

AN OUTLINED COMMENTARY ON

# ROMANS

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**GOSPEL  
BROADCASTING  
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## INTRODUCTION TO ROMANS

### A. Author.

1. The text identifies Paul as the inspired author.
  - a. Romans 1:1: "Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called *to be* an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God."
  - b. Romans 11:13: "For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office."
  - c. Romans 15:15-20: "Nevertheless, brethren, I have written the more boldly unto you in some sort, as putting you in mind, because of the grace that is given to me of God, That I should be the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God, that the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Ghost. I have therefore whereof I may glory through Jesus Christ in those things which pertain to God. For I will not dare to speak of any of those things which Christ hath not wrought by me, to make the Gentiles obedient, by word and deed, Through mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God; so that from Jerusalem, and round about unto Illyricum, I have fully preached the gospel of Christ. Yea, so have I strived to preach the gospel, not where Christ was named, lest I should build upon another man's foundation."
2. External evidence attesting Paul's authorship is given by Clement of Rome, Ignatius, and Justin Martyr.
3. As an apostle, Paul was:
  - a. **An eyewitness of the resurrected Christ:**
    - 1) Acts 1:21-22: "Wherefore of these men which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, Beginning from the baptism of John, unto that same day that he was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of his resurrection." Matthias met the condition of having seen Christ after the resurrection before he could be appointed to the apostolic office.
    - 2) 1 Corinthians 9:1: "Am I not an apostle? am I not free? have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord? are not ye my work in the Lord?"
    - 3) 1 Corinthians 15:8: "And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time."
  - b. **Called by the Lord:**
    - 1) Acts 26:16-18: "But rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee; Delivering thee from the people, and *from* the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee, To open their eyes, *and* to turn *them* from darkness to light, and *from* the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me."
    - 2) Galatians 1:1: "Paul, an apostle, (not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised him from the dead)."
  - c. **Inspired:**
    - 1) John 16:13: "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, *that* shall he speak: and he will show you things to come."
    - 2) Galatians 1:11-12: "But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught *it*, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ."
    - 3) 1 Corinthians 14:37: "If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord."
  - d. **Able to confirm his messages:**
    - 1) Acts 13:8-12: "But Elymas the sorcerer (for so is his name by interpretation) withstood them,

seeking to turn away the deputy from the faith. Then Saul, (who also *is called* Paul,) filled with the Holy Ghost, set his eyes on him, And said, O full of all subtlety and all mischief, *thou* child of the devil, *thou* enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord? And now, behold, the hand of the Lord *is* upon thee, and thou shalt be blind, not seeing the sun for a season. And immediately there fell on him a mist and a darkness; and he went about seeking some to lead him by the hand. Then the deputy, when he saw what was done, believed, being astonished at the doctrine of the Lord."

- a) Acts 14:8-11: "And there sat a certain man at Lystra, impotent in his feet, being a cripple from his mother's womb, who never had walked: The same heard Paul speak: who stedfastly beholding him, and perceiving that he had faith to be healed, Said with a loud voice, Stand upright on thy feet. And he leaped and walked. And when the people saw what Paul had done, they lifted up their voices, saying in the speech of Lycaonia, The gods are come down to us in the likeness of men."
- b) Acts 16:16-18: "And it came to pass, as we went to prayer, a certain damsel possessed with a spirit of divination met us, which brought her masters much gain by soothsaying: The same followed Paul and us, and cried, saying, These men are the servants of the most high God, which show unto us the way of salvation. And this did she many days. But Paul, being grieved, turned and said to the spirit, I command thee in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her. And he came out the same hour."
- 2) Mark 16:17-20: "And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover. So then after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God. And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with *them*, and confirming the word with signs following. Amen."
- 3) Hebrews 2:3-4: "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard *him*; God also bearing *them* witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?"
- e. **Given a universal commission:**
  - 1) Matthew 28:19: "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."
  - 2) Mark 16:15: "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature."
  - 3) Luke 24:47: "And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem."
  - 4) 2 Corinthians 11:28: "Beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches."

B. The epistle is addressed to "All that be in Rome."

1. The inspired record does not report how the church came to be established in Rome.
  - a. Catholics claim that Peter established the church there, but there is no Biblical proof that Peter was ever in Rome at any time.
  - b. Paul did not plant that congregation for it was there long before he arrived.
    - 1) Acts 19:21: "After these things were ended, Paul purposed in the spirit, when he had passed through Macedonia and Achaia, to go to Jerusalem, saying, After I have been there, I must also see Rome."
    - 2) Romans 1:11: "For I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established."
    - 3) Romans 1:13: "Now I would not have you ignorant, brethren, that oftentimes I purposed to come



unto you, (but was let hitherto,) that I might have some fruit among you also, even as among other Gentiles."

- 4) Romans 15:23: "But now having no more place in these parts, and having a great desire these many years to come unto you."
2. There were men from Rome who were present on Pentecost Day when the gospel was first preached (Acts 2:10). It is possible that some of these obeyed the gospel and started the congregation when they returned to Rome.
3. Aquila and Priscilla had been in Rome when Paul first met them (Acts 18:1-2). They may have been instrumental in establishing the church in the Imperial Capital.
4. The salutation does not say, "To the church at Rome," but to "all that be in Rome." Of course, the letter was not directed to the pagans of Rome, but to the Lord's people.
  - a. Paul directs comments in the letter to Jews and Gentiles, suggesting that both groups were represented in the church there.
  - b. That the membership was primarily Gentile is intimated in Romans 1:5-7 and 11:13-24. More than half of the names in chapter 16 are Latin or Greek, not Hebrew.

C. Date and Place of writing.

1. The date is figured to be the year 58 A.D., possibly as early as 55 A.D.
2. The letter was written while Paul was at Corinth (during his 3 months in Greece) prior to returning to Jerusalem on the third missionary journey (2 Cor. 8-9).
  - a. Romans 15:25-27: "But now I go unto Jerusalem to minister unto the saints. For it hath pleased them of Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor saints which are at Jerusalem. It hath pleased them verily; and their debtors they are. For if the Gentiles have been made partakers of their spiritual things, their duty is also to minister unto them in carnal things."
  - b. 1 Corinthians 16:1-4: "Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. Upon the first *day* of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as *God* hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come. And when I come, whomsoever ye shall approve by *your* letters, them will I send to bring your liberality unto Jerusalem. And if it be meet that I go also, they shall go with me."

D. Occasion for the epistle.

1. Paul does not give a specific and clear statement assigning a reason for his letter.
2. Some possible reasons may be adduced:
  - a. He had heard of their faith, and wanted to encourage them. "First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world" (Rom. 1:80).
  - b. He wanted to go to Rome, and this letter would prepare for his coming.
    - 1) Acts 19:21: "After these things were ended, Paul purposed in the spirit, when he had passed through Macedonia and Achaia, to go to Jerusalem, saying, After I have been there, I must also see Rome."
    - 2) Romans 1:11: "For I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established."
    - 3) Romans 1:13 "Now I would not have you ignorant, brethren, that oftentimes I purposed to come unto you, (but was let hitherto,) that I might have some fruit among you also, even as among other Gentiles."
    - 4) Romans 15:22-29: "For which cause also I have been much hindered from coming to you. But now having no more place in these parts, and having a great desire these many years to come unto you; Whensoever I take my journey into Spain, I will come to you: for I trust to see you in my journey, and to be brought on my way thitherward by you, if first I be somewhat filled with your *company*. But now I go unto Jerusalem to minister unto the saints. For it hath pleased them of Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor saints which are at Jerusalem. It hath pleased them verily; and their debtors they are. For if the Gentiles have been made partakers of

their spiritual things, their duty is also to minister unto them in carnal things. When therefore I have performed this, and have sealed to them this fruit, I will come by you into Spain. And I am sure that, when I come unto you, I shall come in the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ."

- c. It was his duty to work in Gentile lands, planting the gospel in the hearts of many. What better place to do so than Rome?
  - 1) Acts 26:16-17: "But rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee; Delivering thee from the people, and *from* the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee."
  - 2) Romans 1:14-17: "I am debtor both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians; both to the wise, and to the unwise. So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also. For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith."

E. Purpose of the epistle.

1. It teaches basic principles of salvation from sin and exposes the follies of those who sought to turn the saints back to Judaism.
  2. It deals with the rejection of Christ by the Jews by putting Christianity into the focus God intended it to have.
    - a. He showed that both Jew and Gentile were under condemnation because of sin.
    - b. He pointed out that sin cannot be justified by the Law of Moses, but by the system of faith which is the gospel.
    - c. He established the fact that neither the Jew with his Law nor the Gentile who did not have that Law, can be justified except in Christ.
    - d. Paul also taught that Christ's death counteracted the effects of Adam's sin.
  3. It emphasizes Christian living, pointing out some of the attitudes and practices which must characterize those who call on the name of the Lord. See Romans 12.
  4. It shows the importance of obeying civil law. Romans 13.
  5. It teaches us to show forbearance toward those who are weak in the faith. Romans 14.
  6. Paul related some of his past activities and future plans. Romans 15:14-33.
  7. He commended Phoebe and sent greetings to former acquaintances. Romans 16.
  8. The epistle also shows why God rejected the Jews and accepted the Gentiles, and discloses how both are saved.
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# ROMANS 1

## A. Romans 1:1-7: The Apostle's Greeting.

1. Verse 1: "Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God."
  - a. There is no question about the identity of the inspired author to those who believe the Bible, but some critics doubt Paul's authorship. He specifies that he is a servant and an apostle of Christ.
  - b. *Servant* is from *doulos*, "a slave." His service was willingly given to Christ. "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me" (Gal. 2:20).
  - c. He was a called apostle. The words "to be" are supplied by the translators, so literally the text reads, "a called apostle." He did not assume his apostleship by his own power, but became an apostle by the call of the Lord.
    - 1) "The word translated 'called' is not a verb nor a participle, but a verbal adjective. The sense is complete and clear, if you read it, 'a called apostle.' Paul was not telling what he was called to be, but what he was" (Whiteside, p.7).
    - 2) His apostleship carried great authority and powers, equal in every way to that given to the Twelve. [His calling has nothing to do with the supposed calling of preachers today].
      - a) Acts 26:16-18: "But rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee; Delivering thee from the people, and *from* the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee, To open their eyes, *and* to turn *them* from darkness to light, and *from* the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me."
      - b) 1 Corinthians 1:1: "Paul, called *to be* an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God, and Sosthenes *our* brother."
      - c) 1 Corinthians 9:1-5: "Am I not an apostle? am I not free? have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord? are not ye my work in the Lord? If I be not an apostle unto others, yet doubtless I am to you: for the seal of mine apostleship are ye in the Lord. Mine answer to them that do examine me is this, Have we not power to eat and to drink? Have we not power to lead about a sister, a wife, as well as other apostles, and *as* the brethren of the Lord, and Cephas?"
      - d) 2 Corinthians 12:11-12: "I am become a fool in glorying; ye have compelled me: for I ought to have been commended of you: for in nothing am I behind the very chiefest apostles, though I be nothing. Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, in signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds."
      - e) Galatians 1:12-15: "For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught *it*, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ. For ye have heard of my conversation in time past in the Jews' religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and wasted it: And profited in the Jews' religion above many my equals in mine own nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers. But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called *me* by his grace."
    - 3) An apostle of Christ was one sent forth with full power and authority. Paul's call came on the road to Damascus, but it was after he entered the city that he received his salvation, sight, and authority.
  - d. He was separated unto the gospel. Before his birth, Paul was marked in the mind of God to become an apostle. "Paul, an apostle, (not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised him from the dead;)....But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace, To reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood" (Gal. 1:1,15-16). Paul was marked in God's mind for the apostolic office from his mother's womb and was given that commission following

his conversion in Damascus.

- 1) This does not mean that he was foreordained to be an apostle, but that God foreknew that he would become an apostle. Paul had a choice in the matter, but God knew ahead of time what the circumstances and results would be. Without foreknowledge, God would have to work out his plans by trial and error.
  - 2) The gospel is called God's gospel. God the Father promised the gospel by the ancient prophets, even preaching it in principle to Abraham.
    - a) John 8:56: "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw *it*, and was glad."
    - b) Galatians 3:8: "And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, *saying*, In thee shall all nations be blessed."
  2. Verse 2: "Which he had promised afore by his prophets in the holy scriptures."
    - a. The gospel was promised before the time of its coming. The promise was given in the holy scriptures. "It is God's gospel; he formerly promised it; promised it through his prophets; promised it in the holy Scriptures. For Jews these facts contain a fine argument" (Lard, p.26).
    - b. Among other things, the statement of this verse affirms that the gospel system was not some last-minute substitution for some grander plan; it was the great plan God had from the beginning, that Christ should die on the cross for the sins of the world.
  3. Verse 3: "Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh."
    - a. The gospel, which was promised in the Old Testament, concerned the Son of God, Jesus Christ. Without Christ, there could be no gospel. "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of *his* government and peace *there shall be* no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this" (Isa. 9:6-7).
    - b. One cannot understand the horrors of sin, the need for a Savior, the meaning of his death, and the wonderful grace of God without a working knowledge of the Old Testament. By seeing the desperate condition of men in those dark days, and observing the ignorance in which they lived, we grasp an idea of what the world is like without Christ. Paul depicts this state in grisly detail in Romans 1:18-32. The foundation thoughts for most of the New Testament are found in the Old Testament.
    - c. Christ came into the world as a descendant of David. But this only accounts for his fleshly nature. His eternal nature is divine. Paul answers the questions Jesus asked the Pharisees in Matthew 22:41-46: "What think ye of Christ? whose son is he?...How then doth David in spirit call him Lord...?" How can Christ be both the son of David and the Son of God? Paul gives the answer here: He is the son of David in that he entered the world as a descendant of David; he is the Son of God in the relationship he sustains to God in his eternal nature.
  4. Verse 4: "And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead."
    - a. The genealogical tables kept so meticulously by the Jews proved Jesus to be a descendant of David; the resurrection from the dead proves his divine Sonship.
    - b. The resurrection cited is the Lord's resurrection, not the general resurrection at the end of time. The resurrection of all the dead is still future; but the resurrection here mentioned is given as proof of the divine Sonship of Christ. An event that has not yet occurred can offer no proof of anything; but his resurrection proves to all right-thinking people that he is the Son of God.
    - c. By the resurrection of Christ from the dead, the Spirit of Holiness (the Holy Spirit) declared that Jesus is the Son of God. Declared is from *horizo*, "to mark off by boundaries." Christ was "marked out" as the Son of God by his resurrection.
    - d. The declaration was made by the Holy Spirit in raising Jesus from the dead; it was a powerful
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- declaration. The Holy Spirit also spoke through the apostles in declaring the resurrection of Christ (Acts 2:1-4, 22-36; 1 Pet. 1:12).
- e. His resurrection can be explained only by admitting it to have been a miraculous operation. All of the necessary elements are present in the story to prove it to be a genuine resurrection.
    - 1) Sufficient evidence is given to prove that Jesus truly was dead. The soldiers were accustomed to seeing death; they could certainly know whether a man was dead. A spear had been thrust into the Lord's side, and the centurion who wielded the spear knew he was dead.
    - 2) That his body was actually placed in the tomb is beyond denial. His enemies knew he had promised to rise from the dead, hence made sure that his body could not be removed and the claim made that he was resurrected.
    - 3) The guard posted at the tomb insured that no one could enter and remove the body.
    - 4) The fact is that his body was missing from the tomb on the third day and he was seen by many of his followers; that they were willing to die rather than deny his resurrection, proves the veracity of their testimony; they had nothing to gain and everything to lose if they preached a lie about his resurrection.
  5. Verse 5: "By whom we have received grace and apostleship, for obedience to the faith among all nations, for his name."
    - a. It was from Christ that Paul had received grace and apostleship. Grace here is a reference to the supernatural gifts possessed by Paul.
      - 1) 1 Corinthians 15:10: "But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which *was bestowed* upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me."
      - 2) Galatians 2:7-9: "But contrariwise, when they saw that the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me, as *the gospel* of the circumcision *was* unto Peter; (For he that wrought effectually in Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision, the same was mighty in me toward the Gentiles:) And when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship; that *we should go* unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision."
      - 3) Ephesians 3:7-8: "Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power. Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ."
    - b. Apostleship has reference to the authority of the apostolic office. This was a very special gift, bestowed only upon a few hand picked men, with Christ himself making the selections.
      - 1) Matthew 19:28: "And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel."
      - 2) John 14:26: "But the Comforter, *which is* the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you."
      - 3) John 15:26: "But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, *even* the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me."
      - 4) John 16:13-14: "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, *that* shall he speak: and he will show you things to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall show *it* unto you."
      - 5) Acts 1:1-8: "The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach, Until the day in which he was taken up, after that he through the Holy Ghost had given commandments unto the apostles whom he had chosen: To whom also he showed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God: And, being assembled together with *them*, commanded

- them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, *saith he*, ye have heard of me. For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence. When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel? And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power. But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."
- 6) 2 Corinthians 12:11-12: "I am become a fool in glorying; ye have compelled me: for I ought to have been commended of you: for in nothing am I behind the very chiefest apostles, though I be nothing. Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, in signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds."
- c. The purpose for giving Paul these gifts was to effect "obedience to the faith" on the part of some from all nations.
- 1) The so-called "Charismatics" of today think that the spiritual gifts (tongue-speaking, etc.) they claim to receive are the end in themselves. No apostle or inspired person of the first century made that kind of blunder. Paul had genuine miraculous powers; certain ones in Corinth were given spiritual gifts; but the reception of these supernatural helps never gave spirituality to any person.
- a) 1 Corinthians 3:1-3: "And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, *even* as unto babes in Christ. I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able *to bear it*, neither yet now are ye able. For ye are yet carnal: for whereas *there is* among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?"
- b) Galatians 2:11-14: "But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed. For before that certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles: but when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision. And the other Jews dissembled likewise with him; insomuch that Barnabas also was carried away with their dissimulation. But when I saw that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel, I said unto Peter before *them* all, If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?"
- 2) The aim of spiritual gifts was that men might be correctly taught the truth, and be convinced of the truth, so that they would obey the gospel. Obeying the gospel and remaining faithful to the Lord's will is the method by which spirituality is developed. There is no other way!
- a) James 1:21-27: "Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls. But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth *therein*, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed. If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion *is* vain. Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, *and* to keep himself unspotted from the world."
- b) 1 John 1:7-10: "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us."
- d. The "faith" here is the gospel system. The obedience, therefore, is submission to the requirements placed on men by the gospel.
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- 1) Romans 10:1-3: "Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved. For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God."
- 2) Romans 10:16: "But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report?"
- 3) 2 Thessalonians 1:8-9: "In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power."
- e. It is highly significant that this epistle begins with a reference to "obedience to the faith" and concludes with a reference to "the obedience of faith" (16:25). In between Paul shows the importance of "obeying from the heart that form of doctrine" delivered to us (6:17).
- f. The aim of the grace and apostleship Paul received was to bring about obedience to the faith on the part of many people, which was designed to bring honor to the name of Christ.
  - 1) Ephesians 3:21: "Unto him *be* glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen."
  - 2) Philippians 2:9-11: "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of *things* in heaven, and *things* in earth, and *things* under the earth; And *that* every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ *is* Lord, to the glory of God the Father."
  - 3) Colossians 3:17: "And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, *do* all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him."
6. Verses 6-7: "Among whom are ye also the called of Jesus Christ: To all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ."
  - a. The Roman saints were among those of all nations who are the called of Christ. Called is not a verb here. They became part of the called out ones when they responded to the call of the gospel. "~~Where~~ unto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Thess. 2:14).
  - b. "Saints" is not used as a title, but as a description of the Christians. They were saints because they had become sanctified and were holy. Every faithful Christian is a saint.
    - 1) Philippians 1:1: "Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons."
    - 2) 1 Peter 1:15-16: "But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy."
  - c. A saint is "beloved" by the God of heaven. While God loves all people, there is a special bond between his child and himself.
    - 1) John 3:16: "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."
    - 2) 2 Corinthians 6:14-18: "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in *them*; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean *thing*; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty."
  - d. No more beautiful or more needed salutation could be given than the pronouncement of God's grace and peace upon them. "Grace" and "peace" were Grecian and Jewish greetings. To have God's grace is to have his good pleasure; to have his peace is to have the contentedness and serenity that only he can provide: "Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving

let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus" (Phil. 4:6-7).

B. Romans 1:8-15: Paul Had a Sincere Interest in the Roman Saints.

1. Verse 8: "First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world."
  - a. The beloved apostle expressed gratitude for all of these brethren, even though he had not met many of them. From the human viewpoint, a Christian we have not met is a stranger, but since we both are fellow-citizens in heaven's kingdom, we have much in common. And since we both are members of God's family, we are brethren. There is a strong bond between Christians; there is a mutual warmth that makes us automatically concerned about each other. We should be thankful for every faithful Christian and every faithful congregation. There is much for which we can and must be thankful every day.
  - b. Their faith had been widely reported. Living in Rome, at the very heart of paganism, their faith would sorely be tested. What he calls their faith here, he calls their obedience in Romans 16:19. Faith itself is intangible, but it can be seen by what it causes its owner to do. The word faith is used as a metonymy: the cause is placed for the effects. These people had obeyed the gospel, so their faith could be seen; they lived a faithful Christian life, so their faith remained visible. Faith cannot be separated from obedience (Jas. 2:14-26).
    - 1) Galatians 5:6: "For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love."
    - 2) 1 Thessalonians 1:3: "Remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God and our Father."
  - c. To have a strong, faithful congregation of saints in Rome would do much toward spreading the influence of the gospel. There was said to be a golden post in Rome, pointing toward the other great cities of the world. Lying at the heart of the civilized world, Rome had continuing communication with these other cities. Thus the brethren would have opportunity to exert influence on many.
2. Verses 9-10: "For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son, that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers; Making request, if by any means now at length I might have a prosperous journey by the will of God to come unto you."
  - a. God was Paul's witness, knowing the sincerity of the gratitude he expressed in the previous verse, and having heard the apostle's earnest prayers he had offered in their behalf. God is witness to all that is done, said, or thought upon earth.
    - 1) Hebrews 4:13: "Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things *are* naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do."
    - 2) Job 26:6: "Hell is naked before him, and destruction hath no covering."
    - 3) Proverbs 15:11: "Hell and destruction are before the Lord: how much more then the hearts of the children of men?"
  - b. Paul served God "with his spirit." "Spirit" is used to define the inner man, the heart or soul. Everything he did was subservient to the will of God; he gave his whole being to God's service; he sincerely offered himself as a willing servant. Man's service must begin in his heart to be acceptable.
    - 1) John 4:24: "God *is* a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship *him* in spirit and in truth."
    - 2) Romans 6:17: "But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you."
    - 3) 2 Corinthians 8:1-5: "Moreover, brethren, we do you to wit of the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia; How that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality. For to *their* power, I bear record, yea, and beyond *their* power *they were* willing of themselves; Praying us with much entreaty that we would receive the gift, and *take upon us* the fellowship of the ministering to the saints. And *this they did*, not as we hoped, but first gave their own selves to the Lord, and unto us by the will of God."



- 4) 2 Corinthians 8:12: "For if there be first a willing mind, *it is* accepted according to that a man hath, *and* not according to that he hath not."
  - c. Without ceasing, Paul prayed in behalf of his brethren in Rome. The fervent, sincere prayers of a righteous person avails much (Jas. 5:16). Paul, being a righteous man and an apostle, could certainly exert much influence on the holy heart of God.
  - d. Paul's prayers included petitions that he might by some means have the privilege of going to Rome to see them. He had yearned to see them for a long time, and prayed that it might be God's will for him to come to Rome.
    - 1) Acts 19:21: "After these things were ended, Paul purposed in the spirit, when he had passed through Macedonia and Achaia, to go to Jerusalem, saying, After I have been there, I must also see Rome."
    - 2) Romans 15:28-33: "When therefore I have performed this, and have sealed to them this fruit, I will come by you into Spain. And I am sure that, when I come unto you, I shall come in the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ. Now I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, and for the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with me in *your* prayers to God for me; That I may be delivered from them that do not believe in Judaea; and that my service which *I have* for Jerusalem may be accepted of the saints; That I may come unto you with joy by the will of God, and may with you be refreshed. Now the God of peace *be* with you all. Amen."
3. Verses 11-12: "For I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established; That is, that I may be comforted together with you by the mutual faith both of you and me."
    - a. The apostle plainly stated his yearning to see them, and gave the reason for this desire: "That I may impart unto you some spiritual gift."
    - b. This is a reference to the impartation of miraculous gifts, those identified in 1 Corinthians 12:8-10. The gift was not merely Paul's personal presence, for that by itself would not be greatly significant. He could impart instructions to them if he were present, but he was doing that by the epistle.
    - c. The purpose of the gift was that "ye may be established." The church was already established. To establish (from *sterizo*) means "to fix, make fast, to set" (Vine, Vol. 2, p.41). The gift of prophecy (of receiving and communicating God's word by inspiration) was included in the spiritual gifts. By means of spiritual gifts, the gospel could be faithfully preached and confirmed. Hence, by imparting one or more of these miraculous gifts, Paul would "fix, make fast, and set" the brethren firmly in the faith.
    - d. It was necessary for an apostle to be present in order for a spiritual gift to be conferred. The Samaritan saints did not receive these gifts until Peter and John prayed and laid hands on them (Acts 8:14-19).
    - e. Paul expressed tact in verse 12. He did not intend for them to get the idea that he would exercise dominion over them, acting as a dictator. Rather, he tactfully stated that his coming would result in comfort being enjoyed by both parties. When he arrived in Italy, he was met by these brethren, whose coming brought cheer to his weary heart (Acts 28:15). Christians are a source of comfort and encouragement to each other. Their reception of spiritual gifts would provide guidance and information that they needed; their encouragement and concern would be a source of strength to Paul.
  4. Verse 13: "Now I would not have you ignorant, brethren, that oftentimes I purposed to come unto you, (but was let hitherto,) that I might have some fruit among you also, even as among other Gentiles."
    - a. He had purposed to come to Rome many times, but was hindered in this intent each time. His plans were not always in accordance with the will of God, for the Holy Spirit would not give him a plan to go to Rome, then allow circumstances or human intervention to prevent the fruition of those plans. The old meaning of let was hinder or prevent.
    - b. Rather, Paul and other inspired men were often left to themselves in working out certain details. When Paul and Silas passed through Asia Minor, they intended to go into certain areas but were overridden by the Spirit (Acts 16:6-10).
    - c. Paul intended to travel to Rome, a worthwhile and logical plan, but his journey there was timed by heaven's guidance, and was under different circumstances from those Paul envisioned.
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d. His aim in coming to Rome was "that I might have some fruit among you also, even as among other Gentiles." The fruit would include the impartation of spiritual gifts, which would provide them with instruction, which in turn would cause them to be built up in the faith.

1) Ephesians 4:11-17: "And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: That we *henceforth* be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, *and* cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, *even* Christ: From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love. This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind."

2) Philippians 4:17: "Not because I desire a gift: but I desire fruit that may abound to your account."

5. Verses 14-15: "I am debtor both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians; both to the wise, and to the unwise. So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also."

a. The apostle fully felt his obligations toward all men. He used the expression "Greeks and barbarians," which was the Greek way of dividing humanity. The apostle knew he was duty-bound to report the gospel truths to all men.

b. His obligations are our obligations; as he was required to tell all he could reasonably approach, so we are obligated to communicate the gospel to as many as possible. Unless we see this great work as our obligation, the work will not get done! Every enlistee in the Lord's army must "fight the fight of faith" in order to lay hold on eternal life (1 Tim. 6:12). But we must not adopt the methods of the world.

1) Isaiah 42:2: "He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street."

2) Matthew 12:18-21: "Behold my servant, whom I have chosen; my beloved, in whom my soul is well pleased: I will put my spirit upon him, and he shall show judgment to the Gentiles. He shall not strive, nor cry; neither shall any man hear his voice in the streets. A bruised reed shall he not break, and smoking flax shall he not quench, till he send forth judgment unto victory. And in his name shall the Gentiles trust."

c. A Christian's obligation extends to all people, without regard to their nationality, race, intelligence, education, social standing, or financial status. The gospel is for all! (Mark 16:15-16; 2 Thess. 1:6-10; Eph. 3:1-9).

d. Paul was perfectly willing and desirous of preaching the gospel to those in Rome, just as he had preached it through many years in many places. This must be our attitude, whether we publicly preach, or privately teach, using every good means at our disposal to get people to see the supreme importance of obeying the gospel.

### C. Romans 1:16-17: The Thesis of the Book of Romans Stated.

1. As John plainly affirmed the intent of his book (John 20:30-31), so Paul here gives us the overall point of the book of Romans: to show that the gospel of Christ is the power God uses to save lost men.

a. The gospel reveals God's system of salvation that is applicable to the Christian Age. The plan he used during the previous age was the Law of Moses, but it could not save.

b. The will of man will not save; a perverted gospel cannot save; a Jesus other than the one revealed in the New Testament cannot save.

1) Acts 4:11-12: "This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner. Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."

2) 2 Corinthians 11:4: "For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus, whom we have not preached, or *if* ye receive another spirit, which ye have not received, or another gospel, which ye have not

accepted, ye might well bear with *him*."

2. Verse 16: "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek."
  - a. This is one of the most significant and far-reaching statements in the Bible. Not only does it show the right attitude which every child of God must have toward the word of God, it reveals what the word of God can do.
  - b. Paul, writing by inspiration, relates his inner attitude toward the gospel: he was not ashamed of it. One who is ashamed of it will be embarrassed or humiliated at it; he will not bring it up in conversation; he will not defend it against its enemies; he will not live it before those who do not respect it. God was not ashamed of Abraham and others (Heb. 11:16). Some were ashamed of the gospel (John 12:42-43; Matt. 26:69ff). Many are ashamed of the gospel today.
    - 1) If one is ashamed of the gospel, he is ashamed of God (who originated it), of Christ (who executed it), and of the Holy Spirit (who revealed it). To be ashamed of the gospel is to forfeit all hope of eternal blessings.
      - a) Mark 8:38: "Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels."
      - b) 2 Timothy 1:8: "Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God."
    - 2) That Paul was not ashamed of the gospel may be seen by his ceaseless efforts to preach it and live it, even under the harshest circumstances and dangers (Gal. 6:14). To dishonor the gospel is to dishonor Christ, and such is unthinkable!
    - 3) He preached the gospel (not current events) to Felix; he emphasized righteousness, temperance and the Judgment, rather than to present pleasantries (Acts 24:25).
    - 4) Paul's "suffering all things for the sake of the truth seemed to deprive him of a name and a place among men. Yet his name has lived through nineteen centuries, and now lives as no other name of a human being lives. It will still go down the stream of time, gathering new luster as the centuries pass. It ought to teach all that fidelity to truth and suffering for right is the only way to lasting honor and true renown on earth and eternal glory in heaven" (Lipscomb, p.29).
  - c. The gospel is God's power unto salvation. In creating the world, the creative power of God was used; in saving man, his saving power is exercised. Few people believe the gospel is the power God uses to save (Heb. 4:12; Jas. 1:18, 21; Rom. 10:1; Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:36-41,47).
    - 1) The word "the" is not in the original, but that the gospel is God's only means of saving the lost today is evident from the very statement of the verse. But men have concocted theories which place God at odds with his affirmation here made. Men teach that God must send down some mysterious power to convert us; this is said to be through the supernatural operation of the Holy Spirit.
    - 2) The mourners' bench was the system by which their theory was put into action. The bench has been dropped in our sophisticated age, but the theory is still held. As Whiteside observed, "It seems, therefore, that it used to take more praying, singing, and shouting to induce God to send down converting power than it does now!" (p.17).
  - d. The gospel is God's power unto salvation, but not without conditions. It can only save those who believe. The verse does not say we are saved by believing only. We can be saved through faith, only when faith leads us to obey (John 1:11-12; 8:30-32,44; 12:42-43). The Lord saves the obedient believer (2 Thess. 1:7-10). The Lord can save or destroy: our reaction determines which.
    - 1) Acts 2:40: "And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation."
    - 2) Acts 13:44-47: "And the next sabbath day came almost the whole city together to hear the word of God. But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy, and spake against those

- things which were spoken by Paul, contradicting and blaspheming. Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles. For so hath the Lord commanded us, *saying*, I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of the earth."
- 3) 2 Corinthians 2:15-16: "For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish: To the one *we are* the savour of death unto death; and to the other the savour of life unto life. And who *is* sufficient for these things?"
- e. The gospel is God's power unto salvation to everyone who believes, among the Gentiles and Jews. It was God's arrangement for the gospel to be published among the Jews first; it was they to whom God had given the Law of Moses; it was through their race that the Redeemer was given to the world. But God never intended for the Jews to be the only recipients of the gospel.
- 1) Genesis 12:1-3: "Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee: And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed."
  - 2) Isaiah 2:2-4: "And it shall come to pass in the last days, *that* the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more."
  - 3) Daniel 2:44: "And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, *but* it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever."
  - 4) Daniel 7:13-14: "I saw in the night visions, and, behold, *one* like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion *is* an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom *that* which shall not be destroyed."
- f. The gospel includes certain essential elements, without which there would be no gospel.
- 1) The gospel contains **facts** which we must believe. These facts include the death, burial and resurrection of Christ: "Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures" (1 Cor. 15:1-4)..
  - 2) The gospel contains **commands** which we must obey. These include repentance, confession of our faith, and baptism into Christ.
    - a) Acts 8:37: "And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God."
    - b) Romans 6:3-4: "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life."
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- c) Romans 10:10: "For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."
  - d) Acts 17:30: "And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent."
  - e) Acts 2:38: "Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."
- 3) The gospel contains **blessings** which we are entitled to enjoy. These include forgiveness, sanctification, hope, providential help, fellowship with God and his saints, and the privilege of serving the greatest cause on earth.
- a) Ephesians 1:3: "Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly *places* in Christ."
  - b) 1 Peter 1:3-5: "Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time."
- 4) The gospel contains **warnings** that we must heed.
- a) Matthew 10:28: "And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell."
  - b) Luke 12:4-5: "And I say unto you my friends, Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: Fear him, which after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear him."
  - c) 1 Corinthians 10:12: "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall."
  - d) Hebrews 2:1-4: "Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let *them* slip. For if the word spoken by angels was stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward; How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard *him*; God also bearing *them* witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?"
  - e) Hebrews 10:23-31: "Let us hold fast the profession of *our* faith without wavering; (for he *is* faithful that promised;) And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some *is*; but exhorting *one another*: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching. For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace? For we know him that hath said, Vengeance *belongeth* unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge his people. *It is* a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God."
- g. The gospel contains instructions regarding our duties before God, including how to live, how to worship, right attitudes, and how we are to regard our brethren and fellowmen.
- 1) Matthew 10:22: "And ye shall be hated of all *men* for my name's sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved."
  - 2) Mark 12:29-31: "And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments *is*, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord: And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with
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- all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this *is* the first commandment. And the second *is* like, *namely* this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these."
- 3) John 4:24: "God *is* a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship *him* in spirit and in truth."
  - 4) 1 John 1:6-10: "If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us."
  - 5) Revelation 2:10: "Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast *some* of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."
3. Verse 17: "For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith."
    - a. The word therein is a reference to the gospel. The gospel reveals the righteousness of God. It is in the gospel that we find the righteousness of God.
    - b. This is not speaking of God's personal righteousness. That he is righteous and perfectly holy is taught throughout God's book. But that is not the point here. The apostle is affirming that the plan by which God makes man to become righteous is given in the gospel.
      - 1) The commandments of God are righteousness (Ps. 119:172); there is nothing about his word that is unrighteous or which encourages unrighteousness. It promotes and produces righteousness in those who will sincerely follow its dictates.
      - 2) When we obey the gospel, we "work righteousness" (Acts 10:34-35). "He that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous" (1 John 3:7; cf. Romans 6:16).
      - 3) Paul's decried the fact that the Jews had not "submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God" (Rom. 10:1-3). What they had done was to refuse to obey the gospel (Rom. 10:13-18; 2 Thess. 1:8-9; Rom. 6:16-18; 1 Pet. 1:22-25).
    - c. The righteousness of God revealed in the gospel is from faith unto faith. The word *eis* (to, unto) shows the result of the first faith. The gospel is a system of faith and it produces faith.
      - 1) The first instance of faith is a reference to the gospel itself (being a system of faith as opposed to a system of works); the second instance of faith is a reference to personal faith on the part of the one who will believe the gospel.
      - 2) Faith comes through hearing God's word (Rom. 10:17; Acts 15:7). The gospel contains all the information and confirmation to create faith in the hearts of those who will sincerely consider its message.
      - 3) The gospel (which is a system of faith: God speaks; man considers; and faith is produced in the individual's heart) is thus able to purify our hearts (Acts 15:9) by producing faith in us which leads us to obey the gospel (1 Pet. 1:22-23). It is therefore from faith unto faith (Phil. 3:9).
        - a) Acts 15:9: "And put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith."
        - b) Philippians 3:9: "And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith:"
        - c) 1 Peter 1:22-23: "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, *see that ye* love one another with a pure heart fervently: Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever."
      - 4) "The just shall live by faith" is a quotation from Habakkuk 2:4. To be righteous, we must be free from the guilt of sin. To be just is to be righteous. This Old Testament statement is found three times in the New Testament. In this case, the emphasis is on just: one who is just is one who lives

by faith. The other two occurrences are Galatians 3:11 and Hebrews 10:38.

- a) Galatians 3:1:1 "But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, *it is* evident: for, The just shall live by faith."
  - b) Hebrews 10:38: "Now the just shall live by faith: but if *any man* draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him."
4. When one hears the gospel for the first time, he is affected in some way: he either gets better or he gets worse. The same is true with a congregation when it is fully taught the whole counsel of God. One who drinks or smokes will quit his evil habit or else he will try to justify himself, or perhaps just say, "I don't care."
  5. The gospel is able to:

Produce the New Birth	1 Peter 1:22-25
Give Salvation	Rom. 1:16; Eph. 1:13
Impart Grace	Acts 20:24,32
Establish in Faith	Rom. 16:25
Generate Faith	Rom. 10:17
Set Free From Guilt of Sin	John 8:31-32
Nourish Spiritual Life	1 Peter 2:1-2
Cleanse the Church	Eph. 5:26
Search the Heart	Heb. 4:12
Make Us to be Partakers of Christ	Eph. 3:6
Impart Immortality	2 Tim. 1:10
Bring Peace	Rom. 10:15
Give Protection	Eph. 6:17
Fit One Finally for Heaven	Acts 20:32
Change the Character	2 Cor. 3:16-18

6. There are some notable distinctions between the Gospel of Christ and the Law of Moses:

<b>GOSPEL</b>	<b>THE LAW OF MOSES</b>
Of God	Human Righteousness: Rom. 10:1
Unto Salvation	Administration of Death: 2 Cor. 3:1-8
Unto Everyone	Jewish Exclusiveness: Rom. 9-11
That Believeth	Dependence on Legal Works: Rom. 2:25; Gal. 3:12

7. In commenting on the following section, R.L. Whiteside gave the following: "Jesus came to seek and to save the lost; he came not to condemn, but to save. Without the gospel, the whole world was lost. 'The whole world lieth in sin.' The question is frequently asked: 'What will become of the heathen who never heard the gospel?' If a person understood the real purpose and philosophy of the gospel, he would never ask that question. To set such questioners to thinking, we ask: 'What would have become of the same heathen, if there had never been any gospel?' The gospel was designed to save a world already condemned. It is only in a relative sense that people are lost because they do not obey the gospel. Primarily people are lost because they are sinners. To illustrate: a boat is rushed out to rescue a drowning man. He refuses to be rescued, and is drowned. Now, why did he drown? 'O,' some one replies, 'he drowned because he would not get in the boat.' Wrong. The boat had nothing to do with his drowning; he drowned because he was in the water, and he would have drowned just the same had there never been a boat. Of course, his refusing to be rescued made his drowning a case of suicide. Just so with the sinner. The gospel is sent out to rescue the perishing. When the sinner refuses to be rescued, it intensifies his guilt and shows it to be a case of spiritual suicide. But the gospel had nothing to do with his perishing; he would have perished had there never been a gospel. The boat was a means of rescue, and so is the gospel" (pp.22f).

D. Romans 1:18-32: The Condition of the Gentile World Without the Gospel.

1. Verse 18: "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness."
  - a. The wrath of God is directed against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men. His wrath is best understood as legal in its exhibition, not emotional. When a criminal is apprehended and brought before the civil court, after establishing his guilt, the wrath of the law is imposed. But it is applied legally; it is not pronounced emotionally. Judges and their courts are expected to act without emotion, to operate within the scope of the law, and to dispense justice impartially. God is controlled by his divine holiness, his sense of perfect justice, and his revealed word.
  - b. He shows no partiality and does not allow emotions to dictate his actions. Otherwise, he would have no desire to deliver anyone. The Amorites, Sodom and Gomorrah, Nineveh, and Israel in the wilderness were given time to repent.
  - c. God's wrath is said to be revealed from heaven. It appears that Paul has reference to cases of God's wrath being poured out upon men in this life. There were many such occurrences during Old Testament times; there are undoubtedly many cases of such even in our times. Providentially, evil men and wicked nations sometimes today are brought to their knees; are not these examples of God's wrath being revealed from heaven?
  - d. The object of his wrath in this verse is twofold: the ungodliness and unrighteousness of men. God will not forever tolerate sinful conduct, even though he is most longsuffering toward his offspring.
    - 1) Romans 2:4: "Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?"



- 2) 2 Peter 3:9: "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance."
- e. The ones he has especially in mind are those who hold (who hinder) the truth by their unrighteousness. In the first century, and in our own time, there were men who did all they could to deter the progress of the truth.
- 1) "The word translated "hold" here, sometimes means to 'maintain,' to 'keep,' to 'observe' (1 Cor 7:30; 2 Cor 6:12); but it also means to 'hold back, to detain, to hinder.' Luke 4:42, 'The people sought him (Jesus), and came to him, and stayed him.' (Greek, the same as here.) Philem 13, 'Whom I would have 'retained' with me,' etc.; 2 Thess 2:6, 'And now ye know what 'withholdeth,' etc. In this place it means also that they held back, or restrained the truth, by their wickedness" [Barnes' Notes, Electronic Database. Copyright (c) 1997 by BibleSoft].
  - 2) Elymas sought to turn Sergius Paulus from the faith (Acts 13:4-12). This evil man was smitten with blindness.
  - 3) His wicked counterparts today seek to overturn the Bible in the minds of men; they have met with shocking success! Today, it is illegal to teach the Bible in the public schools; the possibility of special Creation is not considered in science classes or books; television, movies, advertisements, books and magazines glamorize sin of nearly every stripe; sexual perversions are exalted as normal; abortion is legalized; and many other sinful practices are protected by law, while godly conduct and standards are often ridiculed and opposed.
  - 4) One who resists the progress of the gospel is fighting a losing battle. How can anyone hope to win when he struggles against the God of Heaven? Evil men will gain the upper hand for a while, but eventually will fall under the wrath of God.
  - 5) Other passages which use the term.
    - a) Luke 4:42: "And when it was day, he departed and went into a desert place: and the people sought him, and came unto him, and stayed him, that he should not depart from them."
    - b) 1 Corinthians 11:2: "Now I praise you, brethren, that ye remember me in all things, and keep the ordinances, as I delivered *them* to you."
    - c) 1 Thessalonians 5:21: "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good."
    - d) 2 Thessalonians 2:6: "And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time."
- f. Godliness is defined as piety or reverence. A godly person is one who has a deep respect for God and all sacred things. Godliness is the right disposition of heart toward God. As ungodliness increases, all manner of evil practices and attitudes develop, and society sinks deeper and deeper into sin and degradation until finally it must be destroyed. Consider the ancient South American empires which descended into homosexual practices and offered human sacrifices; they were ultimately destroyed. The archaeological history of some of these civilizations have only come to light in recent years.
2. Verses 19-20: "Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse."
- a. God had given the ancient Gentiles sufficient information to believe in him. That they rejected this evidence is due to the blindness of their own hearts, not due to weakness in the testimony. It would have been unjust on God's part to hold a man guilty of unbelief if there was no means by which he could believe.
  - b. God is invisible, but there is much evidence and proof of his being. Long before men located the planet Pluto, cumulative evidence convinced Percival Lowell that a planet was precisely where it was later discovered to be. Although unseen at the time, the evidence demanded the planet's presence. Although God is unseen by the human eye, powerful and undeniable evidence proves his existence.
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- c. Paul says in verse 20 that God's eternal power and Godhead are clearly demonstrated by the things which God has made.
    - 1) Psalms 19:1-4: "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth his handiwork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge. *There is* no speech nor language, *where* their voice is not heard. Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world. In them hath he set a tabernacle for the sun."
    - 2) Acts 14:17: "Nevertheless he left not himself without witness, in that he did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness."
  - d. Many evidences abound in the natural world and in the universe. The only possible explanation is that these things were created by an infinite being possessing unlimited power and wisdom.
  - e. If those men back in those ancient days had no excuse for their unbelief in the face of the evidence available to them, then men today are less excusable since we have discovered countless other things which demonstrate design in nature. The first and second laws of thermodynamics prove that matter is not eternal and that the universe is "winding down," hence, there was a time when matter had its origin, and that time was not too far in the distant past. It is not eternal; it could not create itself; it must have had a Creator and Designer. The Bible identifies him and reveals his will for mankind.
  - f. When man rejects the will of God, he does so because he wills to do so. God is, therefore, perfectly just in punishing him. "Seeing *it is* a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you; And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power" (2 Thess. 1:6-9).
3. Verses 21-23: "Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things."
- a. The apostle names six steps in the apostasy of the ancient Gentiles. They originally knew God (1:20), but consciously rejected him. Their original knowledge of God consisted of more than recognizing the fact that there must be a Divine Creator. For many years after the Flood, men were doubtless fully appraised of God and his will, but gradually turned away from him. Each succeeding generation lost more and more of that knowledge, and drew further and further away from God, until their light was smothered.
  - b. Although they knew God, **they glorified him not as God**. Man will place his loyalty and love in some entity: if not in God, then in himself, or in an organization, or in a figment of his imagination (viz., an idol), or in some man.
    - 1) The first step in their apostasy was to direct the love and reverence that rightly belonged to God toward someone or something else (Matt. 6:24; Mark 12:29-30). When a Christian begins to be indifferent toward worship, by failure to participate, or by failing to attend as he ought, he has taken this same initial step toward full apostasy. It is only a matter of time until he will draw farther from God [unless he repents].
    - 2) "To glorify him as God is to regard with proper reverence his perfections and laws, to venerate his name, his power, his holiness, and his presence by words and acts, and to worship him as the maker and Governor of the universe" (Lipscomb, p.37).
    - 3) Jesus glorified the Father while on earth (John 17:4). Having perfect knowledge of God, he knew that the Father deserved such reverence. He glorified him by doing the work assigned to him; this is the only way anyone can glorify him. "If any of our inventions, plans, or purposes succeed, we thereby bring worldly glory upon ourselves....It is therefore impossible to glorify God by our own plans and purposes, no matter how successful they may seem to be" (Whiteside, pp.30f).
    - 4) Once God is replaced in a man's heart and thinking by someone or something else, that man can
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- only go downward, morally and spiritually. His condition can only worsen, as this passage shows. "But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived" (2 Tim. 3:13).
- c. **They were not thankful toward God.** This implies that they had blessings for which gratitude should have been expressed. Every man on earth owes his very existence to God; all the essentials of life come from God.
- 1) Scriptural statements:
    - a) Acts 14:17: "Nevertheless he left not himself without witness, in that he did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness."
    - b) 1 Timothy 4:10: "For therefore we both labour and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, specially of those that believe."
    - c) James 1:17: "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning."
  - 2) Pride can cause a man to attribute success to his own ingenuity and strength. Samson thought that his invincibility was due to his own powers. Athletes and entertainers have thought their skill and talents were due to their prowess. This disposition will set the individual up for tragedy, just as it did Samson.
  - 3) If one is no longer thankful to God for the blessings of life, the door is wide open for a steep plunge into sin and corruption. How many individuals have there been who, being successful in this world, thought they owed their attainments, not to God, but to their own competence! Modern American society seems to think that our success as a nation is traceable to our own vigor. Setting one day aside in the year for "Thanksgiving" is merely a token expression of gratitude.
  - 4) If we lose our sense of thankfulness, we have lost one of the essential qualities necessary to have God's good pleasure. "For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy" (2 Tim. 3:2).
  - 5) Regarding gratitude, Lard observed: "A failure here is indicative of the deepest debasement. The people in whom this feeling has become extinct have reached the lowest degree of spiritual degeneracy. No sin is more inexcusable" (p.54).
- d. **They became vain in their imaginations** (reasonings—ASV).
- 1) We gradually become what we think. Our thoughts mold and shape us. If we fill our minds with sensual ideas and fantasies, we will act to fulfill those evil designs (if we have the opportunity and courage to act on them). "For as he thinketh in his heart, so *is* he: Eat and drink, saith he to thee; but his heart *is* not with thee" (Prov. 23:7).
  - 2) But Paul's point here is that these people ceased to reason correctly. "There can be no solid process of reasoning without a starting point, and no process of reasoning that eliminates God has any starting point. It must begin with a guess, an assumption, and proceed in the dark. If God did not create the universe, then any theory as to its origin is a blind guess" (Whiteside, p.31).
  - 3) When men reject the God of heaven, they turn to all kinds of fanciful speculations regarding their origin, how religion is to be conducted, what the purpose of life is, the nature of life and death, and a host of other matters. Modern humanism, starting with the assumptions that there is no Supreme Being and life originated by a chance combination of atoms, claims man can depend only upon himself.
  - 4) If we begin our thinking without considering God, our reasoning will be faulty, and our conclusions will be disastrous. Empty, wasted, useless and meaningless (vain) thinking leads to a foolish heart that cannot see the truth. We are moved to pity the foolish atheist who tries to explain away the evidences of design in the universe (which argues decisively for a Designer); and for the evolutionist who vainly tries to find the "missing links" so essential to support his theory; and for the immoral people of the world who try to justify their sensual, drunken, greedy, irreligious lifestyles by claiming there is no absolute standard, and then try to place limits on others
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- who take their assertion to its logical end.
- e. **Their foolish heart was darkened.**
- 1) Having decided to evict God from their world, they filled their hearts with empty thinking, and their hearts (already foolish), became enmeshed in darkness. "As the foolish reasonings of the Gentiles gradually usurped possession of their minds, the truth faded from them. At last the light which was in them went out" (Lard, p.55).
  - 2) One who fits Paul's description, will reverse righteousness and sin, and godliness and ungodliness. "Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter! Woe unto *them that are* wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight!" (Isa. 5:20-21). Such a person thinks he is right, will not even consider the truth, and thus insures he will remain in darkness. One is truly blind who will not see: "For this people's heart is waxed gross, and *their* ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with *their* eyes and hear with *their* ears, and should understand with *their* heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them" (Matt. 13:15).
  - 3) John 9:39-41: "And Jesus said, For judgment I am come into this world, that they which see not might see; and that they which see might be made blind. And *some* of the Pharisees which were with him heard these words, and said unto him, Are we blind also? Jesus said unto them, If ye were blind, ye should have no sin: but now ye say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth." Our Lord came to earth to enable those who are spiritually-blind to see. Those who understand that they are lost and need salvation have open minds, thus are teachable; they can obtain spiritual sight (they can be saved). But those who are unwilling to admit their sinful condition, thus are not teachable, are blind. If the Pharisees of the text were blind [if they realized they were lost and unable to save themselves] they would be in a position to obtain salvation. Because they were willfully blind, their sin remained on them.
    - a) Matthew 13:14-16: "And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive: For this people's heart is waxed gross, and *their* ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with *their* eyes and hear with *their* ears, and should understand with *their* heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them. But blessed *are* your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear."
    - b) Acts 13:44-47: "And the next sabbath day came almost the whole city together to hear the word of God. But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy, and spake against those things which were spoken by Paul, contradicting and blaspheming. Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles. For so hath the Lord commanded us, *saying*, I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of the earth."
- f. **They professed themselves to be wise, but became fools.**
- 1) This description is true of anyone, regardless of his degree of intelligence and education, who denies the existence of God (Ps. 14:1). The same is true of those who reject the Deity and authority of Christ, or who deny the inspiration of the Bible. The evidence for these truths is so strong that one would exhibit the greatest foolishness to deny any of them.
  - 2) "If a man thinks and acts contrary to common sense, he is a fool, no matter how much he may know about some things. Common sense is the knowledge the human family has accumulated by experience and observation. We have learned that fire burns. If a man should deny that and act according to his theory, he would act foolishly. Only a fool would say that it would not hurt to run full tilt against a stone wall. And only a fool will say that a thing can be made without a maker, for experience and observation teach us that every made thing has a maker" (Whiteside, pp.32f).
- g. **They turned to idolatry.**
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- 1) The epitome of foolishness is the worship of idols! What could be more foolish? A man carves an image from a piece of wood; he knows that he conceived the plan and executed the design; he knows the source of the image. But he prostrates himself before this image, imagining that this lifeless object has the ability to hear pleas and the power to help him! What could be more foolish! "They that make a graven image *are* all of them vanity; and their delectable things shall not profit; and they *are* their own witnesses; they see not, nor know; that they may be ashamed. Who hath formed a god, or molten a graven image *that* is profitable for nothing? Behold, all his fellows shall be ashamed: and the workmen, they *are* of men: let them all be gathered together, let them stand up; *yet* they shall fear, *and* they shall be ashamed together. The smith with the tongs both worketh in the coals, and fashioneth it with hammers, and worketh it with the strength of his arms: yea, he is hungry, and his strength faileth: he drinketh no water, and is faint. The carpenter stretcheth out *his* rule; he marketh it out with a line; he fitteth it with planes, and he marketh it out with the compass, and maketh it after the figure of a man, according to the beauty of a man; that it may remain in the house. He heweth him down cedars, and taketh the cypress and the oak, which he strengtheneth for himself among the trees of the forest: he planteth an ash, and the rain doth nourish *it*. Then shall it be for a man to burn: for he will take thereof, and warm himself; yea, he kindleth *it*, and baketh bread; yea, he maketh a god, and worshippeth *it*; he maketh it a graven image, and falleth down thereto. He burneth part thereof in the fire; with part thereof he eateth flesh; he roasteth roast, and is satisfied: yea, he warmeth *himself*, and saith, Aha, I am warm, I have seen the fire: And the residue thereof he maketh a god, *even* his graven image: he falleth down unto it, and worshippeth *it*, and prayeth unto it, and saith, Deliver me; for thou *art* my god. They have not known nor understood: for he hath shut their eyes, that they cannot see; *and* their hearts, that they cannot understand. And none considereth in his heart, neither *is there* knowledge nor understanding to say, I have burned part of it in the fire; yea, also I have baked bread upon the coals thereof; I have roasted flesh, and eaten *it*: and shall I make the residue thereof an abomination? shall I fall down to the stock of a tree? He feedeth on ashes: a deceived heart hath turned him aside, that he cannot deliver his soul, nor say, *Is there* not a lie in my right hand?" (Isa. 44:9-20).
- 2) The people Paul here describes had rejected God and his word; this led them into all manner of foolish thinking and corrupt living; they *progressed* to the point of idolatry. "Segregate our 'wise men' of today so that they will not be restrained by any outside influence, and they will drift into some form of idolatry. There is but a step between denying God and the worshiping of any sort of a god" (Whiteside, p.32). When men reach a point that they will not submit to the will of God, their denial of his existence soon follows; when they deny the God of heaven, in time they will fill the void with something or someone else.
- 3) These people soon began to fashion idols in the forms of man, birds, animals, and creeping things. "They got God down on two legs, then down on all-fours, and then down on his belly!" (Chester W. Quimby, quoted by Coffman, p.43). The incorruptible God was replaced by inanimate objects made in the image of corruptible beings of earth. What a travesty! What irreverence! What foolishness! Even Israel, who saw many supernatural workings of the Almighty, soon sought to replace him with a golden calf of their own invention (Exodus 32).
4. Verses 24-25: "Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves: Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen."
  - a. Because of the foregoing conditions, God gave them up to do what pleased them. God suffers long with mankind (2 Pet. 3:9; Rom. 2:4); but when an individual, a nation, or a generation descends to a certain level of degradation, God gives up on them.
    - 1) Hosea 4:6: "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me: seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy

- God, I will also forget thy children."
- 2) Hosea 4:17: "Ephraim *is* joined to idols: let him alone."
  - 3) 2 Thessalonians 2:10-12: "And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness."
- b. Paul used the word *wherefore* to introduce the thought of this passage, which shows the link between the conduct of the people and the consequences they now faced. When a person rejects God and enters into a life of sinful rebellion against God's will, there is no flashing light in the sky and no doleful pealing of bells; but God takes note; his heart is grieved that the individual's steps are now pointed toward some awful penalties. "Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, every one according to his ways, saith the Lord GOD. Repent, and turn *yourselves* from all your transgressions; so iniquity shall not be your ruin. Cast away from you all your transgressions, whereby ye have transgressed; and make you a new heart and a new spirit: for why will ye die, O house of Israel? For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord GOD: wherefore turn *yourselves*, and live ye" (Ezek.18:30-32).
  - c. God gave them up to their abandoned way of living. Separated from God, a man will invariably degenerate: morally and spiritually. These people had set their hearts on lasciviousness; God would no longer stand in their way. "When people are determined to reject God for their own way, God allows them unhindered to follow their chosen course so that they may the sooner see the degradation that comes to those who follow their own wisdom...When a whole nation forsakes God for idols, there is not then so much as the conventions of society to hold them in check. It takes a power outside itself to keep anything from going downward, both in physics and in morals" (Whiteside, pp.34f).
  - d. A glimpse into the affairs of ancient civilizations shows how deeply steeped in sensual conduct they became. Having replaced God with idols, they practiced sexual orgies and human sacrifices as acts of devotion to their gods. Homosexuality was rampant in most (perhaps all) of these societies (see vs. 26). This evil practice brought dishonor and shame upon them.
  - e. Their conduct was contrary to God's word; their doctrine and practice are called a lie, and are placed in stark contrast to God's truth. They worshipped and served the creature rather than the Creator. They were more interested in offering homage to images of various beings God had created than in honoring the Maker.
  - f. Despite the efforts of sinful man to banish God from his universe, the glory of the Almighty is undiminished; he is still as loving, as lovable, as powerful, as knowing, and as just as ever—he changes not! And man must meet this unchangeable God in the Judgment of the last day! (Acts 17:30-31; Rom. 14:10-12; 2 Cor. 5:10-11). The word *blessed* means "well-spoken of, praised, honored," and is used only of God.
5. Verses 26-27: "For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompence of their error which was meet."
    - a. Because of the lusts of their own hearts, God gave them up to **uncleanness** (vs. 24); in this passage, God is said to have given them up to **vile affections** (*passions*—ASV). "It states the particular uncleanness to which God abandoned the Gentiles, and details how they dishonored their bodies among themselves" (Lard, p.60).
    - b. This latter state of degraded living began with the rejection of God; the path they followed led through foolish reasoning to idolatry and abandoned living.
    - c. What the Bible here calls "vile affections," our modern society calls being "gay!" Paul wrote in the preceding verse that the Gentiles "changed the truth of God into a lie." Their current counterparts do the same. Paul describes this conduct as **unseemly** (*shameful*).
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- 1) Isaiah 5:20-21: "Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter! Woe unto *them that are* wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight!"
  - 2) Isaiah 30:10: "Which say to the seers, See not; and to the prophets, Prophecy not unto us right things, speak unto us smooth things, prophecy deceits."
  - d. The apostle gives the specifications: women became lesbians, and men became homosexuals. These activities are unnatural; those who practice such are perverters of God's plan for the gratification of the sexual desire; their vile conduct defiled their bodies and corrupted their souls; and their wicked ways contaminated society.
  - e. When men lose their reverence for God, they soon lose their regard for their own bodies; nothing that is sacred, remains sacred to them. Prominent men of Rome and Greece are reported to have practiced sodomy. "When the greatest men of a nation descend to the lowest conceivable form of immorality, it shows how powerless education and philosophy are to save men from the deepest depths of moral pollution" (Whiteside, p.36).
    - 1) Genesis 19:4-8: "But before they lay down, the men of the city, *even* the men of Sodom, compassed the house round, both old and young, all the people from every quarter: And they called unto Lot, and said unto him, Where *are* the men which came in to thee this night? bring them out unto us, that we may know them. And Lot went out at the door unto them, and shut the door after him, And said, I pray you, brethren, do not so wickedly. Behold now, I have two daughters which have not known man; let me, I pray you, bring them out unto you, and do ye to them as *is* good in your eyes: only unto these men do nothing; for therefore came they under the shadow of my roof."
    - 2) Leviticus 18:22-23: "Thou shalt not lie with mankind, as with womankind: it *is* abomination. Neither shalt thou lie with any beast to defile thyself therewith: neither shall any woman stand before a beast to lie down thereto: it *is* confusion."
    - 3) 1 Corinthians 6:9-11: "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God."
  - f. They received the suitable reward for their error. The error meant is the sum total of all their rebellions against God. Paul does not specify what the *reward* was. The degradation into which they plunged themselves carried a penalty with it. It brings a punishment upon many of its practitioners today in the form of AIDS. This dreaded affliction was only discovered by modern medicine in the early 1980s, but that does not prove it developed in our time. It may very well be that it, or some other such disease, was prevalent among these ancient Gentiles. "The result [the penalty] would be the worst form of those diseases which are known to follow such abuse. It would be, besides great pain, premature decay of the body, which again would lead to decay of the mind. A life, therefore, imbittered by disease and pain, with enfeebled powers of intellect, and early death would be the reward of their error" (Lard, p.61).
  - g. Unbridled lust descends deeper and deeper into abandoned conduct. The practice of such people Paul describes in Ephesians 5:12: "For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret." What happens when one has "hit bottom" and there seems to be nothing worse that he can do to satisfy his wild passions?
  - h. A popular false notion of our time claims that aliens are not amenable to the law of Christ, at least not to some features of it. The descriptions inspiration gave here of these Gentiles show that they were sinners, thus were amenable to the Word of God. Paul's point in this section of Romans (1:16—3:23) is to show that all men (Jew and Gentile) need the gospel because they are guilty of sin.
6. Verse 28: "And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient."
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- a. The apostle said here that God gave them up to a **reprobate mind**. They did not wish to retain God in their knowledge. The ASV says, "they refused to have God in their knowledge." Men who want to please themselves will reject God, since he condemns what they want most to do; and men who reject God will sooner or later give themselves over to doing such things as are identified in this passage (1:18-32).
  - b. These people had tested God, and decided not to keep him in their knowledge. It was a willful action. The Greek term means "to prove a thing by trial, to put it to the test" [cf. 1 Cor. 16:3: *approve*; 1 Thess. 2:4: *we have been thought worthy*].
  - c. A reprobate mind is a mind that is given over to the practice of sin. "Here is an apparent play on words. They tested God and did not approve of him, so God gave them over to a mind which would not stand being tested: i.e., he delivered them into the custody of minds which would lead them all the way into degradation, just as a sheriff delivers a prisoner into the custody of a jailer who leads the prisoner into a dungeon" (Warren, *The Book of Romans*, Spiritual Sword Lectures, 1983, p.51). The word *reprobate* (*adokimos*) means "not standing the test; rejected" (Vine, V.3, p.283).
  - d. The result of their being given up to a reprobate mind was that they did those things "which were not convenient" (*not fitting*—ASV). The things they did were unsuited to their status as men. The word is used in Acts 22:22 to describe the condition in which Paul's enemies (wrongly) judged him to be. These Gentiles launched themselves on a way of life that could not be approved by the holy God of heaven. "And they gave him audience unto this word, and *then* lifted up their voices, and said, Away with such a *fellow* from the earth: for it is not fit that he should live" (Acts 22:22).
7. Verses 29-31: "Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, Backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, Without understanding, covenantbreakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful."
- a. In these three verses, the apostle lists twenty-three specific sins of which the people under consideration were guilty. The list is a devastating denunciation of their conduct, and it aptly describes the condition of many in our society today. God's hatred of such conduct still applies. "Being filled with all" is a phrase which apparently is intended to connect with more than just the first sin. That is, those being condemned had developed these sins to a full measure; they were not mere dabblers in sin.
  - b. They were filled with all **unrighteousness**. *Unrighteousness* often means "failure to obey God's word," since *working righteousness* often carries the idea of obedience (Acts 10:34-35). But the word also is used to denote *the way we treat others* (i.e., *justly* or *unjustly*). If the term is used in the broad sense of disobeying God, there would have been no need for Paul to list the twenty-two specific sins that follow. It appears, therefore, that he intends by "unrighteousness" to identify the injustice that these Gentiles had shown their fellowman.
    - 1) Leviticus 19:35-36: "Ye shall do no unrighteousness in judgment, in meteyard, in weight, or in measure. Just balances, just weights, a just ephah, and a just hin, shall ye have: I *am* the LORD your God, which brought you out of the land of Egypt."
    - 2) Amos 2:6-8: "Thus saith the LORD; For three transgressions of Israel, and for four, I will not turn away *the punishment* thereof; because they sold the righteous for silver, and the poor for a pair of shoes; That pant after the dust of the earth on the head of the poor, and turn aside the way of the meek: and a man and his father will go in unto the *same* maid, to profane my holy name: And they lay *themselves* down upon clothes laid to pledge by every altar, and they drink the wine of the condemned *in* the house of their god."
    - 3) Micah 6:8: "He hath showed thee, O man, what *is* good; and what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?"
    - 4) Matthew 23:23: "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier *matters* of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith:
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- these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone."
- c. **Fornication.** This sin is not included in the ASV list. The term is the broad category under which is listed adultery, homosexuality, etc. Thayer (pp.531f) defines this term as "illicit sexual intercourse in general."
    - 1) From *porneuo*: (1) to prostitute one's body to the lust of another; (2) to give one's self to unlawful sexual intercourse; to commit fornication.
    - 2) *Porna* (*as, a*): a woman who sells her body for sexual uses; a prostitute, a harlot.
    - 3) *Pornos* (*oo, o*): a man who prostitutes his body to another's lust for hire, a male prostitute; a man who indulges in unlawful sexual intercourse; a fornicator.
  - d. **Wickedness.** From the Greek term, *poneria*. "This word implies a disposition to do others as much harm as possible. It is more active and energetic than *adikia* [unrighteousness], which means that one would be satisfied withholding from another what is his due. The significance of this term can be seen from the fact that the devil is called *ho poneos*, 'the wicked one'" (Warren, *ibid.*, p.51).
  - e. **Covetousness.** This is from *pleonexia*, and "denotes the disposition to be discontented at another's good fortune, with an inordinate desire for money which usually leads one to use improper means of gaining the same" (*ibid.*). Covetousness is equated with idolatry (Eph. 5:5; Col. 3:5). One who has such a greedy desire for money (or property) that he esteems it greater than God, has made it his god.
  - f. **Maliciousness.** Translated from *kakia*, this trait is an inward vicious attitude which seeks to do damage to another, even taking pleasure in doing so.
    - 1) "Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls" (Jas. 1:21).
    - 2) "Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings" (1 Pet. 2:1).
  - g. **Full of envy.** This is the feeling of pain at the success of another. Envy was involved in the death of Christ (Matt. 27:18; John 11:47-51; 12:19; cf. Prov. 14:30).
  - h. **Murder.** This is the unlawful killing of another human being. When one rejects God, it is only a matter of time until one ceases to value human life. It is a willful and malicious act. "For this is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another. Not as Cain, *who* was of that wicked one, and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous. Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you. We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not *his* brother abideth in death. Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him" (1 John 3:11-15).
  - i. **Debate.** The ASV has *strife*. This is from the Greek *erizo*, and means "to wrangle." The modern English word "debate" does not carry the same significance as it did when the KJV was made. A debate today is an honorable discussion for the purpose of discovering truth. Such a discussion is not in Paul's view in the use of this word.
  - j. **Deceit.** From *doulou*, which means: "a bait for fish (literally); any snare, cunning contrivance for deceiving or catching; any trick or crafty scheme; wile, treachery." (See Whiteside, p.43; Warren, p.52). Deceitfulness is strictly forbidden as sinful, along with all half-truths and scheming. "Behind-the-scenes-maneuvering" among members of the church is odious and sinful.
  - k. **Malignity.** This (*kakoetheias*) is connected to *kakia* which is used in discussing "maliciousness" above. This word describes a malicious disposition, one which places the worst possible construction on the words and actions of others [cf. malign].
  - l. **Whisperers.** This describes the cowardly disposition to attack another secretly. Such a person will not make open accusations, but relies on slanderous statements and insinuations in private, and is designed to besmirch the name of its victim.
  - m. **Backbiters.** This is the disposition to openly announce the charges against another; however, its evil
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work is done when the victim is not present. The whisperer and the backbiter are cut from the same cloth, but the latter is bolder in his attack.

- n. **Haters of God.** These make no pretense of religious faith; they not only deny the existence of God, but assert a hatred for the very concept of God. One who has faith in God cannot hold hatred in his heart against God.
  - o. **Despiteful.** This is an attitude of insolence (see ASV). An insolent person is one who holds others in contempt; he does not mind making offensive remarks designed to express his scorn; he considers himself superior to others. If one has this attitude toward one, he will develop it for others: all he needs is an excuse.
  - p. **Proud.** Such a person is haughty; he is an egotist; his ideas and works are perfect (in his view), while he disdains those of others.
  - q. **Boasters.** This is one who proudly announces his exploits, possessions, and talents, even though they may be insignificant or non-existent. Even if one is well-endowed with natural abilities, has much money, and has accomplished many worthwhile feats, if he wishes to please God, he will talk little about these; and he will understand that in view of God's supremacy and majesty, he has nothing of which to boast!
  - r. **Inventors of evil things.** There are those in every generation who use their talents and time to dream up more and better ways of doing evil. Criminals are always trying to discover the means for a perfect crime. Old ways of committing sin grow stale; new ways are always popular.
  - s. **Disobedient to parents.** This is one of the surest means of breaking down the morals and good order in a society. The church is only one generation away from apostasy at any given time; and a nation is never any further from anarchy than one generation.
  - t. **Without understanding.** Those who have closed their minds to spiritual truths are meant.
    - 1) Proverbs 1:20-33: "Wisdom crieth without; she uttereth her voice in the streets: She crieth in the chief place of concourse, in the openings of the gates: in the city she uttereth her words, *saying*, How long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity? and the scorers delight in their scorning, and fools hate knowledge? Turn you at my reproof: behold, I will pour out my spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you. Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; But ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof: I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh; When your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you. Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me: For that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the LORD: They would none of my counsel: they despised all my reproof. Therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices. For the turning away of the simple shall slay them, and the prosperity of fools shall destroy them. But whoso hearkeneth unto me shall dwell safely, and shall be quiet from fear of evil."
    - 2) Matthew 13:15: "For this people's heart is waxed gross, and *their* ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with *their* eyes and hear with *their* ears, and should understand with *their* heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them."
    - 3) John 3:19-21: "And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God."
  - u. **Covenant breakers.** These are those who will make promises and commitments, but will not make them good. Many will not pay their debts, and many will not keep their word.
  - v. **Without natural affection.** Carthage exposed male babies and kept only the strong; Rome had its baby merchants; and we have legalized abortion.
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- w. **Implacable.** This is not in the ASV. It is translated *truce breakers* in 2 Timothy 3:3. It describes one who will not be at peace with another; irreconcilable; stubborn.
  - x. **Unmerciful.** These are harsh and unfeeling; without compassion; hard-hearted.
8. Verse 32: "Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them."
- a. Though they knew the ordinance of God, they violated his will, and were pleased to see others doing likewise. Despite knowing the penalty for disobedience, they did it anyway. They still knew that those who did such things as Paul named here were doing evil, but that did not deter their sinful conduct. Many today do the same
  - b. What a sorry condition one is in who willfully persists in sin!
    - 1) Hebrews 10:26-31: " For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace? For we know him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge his people. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God."
    - 2) Hebrews 6:4-6: "For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame."
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## ROMANS 2

### A. Romans 2:1-11: The Jew and the Gentile Need the Salvation Provided by the Gospel.

1. The apostle brought up the subject of the gospel which is God's power to save men (in Rom. 1:16-17), stating that its saving properties pertain to both Jew and Gentile.
  - a. In verses 18-32, he showed the condition of men who renounce God's will. The Jews had fallen into idolatry in Old Testament times, and had practiced all of the other sins Paul identified in that passage. Through the punishment of captivity, they had at last learned to avoid idolatry, although the other spiritual crimes were still very prominent among them.
  - b. But the Gentile nations had *perfected* those evil affairs. The Jews had been taught by the Mosaic Law to keep themselves free from the wicked ways of the Gentiles. They had developed a hatred for those pagans, and thought themselves superior to them.
  - c. Having shown that the Gentiles had corrupted themselves and thus brought the condemnation of God upon their own heads, Paul hastens to warn the Jews that they were under God's judgment, also. Hence, in the passage now to be pondered, he establishes the fact that there is no respect of persons with God: he punishes the sins of both the Jew and the Gentile.
2. Verse 1: "Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest: for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest doest the same things."
  - a. It is usually easy to show to one man the errors someone else makes. Without any difficulty we can discern the mistakes of ancient Israel, David, Solomon, and others, whose stories are related in the Bible. We can perceive the sins of our fellowman and brethren. But it is often far more difficult for an individual to see his own sins. Another proofreader can detect the mistakes of a typist more easily than can the typist. The typist sees what he expects to see.
  - b. How could Paul get the unbelieving Jew to see that he also needed salvation? The Jew imagined that he was right with God on account of (1) his birth (which meant he was a descendant of Abraham) and (2) his keeping of the Mosaic Law.
  - c. If he could get the Jews to see the sins of the Gentiles, then it should be a simple matter to show them that they were likewise under condemnation since they were guilty of the same crimes. This was the method Amos used.
    - 1) Amos 1:3: "Thus saith the LORD; For three transgressions of Damascus, and for four, I will not turn away *the punishment* thereof; because they have threshed Gilead with threshing instruments of iron."
    - 2) Amos 1:6: "Thus saith the LORD; For three transgressions of Gaza, and for four, I will not turn away *the punishment* thereof; because they carried away captive the whole captivity, to deliver *them* up to Edom."
    - 3) Amos 1:9: "Thus saith the LORD; For three transgressions of Tyrus, and for four, I will not turn away *the punishment* thereof; because they delivered up the whole captivity to Edom, and remembered not the brotherly covenant."
    - 4) Amos 1:13: "Thus saith the LORD; For three transgressions of the children of Ammon, and for four, I will not turn away *the punishment* thereof; because they have ripped up the women with child of Gilead, that they might enlarge their border."
    - 5) Amos 2:1: "Thus saith the LORD; For three transgressions of Moab, and for four, I will not turn away *the punishment* thereof; because he burned the bones of the king of Edom into lime."
    - 6) Amos 2:4: "Thus saith the LORD; For three transgressions of Judah, and for four, I will not turn away *the punishment* thereof; because they have despised the law of the LORD, and have not kept his commandments, and their lies caused them to err, after the which their fathers have walked."
    - 7) Amos 2:6: "Thus saith the LORD; For three transgressions of Israel, and for four, I will not turn away *the punishment* thereof; because they sold the righteous for silver, and the poor for a pair of

- shoes."
- d. Thus, Paul pointedly affirms that one is inexcusable who condemns another for doing what he himself does. This was precisely what the Jews did when they condemned the Gentiles. *Judge* means to pass judgment against, to condemn.
  - e. Some have distorted Paul's point by asserting that no one has the right to condemn a sinful action on another's part, since he is not sinlessly perfect himself. Matthew 7:1-5 is usually cited as proof. The Lord prohibited harsh, hypocritical, unfair, and unrighteous judgments. The Bible does not forbid all kinds of judging: "Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment" (John 7:24).
    - 1) It does not prohibit judgments in a society's court system.
      - a) Romans 13:1-5: "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same: For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to *execute* wrath upon him that doeth evil. Wherefore *ye* must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake."
      - b) 1 Peter 2:12-17: "Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by *your* good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation. Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme; Or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well. For so is the will of God, that with well doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men: As free, and not using *your* liberty for a cloak of maliciousness, but as the servants of God. Honour all *men*. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the king."
    - 2) It does not forbid those judgments by which the church exercises discipline over its wayward members.
      - a) 1 Corinthians 5:9: "I wrote unto you in an epistle not to company with fornicators."
      - b) Galatians 6:1: "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted."
      - c) 2 Thessalonians 3:6: "Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us."
      - d) Titus 1:9: "Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers."
      - e) James 5:19-20: "Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; *20* Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins."
    - 3) It commands us to make moral judgments regarding false teachers.
      - a) Matthew 7:15-21: "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither *can* a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them. Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven."
      - b) Romans 16:17-18: "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such

- serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple."
- c) Ephesians 5:11: "And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove *them*."
  - d) 1 John 4:1 "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world."
- 4) We are able to make judgments in identifying those who are in sin.
    - a) Matthew 7:6: "Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you."
    - b) 1 Thessalonians 5:21: "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good."
    - c) 2 Timothy 2:2: "And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also."
    - d) 1 John 5:16-17: "If any man see his brother sin a sin *which is* not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death: I do not say that he shall pray for it. All unrighteousness is sin: and there is a sin not unto death."
  - 5) The passage does not forbid judgments in private offenses: "Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear *thee*, *then* take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell *it* unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as a heathen man and a publican" (Matt. 18:15-17).
  - 6) The Bible requires that our judgments be righteous.
    - a) 1 Samuel 1:12-17: "And it came to pass, as she continued praying before the LORD, that Eli marked her mouth. Now Hannah, she spake in her heart; only her lips moved, but her voice was not heard: therefore Eli thought she had been drunken. And Eli said unto her, How long wilt thou be drunken? put away thy wine from thee. And Hannah answered and said, No, my lord, *I am* a woman of a sorrowful spirit: I have drunk neither wine nor strong drink, but have poured out my soul before the LORD. Count not thine handmaid for a daughter of Belial: for out of the abundance of my complaint and grief have I spoken hitherto. Then Eli answered and said, Go in peace: and the God of Israel grant *thee* thy petition that thou hast asked of him."
    - b) 1 Samuel 16:7: "But the LORD said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for *the LORD seeth* not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart."
    - c) Psalms 119:172; "My tongue shall speak of thy word: for all thy commandments *are* righteousness."
    - d) Proverbs 14:12: "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof *are* the ways of death."
    - e) John 7:24: "Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment."
  - 7) Before we can preach the gospel to the lost, correct an erring brother, avoid sinful people, expose a false teacher, or identify the faithful, righteous judgments must be made.
3. Verse 2: "But we are sure that the judgment of God is according to truth against them which commit such things."
    - a. The certainty of the truth Paul here states is emphasized: we know; we are sure. About what are we sure? That it is according to truth that God passes his judgments against those who commit sin. God condemns the guilty; guilt is determined by the truth.
    - b. God's truth (the Bible) will be the standard. The true condition of the individual will be evaluated.
      - 1) John 1:17: "For the law was given by Moses, *but* grace and truth came by Jesus Christ."
      - 2) John 8:32: "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."
      - 3) John 16:12-13: "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit
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- when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, *that* shall he speak: and he will show you things to come."
- 4) John 17:17: "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth."
  - 5) 2 Thessalonians 2:10-12: "And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness."
  - 6) 1 Peter 1:22-25: "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, *see that ye* love one another with a pure heart fervently: Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever. For all flesh *is* as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you."
- c. We will be judged in the last day by God's word.
- 1) John 12:48: "He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day."
  - 2) Revelation 20:12-15: "And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is *the book* of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire."
4. Verse 3: "And thinkest thou this, O man, that judgest them which do such things, and doest the same, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God?"
- a. A Jew who denounced a Gentile for sin, while that Jew was himself guilty of sin, was not going to avoid being condemned by the Lord.
  - b. If God condemned the Gentiles for their guilt, he would likewise condemn the guilty Jews. The Jews no longer have any special advantage over the Gentiles.
5. Verse 4: "Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?"
- a. The Jews had an exalted view of themselves. That they had been highly blessed by God is obvious. God had selected their ancestor, Abraham, to be a progenitor of a great nation (Gen. 12:1-3). He richly blessed Israel. But their fleshly kinship to Abraham did not guarantee that God would ignore their rebellion against his will. No one has ever had the right to commit sin with impunity (Ezek. 18:20; Rom. 3:23; 6:23).
  - b. The Jews thought that their ancestral lines tying them to Abraham guaranteed unconditional acceptance with God.
    - 1) Matthew 3:7-12: "But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance: And think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to *our* father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham. And now also the ax is laid unto the root of the trees: therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and *with* fire: Whose fan *is* in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire."
    - 2) John 8:30-33: "As he spake these words, many believed on him. Then said Jesus to those Jews
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- which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, *then* are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. They answered him, We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free?"
- 3) John 8:39-45: "They answered and said unto him, Abraham is our father. Jesus saith unto them, If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham. But now ye seek to kill me, a man that hath told you the truth, which I have heard of God: this did not Abraham. Ye do the deeds of your father. Then said they to him, We be not born of fornication; we have one Father, *even* God. Jesus said unto them, If God were your Father, ye would love me: for I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of myself, but he sent me. Why do ye not understand my speech? *even* because ye cannot hear my word. Ye are of *your* father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it. And because I tell *you* the truth, ye believe me not."
  - c. John the Baptizer and Jesus plainly declared that the Jews needed to repent (Matt. 3:8; 4:17; cf. Acts 17:30; 2:37-38). Paul makes the same point here: God's goodness is shown to lead them to repent.
    - 1) Matthew 3:8: "Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance."
    - 2) Matthew 4:17: "From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."
    - 3) Acts 2:37: "Now when they heard *this*, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men *and* brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."
    - 4) Acts 17:30: "And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent:"
  - d. The riches of God's goodness are expressed through the forbearance and longsuffering he had shown them. God is not willing that any lost soul should perish, and thus he suffers long with sinful men.
    - 1) Ezekiel 18:31-32: "Cast away from you all your transgressions, whereby ye have transgressed; and make you a new heart and a new spirit: for why will ye die, O house of Israel? For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord GOD: wherefore turn *yourselves*, and live ye."
    - 2) 1 Timothy 2:4-5: "Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. For *there is* one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus."
    - 3) 2 Peter 3:9: "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance."
  - e. Sinful men, in their ignorance, think that because God does not punish their ungodly acts immediately and directly from heaven, that since they got away with sin once, they will always get away with rebellion. Their hearts are "fully set in them to do evil" (Eccl. 8:11-12).
  - f. The goodness of God does not rule out the justice of God. His goodness tempers his justice. If he meted out only justice, without mercy, no accountable person could be saved. But he has shown mercy by being patient.
  - g. Mistaking God's forbearance for permission, the Jews had ignored his goodness. They had failed to see that God's patience was intended to give them time and occasion to repent. Compare: "And I gave her space to repent of her fornication; and she repented not" (Rev. 2:21).
  - h. Modern preachers in the Lord's church are making the same mistake. They argue that since no one can keep God's law perfectly, that God will overlook sin. They make an appeal to 1 John 1:7 as proof. But that passage shows in its context (1:6-10) that the continual cleansing by Christ's blood is conditional: we must walk in the light of God's word; we must be aware that we sin; and we must confess our sins. We do not have a right to live in rebellion to any part of God's law: "For whosoever
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- shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all" (Jas. 2:10).
6. Verses 5-6: "But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God; Who will render to every man according to his deeds."
    - a. God will render to every man according to the individual's deeds. The basis of judgment will not be the works of another individual, but of the person himself. It will not be on the basis of what one was capable of doing or of his good intentions; it is on the basis of what he did.
    - b. The Jews Paul here describes had treasured up for themselves the wrath which God is to pour forth upon the wicked. To treasure up is to store up (Matt. 6:19-21). The punishment indicated has been gained or earned by the evil works of the individual.
    - c. The judgment God will reveal shall be righteous; it will be deserved by the person who receives it. The righteous will get to heaven by more than the "skin of their teeth" (2 Pet. 1:1-11), and the unrighteous will have no logical or scriptural complaint about their punishment (cf. Luke 16:19-31).
  7. Verses 7-8: "To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life: But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath."
    - a. Eternal life will be the reward of those who by patient obedience to God's will seek after glory, honor, and immortality. But indignation and wrath will be the penalty that the disobedient and contentious will receive.
    - b. "Patient continuance in well doing" is placed in opposition to being "contentious and do not obey the truth," and "eternal life" stands opposed to "indignation and wrath."
    - c. This is one of many Bible texts which teaches clearly the essentiality of faithful obedience to the will of God on the part of the child of God in order to enter heaven; and at the same time, it teaches the destiny of anyone who does not render loyal obedience to his word.
    - d. Verse two showed that the Judgment will be done by the standard of truth; verse eight shows that those who do not obey the truth will suffer the indignation and wrath due their works.
    - e. *Contentious (factious)* people are those who do not obey the truth, and thus will be lost. Having a willingness to get along with others is important. Two Christians can get along if both are faithful. It is only after sin enters one or both that brethren are split asunder. False teachers are contentious, but one who earnestly contends for the faith is not so (Jude 3). The blame for division is not placed on those who contend for the truth, but on those who espouse error and sin: "And it came to pass, when Ahab saw Elijah, that Ahab said unto him, *Art thou he that troubleth Israel?* And he answered, *I have not troubled Israel; but thou, and thy father's house, in that ye have forsaken the commandments of the LORD, and thou hast followed Baalim*" (1 Kings 18:17-18).
    - f. *Do not obey* is from the same word used in the following passages:
      - 1) John 3:36: "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him." "He that believeth on the Son hath eternal life; but he that obeyeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him" (ASV).
      - 2) 1 Peter 2:7: "Unto you therefore which believe he is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner." "For you therefore that believe is the preciousness: but for such as disbelieve, The stone which the builders rejected, The same was made the head of the corner" (ASV).
      - 3) Hebrews 3:18: "And to whom sware he that they should not enter into his rest, but to them that believed not?" "And to whom sware he that they should not enter into his rest, but to them that were disobedient?" (ASV).
    - g. *Indignation* and *wrath* depict the punishment God will pronounce upon the wicked.
  8. Verses 9-10: "Tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile; But glory, honour, and peace, to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also
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to the Gentile."

- a. Making the same points as in the preceding two verses, Paul attests that among the Jews and the Gentiles, tribulation and anguish will befall the soul of every evil doer. But to those among the Jews and Gentiles who work good, the reward is glory, honor, and peace. These observations amplify the principle of verse six: God will render to every man in accordance to the works each individual performs.
  - b. *Tribulation and anguish* show that the wicked will have a conscious punishment in the hereafter. Merely ceasing to exist, as materialists claim, would not fit the penalty. As eternal life means much more than simply having an existence, so eternal condemnation means something other than annihilation; there could be no tribulation and anguish for one who has been obliterated. The tribulation and anguish will be the manifestation of God's indignation and wrath.
  - c. Glory, honor, and peace are the blessings to be pronounced upon those who do good. These three words replace glory, honor, immortality, and eternal life which are used in verse seven. *Working good* and *patient continuance in well doing* are also used as parallels. It is not enough to begin to "work good"; one must continue doing so.
    - 1) Matthew 10:22: "And ye shall be hated of all *men* for my name's sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved."
    - 2) Revelation 2:10: "Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast *some* of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."
9. Verse 11: "For there is no respect of persons with God."
- a. This is a key verse in Paul's argumentation of this section (1:18—3:23). The Jews were cognizant of the fact that the sinful Gentiles were lost; but God would not overlook their trespasses:
    - 1) "There is no respect of persons with God."
    - 2) "The soul that sinneth, it shall die..." (Ezek. 18:20).
    - 3) "The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness..." (Rom. 1:18).
  - b. Many of the Jews had a superiority complex in regards to the Gentiles; they thought their fleshly kinship to Abraham obligated God to accept them virtually without conditions. Christians must guard against this disposition. A Christian's unforgiven sin will condemn his soul as surely as does the sin of an alien. We must live daily with the awareness of the need to walk in the light of the gospel, and so retain the continual cleansing the blood of Christ offers (1 John 1:6-10).
  - c. The theories developed by men always clash with some truth of the Bible. Calvinism maintains that God determined the eternal destiny of every soul that would ever live upon earth; this he did, the theory teaches, before time began, and nothing an individual may do or refuse to do can change God's decree. This verse denies and refutes the theory. God would be a respecter of persons if he had unconditionally and arbitrarily assigned some to eternal torment and others to everlasting bliss.
  - d. The very point Paul makes in verses 6-11 is that the eternal destiny of men is decided by the kind of life each one lives.

**B. Romans 2:12-16: The Judgment God Dispenses is Perfect, Just and Impartial.**

1. Verse 12: "For as many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law: and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law."
  - a. "...Where no law is, there is no transgression" (Rom. 4:15). "...Sin is not imputed when there is no law" (Rom. 5:13). "Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law" (1 John 3:4).
  - b. It is clear that the Gentiles were guilty of sin (1:18-32; 2:12). In view of the truth that there can be no sin where no law exists, it is obvious that the Gentiles were under God's law. What was this law?
  - c. The Law of Moses was not given to the Gentile nations; it was intended only for the Israelite people (Deut. 5:1-22; Ex. 20:1-26).

- 1) Deuteronomy 4:18: "The likeness of any thing that creepeth on the ground, the likeness of any fish that *is* in the waters beneath the earth."
  - 2) Deuteronomy 5:3: "The LORD made not this covenant with our fathers, but with us, *even* us, who *are* all of us here alive this day."
  - 3) Deuteronomy 5:15: "And remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and *that* the LORD thy God brought thee out thence through a mighty hand and by a stretched out arm: therefore the LORD thy God commanded thee to keep the sabbath day."
  - 4) Malachi 4:4: "Remember ye the law of Moses my servant, which I commanded unto him in Horeb for all Israel, *with* the statutes and judgments."
- d. Through the centuries, many Gentiles placed themselves under the Mosaic Law, and thus became amenable to its requirements, and were subject to be judged by it. "And Solomon numbered all the strangers that were in the land of Israel, after the numbering wherewith David his father had numbered them; and they were found an hundred and fifty thousand and three thousand and six hundred" (2 Chron. 2:17). But what of the other Gentiles?
  - e. Prior to the coming of the Law of Moses, it was right to honor parents, and was wrong to steal, to kill, to take God's name in vain, to worship idols, and to covet. Those who violated one of these or other such principles became guilty of sin.
    - 1) The people of Edom were condemned because of pride (Obad. 1:3-4). Belshazzar was slain and his kingdom overthrown when he defiled the temple vessels in a drunken feast (Dan. 5:1-6, 22-30).
    - 2) The people of Nineveh became guilty of sin when they violated God's eternal precepts (Jonah 3:4-8).
  - f. These principles of truth were made part of each of God's written revelations: the Law of Moses and the Law of Christ. When the Gentiles, who were not under the Law of Moses, violated the precepts of morality God had laid down from the beginning, they were guilty of sin, and stood under the condemnation of God. When the Jews, to whom were given the Mosaic Law, violated the precepts God incorporated into that Law, they became guilty of sin, and stood under the condemnation of God.
  - g. Therefore, God was just in pronouncing judgment against these sinners. Even the Gentiles knew "the judgment [ordinance] of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them" (Rom. 1:32). And the Jews, when faced with the stark reality of their violations of the Law, could not deny their own guilt or God's righteousness in finding them guilty.
2. Verse 13: "For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified."
    - a. This verse, along with verses fourteen and fifteen, contains a parenthetical statement which supports and amplifies verse twelve.
    - b. Verse twelve connects with verse sixteen, and states that those who commit sin, whether they were Gentiles who did not have the Law, or were Jews who had the Law, would be properly judged; this judgment will occur in the day when God will measure the secrets of men by Jesus Christ.
    - c. Verse thirteen affirms that those who are justified by the Law are those who do what it requires. Few people had copies of God's law in their possession during the Old Testament era; they had it read to them in the public assemblies. If they heard the Law and obeyed its requirements, they were justified; if they did not obey, they committed sin (Jas. 1:21-27; 2:10, 14-26; Acts 10:34-35). The Law condemned the guilty and justified the innocent.
  3. Verse 14: "For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves."
    - a. The good things which the Jews did in following the inspired revelation of the Law of Moses, the acceptable Gentiles did by living in harmony with the principles of rightness, that is, by following those precepts which were obviously right. Cain violated the principle that forbids murder; he knew he was guilty even though God had not given any direct injunction prohibiting murder (as far as we can know).
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- b. Nine of the ten commandments embody principles of truth that are prominent parts of the gospel, and which have always been bound by God on all people. They were bound in the oral code of Patriarchy; they have been bound in the written revelations of the Law and the Gospel. Adam, Noah, Job, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Nineveh, and many others, were amenable to these precepts. When the gospel came, all men everywhere are amenable to it.
- 1) Matthew 28:18-20: "And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, *even* unto the end of the world. Amen."
  - 2) Mark 16:15-16: "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."
  - 3) Acts 17:30-31: "And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent: Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by *that* man whom he hath ordained; *whereof* he hath given assurance unto all *men*, in that he hath raised him from the dead."
  - 4) 1 Timothy 2:4-5: "Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. For *there is* one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus;"
- c. When the Gentiles, who lived prior to the giving of the gospel, followed these moral principles to the best of their ability and light, they were acceptable to God. When they violated these same principles, they were unacceptable to God. The light they followed or failed to follow was by nature (by common sense and wisdom); the Jews did so according to revealed light (the inspired word of God).
- d. The Gentiles who lived in harmony with the light they had, and the Jews who followed the Law of Moses as well as they could, were acceptable to God. The Gentile operated by nature; the Jew operated by revelation; but neither was perfect in his obedience.
- e. The Jew had the written Law; the Gentile had an inner law governing the basic issues of life. By virtue of the greater and more perfect nature of his rule of faith, the Jew bore a heavier responsibility (cf. Jas. 3:1). But his life could be on a higher plane, and his blessings would be on a sure foundation. The Gentile, having only a general light at best (cf. Acts 17:30), could not be as closely judged in particulars as was his Jewish counterpart. But his relationship with God would not be on as high a plane, and his understanding would be deficient and vague.
- f. How did the knowledge of right and wrong enter man? Some think that it is inborn in us as part of our makeup. But more likely, this inner knowledge was instilled in us through teaching.
- 1) In Eden, Adam and Eve had a perfect relationship with God, obtaining guidance directly from the Almighty. Following their sin and expulsion from the Garden, and the rapid increase in the number of human beings, the knowledge of the moral precepts faded with each generation, until finally there was a great apostasy.
  - 2) Noah and his immediate family walked in the light of God's will, but after the flood when men began to multiply again, their knowledge of his will once more faded from memory, and the conditions noted in Romans 1:18-32 developed.
  - 3) However, during these times of departure from God, there was still some degree of knowledge alive in each person. It is hardly likely that any person will reach such a low level of degradation in which there is no glimmer of light, or no awareness of the rightness of some things and the wrongness of other things.
  - 4) Genesis 20:11: "And Abraham said, Because I thought, Surely the fear of God is not in this place; and they will slay me for my wife's sake." It appears that the absence of the "fear of God" was not anticipated by Abraham. It is implied, therefore, that in many places there was some degree of fear for God during that ancient time.
  - 5) That awareness was originally inculcated into the minds of Adam and Noah by teaching, and
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- passed on to succeeding generations by some method of teaching. It cannot be proved that it was imparted at the beginning as a natural part of our physical machinery. But man is distinguished from the beasts by having an eternal spirit and by possessing intellectual and emotional capabilities. Using these powers, man could be taught right precepts, which he could pass on to the following generation, thus keeping some measure of that original information alive. Man's inquisitive nature and power to perceive can lead him to search after God.
- a) Acts 14:17: "Nevertheless he left not himself without witness, in that he did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness."
  - b) Acts 17:22-29: "Then Paul stood in the midst of Mars' hill, and said, *Ye* men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious. For as I passed by, and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you. God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; Neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things; And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation; That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us: For in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring. Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device."
  - c) Romans 1:20: "For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, *even* his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse:"
4. Verse 15: "Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another."
- a. When those Gentiles followed (to some degree) those eternal principles which were made part of the Mosaic Law, it was as if the Law of Moses had been written on their hearts. They kept those precepts, not because they had read the Law, but because they perceived the rightness of doing them.
  - b. The consciences of those described bore witness, either accusing or excusing them. This is the character and work of the conscience: to accuse or excuse. The conscience is a witness of that which the individual does.
  - c. The conscience will urge its owner to act in harmony with what he is convinced is right, then afterward, his thoughts will defend and commend his actions.
  - d. When the mind of a man is instructed in righteousness, he knows what is right and wrong in a given situation; if he acts out of harmony with what he earnestly believes to be right, his conscience afflicts him for his error. If he had acted in accord with what he believes to be right, his conscience would have commended his action.
  - e. The conscience is not the component of our heart that receives instruction; it is the part that condemns or commends our actions. It is the intellectual part of the heart that is taught.
  - f. When the conscience has been ignored and abused for a period of time, its voice is effectively stifled. In that state, it is hardened and unfeeling
    - 1) Matthew 13:15: "For this people's heart is waxed gross, and *their* ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with *their* eyes and hear with *their* ears, and should understand with *their* heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them."
    - 2) Romans 1:21: "Because that, when they knew God, they glorified *him* not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened."
    - 3) Ephesians 4:18: "Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart."
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- 4) 1 Timothy 4:1-3: "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; Forbidding to marry, *and commanding* to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth."
- g. "We are getting at conscience when we think of it as that feeling of pleasure when we do what we think is right, and of pain when we do what we think is wrong. It is that which backs up our moral judgment. Saul of Tarsus always did what he thought was right, and therefore always had a good conscience. But his information was wrong, and therefore his moral judgment was wrong. Our judgment may be wrong because the ideas upon which we base our judgment may be wrong. But no matter how we have been taught, we can expect our conscience to urge us to do what we have judged to be right, unless it has been deadened by long indulgence in things we know to be wrong. It seems to me that a live, tender conscience is infallible. But as to moral judgment, no man can safely say that he is right on everything. Gain all the information you can so that you can form correct judgments, and give heed to the urge of conscience" (Whiteside, p.59).
5. The following references provide a good study of the conscience:
- a. John 8:9: "And they which heard *it*, being convicted by *their own* conscience, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, *even* unto the last: and Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst."
- b. Acts 23:1: "And Paul, earnestly beholding the council, said, Men *and* brethren, I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day."
- c. Acts 24:16: "And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and *toward* men."
- d. 1 Corinthians 8:7,10,12: "Howbeit *there is* not in every man that knowledge: for some with conscience of the idol unto this hour eat *it* as a thing offered unto an idol; and their conscience being weak is defiled....For if any man see thee which hast knowledge sit at meat in the idol's temple, shall not the conscience of him which is weak be emboldened to eat those things which are offered to idols....But when ye sin so against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, ye sin against Christ."
- e. 1 Corinthians 10:25,27-29: "Whatsoever is sold in the shambles, *that* eat, asking no question for conscience sake....If any of them that believe not bid you *to a feast*, and ye be disposed to go; whatsoever is set before you, eat, asking no question for conscience sake. But if any man say unto you, This is offered in sacrifice unto idols, eat not for his sake that showed it, and for conscience sake: for the earth *is* the Lord's, and the fulness thereof: Conscience, I say, not thine own, but of the other: for why is my liberty judged of another *man's* conscience?"
- f. 2 Corinthians 1:12: "For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world, and more abundantly to you-ward."
- g. 2 Corinthians 4:2: "But have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God."
- h. 1 Timothy 1:5: "Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and *of* a good conscience, and *of* faith unfeigned."
- i. 1 Timothy 1:19; 3:9: "Holding faith, and a good conscience; which some having put away concerning faith have made shipwreck....Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience."
- j. 2 Timothy 1:3: "I thank God, whom I serve from *my* forefathers with pure conscience, that without ceasing I have remembrance of thee in my prayers night and day."
- k. Titus 1:15: "Unto the pure all things *are* pure: but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving *is* nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled."
- l. Hebrews 9:4,9: "Which had the golden censer, and the ark of the covenant overlaid round about with
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gold, wherein *was* the golden pot that had manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant....Which *was* a figure for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience."

- m. Hebrews 10:2,18,22: "For then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins....Now where remission of these *is, there is* no more offering for sin....Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water."
  - n. 1 Peter 2:19: "For this *is* thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully."
  - o. 1 Peter 3:16: "Having a good conscience; that, whereas they speak evil of you, as of evildoers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ."
  - p. 1 Peter 3:21: "The like figure whereunto *even* baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ."
6. Verse 16: "In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel."
- a. Connected with verse twelve, the point is made that God will judge every man by the standard that applied to his life; this judgment will be accomplished in the day when God will judge the world by Jesus Christ.
  - b. The reality of the Judgment is amply established by the gospel which Paul preached. The point of this phrase is not that the gospel will be the standard of the judgment; rather, Paul affirms here the fact of the Judgment. Those who live during the Christian Age will be judged in accordance to the truths of the gospel, but those who lived under the Mosaic Law will be measured by it, and those who lived under neither the law nor the gospel will be evaluated by the moral principles discussed in this segment of Romans.
  - c. The fact of the Judgment is a prominent feature of the New Testament:
    - 1) Matthew 7:21-23: "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity. "
    - 2) Acts 17:30-31: "And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent: Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead."
    - 3) Romans 14:10-12: "But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God. "
    - 4) 2 Corinthians 5:10-11: "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad. Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are made manifest unto God; and I trust also are made manifest in your consciences."
    - 5) Matthew 25:31-46. There are many other direct and indirect references to the Judgment of the last day.

C. Romans 2:17-29: Paul Directly Accuses the Jews of Sinful Conduct.

- 1. Verses 17-20: "Behold, thou art called a Jew, and retest in the law, and makest thy boast of God, And knowest his will, and approvest the things that are more excellent, being instructed out of the law; And art confident that thou thyself art a guide of the blind, a light of them which are in darkness, An instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes, which hast the form of knowledge and of the truth in the law."



- a. The Jews had developed an exalted opinion of themselves. The Gentiles, who had just been described as grossly sinful, were no worse off than the sinful Jews. The Jews made great boasts of their special standing with God, but there were major problems in their attitudes and actions. What is given in this passage and in the verses which follow is intended to expose the sins of the wicked among the Jews. If Israel had lived up to God's expectations of them through the centuries, the Gentile nations would have been more greatly influenced to follow the ways of God. Instead, the Jews often contributed to the sinful condition of humanity in general.
- b. **Thou art a Jew.** The name "Jew" evidently developed from the name "Judah." "Now will I praise the Lord: therefore she [Leah] called his name Judah" (Gen. 29:35). Since *Judah* means "praise," and *Jew* is a derivative of *Judah*, the meaning of Judah is carried over into the name *Jew*.
- 1) Its first occurrence in the Bible is in 2 Kings 16:6: "At that time Rezin king of Syria recovered Elath to Syria, and drave the Jews from Elath: and the Syrians came to Elath, and dwelt there unto this day." When the kingdom was split following the death of Solomon, the two southern tribes (Judah and Benjamin) became known as *Judah*, since that tribe was much the larger. The name "Jew" is used several times in Jeremiah (at the time of the Babylonian captivity), and was very commonly used after the exile.
  - 2) "At first one belonging to the kingdom of Judah, as distinguished from northern Israel (2 Kings 16:6). After the captivity, all members of the one new state were 'Jews,' i.e. in God's outward covenant, as contrasted with 'Greeks' or Gentiles (Rom 1:16; 2:9, margin). 'Hebrews' on the other hand expressed their language and nationality, in contrast to 'Hellenists,' i.e. Greek speaking Jews. Again the term 'Israelites' expresses the high theocratic privileges of descent from the patriarch who "as a prince had power with God" (2 Cor 11:22; Rom 9:4)" [Fausset's Bible Dictionary, Electronic Database Copyright (c)1998 by BibleSoft].
  - 3) Jacob prophetically described Judah with these words: "Judah, thou art he whom thy brethren shall praise: thy hand shall be in the neck of thine enemies; thy father's children shall bow down before thee" (Gen. 49:8).
  - 4) To wear the name of *Israel* ("Prince of God"—Gen. 32:28) or *Jew* ("Praised") was an honor; but it carried with it an obligation to live up to those noble names. To wear the name *Christian* is the highest of honors we may have on earth, and with it comes the greatest obligations one can have here.
    - a) Acts 11:26: "And when he had found him, he brought him unto Antioch. And it came to pass, that a whole year they assembled themselves with the church, and taught much people. And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch."
    - b) 1 Peter 4:16: "Yet if *any man suffer* as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf."
- c. **Thou...retest in the law.** They had the advantage of having the Law, but they misunderstood their relationship to it. Their trust was in the fact of their having the Law. But having the Law was not sufficient in itself; they must also obey its precepts. They rested upon the Law, but they did not keep it, as the chapter shows.
- d. **Thou...makest thy boast of God.** They glorified God, at least they thought they were doing so. Only when one is following God's word can he bring glory to the Father. When they offered their devotions to God, but based their worship on their own ideas and commandments, they brought shame to themselves and obtained the displeasure of God. They took great pride in asserting their relationship to the true God; but that relationship existed only if they were obedient.
- 1) Matthew 15:4-9: "For God commanded, saying, Honour thy father and mother: and, He that curseth father or mother, let him die the death. But ye say, Whosoever shall say to *his* father or *his* mother, *It is a gift*, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me; And honour not his father or his mother, *he shall be free*. Thus have ye made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition. *Ye hypocrites*, well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying, This people draweth nigh unto
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- me with their mouth, and honoureth me with *their* lips; but their heart is far from me. But in vain they do worship me, teaching *for* doctrines the commandments of men."
- 2) Mark 7:7-9: "Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching *for* doctrines the commandments of men. For laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men, *as* the washing of pots and cups: and many other such like things ye do. And he said unto them, Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition."
- e. **Thou...knowest his will.** They could know the will of God because God had expressed it in the Law of Moses. The only way anyone can know what God wants is by God's revealed word (1 Cor. 2:9-14). But it is not sufficient merely to know the will of God: one must also be obedient to it (Matt. 7:21-28; Luke 6:46).
- f. **Thou...approvest the things that are more excellent.** They approved of, and accepted, those things that are excellent, at least in theory. The Jews knew enough to know that one must follow the precepts of God's word; and it is probable that most of them thought they were doing so.
- 1) There are many who fully admit the need to be obedient to God today, and think they are doing so. It is impossible for one to obey God if he does not know what God requires; and most do not know! They have been mistaught by false teachers, just as the Jews had been misguided by the errorists of their day.
- 2) To be partially obedient is inadequate; to admit the need to obey, and then ignore submission, is folly; to approve of God's excellent precepts and fail to follow them is to fail altogether.
- a) Matthew 7:21-23: "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity."
- b) 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9: "And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power."
- c) Hebrews 5:8-9: "Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him."
- d) James 2:10: "For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one *point*, he is guilty of all."
- 3) While God overlooked some things in the Old Testament days, he now commands all men everywhere to repent: "And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent" (Acts 17:30).
- g. **Being instructed out of the law.** They were able to discern what was excellent, contrasted to other things, because they had been instructed by the Law. Knowledge of God's word enables us to know right from wrong, to identify those ideas and practices which are dangerous, and to perceive what ought to be done (Heb. 5:12-14). Only a few generations of the Israelites were properly instructed in the Law; those of the first century thought they knew it. Many made boasts of their knowledge, but their lives did not reflect the knowledge they claimed to possess. Cf. Matthew 23.
- h. **Thou...art confident that thou thyself art a guide to the blind, a light of them which are in darkness.** Those who cannot see, need guidance. But one blind man is a poor guide to another without vision.
- 1) Jesus made the same indictment of the Jews: "Woe unto you, ye blind guides..." (Matt. 23:16). On another occasion, he warned: "Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up. Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch" (Matt. 15:13-14).
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- 2) There are countless people in the religious world who deem themselves as being perfectly fitted to guide those in the darkness of sin, but in reality most of these self-appointed teachers need to be taught the truth themselves. Many weak members of the Lord's church also make this error, when they think their knowledge and wisdom of spiritual things is superior to that of godly elders and sound preachers.
  - i. **An instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes.** This carries the previous thought further. [In the place of *instructor*, the ASV has *corrector*]. Their attitude of superiority is indicated in this statement: the Jewish teacher viewed himself as the master, and the student as foolish and a mere baby. A haughty, conceited disposition can develop in us. If one places too much emphasis on his supply of knowledge, *Knowledge* can become the object of his praise. If the attitude is wrong, knowledge will give us a swollen ego. "Now as touching things offered unto idols, we know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth. And if any man think that he knoweth any thing, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know" (1 Cor. 8:1-2).
  - j. **Which hast the form of knowledge and of the truth in the law.** The Jews developed a greater interest in the form than the substance. "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone" (Matt. 23:23).
    - 1) A blind allegiance to the form of a doctrine, without regard to the spiritual significance it has, is useless. Dunking someone in water who has not believed or repented, or who is merely going through the motions, avails nothing. The form is essential, but it must be accompanied by the right spirit. Romans 6:1-18.
    - 2) Paul indicted some for having a mere form of godliness, while denying the power thereof (2 Tim. 3:5).
    - 3) The Law of Moses was designed by the Lord to be a schoolmaster to lead the Jews to Christ (Gal. 3:24). It was like the preface or introduction of a book: it furnished the background to a better understanding of the New Testament. It was given to prepare the people for the coming of the Messiah.
    - 4) But the Jews considered the Law as being full and complete, the final revelation from Heaven. However, God always intended to replace the Old Covenant with the New Covenant.
      - a) Jeremiah 31:31-33: "Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day *that* I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the LORD: But this *shall be* the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people."
      - b) Hebrews 10:9: "Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second."
  2. Verses 21-23: "Thou therefore which teachest another, teachest thou not thyself? thou that preachest a man should not steal, dost thou steal? Thou that sayest a man should not commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery? thou that abhorrest idols, dost thou commit sacrilege? Thou that makest thy boast of the law, through breaking the law dishonourest thou God?"
    - a. The Jews were given definite advantages which the Gentiles did not have. See Romans 3:1-8. But in spite of these privileges, they were not better than the Gentiles—both were under the condemnation of sin (Rom. 3:9-23). The Gentiles had violated the law under which they lived; the Jews violated the law under which they lived. Therefore, they had no right to an attitude of superiority toward the Gentiles (Rom. 2:1-2).
    - b. Having established the foregoing, Paul made the strong point of verse 21. Those who try to teach others must first teach themselves. One is a hypocrite who teaches that it is wrong to steal, while
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- being a thief himself.
- c. The thought of verse 21 is continued in verse 22: one who speaks against adultery, must abstain from adultery, or else is acting hypocritically. To speak against idols, requires that one keep himself from idols, if he wants to be consistent. In place of *sacrilege* in the KJV, the ASV has *rob temples*.
    - 1) To rob temples here may have reference to: (1) hating idols, but entering into a heathen temple for the purpose of stealing one of the images; or (2) condemning idolatry, but being guilty of taking what rightly belongs to God, and using it for selfish purposes. Idolatry robs God of the praise and service which belong to him; and using what is God's for our own selfish purposes is likewise to rob him of his due.
    - 2) Ezekiel 22:26 gives a good example of sacrilege: "Her priests have violated my law, and have profaned mine holy things: they have put no difference between the holy and profane, neither have they showed difference between the unclean and the clean, and have hid their eyes from my sabbaths, and I am profaned among them."
  - d. In verse 23, the apostle accuses the Jews of having dishonored God by violating the Law of God. They made their boast of the Law of Moses, but they did not glorify God when they rejected the parts of the Law they found unpleasant. "Wherefore hast thou **despised the commandment of the LORD**, to do evil in his sight? thou hast killed Uriah the Hittite with the sword, and hast taken his wife *to be thy wife*, and hast slain him with the sword of the children of Ammon. Now therefore the sword shall never depart from thine house; because **thou hast despised me**, and hast taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite *to be thy wife*" (2 Sam. 10:9-10).
3. Verse 24: "For the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you, as it is written."
- a. The Jews made great assertions before the world regarding their relationship to the true God. Their claims would include boasts about what God had done for them in their deliverance from Egypt and other cases in which he intervened in their behalf.
  - b. But when they were punished for their sins, the Gentiles would be moved to blaspheme God's name. When Babylon or some other enemy had success in battle against Israel, they could naturally think that the God of Israel was too weak to help his people. "Wherefore I poured my fury upon them for the blood that they had shed upon the land, and for their idols *wherewith* they had polluted it: And I scattered them among the heathen, and they were dispersed through the countries: according to their way and according to their doings I judged them. And when they entered unto the heathen, whither they went, they profaned my holy name, when they said to them, These *are* the people of the LORD, and are gone forth out of his land" (Ezek. 36:18-20).
  - c. David's sins brought the reproach of the Gentiles upon God's name. "Howbeit, because by this deed thou hast given great occasion to the enemies of the LORD to blaspheme, the child also *that is* born unto thee shall surely die" (2 Sam. 12:14).
  - d. It is possible for God's name to be blasphemed today due to sinful Christians. "The greatest hindrance to the spread of the gospel today is the conduct of many of its professed believers. Immorality, worldly mindedness, dishonest dealings, and divisions hinder Christianity. Opposition from without is not what hurts the most" (Whiteside, p.62).
    - 1) Matthew 5:16: "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."
    - 2) Titus 2:1-5: "But speak thou the things which become sound doctrine: That the aged men be sober, grave, temperate, sound in faith, in charity, in patience. The aged women likewise, that *they be* in behaviour as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things; That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, *To be* discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed."
    - 3) John 17:20-21: "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; That they all may be one; as thou, Father, *art* in me, and I in thee, that they
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- also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me."
- e. The reference to that which is written is the statement in Isaiah 52:5: "Now therefore, what have I here, saith the LORD, that my people is taken away for nought? they that rule over them make them to howl, saith the LORD; and my name continually every day is blasphemed."
4. Verse 25: "For circumcision verily profiteth, if thou keep the law: but if thou be a breaker of the law, thy circumcision is made uncircumcision."
    - a. Circumcision had been introduced to Abraham as a sign of the covenant which God established between himself and that great patriarch, and which was extended to include his descendants. "He that is born in thy house, and he that is bought with thy money, must needs be circumcised: and my covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant. And the uncircumcised man child whose flesh of his foreskin is not circumcised, that soul shall be cut off from his people; he hath broken my covenant" (Gen. 17:1-2). An uncircumcised Israelite male was to be cut off from the nation, an action which meant the forfeiture of the rights and blessings that pertained to the Old Covenant.
    - b. There were, therefore, great advantages to circumcision, for it signified to the Jew that he was in covenant relationship with God. However, he retained those blessings only if he kept the law—was obedient to its requirements.
    - c. When a Jew rebelled against the Law, his circumcision became uncircumcision. That is, he lost those privileges indicated by circumcision; his disobedience deprived him of these advantages.
      - 1) Deuteronomy 11:26-28: "Behold, I set before you this day a blessing and a curse; A blessing, if ye obey the commandments of the LORD your God, which I command you this day: And a curse, if ye will not obey the commandments of the LORD your God, but turn aside out of the way which I command you this day, to go after other gods, which ye have not known."
      - 2) Deuteronomy 30:11-20: "For this commandment which I command thee this day, it *is* not hidden from thee, neither *is* it far off. It *is* not in heaven, that thou shouldest say, Who shall go up for us to heaven, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it? Neither *is* it beyond the sea, that thou shouldest say, Who shall go over the sea for us, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it? But the word *is* very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it. See, I have set before thee this day life and good, and death and evil; In that I command thee this day to love the LORD thy God, to walk in his ways, and to keep his commandments and his statutes and his judgments, that thou mayest live and multiply: and the LORD thy God shall bless thee in the land whither thou goest to possess it. But if thine heart turn away, so that thou wilt not hear, but shalt be drawn away, and worship other gods, and serve them; I denounce unto you this day, that ye shall surely perish, *and that* ye shall not prolong *your* days upon the land, whither thou passest over Jordan to go to possess it. I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, *that* I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live: That thou mayest love the LORD thy God, *and* that thou mayest obey his voice, and that thou mayest cleave unto him: for he *is* thy life, and the length of thy days: that thou mayest dwell in the land which the LORD sware unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give them."
      - 3) Romans 11:18-22: "Boast not against the branches. But if thou boast, thou bearest not the root, but the root thee. Thou wilt say then, The branches were broken off, that I might be grafted in. Well; because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith. Be not highminded, but fear: For if God spared not the natural branches, *take heed* lest he also spare not thee. Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in *his* goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off."
    - d. As circumcision did not guarantee a Jew continual acceptance with God, so baptism does not guarantee heaven to a Christian. But many Christians operate as if they obtain a certain deed to heaven by their baptism.
      - 1) Hebrews 10:35-39: "Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompense of

- reward. For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise. For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry. Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul."
- 2) Hebrews 12:25: "See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. For if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven."
5. Verses 26-27: "Therefore if the uncircumcision keep the righteousness of the law, shall not his uncircumcision be counted for circumcision? And shall not uncircumcision which is by nature, if it fulfil the law, judge thee, who by the letter and circumcision dost transgress the law?"
- Returning to the thought expressed in verses 14-15, Paul says that if the uncircumcised Gentiles obey the moral principles recorded in the Mosaic Law, their uncircumcised state will be considered to be equal to the circumcision of faithful Jews.
  - God intended for the Jews to follow the righteous precepts of the Law, as well as the outward requirements specified in the Law; the outward ceremonies were not matters that applied to Gentiles, but the moral precepts were incumbent on them because they are right within themselves and part of God's moral government (see 2:12-16).
  - If the uncircumcised Gentiles followed the moral principles given in the Law, their condition was better than that of the circumcised Jew who rebelled against the Law. A pure-hearted Gentile was of greater value before God than a corrupted Jew.
  - Uncircumcision was a natural condition; circumcision was not natural. The former is a reference to the Gentiles; the latter an allusion to the Jews. The righteous conduct of a Gentile person would judge (condemn) the disobedient conduct of a Jew. The former was righteous even though uncircumcised; the latter was unrighteous even though he was circumcised and claimed to keep the letter of the Law.
  - Jesus brought up parallel cases in Matthew 12, by saying that the men of Nineveh would be in the Judgment with the wicked Jews, and would condemn them; those ancient Gentiles repented of their sins; the Jewish sinners did not repent (12:41). The queen of Sheba would likewise be in the Judgment, and would also condemn the Jewish sinners; she journeyed to learn from Solomon, but the sinful Jews would not learn from God's Son (12:42).
6. Verses 28-29: "For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God."
- Jew*, as noted under verse 17, has reference to one who is "praiseworthy" (from God's viewpoint). Emphasizing this name, Paul affirms that one is a Jew, not from outward, physical circumstances, but rather from inward, spiritual considerations.
  - The circumcision that matters is that which pertains to the heart (the spirit), and not the operation that relates to the flesh.
  - The apostle used letter and spirit in 2 Corinthians 3 in reference to the Old and New Laws. The Old Law stressed the keeping of outward forms; the New seeks to develop inward traits that tune the soul to heavenly values. Under Christ, every acceptable Christian is obedient from the heart to every requirement; he will follow the items required and do so from the heart.
    - Matthew 23:23: "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier *matters* of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone."
    - Romans 6:16-18: "Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness."
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- 3) Galatians 5:6: "For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love."
  - d. The fleshly Jew was more interested in those outward forms than with the inward qualities that pertain to the soul, and was more concerned with gaining the praise of men than the praise of God.
    - 1) John 12:42-43: "Nevertheless among the chief rulers also many believed on him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess *him*, lest they should be put out of the synagogue: For they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God."
    - 2) Colossians 2:11-12: "In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ: Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead."
    - 3) Philippians 3:3: "For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh."
    - 4) Galatians 6:16: "And as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God."
    - 5) Matthew 19:28: "And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel."
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## ROMANS 3

### A. Romans 3:1-8: Some Advantages the Jews Had Over the Gentiles.

1. Verse 1: "What advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit is there of circumcision?"
  - a. While the Law of Moses was in effect, there were certain advantages which pertained to the Jews. To have open and easy access to the revealed word of God could certainly be considered a wonderful benefit. They had the knowledge that the living God was their God, which surely was a source of great comfort and hope.
  - b. Having shown that both Jew and Gentile are under the condemnation of sin, Paul raised the questions of this verse to emphasize the advantages possessed by the Jews.
  - c. Spiritually, both were afflicted by sin, but the Jew was born with advantages not vouchsafed to the Gentiles. But under the dispensation of Christ, all are on an equal standing. There are no inherent advantages due to race or economic standing.
    - 1) Romans 1:16-17: "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith."
    - 2) Romans 3:23: "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God."
    - 3) Galatians 3:28-29: "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye *be* Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."
2. Verse 2: "Much every way: chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God."
  - a. The great apostle gives an answer to the questions of verse one. He said the Jews had definite advantages. They had been protected and blessed to become a numerous nation; God delivered them from Egyptian bondage; he fed them in the wilderness; he gave them a bountiful land; but the chief advantage was in having been given possession of the word of God.
  - b. Knowing God's word, carries with it a heavy duty and a wonderful blessing.
    - 1) Psalms 119:105: "Thy word *is* a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path."
    - 2) Ezekiel 3:17-19: "Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel: therefore hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me. When I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life; the same wicked *man* shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand. Yet if thou warn the wicked, and he turn not from his wickedness, nor from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul."
  - c. *Oracles of God* included the revelation of the Old Testament. Think of what you would be missing, if you had lived during the Old Testament times as a Gentile. You would not have an accurate account of the creation; you would not know of God's dealings with the ancients, the great prophecies of Christ and his kingdom, or the treasures of Psalms and Proverbs. Instead, you would be exposed to all kinds of sin and error and superstition; your view of life would be extremely limited and confused.
    - 1) Vine gives the following on oracle: "Logion NT:3051, a diminutive of logos, 'a word, narrative, statement,' denotes 'a divine response or utterance, an oracle'; it is used of (a) the contents of the Mosaic Law, Acts 7:38; (b) all the written utterances of God through OT writers, Rom 3:2; (c) the substance of Christian doctrine, Heb 5:12; (d) the utterances of God through Christian teachers, 1 Peter 4:11" [Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words, Copyright (c)1985, Thomas Nelson Publishers].
    - 2) Acts 7:38: "This is he, that was in the church in the wilderness with the angel which spake to him in the mount Sina, and *with* our fathers: who received the lively oracles to give unto us."
    - 3) Hebrews 5:12: "For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which *be* the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of

- milk, and not of strong meat."
- 4) 1 Peter 4:11: "If any man speak, *let him speak* as the oracles of God; if any man minister, *let him do it* as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen."
- d. The knowledgeable and faithful Jew was not in such a state. However, the majority of the Jews were described by Stephen as being rebellious (Acts 7:51-53; cf. Matt. 23:37; 13:15). They maintained a faithful copy of God's revelation down through the ages, but they had failed miserably to allow that word to guide them into the life of holiness and purity God required.
3. Verse 3: "For what if some did not believe? shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect?"
- a. The fact that some (even the majority) of Jews failed to be faithful did not argue against the faithfulness of God. The ASV gives *faithfulness* in place of the KJV *faith*.
- b. God had promised to bless the world through the seed of Abraham (Gen. 12:1-3). In establishing the nation of Israel, he fulfilled part of that great plan. But the Israelites had proved to be unfaithful children, going astray time and again. The sinful conduct of many of them did not cause God to abandon his promises.
- c. The covenant God made with Old Testament people was conditional; if man failed to keep his end of the agreement, God was released from his obligations in the matter. However, in the promise to Abraham, which included God's plan for all time and all people, the faithfulness or unfaithfulness of Israel would not nullify God's plan.
- d. When Christ, the seed of Abraham, came to earth, Israel was in apostasy; they were splintered into warring factions, under the iron fist of pagan Rome, and generally corrupt from the high priest down to the lowest level of society. Only a remnant of the whole of Israel accepted Christ.
- 1) John 1:11-12: "He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, *even* to them that believe on his name."
- 2) John 3:18-21: "He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God."
- 3) Galatians 4:4-5: "But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons."
- e. Despite the fact that only a remnant of the Jews accepted Jesus of Nazareth as the Messiah, God was still able to fulfill his promises.
4. Verse 4: "God forbid: yea, let God be true, but every man a liar; as it is written, That thou mightest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou art judged."
- a. Paul's point in the preceding verse was in the form of a question, having an obvious answer, but the apostle supplies a strong reply in this verse: "God forbid!" The question is so obnoxious that he tenders this powerful response.
- b. God is so holy and righteous, and the apostle revered and loved him so much, that the idea was repugnant to Paul that God might be thwarted in his purposes by sinful man. Man often proves himself to be faithless, but God always lives up to his commitments.
- c. God must be regarded as always true and faithful to his purposes, even though all men must be accounted liars. The Jews did not live up to their commitments under the Law, but God fully performed his. Even though the Jewish nation apostatized, God by his wisdom and power, was still able to fulfill his purposes. God will ultimately have the final word despite the rebellion of the vast majority of mankind. Israel's unfaithfulness was tantamount to lying; they had committed themselves to following God, but many did not live up to it.
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- d. The scripture cited is Psalm 51:4. "This is quoted to show that what Paul had just deduced from the character of God accords with the oracles of God, which the Jews so jealously guarded. Nathan had convicted David of his gross sin, and foretold his punishment. (2 Sam. 12:1-15.) In this Psalm (51:1-4) David sees that his sin was so heinous and directly against God that the sentence of condemnation pronounced against him was right, and he confessed that God might be seen and declared to be righteous, and in this sense be justified by those who heard the sentence upon him....As used by Paul, it is to be held as a fixed, unwavering principle that God is right and true, whatever consequences it may involve, or whatever man may prove to be a liar" (Lipscomb, pp.65f).
- e. The second part of the quotation speaks of God being judged by humanity. "God is judged when he is arraigned in human thought, on his dealings with men. When thus arraigned, he must always come off victor. It is not enough that he simply gain his cause; he must gain it triumphantly....He must be shown to be absolutely innocent of every charge....He is arraigned in the very charge just considered; and in countless ways we, as it were, arraign him every day. We arraign him for creating us capable of sin; for exposing us to temptation; for subjecting us to death for another's sin; for appointing us to death for another's sin; for appointing us to a life of hardship; for requiring us to be holy in the midst of great trials; for not revealing to us more of the future on all these counts, and many more, we arraign him....But we arraign him in our perplexities, in our discontents in a word, in the very modes in which we think of him. Not to be wholly reconciled to God is to arraign him" (Lard, p.103).
5. Verse 5: "But if our unrighteousness commend the righteousness of God, what shall we say? Is God unrighteous who taketh vengeance? (I speak as a man)."
- a. Paul raises another point regarding the righteousness of God. If unrighteous men, upon examining the nature of God, judge him to be righteous because of the mercy he shows sinful men (as in the case of David), they might get the mistaken idea that God would be unrighteous to punish other sinful men.
- b. Paul had already shown in the epistle that God is longsuffering and good toward evil men (cf. 2:4). He does not immediately destroy men when they fall into sin, although he has every right to do so. "Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil. Though a sinner do evil an hundred times, and his *days* be prolonged, yet surely I know that it shall be well with them that fear God, which fear before him" (Eccl. 8:11-12).
- c. When he forgave David and others, that did not obligate him to forego punishment on the rest. David repented; many others also repent; but the great majority continue to live in rebellion. Therefore, let not man think that God will overlook sin and allow the guilty to avoid judgment.
- d. He raises the issue of this verse from the viewpoint of a man. They saw the forbearance and mercy of God; the sinful conduct of man elicited the mercy of God; in this manner, the unrighteousness of man commended the righteousness of God. The Greek word (for *commend*) is also used in Romans 5:8, where it carries the idea of "declaring."
- 1) Romans 16:1: "I commend unto you Phebe our sister, which is a servant of the church which is at Cenchrea."
  - 2) 2 Corinthians 4:2: "But have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God."
  - 3) 2 Corinthians 6:4: "But in all *things* approving ourselves as the ministers of God, in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses."
  - 4) 2 Corinthians 10:18: "For not he that commendeth himself is approved, but whom the Lord commendeth."
  - 5) 2 Corinthians 12:11: "I am become a fool in glorying; ye have compelled me: for I ought to have been commended of you: for in nothing am I behind the very chiefest apostles, though I be nothing."
- e. Paul said, "I speak as a man." He means by this that he is offering a quibble that the unbelieving Jews would offer. In essence, the quibble is this: "Since our sins bring forth the forgiving righteousness of
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- God, therefore God would be unrighteous to punish any sinner." The apostle's response is immediate and strong. Compare: "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? 2 God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?" (Rom. 6:1-2).
6. Verse 6: "God forbid: for then how shall God judge the world?"
    - a. This is Paul's inspired answer to the question of the previous verse. If our sinful conduct elicits God's mercy and forgiveness in every case, then how shall God judge the world as he has promised to do?
    - b. The Jews thought that God would overlook their wicked ways, forgiving them despite their continual departures from the way of holiness; but if he did so for the Jews, his impartiality (Rom. 2:11) would require that he do the same for the Gentiles.
    - c. If this view was right, God would have no reason to have the final Judgment. But he will have the final Judgment; therefore, the quibble is wrong. "But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. For it is written, *As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God*" (Rom. 14:10-12).
    - d. The Israelites were warned by Moses that the way of life and the way of death were both opened to them (Deut. 30:15-20); which they would follow was their choice. If they chose evil, they would be punished; if they chose good, life would be given. God is as much bound to his promises to punish, as he is to his vows to bless. The reward depends on the choice made by each individual:
      - 1) Matthew 11:28-30: "Come unto me, all *ye* that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke *is* easy, and my burden is light."
      - 2) Revelation 22:17: "And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."
  7. Verse 7: "For if the truth of God hath more abounded through my lie unto his glory; why yet am I also judged as a sinner?"
    - a. The unbelieving Jews had decided that the gospel Paul preached was a lie. In view of the preceding quibble (vs. 5) which depicted the idea the Jews had, how could the Jews denounce Paul as a sinner when his message (which they said was a lie) brought glory to God?
    - b. Their own reasoning condemned this faulty conclusion: "If you justify your sins on the grounds that your sins brought out and displayed God's righteousness, why condemn me for what you consider my great sin?" (Whiteside, p.69).
    - c. Paul is not directing these remarks toward the saints in Rome, for they did not consider his message to be a lie, and did not think that the apostle was a great sinner. Rather, those to whom these comments are addressed are unbelieving Jews. Paul is not discussing in this passage (3:1-8) any abuses on the part of the Roman Christians; he addresses a mistaken idea entertained in the Jewish mind, that because they were the chosen people, God would not hold them accountable for sin. He shows that God is ever true to his promises, and that he will indeed judge the world, a world comprised of sinful Jews and Gentiles.
  8. Verse 8: "And not rather, (as we be slanderously reported, and as some affirm that we say,) Let us do evil, that good may come? whose damnation is just."
    - a. Lard gave the following translation of the original text: "And should we not, as we are hurtfully reported, and as some allege we say, do evil that good may come, whose condemnation is just?" (p.106).
    - b. Paul preached the forgiveness of sins by the gospel of Christ (Rom. 1:16-17). He showed that the Law of Moses could not provide this benefit (Acts 13:38-39). He affirmed that any sin, regardless of how heinous it was, could be pardoned (1 Cor. 6:9-11).
    - c. Paul's enemies, the Judaizing teachers, asserted that Paul encouraged sinful living in order to obtain a greater portion of God's grace. The apostle labels this as a slanderous report, a false charge. He never taught such a foul doctrine. No one reading his epistles could get such an idea from what he
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wrote. He taught the opposite, that we must avoid all sin (Gal. 5:19ff; 1 Cor. 6:9-11; Col. 3:1ff).

- d. Actually, Paul's Jewish enemies could be accused of promoting this false doctrine. See verse five. They thought God would be unjust to punish sin because man's sins called forth God's mercy, and thus brought glory to God. It was they who fostered this false conclusion.
- e. One who commits sin has earned the penalty God imposes on rebellion. The punishment is just; it is deserved.
  - 1) Ezekiel 18:20: "The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him."
  - 2) Romans 6:23: "For the wages of sin *is* death; but the gift of God *is* eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."
  - 3) 2 Thessalonians 1:6-9: "Seeing *it is* a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you; And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power."

#### B. Romans 3:9-18: Both Jew and Gentile are Guilty of Sin.

1. Verse 9: "What then? are we better than they? No, in no wise: for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin."
    - a. **We** and **they** focus on the Jew and Gentile. Paul was a Jew; so were many of the brethren in Rome; but the vast majority of Jews remained unconverted. The rest were Gentiles, of whom a goodly number had obeyed the gospel, but the far greater portion of Gentiles was still in unbelief.
    - b. That *we* and *they* refer to Jews and Gentiles is established by a clear declaration: "We have before proved both Jews and Gentiles" are both guilty of sin. This is the great point of this section of Romans (1:18-3:23).
    - c. Paul had already charged that both sections of humanity were under the condemnation of sin. This he had done in chapter one (for the Gentiles) and chapter two (for the Jews). In this chapter he joins both groups, and declares in extremely plain words that "all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (vs. 23).
    - d. The phrase *we have before proved* (KJV) is rendered as *we before laid to the charge* in the ASV. The word "*aitiaomi*" does not primarily mean "to prove," but "to charge." However, Paul would not charge what he could not prove. For him, as an inspired man, to charge them with guilt, was tantamount to proving it.
    - e. The questions of the verse are spoken from the Jewish standpoint. Are we Jews better than the Gentiles? In no wise are we better than they. Why? Because both are under the condemnation of sin.
    - f. Despite the advantages the Jews received by virtue of being the chosen people during Old Testament times, they were still violators of God's will. "Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law" (1 John 3:4). The only means of being freed from this condemnation was through obedience to the gospel, the same means by which the Gentiles could also receive pardon.
  2. Verse 10: "As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one."
    - a. Paul now cites several quotations from the Old Testament to establish the guilt of the Jews; and what is said in the scriptures he quotes, describes the condition of the Gentiles as well.
    - b. Paul did not believe as do those of our day who assert that the Bible is not to be understood literally. A "new hermeneutic" is not what is needed, but rather a willingness to study God's word with a receptive mind, and a readiness to do what God so clearly taught in his inspired revelation, the Bible.
    - c. The first scripture cited is from Psalm 14:1-3. There is none righteous. Any one who believed the Bible, would accept this as undeniable truth. God, in looking down upon mankind from heaven, sees that the entire human family has corrupted itself (individually).
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- d. This did not mean that there was not a single individual who was trying to walk in the light of God's will. But even David, who was described as a man after God's own heart, was tainted by sin (2 Sam. 11-12). This was true of the most spiritually-minded men and women of the ages. Even Cornelius, who received some of the grandest plaudits ever given to any man, nevertheless stood in need of redemption (Acts 10:2, 22; 11:13-14). Joseph, the husband of Mary, is described as a "just man" (Matt. 1:19), but he was not without sin.
  - e. It will be remembered that the Mosaic Law did not have the capability of removing the guilt of sin (Acts 13:38-39; Heb. 10:1-4). Paul is illustrating in this passage the need that all accountable people have for the gospel of Christ (Rom. 1:16-17).
  - f. If lost humanity could have been saved by the Law of Moses, or by living a good moral life, or by some religious system invented by man, or by any other means, the death of Christ would not have been necessary. But there was no other way: "I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness *come* by the law, then Christ is dead in vain" (Gal. 2:21; cf. Rom. 5:1-9; Phil. 2:1-12).
3. Verse 11: "There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God."
- a. The apostle is emphasizing the sinful condition into which man had plunged himself; he is not teaching what Calvinism asserts—total hereditary depravity. This will become very clear in the rest of the passage.
  - b. No one understood the will of God with absolute perfection, and none was as totally devoted to seeking God's will as was Jesus. This is still true today, even of those whom we consider to be the "best" Christians.
  - c. There were many then, even as there are many now, who had as full an understanding as they could be expected to possess; and there were many who sought after God with the fullness of their being. But in the aggregate, this did not characterize our race. Only a few understood a significant portion of God's word; and only a handful sought after God.
  - d. "To those who were supposed to be especially skilled in the law Jesus said: 'Woe unto you lawyers! for ye took away the key of knowledge.' Even the key to a correct understanding of their Scriptures had been hidden in the rubbish of their notions or traditions. Let those who think the Jews had such an accurate understanding of kingdom matters consider what Jesus and his inspired apostle said about them" (Whiteside, p.71).
  - e. How many today, out of the five billion precious souls inhabiting our planet, have an accurate understanding of the nature of God, the deity of Christ, the authority of the Bible, the plan of salvation, scriptural worship, the Christian life, and the Bible doctrine of final things? *Ignorance* (of God's will) probably describes mankind better than any other expression.
  - f. God has always been accessible to his offspring. "That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us" (Acts 17:27). How many of the Athenians sought after God? How many diligently search for God in our day? Accessibility of God's truth is a distinct advantage we have today, but that has not changed the general truth of this verse.
  - g. Despite having the full revelation of God's eternal plan, despite having many capable proclaimers and teachers of that message, despite the certainty of its truths—few seek to learn and do what God requires. "Instead of seeking to be justified in the sight of God, they seek to justify themselves in the sight of men" (Whiteside, p.71). This is common throughout the generations.
    - 1) Hosea 6:3-4: "Then shall we know, *if* we follow on to know the LORD: his going forth is prepared as the morning; and he shall come unto us as the rain, as the latter *and* former rain unto the earth. O Ephraim, what shall I do unto thee? O Judah, what shall I do unto thee? for your goodness *is* as a morning cloud, and as the early dew it goeth away."
    - 2) Matthew 7:21-23: "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and
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- in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity."
- 3) Luke 16:15: "And he said unto them, Ye are they which justify yourselves before men; but God knoweth your hearts: for that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God."
  - 4) John 5:44: "How can ye believe, which receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour that *cometh* from God only?"
  - 5) John 12:42-43: "Nevertheless among the chief rulers also many believed on him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess *him*, lest they should be put out of the synagogue: For they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God."
  - 6) 1 Peter 3:20-21: "Which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water. The like figure whereunto *even* baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ."
4. Verse 12: "They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one."
- a. "They are all gone aside, they are all together become filthy: there is none that doeth good, no, not one" (Psa. 14:3). Notice that they are described as having "gone out" and had "become unprofitable." They were not born into that condition!
  - b. Calvinistic doctrine asserts that man is born into this world guilty of sin, wholly depraved, and has not one particle of good within him. If this is true, the individual obtained that dreaded state from either God or his parents. Ezekiel 18:20 plainly states that the son does not bear the sin of his father; that sin is not transferable from one person to another any more than one man's righteousness avails the soul of another. Rather, the soul that commits sin shall die. Since we cannot acquire the guilt of our parents, did we get it from God? Such a thought is abominable!
  - c. From whence came our guilt? From our own transgression of God's word (1 John 3:4). Jesus taught that little children are pure (Matt. 18:3; 19:14; cf. Gen. 8:21; Ezek. 28:15). We reach a point in our lives when we transgress God's will, thus do we become unprofitable, and go out of the way God wants us to travel (Prov. 22:6; Rom. 3:23).
    - 1) 1 John 3:4: "Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law."
    - 2) Genesis 8:21: "And the LORD smelled a sweet savour; and the LORD said in his heart, I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake; for the imagination of man's heart *is* evil from his youth; neither will I again smite any more every thing living, as I have done."
    - 3) Proverbs 22:6: "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it."
    - 4) Ezekiel 28:15: "Thou *wast* perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee."
    - 5) Matthew 18:3: "And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven."
    - 6) Matthew 19:14: "But Jesus said, Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven."
    - 7) Romans 3:23: "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God."
5. Verses 13-15: "Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips: Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness: Their feet are swift to shed blood."
- a. Several figures of speech are here used to describe the specific violations of God's will on the part of man.
  - b. **Their throat is an open sepulchre.** This is taken from Psalm 5:9: "For there is no faithfulness in



their mouth; their inward part is very wickedness; their throat is an open sepulchre; they flatter with their tongue." The original statement describes wrongful speech, and since the throat is the source of our articulating apparatus, it is the throat which is assigned the guilt of the action. This is figurative; it is the heart [mind, soul, spirit] of man that is the real source of our words and actions: "But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man. For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies: These are *the things* which defile a man: but to eat with unwashen hands defileth not a man" (Matt. 15:18-20).

- c. **With their tongues they have used deceit.** Deceit is usually effected by the use of words. Deceit is a misrepresentation; it is a lie. Deceit is widely practiced in our society, from those who will twist the truth to keep from hurting someone's feelings or to avoid an embarrassing situation, to those merchandisers who pervert or conceal certain aspects of their product or service in order to make a sale. Some in politics are known for their deceptions; false teachers in religion are masters in the art of deception. But God condemns it!
- 1) Proverbs 6:16-19: "These six *things* doth the LORD hate: yea, seven *are* an abomination unto him: A proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, An heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, feet that be swift in running to mischief, A false witness *that* speaketh lies, and he that soweth discord among brethren."
  - 2) 1 Peter 2:1-2: "Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings, As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby."
  - 3) Revelation 21:8: "But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death."
- d. **The poison of asps is under their lips.** "They have sharpened their tongues like a serpent; adders' poison is under their lips" (Ps. 140:3). Words have the power of life and death (Prov. 18:21). Inspiration describes its killing effect as the deadly poison of a serpent. Deadly words are not limited by time or space; their evil effect can be administered against one who is half-way around the globe. They will finally be punished in eternity. "O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things. But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned" (Matt. 12:34-37).
- e. **Their mouth is full of cursing and bitterness.** This thought is found in Psalm 10:7. "They are full of blasphemy and oaths. These are aimed against God. Thus the mouth which he created to bless him is used to grieve him. By bitterness is meant those wounding, stinging words which the wicked utter. None suffer from them as do the innocent" (Lard, p.110). One whose heart is filled with rebellion against God, will devote his tongue to every kind of unholy utterance, from profanity and blasphemy, to vilifying one's fellowman; and bitter words of complaint commonly pour forth from such a heart.
- f. **Their feet are swift to shed blood** (Prov. 1:16; 6:16-19; Isa. 59:7-8). Those who are engrossed in sin are not hesitant to inflict injury to others, even murder. The so-called "pro-choice" advocates of our day, who promote the death of millions of babies annually, are no less guilty than those originally addressed by these words. What a horrible fate awaits such in eternity!
- 1) Proverbs 1:16: "For their feet run to evil, and make haste to shed blood."
  - 2) Proverbs 6:16-19: "These six *things* doth the LORD hate: yea, seven *are* an abomination unto him: A proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, An heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, feet that be swift in running to mischief, A false witness *that* speaketh lies, and he that soweth discord among brethren."

- 3) Isaiah 59:7-8: "Their feet run to evil, and they make haste to shed innocent blood: their thoughts *are* thoughts of iniquity; wasting and destruction *are* in their paths. The way of peace they know not; and *there is* no judgment in their goings: they have made them crooked paths: whosoever goeth therein shall not know peace."
6. Verses 16-18: "Destruction and misery are in their ways: And the way of peace have they not known: There is no fear of God before their eyes."
- a. The sinful world is further described in dreadful terms. To look at the world at large as guilty of these appalling crimes is bad enough, but it is individuals who commit the outrages. Again, this is the assessment that God gives of humanity.
  - b. **Destruction and misery are in their ways.** Isaiah 59:7-9 is being cited. They are not concerned with promoting peace, but turmoil and pain. Where such people have had their natural effect, destruction and misery are the result. Ruined lives, shattered reputations, despondency and sorrow and woe—these are the consequences of sin, on the life of the sinner and in the effect he has on others. Sinful men demand liberty to do as they please; what they want is license to operate without any restraint or penalty. Sin is a cruel taskmaster. For a good discussion on the passage (Rom. 3:9-18), read 2 Peter 2 and the book of Jude.
    - 1) John 8:34: "Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin."
    - 2) 2 Peter 2:19: "While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption: for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage."
  - c. **The way of peace have they not known.** Sin brings a separation between the offender and God (Isa. 59:1-2). Sin often divides sinners. It separates the sinner from the righteous. It can divide families. Peace is not characteristic of those who live in sin. But peace is one of the prime blessings of a saint (Eph. 2:12-22; Matt. 5:9; Phil. 4:6-7). A faithful Christian is at peace within himself, with his fellow saints, with the Lord's church, and with God. He promotes peace, but the sinner destroys peace. Paul's point in this verse is taken from Isaiah 59:7-8.
  - d. **There is no fear of God before their eyes.** This is cited from Psalm 36:1. "No wonder then that we have the preceding catalogue. Where God is not feared, nothing else is; and when this last barrier to vice is broken down, sin comes in like a flood." (Lard, p.110). There are several restraints we can have to keep from committing sin.
    - 1) One is the fear of punishment from parents, school officials, employer, or the legal system.
    - 2) Another restraint is the dread of facing the censure of our conscience.
    - 3) Another barrier to sin is the desire to retain the favor of our peers who applaud good moral conduct and righteousness.
    - 4) Still another impediment to sin is a desire for some reward or benefit which we can receive only if we keep free of entanglements with immorality, etc. (e.g., continuation of one's marriage and home).
    - 5) But the greatest deterrent to sin is the fear of God. If we fear God, we do not want to die lost; we know the awful penalty of hell awaits. If we have reverence for the Almighty, we dread doing anything that might offend him or invite his displeasure. When one loses his fear for God, there is hardly anything else left that is strong enough to keep one from entering sin wholeheartedly. And without fearing God, the appeal of the gospel will not be strong enough to lead us to obey.
- C. Romans 3:19-20: The Law of Moses Condemned all Offenders, and Justified None.
1. Verse 19: "Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God."
    - a. The law described here is the Law of Moses; it was given to the Jews. All of the prohibitions and mandates contained in it applied to the Jews. [The moral precepts included in the law had application to the Gentiles, not because they were recorded in the law, but because they are timeless principles of truth, and have always applied].
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- b. The spiritual crimes enumerated in the preceding verses, and taken from the Old Law itself, were offenses committed by those who were under the law [the Jews]. While the Gentiles were guilty of the things specified, the Jews were guilty, too. Citing from their own beloved law, Paul convicts the Jews of sin. They could not deny their guilt; they stood condemned by the law, and needed salvation just as badly as did the Gentiles.
  - c. The Law was given to identify sin and hinder its expansion. The quotes Paul made from the Old Testament have established the guilt of the Jews and of the Gentiles. The apostle's quotes made their guilt very clear. In the face of the quotations just made, no Jew could hope to sustain a plea of innocence; and the guilt of the Gentiles was conceded.
2. Verse 20: "Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin."
- a. The Law identified sin and convicted its violators of sin, but it did not have the provisions within it to take away guilt.
    - 1) Acts 13:38-39: "Be it known unto you therefore, men *and* brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses."
    - 2) Hebrews 9:22: "And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission."
    - 3) Hebrews 10:1-4: "For the law having a shadow of good things to come, *and* not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect. For then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins. But in those *sacrifices there is* a remembrance again *made* of sins every year. For *it is* not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins."
  - b. Paul plainly makes this point: Therefore by the works of the law no flesh can be justified in God's sight. The word **therefore** assigns a reason for what had just been said. That is, the whole world (Jew and Gentile) was guilty of sin; the Jews had violated the conditions and requirements of the Law and the Gentiles had failed to attend to the moral principles which were incorporated into the law and which have always been bound by God.
  - c. The article *the* is not in the original before *law*. The statement is: Therefore by deeds of law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight. This has led some to think that justification and obedience to law have no connection. That this conclusion is wrong is seen by clear statements to the contrary (cf. Jas. 2).
    - 1) Matthew 7:21-27: "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity. Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock. And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it."
    - 2) Luke 6:46: "And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?"
    - 3) Acts 2:38: "Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."
    - 4) Acts 10:34-35: "Then Peter opened *his* mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is

- accepted with him."
- 5) Acts 22:16: "And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord."
  - 6) Ephesians 2:8-9: "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: *it is* the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast."
  - 7) Hebrews 5:8-9: "Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him."
  - 8) Revelation 22:14: "Blessed *are* they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city."
- d. The law under consideration in the context is the Law of Moses, including the Psalms and prophets. This is the law which the Jews violated and thus incurred guilt. This law was given to identify sin and hinder the spread of sin, but it did not have the essential power to bring about forgiveness. The pardon Old Testament people received was given to them on the merit of Christ's death; in effect, their pardon was "on credit." The death of Christ benefitted those who lived in the Old Testament era. **The verse affirms the guilt of the Jews.**
- 1) Romans 3:24-25: "Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Whom God hath set forth *to be* a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God."
  - 2) Hebrews 9:15-17: "And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions *that were* under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance. For where a testament *is*, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. For a testament *is* of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth."
  - 3) Guy N. Woods made this comment which identifies the law under consideration: "That Paul, in the passage alluded to, (Rom. 6:14), did not intend to affirm that children of God are wholly without law *of any kind* is evident from (a) the fact that he himself said that we are under law to Christ and to God (1 Cor. 9:21); and (b) from the context in which the statement appears. The *thesis* of Romans is that justification is through the system of faith which originated with Christ, and not by means of the law of *Moses*. (Rom. 1:16,17.) In much detail, and with many contrasts, does he pursue this argument from Rom. 1:13 through 8:25. The law which the Gentiles did not have (2:12-16), was the law of Moses. The ordinances of the law (2:25-28), were of the law of Moses. The works of the law (3:19,20), which could not justify, were the works of the law of Moses. The righteousness, in Christ, apart from the law (2:21-26), is that which is apart from the law of Moses. The law of works, contrasted with the law of faith (Rom. 3:27,28), was the law of Moses....The blessing pronounced upon Abraham, because of his faith, (cited by the apostle to sustain the view that justification was not by the law of Moses), which was exercised anterior to the giving of the law (4:9-14), was declared to be apart from, and before the law of Moses. The law which said, 'Thou shalt not covet' (Rom. 7:7), was the law of Moses. The commandment, which Paul found to be death to him (Rom. 7:7-25), was the law of Moses. The law which was weak, through the flesh (Rom. 8:2), was the law of Moses. It is, therefore, an exceedingly careless and confused exegesis which would take from such a context a statement which says, 'For ye are not under law, but under grace,' and deny that the law referred to is *the law of Moses!* Here, the contrast intended is exactly the same as that of John 1:17: 'For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.' The conclusion is irresistible that the statement, (Rom. 6:14: 'for ye are not under law, but under grace,') is limited to the contextual significance of the term; and, that Paul, continuing his thesis that Christians are not under the law of Moses, but are, in this dispensation, wholly answerable to Christ, meant by the statement, '*You are not under the law of Moses; you are amenable to Christ through the system of grace originating with him.*' This is, however, far from affirming that, in consequence, Christians are not under *any* law today. (Gal.
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6:2; James 2:12; 1 Cor. 9:21.)" (*Commentary on James*, pp.90f).

- 4) "Children of God have been, by the precious blood of Christ, redeemed from the *curse* of the law (of Moses), and are privileged, in Christ, to share in the blessings of salvation available through conformity to 'the *law* of the Spirit of life.' (Rom. 8:2.) Through the freedom from the law of Moses children of God today enjoy, they may pursue their obligations under the law of love, realizing that the law by which they shall be judged (James 2:12), is not one of slavery, but one of freedom. By this rule (of law), let us ever walk. (Gal. 6:16.)" (*ibid.*, p.92).
- e. There could be no sin if there is no law (Rom. 4:15; 5:13; 1 John 3:4). The Law of Moses spelled out requirements which God placed on the Jews, and even showed moral demands, which he placed on all men from the beginning. Thus, Paul could say that knowledge of sin came by the Law (Rom. 7:7).
  - 1) Romans 4:15: "Because the law worketh wrath: for where no law is, *there is* no transgression."
  - 2) Romans 5:13: "For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law."
  - 3) Romans 7:7: "What shall we say then? *is* the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet."
  - 4) 1 John 3:4: "Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law."
- f. God's law contains two requirements: it commands us to do what is right and forbids us to do what is wrong. It spells out the details of each category, in some cases by plainly listing these matters, and in other cases by giving principles which help us identify what we should or should not do. The "deeds" (or "works") includes all of these requirements.
- g. The promise God made to Abraham (Gen. 12:1-3; cf. 3:15) was given centuries before the appearance of the Law of Moses, and is fulfilled in Christ (Gal. 3). The Law was "added" because of transgressions, and was intended to last only until the "Seed" had come (Gal. 3:19; 4:4-5). It has been replaced by the Law of Christ (Rom. 1:16-17; 8:2; Acts 4:11-12; Gal. 6:2; Heb. 8).

D. Romans 3:21-26: Justification is by the Gospel.

1. There are certain terms used in the context that need to be understood before one can fully grasp the truths presented.
  - a. Justify: This term means that a person has been pronounced righteous (just); he is considered to be free from guilt, as if he had never been guilty of an offense. If one perfectly kept the law, he would be justified (not guilty); when God pardons an offender, the individual is *justified*.
    - 1) Romans 4:7-8: "*Saying*, Blessed *are* they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed *is* the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin."
    - 2) Romans 8:1: "*There is* therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."
    - 3) James 2:24: "Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only."
  - b. Grace: This identifies the favor God gives to individuals; this favor is undeserved by the individual, but is needed by him. Despite the fact that salvation depends on man's faith and obedience, without the grace of God there could be no hope of deliverance.
    - 1) Ephesians 2:8: "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: *it is* the gift of God"
    - 2) Titus 3:5: "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost."
  - c. Redeemer: This term describes one who has acted to rescue another from the control of some evil person or condition. Jesus is the Redeemer.
    - 1) Job 19:25: "For I know *that* my redeemer liveth, and *that* he shall stand at the latter *day* upon the earth."
    - 2) Isaiah 59:20: "And the Redeemer shall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob, saith the LORD."
    - 3) Galatians 4:4-5: "But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a

- woman, made under the law, To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons."
- 4) Titus 2:14: "Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works."
- d. Ransom: This is the price of redemption. Christ has redeemed us with his blood. He redeems us from the bondage of sin.
- 1) Matthew 20:28: "Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many."
  - 2) Ephesians 1:7: "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace."
  - 3) Colossians 1:13-14: "Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated *us* into the kingdom of his dear Son: In whom we have redemption through his blood, *even* the forgiveness of sins."
  - 4) Revelation 1:5: "And from Jesus Christ, *who is* the faithful witness, *and* the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood."
2. Verse 21: "But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets."
- a. Having taught in verse 20 that there was no justification possible by means of the Law of Moses or by the law under which the Gentiles were governed, Paul affirms that now God has established a system by which all men can be justified.
  - b. "A judge and a jury may find that a man is guilty as charged in the indictment; and yet the man's sorrow and repentance may be so manifest that both judge and jury would earnestly wish that there might be some way to clear him, and at the same time uphold the majesty of the law; but there is no way that they can show that they are right in freeing him. To maintain the law they must condemn him...Justice demands that the guilty be punished, and the majesty of the law requires that the penalties of the law be inflicted on the guilty" (Whiteside, p.81).
  - c. The problem God had to solve was monumental. How could he maintain his own holiness, and accept fallen man back into his fellowship? Man had sinned, and God's absolute state of holiness could have nothing to do with a corrupted being (Isa. 59:1-2); and his infinite justice demanded that sin be punished. But how could God show mercy and at the same time fulfill the demands of justice and protect his holy nature?
    - 1) The perfect plan was the gospel, which brought Christ to the cross to suffer the penalty for fallen man, and allowed God to show mercy to man. What neither the Law of Moses nor the natural law of the ancient Gentiles could do, the gospel was perfectly adapted to accomplish! "~~My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world. And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him: But who keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him!~~" (1 John 2:1-50).
    - 2) The New Covenant provides life for its adherents (2 Cor. 3:6); but those who try to follow the Old Covenant "are fallen from grace" (Gal. 5:4). God had many good reasons for giving the Old Covenant (Gal. 3), but he always intended to replace it with the New Covenant (Heb. 10:9; 8:1-13; Jer. 31:31-33).
  - d. The word now is emphatic. It is true that no justification was possible by the Old Testament system, **but now** the righteousness of God is manifested. This righteousness is without (apart from—ASV) the law (of the Old Testament).
  - e. But what is the righteousness of God? Is the reference to the personal righteousness which pertains to God's holy nature? No, for his personal characteristics had been revealed already, in the Old Testament.
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- 1) The purpose of the book of Romans was to reveal God's method of making men to become righteous (1:16-17). The unbelieving Jews refused to submit to God's righteous plan (Rom. 10:1-3), thus remained in an unsaved condition. Submission to God's righteousness is done by obeying the gospel (Rom. 10:16; 1:5; 16:26).
  - 2) This plan was kept secret through the Old Testament era, but is now revealed to mankind (Rom. 16:25; Eph. 3:1-11). "But **now** the righteousness of God...is manifested..." (Rom. 3:21).
  - f. God's plan for bringing about righteousness on the part of man was foretold in the ancient days of the Old Testament by the Law and the prophets. It did not develop suddenly; it did not come into fruition without advance preparation.
    - 1) God's plan began to be mentioned soon after Adam and Eve plunged into sin (Gen. 3:6, 15). More information was given to Abraham (Gen. 12:1-3).
    - 2) Many references were given in the Law and prophets in reverence to the plan; the plan was not taught or developed by the law and prophets, but these bore witness of it (Isa. 2:1-4; Jer. 31:31-34; Dan. 2:44; cf. Luke 24:44).
    - 3) Millennial theories assert without evidence that God intended to set up an earthly kingdom when Christ came, but that since the Jews rejected his kingship, God was forced to substitute the church, an action which he did not anticipate making, and for which no preparations had been made. Paul's statement here explodes this myth.
  - g. There are various Old Testament attestations of the New Testament system.
    - 1) There were hundreds of Old Testament prophecies of Christ and his New Covenant, including details about the nature and place of his birth (Isa. 7:14; Mic. 5:2), the tribe to which he would belong (Gen. 49:10; Heb. 7:12-14), his betrayal by a friend (Ps. 41:9; Zech. 11:12-13), and many other details.
    - 2) There were many typical men who prefigured the Messiah, including Adam, Abraham, Isaac, Joseph, David, Jonah, and Melchizedek.
    - 3) The tabernacle, its furniture and services, and the entire Mosaic system, bore typical images of the New Testament system (Heb. 10:1-4).
    - 4) Every sacrificial lamb of the Old Testament ages gave a picture of the sacrifice of the Lamb of God (John 1:29; Rev. 13:8).
  3. Verse 22: "Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference."
    - a. Paul here further describes God's righteous plan. It is the plan which is dependent on our faith in Christ, not on the merit of keeping the Old Covenant (3:28).
    - b. This verse does not speak of Christ's faith in us, but of our faith in him. Our faith in Christ enables us to receive the salvation God offers to our souls (Mark 16:15-16; Jas. 2:24; Heb. 5:8-9). "He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, *even* to them that believe on his name" (John 1:11-12). [Note: those who believe are given the *right* (the *authority*) to become children of God; they are not children of God the moment they believe].
    - c. But this is not faith only, as sectarianism teaches and which is asserted by some of the modern translations.
      - 1) Faith is the motivating factor behind obedience (Jas. 2:14-26), and without which no man can please God (Heb. 11:6). Faith is produced by learning God's word (Rom. 10:17; Acts 15:7).
      - 2) But *faith* is used in this passage and several others (e.g., John 3:16; Rom. 5:1) as a synecdoche, where a part stands for the whole. *Repentance* (Acts 11:18) and *baptism* (1 Pet. 3:21) are used in a similar fashion. "Faith, being an outstanding and conspicuous condition of redemption, is here used as a synecdoche for all the conditions God has imposed and made to be prerequisites of salvation. The most conspicuous theological error of Biblical interpretation in the past five hundred years is that of interpreting this synecdoche as a denial of the other conditions of
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- salvation" (Coffman, p.121).
- d. Having already shown that both Jews and Gentiles are under the condemnation of sin, the apostle shows that the remedy for their ailment (sin) is identical; there is no distinction in the guilt, and the plan that justifies the Jew, will also justify the Gentiles (Rom. 1:16-17). It is the only plan of salvation given to alien sinners.
    - 1) The same requirements for the Jew to become righteous are identical with those specified for the Gentile (Mark 16:15-16; Rom. 10:9-10; Acts 2:38).
    - 2) Acts 15:9: "And put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith." The word "the" is in the original, thus saying that God purifies our hearts by the faith (the gospel: Jude 3; Acts 6:7; Gal. 1:23; Eph. 4:4-5).
  - e. "Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified" (Gal. 2:16; cf. Gal. 3:22; 2:20; Eph. 3:12; Phil. 3:9).
4. Verse 23: "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God."
- a. This connects with the concluding remark of verse 22. Why is there no difference in the method by which Jews and Gentiles are saved? Because all (both Gentile and Jew) have sinned.
  - b. The tenses of the verbs **sinned** and **come short** demonstrate the universal extent of sin. "Sinned" (*hemarton*) is second aorist active indicative, gnomic or timeless; it shows that sin has always been a problem for the whole human race. "Come short" (*husteroustai*) is present middle indicative; it stresses the continuing nature of sin in the lives of individuals (Winford Claiborne, *The Book of Romans*, Spiritual Sword Lectures, 1983, p.74).
  - c. Because all have sinned, they continue to come short of the glory of God. Because of sin, therefore, we fail to bring the glory to God that he deserves. We owe it to God, by virtue of the greatness of his nature, and position of Creator, and for the blessings he bestows, to glorify and honor his name (Eph. 3:21).
    - 1) 1 Corinthians 11:7: "...Man...is the image and glory of God...."
    - 2) 2 Corinthians 4:6: "For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."
    - 3) Ephesians 5:8: "For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light."
    - 4) 2 Corinthians 3:18: "But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory...."
5. Verse 24: "Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus."
- a. Justification is given freely by God's grace; it is expressed by means of the redemption which God supplies; it is given in Christ Jesus.
  - b. God's grace (the unmerited favor he showed to fallen mankind) was freely given by our Maker. No one forced him to send Christ to the cross; no one coerced Christ to submit to death. "Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father" (John 10:17-18).
  - c. But when a gift is freely offered, one must accept it, with whatever conditions are required; the prerequisites do not mean the recipient has earned the gift. Those sectarians are seriously in error who reject the necessity of obedience, thinking that obedience to God somehow **earns** the blessings he offers.
  - d. God provides redemption through Christ; this redemption (and all other spiritual blessings) are located in Christ (Eph. 1:3,7; 2:12-13; Col. 1:13-14; 2 Tim. 2:10). No one out of Christ has these benefits. The idea of "in Christ" is used at least 169 times in the writings of Paul (according to Coffman, p.122).
  - e. According to the New Testament, baptism puts us into Christ (Gal. 3:27; Rom. 6:3-4). But the
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- candidate for baptism must meet certain qualifications: faith (Mark 16:16), repentance (Acts 2:38), and confession of faith in Christ (Acts 8:36-38; Rom. 10:10).
- f. Men are not saved simply because Christ died on the cross; they are not saved merely because God has decided to be gracious toward men. But individuals must take personal action—by faithfully meeting the conditions unto salvation God has set.
6. Verse 25: "Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God."
- a. God has set Christ forth to be a propitiation for our sins. God initiated the action that brought about the result indicated in the verse. To propitiate means to "render favorable, to conciliate." The word is used in 1 John 2:2, 4:10, Luke 18:13, Hebrews 2:17, and in this text. Several profound truths are taught in this great verse.
  - b. "*Propitiation*" is a translation of *hilasterion* and refers to the atoning sacrifice of Christ. '*Expiation*' probably comes closer to the original than '*propitiation*.' These words—redemption and propitiation—show the great power of God which is available to all who will come to Jesus Christ through faith in his word" (Claiborne, *ibid.*, p.75).
  - c. By the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ, together with the work of his personal ministry and the message of the gospel, God can look with favor toward mankind; we can be reconciled to God, and thus be at peace with him; Christ paid the debt; he ransomed us; and made it possible for us to be loosed from the guilt and bondage of sin.
  - d. The reconciliation which Christ effected is obtained (on our part) by faith in his blood (Col.1:20; 1 Peter 1:18-19; Eph. 1:7; 1 Cor. 6:20). To give one's blood is to give his life, for the life of the flesh is the blood (Gen. 9:4; Lev. 17:11). Jesus willingly gave his life and shed his blood for fallen humanity; only those who will believe in the significance of his death, loving him for his supreme sacrifice, and earnestly believing the message the Savior gave, can secure the benefits he offers. But salvation by faith is not salvation by faith only (Jas. 2:24).
  - e. The Father set Christ forth to be the expiation of our sins, and thus declared his righteousness. The death of Christ for the sins of the world was God's plan for the solution to the great problem. God wanted to save his fallen offspring; but he must not compromise his holiness or his justice; but by allowing his only begotten Son to die in our place, he was able to satisfy justice, maintain his own holiness, and show mercy to man. God did not vent his wrath for men against Christ, to appease his anger; it was God himself who put forth the propitiatory offering for man.
  - f. God's plan for making men righteous extends backwards in time to benefit those who lived in the past, but were dead when Christ died (Heb. 9:15,22). *Remission* is from a Greek word which means "passing over" (see margin). Hebrews 9:15 gives an inspired commentary on the thought, and shows that the idea is that of forgiving, not ignoring the guilt of the offenders. But upon what basis did God forgive their sins? The only possible basis was their faithfulness to the law under which they lived.
  - g. The forbearance of God lies at the heart of God's willingness to help man. He was patient with the men of Noah's generation (1 Pet. 3:20-21), but his patience had a limit (Gen. 6:3-5). Acts 17:30 also shows God's forbearance: he put up with many things from man then which he will not condone today. "And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent" (Acts 17:30).
7. Verse 26: "To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus."
- a. Paul again (vs. 25) stressed the fact that God declared his righteousness by means of the gospel system. "God wanted to show—to prove—that he is righteous when he forgives and justifies the sinner. By his very nature, he could not be true to himself without arranging the means whereby those who have transgressed his laws would have the opportunity of remedying their transgressions" (Claiborne, *ibid.*, p.76).
  - b. God is able, by the gospel, to retain his righteousness and at the same time be the justifier of those
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who believe in Christ. He showed mercy and maintained the integrity of justice.

- c. A story concerning an ancient king illustrates this matter. The law had been passed prohibiting fornication, and specifying the loss of two eyes as the penalty for its violation. The king's son transgressed the law; the monarch wanted to show mercy, but preserve the dignity of justice. The solution he reached was to require his son to forfeit one eye, while the king supplied the other—a great sacrifice on the part of both the king and his son.
- d. God sent his precious Son to die on the cross, and requires that we submit to the requirements of the gospel. Our faith in Christ includes obedience to the law of Christ.

E. Romans 3:27-31: The Law of Faith.

1. Verse 27: "Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith."
    - a. If a person was able to keep the Law of Moses perfectly, the Law justified the individual. None could perfectly observe that Law, but if one could do so, he might think he had the right to be boastful about his feat. Christ is the only one who kept the Mosaic Law perfectly.
      - 1) Hebrews 4:15: "For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as *we are, yet without sin.*"
      - 2) 1 Peter 2:21-22: "For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth."
    - b. The Law of Christ excludes boasting. It was Christ who paid the penalty for sin by his death on the cross (Matt. 26:28; Heb. 2:9; Rom. 5:6-9). We cannot save ourselves from sin, so there is no room for boasting.
      - 1) One of the basic principles of the religion of Christ is humility (Matt. 5:3). Humility prohibits boasting.
      - 2) The law of Christ shows that every accountable person stands condemned of sin, without any hope of deliverance from the wages of sin apart from Christ (Rom. 3:23; 6:23; John 3:17-18).
    - c. Christ did the difficult part in executing God's plan; our part is simply to hear, believe, and obey the gospel (Acts 18:8; Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:38; Rev. 2:10). No man can merit salvation (Eph. 2:8-10; Tit. 3:5; 2 Pet. 1:1-11).
    - d. The gospel is called "the law of faith." It is a system of faith and it requires faith on our part (Rom. 1:16-17; Eph. 4:4-5; Acts 6:7; Jude 3; Heb. 11:6).
      - 1) Our faith is produced by learning the gospel; our faith is perfected by obedience (Jas. 2:20-22; cf. Rom. 1:5; 16:26).
      - 2) That we are under law in the Christian dispensation is clearly affirmed by the New Testament (Rom. 3:27; 8:2; Jas. 1:25; 2:8; 2:12; Heb. 8:10; Rom. 4:15; 2:23).
    - e. "The principle of faith allows imperfect man to throw himself on the mercy and grace of God and know that God will save the obedient believers. Paul expressed the desire to be found in Christ, '*not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith*' (Phil. 3:9)" (ibid.).
  2. Verse 28: "Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law."
    - a. Martin Luther added to God's word in this verse by including the word *alone*. He was fighting an essential and tremendous battle against the Catholic error of salvation by human, meritorious works. He went to the opposite and equally erroneous extreme.
    - b. Because his theory conflicted with the plain statement of James 2:24, Luther regarded the epistle of James as *strawy*. Any theory that is contradicted by plain teachings in the Bible, must be rejected as wrong.
    - c. Paul's point in this verse is to state the proper conclusion growing out of the preceding discussion: we are not saved by keeping the Law of Moses (Gal. 2:21; Heb. 10; Gal. 4; Eph. 2:14-15; Col. 2:14; 2 Cor. 3:6-18).
    - d. We are not saved by any one thing by itself, but by several different things acting in concert.
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- 1) We are saved by grace (Eph. 2:4-5,8; Rom. 3:24; 2 Tim. 1:9-10; Tit. 2:11-12; Rom. 5:2,21; Tit. 3:5).
  - 2) We are saved by faith (Eph. 2:8; Rom. 5:1; John 17:20; 20:30-31; 12:42-43; Jas. 2:24; Matt. 7:21; John 1:11-12; Jas. 2:21-23; Heb. 11:30).
  - 3) We are saved by the blood of Christ (Rom. 5:9; Col. 1:14; Rev. 1:5; Rom. 6:3; John 19:34; Rom. 6:17-18; Heb. 9:22).
  - 4) We are saved by the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 6:11; Rom. 8:2; Eph. 3:5; 1 Cor. 2:9-10,13; 1 Pet. 1:22; Jas. 1:21; Acts 11:14; Rom. 1:16; John 6:63).
  - 5) We are saved by works (Matt. 7:21; Luke 6:46; John 6:29; 8:24; Acts 17:30; Rom. 10:10; Mark 16:16; 1 Pet. 3:21). We are not saved by the works of Moses' Law (Acts 13:38-39; Gal. 2:21), or by works of human design (Tit. 3:5; Eph. 2:9). Our hope of heaven depends on our obedience (Rev. 2:10; 22:14).
  - 6) We are saved by the life of Christ (Rom. 5:10; 1 Pet. 2:21-22; Heb. 4:15).
  - 7) We are saved by gospel preaching (1 Cor. 1:21; Mark 16:15-16).
  - 8) We are saved by hope (Rom. 8:24-25; 1 Cor. 15:19).
3. Verse 29: "Is he the God of the Jews only? is he not also of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also."
    - a. In view of the established fact that salvation is not by the Mosaic Law, then God is the God of both Jews and Gentiles. The wall of partition which divided these two segments of humanity has been removed by the death of Christ (Col. 2:14; Eph. 2:12ff).
    - b. While there were certain inherent advantages given to the Jews during the Old Testament period, these vanish under the New Covenant.
    - c. The Jews of the first century would have great difficulty accepting the premise of this verse; all of their lives, they had considered the Gentiles to be outcasts from God due to their birth and sinful conduct.
    - d. Many in the early part of the nineteenth century had difficulty accepting the fact that the black race had as much need (and right) for the gospel as the white race. And in our time, some have difficulty accepting the fact that the poor have as much right and need for the gospel as the middle-class and the rich.
    - e. There is no respect of persons with God (Rom. 2:11).
  4. Verse 30: "Seeing it is one God, which shall justify the circumcision by faith, and uncircumcision through faith."
    - a. This develops the thought of verse twenty-nine a little farther. God shows no favoritism in saving people from different nations and backgrounds.
    - b. There is only one God, and he saves the Circumcision and the Uncircumcision in the same way. The Jews are "the circumcision." The Gentiles are the "uncircumcision."
    - c. He justifies the Jews by (*ek*—out of) faith; he justifies the Gentiles through (*dia*) faith. Paul did not intend any significant difference by using two different Greek terms; that would have clashed with the very point of the context, namely that God saves both Jew and Gentile on the same basis of faith. Romans 3:22, 29.
    - d. God does not have two different plans of salvation for Jew and Gentile (Rom. 1:16-17; Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:38).
    - e. The apostle probably used the two different terms, which express the same thought, for sake of variety.
  5. Verse 31: "Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law."
    - a. The apostle responds to a question that some might advance: since salvation under Christ is not by the Law, does this mean that the Law is made void by the gospel?
    - b. In the original, Paul referred to *faith* as the faith. He was speaking about the gospel, not personal faith.
      - 1) Jude 3: "Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints."
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- 2) Ephesians 4:4-5: "There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism."
- 3) Galatians 1:23: "But they had heard only, That he which persecuted us in times past now preacheth the faith which once he destroyed."
- 4) Acts 6:7: "And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith."
- c. Make void (*katargeo*) is from the same word as destroy in Matthew 5:17. Christ did not come to destroy the Law of Moses, but to fulfill it; Paul did not seek to destroy the Law, but to establish (to confirm; to prove) it. Neither Christ nor Paul was an enemy of the Law; they understood correctly its true nature and design. The Jews thought the Law was the end in itself, that it would ever be in effect.
- d. That we are not under the Law of Moses today is clearly established in many places in the New Testament. There are many differences between the Law and the Gospel (2 Cor. 3; Hebrews).
- e. But the gospel does not destroy the Law (Matt. 5:17); rather, it fulfilled the Law. The Law was a schoolmaster to bring men to Christ (Gal. 3:24); it pointed to the coming of Christ and his new covenant (Acts 3:22-23; Jer. 31:31-33). There are more than three hundred prophecies in the Old Testament that relate to Christ.
- f. The gospel incorporated all of the divine, eternal principles of morality which have always been bound by God. These include nine of the ten commandments, with the law of the Sabbath belonging only to the Mosaic Law. The New Covenant includes the other nine, but usually in strengthened forms.
  - 1) Matthew 5:21-22: "Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment: But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire."
  - 2) Matthew 5:27-28: "Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery: But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart."
  - 3) Ephesians 4:28: "Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with *his* hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth."
- g. "Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second" (Heb. 10:9).
  - 1) Colossians 2:14-17: "Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross; And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it. Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days: Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ."
  - 2) Ephesians 2:14-15: "For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace."

## ROMANS 4

### A. Romans 4:1-8: Justification is by Faith, Not by the Works of the Law.

1. Verse 1: "What shall we say then that Abraham our father, as pertaining to the flesh, hath found?"
  - a. Paul raises a question which grows out of the preceding section: "What did Abraham, who is our fleshly progenitor, obtain?" That Abraham was justified would be admitted by all the Jews. But how was he justified?
  - b. He was called forth from Ur of the Chaldees before either circumcision or the Law of Moses was given. If he was justified, it was not by the works of the Mosaic Law. By what, then? The apostle is about to show that Abraham was not justified by works. The context (chapter 3) shows that the "law" under consideration is the Mosaic Law. Enoch, Noah, and Abraham lived before the Mosaic Law was given—their righteous condition had nothing to do with the Mosaic Law.
  - c. The Judaizers asserted that the Law must be kept by the Gentile converts in the church (see Acts 15). When Paul taught unbelieving Jews, he presented evidence to prove that Jesus is the Christ; a different tact must be followed when trying to correct the Judaizing Christians. This latter approach is followed by Paul here.
    - 1) "A little thought will enable one to see that Paul's whole line of reasoning along these lines was directed against the contention of these Judaizing Christians, and not toward the unbelieving Jews" (Whiteside, p.88)
    - 2) Paul's argument here exposes their theory as false by showing that Abraham, a justified man, did not receive his justification by means of the Law since he lived hundreds of years before the Law was given.
  - d. Some people have thought there is a contradiction between what Paul says in this chapter about Abraham, and what James wrote about the same man in James two. If both passages are God's word, and there can be no suggestion that they are not, then each of these inspired penmen wrote the truth.
    - 1) James 2:21-24: "Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect? And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God. Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only." James says that Abraham was justified when he offered Isaac, obeying what God had commanded him to do. His point is that Abraham would not have been justified had he believed only, and had not obeyed God's requirement.
    - 2) Paul's point in Romans 4 is that Abraham did not receive his justification by keeping the Mosaic Law. Hence, those Jews were wrong who insisted that the Law must be kept in order to be justified in God's sight.
2. Verse 2: "For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory; but not before God."
  - a. Abraham did not need the Law to be justified, and he came out of heathenism. The Jews thought they needed the Law, but they did not keep it. In the eyes of the Jews, if anyone was ever justified, it was Abraham. They deemed him to be the greatest one of all time.
  - b. If he had been justified by the Law of Moses, he might have had reason to boast; or if he had been justified by a law of human works, he could have gloried in his own strength. He could not have been justified by faith only (Jas. 2:17-26).
  - c. Any kind of works that is done without faith is useless for improving one's standing before God. But faith that leads one to do what God requires is effective to that end. Abraham had faith the morning he left Beersheba for the mountain of Moriah; he demonstrated his faith when he obeyed God's directions to offer Isaac (Gen. 22).
  - d. Abraham's justification was "not based on any works about which Abraham could boast but was based on God's grace accepted by faith (v. 5) and the obedience that faith induces (Heb. 11:8-19; Jas. 2:21-

- 24). The imputation of such righteousness depends on God's gracious willingness to forgive sins (vv.6-8). This is not an imputation of the personal righteousness of Christ, as some are teaching, but rather the '*righteousness of God*' (Rom. 1:17; 3:21)—a legal verdict of exoneration that comes from God as a result of Jesus' sacrificial death. It is because of being '*reconciled to God through the death of his Son*' (Rom. 5:10), and therefore '*justified by his blood*' (v. 9), that righteousness '*might be reckoned*' to us by God (Rom. 4:11)" (Workman, *Spiritual Sword Lectures*, 1983, p.80).
- e. If one insists that salvation is by faith, without any works (with no obedience), he is in a major difficulty, for faith is said to be a work:
- 1) John 6:29: "Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent."
  - 2) 1 John 3:23: "And this is his commandment, That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment."
3. Verse 3: "For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness."
- a. The apostle directs the attention of the readers to the scriptures as final authority on this matter: "What do the Scriptures say?" The Scriptures said: "Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness." The quotation is from Genesis 15:6.
  - b. James 2:23: "And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God." James shows that Abraham was justified when he obeyed God's instructions. It was at this point, when faith led him to obey, that he was accounted righteous (justified).
  - c. But Abraham was not an unforgiven, condemned, alien sinner when he started toward Moriah with his son. The following verses cannot describe an alien sinner (Gen. 12:1-3; Acts 7:2-3; Heb. 11:8; Gen. 12:6-7; 12:8; 13:3-4; 14:19; 15:1). See Whiteside, pp. 89-91. Abraham was a child of God who needed to be justified. Rahab was an alien sinner; she was justified by doing her God-given duty (Jas. 2:25).
  - d. There is no clash between Paul and James. James is not saying that we are saved by human works; and he is not asserting that salvation is by obedience only. But Paul is not saying we are saved by faith apart from obedience.
  - e. There is perfect harmony between Paul and James: salvation is by grace through faith, a living faith that meets the conditions as stated by God (cf. Eph. 2:8-10; Jas. 2:14-26).
4. Verse 4: "Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt."
- a. If one earns his salary, what he obtains is not acquired by grace but by his own merit. What one is given by grace, is not gained by merit. But if a gift is extended freely, but with conditions stated by the donor, the one who accepts the gift does not earn the benefaction by meeting the conditions.
  - b. One who is beneficiary of a wealthy person's inheritance does not merit the legacy by agreeing to the condition, which might be to live in the mansion and tend to the dead man's cats until they die.
  - c. If one earned God's blessings by perfectly accomplishing a program of work, those benefits he would have obtained by merit, not by grace. But salvation is by the grace of God (Eph. 2:1-9; Rom. 3:24).
  - d. "The verse is a simple statement of the truth that if one's hope of salvation is based upon his having kept the law of Moses perfectly, then such a person could claim that God owed him salvation; and it would not be by virtue of God's grace at all in such an event" (Coffman, p.161).
5. Verse 5: "But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness."
- a. Keeping the Law of Moses, as noted many times already, did not save anyone; one who put his salvation and hope on his ability to keep the Law, was placing his trust on the arm of flesh.
  - b. However, we would be in error to suppose that one who lived under the Mosaic system could have God's good pleasure by ignoring the Law. "So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty
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- to do" (Luke 17:10).
- c. Since one cannot keep the law of Christ perfectly, without a single act of omission of duty or commission of wrong, it would be folly to conclude that we can save ourselves. Faith that leads us to do, to the best of our sincerest ability, the will of Christ, will result in God's blessings.
    - 1) 1 John 1:7: "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin."
    - 2) Hebrews 5:9: "And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him."
  - d. The living faith of a follower of Christ is counted as righteousness (Ja. 2:14-26).
    - 1) Acts 10:34-35: "Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him."
    - 2) 1 John 3:7: "Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous."
    - 3) We would be on extremely dangerous ground if we should array the grace of God against obedience to God!
  - e. We appropriate the grace of God by obedience to his will:
    - 1) Romans 5:21: "That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord."
    - 2) Titus 2:11-12: "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world."
    - 3) James 2:10: "For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all."
    - 4) James. 2:24: "Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only."
6. Verses 6-8: "Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, Saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin."
- a. There is a great difference between the works of God and the works of man; there is no profit in doing the works of man; doing the works of God is obeying the divine commands of the Almighty. One who does not recognize the distinction between the two will never come to understand James or Paul; their writings will be hopelessly in conflict to the man who thinks that obedience is non-essential to salvation. Understanding Paul's writings on the Law depends on ascertaining which law is meant: he is not saying that the keeping of law, any law, violates the principle of salvation by faith; and he does not contradict what James writes on justification by works. The writings of both of these inspired men are in perfect accord! We are justified when our faith leads us to obey the will of heaven.
  - b. Paul quotes from the writings of David to illustrate the principle of having God's blessings apart from keeping the Law of Moses. The apostle is not saying that we are made righteous without any action of obedience on our part; if he did, he and James, and other New Testament writers, would be opposing each other. The works of this passage are works of Moses' law. Remember, Paul penned the epistle of Romans to defeat the attacks of the Judaizers who went everywhere teaching the Gentile saints that they must be circumcised and keep the Law of Moses (Acts 15; Galatians).
  - c. Verse seven is parallel with 1 John 1:7. One who obeys the gospel and walks in the light of the Law of Christ (the gospel), has the abiding benefit of continual cleansing by the blood of Christ. Under the Law of Moses, the faithful Jew could only hope to have his guilt "rolled forward" from one year to the next on the day of atonement (Heb. 10:1-4; Lev. 16). How much better it is to be under the law of the gospel!
  - d. Verse eight continues the quote from Psalm 32:1-2. David's statement could not be fulfilled under the Mosaic Law; it is fulfilled under the Gospel (Acts 13:38-39). A man is truly blessed if his sins are
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covered and are not imputed to his record! But this is not to say that there are no conditions involved. **If we walk in the light** is the underlying requirement; it means that Christians live up to the standard of the New Testament, to the very best of their ability, doing their duty sincerely and zealously and refraining from every appearance of evil.

- e. As salvation from past sins is conditional, so remaining in the love of God is conditional. "Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life" (Jude 21).
- f. "Baptism is sometimes called a work of the person baptized, and it is sometimes claimed that if a man is pardoned in baptism it would be salvation through works; but baptism has fewer of the qualities of works of the person baptized than either faith or repentance. Faith is an act of the heart, the soul, the inner man—something the man does. It is a work; man does the work, but it is God's work. It is ordained by God and terminates in and honors God. Jesus said: 'This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.' (John 6:29.) So of repentance. 'Believe' and 'repent' are both active—both done by the subject. The person baptized gives himself up into the hands of the administrator, and is buried out of self, to be raised up in Christ, and, as a servant of God, to 'walk in the light, as he is in the light.' (1 John 1:7.) When a man dies and his friends take his body and bury it, no one could call it a work of the man buried. This is the true type of him who is baptized. And there is no more propriety in calling baptism the work of the man baptized than there is in calling a burial the work of the person buried. Baptism is a work of God performed upon the man baptized through his servant to bring him, dead in trespasses and sins, into the state of life with God. The life is imparted through faith; it turns from sin in repentance and puts off the body of sin in baptism" (Lipscomb, p.82).

B. Romans 4:9-12: This Conditional State of Blessedness is Available to All.

1. Verse 9: "Cometh this blessedness then upon the circumcision only, or upon the uncircumcision also? for we say that faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness."
    - a. If the father of the Jewish nation could be justified separate and apart from the Mosaic Law, then others could likewise have that prerogative. Abraham's obedient faith was reckoned to him for righteousness; it was not necessary for him to follow the demands of the Law.
    - b. Establishment of this simple truth would defeat the Judaizers in their attempts to require that the Gentiles be circumcised and keep the Law in order to be justified.
    - c. Paul raised the question of the verse to introduce the thought that both the Jew and the Gentile could receive the blessings of verses 6-8; the state of being justified by God's grace was given in the gospel, not by the Mosaic Law, which had been provided only to the Jews.
  2. Verse 10: "How was it then reckoned? when he was in circumcision, or in uncircumcision? Not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision."
    - a. Had Abraham been circumcised when his faith was reckoned for righteousness? "That such a justification is not limited to those who are circumcised is seen in the fact that Abraham was pronounced '*righteous*' (in Gen. 15:6) some 29 years (according to Jewish reckoning) before his circumcision (Gen. 17:24). Thus, Abraham's justification serves as a prototype for the salvation of all who will believe, whether circumcised or not (Rom. 4:9-12)" (Workman, *Spiritual Sword Lectures*, 1983, p.81).
    - b. Paul's statement here was a death-blow to the Judaizers.
  3. Verse 11: "And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised: that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised; that righteousness might be imputed unto them also."
    - a. Abraham had been justified prior to being circumcised; his circumcision was a seal (or sign) of being in covenant relationship with God. Paul emphasizes the medium of Abraham's justification (faith); James 2:21 deals with the specific time of his justification: "Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar?"
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- b. Paul and James are writing for two different purposes. Paul was combatting Judaizers who claimed justification came by the Mosaic Law; James writes to Christians who evidently tried to rely upon faith without obedience for justification; Paul discusses the works of the Law; James speaks of the works required under the gospel.
  - c. In Genesis 15, verses five and seven give the primary line of thought; verse six is inserted by inspiration: "And he brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be. And he believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness. And he said unto him, I am the LORD that brought thee out of Ur of the Chaldees, to give thee this land to inherit it" (Gen. 15:5-7). For Paul's point, Genesis 15 was the logical place for this statement rather than Genesis 22.
  - d. Abraham was not justified by circumcision, but by faith; his faith began when he left Ur of the Chaldees; it was perfected when he offered Isaac. Circumcision was a sign of the covenant between God and Abraham: "And ye shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin; and it shall be a token of the covenant betwixt me and you" (Gen. 17:11). His justification grew out of his faith (which led him to obey God).
4. Verse 12: "And the father of circumcision to them who are not of the circumcision only, but who also walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham, which he had being yet uncircumcised."
- a. Abraham became the father of the faithful, without regard to circumcision. His faith was the means to his justification. Faith is the means to justification under the New Covenant. "For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love" (Gal. 5:6).
  - b. James 2:18: "Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: show me thy faith without thy works, and I will show thee my faith by my works."
  - c. James 2:21-24: "Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect? And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God. Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only."
- C. Romans 4:13-25: The Abrahamic Promise was not Fulfilled in the Law of Moses.
1. Verse 13: "For the promise, that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith."
    - a. Abraham became the father of a few material nations (Israel; Arabs), but a multitude of nations in the spiritual sense; every generation of Christians from the various nations of earth can be said to be his descendants.
      - 1) Genesis 17:4: "As for me, behold, my covenant is with thee, and thou shalt be a father of many nations."
      - 2) Galatians 3:29: "And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."
      - 3) Genesis 12:1-3: "Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee: And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed."
    - b. Abraham was heir of the world (received an inheritance in the world) mainly through his spiritual offspring. The promise was fulfilled, not through the Mosaic Law, but through the righteousness which comes by faith (the New Covenant).
    - c. The Old Law was a schoolmaster (pedagogue); as the pedagogue brought the children to the door of the schoolhouse, so the Law brought the Jewish people to Christ so they could be fully instructed: "Wherefore then *serveth* the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come
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- to whom the promise was made; *and it was* ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator. Now a mediator is not *a mediator* of one, but God is one. *Is* the law then against the promises of God? God forbid: for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law. But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe. But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed. Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster *to bring us* unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster" (Gal. 3:19-25).
- d. Genesis 22:18: "And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice." The Seed is identified by Paul in Galatians 3:16 as Christ: "Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ."
2. Verses 14-15: "For if they which are of the law be heirs, faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect: Because the law worketh wrath: for where no law is, there is no transgression."
    - a. Paul has already demonstrated that Abraham was justified prior to the giving of the Law, and that the great promise made to Abraham was not intended to be fulfilled in the Law.
    - b. Therefore, he concludes here, if the Jews are the primary heirs of the promise, then the promise is made of none effect. This is true because of the principles he had already established. The Law was unable to justify those who had committed sin; but the system of faith (the New Covenant) was able to do so.
    - c. The Law identified sin and condemned those who committed sin. It had no provisions for removing the guilt of sin (Heb. 10:1-4; Acts 13:38-39). The purpose of God's law was to identify sin and hinder its spread.
      - 1) **Sin** means "to miss the mark." It is done by transgressing some overt command or principle of the law, or by failing to do what was required by the law (1 John 3:4; Jas. 4:17).
      - 2) Where there is no law, there can be no sin. Law requires and forbids. It sets up a standard that must be observed. If there were no required standard, there could be no transgressions of that standard, thus no sin. "For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law" (Rom. 5:13).
      - 3) Since there is such a thing as sin, even under the New Covenant, therefore we can **know** that God has a **law** in effect today. The gospel is a legal document, a law.
        - a) Romans 3:27: "Where *is* boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith."
        - b) Romans 8:2: "For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death."
        - c) Galatians 6:2: "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ."
  3. Verse 16: "Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham; who is the father of us all."
    - a. The promise God gave to Abraham, and which finds its primary fulfillment in the gospel, is obtained by faith so that it might be provided by grace, and not earned by human merit.
    - b. Otherwise, there could be no certainty about our inheritance, for no one can perfectly keep any law. If there were a means of detecting every violation of civil law, how many people would not be lawbreakers? Very few, if any! It is virtually impossible to keep from exceeding the speed limits, or to report to the IRS every penny which comes into our possession. Technically, even one mile above the speed limit is a violation of law, and even a dollar unreported to the IRS is an infraction.
    - c. Since we cannot even keep man's law perfectly, it is certain we cannot obey God's law without a single infraction! How thankful ought we to be that we are not under such a cold system as the Mosaic Law, a code that identified sin and prescribed the proper penalty, but which could not of itself remove a
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- single guilt!
- d. The New Testament often speaks of the confidence which Christians can have.
    - 1) Ephesians 3:12: "In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him."
    - 2) Philippians 1:25: "And having this confidence, I know that I shall abide and continue with you all for your furtherance and joy of faith."
    - 3) Hebrews 3:6: "But Christ as a son over his own house; whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end."
    - 4) Hebrews 3:14: "For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end."
    - 5) Hebrews 10:35: "Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward."
    - 6) 1 John 2:28: "And now, little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming."
    - 7) 1 John 3:21-22; "Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, *then* have we confidence toward God. And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight."
    - 8) 1 John 5:14: "And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us."
  - e. The New Testament often speaks of the boldness which Christians can have.
    - 1) Acts 4:13: "Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus."
    - 2) Acts 4:29: "And now, Lord, behold their threatenings: and grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word."
    - 3) Acts 4:31: "And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness."
    - 4) Philippians 1:20 "According to my earnest expectation and *my* hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but *that* with all boldness, as always, *so* now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether *it be* by life, or by death."
    - 5) 1 Timothy 3:13: "For they that have used the office of a deacon well purchase to themselves a good degree, and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus."
    - 6) Hebrews 10:19: "Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus."
    - 7) 1 John 4:17-18: "Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world. There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love."
  - f. While none of us can perfectly keep the law of Christ, yet we must endeavor to do that very thing! As we walk in the light of the gospel, doing the best we can, the Lord will take care of our omissions and transgressions (1 John 1:7-10). Confidence is one thing, and over-confidence is another; the former ought to characterize us, but the latter must never be part of our character. When we perceive an omission or transgression, we repent and ask for the Lord's forgiveness.
  - g. These features of the New Covenant pertain to all who call upon the name of Christ, the Jew and the Gentile. In this matter, we all partake of the faith of Abraham, believing and obeying the will of God to the best of our ability, and relying on his grace to see us through.
4. Verse 17: "As it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations, before him whom he believed, even God, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were."
- a. Paul appeals to a statement in Genesis 17:5 for proof of the preceding idea that Abraham is the father of all the faithful: "Neither shall thy name any more be called Abram, but thy name shall be Abraham; for a father of many nations have I made thee."
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- b. Abraham believed God, one who can give life to the dead, and who calls things that are not, as though they were. God is able to speak of future events and things as already in existence, although centuries must pass before they occur. "But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day *is* with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (2 Pet. 3:8-9).
5. Verses 18-19: "Who against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations, according to that which was spoken, So shall thy seed be. And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sara's womb."
- a. Continuing his discussion of Abraham, the apostle affirms that the patriarch believed in hope even though there appeared to be no reason for hope. God had promised that he would not only have a son, but that he would become father of many nations! But Abraham was aged, as was his wife Sarah.
- b. We have not seen heaven, but we have God's promise that the faithful will populate that glorious abode of the soul. We have not seen anyone who has been raised up from the dead, but God promises to quicken us from the grave (John 5:28-29; 1 Cor. 15). Our lives are built on hope, and are sustained by hope. "For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it" (Rom. 8:24-25).
- c. As Abraham took God at his word, so we take him at his word; and as that grand old patriarch remained loyal to Jehovah, so are we determined to be faithful unto death.
- d. Abraham believed God, even though his body was now dead as far as producing offspring was concerned; nor did he allow the deadness of Sarah's womb to keep him from trusting God's promise. He was not disappointed by his faith!
6. Verses 20-21: "He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform."
- a. The patriarch was fully persuaded that God could and would do what he had promised to do. His life had been filled with proofs of God's providential powers. He gave glory to God by his constant faith in his word.
- b. He did not stagger (waver) in unbelief. "But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed" (Jas. 1:6).
7. Verse 22: "And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness."
- a. Man is prone to give up when his object is not obtained quickly. Many years passed before God fulfilled his promise to Abraham, but not because God was unable to do it sooner; the patriarch needed time to develop the trust necessary to fulfill his role as "the father of the faithful."
- b. Because of the remarkable faith of this great man, he is the most outstanding example of faith in the Old Testament (Heb. 11:8-19). God reckoned his faith for righteousness. The following is from the author's commentary on the book of James (Jas. 2:23):
- 1) The scripture (Gen. 15:6) is declared to have been fulfilled when Abraham's faith was perfected. It is most important to notice when this scripture was fulfilled: it was not until his faith was perfected in his offering Isaac as God directed (Gen. 22; Jas. 2:21-22). Offering Isaac fulfilled the statement of Genesis 15:6.
  - 2) Abraham was a believer earlier (Gen. 15:6). God acknowledged him as a believer, and his faith was *reckoned* for righteousness. To reckon is to regard, deem, consider, account. Thus God deemed, considered, regarded Abraham's faith as righteousness (right-doing). Faith itself became an act of obedience since there was no act of obedience required of him at the time to show outwardly that he believed what God had promised regarding a vast posterity.
  - 3) "In the nature of the case, the promise of great posterity involved matters which would require considerable time for their development; hence, there was nothing more, at the moment, for
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Abraham to do but to accept, without hesitation, the assurances of such from God. Thus, he did; and his acceptance thereof, became an act of righteousness which God, in his turn, accepted, and put to Abraham's account for righteousness (right-doing). It is a violent perversion of this passage and historic incident from it to assume that because Abraham's faith was accepted as an act of righteousness when there was nothing else required of him at the time that in our case faith will suffice without the performance of those conditions which are required of us now. Even in Abraham's case, as James so clearly shows, the patriarch's faith did not reach its consummation, its fulfillment, until it had translated itself into action in the offering of Isaac" (Guy N. Woods, *Commentary on James*, pp.146f).

8. Verses 23-25: "Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him; But for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification."
    - a. The details of Abraham's experiences and faith were not written for his sake only, although such faith ought to be recorded because of its greatness. But the story of Abraham's faith is needed for the benefit of future generations, including our own.
    - b. It is important that we know that Abraham's faith was imputed to him for righteousness, since our faith will bless us also. Our faith must rest on God, who raised up Jesus from the dead. Abraham believed that God would be able to give him a son, and through that son, a multitude of nations. We must believe that God resurrected Christ from the dead, for on that great event is based our hope, in this life and in eternity.
    - c. His resurrection would be meaningless, however, without his sinless life, his perfect teachings, and his sacrificial death, all of which prove him to be the Son of God, the Savior of our souls.
    - d. Christ was delivered to the cross because of our offenses against God, and he was raised up from the dead for our justification. The greatest and most important events of all time are the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ! This supreme truth was something the Jews in general had not accepted, and which the Judaizers had failed to comprehend.
  9. Romans 4 shows that works without faith cannot save; James 2 shows that faith without works cannot save.
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## ROMANS 5

### A. Romans 5:1-11: The Blessings of Salvation Which Faith Provides.

1. Verse 1: "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."
  - a. Having shown that justification cannot be obtained through the works of the Law, Paul affirms that we can be justified by faith. His previous argumentation has proved this truth, so he could logically introduce this fact here by **therefore**. To be justified is to be considered by the Lord as having never been guilty of sin.
  - b. The verse does not teach, directly or indirectly, that justification is by faith alone. "There is more rebellion than faith in the heart of one who will not do what God commands" (Whiteside, p.116). The blessings of God have always been obtained by obedient faith (Heb. 11).
    - 1) Luke 6:46: "And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?"
    - 2) Romans 1:5: "By whom we have received grace and apostleship, for obedience to the faith among all nations, for his name."
    - 3) Romans 6:16-18: "Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness."
    - 4) Romans 16:26: "But now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith."
    - 5) James 2:14-26: "What *doth it* profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him? If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, And one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be *ye* warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what *doth it* profit? Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone. Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: show me thy faith without thy works, and I will show thee my faith by my works. Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble. But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead? Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect? And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God. Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only. Likewise also was not Rahab the harlot justified by works, when she had received the messengers, and had sent *them* out another way? For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also."
  - c. Peace with God is the blessing specified in this verse. To be in a state of sin is be hostile toward God, whether one realizes it or not. But if one faithfully obeys the gospel, he has peace with God (Eph. 2:11-22).
  - d. This peace is made possible by the sacrificial death of Christ (Phil. 4:6,7,9; Acts 10:36). Peace is one of the prominent blessings Christians have.
    - 1) Romans 8:6: "For to be carnally minded *is* death; but to be spiritually minded *is* life and peace."
    - 2) Romans 14:17: "For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost."
    - 3) Romans 14:19: "Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another."
    - 4) Romans 15:13: "Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost."
    - 5) 2 Corinthians 13:11: "Finally, brethren, farewell. Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind,

- live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you."
- 6) Galatians 6:16: "And as many as walk according to this rule, peace *be* on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God."
  - 7) Ephesians 1:3: "Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly *places* in Christ."
2. Verse 2: "By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God."
- a. Not only do we have peace with God instead of being at enmity with him, but through Christ we have access into the grace of God. Grace is the ground upon which a child of God stands; without grace there could be no hope for any man.
  - b. All spiritual blessings are in Christ (Eph. 1:3). It is through Christ that we have peace with God (Rom. 5:1); and we have access into God's grace through Christ. But it is in Christ that we have these advantages. We enter Christ by means of baptism (Gal. 3:26-27; Rom. 6:1-18). The grace of God is available in Christ, hence we must be in him to obtain its benefits.
  - c. Since faithful saints enjoy the blessings of God's grace in Christ, we can rejoice in hope of the glory of God. Our past sins are forgiven; we walk in daily communion with our God by walking in the light of our Savior's word (1 John 1:7); the continual forgiveness of our omissions and commissions is our daily benefit, as we seek to do the very best we can (Rom. 4:7-8); we live in constant realization that eternal life in heaven awaits us, an unending life amid the glory of God. Therefore, we have good reason to rejoice!
    - 1) Philippians 3:20-21: "For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself."
    - 2) Philippians 4:4: "Rejoice in the Lord alway: *and* again I say, Rejoice."
    - 3) 1 Peter 1:3-5: "Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time."
    - 4) 2 Peter 1:3-4: "According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that *pertain* unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust."
  - d. Our blessings in Christ are sufficient to make us gloriously happy and contented; but in them there is no cause for boasting, for we did not earn any of these advantages.
  - e. In the first two verses of this chapter, Paul emphasizes peace and grace; these are commonly made part of his greetings to the brethren in his epistles.
3. Verses 3-4: "And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; And patience, experience; and experience, hope."
- a. Not only does the mature Christian rejoice in hope of the glory of God which awaits him in heaven, he also rejoices in tribulations. What a paradox! Rejoicing over having tribulations!
  - b. We rejoice over our tribulations which come upon us because of our faithfulness, not for the hardships which are the common lot of all men. There is no special cause for exultation over these ordinary troubles, for they come upon the evil and the good. But when we suffer for the sake of Christ (Matt. 5:10-12), we are made stronger, and thus our eternal reward becomes more certain for us. These tribulations also show us that we have the loving concern of our heavenly Father (Heb. 12:1-11).
  - c. Tribulation produces patience (steadfastness; endurance). The apostles forsook the Lord and fled from the garden in terror when the mob apprehended Christ (Matt. 26:56). But later when they were beaten
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for preaching the gospel, and threatened with even greater consequences if they spoke in the name of Christ any more, they rejoiced "that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name" (Acts 5:41-42). "For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise" (Heb. 10:36).

- d. Patience produces experience (approvedness, ASV). Tribulations develop greater steadfastness in us; and this strength to endure results in having God's approval. "My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; Knowing *this*, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have *her* perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing" (Jas. 1:2-4). The *temptations* James describes here are tribulations which test our faith.
- e. These are hard on the body, but good for the soul. Having the approval of God is the greatest of good, and to die without it is the greatest tragedy.
  - 1) Matthew 16:26: "For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"
  - 2) Luke 9:25: "For what is a man advantaged, if he gain the whole world, and lose himself, or be cast away?"
- f. Having God's approval produces hope. Knowing that we have God's good pleasure builds hope within us. Hope sustains us in our daily struggles and disappointments; we know that something far better awaits us in eternity. Hope lies ahead of us, calling us on.
  - 1) Romans 8:24-25: "For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, *then* do we with patience wait for *it*."
  - 2) 2 Corinthians 4:14-18: "Knowing that he which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also by Jesus, and shall present *us* with you. For all things *are* for your sakes, that the abundant grace might through the thanksgiving of many redound to the glory of God. For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward *man* is renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding *and* eternal weight of glory; While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen *are* temporal; but the things which are not seen *are* eternal."
  - 3) 2 Corinthians 5:1-11: "For we know that if our earthly house of *this* tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven: If so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked. For we that are in *this* tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life. Now he that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing *is* God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit. Therefore *we are* always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord: (For we walk by faith, not by sight:) We are confident, *I say*, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord. Wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things *done* in *his* body, according to that he hath done, whether *it be* good or bad. Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are made manifest unto God; and I trust also are made manifest in your consciences."
  - 4) Romans 8:18: "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time *are* not worthy *to be compared* with the glory which shall be revealed in us."
  - 5) Philippians 1:21-26: "For to me to live *is* Christ, and to die *is* gain. But if I live in the flesh, this *is* the fruit of my labour: yet what I shall choose I wot not. For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better: Nevertheless to abide in the flesh *is* more needful for you. And having this confidence, I know that I shall abide and continue with you all for your furtherance and joy of faith; That your rejoicing may be more abundant in Jesus Christ



- for me by my coming to you again."
- 6) Hebrews 11:10: "For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker *is* God."
  - 7) Hebrews 13:14: "For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come."
  - 8) 1 John 3:1-3: "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure."
4. Verse 5: "And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us."
- a. "Buoyed by bright hopes of future good enables us to bear with fortitude present sufferings. Hope reaches forward, pierces the vale of the future, takes hold of the blessings reserved in heaven, and serves as an anchor to hold the soul firm and stedfast in union with God" (Libscomb, p.95).
  - b. Because the power of God insures the reality of the hope a faithful saint has, there is no possibility that we will be ashamed by his inability to fulfil our aspirations for glory. And there is nothing that is associated with our hope that will bring us shame. We will not be disappointed in heaven, and although our enemies may seek to humiliate us here, yet we see their efforts bringing glory to Christ through us, and honor to us by our faithful endurance.
  - c. How does the Holy Spirit spread the love (agape) of God in our hearts? "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins" (1 John 4:10). How do we know God first loved us? He declared it in his word (Rom. 5:5-8; John 3:16).
    - 1) The context of the text indicates that the love of God is his love for us (see Rom. 5:5-11). Also, *the love of God* is genitive singular, meaning "God's love."
    - 2) He did not make us **feel** his love, but he **told** us of his love, and demonstrated his love by sending his Son to the cross. Credit is given to the Holy Spirit here because he revealed and confirmed the word of God. See 1 Corinthians 2:9-14; 15:1-4.
    - 3) The apostles received the baptism of the Holy Spirit which provided them with full inspiration and authority to be ambassadors of Christ; those upon whom they laid hands received spiritual gifts which enabled them to preach and confirm the revealed word (1 Cor. 12:1-10; Acts 8:14-17; 19:6; Rom. 1:11). Through this means the Spirit "spread abroad in our hearts" knowledge of God's love for fallen man.
    - 4) Some want to make this operation on the part of the Holy Spirit a direct action. But that would mean that we are not responsible for studying the Bible to learn of God's love; this knowledge would be directly infused into our minds by the Spirit. However, God does not give us any kind of knowledge in that fashion today. If the love in the verse is our love for God, and it is provided directly by the Spirit, our love for God would be something done to us, not by us. What kind of glory could God derive from us that did not arise willingly from within us?
    - 5) The Holy Spirit revealed in the inspired word all the information, examples and motives for us to obtain the same disposition and concern which is possessed by the Lord. God loves his enemies and his friends; he teaches us to do likewise (Matt. 5:43-48); God loves truth and holiness; he teaches us to do so (John 8:32; 17:17; 2 The. 2:10-12; Prov. 23:23; 1 Pet. 1:15-16; 2 Cor. 7:1; Heb. 12:14-15).
5. Verse 6: "For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly."
- a. While we (all accountable individuals) were without strength, Christ died for the ungodly. Those who are contaminated by sin are weak; they need salvation, but have no strength of their own to save themselves; and no other human can save them.
  - b. But when the proper time arrived, Christ died for the ungodly. "But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law" (Gal. 4:4). This verse,
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combined with Galatians 3:16 and Genesis 22:18, makes the meaning of Genesis 3:15 very clear: the seed of woman is Christ, who had no human father.

- 1) Genesis 3:15: "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel."
  - 2) Genesis 22:18: "And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice."
  - 3) Galatians 3:16: "Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ."
- c. A thorough preparation was essential before Christ should come. And the timing of his coming was important. A wide-spread language (Greek) was in place; the Romans ruled the world, which made entry into the various areas subject to their liberal travel policies, and their road-building projects gave access to all their territory. These things would facilitate the spread of the Messiah's message.
- d. The power and nature of God's love is seen in his allowing his Son to die for ungodly people, even those who hate the God of Heaven.
6. Verses 7-8: "For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."
- a. A righteous man in Paul's statement is distinct from a good man; his point is based on these two individuals being different.
  - b. This righteous man (here) is not necessarily a good man. This righteous person is one who does only what justice demands; he does not operate on the basis of the *golden rule* or the principles of the beatitudes. He is totally honest in his dealings with others, but he may not be a tenderhearted or likeable man. For such a person one would scarcely be willing to give his life.
  - c. A few might be inclined to forfeit his life for a good man. A few rare cases could likely be found where one person would be willing to die in behalf of a good man. A good man, in the Scriptures, is one like Barnabas (Acts 4:34-37; 11:22-24). A good man is a "second miler," one who goes beyond his duty to others. The apostle indicates the rarity of such a case by saying, "peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die."
  - d. By way of contrast, Paul affirms that Christ was willing to die for lost men, even though we were steeped in sin. Sin is rebellion against the will of God; sinners willfully perpetuate this rebellion. Verse six plainly describes sinful men as "the ungodly" (the wicked). The **we** of verse six and **the ungodly** of the same verse refer to the same people.
  - e. God commends (*sunistemi*) his love for us in the sacrificial death of Christ. The word *commendeth* means *declares* or *shows* (cf. 2 Cor. 4:2; 6:4; 10:18; 12:11). Vine defines the word as, "lit., to place together, denotes to introduce one person to another, represent as worthy" (Vol. I, p.211).
  - f. God introduced (announced; declared) his love for sinful man by having his Son die on the cross. The most sublime truth of all time is stated here: "Christ died for us." This is the grand theme of God's eternal plan (Eph. 3:1-11; John 3:16; Rev. 13:8). It is the heart of the Bible's message, without which there would be no hope for anyone.
  - g. Christ died for us while we were yet sinners. This is in glaring contrast to verse seven. For one to die for an austere (righteous) man would be rare indeed; to do so even for a good man would be unlikely; but Christ died for the wicked of this world, which includes every accountable person (Rom. 3:23, 9-20).
7. Verse 9: "Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him."
- a. There are two phases of salvation: the first is salvation from the guilt of past sins in our lives; the second is salvation from eternal death. If we were to be saved from past guilt, that would be marvelous; but to be delivered from hell, and saved in heaven, is the greatest benefit we can obtain.
    - 1) John 5:28-29: "Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life;

- and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation."
- 2) 2 Thessalonians 1:6-10: "Seeing *it is* a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you; And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power; When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day."
  - 3) Revelation 2:11: "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death."
  - 4) Revelation 21:8: "But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death."
- b. God's Son delivered Daniel's companions from the fiery furnace, and he can keep us from the Devil's *furnace*: "Then Nebuchadnezzar the king was astonished, and rose up in haste, and spake, and said unto his counsellors, Did not we cast three men bound into the midst of the fire? They answered and said unto the king, True, O king. He answered and said, Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt; and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God" (Dan. 3:24-25).
  - c. Faithful Christians are presently justified by the blood of Christ, and they shall be saved from the punishment which God's wrath shall bring upon the ungodly in eternity. The blood of Christ is given as the foundation of our salvation and hope.
  - d. Both phases of salvation are accomplished by the power of Christ. Although no condition is stated in the verse, faith and obedience are elsewhere given.
    - 1) Matthew 10:22: "And ye shall be hated of all *men* for my name's sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved."
    - 2) Acts 2:38: "Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."
    - 3) Acts 18:8: "And Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his house; and many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized."
  - e. The wrath of God is not an explosion of anger; it is more judicial than emotional. When sentence against a condemned criminal is pronounced by a judge, the penalty is not imposed in a fit of rage, but rather it is a solemn pronouncement.
8. Verse 10: "For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life."
- a. Since it is the case that we were reconciled to God by the **death** of Christ, we shall certainly be saved by his **life**.
  - b. Sinful individuals must be reconciled to God; it was man who left God; God did not desert man (Isa. 59:1-2; Rom. 3:9-20, 23; Ezek. 18:20, 30-32; Isa. 1:18; 2 Cor. 5:18-21; Mark 16:15-16; Eph. 2:11-22). Only the creeds of men teach that God must be reconciled with man; the Bible does not do so.
  - c. Because we, by our manner of life, were enemies of God, there was the need for us to be reconciled to God. Sin (to miss the mark) and iniquity (lawlessness) are used in the Bible to describe our rebellion against God. We were hostile to his will; we were his enemies; there was no peace between us and God.
  - d. But Christ's death made it possible for us to be reconciled with God, and thus to have peace with him (5:1). But there is another benefit beyond reconciliation: we shall be saved by the life of Christ.
  - e. If the death of the Savior could reconcile us to God, his resurrected life can save from eternal death. A dead Savior is of no use to anyone, but a living Savior is able to bless and help. Because he is alive, our Lord offers much help and hope to his faithful saints.
    - 1) He adds the obedient to the church (Acts 2:37-47; Col. 1:13-14).
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- 2) He provides the means to escape temptations (1 Cor. 10:13).
  - 3) He dispenses mercy and grace in times of need (Heb. 4:15-16).
  - 4) He ever lives to make intercession in our behalf (Heb. 7:25-28; 9:24).
  - 5) He has authority over all men, whether they acknowledge his power or not (1 Cor. 15:25-26; Phil. 2:9-12; Matt. 28:18).
  - 6) He has left a full record of his perfect life on earth, which serves us as a model of how to live (1 Pet. 2:21-25; 1 Cor. 11:1).
9. Verse 11: "And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement."
- a. But not only do we have reconciliation and salvation, we may also rejoice in our Savior. The world is filled with trouble and woe; the sinner is filled with many stains of sin; there are many hardships which even faithful saints must face. But in spite of these problems, because we follow the Savior, we have reason to rejoice.
  - b. Jeremiah 9:23-24: "Thus saith the LORD, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches: But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the LORD which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the LORD."
  - c. We may rejoice because we have been reconciled (received the benefits of the atonement). On the day of atonement, the Jews of the Old Testament had their guilt rolled forward for another year (Lev. 16; Heb. 10:1-4); that was reason to make that day one of rejoicing. But when we obey the gospel, our past sins are taken away, never to be remembered against us any more (Heb. 8:12-13). How much greater should be our joy!
- B. Romans 5:12-19: The Effect of Adam's Sin is Counterbalanced by the Sacrifice of Christ.
1. Verse 12: "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned."
    - a. Through the disobedience of Adam (and Eve), sin entered the world. Although we had nothing to do with their sinful conduct, yet the consequences of their rebellion are passed on to us. We do not partake of their guilt, but because they became guilty, the earth was cursed, death entered the human family, and many troubles and heartaches now characterize our race; these are consequences of the original act of disobedience. See Genesis 3.
    - b. But what we lost through Adam's sin, we are more than compensated for by the obedience of Christ.
      - 1) We lost physical life unconditionally; but Christ restored what we lost by making the resurrection possible (all will be unconditionally raised up at the end of time).
        - a) John 5:28-29: "Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation."
        - b) 1 Corinthians 15:21-22: "For since by man *came* death, by man *came* also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive."
      - 2) Adam lost access to the tree of life by his sin (Gen. 3:22-24); access to it is restored by Christ (Rev. 22:14).
        - a) Genesis 3:22-24: "And the LORD God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever: Therefore the LORD God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken. So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life."
        - b) Revelation 22:14: "Blessed *are* they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city."
      - 3) Adam lost the Paradise of Eden; but Christ made the Paradise of Heaven accessible to all: "Let not
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- your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if *it were* not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, *there* ye may be also" (John 14:1-3).
- 4) Adam lost the close fellowship with God that he had enjoyed; Christ restored to us this fellowship.
    - a) Romans 5:1-2: "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God."
    - b) Ephesians 2:11-12: "Wherefore remember, that ye *being* in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world."
  - c. Sin originated, not with Adam, but with Satan. Satan is called the father of liars (John 8:44); he lied to Eve (Gen. 3:1-6). "For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast *them* down to hell, and delivered *them* into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment" (2 Pet. 2:4). Adam and Eve opened the door for sin to enter this world.
  - d. Sin entered the world by the sin of one man: Adam (and his wife); and death entered the world by means of sin. But what kind of death is meant? Physical or spiritual death? God promised that Adam would die **in the day** that he ate the forbidden fruit. Since Adam did not die physically on the very day he disobeyed the Lord, the kind of death he suffered was spiritual. He began to age when he committed this sin, and eventually died physically, but he died spiritually the instant he sinned; that is, he was separated from God by his sin (Isa. 59:1-2). The basic idea of **death** is separation (Jas. 2:26). When we become guilty of sin, we are separated from God; when we are driven from the Judgment seat of Christ, we will be eternally dead (Rev. 20:20:12-15).
  - e. "So death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." This statement is difficult. We must decide what kind of death is meant.
    - 1) If we say that Paul means death in the physical sense, then we have this problem: If one never committed a single act of sin (as in the case of Christ), the individual would not be required to die. But infants and adults (who have never had a right mind) often die; they have never committed sin. Why do they die if they are guiltless of sin? One possible explanation is that every single human being was destined to die because of Adam's sin; that each person sinned representatively when the father of our race committed sin. But that entails the matter of guilt; if we sinned representatively by Adam, would we not all also partake of his guilt? Yet the Bible says that the individual will suffer only the penalty of his own sin (Ezek. 18:20).
    - 2) Spiritual death is the better explanation. Each person suffers spiritual death when he commits sin, for he is separated from God at that point (Isa. 59:1-2). Only those who become guilty of sin experience spiritual death. Reconciliation is conditional; we must obey the gospel in order to obtain this benefit. Guilt is likewise conditional; we must transgress the will of God before we become guilty of sin and must pay the penalty (1 John 3:4). The drawback to this view is that death is not taken in its ordinary sense; one rule of biblical interpretation is to understand a passage or a word in its literal sense unless there is something in the verse or context which requires that it be taken as a figure of speech. But there is such a requirement here—infants and mentally-deficient ones die; they are guiltless; so the death must not be physical death; since it is not physical death, it is spiritual death.
  2. Verses 13-14: "For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law. Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come."
    - a. Paul inserts a parenthetical statement beginning with this verse and concluding with verse seventeen; the main thought passes from verse twelve to verse eighteen. Verses 13-17 are given to explain verse
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- 12; verse 18 provides the conclusion. Paul affirms that sin was in the world from Adam to Moses.
- b. Since sin is not charged where there is no law, Paul implies that God had some kind of law in effect from the time of Adam until he gave the Mosaic Law through Moses. In Adam's case, the law was expressed in Genesis 2:16-17 where he forbade their eating the fruit of the tree of knowledge, and in the requirement to dress and to keep the Garden of Eden (Gen. 2:15).
  - c. The eternal principles stated in nine of the ten commandments (with number 4 excluded) were bound on everyone from Adam to Moses; these are still bound in the New Covenant. All men were held accountable to these timeless precepts, plus anything else which God required of them individually.
    - 1) Noah was commanded to build an ark; Abram was told to leave his home and kindred; other specific directions were given to other people. The Sodomites were destroyed because they violated God's moral precepts of sexual purity.
    - 2) We who live in America are more accountable to God than were those who lived during the Patriarchal Age, because we have the great advantage of having easy access to the full Word of God. "And that servant, which knew his lord's will, and prepared not *himself*, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many *stripes*. But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few *stripes*. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more" (Luke 12:47-48).
  - d. When those individuals living before the giving of the Law of Moses transgressed one or more of these unwritten laws, they sinned.
    - 1) Death reigned during that time frame because sin was present; those who sinned, died spiritually; they were separated from God. This was true even though none of these committed the same transgression Adam committed.
    - 2) No one could enter the Garden of Eden, which was presumably destroyed by God in the flood or in some other way and time. None but Adam and Eve ever had opportunity to eat the forbidden fruit. Anyhow, the prohibition was given only to Adam and his wife. God's law requires and prohibits; when it is violated by some act of direct transgression or by omission of what is bound, sin is the result.
      - a) James 4:17: "Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth *it not*, to him it is sin."
      - b) 1 John 3:4: "Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law."
  - e. Adam is said to be "the figure" of Christ. **Figure** is from the Greek word *tupos*, and means "pattern or type." There are many points of comparison between Adam and Christ (they are also called *the first and second Adam*: 1 Cor. 15:45).
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FIRST ADAM	SECOND ADAM
Son of God	<b>Son</b> of God
Head of Physical Race of Mankind	Head of Spiritual Race of Mankind
Miraculous Entrance Into World	Virgin Birth
Entered World Free From Sin	Entered World Free From Sin
Capable of Being Tempted—Fell	Capable of Being Tempted—Sinless
Received Name From God	Received Name From God
Given Bride—Eve	Given Bride—Church
Deep Sleep Before Bride Given	Sleep of Death Before Bride Given
Side Opened Before Bride Given	Side Pierced Before Bride Given
Only One Bride	Only One Bride
Authority Over Bride	Authority Over Bride
Bride Took Name of Husband	Bride Wears Name of Christ

3. Verse 15: "But not as the offence, so also is the free gift. For if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many."
- a. There is a disparity between the consequence of Adam's sin and the blessings provided by the obedience of Christ. What we lost in Adam is more than compensated for in Christ.
  - b. Adam's sin resulted in all his descendants entering the grave; but the resurrection brings us all from the grave and gives heaven (to the faithful), where greater blessings are given than could ever have been obtained in Eden.
  - c. We can escape spiritual death by obeying Christ; and physical death is nullified by the resurrection; and eternal death is avoided by following Christ.
  - d. The offence committed by Adam brought much suffering and sorrow upon the human race, but the grace of God, exhibited through the gospel, brings blessings that far surpass these hardships.
    - 1) Romans 8:18: "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time *are* not worthy *to be compared* with the glory which shall be revealed in us."
    - 2) 2 Corinthians 4:16-18: "For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward *man* is renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding *and* eternal weight of glory; While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen *are* temporal; but the things which are not seen *are* eternal."
    - 3) 2 Corinthians 5:1-11: "For we know that if our earthly house of *this* tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven: If so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked. For we that are in *this* tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life. Now he that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing *is* God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit. Therefore *we are* always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at

home in the body, we are absent from the Lord: (For we walk by faith, not by sight:) We are confident, *I say*, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord. Wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things *done* in *his* body, according to that he hath done, whether *it be* good or bad. Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are made manifest unto God; and I trust also are made manifest in your consciences."

- e. But these blessing of the gospel are not possessed by those out of Christ!
  - 1) Ephesians 1:3: "Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly *places* in Christ."
  - 2) Ephesians 2:11-12: "Wherefore remember, that ye *being* in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world."
  - 3) 2 Timothy 2:10: "Therefore I endure all things for the elect's sakes, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory."
4. Verse 16: "And not as it was by one that sinned, so is the gift: for the judgment was by one to condemnation, but the free gift is of many offences unto justification."
  - a. Another distinction between the offense of Adam and the obedience of Christ is stated here. By Adam's sin, all of his descendants were condemned to sorrow and death in this world; but the obedience of Christ resulted in a gift by which all can be freed from their personal offenses [the majority choose otherwise—Matt. 7:13-14).
  - b. Only one sin condemned Adam and his race to physical death; but Christ made it possible for any person to be forgiven of many sins!
    - 1) Matthew 26:28: "For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins."
    - 2) Luke 19:10: "For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost."
    - 3) 1 Timothy 2:4-5: "Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. For *there is* one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus."
    - 4) Titus 2:11-12: "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world."
    - 5) Hebrews 2:9: "But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man."
5. Verse 17: "For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ."
  - a. Death reigned over the race because of one man's sins; but many will obtain life through Christ. The *gift of righteousness* is the remission of sins. From the divine side, it is a gift; no man could earn it. From the human viewpoint, it is something received, with no hope of paying for it. Faithful Christians are alive spiritually during their life on earth; they have received the abundance of grace and the gift of righteousness.
  - b. This verse does not say that we enter the world with the guilt of Adam's sins upon our souls. We cannot be condemned for the sins of our forebears (Ezek. 18:20); it does not matter how wicked our father or mother may have been, we do not imbibe their guilt just because they are our parents (Ezek. 18:20). And it is certain that we do not obtain guilt from God!
    - 1) If Adam had introduced smallpox into the world, would this mean everyone would be born with smallpox? We would all face the possibility of developing that dreaded disease, but that would not mean we would enter the world with the malady. See Whiteside, p.124.



- 2) To say that we enter the world where sin reigns is not the same as to say we enter the world already guilty of sin; we will all face sin, but we do not enter the world already guilty.
- c. Notice these points of comparison:

<b>ADAM</b>	<b>MEN TODAY</b>
State of Purity	State of Condemnation: Rom. 3:23
Satan Preached Lie: Gen. 3:1-6	Truth Preached: Mark 16:15-16
Heard Lie	Hear Truth
Believed Lie	Believe Truth
Obedied Lie: Gen. 3:6	Obey Truth: 1 Pet. 1:22-23
State of Condemnation	State of Salvation

- d. If one departs from the standard of truth in doctrine or practice, he must return to the strait and narrow by the same distance as the deviation.
6. Verses 18-19: "Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous."
- a. The main thought flows from verse 12 to verse 18: "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned....Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life."
- b. Condemnation entered the world by the offense of one man—Adam; by the righteousness of one man (Christ) all men are given the privilege of obtaining justification which gives life.
- c. Stating the point in different words in verse nineteen, the apostle says that men became sinners through one man's disobedience, and many became righteous by one man's obedience. Neither of these two operations is unconditional.
- 1) If they were unconditional, then everyone would be born guilty of sin because of Adam's sin, and everyone would become righteous because of Christ's obedience.
- 2) But both of the operations are conditional. No one becomes guilty of sin until he disobeys God's law (Ezek. 18:20); and no sinner is justified until he obeys God's law of pardon (Rom. 6:16-18).
- C. Romans 5:20-21: The Purpose of the Law in the Old Economy.
1. Verse 20: "Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound."
- a. The Law was given to identify and restrain sin. It showed what God wanted and what he forbade. Penalties were stated which urged men to refrain from committing sin. By appealing to man's higher nature and by warning man of the punishment of sin, God sought to lead men along paths of righteousness and holiness.
- b. But as men stiffened their necks against God's yoke, they plunged deeper and deeper into sin and degradation, and thus rebelled the more against the Creator. Their guilt increased as their sins abounded.
- c. But, says Paul, where sin abounded, the grace of God abounded even more. The apostle emphasized what he had stated earlier in verses 15-17, namely that what mankind lost in Adam is more than replaced in Christ.

- d. However, Paul stressed in chapter six that just because God has showered his grace upon men does not give them the right to continue in sin; rather because of God's abundant grace, we ought to try to serve him with even greater dedication and purity.
  2. Verse 21: "That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord."
    - a. God's plan was to replace the misery which sin had caused mankind, with the blessings of his grace; sin had reigned unto death, but he willed that grace should reign through righteousness, the end result of which would be eternal life.
    - b. The brief statement, that grace might reign through righteousness, spells out the means by which the grace of God is accessed. Righteousness is that state of the soul that is produced by obedience to the will of God. When we obey the gospel, we obtain the grace of God.
      - 1) Psalms 119:172: "My tongue shall speak of thy word: for all thy commandments are righteousness."
      - 2) Acts 10:34-35: "Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him."
      - 3) 1 John 3:7: "Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous."
      - 4) Romans 10:1-3: "Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved. For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God."
      - 5) Philippians 3:9: "And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith."
      - 6) James 2:21-24: "Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect? And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God. Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only."
      - 7) 1 John 2:29: "If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him."
      - 8) 1 John 3:10: "In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother."
      - 9) Titus 3:3-5: "For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, *and* hating one another. But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost."
    - c. Grace, therefore, is not accorded to man without condition; to be sure, it is freely offered, but it is obtained conditionally. When we believe and obey the will of God, that is, when we meet the conditions God has appointed, we receive the benefits he provides us by his grace.
  3. The following passages offer a good study of the subject of righteousness.
    - a. Deuteronomy 6:25: "And it shall be our righteousness, if we observe to do all these commandments before the LORD our God, as he hath commanded us."
    - b. Psalms 4:5: "Offer the sacrifices of righteousness, and put your trust in the LORD."
    - c. Psalms 15:2: "He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his heart."
    - d. Proverbs 10:2: "Treasures of wickedness profit nothing: but righteousness delivereth from death."
    - e. Proverbs 11:6: "The righteousness of the upright shall deliver them: but transgressors shall be taken
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- in *their own* naughtiness."
- f. Proverbs 11:18-19: "The wicked worketh a deceitful work: but to him that soweth righteousness *shall be* a sure reward. As righteousness *tendeth* to life: so he that pursueth evil *pursueth it* to his own death."
  - g. Proverbs 12:28: "In the way of righteousness *is* life; and *in* the pathway *thereof there is* no death."
  - h. Proverbs 14:34: "Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin *is* a reproach to any people."
  - i. Proverbs 15:9: "The way of the wicked *is* an abomination unto the LORD: but he loveth him that followeth after righteousness."
  - j. Isaiah 26:9: "With my soul have I desired thee in the night; yea, with my spirit within me will I seek thee early: for when thy judgments *are* in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness."
  - k. Isaiah 58:2: "Yet they seek me daily, and delight to know my ways, as a nation that did righteousness, and forsook not the ordinance of their God: they ask of me the ordinances of justice; they take delight in approaching to God."
  - l. Ezekiel 3:20: "Again, When a righteous *man* doth turn from his righteousness, and commit iniquity, and I lay a stumblingblock before him, he shall die: because thou hast not given him warning, he shall die in his sin, and his righteousness which he hath done shall not be remembered; but his blood will I require at thine hand."
  - m. Ezekiel 14:14: "Though these three men, Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it, they should deliver *but* their own souls by their righteousness, saith the Lord GOD."
  - n. Ezekiel 33:12: "Therefore, thou son of man, say unto the children of thy people, The righteousness of the righteous shall not deliver him in the day of his transgression: as for the wickedness of the wicked, he shall not fall thereby in the day that he turneth from his wickedness; neither shall the righteous be able to live for his *righteousness* in the day that he sinneth."
  - o. Daniel 4:27: "Wherefore, O king, let my counsel be acceptable unto thee, and break off thy sins by righteousness, and thine iniquities by showing mercy to the poor; if it may be a lengthening of thy tranquillity."
  - p. Matthew 3:15: "And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer *it to be so* now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered him."
  - q. Matthew 6:33: "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."
  - r. Acts 17:31: "Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by *that* man whom he hath ordained; *whereof* he hath given assurance unto all *men*, in that he hath raised him from the dead."
  - s. Acts 24:25: "And as he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled, and answered, Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee."
  - t. Romans 6:16: "Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?"
  - u. Romans 6:18: "Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness."
  - v. Romans 10:1-3: "Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved. For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God."
  - w. 2 Timothy 3:16: "All scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness."
  - x. Hebrews 11:33: "Who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions."
  - y. James 1:20: "For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God."
4. "Sin reigned in death—in the sphere or realm of death. That Paul is here referring to spiritual life and
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spiritual death is made clear by the verses that immediately follow in the next chapter. In spiritual death sin's reign is absolute; it is the reigning monarch in every man who is dead in sins. But grace reigns through righteousness—that is, through this gospel plan of righteousness. It is God's grace that produced this plan of righteousness; it is the power that banishes sin from the heart and leads a man in devoted service to God. The ultimate result of its reign is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Whiteside, p.127).

D. Note from Author's Material on Revelation 5:10 [which relates to Romans 5:17]:

1. Revelation 5:10: "And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth."
  - a. "And madest them to be unto our God a kingdom and priests; and they reign upon the earth" (ASV). The ones made to be a kingdom and priests are those purchased from all nations by the blood of Christ (vs. 9). John had earlier said that those cleansed from sin by the blood of Christ were made a kingdom and were priests unto God: "And from Jesus Christ, *who is* the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loveth us, and loosed us from our sins by his blood; and he made us *to be* a kingdom, *to be* priests unto his God and Father; to him *be* the glory and the dominion for ever and ever. Amen" (Rev. 1:5-6, ASV).
  - b. This kingdom is the one God established in fulfillment of Daniel 2:44, which Christ received on his return to heaven: "I saw in the night visions, and, behold, *one* like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion *is* an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom *that* which shall not be destroyed" (Dan. 7:13-14).
  - c. In this kingdom into which Christians have been translated, redemption and forgiveness of sins are obtained: "Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated *us* into the kingdom of his dear Son: In whom we have redemption through his blood, *even* the forgiveness of sins" (Col 1:13-14).
2. The ones in the kingdom are priests at the same time (5:10) that they reign on earth. As the priesthood is spiritual, so also is the reigning.
  - a. Ephesians 2:5-6: "Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) And hath raised *us* up together, and made *us* sit together in heavenly *places* in Christ Jesus."
  - b. Hebrews 13:15-16: "By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of *our* lips giving thanks to his name. But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased."
  - c. 1 Peter 2:5: "Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ."
  - d. 1 Peter 2:9: "But ye *are* a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light."
3. *Reign on earth* is present tense (in the ASV). *Shall reign* in the King James Version describes the continuing action of reigning. The priesthood is now and so is the reigning: "For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ" (Rom. 5:17). This passage does not give any support or comfort to the premillennialists. Death reigned over the race because of one man's sins; but many will obtain life through Christ. When a penitent believer obeys the gospel, his guilt is cleansed by the blood of Christ; he is translated from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of Christ; his old man of sin has been put to death and buried and he becomes a new creature in Christ. Before he was dead in sin [death reigned over him]; now he is alive in Christ—he "reigns" in life [he is alive spiritually and lives in hope of eternal life in heaven].
4. Consider these comments on Romans 5:17:
  - a. "Reigned. The emphatic point of the comparison. The effect of the second Adam cannot fall behind

that of the first. If death reigned, there must be a reign of life” [Vincent's Word Studies of the New Testament, Electronic Database. Copyright ©) 1997 by Biblesoft].

- b. “Shall reign in life by one (‘through the one’), Jesus Christ. We have here the two ideas of Rom 5:15-16 sublimely combined into one, as if the subject had grown upon the apostle as he advanced in his comparison of the two cases. Here, for the first time in this section, does he speak of that LIFE which springs out of justification, in contrast with the death which springs from sin and follows condemnation. The proper idea, therefore, of the word ‘life’ here is, ‘Right to live’— ‘Righteous life’—life possessed and enjoyed with the good will, and in conformity with the eternal law, of ‘him that sitteth on the Throne;’ life, therefore, in its widest sense—life in the whole man and throughout the whole duration of human existence, the life of blissful and loving relationship to God in soul and body forever and ever. It is worthy of note, too, that while he says death ‘reigned over’ us through Adam, he does not say Life ‘reigns over us’ through Christ; lest he should seem to invest this new life with the very attribute of the death—that of fell and malignant tyranny—of which we were the hapless victims. Nor does he say Life reigns in us, which would have been a Scriptural enough idea; but, which is much more pregnant, ‘We shall reign in life.’ While freedom and might are implied in the figure of ‘reigning,’ ‘life’ is represented as the glorious territory or atmosphere of that reign. And by recurring to the idea of Rom 5:16—as to the ‘many offences’ whose complete pardon shows ‘the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness’—the whole statement amounts to this: ‘If one man's one offence let loose against us the tyrant power of Death, to hold us as its victims in helpless bondage, ‘much more,’ when we stand forth enriched with God's ‘abounding grace,’ and in the beauty of a complete absolution from countless offences, shall we expatiate in a life divinely owned and legally secured, ‘reigning’ in exultant freedom and unchallenged might, through that other matchless ‘One,’ Jesus Christ!’” [Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown Commentary, Electronic Database. Copyright ©) 1997 by Biblesoft].
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## ROMANS 6

### A. Romans 6:1-7: Salvation by Grace Forbids Living in Sin.

1. Verses 1-2: "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?"
  - a. Paul answers a question that might arise in the mind of an objector: "Does not the fact we are saved by grace through faith suggest that the more we sin, the more grace we shall receive?" One whose sins are more numerous than another's will require a greater "amount" of grace to cover them. "...But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound" (Rom. 5:20). However, as the apostle shows, that does not give anyone the right to plunge deeper into sin just so he can obtain more of God's grace! That is willful sin!
  - b. One extreme in religion often begets an opposite extreme. Catholicism foolishly went to the radical extreme on works, requiring all sorts of things to be done by their followers to earn the blessings of God. The Protestant world has generally gone to the other extreme, of denying the essentiality of works. It is just as wrong to say that salvation is by faith alone as to require a penitent person to "say" fifty "Hail Marys." Both of these are violations of God's word.
  - c. Calvinists have made horrible assertions in propagating and defending their doctrine of the impossibility of apostasy. Some have claimed that one could commit every sin imaginable, from raping Mary to cursing God, and the "Christian" doing it would have no guilt! These admit that they commit sin but that God does not hold them accountable. Others allege that they reach a point where it is impossible for them even to commit an act of sin (cf. 1 John 3:9). But 1 John 1:6-10 shows that even the apostle John, and every other saint, commits sin (cf. Gal. 2:11-14).
  - d. While every Christian can fall victim to sin, either of omission (Jas. 4:17) or by direct violation (1 John 3:4), that is not the same thing as living a life of continual sin (1 Tim. 5:6; Matt. 14:1-10). We may occasionally stumble but we can avoid a life of sin. The Holy Spirit anticipated the errors indicated above (and all other errors), and placed within the inspired Record sufficient information to expose them.
  - e. The Holy Spirit also anticipated the misuse that some would make of the truth that we are saved by grace through faith, and provided the inspired evidence in this very passage to refute them. Shall we continue in sin so as to obtain greater grace to cover it? "The subjunctive as here used implies duty or obligation. It means to enter sin as a habit or practice....'Is it our duty, since grace abounds where sin abounds, to continue to sin so that grace may abound more and more?' Of course, he does not mean mere continuance. Rather, he means perseverance in will and act. He then proceeds to disprove this idea by showing that it conflicts with a fundamental element of the gospel. He then disposes of the idea that the doctrine of justification by grace either gives license to sin or weakens the motives to a pure and holy life" (Thomas B. Warren, "Gospel Advocate," May 10, 1973, article: "Romans 6:1-14").
  - f. The inspired answer is: "God forbid!" "Let such a disposition never come to pass!" If one has a reverential attitude toward the Almighty, coupled with a hatred for sin, he will never even entertain such a notion.
    - 1) "When Paul became a Christian, there was one less sinner in the world as certainly and definitely as if he had died physically and been buried at Damascus. And that death is repeated every time a person becomes a Christian. How shall we continue in sin, since we are dead to sin?" (Whiteside, p.129).
    - 2) How can one who is dead to sin, live any longer a life of sin? As a dead man no longer lives a physical life, so a Christian who is dead to sin will never live in sin.
      - a) 1 John 1:7-10: "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and

- just to forgive us *our* sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us."
- b) Galatians 2:20: "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me."
2. Verse 3: "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?"
- a. Paul now asks: "Do you not know that as many as were baptized into Christ were baptized into his death?" The question is based on the knowledge his readers had regarding the significance and purpose of baptism. Since they understood that they had entered Christ at baptism, they should perceive that a new life was required of them. To be baptized into Christ is the same as to be baptized into the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (Matt. 28:19).
- 1) Faith changes the object of our love: from sin to Christ.
    - a) 1 John 2:15-17: "Love not the world, neither the things *that are* in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that *is* in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever."
    - b) 1 John 4:19: "We love him, because he first loved us."
  - 2) Repentance changes our practice: from living in sin to living for Christ.
    - a) Matthew 3:8: "Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance."
    - b) Acts 26:20: "But showed first unto them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judaea, and *then* to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance."
    - c) 2 Corinthians 7:10: "For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death."
  - 3) Baptism changes our state: before baptism we are guilty of sin; after baptism we are cleansed from sin by the blood of Christ.
    - a) Acts 22:16: "And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord."
    - b) 1 Peter 3:21: "The like figure whereunto *even* baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ."
    - c) Revelation 1:5: "And from Jesus Christ, *who is* the faithful witness, *and* the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood."
- b. All spiritual blessings are given **in Christ**. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ" (Eph. 1:3). The blessings include:
- 1) Salvation. "Therefore I endure all things for the elect's sakes, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory" (2 Tim. 2:10).
  - 2) Citizenship in Christ's kingdom. "Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son" (Col. 1:13).
  - 3) Redemption and forgiveness. "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace" (Eph. 1:7). "In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins" (Col. 1:14).
  - 4) Made alive. "And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins" (Eph. 2:1).
  - 5) Made nigh to God. "But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ" (Eph. 2:13).
  - 6) Reconciliation. "And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain
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- the enmity thereby" (Eph. 2:16).
- 7) Made a new creature. "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (2 Cor. 5:17).
  - 8) Liberty. "And that because of false brethren unawares brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage" (Gal. 2:4).
  - 9) All things that pertain to life and godliness. "According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue" (2 Pet. 1:3).
- c. There is a change in location (state, condition) in baptism. Before baptism we were outside of Christ; after baptism we are in Christ. Before baptism we were guilty of sin; after baptism our sins are washed away. Before baptism we had none of the great spiritual blessings; after baptism we come into possession of them all. There is no unsaved person in Christ, and there is no saved person out of Christ.
  - d. We are baptized into Christ. There is a motion involved; we pass from one state into another state, from one condition into another condition. To be baptized into Christ means we pass from without to within Christ; from without his body to within his body: "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether *we be* Jews or Gentiles, whether *we be* bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit" (1 Cor. 12:13).
  - e. We are baptized into the death of Christ.
    - 1) Since we are baptized into the Lord's death, that process (faith, repentance, and baptism) causes us to become dead to sin (love for, practice of, and its guilt). As Christ was separated from earthly life when he died, so we are separated from sin when we are baptized into his death. Following his crucifixion, he was dead to his former state; following our baptism, we are separated from our former state of sin. Therefore, we cannot continue to live in sin as before. We are forbidden to do so by virtue of our being dead with Christ.
    - 2) What do we find in baptism? The blood of Christ. The side of Christ was pierced by the spear after he had died (John 19:33-34). It was then that he shed his blood. But water came from his body with his blood, which symbolizes the connection between baptism and the cleansing blood of Christ. When we are baptized into Christ, it is then that we contact his blood, hence we are saved by baptism (1 Pet. 3:21), receive remission of sins in baptism (Acts 2:38; 22:16), and are at that point added to the church (Acts 2:41,47), which is equivalent to being translated into the kingdom (Col. 1:13-14; John 3:5).
    - 3) Although we still have the capability to commit sin following our conversion to Christ, we will not do so because we are new creatures. While we will fall into an occasional act of sin, we will keep ourselves from a life of sin. If it were impossible for us to commit sin, or if the guilt of sins we commit after our conversion is not recorded against us, then why are there so many warnings given to Christians regarding the danger of sin?
      - a) 1 Corinthians 9:27: "But I keep under my body, and bring *it* into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway."
      - b) 1 Corinthians 10:12: "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall."
      - c) Hebrews 3:12-13: "Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin."
      - d) 1 John 1:6-10: "If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us."
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- f. To be baptized into Christ is equivalent to being born again.
- 1) John 3:3,5: "Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God....Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and *of* the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."
  - 2) 1 Peter 1:18-25: "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, *as* silver and gold, from your vain conversation *received* by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you, Who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God. Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, *see that ye* love one another with a pure heart fervently: Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever."
- g. We are baptized into the benefits furnished by his death. No one receives the benefits of the death of Christ unless he has been baptized into Christ.
- 1) Romans 5:8-9: "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him."
  - 2) Ephesians 1:7: "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace."
  - 3) Romans 6:3-4: "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life."
3. Verse 4: "Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life."
- a. We cannot go to Palestine and be buried in the same tomb as Christ, but we can be buried in water in the likeness of his burial. This is not Holy Spirit baptism; if it were, why would Paul have to go to Rome to impart spiritual gifts to them? (1:11). Holy Spirit baptism was a direct outpouring of miraculous power, without the instrumentality of any man (cf. Acts 2:1-4). Also, there would have been no need for this epistle—they would already have known everything they needed to know.
  - b. This baptism is a burial. One cannot be buried by sprinkling or pouring water on the subject. The Greek word *baptizo* means "to immerse." So say all reputable Greek scholars. So says this verse, and every other verse that describes the action of baptism. "Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with *him* through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead" (Col. 2:12; cf. Acts 8:35-39).
  - c. We do not bury those who are alive; we only inter the dead. In baptism, we bury rebellious children of the devil; they are dead to the practice of sin, although they still are guilty of sin—until their baptism.
  - d. We are buried with Christ by baptism into death. The penitent believer has ceased to love and practice sin; but he does not die to the guilt of sin until he is baptized into Christ. It is then that he is fully separated from sin.
  - e. Christ was raised up from the dead, by the glory of God.
    - 1) Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, for "the glory of God was most conspicuously displayed in the resurrection of Christ" (Lard, p.201). God is glorious because he is perfectly holy, infinitely majestic, and unlimited in power, knowledge and presence.
    - 2) God's eternal plan required the death of his Son, and likewise his resurrection. It was not possible that Christ should be restrained for all time by the power of death (Acts 2:24; Rom. 1:4). God's glorious nature could not permit Christ to remain dead; his glorious plan demanded that he be raised; his glorious blessings could not be provided by a dead Savior.
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- a) Acts 2:24: "Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it."
- b) Romans 1:4: "And declared *to be* the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead:"
- f. As Christ was raised up from the dead (to live again, and to mount the throne of his kingdom), so we are likewise raised from our watery grave. The picture of the action of baptism is indicated.
  - 1) This fits the Greek word, which means *to immerse*. *Sprinkling* is not the meaning, nor even a part of the meaning, of *baptizo*. All the Greek scholars agree.
  - 2) The picture of baptism as presented in various Bible examples is **immersion**.
    - a) John 3:23: "And John also was baptizing in Aenon near to Salim, because there was much water there: and they came, and were baptized."
    - b) Acts 8:35-39: "Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus. And as they went on *their* way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, *here is* water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him. And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more: and he went on his way rejoicing."
  - 3) The description of baptism as a burial and resurrection, as given here and in Colossians 2:12, will only fit immersion.
- g. We are raised to walk in newness of life. This is the point of primary emphasis in the passage. The apostle started by saying that those who are dead to sin, cannot live any longer in sin; they must give it up.
  - 1) We are the same physical person after baptism that we were before baptism. There was no change in that regards.
  - 2) But our spiritual condition has changed: we no longer bear the guilt of our sins. And our standing in God's sight has changed: we are now pleasing to him. Before we were baptized, we were outside of Christ; now we are in Christ.
  - 3) The kind of life we live subsequent to baptism is much different from what characterized us before baptism. We lived in sin at that time; now we live free from sin; our manner of life, our attitudes, our goals, and our thoughts and words are different, because we now serve a different Master (Matt. 6:24; Rom. 6:16-18).
  - 4) One who has been cleansed from past guilt in obeying the gospel, now sincerely desires to serve Christ; his Lord forbids him to practice sin any more; therefore, his life is new and different because he is different! "Therefore if any man *be* in Christ, *he is* a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (2 Cor. 5:17).
- h. Baptism into Christ is a facsimile of the death, burial and resurrection of Christ.
  - 1) We die to the practice of sin (when we repent); we are buried in the watery grave of baptism; we are raised up from the grave as the action of baptism is completed.
  - 2) This is the way by which we obey "from the heart that form of doctrine" (Rom. 6:17), which we are taught to do by the inspired New Testament.
- 4. Verse 5: "For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection."
  - a. The point of emphasis in this verse is the word **if**. If we are planted together in the likeness of death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection. **Planted** is from *sumphutos*, which carries the meaning of: "planted or grown along with, united with [Rom. 6:5]...indicating the union of the believer with Christ..." (Vine, Vol. 3, pp.187f).
  - b. In baptism, the penitent believer is united with Christ (vs. 5); he enters Christ (Gal. 3:27); he is added

- to the church, the body of Christ (Acts 2:47; Eph. 1:22-23); he is translated into the kingdom of Christ (Col. 1:13-14,18).
- c. If one has been united with Christ, then (and only then) is he also in the likeness of the Lord's resurrection.
    - 1) That is, as Christ was raised from the dead so as to live again, so the penitent believer, having been buried in a watery grave, is raised up to live a new life.
    - 2) One cannot live the new life until he has died to the old life of sin. It is in baptism that the alien is cleansed of his sins (by the blood of Christ—Eph. 1:7; Rev. 1:5), and is made alive (Eph. 2:1; 2 Cor. 5:17; Rom. 6:4,17-18).
    - 3) If one tries to live the new life (the Christian life) without being baptized, his present life is purer, but he still carries the guilt of all of his past sins. It is like a man who worked in a coal mine all day, then put on a new suit of clothes—without taking a bath! Baptism cleanses the soul of its guilt; it is not intended to cleanse the body of grime (1 Pet. 3:21).
  - d. As Christ was raised up from the dead, never to live the same life he had formerly lived, so we are raised up to shun forever the former life we lived. It must be remembered that Christ was never guilty of sin; death ended his earthly life.
5. Verse 6: "Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin."
- a. In obeying the gospel, our old man is crucified. The body of sin (the old man) is thereby destroyed. From that time forward, we are not to serve sin. Paul shows the certainty of the matter at hand: we know this to be so. The *old man* is the man we were prior to our baptism into Christ.
    - 1) 2 Corinthians 5:17: "Therefore if any man *be* in Christ, *he is* a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new."
    - 2) Galatians 2:20: "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me."
  - b. Every particle of the guilt the *old man* incurred is taken away in baptism. But that does not mean that the old man himself is forever gone, never to plague us again. We must continually fight our former evil habits and the other enticements of Satan.
    - 1) Matthew 10:22: "And ye shall be hated of all *men* for my name's sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved."
    - 2) 1 Corinthians 9:24-27: "Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain. And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they *do it* to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible. I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air: But I keep under my body, and bring *it* into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway."
    - 3) 1 Corinthians 10:12-13: "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall. There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God *is* faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear *it*."
    - 4) 1 Peter 5:8-9: "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: Whom resist stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world."
    - 5) Revelation 2:10: "Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast *some* of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."
  - c. When we are baptized, the body of sin (our guilt) is destroyed; the old man is buried, and the new man is raised up. Our past record is expunged (Heb. 8:12), and we start over with not a mark against us.
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- 1) We *should* not serve sin again. Christ died on the cross so that believers *should* not perish, but have everlasting life (John 3:16). Just because Christ died for all men, and seeks to take all men to heaven, does not mean that all will be saved and go to heaven; just because a person is baptized into Christ, thus destroying the body of sin, does not mean that the individual will not once more serve sin.
  - 2) The process by which we enter Christ destroys our desire to serve sin; we commit ourselves to serve Christ. We will not be able to live without an occasional act of sin (1 John 1:8,10), but our lives are dedicated to serving the Lord. When we realize we have stumbled, we repent, and confessing out fault to God, we humbly ask his forgiveness (Acts 8:22; 1 John 1:9; Jas. 5:16).
  - d. If a pistol, which was used often in wounding and killing others, has its bullets removed, it is disabled from further shooting. But if more bullets are loaded into it, its former evil uses may be resumed. Our old man is buried in baptism; it is raised up to live a different kind of life; but it might be persuaded to take up again that former evil manner of living, and become corrupted by sin once more.
    - 1) Hebrews 2:1-4: "Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let *them* slip. For if the word spoken by angels was stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward; How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard *him*; God also bearing *them* witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?"
    - 2) Hebrews 10:23-31: "Let us hold fast the profession of *our* faith without wavering; (for he *is* faithful that promised;) And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some *is*; but exhorting *one another*: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching. For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace? For we know him that hath said, Vengeance *belongeth* unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge his people. *It is* a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God."
    - 3) 2 Peter 2:20-22: "For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known *it*, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them. But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog *is* turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire."
6. Verse 7: "For he that is dead is freed from sin."
- a. "As the slave when dead is set free from his master, so he that has died with Christ is freed from sin and can no longer live in sin" (Lipscomb, p.117).
  - b. One is dead to the practice of sin before baptism (when he repents), but he is not freed from the guilt of sin until he is baptized into Christ. The marginal rendering for *freed* is *justified*. Thus, the freedom indicated is from the guilt of sin.
  - c. The passage under consideration (Rom. 6:1-7) is a beautiful discussion of the truths given in Mark 16:15-16, Acts 2:36-38, and Acts 22:16.
    - 1) Mark 16:15-16: "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."
    - 2) Acts 2:36-38: "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same
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Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ. Now when they heard *this*, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men *and* brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."

- 3) Acts 22:16: "And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord."

#### B. Romans 6:8-14: We Died With Christ.

1. Verse 8: "Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him."
  - a. The argument which begins with verse eight, is continued through verse eleven. We died to the practice and guilt of sin when we obeyed the gospel. That being the case, we "shall also live with him." "The future *suzesomen* is the Future of duty or obligation. It is used because the obligation, viewed in relation to the death in the crucifixion, where it took its rise, was strictly future. We may at pleasure render, *should live with*, or *should live like*. Either is true to the *sun*....If we should or ought to live like Christ, the question arises, How does Christ live. The reply is, he does not live the life he lived before his death; he lives a new life. So with us. We should no longer live the old life we lived before our death in Christ. We should live a new life, a life free from sin. Hence, again, the conclusion, we must not continue in sin that favor may bound" (Lard, pp.204f).
  - b. Since we died to sin in obeying the gospel, every Christian commits himself to live the new life demanded of a follower of Christ.
    - 1) 1 Corinthians 11:1: "Be ye followers of me, even as I also *am* of Christ."
    - 2) 1 Peter 2:21-23: "For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed *himself* to him that judgeth righteously:"
2. Verse 9: "Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him."
  - a. Christ died and was resurrected from the dead; he will never die again; death has no dominion over him. Lazarus was raised, but had to face death again. No such possibility pertains to our Lord. "But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God" (Heb. 10:12).
  - b. "The word dead, *nekron*, is here plural...and denotes the whole of the human dead, and not simply the state of death. Hence, 'raised from the dead,' means brought out from among the dead, leaving them still in the grave" (Lard, p.205).
  - c. It was necessary for Christ to have a physical body in order to die. It is impossible for him, as a divine being, to die.
    - 1) 1 Timothy 1:17: "Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, *be* honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen."
    - 2) 1 Timothy 6:14-16: "That thou keep *this* commandment without spot, unrebukeable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ: Which in his times he shall show, *who is* the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords; Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom *be* honour and power everlasting. Amen."
    - 3) Hebrews 2:9: "But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man."
  - d. Our faith in Christ as the Son of God includes believing in his virgin birth, sacrificial death, burial, and his resurrection from the dead; it also includes the knowledge that it is impossible for him ever to die again. This last point gives us reason to have hope for the resurrection.
  - e. And since he died once (Heb. 9:25-28), and will never die again, he ever lives to make intercession

- for us (Heb. 7:25).
3. Verse 10: "For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God."
    - a. Christ died but once (Heb. 7:27). The word translated "once" in both our text and Hebrews 7:27 means "once for all time," a strengthened form of the word used in Jude 3 (see Vine). He died to sin "once for all." Sin has no power over him any more. It cannot tempt him; it cannot bother him; it cannot lead to his death again. He was subject to temptations while in this life, but he never fell victim to its enticements.
    - b. He is still alive, in a different world and a different life. He abode in a fleshly body on earth; now he inhabits a glorious body (Phil. 3:20-21). He lives unto God. "This means that Christ is now out of the realm of sin, not facing the penalty of sin which he bore in behalf of sinful mankind, although he himself was free from sin. (Heb. 4:15; 2 Cor. 5:21.) His life on earth was also to God, but it was a life which was in conflict with sin and death" (Warren, op.cit., p.362). His present life is beyond the temptations of the devil and all the ravages of sin.
  4. Verse 11: "Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord."
    - a. This forms a conclusion from verses nine and ten; it is parallel to the statement of verse ten. Christ is dead to sin; Christians are to account themselves dead to sin. Christ lives unto God in his present state; Christians are to live for God in their present state. Do not return to the weak and beggarly elements of the sinful world again.
    - b. "Instead of continuing in sin, consider that you are now to be wholly devoted to God. His will is henceforward to be the rule of your conduct. Yourselves, and life, and time, are all due to him. Nothing remains for sin. You must utterly abstain from it" (Lard, p.206).
    - c. This new life of devoted service to God is made possible by the death of Christ. To him belongs the gratitude.
  5. Verse 12: "Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof."
    - a. Therefore, we are not to permit sin to reign in our mortal bodies. It can reign in us only as we obey its enticements. The enticements of sin have influence upon us because of fleshly appetites.
      - 1) "Love not the world, neither the things *that are* in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that *is* in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever" (1 John 2:15-17; cf. Gen. 3:6; Matt. 4:1-11).
      - 2) "Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death" (Jas. 1:13-15).
    - b. A man's destiny lies within his own hands. Temptations come upon all, but God has provided Christians a way to escape in each instance: "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God *is* faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear *it*" (1 Cor. 12:13).
      - 1) We should never think that temptations are easily overcome (1 Cor. 10:12), but neither should we be overly afraid of them.
      - 2) If we commit ourselves to living the Christian life as perfectly as we can, taking advantage of all the helps God provides, assemble with the Lord's people on every occasion, pray without ceasing, develop the Christian graces, study God's word night and day, keep our minds free from evil thoughts—we will not fall under the dominion of sin! (2 Pet. 1:1-11; Heb. 10:23-25; 1 Thess. 5:17; 2 Tim. 2:15; 2 Pet. 3:18; Matt. 15:17-20; Prov. 4:23; Rom. 8:13).
  6. Verse 13: "Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto
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God."

- a. It is within our power to follow the dictates of this verse. It is possible for us to refuse to allow our members (our body) to be used as implements of unrighteousness. If we will not allow any of our faculties or powers to be used for sinful purposes, we will not fall under the dominion of sin.
  - b. Although it is the body of a man that commits sin, it is the spirit that suffers the primary penalty (Ezek. 18:20). When a man uses a gun to murder another man, the civil authorities do not arrest and punish the gun. We refrain from sin if we perceive the awesome penalty it brings the soul.
    - 1) Matthew 25:46: "And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal."
    - 2) John 5:28-29: "Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation."
    - 3) Romans 6:23: "For the wages of sin *is* death; but the gift of God *is* eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."
  - c. No one can live in a vacuum. When we rid ourselves of an evil practice, we must replace it with some good practice: "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things *are* honest, whatsoever things *are* just, whatsoever things *are* pure, whatsoever things *are* lovely, whatsoever things *are* of good report; if *there be* any virtue, and if *there be* any praise, think on these things" (Phil. 4:8).
  - d. We are to present ourselves unto God as being alive from the dead; that is in effect our real status. We were dead in sins, but now we are alive in Christ, and free of sin's guilt. We must make sure that we do not fall under its dominion once again. This we can avoid only if we walk in the light: "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us" (1 John 1:7-10).
  - e. We are to present our members (our body is the sum of all of its members) as instruments of righteous-ness unto God. Instead of serving sin, we are to serve God. The only way we have of learning the will of God is by studying the Bible.
7. Verse 14: "For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace."
- a. Sin's reign over us was broken when we obeyed the gospel. We changed masters. It continues to be broken as long, and only as long, as we walk in the light of God's word.
  - b. We are under law to God today, as many New Testament verses attest. There is no conflict between this fact and Paul's statement that we are under grace.
    - 1) Romans 8:2: "For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death."
    - 2) Romans 13:10: "Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love *is* the fulfilling of the law."
    - 3) 1 Corinthians 9:21: "To them that are without law, as without law, (being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ,) that I might gain them that are without law."
    - 4) Galatians 6:2: "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ."
    - 5) James 1:25: "But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth *therein*, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed."
    - 6) James 2:10: "For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one *point*, he is guilty of all."
    - 7) Titus 2:11-14: "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and

purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works."

- c. "The statement, 'Ye are not under law, but under grace,' is either (a) limited by the context; or (b) it is not. If *it is not*, Christians are a lawless people. Those who are under no law are lawless. It is absurd to affirm, in one breath, that children of God are not under law, any law, law of any kind, and then to concede that they are under restraint. Law is restraint. Those who are restrained are under law. Where there is no law there is no restraint. Moreover, those who are without law are without sin. Sin is the transgression of the law. 'Where there is no law, neither is there transgression.' (Rom. 4:15.) Where there is no law, there is nothing to transgress; where there is nothing to transgress, there is no sin. Hence, where there is no law, there is no sin. This conclusion is irresistible. What is sin? It is lawlessness. (1 John 3:4.) What is lawlessness? Lawlessness is an offense against law. But, where there is no law, there can be no offense against it. Those incapable of offending are either (a) perfect, thus *above* law; or (b) they are wholly *without* law. How can one transgress that which does not exist? We are under some law; or, we are not. If we are not, then it is impossible for us to sin; if we are under some sort of law, then those who affirm otherwise, are in grave error" (Guy N. Woods, *Commentary on James*, pp.90f).
- d. "That Paul, in the passage alluded to, (Rom. 6:14), did not intend to affirm that children of God are wholly without law *of any kind* is evident from (a) the fact that he himself said that we are under law to Christ and to God (1 Cor. 9:21); and (b) from the context in which the statement appears. The *thesis* of Romans is that justification is through the system of faith which originated with Christ, and not by means of the law of *Moses*. (Rom. 1:16,17.) In much detail, and with many contrasts, does he pursue this argument from Rom. 1:13 through 8:25. The law which the Gentiles did not have (2:12-16), was the law of Moses. The ordinances of the law (2:25-28), were of the law of Moses. The works of the law (3:19,20), which could not justify, were the works of the law of Moses. The righteousness, in Christ, apart from the law (2:21-26), is that which is apart from the law of Moses. The law of works, contrasted with the law of faith (Rom. 3:27,28), was the law of Moses....The blessing pronounced upon Abraham, because of his faith, (cited by the apostle to sustain the view that justification was not by the law of Moses), which was exercised anterior to the giving of the law (4:9-14), was declared to be apart from, and before the law of Moses. The law which said, 'Thou shalt not covet' (Rom. 7:7), was the law of Moses. The commandment, which Paul found to be death to him (Rom. 7:7-25), was the law of Moses. The law which was weak, through the flesh (Rom. 8:2), was the law of Moses. It is, therefore, an exceedingly careless and confused exegesis which would take from such a context a statement which says, 'For ye are not under law, but under grace,' and deny that the law referred to is *the law of Moses!* Here, the contrast intended is exactly the same as that of John 1:17: 'For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.' The conclusion is irresistible that the statement, (Rom. 6:14: 'for ye are not under law, but under grace,') is limited to the contextual significance of the term; and, that Paul, continuing his thesis that Christians are not under the law of Moses, but are, in this dispensation, wholly answerable to Christ, meant by the statement, '*You are not under the law of Moses; you are amenable to Christ through the system of grace originating with him.*' This is, however, far from affirming that, in consequence, Christians are not under *any* law today. (Gal. 6:2; James 2:12; 1 Cor. 9:21.)" (ibid., pp.91f).
- e. "Children of God have been, by the precious blood of Christ, redeemed from the *curse* of the law (of Moses), and are privileged, in Christ, to share in the blessings of salvation available through conformity to 'the *law* of the Spirit of life.' (Rom. 8:2.) Through the freedom from the law of Moses children of God today enjoy, they may pursue their obligations under the law of love, realizing that the law by which they shall be judged (James 2:12), is not one of slavery, but one of freedom. By this rule (of law), let us ever walk. (Gal. 6:16.)" (ibid., p.92).

C. Romans 6:15-18: We Are Under Obligation to Obey God, not Sin.

1. Verse 15: "What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid."
  - a. "One who is committed to God cannot continue to live in sin, because one becomes servant of that



to which he yields himself, '*Whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness.*' (Rom. 6:15). It is a matter of free choice, but it is impossible both to be committed to righteousness and living in sin. It must be one or the other" (Alan Highers, *Spiritual Sword Lectures*, p.107).

- b. Just because we are not bound to the Passover and other features of the Mosaic Law, does not permit us to do as we please. The Holy Spirit anticipated the misuse some would make of his emphasis on the grace of God; he knew that some would think that they were not under restraint because they were under grace, and so gave this passage to defeat such a notion.
- c. The question Paul raises and answers in this verse is this: "Are we allowed to sin as we please because we are not under the Law, which condemned sin, but are under grace? **God forbid!**" We have God's favor only when we submit to his will, expressed in the gospel, and sincerely, zealously, cheerfully, and diligently try to live above sin. Therefore, if we sin willfully, we fail to retain his grace (see Heb. 12:14-15; 10:23-31; 6:4-6; 2:1-4).
  - 1) Hebrews 2:1-4: "Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let *them* slip. For if the word spoken by angels was stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward; How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard *him*; God also bearing *them* witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?"
  - 2) Hebrews 6:4-6: "For *it is* impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put *him* to an open shame."
  - 3) Hebrews 12:14-15: "Follow peace with all *men*, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord: Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble *you*, and thereby many be defiled."
- d. We are not under the Law of Moses; but we can still commit sin; therefore we are under a law (the law of the gospel) because without a law, there could be no sin (Rom. 4:15; 5:13). To say that we are not now under law is to say that we are without any restraint—that there is no such thing as sin. We are under law—the law of faith (which is the gospel).
  - 1) Romans 4:15: "Because the law worketh wrath: for where no law is, *there is* no transgression."
  - 2) Romans 5:13: "For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law."
- e. A related error to the one Paul here exposes, is the idea that God shows mercy to whom he pleases, with the misguided construction placed on the statement from Romans 9:15 that God arbitrarily dispenses his mercy. But if God gives one man a special exemption in the Judgment, he is obligated to give that special handling to everyone, or else he is not impartial (cf. Rom. 2:11). God shows mercy to whom he wills, but those who receive it are those who meet the conditions of the gospel! God has a law which governs our lives; we are not permitted to live as we please. But he has a law by which he dispenses his gracious blessings; he does not give them to every person indiscriminately; it is according to a definite standard (law). The law in both cases is the gospel.
  - 1) John 5:28-29: "Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation."
  - 2) John 12:48: "He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day."
  - 3) Romans 1:16-17: "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith."
  - 4) Romans 10:1-3: "Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved. For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. For

- they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God."
- 5) Romans 10:16: "But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report?"
  - 6) 2 Corinthians 5:10-11: "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things *done* in *his* body, according to that he hath done, whether *it be* good or bad. Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are made manifest unto God; and I trust also are made manifest in your consciences."
  - 7) Galatians 6:7-8: "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting."
  - 8) Hebrews 5:9: "And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him."
  - 9) Revelation 20:12-15: "And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is *the book* of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire."
2. Verse 16: "Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?"
- a. Sin is obedience to Satan; righteousness is obedience to God (Acts 10:34-35). One's Master can be identified by seeing whose will the individual obeys. If you see a person who does things that the Bible forbids, you know that person is not a faithful Christian; he is a servant of the devil.
    - 1) Matthew 6:24: "No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon."
    - 2) Matthew 12:30: "He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad."
    - 3) Acts 10:34-35: "Then Peter opened *his* mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him."
  - b. For a person to throw off all restraint, and proclaim that he is free to do whatever he pleases, is to wear the cruelest yoke of all (John 8:34; 2 Pet. 2:19). If a man drinks and becomes an alcoholic, is he or the liquor he consumes, the master? When a person uses profanity with profusion, is God or Satan in control?
    - 1) John 8:34: "Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin."
    - 2) 2 Peter 2:19: "While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption: for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage."
  - c. Obedience to sin results in death. One dies (is separated from God) when he becomes guilty of sin (Isa. 59:1-2); sin is rebellion against God (1 John 3:4; 5:17). One who persists in sin, and passes from earthly life in that state, will be eternally separated from God in the next world (Matt. 25:31-46; Rev. 20:12-15; Rom. 6:23).
  - d. Obedience to God is righteousness (Ps. 119:172; Acts 10:34-35; 1 John 3:7). If we want to retain the favor of God, we must walk in righteousness—we must continue to obey God. Paul is writing to Christians; it is incumbent upon them, he teaches, that they continue their obedience; otherwise, they will become guilty of sin and be lost. Compare:
    - 1) Galatians 3:1: "O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth,
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- before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you?"
- 2) Galatians 5:6-7: "For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love. Ye did run well; who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth?"
  - 3) 1 John 1:7: "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin."
3. Verses 17-18: "But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness."
- a. The apostle did not thank God that they had been servants of sin, but for the fact that their sin was in the past, not the present; he was grateful that they had obeyed the gospel. "But thanks be to God, that, whereas ye were servants of sin, ye became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching whereunto ye were delivered; and being made free from sin, ye became servants of righteousness" (ASV).
  - b. They became free from sin when they obeyed; they ceased to be servants of sin and became servants of righteousness in the same process.
  - c. They obeyed from the heart the form of doctrine that was given them. The heart is that inner part of man which is comprised of the intellect, the emotions, the will, and the conscience. Whatever we do in spiritual matters must be done "with all the heart." We are to love God with all our heart (Mark 12:29-30); we are to believe in Christ with all our heart (Acts 8:36-37); and here, we are to obey from the heart. The meaning, of course, is that we sincerely, fully, and reverently believe, love, and obey. Herein lies a distinction between a cold response to the Law of Moses and a warm, loving response to the Gospel of Christ.
  - d. They obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine that was given to them. The context of this statement goes back to verse one. The only form of teaching given in this setting is the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. The only way in which we can be obedient to this form is by being baptized (immersed).
    - 1) "The word *tupon* here signifies a model to which something is to be conformed. *Didaches* is Genitive of definition; and the two words together mean *doctrinal model*" (Lard, p.214).
    - 2) The fundamental facts of the gospel are the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ (1 Cor. 15:1-3); the basic commands of the gospel for the alien include hearing, believing, repenting, confessing, and being baptized; the promises of the gospel include forgiveness of sin, reconciliation, hope of heaven, and God's providential guidance; the warnings of the gospel pertain to the punishment God metes out against sin and religious error.
    - 3) We are to believe the facts, obey the commands, heed the warnings, and enjoy the promises of the gospel.
    - 4) The only way in which the gospel (the death, burial and resurrection of Christ) can be obeyed is by obeying it in form (pattern); and that pattern is baptism into Christ. Baptism is the only physical act in the plan of salvation.
  - e. "It is significant that twice in this chapter Paul refers to baptism into Christ in connection with his exhortations against sinful living. Many out of the church (and apparently some within the church) have never realized the full import of baptism. It is not only an act of obedience for the alien sinner which is for or unto the remission of sins, but it is an ever-present reminder to the child of God that we are no longer servants of sin but servants of righteousness" (Highers, *op cit*, p.108).
  - f. The form of teaching which they had obeyed had been delivered unto them through the preaching of the gospel. When Paul preached the gospel, he included sufficient information on baptism so that his hearers would know what was expected of them. In Corinth, many people heard, believed, and were baptized (Acts 18:8).
  - g. When these Romans obeyed from the heart that form of teaching, they (1) became servants of righteousness and (2) were made free from sin. To be made free from sin is the same as to be made
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righteous (verse 16).

- 1) Paul is speaking of their being pardoned from the guilt of their sin. He used "free from sin" interchangeably with "righteousness" (Verses 16, 18).
- 2) "Justification of the believer in Christ therefore takes place *then*, when he obeys from the heart that form of teaching, that is, when he is baptized. Thus, apostolical authority has truly enlightened man as to the moment when his faith saves him, that being the exact time when his faith leads him to be baptized into Christ for the remission of his sins" (Coffman, p.242).
- 3) Jesus said that we can be made free from sin by the truth (John 8:32); he later identified truth as being the word of God (John 17:17). Peter shows that our souls are purified when we obey the truth: "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, *as* silver and gold, from your vain conversation *received* by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you, Who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God.<sup>2</sup> Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, *see that ye* love one another with a pure heart fervently: Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever. For all flesh *is* as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you" (1 Pet. 1:18-25). Paul has shown here that we are made free from sin when we are baptized into Christ (Rom. 6:1-18).
- 4) Our life of obedience in Christ begins with baptism; we become servants of righteousness in baptism. Baptism puts us into the Lord's kingdom, where we enjoy the rights and blessings of citizenship. But there are also obligations which our new state requires: we are to live pure lives; worship in spirit and truth; discard all of the evil ways of the past; develop the attributes and characteristics that are consistent with following Christ; set our hope on heaven, not on earthly things; and in all matters, let the Lord be the Master (Col. 3:17).
- 5) The Greek term (made free from sin) is the expression used to describe the action of a smith who literally gave the slave his freedom by cutting his chains.

D. Romans 6:19-23: The Personal and Eternal Consequences of Serving God or Sin.

1. Verse 19: "I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh: for as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness."
  - a. The saints in Rome had, prior to their conversion to Christ, heaped sin upon sin; but now a new way of life was theirs. They had no more right to continue to serve sin as a slave, who had been sold to another master, had the right to continue to serve his former master.
  - b. Paul used the idea of servanthood (slavery) because of the weaknesses of the flesh: they could understand the proposition better by this common-sense illustration from the common affairs of life. He made similar points in Romans 3:5 and Galatians 3:15.
    - 1) Romans 3:5: "But if our unrighteousness commend the righteousness of God, what shall we say? *Is* God unrighteous who taketh vengeance? (I speak as a man)."
    - 2) Galatians 3:15: "Brethren, I speak after the manner of men; Though *it be* but a man's covenant, yet *if it be* confirmed, no man disannulleth, or addeth thereto."
  - c. They had formerly presented themselves as slaves to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity. Their service to this sinful way of life had been whole-hearted; it was not a mere lip-service.
  - d. *Uncleanness* means "moral impurity." God did not call us to live unclean lives, but holy lives. This Greek word (*akatharsia*) is also used in other passages:
    - 1) Romans 1:24: "Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves."

- 2) 2 Corinthians 12:21: "*And* lest, when I come again, my God will humble me among you, and *that* I shall bewail many which have sinned already, and have not repented of the uncleanness and fornication and lasciviousness which they have committed."
  - 3) Galatians 5:19: "Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are *these*; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness."
  - 4) Ephesians 4:19: "Who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness."
  - 5) Ephesians 5:3: "But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints."
  - 6) Colossians 3:5: "Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry."
  - 7) 1 Thessalonians 2:3: "For our exhortation *was* not of deceit, nor of uncleanness, nor in guile."
  - 8) 1 Thessalonians 4:7: "For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness."
  - e. *Iniquity* means "lawlessness." These Roman Christians had, in their unconverted state, piled iniquity upon iniquity; they went from one act of unrighteousness to another; they progressed from one stage of iniquity to another, digging deeper and deeper into rebellion against the will of God. The apostle appeals to them to dedicate themselves as fully to follow Christ as they had formerly devoted themselves to uncleanness and iniquity.
  - f. **Righteousness** and **holiness** stand in opposition to **uncleanness** and **iniquity**. Notice that holiness is here said to be the result of righteousness: "righteousness **unto** holiness." Only when one submits himself to obedience to the will of God can he be holy.
    - 1) Romans 6:17-18: "But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness."
    - 2) 1 Peter 1:18-23: "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, *as* silver and gold, from your vain conversation *received* by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you, Who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God. Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, *see that ye* love one another with a pure heart fervently: Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever."
    - 3) 1 John 1:7-10: "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.<sup>9</sup> If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us."
  - g. It is often the case that those who have been the *biggest* sinners, also make the strongest saints. Saul of Tarsus is a case in point. It is also true that some of those who did not plunge very deeply into sin, do not devote themselves deeply to the Lord.
2. Verse 20: "For when ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness."
    - a. "In requiring you to present your members as servants to righteousness, I am doing only what you yourselves recognize as right. When servants are released from one master, and become bound to another, you insist on their obligations to the latter. So in your case" (Lard, p.216).
    - b. While they were serving sin, they were not committed to righteousness or holiness. They gave themselves over to sinful living. Implying by this statement what he plainly stated in verse nineteen, they were to devote themselves whole-heartedly to following Christ.
    - c. They had lived free from righteousness before their conversion; now they are to live free from sin.
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Or as he stated in Romans 12:1-2: "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God."

- d. The inspired Record also says: "Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God" (2 Cor. 7:1).
  - e. And further: "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure. Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law; for sin is the transgression of the law" (1 John 3:2-4).
3. Verse 21: "What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things is death."
- a. What good developed from your former way of life? You are now ashamed of that kind of life. You now understand that there was no profit whatsoever growing out of a sin-filled life.
  - b. "The fact that when the disciples in Rome looked back over their past lives, they felt ashamed of the sins in which they had formerly delighted shows the deep change that had taken place in their minds, and implies how sincere and thorough their repentance had been" (Lard, p.217).
  - c. A life of sin is productive of no good, but it is productive of shame; and what is far more significant, its final fruit is death. Sin, of course, led to the introduction of physical death for human beings. But temporal death is not the kind of death meant here; rather, eternal separation and banishment from God and heaven is intended. Whether we live in sin or righteousness, we must all die physically.
  - d. But there is a penalty that must be faced by those who live in sin; this penalty is identified by Paul as death. This death is imposed following our departure from earthly scenes. This death is placed in contrast with everlasting life in the next verse.
4. Verse 22: "But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life."
- a. The fruit of a sinful life is death; but the fruit of a godly life is everlasting life. Paul had already discussed the process by which they were made free from sin. They lost their love for sin when they believed in Jesus; they departed from the practice of sin when they repented; they were cleansed from the guilt of sin when they were baptized into Christ (6:17-18, 3-4).
    - 1) John 8:32: "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."
    - 2) John 17:17: "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth."
    - 3) 1 Peter 1:22-23: "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently: Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever."
  - b. In the conversion process, they rejected sin as their master, and became servants of God. The immediate fruit they obtained was a state of holiness; and the lives they now lived were in keeping with the holy principles of God's will.
  - c. The ultimate fruit of their obedience to God would be everlasting life. The Bible does not teach, as many claim, that faithful Christians have eternal life now, on the near side of death.
  - d. If we have it now, why is it that we die? Sectarians teach this error as support of their theory that once a person is saved, he is forevermore saved, and cannot fall from grace. Aside from the many scriptural evidences that man can fall from grace and be lost, there are other statements which show that eternal life is not received until the next world—eternity.
    - 1) Mark 10:30: "But he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life."
    - 2) 2 Timothy 4:8: "Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the

- righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing."
- 3) Paul said that saints live, "In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began" (Tit. 1:2). We have not yet received what we hope for: "For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, *then* do we with patience wait for it" (Rom. 8:24-25); since we **hope** for eternal life, we do not have it yet.
  - 4) 1 John 2:25: "And this is the promise that he hath promised us, even eternal life." The fulfillment of this promise will not be had until we enter heaven.
  - 5) 1 Peter 1:3-5,9: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, **reserved in heaven for you**, who are kept by the power of God through faith unto **salvation ready to be revealed in the last time**....Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls."
  - 6) Any verse that speaks of our having eternal life now, therefore, cannot mean that we have it in actual possession; we have it only in hope and in promise.
5. Verse 23: "For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."
- a. God does not make distinctions between sins; sin of any kind will result in separation from God if left unpardoned. Sin is the violation of God's word (1 John 3:4; 5:17). Sin pays its proper wages—death! This is eternal separation from God and all that is pure and holy.
    - 1) Matthew 25:46: "And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal."
    - 2) 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9: "And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power."
    - 3) Revelation 20:12-15: "And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is *the book* of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire."
    - 4) Revelation 21:27: "And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither *whatsoever* worketh abomination, or *maketh* a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life."
  - b. "Sin is still conceived of as a master whom the human family are serving; and it never receives service for nothing. It always pays. Whether the sinner stipulate for his wages or not, he is sure to receive it. What the wages of sin is, the Apostle here tells us: it is eternal death. How astounding the fact that so many should serve for such a reward!" (Lard, p.218).
  - c. G.C. Brewer illustrated the wages of sin by telling of a boy who tried to rescue a rabbit from a river; with it in his bosom, he tried to swim back to shore; he was struck on the temple by a log, and drowned. Four days later, when his body was recovered, his friends held up the remains of the rabbit, saying, "This is what he gave his life for!" (See Coffman, pp.247f). Sin is not worth dying for!
  - d. The reward of serving God is eternal life; it can never be earned; it is a gift from God. Under the best of cases, a mortal's best service to God is flawed and incomplete.
    - 1) Luke 17:10: "So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do."
    - 2) 1 John 1:8,10: "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us....If

- we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us."
- e. This gracious gift, which is far beyond our due, is possible only through Christ. Mere words cannot fully express the great debt we owe the Savior! "Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift" (2 Cor. 9:15).
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## ROMANS 7

### A. Romans 7:1-6: Christians Are Dead to the Law of Moses.

1. Verse 1: "Know ye not, brethren, (for I speak to them that know the law,) how that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth?"
  - a. The law of Moses had application to a man only as long as that individual was alive upon the earth; he could not obey it after death. This is true with every law.
  - b. Of course, man must face the applicable law of God when he stands in the Judgment (John 12:48; Rev. 20:12-15). The patriarchs will be judged on the basis of the unwritten law under which they lived; the Old Testament Jews will be measured by the standard of the Law of Moses; those who live on this side of the cross of Christ, will be judged by the Law of Christ (Phil. 2:5-11; Rom. 14:10-12).
  - c. Paul will show in this chapter that the Law of Moses is no longer in effect, and consequently that no one is required to follow that law any more.
2. Verses 2-3: "For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband. So then if, while her husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man."
  - a. Paul uses the general rule of marriage to illustrate the change of the law. This general rule is for husband and wife to be bound together in marriage until death. The wife is bound to her husband as long as her husband lives. But if her husband dies, she is free to marry someone else.
  - b. However, if she marries another man while her husband is alive, she shall be called an adulteress, even though she is married (in the eyes of the world) to this other man. The apostle is using the general law of marriage; he does not consider in this illustration the exclusion clause (Matt. 19:9). He is using the *general* rule of marriage to illustrate the point of the passage.
    - 1) Matthew 5:31-32: "It hath been said, Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement: But I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery."
    - 2) Matthew 19:9: "And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except *it be* for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery."
  - c. "She shall be called an adulteress." Called an adulteress by whom? God! The word translated "called" is *chrematizo*, which is used elsewhere to describe an action on the part of God (Matt. 2:12; 2:22; Luke 2:26; Acts 10:22; 11:26; Heb. 8:5; 11:7; 12:25). The world would not call such a woman an adulteress; the world usually considers divorce (for any cause) and remarriage perfectly all right. But God calls it adultery.
  - d. Since it is right for a widow to remarry (1 Cor. 7:39), it follows that it would also be right for a widower to remarry.
3. Verse 4: "Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God."
  - a. Here is the point of the passage: those who had been under the Law of Moses are now freed from that law by Christ's death; they are free to be married to another.
  - b. God described the relationship he had with Israel as a marriage; their unfaithfulness to him was characterized as spiritual adultery (Jer. 3:9; Ezek. 23:37). It was necessary that the Law of Moses be taken away before any could be married to Christ.
    - 1) Jeremiah 3:9: "And it came to pass through the lightness of her whoredom, that she defiled the land, and committed adultery with stones and with stocks."

- 2) Ezekiel 23:37: "That they have committed adultery, and blood *is* in their hands, and with their idols have they committed adultery, and have also caused their sons, whom they bare unto me, to pass for them through *the fire*, to devour them."
  - c. They became dead to the Law of Moses by the body of Christ (by his death). When Christ died on the cross, the Law of Moses was fulfilled and taken away, being then replaced by the New Covenant (Heb. 9:15-17).
    - 1) Ephesians 2:14-16: "For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition *between us*; Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, *even* the law of commandments *contained* in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, *so* making peace; And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby."
    - 2) Colossians 2:14: "Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross."
    - 3) Hebrews 9:15-17: "And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions *that were* under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance. For where a testament *is*, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. For a testament *is* of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth."
  - d. The "first husband" being gone, they were free to marry the "second husband."
  - e. An act of disobedience on the part of ancient Israel constituted spiritual adultery; an act of disobedience to Christ on the part of a Christian constitutes spiritual adultery: "Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God" (Jas. 4:4).
  - f. A marriage is expected to produce fruit—children. Our marriage to Christ is expected to produce fruit (John 15:1-8).
    - 1) Galatians 5:22-23: "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law."
    - 2) Titus 3:8: "This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable unto men."
    - 3) John 15:1-8: "I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every *branch* that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit. Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you. Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye *are* the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing. If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast *them* into the fire, and they are burned. If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you. Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples."
4. Verse 5: "For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death."
- a. Paul describes the condition of these Jews when they were subject to the Law of Moses as "in the flesh." They became subject to that law by virtue of their physical birth (because their parents were Jews and subject to the law, their children were Jews and subject to the law). They formerly entered the covenant by circumcision.
  - b. The Law of Moses did not produce the passions of the flesh, but made them manifest as sinful. It restrained sin to the extent that men heeded the warnings given in the Law; but it did not have the capacity to remove the guilt of sin once it was incurred by a transgressor of the law. While the guilt could be "rolled forward" from one year to the next at the annual atonement sacrifice (Heb. 10:1-4;
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- Lev. 16), the actual removal of the guilt was not possible (Heb. 9:22; 9:12; 10:3-4).
- 1) Hebrews 9:12: "Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption *for us*."
  - 2) Hebrews 9:22: "And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission."
  - 3) Hebrews 10:1-4: "For the law having a shadow of good things to come, *and* not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect. For then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins. But in those *sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year. For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins.*"
- c. Instead of bringing forth fruit unto God, it brought forth fruit unto death. This was not the fault of the Law, but of the failure of the Jews to keep it properly. "For if the first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second. For finding fault with them, he saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah" (Heb. 8:7-8).
5. Verse 6: "But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter."
- a. The apostle draws a contrast here with verse five. During the time when the Law was in effect, the passions (motions) of sin held sway; but now they were delivered (discharged) from the law.
  - b. Paul describes their deliverance from the law as their being dead to it. When one is dead to something, he is separated from it. The idea of *separation* is inherent in the word *death* (cf. Jas. 2:26).
  - c. He depicts their relationship to the Law as "being held" by it. But now they are released (delivered; discharged; cleared) from its hold.
  - d. "In the oldness of the letter" is parallel with "in the flesh" (verse 5); each of these phrases refers to the Old Covenant (the Law of Moses). It is opposite to the "newness of spirit," which refers to the New Covenant. "The obedience to the Jewish law did not necessarily require the service of the spirit, or from the heart. Under Christ all service must be from the heart. The weakness of the law was that it condemned sin, but did not enlist and purify the heart" (Lipscomb, p.130).
  - e. These same descriptive phrases (*letter* and *spirit*) are used in 2 Corinthians 3 to draw a series of contrasts between the Law of Moses and the Law of Christ. Some have taken a shallow view of these statements, drawing the erroneous conclusion that the Old Law required specific and minute obedience, but that the New Law demands only that we heed the *spirit* of the requirement. But the New Covenant is not less demanding than the old (Matt. 5:21ff).
- 1) 1 Corinthians 4:6: "Now these things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself and Apollos for your sakes; that in us ye might learn not to go beyond the things which are written; that no one of you be puffed up for the one against the other" (ASV).
  - 2) Galatians 1:6-12: "I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed. For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ. But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ."
  - 3) Hebrews 2:1-4: "Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip. For if the word spoken by angels was stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward; How shall we escape,
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if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him; God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?"

- 4) 2 John 9: "Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son."

B. Romans 7:7-12: Paul Identifies and Praises the Law That Was Removed.

1. Verse 7: "What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet."
  - a. To this point in the chapter, the apostle has not specifically identified the law which has been removed. He does so in plain words here! The law that was removed was the law that said, "Thou shalt not covet." The law that made that statement was the Ten Commandments. Therefore, the Decalogue (the Ten Commandments) and the rest of the Mosaic Law was removed.
  - b. Is the law from which we have been delivered sinful? God forbid! He answers an objection that someone might raise: "If you are correct in saying that the Law encouraged sin by its prohibitions, and provided no relief therefrom, are you not also saying that the Law was sinful?" Paul strongly denies such a conclusion. His full statement not only identified the Law he is discussing, but it also defends it as being in the best interest of its subjects.
  - c. He states that he would not have known what is sinful without the information given in the Law which identifies sin. He gives one specification: I would not have known that it was wrong to lust, except by the commandment of the Law prohibiting such.
  - d. The Decalogue as a code has been removed. This set of precepts form the basis of the entire Law of Moses. Sabbatarians try to make a distinction between the Ten Commandments and the ceremonial parts of the Law; they assert that only the ceremonial law was taken away, and that the Ten Commandments are still in effect, including the Sabbath. Their theory is utterly demolished by Paul's affirmation here! The entire Law of Moses, including the Ten Commandments, has been removed, being replaced by the New Testament. The entire Law of Moses was the Law of God.
    - 1) 2 Chronicles 34:14: "And when they brought out the money that was brought into the house of the LORD, Hilkiah the priest found a book of **the law of the LORD** given by Moses."
    - 2) Ezra 7:6: "This Ezra went up from Babylon; and he *was* a ready scribe in **the law of Moses**, which the LORD God of Israel had given: and the king granted him all his request, according to the hand of the LORD his God upon him."
    - 3) Nehemiah 8:1: "And all the people gathered themselves together as one man into the street that *was* before the water gate; and they spake unto Ezra the scribe to bring the book of **the law of Moses**, which the LORD had commanded to Israel."
    - 4) Nehemiah 10:29: "They clave to their brethren, their nobles, and entered into a curse, and into an oath, to walk in **God's law, which was given by Moses the servant of God**, and to observe and do all the commandments of the LORD our Lord, and his judgments and his statutes."
  - e. Nine of the Ten Commandments have been incorporated into the New Covenant, with the fourth (dealing with the Sabbath) excluded. These nine involve principles that have always been true; for example, it has always been right for a child to honor his parents, and always wrong to dishonor them. It is still wrong to covet because lust has always been prohibited and because it is forbidden by the law of Christ.
  - f. The Law of the Sabbath was given only to the Israelites:
    - 1) Exodus 31:13: "Speak thou also unto the children of Israel, saying, Verily my sabbaths ye shall keep: for it *is* a sign between me and you throughout your generations; that *ye* may know that I *am* the LORD that doth sanctify you."
    - 2) Deuteronomy 5:3: "The LORD made not this covenant with our fathers, but with us, *even* us, who *are* all of us here alive this day."
    - 3) Nehemiah 9:13-14: "Thou camest down also upon mount Sinai, and spakest with them from

heaven, and gavest them right judgments, and true laws, good statutes and commandments: And madest known unto them thy holy sabbath, and commandedst them precepts, statutes, and laws, by the hand of Moses thy servant."

### The Ten Commandments and the New Testament

Exodus 20:1-17

Old Testament Code	New Testament Counterpart
1. No Other Gods—Ex. 20:2-3	Matt. 4:10; John 4:23-24; Rev. 22:8-9
2. No Graven Images—Ex. 20:4-5	1 John 5:21; 1 Cor. 10:7, 14; cf. Col. 3:5
3. Not Take God's Name in Vain—Ex. 20:7	Matt. 5:33-37; Jas. 5:12
4. Keep Sabbath—Ex. 20:8-11	Sabbath Not Bound Under the New Testament
5. Honor Parents—Ex. 20:12	Eph. 6:1-3
6. Not Kill (Murder)—Ex. 20:13	Matt. 19:18; 1 John 3:15; Matt. 5:21-22
7. Not Commit Adultery—Ex. 20:14	Matt. 5:27-28
8. Not Steal—Ex. 20:15	Eph. 4:28
9. Not Bear False Witness—Ex. 20:16	Col. 3:9; Rev. 21:8
10. Not Covet—Ex. 20:17	Eph. 5:5; Heb. 13:5; Luke 3:11

2. Verse 8: "But sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence. For without the law sin was dead."
  - a. If there were no Law, there would be no sin. The Law did not create sin; it did not encourage sin; it did not cause sin. But when a man has the inner desire for that which is forbidden, and succumbs to that desire, sin is the result (1 John 3:4; 5:17). The commandment prohibiting a certain action was the occasion for sin to assert itself.
    - 1) James 4:17: "Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth *it* not, to him it is sin."
    - 2) 1 John 3:4: "Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law."
    - 3) 1 John 5:17: "All unrighteousness is sin: and there is a sin not unto death."
    - 4) James 1:13-15: "Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death."
  - b. God's commandment was not the source of the evil desire. "There is no occasion for any one to think that a command of God creates or stirs up evil desires. The desire was there, even if God had issued no command, but became an evil desire when it sought to override the command. Hence, 'without the law sin was dead.' As sin is lawlessness, sin would not be operative where there is no law. Neither does law apply to a person who is not responsible for his deeds. To such a person there is really no law, and, therefore, no sin" (Whiteside, p.150).
  - c. Knowing there is a penalty for violation of law, does not keep all men from disobedience; it prevents some from violating the law, but some are determined to do evil.
  - d. Sin is personified in the verse. It is depicted as taking the offensive in transgressing God's will. James

- 1:13-15 describes how sin is committed. Lust is allowed to exist in a man's heart; an occasion for gratifying that lust arises; he engages in that which his lust desires; his action violates God's prohibition and thus he becomes guilty of sin; and sin, when it has run its course, results in the eternal separation of the individual's soul from God.
- e. That which is prohibited often becomes the chief desire of man. Tell a child that he is not to sneak a cookie while you are out of the house, and his mind will be filled with the desire for a cookie. Such is often true with a responsible person who is forbidden by God's word to participate in a certain act. Paul says that the commandment of God was the occasion of all kinds of concupiscence. In place of *concupience* the ASV has *coviting*. Vine gives the following on the Greek word: "epithumia NT:1939 denotes 'coveting,' Rom 7:7-8, RV; KJV, 'lust' and 'concupiscence'; the commandment here referred to convicted him of sinfulness in his desires for unlawful objects besides that of gain" [Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words, Copyright (c)1985, Thomas Nelson Publishers].
3. Verse 9: "For I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died."
    - a. "The only time Paul was without law was during the years of his childhood, before he reached the years of accountability" (Whiteside, p.150).
    - b. Paul's statement here denies the doctrine of "original sin" (total hereditary depravity). We do not enter the world already guilty of sins, those of Adam as passed down to us by our parents.
      - 1) Ezekiel 18:20: "The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him."
      - 2) Matthew 16:3: "And in the morning, *It will be* foul weather to day: for the sky is red and lowering. O ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky; but can ye not *discern* the signs of the times?"
      - 3) Matthew 18:3: "And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven."
      - 4) Matthew 19:14: "But Jesus said, Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven."
    - c. During these formative years, Paul was alive spiritually since he was not of an age that he could be held accountable to the Law. However, being a normal individual, the time came when he learned his duty to God, and being a human, he did not live up to God's law perfectly; he violated the law and was held accountable: he died! That is, his sins drove a wedge between himself and God: "Behold, the LORD'S hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid *his* face from you, that he will not hear" (Isa. 59:1-2).
    - d. Sin revived. "Sin sprang to life. It does not mean that sin came to life again. The Greek student will recognize the perfective function of the preposition prefixed to the word translated *revived*, and that instead of changing the meaning of the verb, adds to it force and vividness—sin came much alive" (Whiteside, p.151).
  4. Verse 10: "And the commandment, which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death."
    - a. The commandment of the Law was intended to keep him away from sin, but due to the weaknesses of the flesh (cf. Eccl. 7:20), it became a sentence of death. He did not keep the law, because he could not observe it perfectly.
    - b. It was a yoke which no one was able to bear as they wished (Acts 15:10). His disobedience to the Law resulted in spiritual death (separation from God). This happened even though he could later say that he had always lived in harmony with his conscience (Acts 23:1).
  5. Verse 11: "For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew me."
    - a. Sin slew Paul. Sin is used symbolically of Satan. It was not the command of God that brought death, but Paul's violation of the command.
    - b. Sin made the desired object appear beautiful, just as the forbidden fruit looked good to Eve (Gen. 3:6).
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Some have suggested that perhaps Satan ate from the forbidden tree in front of Eve, thus adding to the temptation, for she "saw that the tree was good for food..."

- c. Satan, using the lusts and emotions of our hearts, is able to make evil seem pleasant and desirable to us (2 Cor. 11:3).
  - d. Thus, sin deceived Paul through the commandment, and slew him.
6. Verse 12: "Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good."
- a. Nothing that Paul has written can be construed as an attack against the Law of God. He affirms that the law is holy, and the commandments it presents are holy, righteous, and good. "But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises. For if that first *covenant* had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second. For finding fault with them, he saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah" (Hebrews 8:6-8).
  - b. The Old Testament law was perfect for what God intended to accomplish by it. It did not have the capacity to remove the guilt of sin, but it led men in the paths of righteousness; and it laid the groundwork for the coming of the Messiah.
  - c. The thing that condemned souls was the individual's violation of the law; it was not the fault of the law that they disobeyed. "A good law is not to blame, if people disobey it and bring punishment upon themselves" (Whiteside, p.154).
  - d. "The law of Moses was holy because it came from God, righteous because of the justice of its precepts, and good because of the benefit intended for mankind through the Father's giving of it. This high estimate of Moses' law will be further justified in the subsequent verses of this chapter, in which, not the law itself, but the sinful bent of human nature, will be shown as bearing the blame for the sin and death that abounded under God's law" (Coffman, p.259).
- C. Romans 7:13-23: Paul Illustrates the Need for the New Covenant.
1. Verse 13: "Was then that which is good made death unto me? God forbid. But sin, that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good; that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful."
    - a. It was not the commandment of God that brought the death of the sinner, but the violation of the command. The law was designed to keep people from committing sin, but once they became guilty, it contained no law of pardon.
      - 1) Acts 13:38-39: "Be it known unto you therefore, men *and* brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses."
      - 2) Hebrews 10:1-4: "For the law having a shadow of good things to come, *and* not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect. For then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins. But in those *sacrifices there is* a remembrance again *made* of sins every year. For *it is* not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins."
    - b. The law was not designed to incite sin. "Sin used the law which was good as the occasion for exciting in the heart the rebellious and sinful feelings that brought death" (Lipscomb, p.135).
    - c. Satan promised Eve that she and Adam could become as God if they ate the forbidden fruit (Gen. 3:1-6). When they partook of the fruit, they had the highest expectation of advancing their situation, but what they found was eviction from Eden, separation from God, a life of toil and hardship, and death.
    - d. "The exceedingly sinful and destructive nature of sin is supremely exhibited in this, that through deceit, seduction, and falsehood, sin (here personified) induces the sinner to break God's commandment, thereby using the commandment which had been given and was intended solely for man's good, to become the instrument of the sinner's death, thus (in a figure) slaying the sinner with
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- God's own commandment, death ensuing from the penalty inherent in the broken commandment" (Coffman, p.261).
- e. The awfulness of sin is seen in (1) that it uses God's good commandments to exhibit itself, (2) that it causes the sinner to be separated from God (to die spiritually, thus losing the blessings which fellowship with God brings), and (3) results in eternal punishment (Rom. 6:23).
2. Verse 14: "For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin."
    - a. This verse gives the reason for Paul's negative answer to the question he raised in the previous verse: the law of God is spiritual; man is carnally minded.
    - b. The apostle uses the first person and present tense as a means of teaching the lesson at hand. He should not be understood to say that he, Paul the apostle, a faithful Christian, was full of sin as he sincerely sought to follow the will of God. It is certain that a faithful saint would not be described as "carnal, sold under sin." Inspiration draws a definite contrast between the situation under the Law of Moses and that of the gospel, in Romans 7:1-14 and Romans 8:1-6.
      - 1) Romans 6:11: "Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord."
      - 2) Romans 8:1-4: "*There is* therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."
      - 3) Hebrews 8:12: "For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more."
      - 4) 1 John 1:7: "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin."
    - c. The chapter was written to show that God's people today are not under the Law of Moses, but under the new covenant of Christ (see verses 1-7, 24-25). The description Paul gives, using himself as the type of all who served God under the Mosaic system, shows that the Law could not save a man, because no man could keep it perfectly; it had no power to remove guilt once the individual committed sin (Heb. 10:1-4).
    - d. "Paul here began consideration of a third element in the law of Moses that make it an absurdity to accept the law as binding upon Christians, that being the fact that justification was absolutely impossible under that system" (Coffman, p.261).
    - e. "In verse 9 he spoke of the time when sin entered his life, and he died. He then explains that sin, not the law, caused this spiritual death. Sin is here personified, and Paul represents himself as having been sold to sin as a slave. But if he referred to his past experience, why did he use the present tense? Because he was merely speaking of himself as a type of all who were under the bondage of sin" (Whiteside, p.155).
    - f. No inspired person would ever describe a sincere Christian as a "wretched man," who would cry out, "Who shall deliver me from the body of this death!" (Rom. 7:24). Verse 25 shows that deliverance is through Christ. Thus, he is describing the situation of an individual under the Mosaic Law who was struggling with sin. Paul said in Romans 8:6-8 that one who is carnally minded is living in rebellion against God, and thus is lost. No faithful Christian is carnally minded, but minds the things of the Holy Spirit (i.e., he walks in the light of the gospel, and obtains the continual cleansing of Christ's blood: 1 John 1:7).
    - g. "I am carnal, sold under sin." The Law was spiritual; it was addressed to the heart of man. "And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart" (Deut. 6:5-6). But all men live in a fleshly body, and are subject to the lusts thereof. Despite a man's sincerest effort, he is unable to
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keep any law perfectly. Since the Law of Moses could not remove guilt, and in view of the fact that no one kept the Law perfectly (except Christ), the guilt of sin weighed heavily upon the conscience. The average Old Testament Jew may have seen only the outward forms and ceremonies of the Law, but the pious and sincere Jew who diligently tried to serve God according to the Law would live under the onus of guilt. Paul pictures just such a man in his present discourse, using himself as a representative of all such individuals.

3. Verses 15-16: "For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I. If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good."
  - a. Those zealous adherents of the Old Law knew what was required of them, but owing to the weaknesses of the flesh, they did not always do what they knew to do. And what they knew not to do, that they often did. They were guilty of the sins of omission and commission, and there was no remedy in the Law for removing the guilt thus incurred.
  - b. Every sin is a crime against God. Flesh is like a dollar bill: it has no character of itself; how we use it determines the effect it produces—whether good or evil. While it is the flesh that violates the will of God, it is the spirit that is held accountable, and will be judged and punished.
  - c. "For that which I do I allow [*know*—margin] not." This does not mean that Paul and others who committed sin were unaware of their actions; rather, they did not comprehend the significance of their actions. Paul knew he was persecuting people when he arrested Christians, but he did not understand that he was working against the will of God (Acts 23:1; 26:9-11; 1 Tim. 1:13-15). The Jews knew they were crucifying a man, but they did not realize the full significance of what they were doing (Luke 23:34; Acts 3:17; 1 Cor. 2:8). These people were not deranged—they simply did not understand the awfulness of their conduct.
    - 1) Luke 23:34: "Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. And they parted his raiment, and cast lots."
    - 2) Acts 3:17: "And now, brethren, I wot that through ignorance ye did *it*, as *did* also your rulers."
    - 3) 1 Corinthians 2:8: "Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known *it*, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory."
  - d. "For that which I do I know not; for not what I would, that do I practice; but what I hate, that I do" (ASV). Whiteside points out that the word *do* occurs twice in verse 15 (ASV), but is translated from two different Greek words; and *practice* is from yet another Greek term.
    - 1) *Katergazomai* means "to effect, accomplish, achieve, etc." *Prasso* means "to exercise, practice, be busy with, carry on, etc." *Poieo* means "to produce, construct, form, fashion, to make, etc." (Whiteside, p.157).
    - 2) He suggests the following wording for a clarified translation: "For that which I accomplish I know not: for not what I would, that do I practice; but what I hate, that I produce" (ibid.).
  - e. "The sinner does not know what he accomplishes by a life of sin. He cannot so much as know how far reaching is the influence of his life of sin. In his thoughtful moments he desires a different life from the things he practices, but without Christ, sin has him under its dominion. He may delight in gratifying his flesh, but he hates the results produced by his dissipation" (Whiteside, pp.157f).
  - f. Paul and other pious Jews under the Law, recognized that the law was right and good, even though they violated its precepts from time-to-time. In their own mind, they approved the Law as good, they "consent unto the law that it is good."
4. Verse 17: "Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me."
  - a. The weaknesses of the flesh lead to temptations, and temptations that are heeded lead into sin, and sin when it completes its evil work, produces death (Jas. 1:13-15). The inner man rebels against the weaknesses of the flesh, but often the lusts are more powerful than the resolve of the mind.
  - b. Some have asserted, in jest, that "the devil made me do it!" But Satan has control over us only to the extent we allow (Jas. 4:7; 1 Pet. 5:8-9). The same was true under the Mosaic system; they could resist the devil, but his temptations were often too strong for them to withstand. And once they succumbed,

- the Law could not remove the guilt. But their stumbling into sin did not reflect on the goodness of the Law.
- c. Under the law of Christ, a "second law of pardon" is provided (Acts 8:22; 1 John 1:8; Jas. 5:16). Also, we have God's promise that a way to escape the temptation will be provided (1 Cor. 10:13). But we are warned to be on guard against temptations, for all of us are still subject to their allurements.
    - 1) 1 Corinthians 9:24-27: "Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain. And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they *do it* to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible. I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air: But I keep under my body, and bring *it* into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway."
    - 2) 1 Corinthians 10:12: "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall."
  5. Verses 18-19: "For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do."
    - a. The same problem faces the Christian just as it confronted the Old Testament Jew. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak (Matt. 26:41).
    - b. However, the sin problem is solved under Christ: we receive full pardon for all our past sins when we are baptized into Christ (Rom. 6:3-4; Acts 2:38; Eph. 1:3; Heb. 8:12; 1 Cor. 6:9-11), and as we walk in the light, Christ's blood continues to cleanse us. Walking in the light includes putting God and his kingdom first, sincerely devoting ourselves fully to follow Christ, having the willingness to endure persecutions rather than to give up our faithfulness, and repenting and confessing our errors when we stumble.
    - c. The flesh is neither good nor evil; it is neither morally good nor morally evil. Its influence is determined by what it does. It is inclined toward self-gratification. These bents are to be controlled by the inner man (the spirit of man). "That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded *is* death; but to be spiritually minded *is* life and peace. Because the carnal mind *is* enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be" (Rom. 8:4-7).
    - d. The flesh of itself does not know how to seek for the higher and better way. It has its desires which it seeks to gratify. The flesh might crave liquor, but the inner man should be so educated and dedicated as to strive to live on a higher and more holy plane. The inner man and the flesh are distinguished. The fleshly man is a bundle of appetites. The inner man must be supreme; it can learn to control the physical appetites of the body, and will be held responsible if it fails to do so.
      - 1) Ezekiel 18:20: "The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him."
      - 2) Matthew 10:28: "And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell."
      - 3) Luke 12:4-5: "And I say unto you my friends, Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: Fear him, which after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear him."
      - 4) 1 Corinthians 9:27: "But I keep under my body, and bring *it* into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway."
    - e. That Paul is not describing himself as a follower of Christ in verse 19, is clearly demonstrated by his statement in 1 Thessalonians 2:10: "Ye are witnesses, and God also, how holily and justly and unblameably we behaved ourselves among you that believe."
  6. Verse 20: "Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me."
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- a. This closely resembles the statement in verse 17, just as verse 19 resembles the thought of verse 15.
  - b. Sin is personified again in this verse, and is shown to be in control of the person who is not subject to Christ. But it cannot lead us into sin until it has first influenced the mind to develop and execute a plot to satisfy the lust that is to be gratified.
  - c. "A normal person under law, whether the moral law or the law of Moses, but without Christ, has a desire to do good, but has not the ability to throw off sin and lead a pure life" (Whiteside, p.160).
  - d. The inner man is helpless in its battle with the flesh—without the gospel of Christ to guide him, to encourage him, to lead him into penitence, and to provide him with pardon.
7. Verse 21: "I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me."
- a. What is this law? "But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members" (Rom. 7:23).
  - b. The ASV marginal gives the following: "I find then in regard of the law, that to me who would do good, evil is present." Paul depicts himself as having a desire to do good (obey the law), but evil desires are in the flesh, trying to lead him into gratifying the appetites of the flesh, which would put him in violation of the law of God.
  - c. This view harmonizes with the information he has already presented.
8. Verse 22: "For I delight in the law of God after the inward man."
- a. The zealous Jew loved the law, and delighted in following it. But sometimes his temptations were just too much for him to overcome. The same can be said about faithful Christians; we love the gospel, but Satan's enticements often cause us to fall short of perfection.
  - b. The difference between us and an Old Testament Jew is that we can obtain full pardon, whereas he could only have his guilt "rolled forward" until the next day of atonement (Lev. 16; Heb. 10:1-4).
  - c. "Every Jew, and every unregenerate man, who receives the Old Testament as a revelation from God must acknowledge the great purity, excellence and utility of its maxims, etc., though he will always find that without the grace of our Lord Jesus he can never act according to those heavenly maxims; and without the mercy of God, can never be redeemed from the curse entailed upon him for his past transgressions" (Adam Clarke's Commentary, Electronic Database. Copyright (c) 1996 by Biblesoft).
9. Verse 23: "But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members."
- a. This "different law" (ASV), which Paul perceived to be in his members, is the law of sin.
  - b. The word "members" is a reference to the sum total of the human body; it includes all the fleshly parts which comprise the physical man.
  - c. The law of the mind is the Law of God; it is addressed to the mind (cf. Isa. 1:18). The other law in his members is the law of sin, the inclination toward satisfying the appetites of the flesh. There is a constant struggle between the law of the mind and the law of the flesh.
  - d. "If the spirit under the influence of the law of God controls the body, the person lives a spiritual life. If the appetites and passions of the body control the person, he is brought into captivity to the law of sin in his members. In verse 14 Paul speaks of this condition as being sold under sin. Such a person is a slave of sin. It could not be said of a Christian that he was sold under sin—brought into captivity to the rule of sin. Such language as Paul here uses shows the complete helplessness of a person under the dominion of sin and without Christ" (Whiteside, p.162).
- D. Romans 7:24,25: The Wretched Condition of One Without Christ.
1. Verse 24: "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"
    - a. In the foregoing verses, Paul describes the individual who is experiencing the battle between the law of his mind and the law of his flesh. The person realizes that the Law of the mind (in this case the Law of Moses) cannot remove the guilt of the many past transgressions.
    - b. With that in the immediate background, the apostle raises the cry: "O wretched man that I am!" In the pitiable condition described, there is no hope for him.
    - c. So he raises the question: "Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" He knows that with
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- the law of sin having the upper hand, and that there was no forgiveness offered by the Law of Moses, he was doomed to face the penalty of his sins. The "body of this death" is a reference to the mortal body in which resides the law of sin, and over which it exerts its control.
- d. "Paul here presents the condition of the man who first finds himself completely under the dominion of sin and helpless in his desire to free himself, and yet knows no way of escape, till Christ is revealed to him..." (Whiteside, p.163).
  - e. "Throughout this paragraph the deliverer has been kept out of view, that his presence, as absolutely indispensable to the life and happiness of the believer, may be realized. The need of being in Christ and under grace, in contrast with being under a purely legal system, has been shown in the development of the argument in these words: 'For when we were in the flesh, the sinful passions, which were through the law, wrought in our members to bring forth fruit unto death. But now we have been discharged from the law, having died to that wherein we were held; so that we serve in newness of the spirit, and not in oldness of the letter.' (Verses 5,6.) Here 'the law, wrought in our members to bring forth fruit unto death,' which answers to 'captivity' and 'wretched,' called 'the body of this death.' Under grace is a state in which we are 'discharged from the law, having died to that wherein we were held; so that we serve in newness of the spirit, and not in oldness of the letter.' Think, then, of one as being left with all his imperfections under the law, without grace, yearning to do good, but learning finally that the good is beyond his reach. There would be wrung from him the cry for deliverance from his wretchedness. This is the point to which Paul has been leading the argument. Experience shows that the law leaves man, no matter how earnest to keep it, in a state of miserable slavery and wretchedness" (Lipscomb, pp.139f).
  - f. Before he could cry out as he did, he had to realize first that he was in need of salvation. The process of instructing one in the way of salvation is made immensely easier if one recognizes his need for salvation, desires to be saved, and understands that the gospel is the only means whereby deliverance may be effected.
2. Verse 25: "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin."
- a. When the appetites of the flesh called one into the practice of sin, he was doomed to remain under the condemnation of sin as long as he had only the Mosaic Law as the remedy. Paul's jubilant statement here, however, gives the answer to the plaintive cry of the preceding verse: "I am delivered from the body of this death by Jesus Christ!"
  - b. "The language is abrupt, and the sense is incompletely expressed, no direct answer being given to the question, 'Who shall deliver me?' This abruptness is, however, proof of genuineness, answering as it does most naturally to the outburst of anguish and the sudden revulsion of feeling when Paul turns to view his actual state in contrast with his former misery. The cause of thankfulness is not expressed, which is quite after the manner of lively emotion; but a thanksgiving offered to God through Jesus Christ implies that he is the author of the redemption so earnestly desired. The victory was the subjugation of the flesh to the spirit, so that he could say: 'I buffet my body, and bring it into bondage.' (1 Cor. 9:27)" (Lipscomb, p.140).
  - c. Christ came, fulfilled the law (Matt. 5:17), and replaced it with the law of the gospel (Col. 2:14; Heb. 8:1-13; 9:15-17). "For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ" (John 1:17). "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit" (Rom. 8:1-4).
  - d. Under the law, the adherents served the law of God with the mind, but the flesh was bent toward serving the law of sin. This does not suggest that one may serve God acceptably with his mind, while
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at the same time allowing his body to serve sin. This entire concept was utterly rejected and exploded by the information Paul presented in Romans 6. No man can serve two masters (Matt. 6:24). The sinner serves sin with the flesh; the Christian serves God with the law of the mind (the gospel).

- e. "To serve the law of sin with the flesh means simply to commit sin under the influence of the flesh. Now of course I can not serve both the law of God, with the mind, and the law of sin, with the flesh, at one and the same time. To serve the one is to slight the other. And since I can not serve the law of sin continually and be a Christian, it follows that the service of sin is only occasional and exceptional. Hence, the meaning must be that with the flesh, and not with the mind, I serve the law of sin whenever I sin at all. I sin but seldom, suppose, but whenever I do sin, it is with the flesh as an instrument, or through its influence" (Lard, p.244).
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## ROMANS 8

### A. The Setting and Significance of Romans 8.

1. In the first seven chapters of this great book, the Apostle Paul has set forth some significant matters.
  - a. He stated the thesis of the epistle in 1:16-17: the gospel is the power God uses to save lost men. This truth is the foundation upon which the entire letter is set.
  - b. In 1:18—3:23, he showed in graphic detail the fact that both the Jews and Gentiles need the salvation God offers to mankind through the gospel of Christ. Every person who is responsible for his actions in God's sight is lost without the gospel.
  - c. In Chapter 4, we are shown that salvation is by the system of faith (the gospel), and not by the Law of Moses.
  - d. Chapter 5 affirms that Christ died to make salvation possible.
  - e. Romans 6 presents the imperative nature of obedience to the gospel, affirming that it is at the point of being baptized into Christ that we are saved.
  - f. Chapter 7 draws the stark and necessary contrast that exists between the Law of Moses and the Law of Christ. We are delivered from Moses' Law; it is not the law under which we serve God today. It was perfect for what God intended it to accomplish, but it did not have the capability of removing the guilt of sin. Thus, in emphasizing the absolute need for the saving power of the gospel of Christ, the apostle cried out in the closing verses of the chapter, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" The answer is given in Chapter 8..
2. Roy Deaver summarized Romans 1-8 under these headings (*Spiritual Sword Lectures*, p.10):
  - a. The need for the gospel: 1:18-3:20.
  - b. The fact of it: 3:21-31.
  - c. The nature of it: chapter 4.
  - d. The blessings of it: chapter 5.
  - e. The obligation of it: chapter 6.
  - f. The governing factor of it: chapters 7 and 8.
3. "Romans 8 portrays what it means to have the stately security of salvation IN Christ. Since all the Bible up to this chapter prepares for and paves the way for entrance into the continuation in Christ, then all of Holy Writ prior to Romans 8 forms the remote and immediate background" (Robert Taylor, *ibid.*, p.119).

### B. Romans 8:1-4: There Is No Condemnation to Those Who Are in Christ.

1. Verse 1: "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."
  - a. In beautiful contrast to the description Paul gave of the individual who is without Christ (7:8-25), he happily affirms that now there is no condemnation to those he describes here.
  - b. Before one is able to appreciate salvation properly, he must have a conception of the awfulness of condemnation. The Bible offers many statements about the tragedy of being condemned to the devil's hell (Luke 12:4-5; Matt.10:28; Heb. 10:31). This fate is worse than physical death, which divides the spirit from the body; but this state entails an eternal separation from God. The significance of being lost is illustrated by the words used to describe that rueful predicament.
    - 1) Destroyed: 2 Thessalonians 1:6-9.
    - 2) Separated: Matthew 25:31-46.
    - 3) Fire: Mark 9:42-48; Matthew 25:41.
    - 4) Darkness: Matthew 25:40.
    - 5) Horrible cries: Matthew 25:30.
    - 6) Separated from all that is holy and good: Matthew 7:21-23; 25:41; Revelation 22:15.
  - c. There is therefore now. This, of course, draws the contrast with the previous case when the Jews were under Moses' Law and the Gentiles were under the law of conscience (Rom. 2:14-15). In this present

- dispensation, God's law is the gospel of Christ; it has many obligations for us, but also many blessings.
- d. There is therefore now no condemnation. This is an advantage offered to all, but one which only certain ones obtain; it is not a description of the condition of every individual on earth.
- 1) Matthew 7:13-14: "Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide *is* the gate, and broad *is* the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait *is* the gate, and narrow *is* the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it."
  - 2) John 5:28-29: "Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation."
  - 3) Romans 14:10-12: "But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. For it is written, *As I live*, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God."
  - 4) Galatians 6:7-8: "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting."
- e. There is therefore now no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus. The state of not being under the condemnation of sin (i.e., being justified, pardoned, forgiven) pertains only to those who are in Christ. Paul has already shown when and how one enters into Christ (Rom. 6:1-18). It is when one obeys the gospel, which is concluded by baptism into Christ (Gal. 3:27; Rom. 10:13-18; Acts 2:36-41).

#### **THOSE IN CHRIST HAVE THESE BLESSINGS**

<b>BLESSING</b>	<b>REFERENCE</b>
In the Kingdom	Col. 1:13
Redeemed by Blood of Christ	Col. 1:14
Forgiven for Offenses	Eph. 1:7; Acts 2:38; 22:16
Spiritually Alive	Eph. 2:1-5; Rom. 6:3-4; 2 Cor. 5:17
Near to God	Eph. 2:13
Reconciled to God	Eph. 2:16; 2 Cor. 5:17-21
Sanctified	1 Cor. 1:2
New Creature (Creation)	2 Cor. 5:17
Liberty	Gal. 2:4
Have Hope	1 Pet. 1:3-5
Saved	2 Tim. 2:10

**THE CONDITION OF THOSE WHO ARE OUT OF CHRIST**

CONDITION	REFERENCE
Spiritually Dead	Eph. 2:1-5
Children of Disobedience	Eph. 2:2
Children of Wrath	Eph. 2:3
Aliens & Strangers	Eph. 2:12; Matt. 7:23
Have No Hope	Eph. 2:12
Without God	Eph. 2:12
In the World	Eph. 2:12
Far Off From God	Eph. 2:13,17
In Spiritual Darkness	Eph. 4:18

- f. The statement of the verse places a further limit to the blessing: who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. The verb *walk* is commonly used in the Bible to depict the way one lives (Eph. 4:1-3; 5:1-2,8; 1 Th. 4:1,12).
- 1) To walk after the flesh is to live in obedience to the lusts of the flesh; to serve earthly concerns, rather than heavenly. "For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh..." (verse 5). "But there is a general impression that God demanded a more rigid obedience to his law under the Jewish dispensation than under the Christian. It is imagined that through the death of Christ in some way an indulgence from God was secured by which man might be allowed greater license in neglecting the law of God and in going his own way. This is a fatal mistake" (Lipscomb, p.141).
    - a) Acts 17:30-31: "And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent: Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by *that* man whom he hath ordained; *whereof* he hath given assurance unto all *men*, in that he hath raised him from the dead."
    - b) Hebrews 2:1-4: "Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let *them* slip. For if the word spoken by angels was stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward; How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard *him*; God also bearing *them* witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?"
    - c) Hebrews 10:23-31: "Let us hold fast the profession of *our* faith without wavering; (for he *is* faithful that promised;) And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some *is*; but exhorting *one another*: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching. For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who



hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace? For we know him that hath said, Vengeance *belongeth* unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge his people. *It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.*"

- 2) To walk after the Spirit is to live in obedience to the word which was revealed by the Holy Spirit. "For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit" (Rom. 8:5).
  - 3) The ASV omits the second portion of verse one, having only: "There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus." The omitted portion is found in verse four, so the thought is in the passage. Some of the old manuscripts do not contain the statement. Obviously, the statement was found in those upon which the KJV was based.
- g. The expression *in Christ*, and other parallel thoughts, is found many times in the New Testament, including Romans 3:24,26, 5:1,11,17, and 6:11,22.
- 1) To be in Christ is equivalent to being in his body.
    - a) Romans 12:5:"So we, *being* many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another."
    - b) 1 Corinthians 12:27:"Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular."
  - 2) To be in Christ is equivalent to being in his church, since his spiritual body is his church.
    - a) Ephesians 1:22-23:"And hath put all *things* under his feet, and gave him *to be* the head over all *things* to the church, Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all."
    - b) Colossians 1:18:"And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all *things* he might have the preeminence."
    - c) Colossians 1:24:"Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake, which is the church."
  - 3) To be in Christ is equivalent to being in his kingdom, since his kingdom is his church.
    - a) Matthew 16:18-19:"And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."
    - b) Colossians 1:13-14:"Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated *us* into the kingdom of his dear Son: In whom we have redemption through his blood, *even* the forgiveness of sins."
  - 4) The body of Christ, the church of Christ, and the kingdom of Christ all identify the same institution; they are different expressions describing the people of God who are governed by the word of God, and unto whom are given all the spiritual blessings of God: "Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly *places* in Christ" Eph. 1:3).
  - 5) The one baptism of Ephesians 4:4 puts us into Christ (Gal. 3:27), into his body, the church (1 Cor. 12:13; Acts 2:47,38,41), and into the kingdom (John 3:5; Tit. 3:5; Col. 1:13; 2:12).
    - a) John 3:5:"Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and *of* the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."
    - b) Acts 2:38:"Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."
    - c) Acts 2:41:"Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added *unto them* about three thousand souls."
    - d) Acts 2:47:"Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved."
    - e) 1 Corinthians 12:13:"For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether *we be* Jews

- or Gentiles, whether *we be* bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit."
- f) Galatians 3:27: "For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ."
  - g) Colossians 1:13: "Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated *us* into the kingdom of his dear Son.
  - h) Colossians 2:12: "Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with *him* through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead."
  - i) Titus 3:5: "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost."
- h. The conditional statement given in the KJV and in verse 4 shows that one who is not under condemnation (is justified), does not have an unconditional hold on that great blessing. We can lose our justification (our salvation). "A person might run into a cave and be free from the storm that raged without, but that does not guarantee future safety" (Whiteside, p.166).
2. Verse 2: "For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death."
- a. Two different laws are named in the verse; the first law mentioned is able to make us free from the second. A third law is bought up in the next verse. The identity of the first law is obviously the gospel. This troubles sectarian commentators; they are confused with the false doctrine that salvation is by grace and not by any kind of law. But this verse plainly and undeniably affirms that it is by law that we are made free.
    - 1) Jesus said that the truth (God's word) would make us free (John 8:32; 17:17). That truth is nothing less than the gospel of Christ, which is God's power to save (Rom. 1:16). James 1:21 states that the word (of God) is able to save our souls.
    - 2) In different words, 1 Peter 1:22-25 shows that our souls are purified when we obey the truth, which is identified as the word of God, the gospel. And further, Peter described the purification of our souls as "being born again" by the incorruptible word of God. "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, *see that ye* love one another with a pure heart fervently: Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever. For all flesh *is* as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you" (1 Peter 1:22-25).
    - 3) Those who deny that the gospel is a law have an impossible job to try to explain such verses as the present text, and 1 Corinthians 9:21, Galatians 6:2, and James 1:25. Each of these passages speaks of the gospel as a law.
      - a) 1 Corinthians 9:21: "To them that are without law, as without law, (being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ,) that I might gain them that are without law."
      - b) Galatians 6:2: "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ."
      - c) James 1:25: "But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth *therein*, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed."
  - b. This first law is called by Paul in our text "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus." This is a beautifully expressive description of the gospel.
    - 1) The gospel was revealed by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.
      - a) 2 Samuel 23:2: "The spirit of the LORD spake by me, and his word *was* in my tongue."
      - b) Mark 13:11: "But when they shall lead *you*, and deliver you up, take no thought beforehand what ye shall speak, neither do ye premeditate: but whatsoever shall be given you in that hour, that speak ye: for it is not ye that speak, but the Holy Ghost."
      - c) John 16:13-14: "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, *that* shall he speak: and he will show you things to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall show *it* unto you."
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- d) Acts 2:1-4: "And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance."
- e) 1 Corinthians 2:9-14: "But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed *them* unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know *them*, because they are spiritually discerned."
- f) 2 Timothy 3:16-17: "All scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."
- g) 2 Peter 1:20-21: "Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake *as they were* moved by the Holy Ghost."
- 2) The law the Spirit gave provides life for those who properly respond to it. It produces the new birth (1 Pet. 1:22-25; Jas. 1:18); the new birth makes us into new creatures (2 Cor. 5:17; Eph. 2:1).
- a) 2 Corinthians 5:17: "Therefore if any man *be* in Christ, *he is* a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new."
- b) Ephesians 2:1: "And you *hath he quickened*, who were dead in trespasses and sins.
- c) James 1:18: "Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures."
- 3) The law of the Spirit is the gospel of Christ; it came from Christ (John 14:26; 15:26-27; 16:13-14) and the freedom it provides is located in Christ.
- a) John 14:26: "But the Comforter, *which is* the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you."
- b) John 15:26-27: "But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, *even* the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me: And ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning."
- c) John 16:13-14: "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, *that* shall he speak: and he will show you things to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall show *it* unto you."
- c. The law of sin and death is nullified by the law of the Spirit. This law given by the Holy Spirit is able to save us from the law that says, "Because you have sinned, you must die." This law is the one described in Romans 7:23 as the law which wars against the law of the mind (God's word): "And not only *they*, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, *to wit*, the redemption of our body."
3. Verse 3: "For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh."
- a. The third law of the context (verses 1-4) is named here. This third law is the Law of Moses. The law of the Spirit (the gospel) makes the individual free from the law of sin and death (guilt of sin); the Law

of Moses was unable to give this freedom. Again, consider:

- 1) Acts 13:38-39: "Be it known unto you therefore, men *and* brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses."
  - 2) Hebrews 10:1-4: "For the law having a shadow of good things to come, *and* not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect. For then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins. But in those *sacrifices there is* a remembrance again *made* of sins every year. For *it is* not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins."
- b. Moses' Law was unable to do what the Spirit's law [the gospel] does since it [Moses' Law] was weak because of the flesh. To deliver a man from the jaws of sin, the individual must never violate a single precept of that Old Testament law; once he had transgressed, he was guilty of sin, and that law could not remove guilt (Heb. 10:1-4). Because man is unable to keep any law perfectly, he transgressed quickly and often.
- 1) Ecclesiastes 7:20: "For *there is* not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not."
  - 2) Romans 3:23: "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God."
- c. But God found another means by which he could justify fallen man from his sins fully and completely (Heb. 8:12), and if he would sincerely try to follow this new system (the gospel), that faithful person could have the continual cleansing of his sins (1 John 1:7).
- d. This system God designed, which was actually planned from before the beginning of time (Rev. 13:8), involved the sending of the second person of the Godhead, Christ, to die for the sins of mankind. His life was free from any taint of sin; his teachings identified the errors of men and warned them of the extreme danger of living in sin; and he died on the cross as the only possible sacrifice that could take away the guilt of man's sin.
- 1) Matthew 26:28: "For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins."
  - 2) John 1:29: "The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world."
  - 3) Hebrews 9:22: "And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission."
  - 4) 1 Peter 1:18-19: "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, *as* silver and gold, from your vain conversation *received* by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot."
  - 5) 1 John 2:1-4: "My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for *the sins of* the whole world. And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him."
- e. Thus, by his life, his teachings, his works, and his death, Christ condemned sin while he was living in a fleshly body. It was essential for him to take a body of flesh in order to be tempted as a man (Heb. 4:15), and to be susceptible to death (Phil. 2:5-11; Heb. 2:18; 1 Tim. 6:16).
- 1) Philippians 2:5-11: "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of *things* in heaven, and *things* in earth, and *things* under the earth; And *that* every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ *is* Lord, to the
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glory of God the Father."

- 2) 1 Timothy 6:16: "Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom *be* honour and power everlasting. Amen."
- 3) Hebrews 2:18: "For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted."
- 4) Hebrews 4:15: "For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as *we are, yet* without sin."
- f. "When Adam and Eve were first created, they had all that belongs to human nature. Sin came into their lives as a foreign element. Sin is no more a part of your nature than dust in your eye is a part of the nature of your eye. Because the desires, appetites, and passions of the flesh so often lead to sin, flesh is called sinful. But we should remember always that fleshly desires lead to sin only when the mind, or heart, purposes to gratify the flesh in an unlawful way" (Whiteside, pp.169f).
- g. In God's infinite wisdom, he knew that the only means by which the reign of sin could be overthrown was through the death of his Son (Isa. 53; John 3:16; 2 Cor. 9:15).
4. Verse 4: "That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."
  - a. The righteousness which the Law of Moses sought to give those Old Testament people is fulfilled in the faithful followers of Christ. If a Jew had kept the Mosaic Law perfectly, God would have had nothing against him.
  - b. When a person obeys the gospel, all of his guilt is removed, and God considers him as if he had never been guilty of sin at any time. That is the meaning of *justification*. God has nothing against a faithful Christian; he is acceptable to God; God is his Father, and he is God's child. "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in *them*; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean *thing*; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty" (2 Cor. 6:14-18).
  - c. The condition of walking after the Spirit, and not walking after the flesh, is given. It is not enough that one becomes a Christian; he must live as a Christian. This he can do only if he follows the directions given in the New Testament by the Spirit.
    - 1) Galatians 5:19-23: "Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are *these*; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told *you* in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law."
    - 2) Titus 2:11-12: "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world."
  - d. "Commentators are not agreed as to whether the Greek word translated 'ordinance' [ASV] should be translated *ordinance, requirement, righteousness, or justification*" (Whiteside, p.170).
- C. Romans 8:5-8: Because the Flesh is Under Control, Eternal Victory is Possible.
  1. Verse 5: "For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit."
    - a. Those who are after the flesh (that is, who exalt fleshly appetites over spiritual matters), are those who mind the things of the flesh. If one has too high a regard for fleshly concerns, he is bound to follow the same.

- b. The same is true with those who exalt spiritual concerns: they will follow those principles. This expresses the precept of Proverbs 23:7: "For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he...." Therefore, we are told by the wise man: "Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life." The direction we allow our minds to take, that is the direction we will take in life. "O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things. But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned" (Matt. 12:34-37).
  - c. It is impossible to follow the dictates of the flesh and those of the Holy Spirit at the same time. This is true because no man can serve two opposing masters simultaneously.
    - 1) Matthew 6:24: "No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon."
    - 2) Romans 6:16: "Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?"
2. Verse 6: "For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace."
- a. The end result of serving the flesh is death; to serve the Spirit is life and peace. The two opposites are here defined as *carnally minded* and *spiritually minded*. This verse restates the truth of verse five. The ASV renders verse six as, "For the mind of the flesh is death; but the mind of the Spirit is life and peace."
  - b. To be carnally minded is to allow the appetites and passions of the flesh to govern and control our dispositions and life. It is that inclination to serve the desires of the flesh (1 Cor. 6:9-10; Gal. 5:19-21). The ultimate end of this way of life is death—that eternal separation of the individual's soul from God; the consignment of the soul in the devil's hell, without hope of deliverance.
    - 1) 1 Corinthians 6:9-10: "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God."
    - 2) Galatians 5:19-21: "Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are *these*; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told *you* in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God."
  - c. To be spiritually minded is to allow the teachings of the Holy Spirit to govern and control our dispositions and life. It is that inclination to develop the fruit which the Spirit advocates (Gal. 5:22-23; 2 Pet. 1:5-7; Tit. 2:11-14). The result of this way of life is life and peace: we will be alive spiritually; we will enter eternal life in heaven; our life on earth will be characterized by inner contentment (Phil. 4:6-13) and peace with God (Eph. 2:16), and we will be at peace in eternity.
3. Verse 7: "Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be."
- a. The ASV translates this verse as, "Because the mind of the flesh is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can it be."
  - b. If one minds the sinful appetites of the flesh, he will place himself in opposition to God. The disposition to gratify fleshly concerns is opposite to what God wants, and if we maintain this frame of mind, we will be at enmity with God. "Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God" (Jas. 4:4).
  - c. The disposition of minding the flesh is not subject to the law of God, but is in direct conflict with God's law, and as long as that disposition is maintained, the individual cannot be in concord with his
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law. However, if the person changes his disposition (through faith and repentance), and obeys the law, he will be saved.

4. Verse 8: "So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God."
  - a. If one continues to display the attitude of verse seven, he cannot please God. This statement does not mean that a person, while he is alive on earth, cannot please him. But the verse clearly shows that one cannot live as he pleases and have the approval of God.
  - b. It will be remembered that chapter six developed in detail the truth that, just because we are under the grace of God, does not mean that we have the right to live in sin.
  - c. God's law requires us to live godly, holy, and pure lives. God sets the standard! "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world" (Titus 2:11-12).

D. Romans 8:9-11: The Indwelling Spirit Directs the Faithful Christian.

1. Verse 9: "But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his."
  - a. The meaning of this verse has been highly disputed, even among our brethren. It behooves us to proceed with care before affirming a dogmatic conclusion, since perfect understanding and agreement on the verse may be impossible.
  - b. The various views given are the following:
    - 1) Some think that "the Spirit" is the Holy Spirit (which the translators asserted by the use of the capital letter).
    - 2) But others says that the human spirit is meant (Lard, p.256).
    - 3) Some say that the verse teaches a direct, personal indwelling of the Holy Spirit in the heart of every faithful Christian (Coffman, pp.290ff).
    - 4) Others say that it refers to an indirect, representative indwelling of the Spirit; that the Spirit indwells us only to the extent that the word of God resides in our hearts and lives (Taylor, op. cit., p.122).
    - 5) And others maintain that the indwelling here is a reference to the miraculous control effected by the Spirit over the inspired people of the first century (Franklin Camp, *The Work of the Holy Spirit in Redemption*, pp.234f).
  - c. That the Spirit meant is the Holy Spirit, and not the human spirit, is evident from the context (see verses four, five, and sixteen). Those who follow the flesh cannot please God by so-doing (verse 8); those who follow the Spirit are subject to the law of God (verse 7). Of the last three views, only the last two seem to be tenable to this writer. Paul simply stated a fact in this verse; he did not define the means by which the indwelling was accomplished, whether it was direct or indirect, or if he had in mind a miraculous or non-miraculous operation.
  - d. Regarding points four and five above:
    - 1) In support of view # 5, Camp cites Thayer, saying that "in the Spirit" means, "To be in the power of, to be actuated by, to be inspired by the Holy Spirit, (see Romans 8:9)."
      - a) Revelation 1:10: "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet."
      - b) Revelation 4:1-2: "After this I looked, and, behold, a door *was* opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard *was* as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said, Come up hither, and I will show thee things which must be hereafter. And immediately I was in the spirit; and, behold, a throne was set in heaven, and *one* sat on the throne."
    - 2) In support of view # 4, Taylor cites Guy Woods: "Neither here, nor elsewhere, in the sacred writings, do the Scriptures teach that there is a literal, bodily indwelling of the Holy Spirit apart from the word....The view that the Holy Spirit, apart from the word, and in direct contact with the heart of man leads, guides and motivates either sinners or Christians today, is a dangerous delusion" (p.122).

- e. The Bible teaches that God dwells in the Christian (1 John 4:15); it also says that Christ dwells in the Christian (Eph. 3:17).
    - 1) In this latter verse, the means by which Christ dwells in us is said to be "by faith" (precisely, "by **the faith**").
    - 2) **We have no reason to think that the Holy Spirit dwells in us directly and personally, any more than to believe God and Christ dwell in us directly and personally. There is every reason to think that the Holy Spirit dwells in us in exactly the same way that Christ does: that is, as we permit the word of Christ to reside in our minds and control our thoughts, motives, and actions; only to that extent and in that manner does Christ abide in us.**
    - 3) In fact, we have two parallel passages which teach this truth plainly:
      - a) "And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit; speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord" (Eph. 5:18-19).
      - b) "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord" (Col. 3:16).
      - c) To be filled with the Spirit is identified as letting the word of Christ dwell in us in all wisdom.
  - f. The present text (Rom. 8:9) is a development from the preceding verses. It teaches:
    - 1) Faithful Christians do not live in harmony with the passions of their fleshly bodies, but they do live in harmony with the Spirit (that is, they follow the teachings of the Holy Spirit).
    - 2) This description is true if the Spirit of God (the Holy Spirit) dwells in the Christian. If a Christian does not have the Spirit of Christ (the Holy Spirit), he does not belong to Christ.
    - 3) The reason for this is clear: the person is not willing to submit to the will of Christ. He will not allow the word of Christ to dwell in him (Col. 3:16), which is equal to saying he will not permit the Holy Spirit to fill him (Eph. 5:18-19).
    - 4) The Holy Spirit revealed the New Testament (1 Cor. 2:9-14; John 16:13-14; Mark 13:11; Luke 24:49; Acts 1:5,8; 2:1-4). [See the outline at the end of the chapter for more information on the influence of the Spirit].
2. Verse 10: "And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness."
    - a. For Christ to be in them, they would have to be dead to sin. The Lord will not abide where sin is. He is not suggesting that they must be absolutely sinless, with never a slip (1 John 1:7-10). But we must not be characterized by sinful conduct; we must keep ourselves as pure as we can, as close to the Lord's word as possible.
    - b. The physical body is doomed to meet physical death whether or not Christ dwells in us. The point is this: we put aside the sinful passions of the flesh; as far as the gratification of these lusts is concerned, the body is dead; it is dead to the practice of sin.
      - 1) Galatians 2:20: "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me."
      - 2) Galatians 5:24: "And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts."
    - c. Righteousness is produced by obedience to the law which was given by the Holy Spirit. Verse two of this chapter described the gospel as "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus." To be made free from the law of sin and death, to be in a state of no condemnation, and to be righteous, are parallel thoughts.
    - d. Again, Christ dwells in us by faith; as we learn and apply his teachings, he can be said to be in us. "To whom God would make known what *is* the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory" (Col. 1:27; cf. Phil. 2:5-11).
  3. Verse 11: "But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ
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from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you."

- a. Once again, Paul describes a blessing which is predicated on the indwelling of the Spirit. Throughout this chapter, we must remember the fact which has already been established—that the Spirit dwells in us as we know, believe, and follow the Spirit-given gospel. This is an indisputable fact.
    - 1) 2 Timothy 3:16-17: "All scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."
    - 2) 1 Peter 1:22-23: "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, *see that ye* love one another with a pure heart fervently: Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever."
    - 3) Ephesians 5:18-19: "And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit; Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord."
    - 4) Colossians 3:16: "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord."
  - b. God was the power behind the Lord's resurrection; the Spirit of God is the Holy Spirit
    - 1) 2 Samuel 23:2: "The spirit of the LORD spake by me, and his word *was* in my tongue."
    - 2) Psalms 51:11: "Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy holy spirit from me."
  - c. The blessing indicated is that God, who raised Christ from the dead, will also raise us from the dead—if the Spirit dwells in us. This passage seems to promise us that we (as faithful Christians) will be raised up at the last day, and that this is predicated on the Spirit being in us while we live on earth. But other passages show that both the righteous and the wicked will be raised from the dead, unconditionally.
    - 1) John 5:28-29: "Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation."
    - 2) Acts 24:15: "And have hope toward God, which they themselves also allow, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust."
    - 3) 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18: "But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive *and* remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive *and* remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words."
  - d. One explanation is this: that the sentence of death was issued to every human being following the entrance of sin into the human family. But due to the successful mission of Christ, which was culminated by his resurrection, our ultimate victory over death is assured—conditionally. The resurrection of the wicked will not result in any blessing for them; only more torment (Luke 16:19-31; 2 Thess. 1:7-9). But for those who obey the gospel and remain faithful to the end, they were delivered from the guilt of sin while they were alive on earth, and will receive the end of their salvation in heaven—an eternal life of splendor and bliss. The resurrection of the dead is essential before this reward can be entered.
  - e. Another explanation is this: that those aliens who obey the gospel will be made alive to God (spiritually); that as they had been dead in sin, they are now alive from sin; their mortal bodies have
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been purified from the practice of sin. The body is quickened so as to be of service to God. "For we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh" (2 Cor. 4:11; See Whiteside, pp.175f). "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me" (Gal. 2:20).

- f. God, Christ, and the Holy Spirit were involved in the resurrection of the Savior. This verse attributes the power behind the operation to God. Christ said he had the power to lay down his life and to take it up again (John 10:17-18). Romans 1:4 shows that the Holy Spirit also had a part in his resurrection.
- g. The text shows that the Holy Spirit will be involved in our own resurrection from the grave (according to the explanation in *d* above). If the reference is to our being made alive in obeying the gospel (*e*), the Spirit does this through the inspired word. It seems clear that, since it is the mortal body that is to be made alive, that the resurrection is the literal resurrection at the last day. The position stated under *d* seems to be proper understanding.

E. Romans 8:12-17: We Are Indebted to the Spirit.

1. Verse 12: "Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh."
  - a. We have no obligation to gratify the appetites of the flesh if they cannot be satisfied without tainting the soul. What right does our fleshly body have to demand gratification of its every desire when the result is the destruction of the soul? We are not debtors to the flesh, to appease its appetites and to serve its wishes.
  - b. Paul implies in the statement what he affirmed earlier: that we are obligated to exalt the spiritual interests of the soul, which we do by following the instructions of the Holy Spirit (which he gives through the written word of God).
2. Verse 13: "For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live."
  - a. This completes the thought of the previous verse. If we allow the appetites of the flesh to direct the way we live, death will be the unavoidable consequence. The death here is spiritual death, separation from God (in this life and in eternity).
  - b. However, Christ offers an escape from the trap. If we mortify (put to death) the deeds which our fleshly bodies seek to fulfill, we shall be alive spiritually. We put these deeds of the body to death in the sense that we subdue and control them. If we do not kill sin, it will kill us.
  - c. We are able to subdue these appetites by the Holy Spirit, but not by some direct or miraculous operation he effects over us. Rather, as we mind the instructions given by the Spirit in the word of God, we will be guided away from sensuality (verses 1-6; 2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Pet. 1:1-12).
  - d. The normal appetites of our fleshly bodies have legitimate means of gratification. The sexual desires are to be fulfilled in marriage (1 Cor. 7). Food, clothing and shelter are proper desires and needs for which God has given (Acts 14:17; Jas. 1:17). But the gratification of these passions becomes sinful if:
    - 1) We exalt them above the needs of the soul (Matt. 4:4).
    - 2) We give them a greater priority than that of serving God (Matt. 6:33).
    - 3) We seek to fulfill them by unlawful means (2 Tim. 2:5; 1 Cor. 9:24-27).
3. Verse 14: "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God."
  - a. The way we live denotes who our master is. If we are led by the Spirit, we are God's children; if we are led by the passions of the flesh, we are children of the devil (John 8:44).
  - b. "Minding the Spirit," "the Spirit in us," and being "led by the Spirit" are used as parallels; to mind the Spirit is to be led by the Spirit; to mind the Spirit and be led by the Spirit are equal to having the Spirit in us.
  - c. Paul and those in Rome to whom he was writing were Christians; but just because men have obeyed the gospel (Rom. 10:16) does not insure that they are still God's children. The apostle has stressed the need to live righteously (Rom. 6). He has shown in this chapter that we must walk after the Spirit,

conducting our lives after (i.e., minding) the instructions given by the Spirit.

- d. The point being emphasized here is the need to be led by the Holy Spirit, but Paul does not identify in this passage exactly how the Holy Spirit leads us; this we must learn from other Bible statements. The outline inserted (at the end of the chapter) shows conclusively that the Spirit's leading is effected by means of the word of God.
- e. The gospel is God's power to save fallen man (Rom. 1:16); the means by which God makes men to become righteous is the gospel (Rom. 10:1-3, 13-18); the Holy Spirit revealed, confirmed, recorded, and preserved the gospel.
  - 1) Mark 16:20: "And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with *them*, and confirming the word with signs following. Amen."
  - 2) Acts 1:5: "For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence."
  - 3) Acts 1:8: "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."
  - 4) Acts 2:1-4: "And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance."
  - 5) 1 Corinthians 2:9-14: "But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed *them* unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know *them*, because they are spiritually discerned."
  - 6) 2 Timothy 3:16-17: "All scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."
  - 7) Hebrews 2:1-4: "Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let *them* slip. For if the word spoken by angels was stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward; How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard *him*; God also bearing *them* witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?"
  - 8) 1 Peter 1:18-25: "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, *as* silver and gold, from your vain conversation *received* by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you, Who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God. Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, *see that ye* love one another with a pure heart fervently: Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever. For all flesh *is* as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: But the word of the Lord endureth for ever.

- And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you."
- 9) 2 Peter 1:19-21: "We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts: Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake *as they were* moved by the Holy Ghost."
  - f. The Holy Spirit leads aliens into the family of God by means of the gospel of Christ (Rom. 1:16; John 3:5; Tit. 3:5); the truth is presented to them (Mark 16:15-16); they understand it and believe it (Acts 8:1-12, 35-39); they repent of their sins (Acts 2:36-38, 41); they confess their faith in Christ (Acts 8:37; Rom. 10:10); they are baptized into Christ (Rom. 6:3-4; Gal. 3:26-27). But if the Holy Spirit influences men to become children of God separate and apart from the gospel, then the gospel is not the power of God unto salvation (Rom. 1:16).
  - g. Those who are converted to Christ then walk in harmony with the gospel (1 John 1:7-10; Matt. 10:22; Rev. 2:10; John 15:14; Luke 6:46; 2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Pet. 1:3). But if the Holy Spirit guides Christians separate and apart from God's word (the gospel), then the word of God is not able to furnish us unto all good works, does not give us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, and is not sufficient unto all our needs.
    - 1) John 6:63: "It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, *they* are spirit, and *they* are life."
    - 2) Hebrews 4:12: "For the word of God *is* quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and *is* a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."
    - 3) James 1:18: "Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures."
    - 4) James 1:21: "Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls."
    - 5) 2 Timothy 3:16-17: "All scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."
  - h. Christ is the way, the truth and the life (John 14:6). No man can come to him unless God has drawn that person to Christ (John 6:44). God draws us by means of teaching, learning, and heeding. "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day. It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me" (John 6:44-45).
  - i. The Spirit produces faith by the gospel (Rom. 10:17; Acts 15:7; John 17:20-21; 20:30f). He produces repentance (Acts 11:18; 2:1-4, 38) by means of the gospel; in the gospel, he gives motives and instructions which lead us to have godly sorrow, which in turn results in repentance (2 Cor. 7:10; Acts 17:30-31; 9:1-6; 22:16; 1 Tim. 1:13-15). He provides the information and instruction necessary to lead us to confess Christ and be baptized into Christ (Rom. 10:10; Gal. 3:26). From the time we first learn and believe the Spirit-given gospel, to the time we pass from this life, we are to be directed by the inspired, written word of God. The word of God is all-sufficient.
4. Verse 15: "For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father."
    - a. The Gentiles under idolatry and the Jews under the Mosaic Law served in a spirit of fear. The idols were often fearsome images, and the priests who "served" them controlled the worshippers by means of fear. In the case of both Jew and Gentile, the individual served sin to one degree or another, allowing the passions of the flesh to be in command.
    - b. The Mosaic Law did not have a means of removing guilt, so those who served God under the law had the daily realization of guilt, and thus were in fear. All idolaters and other sinners had reason to fear
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- while in the state of condemnation. Notice the word again, which implies the current state of these saints in Rome is in contrast to the condition they formerly had.
- c. 2 Timothy 1:7: "For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind." We are to fear God (Acts 10:34-35; Heb. 12:28-29), but not to the extreme that we are in stark terror of him. We serve God with the realization that we, as faithful Christians, are acceptable to him, have his approval and help, and are co-laborers with him. We also recognize his majestic greatness in contrast to our finite weakness.
  - d. Instead of having a spirit of fear, we have received the Spirit of adoption. The reference is evidently to the Holy Spirit, thus indicating the Spirit's involvement in our being adopted into God's spiritual family (Rom. 8:16-17). Under Roman law, adoption by a Roman citizen was uncommonly meaningful. There were definite benefits that citizenship conferred which were not enjoyed by the general population of the far-flung empire (cf. Acts 22:25-28). In the Lord's kingdom, there are rights and blessings conferred which do not pertain to non-citizens.
    - 1) Ephesians 1:3: "Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly *places* in Christ."
    - 2) Colossians 1:13-14: "Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated *us* into the kingdom of his dear Son: In whom we have redemption through his blood, *even* the forgiveness of sins."
  - e. Because we are members of God's family, we are privileged to cry, "Abba, Father." *Abba* is Aramaic for "Father," and the second word is Greek for the same word. The repetition emphasizes the blessing of having God as our father, whether we are Jew or Greek. Concerning the word *abba*, Vine gives this studied appraisal: *Abba* "is an Aramaic word, found in Mark 14:36, Rom. 8:15 and Gal. 4:6. In the Gemara (a Rabbinical commentary on the Mishna, the traditional teaching of the Jews) it is stated that slaves were forbidden to address the head of the family by this title. It approximates to a personal name, in contrast to 'Father,' with which it is always joined in the N.T. This is probably due to the fact that, 'Abba' having practically become a proper name, Greek-speaking Jews added the Greek word *pater*, father, from the language they used. 'Abba' is the word framed by the lips of infants, and betokens unreasoning trust; 'father' expresses an intelligent apprehension of the relationship. The two together express the love and intelligent confidence of the child" (Vol. 1, p.9).
  - f. Galatians 4:1-7: "Now I say, That the heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all; But is under tutors and governors until the time appointed of the father. Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world: But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father. Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ." Notice the similarities between this passage and our text.
5. Verse 16: "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God."
- a. The Holy Spirit bears witness with our spirits that we are the sons of God. There is a difference between talking to someone and talking with that person. In the former case, you do the talking; in the latter, both parties participate in the talking.
  - b. Sectarians say that the Holy Spirit bears witness to them that they are saved; but the passage says the Spirit bears witness with our spirits. Both the Holy Spirit and our spirit are involved in bearing witness.
  - c. We have already seen the method by which the Holy Spirit influences men. It is by means of God's word. He miraculously gave the inspired people of the first century direct revelations, coupled with supernatural powers to confirm the message as coming from heaven (Mark 13:11; 16:20).
    - 1) But to change each individual (including those who were inspired), the person had to learn, believe, and obey the precepts presented by the Holy Spirit.
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- 2) The Holy Spirit provided the information, but the individual had to act on that truth personally.
  - a) Nehemiah 9:20: "Thou gavest also thy good spirit to instruct them, and withheldest not thy manna from their mouth, and gavest them water for their thirst."
  - b) Nehemiah 9:30: "Yet many years didst thou forbear them, and testifiedst against them by thy spirit in thy prophets: yet would they not give ear: therefore gavest thou them into the hand of the people of the lands."
  - c) Acts 7:51-53: "Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers *did*, so *do* ye. Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? and they have slain them which showed before of the coming of the Just One; of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers: Who have received the law by the disposition of angels, and have not kept *it*."
  - d) Acts 10:34-35: "Then Peter opened *his* mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him."
  - e) Galatians 2:11-14: "But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed. For before that certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles: but when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision. And the other Jews dissembled likewise with him; insomuch that Barnabas also was carried away with their dissimulation. But when I saw that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel, I said unto Peter before *them* all, If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?"
- d. Therefore, the Holy Spirit bears his testimony through the word he gave; that message includes the conditions essential to our becoming the children of God. When we have complied with those stipulations fully, our spirit bears testimony that we are God's child.
  - 1) The Holy Spirit teaches: believe, repent, confess Christ, and be baptized for the remission of sins, and you will be adopted into God's family; our spirits can report that we have complied with those terms, and therefore we acknowledge that we are in God's family.
  - 2) The Spirit tells us in the gospel what we must do to be saved; our conscience can answer, "I have done it." Cf. 1 Peter 3:21; Hebrews 10:15-22; 1 John 5:9-13.
- e. Notice the pronouns ye and we (verse 15). The Romans had received the Spirit of adoption; and since Paul had also received this blessing, he could include himself in the forthcoming cry, "Abba, Father." Paul, the Roman saints, and faithful Christians today, are children of God, and can address him as "Father." This benefit is not possessed by those outside God's family.
- f. The reception of the Spirit here is to be understood as indicated in verse nine. The statement did not tell **how** the Spirit indwells; it only affirmed the fact of the indwelling (the reception). Considering the parallels between Ephesians 5:18-19 and Colossians 3:16, we learn that the Spirit dwells in the saints to the degree that the word of God abides in them. This appears to be the most natural meaning of the indwelling.
- g. Some brethren understand the reception of the Spirit in this passage as a reference to the miraculous gifts of the first century. Galatians 3:2,5 attaches a miraculous meaning to a similar statement. The argument is made that Romans 8:14-16 is parallel and indicates a miraculous indwelling of the Spirit in those of the first century who received spiritual gifts.
- h. Concerning the testimony of our spirit, Whiteside suggests that instead of the reference being to our spirit (our soul or heart), the part of us that bears witness is the disposition or attitude we have because we are Christians. "Our spirit as Christians is the spirit of faithful sons, the spirit of loving obedience. That is the spirit Paul had just mentioned, and that is our spirit—the Christian spirit. The Holy Spirit gives testimony as to what one must do and be to be a child of God, and our spirit of filial submission shows that we possess the characteristics of sonship. In this way we prove, not only to ourselves, but

- to the world also, that we are children of God. A life of devotion guided by the testimony of the Holy Spirit is double evidence that we are children of God" (pp.179f).
- i. The word *itself*, which is used by the KJV as a pronoun for the Holy Spirit, is given more properly as *himself* by the ASV. The Holy Spirit is spoken of consistently in the Scriptures as a person, in the singular, masculine gender; he is not some kind of glorified *thing* or *force*.
6. Verse 17: "And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together."
    - a. If one is a child of God, then he is also an heir of God; if he is an heir of God, he a joint-heir with Christ. Christ has received the blessings of God included in the honor of sitting at God's right hand.
      - 1) Hebrews 1:8: "But unto the Son *he saith*, Thy throne, O God, *is* for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness *is* the sceptre of thy kingdom."
      - 2) Hebrews 8:1: "Now of the things which we have spoken *this is* the sum: We have such an high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens."
      - 3) Hebrews 12:1-2: "Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset *us*, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of *our* faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God."
      - 4) Revelation 3:21: "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne."
    - b. Since the faithful today will receive an inheritance in heaven, we are joint-heirs with Christ, with the understanding that he is the Elder Brother in the family, and as such, will receive the greater legacy, as per the ancient practice.
    - c. Our inheritance depends on our faithfulness. In the first century and to a lesser degree in modern times, faithfulness often entails persecution. "Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution" (2 Tim. 3:12).
      - 1) Christianity demands that we be different from the world; that distinction often brings hatred and prejudicial treatment.
      - 2) Demands were made then that Christians revile Christ or suffer torture. To surrender to the demands is to forfeit the inheritance; to remain loyal meant persecution. Faithful obedience is specifically indicated before the inheritance could be expected.
    - d. Entering God's family does not depend on certain things.
      - 1) Ancestry. Some boast about their ancestral lineage. Someone boasted to Will Rogers that his ancestors came to America on the Mayflower; Rogers quipped, "My ancestors were there to meet them."
        - a) Matthew 3:9: "And think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to *our* father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham."
        - b) John 8:32-33: "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. They answered him, We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free?"
      - 2) Human wisdom. The greatest of wise men are oafs before the Almighty! The most enlightened rocket scientist cannot enlighten our souls or remove the guilt of a single sin!
        - a) Proverbs 3:5: "Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding."
        - b) Jeremiah 9:23: "Thus saith the LORD, Let not the wise *man* glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty *man* glory in his might, let not the rich *man* glory in his riches."
        - c) 1 Corinthians 1:25-29: "Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men. For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, *are called*: But God hath chosen the foolish

things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, *yea*, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: That no flesh should glory in his presence."

- d) 1 Corinthians 1:31: "That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord."
- 3) Long prayers and big contributions.
  - a) Matthew 23:14: "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayer: therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation."
  - b) Mark 12:41-44: "And Jesus sat over against the treasury, and beheld how the people cast money into the treasury: and many that were rich cast in much. And there came a certain poor widow, and she threw in two mites, which make a farthing. And he called *unto him* his disciples, and saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, That this poor widow hath cast more in, than all they which have cast into the treasury: For all *they* did cast in of their abundance; but she of her want did cast in all that she had, *even* all her living."
- 4) The only means of entering God's family (his kingdom) is by the new birth.
  - a) John 3:3: "Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."
  - b) John 3:5: "Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and *of* the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."
  - c) Acts 2:38: "Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."
  - d) Acts 2:47: "Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved."
  - e) Colossians 1:13-14: "Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated *us* into the kingdom of his dear Son: In whom we have redemption through his blood, *even* the forgiveness of sins."
- e. As children of God, we are heirs to the greatest legacy that could be imagined.
  - 1) We are heirs of God's grace (Rom. 5:1-2). In effect, it is as if God says, "I am willing to open the treasure-house of heaven for you."
    - a) Romans 5:1-2: "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God."
    - b) Hebrews 4:14-16: "Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast *our* profession. For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as *we are*, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need."
  - 2) We are heirs of salvation. This is the great objective of the gospel.
    - a) Luke 19:10: "For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost."
    - b) Ephesians 1:10: "That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; *even* in him."
    - c) 2 Timothy 2:10: "Therefore I endure all things for the elect's sakes, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory."
    - d) Titus 2:11: "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men."
    - e) Hebrews 1:4 "Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they."
  - 3) We are heirs of his promises.
    - a) Galatians 3:29: "And if ye *be* Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the



- promise."
- b) Hebrews 6:10: "For God *is* not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have showed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister."
  - c) Hebrews 6:17: "Wherein God, willing more abundantly to show unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed *it* by an oath."
- 4) We are heirs of his kingdom.
- a) Daniel 2:44: "And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, *but* it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever."
  - b) Hebrews 12:28-29: "Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: For our God *is* a consuming fire."
  - c) James 2:5: "Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him?"
  - d) 2 Peter 1:5-12: "And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make *you that ye shall* neither *be* barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Wherefore I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, though ye know *them*, and be established in the present truth."
- 5) We are heirs of eternal life.
- a) Titus 3:7: "That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life."
  - b) 1 Peter 1:3-5: "Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time."
  - c) 1 Peter 1:9: "Receiving the end of your faith, *even* the salvation of *your* souls."
  - d) 1 John 2:25: "And this is the promise that he hath promised us, *even* eternal life."
- 6) Faithful saints have their names enrolled in the Lamb's Book of Life.
- a) Exodus 33:12: "And Moses said unto the LORD, See, thou sayest unto me, Bring up this people: and thou hast not let me know whom thou wilt send with me. Yet thou hast said, I know thee by name, and thou hast also found grace in my sight."
  - b) Nahum 1:7: "The LORD *is* good, a strong hold in the day of trouble; and he knoweth them that trust in him."
  - c) Luke 10:20: "Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven."
  - d) John 10:3-4: "To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out. And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice."
  - e) 1 Corinthians 8:3: "But if any man love God, the same is known of him."
  - f) Philippians 4:3: "And I entreat thee also, true yokefellow, help those women which laboured with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and *with* other my fellowlabourers, whose names *are*
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in the book of life."

- g) 2 Timothy 2:19: "Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity."
- h) Hebrews 12:23: "To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect."

F. Romans 8:18-25: We Are Sustained in the Present by the Hope of Future Glory.

1. Verse 18: "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us."
  - a. This is one of the most beautiful, faith-sustaining statements in the Bible! Heaven, with all its riches and glories, awaits the faithful saint! Regardless of the sufferings our faith brings forth, heaven will be worth it all. There is nothing in this world that can compare to the freshness, the glorious majesty, or the richness of splendor that heaven holds. No price is too high to pay in order to obtain entrance into that beautiful place! (2 Cor. 4:16-18; 5:1-11; 2 Tim. 2:11-12).
    - 1) The glory mentioned will be revealed in us (the redeemed). This glory is not presently manifested, but one day it will be plainly displayed for all to see (cf. Matt. 25:31-46; Luke 16:19-31). Heaven is now unknown even to the redeemed; the descriptions given in the Bible usually are negative, showing that our situation there will be different from what it is here.
    - 2) At the Judgment, it appears that the lost will have a glimpse of the glory of that great city, before being cast into Gehenna. For that brief instant, its grandeur will be seen by them, but for eternity it will be fully revealed to the redeemed! Revelation 21:1-8.
  - b. Heaven is a place of freshness: Revelation 21:1.
    - 1) It is called, "New heaven and new earth." This does not mean Christ will renew the earth and have an earthly kingdom (2 Pet. 3:8-13; Matt. 24:35). The first heaven and earth will be destroyed, and supplanted by the new heaven and earth.
    - 2) Two New Testament words are translated **new**: *Neos*: young (not ancient). *Kainos*: fresh, not worn out; new in form or quality; having a different nature from the contrasted item. Both Peter [2 Pet. 3:13] and John [Rev. 21:1] used this term [*kainos*]. The term *kainos* is also used in Matthew 26:28 ["new testament"] and 2 Corinthians 5:17 ["new creature"].
    - 3) Heaven is new in quality and freshness; it is a new habitation which has never been the habitation of men.
  - c. The soul's eternal abode is not this earth (John 14:1-3; Acts 1:9-11; 1 Th. 4:13ff).
    - 1) Christ had to leave earth to go to it; he went there to prepare for our coming.
    - 2) No passage says Christ will ever set foot on this earth again!
    - 3) This universe will be utterly removed: burned up; dissolved; melted (2 Pt. 3:10ff).
  - d. Heaven is a place of righteousness (2 Pet. 3:13; Rev. 21:27).
    - 1) It is a place of freshness—without any taint of sin or depravity.
    - 2) No hatred, division, or disobedience will be found there; perfect obedience, love, and purity will characterize that city.
  - e. Heaven is pictured as a holy city (Heb. 11:10; 13:14; cf. Rev. 21-22). Jerusalem was the greatest city to Jews (heaven is called "new Jerusalem"). Such a city offered comfort, rest, beauty, provisions, and protection.
  - f. Heaven is described as coming to the redeemed as a beautiful bride.
    - 1) This is apocalyptic language, giving a symbolic description; it depicts the ultimate victory of the Lord's church at the end of time.
    - 2) Weddings are often beautiful affairs; the bride is gorgeous and the scene is both glorious and happy.
  - g. Heaven is described as a situation in which God and the redeemed are together, thus, as a family reunion. Now we have this relationship only in a limited degree (2 Cor. 6:14-18), but it will be fully

realized in heaven (1 John 3:2-3; 1 Cor. 15:28).

- 1) 1 Corinthians 15:28: "And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all."
  - 2) 2 Corinthians 4:14-18: "Knowing that he which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also by Jesus, and shall present *us* with you. For all things *are* for your sakes, that the abundant grace might through the thanksgiving of many redound to the glory of God. For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward *man* is renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding *and* eternal weight of glory; While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen *are* temporal; but the things which are not seen *are* eternal."
  - 3) 1 John 3:2-3: "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure."
- h. Heaven is a place of total delight (Rev. 21:4).
- 1) This world is filled with trouble, heartache, disappointment and pain. The reason is sin, its guilt and consequences. But there will be none of this in heaven!
  - 2) God shall wipe every tear from the eyes of the redeemed. We are not told how, but being separated from all earthly woes will be part of the reason. Being in God's holy, majestic presence will account for another part.
- i. Five negative descriptions of heaven follow the positive action of wiping away all tears: "And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away" (Rev. 21:4)..
- 1) No more death: death is the prime consequence of sin and cause of our troubles.
    - a) Death will be fully abolished at the Lord's return (1 Cor. 15:25-26; Heb. 2:14).
    - b) We will receive incorruptible, spiritual bodies (1 Cor. 15:50-54; Phil. 3:20-21).
    - c) We will have eternal life unconditionally there.
    - d) Death is essential here, for without it the wicked would grow more wicked, the sick would only become more sickly, those in pain could only increase in their misery. And without death, we could not enter into eternity.
  - 2) No more sorrow. There are many causes of sorrow here: death, illness, disappointment, pain, accidents, discouragements, financial troubles, war, etc. In heaven, all causes of sorrow will be removed! This is hard to imagine!
  - 3) No more crying. There will be nothing there to cause bitter tears.
  - 4) No more pain. Many live here in constant pain due to diseased or maimed bodies. But in heaven we will have perfect, spiritual, incorruptible, immortal bodies (Phil. 3:20-21; 2 Cor. 5:1-2). There will be no pain, no gray hair, no scars, no need for surgeries, no painful medical treatments, no bad eyesight, no hospitals, no missing limbs, no medicines, no funeral parlors, and no diets!
    - a) 2 Corinthians 5:1-2: "For we know that if our earthly house of *this* tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven."
    - b) Philippians 3:20-21: "For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself."
  - 5) The former things will have passed away. All earthly hardships, dangers, turmoil, and uncertainty will be gone! It is hard to visualize an existence without any worry, danger, trouble, disappointment, or discouragement!
- j. The reality of heaven is certain: "And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful. And he said unto me, It is done. I
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am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely. He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son. But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death" (Rev. 21:5-8).

- 1) The facts of the case are so sure, the apostle John is told to put it in writing!
- 2) The one who promised is Alpha & Omega, the beginning and the ending, the Eternal Son of God.
- 3) He will give the water of life freely to those who overcome.
  - a) John 4:10: "Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water."
  - b) John 4:13-14: "Jesus answered and said unto her, Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life."
  - c) Revelation 2:10: "Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast *some* of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."
  - d) Revelation 22:14: "Blessed *are* they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city."
- k. But heaven will not be open to many people. The destiny of the types of people who are described will be an eternity in the lake of fire, where they will suffer unending condemnation and separation from God.
  - 1) Fearful: cowardly, timid people who will not pay the cost of discipleship; who give up, or who will not obey the gospel.
  - 2) Unbelievers: this term includes aliens who reject the gospel and Christians who return to the world or who walk by sight.
  - 3) Abominable: these are morally or spiritually foul (Pr. 28:9; Mt. 7:21-23).
  - 4) Murderers: those who take human lives willfully and maliciously.
  - 5) Fornicators: those who practiced any kind of sexual immorality.
  - 6) Sorcerers: those who followed astrology or any kind of magical arts.
  - 7) Idolaters: worshippers of false gods, whether visible or invisible.
  - 8) All liars: those who practice deceit and falsehood.
2. Verse 19: "For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God."
  - a. In this passage which begins with verse 18, a contrast is drawn between the present time when sufferings were characteristic of the saints and the future time when glory would be their reward (verse 18). The time of suffering is during the earthly struggles of the faithful, and the time of glory is a reference to heaven. Verse 19 is closely connected with the previous verse, which is indicated by the Greek term *gar* ("for") with which the verse begins. The passage is manifestly a difficult one, the interpretation of which depends on the construction placed on the word "creature."
  - b. But first, consider the phrase, *the earnest expectation* of the creature. MacKnight offers this definition: "The lifting of the head, and the stretching of the body as far as possible, to hear and see something very agreeable, or of great importance: it is therefore fitly used to denote the greatest earnestness of desire" (Vol.1, p.345).
  - c. The *creature* awaits the manifestation of the sons of God with great expectation. The thought is coupled with verse 18, and has reference to the glorification of God's people at the end of time.
  - d. But what is this creature? The word translated creature (creation—ASV) does not settle the matter, for it is used in several distinct senses in the New Testament.
    - 1) It is used to describe the material universe in Romans 1:25: "Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever.

- Amen."
- 2) It is also used in reference to mankind in Mark 16:15 and Colossians 1:23.
    - a) Mark 16:15: "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature."
    - b) Colossians 1:23: "If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and *be* not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, *and* which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister."
  - 3) Then it is used in reference to Christians in Galatians 6:15 and 2 Corinthians 5:17.
    - a) 2 Corinthians 5:17: "Therefore if any man *be* in Christ, *he is* a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new."
    - b) Galatians 6:15: "For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature."
- e. Some interpretations of the passage are obviously false.
- 1) Millennialists claim that the reference is to the material earth which will be renewed at the coming of Christ when he returns to set up his earthly kingdom. The very basis of this assertion is false: when the Lord returns, he will utterly destroy the earth and the universe (2 Pet. 3:8-13). Anyhow, his kingdom was set up on the Pentecost day of Acts 2 in fulfillment of many prophecies and promises.
  - 2) Some think the passage describes the lower creation (the animals, birds, plants, etc.). This view would tie the death of these life-forms to the sin of Adam and Eve, that if they had not sinned, these would not have been placed under the same sentence of death as was the human race. But this view cannot be true, for death existed for these lower forms of life even before sin entered our race. Adam and Eve ate fruits and vegetables in Eden; plant life dies when it is eaten. What did carnivores eat prior to Adam's fall into sin? They could not eat grass! The very nature of some life-forms limit their lifetime to a few minutes, hours, or days. Surely, many of these died before Adam sinned!
  - 3) Some think the creature is the unredeemed of the human family. But these who are called "the creature" (or "creation") earnestly long for the manifestation of the sons of God. A great portion of the unredeemed are under the misconception that they are "bound for glory." The Muslims and Jews, for example. Another great part of the unredeemed have no belief in the hereafter, and are so unconcerned about the whole matter that it could scarcely be said that they earnestly await the manifestation of the sons of God.
  - 4) Others say the reference is to the Jews or to the Gentiles. But no evidence can be cited in support of these views. The sons of God include some from both ranks.
- f. One interpretation with merit has the creature being used in reference to Christians. It is certain that the saved do anxiously await the manifestation of the sons of God, for they themselves are such. There is no other group of people on earth about whom this could be said.
- 1) A parallel construction of the verse, using this view, would be: "We anxiously await the time when the sons of God will be manifested (revealed, glorified)." The "we" and the "sons of God" are the same group. The "we" would be those of the redeemed who are yet upon earth; they are still in their struggles, and are desirous of leaving this life so that they may enter into their rest.
  - 2) The distinction between the creature who earnestly awaits the manifestation of the sons of God and the sons of God is the strongest argument against this view. But one could be part of both groups. Each of the saved does earnestly await the time when all of the redeemed will receive the glory verse 18 mentions. The individual members of the race of the redeemed long for the time when the whole will be made manifest as the sons of God, and receive the salvation laid up for them in heaven (1 Pet. 1:3-11; Rom. 5:8-9).
- g. Another interpretation, advanced by Wayne Jackson, is certainly worthy of notice. "The most reasonable explanation seems to be this. Paul, in these passages, has *personified* the creation. He
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figuratively represents it as longing for deliverance as a prelude to that time when its purpose shall have been completed. When God's redemptive plan is brought to fruition, earthly affairs are ended. The righteous will obtain their reward in 'the new heavens and the new earth' (2 Pet. 3:13; Rev. 21:1), which is heaven itself. Just as there is a link between man's physical body and his new, resurrected spiritual body, even so *figuratively* there is a connection between the present creation and a new creation wherein eternal righteousness abides. This type of argument is not without precedent in the Scriptures. In Psalm 114, the inspired writer describes the deliverance of Jehovah's people from Egyptian bondage. In conjunction with that glorious event, various elements of the creation are depicted as cooperating with, and rejoicing at, Israel's freedom. The sea saw it and fled, the mountains skipped as rams, the hills frolicked like little lambs, and the earth trembled. The Old Testament is replete with this type of symbolism (cf. Ps. 96:12; 98:8; Isa. 35:1; 55:12). No one contends that the language in these passages is literal. In view of other clear biblical indications, why should such an assumption be made with reference to Romans 8? There is simply no need for that" (*Christian Courier*, "When The Creation Is Delivered, A Study of Romans 8:18-23," Vol. XXVI, No. 7, November, 1990). This view seems to this scribe to be the better explanation.

3. Verse 20: "For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope."
  - a. There is nothing in the Bible to suggest that "All Dogs Go To Heaven," and that all plants, cats, birds, bacteria, fish, etc., have the promise of a "heaven" especially designed for them. If the passage is taken as literal language, and a literal interpretation is forced upon it, this would be the faulty conclusion that would be met.
  - b. If the view that creature is a reference to the saved is taken, the verse would teach that each of the redeemed of God must live in a world here that is inhospitable for those who seek to serve the God of heaven. But he lives here, doing the best he can, because this is the will of God, who has placed each saint in this circumstance, but holds out to him the hope of heaven when he successfully concludes his sojourn here.
  - c. If the view that creature is a figurative reference to the material universe, in which the world is personified, in a figure, then, the universe is pictured as earnestly awaiting the end of time, when the sons of God will be revealed in glory. The curse of sin will be lifted from the earth (although, in the literal language of 2 Peter 3:10, the earth and all material things and the elements from which they are constructed will be burned up and return to nothingness).
4. Verse 21: "Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God."
  - a. At the time when the children of God are finally ushered into the glorious liberty that awaits them in heaven, the creature shall also be delivered from the bondage of corruption.
  - b. If the view that creature is a reference to the saved is followed here, the verse is simply saying that the saints will be delivered from this sphere of corruption that surrounds us all on earth, and be given the liberty of heaven. The word *also* does not mean *as well as* or *in addition to* someone else, but carries the idea that they have hope and also **shall** be delivered.
  - c. If the view that creature is a figurative reference to the material universe, then the personified universe is given a reprieve from the bondage of corruption imposed on it as a consequence of sin, and will be given a corresponding state of freedom to that enjoyed by the children of God. Remember, this view stresses that a figure of speech is being employed, and does not mean there is a "heaven" for the various components of the material universe. The material universe will be destroyed when Christ returns, and in a figure, is replaced by the "new heavens and new earth."
5. Verse 22: "For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now."
  - a. The entire creation groans and travails together in pain until now. Paul's statement here appears to describe the past history of the universe up to the time then present; it has groaned and travailed under the load of sin and corruption from the time sin entered into mankind, bringing the curse of God upon

even the earth: "And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed *is* the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat *of* it all the days of thy life; Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou *art*, and unto dust shalt thou return" (Gen. 3:17-19).

- b. There appears to be no appreciable difference between the two views being noted in the interpretation of this verse. In the former view, the saints have reason to groan and travail, along with the rest of humanity. In the latter view, the personified universe is depicted as groaning, in conjunction with the sons of God.
6. Verse 23: "And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body."
    - a. The pronoun *we* perhaps has reference to the apostles; or possibly to the that first generation of Christians; or to those of the first century who had received the spiritual gifts (2 Cor. 1:22; 5:5; Eph. 1:13-14). Having those miraculous powers did not insulate them from trouble.
    - b. In the first view [that the creature refers to Christians], the interpretation would be to show that the entire church suffered persecutions of some degree, including those who had miraculous gifts.
    - c. In the latter view, the travail the material universe suffered, in a figure, was shared by the first century saints, who waited the redemption of their bodies.
  7. Verses 24-25: "For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it."
    - a. Growing out of the difficult statements in the verses above, Paul states that hope contains a saving factor for the saints. We are saved by hope.
    - b. Hope is pictured in Hebrews 6:19-20 as the anchor of the soul. Our hope is firmly set in heaven, lending stability and confidence to our souls as we are tossed upon the sea of life. Hope gives us the strength to endure until heaven is realized.
    - c. Hope has to do with the future, and finds its realization in something which we do not presently possess
      - 1) Mark 10:28-30: "Then Peter began to say unto him, Lo, we have left all, and have followed thee. And Jesus answered and said, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake, and the gospel's, But he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life."
      - 2) Titus 1:2: "In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began."
      - 3) Titus 3:7: "That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life."
      - 4) 1 John 2:25: "And this is the promise that he hath promised us, *even* eternal life."
    - d. Hope is able to sustain us when all around us is gloom and trouble (Rom. 8:18; Heb. 11:10; 13:10; Ps. 16:11; Rev.21:4; Phil. 3:20-21). The spiritual blessings we have now give us a foretaste of heaven.
      - 1) Psalms 16:11: "Thou wilt show me the path of life: in thy presence *is* fulness of joy; at thy right hand *there are* pleasures for evermore."
      - 2) Romans 8:18: "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time *are* not worthy *to be compared* with the glory which shall be revealed in us."
      - 3) Philippians 3:20-21: "For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself."
      - 4) Hebrews 11:10: "For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker *is* God."

- 5) Hebrews 13:10: "We have an altar, whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle."
- 6) Revelation 21:4: "And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away."
- e. A Christian's citizenship (Phil. 3:20) and treasure (Matt. 6:19-21) are in heaven; his name is recorded there (Luke 10:20); his Lord is there (Heb. 6:19-20); his affections are set on heaven (Col. 3:1-4); his mansion is built there (John 14:1-3). It is clear that our reward is not on earth, even though there are many memories here.
- f. See the outline on "Hope" at the end of the chapter for more information on this highly important subject.

G. Romans 8:26-27: The Intercession of the Spirit.

1. Verse 26: "Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered."
  - a. Likewise (in like manner) the Spirit also helps our infirmities. This statement indicates a comparison is being drawn between two things which help us: the first is hope (verses 24-25) and the second is the Spirit (verse 26).
  - b. Hope is able to support us in our human struggles, and the Spirit also helps us in them. *Infirmities* is a reference to a lack of strength, weakness, an inability to produce results (Vine, Vol. 2, p.257). It is also used in 2 Corinthians 12:5,9,10; 11:30.
    - 1) 2 Corinthians 11:30: "If I must needs glory, I will glory of the things which concern mine infirmities."
    - 2) 2 Corinthians 12:5: "Of such an one will I glory: yet of myself I will not glory, but in mine infirmities."
    - 3) 2 Corinthians 12:9-10: "And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong."
  - c. The specific infirmity Paul identifies in the verse is our inability to pray as we ought. The KJV indicates that this weakness lies in our lack of knowing the things for which we ought to pray; the ASV rendering shows that our inability is in knowing how to pray.
  - d. Christ taught us how to pray and gave us a sample of things for which we are to pray (Matt. 6:9-13; Luke 11:1-4; 1 Tim. 2:1ff). But there are many things about which we know little. If God gave us everything we asked for, undoubtedly there would be some things which would be a curse to us.
    - 1) We have only a partial view of the providential workings of God, of death, of eternity, of heaven and hell, of the resurrection, of the value of hardships and troubles, and a host of other matters. The Holy Spirit has provided us with all the information we need, in regards to prayer, in the inspired Word.
    - 2) But we need another benefit, apparently. Sometimes, our hearts are so filled with pain, dismay, and discouragement that we cannot express our needs in prayer with clarity and fullness of thought. This verse appears to say that the Holy Spirit is able to intercede in our behalf, taking our faulty articulations and presenting them unto God.
  - e. The Holy Spirit does something in heaven for us. What is stated here is not done to us, but something done in our behalf.
    - 1) This action on his part does not nullify the truth that in the conviction and conversion of alien sinners, the Holy Spirit operates only in and through the word of God. It does not contradict the truth that in guiding and influencing the saints, the Holy Spirit operates only through the word of God.
      - a) Romans 1:16: "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek."



- b) 2 Timothy 3:16-17: "All scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."
- c) Hebrews 4:12: "For the word of God *is* quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and *is* a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."
- d) James 1:21: "Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls."
- e) 2 Peter 1:3-11 "According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that *pertain* unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness;<sup>7</sup> And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make *you that ye shall* neither *be* barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."
- 2) What is described in this verse is something that is done in our behalf by the Spirit in heaven, not on earth.
- f. The groanings are not those of the Holy Spirit, but of the human spirit. The Holy Spirit is deity, and is thus infinite in his abilities and powers. The grammatical construction of the statement is parallel to the following: "The Spirit maketh intercession for us with 'red hair that cannot be changed.'" In this sentence, the red hair belongs to us, not to the Spirit. Similarly, the groanings of the verse do not belong to the Spirit, but to us. (Roy J. Hearn).
- 1) These groanings are deep feelings that cannot be vocalized in human language. These are "the dimly perceived and partially understood longings of the redeemed soul which are impossible for the Christian to frame into articulated petitions to the Father, but which needs, though inadequately understood, are nevertheless understood by the Spirit of God who transfers such inexpressible yearnings of the soul to the Throne itself" (Coffman, p.311).
- 2) "The Spirit helps us in these groanings, for he understands our needs and longings and can make them known to God" (Whiteside, p.186).
- g. But what difference, if any, does this make with the Biblical statement that Christ is the only mediator between man and God (1 Tim. 2:5)?
- 1) Jeremiah could (but is told not to) intercede with God on behalf of Israel (Jer. 7:16); others could do so (Jer. 27:18); Christ intercedes (Rom. 8:34; Heb. 7:25); Elijah interceded for Israel (Rom. 11:2); Christians are told to pray one for another (Jas. 5:16). Abraham interceded for Sodom (Gen. 18:22-33). "I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men" (1 Tim. 2:1).
- 2) There is only one Mediator (Christ); but anyone can be an intercessor (to plead in behalf of another). Every time we pray for someone, we are interceding for them with God. But only Christ stands between man and God (1 Tim. 2:5). Christ is our only mediator.
2. Verse 27: "And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God."
- a. The mind of the Spirit is known to him who searches the hearts. Although we have no clear statement identifying this individual, God is clearly the one meant. God is the Great Heart-Searcher. What God

can do, both Christ and the Spirit can also do.

- 1) 1 Samuel 16:7: "But the LORD said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for the LORD seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart."
  - 2) 1 Kings 8:39: "Then hear thou in heaven thy dwelling place, and forgive, and do, and give to every man according to his ways, whose heart thou knowest; (for thou, *even* thou only, knowest the hearts of all the children of men)."
  - 3) 1 Chronicles 28:9: "And thou, Solomon my son, know thou the God of thy father, and serve him with a perfect heart and with a willing mind: for the LORD searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts: if thou seek him, he will be found of thee; but if thou forsake him, he will cast thee off for ever."
  - 4) Psalms 7:9: "Oh let the wickedness of the wicked come to an end; but establish the just: for the righteous God trieth the hearts and reins."
  - 5) Jeremiah 17:10: "I the LORD search the heart, *I* try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, *and* according to the fruit of his doings."
  - 6) Acts 1:24: "And they prayed, and said, Thou, Lord, which knowest the hearts of all *men*, show whether of these two thou hast chosen."
- b. God, who knows all things, and is limited in his knowledge only as he limits himself, knows the mind of the Spirit. Since the Spirit grasps the things we try to utter to God in prayer, God is informed of our deep longings. The Spirit is said to search the mind of God (1 Cor. 2:9-13), but here the reverse is stated. Nothing is hidden between the members of the Godhead.
  - c. The Spirit, therefore, makes intercession for the saints; his intercession is in accordance with the word of God. Perfect harmony pertains to all the activities of the Godhead.
  - d. God's revealed will must be done, and his providential will must be accepted.
3. Whiteside made the following comment, in summing up the teaching of the passage: "Every man who is devoted to the Lord finds times when deep down in his heart there are vague desires and longings, and a sense of need, that he is unable to put in words. These are the groanings which cannot be uttered; these are the groanings which the Holy Spirit conveys to the father in our prayers. He is the heartsearcher; he knows our innermost thoughts, and our inexpressible desires and longings. This does not make him the Advocate; he makes intercession for us in the sense that he makes known to the Father the things which well up in our hearts, that we cannot express. He does not even help us to express these feelings—human language is not sufficient for that. In no sense are we to infer that the Spirit causes these unutterable feelings and desires by any direct work on the heart; rather it may be said that he interprets these matters to the Father. In this way he helps us in our ability to express the deepest desires of the heart" (Quoted by Guy N. Woods, *Questions and Answers: Open Forum*, Vol. 1, p.73).

#### H. Romans 8:28-30: The Purpose of God.

1. Verse 28: "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose."
  - a. First, let us examine each part of the verse to see the components of Paul's inspired statement. Then, perhaps, we shall be able to understand and appreciate the truth he presented here more fully.
  - b. We know. Paul could know this to be truth because (1) the inspired revelation of God's word made it known, and (2) by experiences accumulated through many years of serving Christ in which he saw the providential hand of God at work. His declaration here is by inspiration, and contains all the evidence we need in order to believe the declaration to be true. The Bible is replete with affirmations of certainty.
    - 1) Luke 1:1-4: "Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us, Even as they delivered them unto us, which from the beginning were eyewitnesses, and ministers of the word; It seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write unto thee in order, most

- excellent Theophilus, That thou mightest know the certainty of those things, wherein thou hast been instructed."
- 2) John 6:69: "And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God."
  - 3) Acts 2:36: "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ."
  - 4) 2 Timothy 1:12: "For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day."
- c. That all things. Anticipating the next part of the statement, does everything work together for good? Everything without exception?
- 1) "Does Paul include the devil and all his works and agents? Does he include the lusts of the flesh, which war against the soul, and to our infirmities in which we need help? It seems to me that the context and the very nature of the case demand that we take the *all things* in a limited sense. In all that he has said up to this point Paul was talking about what God had done and is doing for us through Christ and by the ministry of the Holy Spirit....Why not understand Paul to refer to the thing he had been talking about?" (Whiteside, p.187).
  - 2) Think of the vilest possible event, and ask yourself if there is anything good that grows out of it. A five-month-old infant was sexually abused by the mother's live-in boyfriend, and suffered serious damage that can never be repaired. What redeeming quality could grow out of such a horrible act? Someone might say, "The terrible experience might make the child grow up to be spiritually minded, obey the gospel and become a fine servant of God." But what if she obeys the gospel, but then turns to drug addiction and prostitution because of what she suffered as an infant, and ultimately dies in the gutter? To include every possible action or word seems to go beyond the apostle's scope in the statement of the verse.
  - 3) "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23). Here is a case where a built-in limitation is understood. Not every person has sinned. Infants and little children are not guilty of sin; others who are not responsible for their actions are not guilty of sin. Only accountable people become sinners. An inherent limitation is likewise understood in the "all things" of our present text.
- d. Work together. Within the scope of the context, the things included cooperate in producing the end in view. God delights in harmonious cooperation.
- 1) Psalms 133: "Behold, how good and how pleasant *it is* for brethren to dwell together in unity! *It is* like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, *even* Aaron's beard: that went down to the skirts of his garments; As the dew of Hermon, *and as the dew* that descended upon the mountains of Zion: for there the LORD commanded the blessing, *even* life for evermore."
  - 2) John 17:20-21: "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; That they all may be one; as thou, Father, *art* in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me."
  - 3) 1 Corinthians 1:10-13: "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and *that* there be no divisions among you; but *that* ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment. For it hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them *which are of the house* of Chloe, that there are contentions among you. Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ. Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?"
  - 4) 1 Corinthians 14:33: "For God is not *the author* of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints."
  - 5) 1 Corinthians 14:40: "Let all things be done decently and in order."
  - 6) Philippians 3:16: "Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule,
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- let us mind the same thing."
- e. For good. "Paul's statement is a sort of conclusion from what he had said. It is not fair to him to make his conclusion include things he had not mentioned. Why, then, should we conclude that he now speaks of every conceivable thing, every conceivable force and circumstance, and that he affirms that all these things, both good and bad, work together for good to those who love God? To do so is to entirely miss the trend of his thought" (Whiteside, p.187).
    - 1) In the context (see verse 18), Paul speaks of the ultimate good which the faithful shall receive: the glory of heaven. In this life, it is often the case that the saints must suffer terrible persecution because of their devotion to Christ. The apostle assures us that even if this occurs, and we remain loyal, heaven will be well worth the price we paid.
    - 2) Thus, in suffering for the cause of Christ, we endure perhaps many years of cruel hardship, but good will be the result for us.
    - 3) All of the plans and efforts that God had made down through the centuries, in preparing for the establishment of his kingdom, including all the suffering and deprivation of the Old Testament prophets, plus the suffering and death of Jesus, and the hardships the apostles endured—all of these and other difficulties that were essential for the development, presentation, and recording of the gospel, have good as the result.
  - f. To them that love God. Trials, hardships, persecutions, and heartaches do nothing good, in the final analysis, for those who do not love God. But for those who do obtain and retain love for God, good is the outcome. Love for God is genuine only if obedience to his will accompanies devotion for him.
    - 1) John 14:15: "If ye love me, keep my commandments."
    - 2) John 14:21: "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him."
    - 3) 1 John 5:3: "For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous."
    - 4) 2 John 6: "And this is love, that we walk after his commandments. This is the commandment, That, as ye have heard from the beginning, ye should walk in it."
  - g. To them who are the called according to his purpose. This is a further delineation of those who love God. Those who love God are the called of God. He calls through the gospel (2 Thess. 2:13-15). "God's purpose in sending his Son into the world was to save those who believe in him. He, therefore, purposed to save men through his Son. It is his purpose to save all who want to do right (Matt. 5:6). Hence, all who feel the burden of sin and their need of righteousness, or justification, are called. 'Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest' (Matt. 11:28). Those who answer this call are *the called according to his purpose*. This calling is spoken of in 2 Timothy 1:9: 'Who saved us, and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before times eternal'" (Whiteside, p.188).
2. Verses 29-30: "For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified."
    - a. The key to understanding this passage is to grasp the meaning of the terms Paul employs. The statement is difficult, but if we interpret it in the light of the plain statements the Bible makes on the same subjects, we should be able to obtain the message the apostle intended.
    - b. For whom he did foreknow. God is the person indicated by the pronoun *he*. God foreknew someone. The foreknowledge of God is a prominent subject in the Bible.
      - 1) He is limited in his knowledge of the past, present and future only to the extent that he limits himself. There is nothing that God cannot know if he chooses to know it. "Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things *are* naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do" (Heb. 4:13).
      - 2) God can know ahead of time what a man's actions will be, but that does not mean that he has
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- programmed that action to occur. God knew that Adam and Eve would fall into sin before the fact. He commanded them to refrain from eating the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (Gen. 2:16-17). If we maintain that God programmed them to eat the fruit, but still ordered them to refuse to eat it, then God is working at cross purposes with himself. And he is guilty of requiring Adam and Eve to do the very thing he commanded them not to do; and further, he punished them severely for doing what he had scheduled them to do.
- 3) Adam and Eve had full choice in eating or refusing to eat the forbidden fruit. God knew ahead of time what their choice would be, for he had already made plans to send his Son into the world to die for the sins of humanity (Rev. 13:8; 14:6; 2 Tim. 1:9-10). But he did not cause them to transgress the commandment.
- a) 2 Timothy 1:9-10: "Who hath saved us, and called *us* with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel."
  - b) Revelation 13:8: "And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world."
  - c) Revelation 14:6: "And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people."
- c. He also did predestinate them to be conformed to the image of his Son. Some misapprehend this statement, and assert that God decided the eternal destiny of every human being before time began, and did so without their having any decision in the matter.
- 1) That this doctrine is erroneous is made clear from many Bible statements (Rom. 2:11; Acts 10:34-35; Rev. 22:17; Matt. 11:28-30). The impartiality of God is affirmed many times in the Bible, which truth also refutes the doctrine. That God gave each man the freedom of choice in deciding his own eternal destiny is manifest in the offer of salvation to each accountable individual (Tit. 2:11-14; Matt. 23:37; John 5:40; 6:44-45; Acts 13:45-46; Mark 16:15-16). This also shows that God did not arbitrarily, or in any other way, dictate the destiny of any individual independent of the will of that individual.
    - a) Matthew 11:28-30: "Come unto me, all *ye* that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke *is* easy, and my burden is light." This is an open offer,
    - b) Acts 10:34-35: "Then Peter opened *his* mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him." This is also an open invitation.
    - c) Romans 2:11: "For there is no respect of persons with God."
    - d) Revelation 22:17: "And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."
    - e) Matthew 23:37 "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, *thou* that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under *her* wings, and ye would not!"
    - f) Mark 16:15-16: "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."
    - g) John 5:40: "And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life."
    - h) John 6:44-45: "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day. It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me."
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- i) Acts 13:45-46: "But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy, and spake against those things which were spoken by Paul, contradicting and blaspheming. Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles."
  - j) Titus 2:11-14: "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works."
- 2) The predestination indicated does not extend to the selection of individuals; but rather, God predestinated a certain *type* of person to be saved: those who would obey the gospel and be conformed to the image of Christ. The Lord knew that there were many of this kind of person in Corinth, for he said, "I have much people in this city" (Acts 18:10). The gospel of Christ is designed to restore sinful man to the image he had before the fall. What was lost in Adam, is more than made up for in Christ.
- a) Romans 12:1-2: "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, *which is* your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what *is* that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God."
  - b) 2 Corinthians 3:18: "But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, *even* as by the Spirit of the Lord."
- 3) It is God's desire that there be many people who will obey the gospel; he wants Christ to be the firstborn of many who are like him, who will live pure lives of obedience to God's will. Regarding the election of the saints, some wise gospel preacher has observed, "God votes for us; the devil votes against us; and we cast the deciding ballot!"
- a) Matthew 7:21-23: "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity."
  - b) Hebrews 5:8-9: "Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him."
  - c) 1 John 2:3-5: "And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him."
  - d) Revelation 22:14: "Blessed *are* they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city."
- 4) The nature of the gospel is such that only a certain type of person will find it palatable. These are the minority in any generation or society. Does this make God unjust to design a system that will be rejected by the majority? No. God has the right to decide the kind of person he wants around him (Ps. 15; Rev. 21:27). It is not his fault, but the individual's, when men refuse to humble themselves to obey the gospel and be restored to the spiritual level God requires to make it possible for them to enter heaven.
- a) Psalms 15: "LORD, who shall abide in thy tabernacle? who shall dwell in thy holy hill? He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his heart. *He that* backbiteth not with his tongue, nor doeth evil to his neighbour, nor taketh up a reproach against
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his neighbour. In whose eyes a vile person is contemned; but he honoureth them that fear the LORD. *He that* sweareth to *his own* hurt, and changeth not. *He that* putteth not out his money to usury, nor taketh reward against the innocent. He that doeth these *things* shall never be moved."

- b) Revelation 21:27: "And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither *whatsoever* worketh abomination, or *maketh* a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life."
- d. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called.
- 1) The *called* are those who have responded to the call of the gospel (2 Thess. 2:13). The church (*ekklesia*: "the called out ones") is comprised of those who have been called out of the world by the gospel.
  - 2) The call of the gospel is intended to be extended to every accountable person (Mark 16:15-16; Luke 24:47; Matt. 28:18-20; Col. 1:6,23; Rom. 10:18; Acts 8:4). "Many are called but few are chosen" (Matt. 20:16). Everyone is offered the invitation to obey the gospel, but few are so-minded to accept it. They **chose** not to accept, thus they placed themselves among the ranks of the **unchosen**.
  - 3) The call of the gospel is not irresistible. Why should the gospel be preached to those who will reject it? One reason is that we do not have any way of knowing what a person's response will be. Another reason is that at least the individual will have the opportunity to obey; each person needs to have the opportunity to respond. "And the next sabbath day came almost the whole city together to hear the word of God. But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy, and spake against those things which were spoken by Paul, contradicting and blaspheming. Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles" (Acts 13:44-46).
- e. And whom he called, them he also justified.
- 1) Those who obey the gospel are justified; they are pardoned, and considered by the Lord as if they never had been guilty of sin (Acts 2:38; 22:16; Col. 1:13-14; Eph. 1:7; 2:1-13; 2 Cor. 6:14-18).
  - 2) 2 Timothy 1:9-10: "Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began. But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel."
- f. And whom he justified, them he also glorified.
- 1) This glorification is primarily prospective, that is, it has not been obtained in its fullness while we are here on earth; but we joyfully anticipate it when this life is over. We have eternal life now, but not in actual possession; it is ours in hope and in promise (Tit. 1:2; 3:7; 1 John 2:25; Mark 10:29-30).
  - 2) Acts 18:8: "And Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his house; and many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized." Those the Lord called his "people" (Acts 18:10) were the ones who obeyed the gospel. He knew there were certain ones in Corinth who would be receptive, thus he could call them [prospectively] his people.
  - 3) 1 Corinthians 6:9-11: "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God." Those in Corinth who obeyed the gospel were freed from their guilt of sin; they were washed, sanctified, and justified.
  - 4) Romans 8:18: "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time *are* not worthy to be compared
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with the glory which shall be revealed in us." The glory intended for the obedient is to be fully delivered in eternity. We are "glorified" in a limited way when we obey the gospel: we are freed from the love, practice, and guilt of sin; our citizenship is in heaven; our affections are set on things above; we mind heavenly things.

- 5) This glorification is certain for those who remain faithful. It was introduced in verse 17, where the apostle affirmed that we are the children and heirs of God. It was addressed in verse 18 where Paul showed that it would be worth all the sufferings the persecutors of this world could heap upon us. This glorification includes our being manifested as the true children of God, thus it involves vindication. It is the ultimate goal of God's eternal purpose (2 Tim. 1:9-10).
- g. Some try to apply this passage to Matthew 27:52-53, where certain Old Testament saints were resurrected at the time of our Lord's exit from the Hadean realm. But Paul was showing what the gospel does for all those who obey it, not what became of a handful of Old Testament individuals.
  - 1) Matthew does not say that these people ascended on to heaven and were glorified; as far as we know, they lived for a period of time on the earth, and again died. Also, Paul shows that all who were foreknown were glorified; Matthew only says that some of the saints arose.
  - 2) There was a purpose in raising these people; it added further credence to the Lord's resurrection. "Men *and* brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day" (Acts 2:29).
- h. God had an eternal purpose in mind when he made the world. That purpose was to save as many men and women as would be willing to obey his will (Eph. 3:1-11; Rom. 16:25). He gradually revealed that great plan, first by prophetic types and promises. After Christ completed his earthly mission, the apostles were empowered to receive, broadcast, confirm, and record that plan.
  - 1) God's eternal purpose included foreknowing, predestinating, calling, justifying, and glorifying certain of his offspring. Paul's statement in this passage views this plan in its broad scope, picturing it from the eternal perspective.
  - 2) God's eternal purpose sought the redemption of all man; he offers salvation in Christ; he originated the plan before the world began; he brought it to fruition through the gospel; it is through the gospel that the call is issued; and it will confer its ultimate benefits in heaven.

#### I. Romans 8:31-39: God is For Us.

1. Verse 31: "What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?"
  - a. *These things* are those gems of truth of the preceding passage. What shall we say in reference to these things? What conclusion is to be derived? One thing that is eminently taught by these truths is stated by the apostle: "If God is for us, who can be against us?" The implied answer is, "No one that matters." The enemy may mistreat us; he might have the upper hand for a while; but God will have the final word.
  - b. There is no doubt that God is **for** his people.
    - 1) Psalms 23: "The LORD *is* my shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou *art* with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me. Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever."
    - 2) 2 Timothy 2:19: "Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity."
    - 3) Hebrews 13:5-6: "*Let your conversation be* without covetousness; *and be* content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, The Lord *is* my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me."



- 4) James 4:10: "Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up."
  - 5) 1 Peter 5:5-6: "Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all *of you* be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble. Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time."
  - 6) 2 Peter 2:9: "The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished."
  - c. God is all-powerful, all-knowing, and is infinite in love. Therefore, he is both able and willing to help us.
    - 1) Ephesians 3:20-21: "Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, Unto him *be* glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen."
    - 2) Philippians 4:19: "But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus."
  - d. Since the Eternal One, the Creator and Sustainer, the Ancient of Days, is our Father, no earthly power can withstand his will. In the purpose of God and for our good, the enemy might buffet us for a while, but God will have the ultimate word. There is no foe that can thwart our glorification—against our will (John 10:27-28). God's plan of the ages will assuredly glean from the ranks of mankind, a great and dedicated family, who shall praise God in eternity (Rev. 7:9-17).
2. Verse 32: "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?"
- a. Evidence for the reliability of God's promises is here given. Since God has given his own Son in our behalf, it is certain that he will not keep from us any of the blessings he has promised. He was willing to give Christ; he will surely be willing to give what he offers. Since he gave the greater gift, he will provide the lesser gift.
  - b. God so loved us that even his precious Son was not too high a price for him to pay for our redemption.
    - 1) John 3:16: "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."
    - 2) Revelation 1:5: "And from Jesus Christ, *who is* the faithful witness, *and* the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood."
  - c. Christ was delivered up for us all. He did not die only for a certain portion of mankind (Heb. 2:9; Tit. 2:11-12). However, it is true that only those who obey the gospel actually receive the benefits of his sacrifice (Matt. 26:28; Rev. 1:5; Eph. 1:3,7; 2:12ff; Gal. 3:26-27; Rom. 8:1-3; 6:1-18).
  - d. All the spiritual blessings God has made available to those in Christ will be given freely. They cannot be bought or earned. They are provided by God's grace (Rom. 6:23; Eph. 2:8-9; Tit. 3:5). However, a life of devoted service is required (Luke 9:23; Matt. 16:24,26). Before these benefits are delivered, the individual must meet the conditions Christ has specified (John 8:24; Luke 13:3; Matt. 10:32; Mark 16:15-16; Acts 10:34-35).
3. Verse 33: "Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth."
- a. The *elect* has been abused by many false teachers. God chose those who are to go to glory, but he did not pick out individuals; rather, he chose the type of person (the obedient).
    - 1) Matthew 7:21-23: "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity."
    - 2) Hebrews 5:9: "And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him."
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- b. God has justified those who are the elect; no man has any right to bring charges against them if God says they are righteous.
  - c. When first century saints were brought under severe persecution, some of them might get the idea that there must be something wrong with them. Non-Christians would very likely believe the same thing. But Paul assures the saints that since God held them in high esteem, the charges men brought against them were groundless.
4. Verse 34: "Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us."
- a. Christ will not condemn the faithful. God has appointed him to be the Judge (Matt. 25:31-46; Acts 17:30-31; John 5:22). Christ, our Judge, died and rose again, and is at God's right hand; he "was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification" (Rom. 4:25).
  - b. It is certain that he will not condemn one whom God has justified. There is perfect agreement between members of the Godhead.
  - c. He also makes intercession for us. He not only died and was resurrected for us, but he, in addition to that, makes intercession for us. Verse 26 shows that the Holy Spirit is involved in an interceding role in our behalf.
  - d. Since neither God, Christ, nor the Holy Spirit will heed any charges men make against us, and since the devil and sinful man are powerless in convincing God of our guilt if we are guiltless, then our standing with God is sound.
5. Verses 35-36: "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter."
- a. "Love of Christ" can mean his love for us or our love for him. Which is the one Paul means may be difficult to know with certainty. Whiteside says it is our love for him; Coffman and Lard say it is Christ's love for us.
  - b. In view of the statement of the passage, it appears Paul speaks of our love for him. If it is his love for us, then the implication is that the external forces which assail us in this life can interfere with his love for us. Will Christ cease to love us because we are undergoing persecution? Certainly not! However, we might have the idea that Christ does not love us because we are having these hardships.
  - c. But if we meet with tribulation, distress, persecution, famine, nakedness, peril, or sword, we might give up our love for him in the interest of our own comfort.
  - d. The apostle cites a passage (Ps. 44:22) which predicted the persecutions that would come upon the citizens of Christ's kingdom. For his sake, we face daily martyrdom; we are considered by our enemies to be no more than sheep to be slaughtered. Wicked men think no more of God's children than they do of sheep; just another *animal* to be slain for their own selfish interests!
6. Verse 37: "Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us."
- a. During the persecutions and hardships we face, Paul says we are more than conquerors. Instead of being the conquered, we surpass conquerors. An earthly conqueror wins only material assets and glory; we win eternal life and all that goes with it! We not only are not conquered by our enemies, even if we forfeit our lives for Christ's sake, we become the chief winner.
  - b. But our victory is possible only because of Christ our Lord. Were it not for his victory, his example, his power, his guidance, and his encouragement, we could do nothing.
7. Verses 38-39: "For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."
- a. God's love is expressed to mankind through Christ, which means that by means of the gospel of Christ, God reveals and imparts his love for us. None of the things named can cause God to quit loving us!
  - b. Whether we live or die, God loves us. Mighty angels, powerful governments and powers, things now
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present or to come in the future, or the extremes of height or depth, or any other creature, can cause God to stop loving us.

- c. If it is our love for God that is meant, none of these things can make us give up our love for him. Only if we grow weak within ourselves, will our love for God wane.

## How the Holy Spirit Influences Men

### A. The Bible presents the Holy Spirit as an active, powerful member of the Godhead.

1. How does the Holy Spirit exert influence over the lives of men? How does he influence the alien sinner to become a child of God? How does he move Christians to do our duty?
2. We shall see in this section that he does many things, but the question at this point is, How does he do these things?
3. Most people think the Holy Spirit does his work through miraculous means, directly and supernaturally bringing his influence to bear on human beings.
  - a. The Bible says he is active in the salvation of alien sinners (1 Cor. 6:11). The common understanding is that he does this by a direct operation on the heart. "And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God" (1 Cor. 6:11).
  - b. The Bible also teaches that he is active in the sanctification (the edifying) of the saints
    - 1) 1 Thessalonians 5:23: "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and *I pray God* your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."
    - 2) 2 Thessalonians 2:13: "But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth."
  - c. His work involves reproofing the world: "Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: Of sin, because they believe not on me; Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged" (John 16:7-11).
    - 1) Of sin (that of rejecting Jesus—John 1:11; Acts 2:23,36-37).
    - 2) Of righteousness (he shows the world that Jesus was innocent of wrongdoing).
    - 3) Of judgment (not the final Judgment, but the overturning of the judgment that had been pronounced upon Christ (Acts 2:32-36). The Spirit did this through the message of truth he gave through inspired men.
4. The Holy Spirit, his identity, his nature, and his work are *mysterious* to many religious people. Consequently, they interpret his work as mystical and miraculous, thinking that the primary means he has of operating in our world is through the supernatural. The following are examples of this false teaching:
  - a. Lorraine Boettner, a leading Calvinist advocate, stated: "In addition to the outward general call to salvation which is made to everyone who hears the gospel, the Holy Spirit extends to the elect a special inward call that inevitably brings them to salvation. The external call (which is made to all without distinction) can be, and often is, rejected; whereas the internal call (which is made only to the elect) cannot be rejected; it always results in conversion. By means of this special call the Spirit irresistibly draws sinners to Christ. He is not limited in His word of applying salvation by man's will, nor is He dependent upon man's cooperation for success. The Spirit graciously causes the elect sinner to cooperate, to believe, to repent, to come freely and willingly to Christ. God's grace, therefore, is invincible; it never fails to result in the salvation of those to whom it is extended" (*The Reformed Doctrine of Predestination*, p.435). The "internal call" and the "external call" are figments of sectarian imagination. There is nothing in the Bible about these two calls.
  - b. Boettner says regarding the elect following their call: "All who are chosen by God, redeemed by Christ, and given faith by the Spirit are eternally saved. They are kept in faith by the power of Almighty God and thus persevere to the end" (ibid.). Thus, once a person is saved, the Spirit does everything for him that is needed—independent of his own will and activity. He cannot fall from grace. This is a false doctrine.

5. But what does the **Bible** say about the method of the Spirit's influence?

B. In times past he acted directly and miraculously in special situations.

1. He exerted direct, miraculous influence on certain animals in a few select cases.
  - a. Numbers 22:22-35: God caused Balaam's donkey to speak with a man's voice. Since there is perfect unity between the members of the Godhead, what one is said to have done from heaven by one member, can be also attributed to the other two; so we can attribute this miraculous influence to the Spirit.
  - b. I Samuel 6:1-12: Two milk cows were hitched to a cart, their calves were put up at home; the cows were guided to the right place, bearing the ark of the Lord.
2. The Holy Spirit exerted direct miraculous influence on selected men in guiding them to receive and communicate God's word (2 Pet. 1:21).
  - a. David was inspired to transmit God's will to men.
    - 1) 2 Samuel 23:1-2: "Now these *be* the last words of David. David the son of Jesse said, and the man *who was* raised up on high, the anointed of the God of Jacob, and the sweet psalmist of Israel, said, The spirit of the LORD spake by me, and his word *was* in my tongue."
    - 2) Acts 1:16: "Men *and* brethren, this scripture must needs have been fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost by the mouth of David spake before concerning Judas, which was guide to them that took Jesus."
  - b. The apostles received this inspiration.
    - 1) Mark 13:11: "But when they shall lead *you*, and deliver you up, take no thought beforehand what ye shall speak, neither do ye premeditate: but whatsoever shall be given you in that hour, that speak ye: for it is not ye that speak, but the Holy Ghost."
    - 2) Acts 2:4: "And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance."
3. The direct influence of deity upon these animals and men did not change the nature of any of those involved.
  - a. The donkey and cattle remained the same afterwards as they had been before. The men were still as likely to commit sin afterwards as before.
  - b. Peter communicated an infallible message, but later fell victim to the sin of violating the very truth he had delivered.
    - 1) Acts 10:34-35: "Then Peter opened *his* mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him."
    - 2) Galatians 2:11-14: "But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed. For before that certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles: but when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision. And the other Jews dissembled likewise with him; insomuch that Barnabas also was carried away with their dissimulation. But when I saw that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel, I said unto Peter before *them* all, If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?"

C. In the conviction and conversion of alien sinners, the Spirit uses indirect influence.

1. There is a void or empty space between two minds which requires a medium before any communication can be established between those two minds. "For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God" (1 Cor. 2:11).
  - a. We cannot know what is in the mind of someone else unless that person uses some medium by which to express to our mind what he wants us to know (1 Cor. 2:11a).
  - b. We could not know what is in the mind of God but for the fact that the Spirit searched God's mind and communicated that message to us (1 Cor. 2:11b).
  - c. The Spirit used words, at first spoken words, and written words later, in giving the message to those who were lost. He did not exert direct influence of mind-on-mind in instructing them in what they

must do to be saved. This truth will be firmly and clearly established as the study progresses.

2. Satan is forced to use mediums through which he exerts his evil influence.
  - a. When he enticed Eve to violate the God-given edict forbidding the eating of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, the tempter did not exert direct, mind-on-mind, miraculous influence. Rather, he offered his temptations by the medium of words. Since there were no other human beings to do his evil work for him, he operated through the wily serpent.
  - b. When the devil wanted to tempt the Savior, he used the medium of words which was addressed to the natural appetites of the fleshly body and the pride of life (Matt. 4:1-11). Even though he approached Christ in person (evidently), he still had to use a medium to offer the temptations.
  - c. When he tempts us today, he does so indirectly through the same three avenues: the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life (1 John 2:15-17). For agents, he uses false teachers, sinners, situations that develop, and the natural weaknesses of the flesh.
  - d. In the case of Ananias and Sapphira, the devil was the source of their temptation: "Why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and keep back part of the price of the land?" (Acts 5:3). But in the next verse Peter asked, "Why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart?" The passage does not teach that Satan miraculously placed the temptation into their minds; rather he used the medium of their own greed and pride to entrap them!
3. The Holy Spirit uses the medium of words to convict and convert alien sinners.
  - a. We can know what the Spirit says by hearing and learning his words: "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils" (1 Tim. 4:1).
  - b. We can know what he says by hearing and learning his written words: "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God" (Rev. 2:7).

D. The Holy Spirit's medium is the inspired word of God.

1. The void (space) between the mind of God and the mind of men must be breached.
    - a. The Holy Spirit searched out the information in God's mind, and communicated that message to the minds of selected men by means of inspiration. That information was given to those men in the form of a message of words: "But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed *them* unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual" (1 Cor. 2:9-13).
    - b. There is no natural way that men can learn the mind of God; only by the supernatural means of inspiration could God's will be obtained by man: "But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know *them*, because they are spiritually discerned" (1 Cor. 2:14).
    - c. But when that message of words was given to the inspired men, they were used in communicating that same message to the lost. Only when the lost received and obeyed that message were they saved.
  2. Significant passages:
    - a. Isaiah 1:18: "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool."
    - b. Ephesians 3:1-11: "For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles, If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward: How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words, Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ) Which in other ages was not made known unto
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- the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel: Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power. Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; And to make all *men* see what *is* the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ: To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly *places* might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord."
- c. Hebrews 1:1-2: "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by *his* Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds."
  - d. 2 Peter 1:21: "For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake *as they were* moved by the Holy Ghost."
3. In the creation, God through the Spirit used direct, irresistible force. In changing hearts, he uses a message of words (John 3:16; Mark 16:15-16). He uses persuasion to save and force to punish. Because God loved faithful Noah he told him to prepare the ark to save himself and his family. Because God's holiness and justice required the punishment of sin, he brought a great flood upon the earth to destroy the sinful.
  4. The Holy Spirit speaks through the inspired word of God (Rev. 2:7; 2 Tim. 3:16-17).
    - a. He gave that word and commanded its dissemination. When that word is heard, believed, and obeyed, people are thereby drawn to the Lord (John 6:44-45). "And Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his house; and many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized" (Acts 18:8).
    - b. This process is described in the parable of the sower. The result of the sowing depends on the reaction of the individual to the word preached: "Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God. Those by the way side are they that hear; then cometh the devil, and taketh away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved. They on the rock *are they*, which, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, which for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away. And that which fell among thorns are they, which, when they have heard, go forth, and are choked with cares and riches and pleasures of *this* life, and bring no fruit to perfection. But that on the good ground are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep *it*, and bring forth fruit with patience" (Luke 8:11-15).
  5. If the Holy Spirit directly exerts his saving influence by direct force, separate and apart from the word, there are some questions that cannot be answered:
    - a. Why are there no Christians where the gospel has not gone?
    - b. Why are we commanded to go into all the world and preach the gospel to everyone?
    - c. Why is there no knowledge of God, Christ, the Holy Spirit, salvation, and heaven where the gospel has not been taught?
    - d. Where was the Holy Spirit during the Dark Ages when the Bible was hidden from the common man? If he operates directly in convicting and converting aliens, why did he not do so then?
    - e. Who is responsible when a sinner dies lost? If the Holy Spirit must operate on the sinner's heart directly before he can be saved, and this operation is not done, who is responsible for the lost soul?
    - f. Why is there no faith where the gospel has not gone? If the Spirit gives faith apart from the word, why is there no faith without the gospel? The Holy Spirit produces faith through the word of God.
      - 1) Acts 15:7: "And when there had been much disputing, Peter rose up, and said unto them, Men *and* brethren, ye know how that a good while ago God made choice among us, that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the gospel, and believe."
      - 2) Romans 10:17: "So then faith *cometh* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."

6. If we can see how the Holy Spirit strove with the sinful men of the past, we can see how he does so today.
  - a. He strove with the evil men of Noah's generation (Gen. 6:3); Noah was a preacher of righteousness (2 Pet. 2:5); the Spirit strove with them in the person of Noah who did the preaching (1 Pet. 3:18-20).
    - 1) Genesis 6:3: "And the LORD said, My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also *is* flesh: yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years."
    - 2) 1 Peter 3:18-20: "For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit: By which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison; Which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water."
    - 3) 2 Peter 2:5: "And spared not the old world, but saved Noah the eighth *person*, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly."
  - b. The Spirit strove with ancient Israel; this striving was done by the Spirit when he guided the inspired prophets in preaching to the people:
    - 1) Nehemiah 9:20: "Thou gavest also thy good spirit to instruct them, and withheldest not thy manna from their mouth, and gavest them water for their thirst."
    - 2) Nehemiah 9:30: "Yet many years didst thou forbear them, and testifiedst against them by thy spirit in thy prophets: yet would they not give ear: therefore gavest thou them into the hand of the people of the lands."
    - 3) When they resisted the words spoken by the prophets, they resisted the Holy Spirit: "Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers *did*, so *do* ye" (Acts 7:51).
  - c. The Spirit strove with the Jews through the inspired preacher Stephen (Acts 6:9-10; 7:55; 7:51-53). These Jews refused to accept the truth the Spirit proclaimed to them through Stephen, and proceeded to stone Stephen to death (7:54-60). When they resisted the words spoken by Stephen, they resisted the Holy Spirit.
    - 1) Acts 6:9-10: "Then there arose certain of the synagogue, which is called *the synagogue* of the Libertines, and Cyrenians, and Alexandrians, and of them of Cilicia and of Asia, disputing with Stephen. And they were not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit by which he spake."
    - 2) Acts 7:51-53: "Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers *did*, so *do* ye. Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? and they have slain them which showed before of the coming of the Just One; of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers: Who have received the law by the disposition of angels, and have not kept *it*."
    - 3) Acts 7:55: "But he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up stedfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God."
  - d. The Spirit strove with the great audience of Jews who came together to hear the apostles on Pentecost Day.
    - 1) The apostles were inspired by the Holy Spirit to present a message of words to the people: "And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance" (Acts 2:1-4).
    - 2) The message convicted some of them that they had killed the Messiah: "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ. Now when they heard *this*, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men *and* brethren, what shall we do?" (Acts 2:36-37).
    - 3) Those who accepted the message of words presented by the spostles were convicted by the Holy



Spirit who was operating through this spoken message: "And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation. Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added *unto them* about three thousand souls" (Acts 2:40-41).

- 4) Those who are operated on by the Holy Spirit may accept or reject the teaching according to their choice.

E. The following chart illustrates the fact that the Spirit operates through the Word.

<b>WORK</b>	<b>HOLY SPIRIT</b>	<b>WORD</b>
Instructs	Neh. 9:20,30	2 Tim. 3:16-17
Begets	John 3:5	1 Cor. 4:15; Jas. 1:18
New Birth	John 3:5	1 Peter 1:22-23
Quickens	John 6:63	Psalms 119:50
Teaches	John 14:26	John 6:44-45; Titus 2:11-12
Convicts	John 16:8	Titus 1:9
Comforts	Acts 9:31	1 Th. 4:18; Rom. 15:4
Gives Love	Rom. 5:5	1 John 2:5
Saves	1 Cor. 6:11	Acts 4:4; Jas. 1:21
Washes	1 Cor. 6:11	Eph. 5:26
Sanctifies	1 Pet. 1:2	John 17:17
Converts	John 16:7-8	Psalms 19:7
Makes Free	Rom. 8:2	John 8:32; 17:17
Strengthens	Eph. 3:16	Deut. 11:8; Acts 20:32
Indwells Saints	Eph. 5:18-19	Col. 3:16
Leads	Rom. 8:14	Psalms 119:105
Witnesses	Heb. 10:15; 1 John 5:6-8	Heb. 10:15-16; Jer. 31:31-34
Produces Fruit	Gal. 5:22-23	Col. 1:5-6

F. In the light of the foregoing, it is clear that the Spirit operates through the Word.

1. The effects wrought, the emotions stirred, and the changes made (on us) are all produced by the Holy Spirit through the medium of God's word.
2. If a man chops down a tree with an axe, one could attribute the result either to the man or the axe since both are involved; but neither could accomplish the feat without the other. So it is with regards to the Spirit and the Word!
3. If we reject the Spirit-given word, what is left? When we reject his word, we also reject God, Christ, and all hope of salvation and heaven!
4. If we accept that Spirit-given word, then all spiritual blessings are opened to us!

## 5. Significant passages:

- a. Ephesians 6:17: "And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God."
- b. Hebrews 4:12: "For the word of God *is* quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and *is* a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."
- c. James 1:21-25: "Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls. But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth *therein*, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed."
- d. 1 Peter 1:22-25: "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, *see that ye* love one another with a pure heart fervently: Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever. For all flesh *is* as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you."

G. A survey of the accounts of conversion in Acts show how the Spirit does his work.

CASE	GOSPEL	ACTION	ACTION	ACTION	RESULT
Acts 2	Spoke	Heard	Pricked	Baptized	Added, Saved
Acts 8:1-13	Preached	Heard	Believed	Baptized	Great Joy
Acts 8:26-40	Preached	Heard	Believed	Baptized	Rejoiced
Acts 10 & 11	Spoke	[Heard}	Believed	Baptized	[Saved]
Acts 16:12-15	Spoke	Heart Opened	Attended	Baptized	[Saved]
Acts 16:19-34	Spoke	[Heard]	[Believed]	Baptized	Washed Stripes
Acts 18:1-8	Reasoned	Heard	Believed	Baptized	[Saved]
Paul: Acts 9, 22, 26	Spoke	Heard	Believed	Baptized	Sins Washed Away

H. How the Holy Spirit operates is also seen in cases of non-conversion:

CASE	GOSPEL	ACTION	ACTION	RESULT
Acts 5:29-33	Spoke	Heard	Cut to the Heart	Wanted to Kill Them
Acts 7	Spoke	Heard	Cut to the Heart	Resisted, Stoned
Acts 13:14-46	Spoke	Heard	Contradicted & Blasphemed	Rejected
Acts 17:16-33	Spoke	Heard	Mocked	Rejected
Acts 24:24-25	Reasoned	[Heard]	Trembled	Put Off
Acts 26	Spoke	[Heard]	Believed	Rejected
Acts 28:23-29	Expounded & Testified	[Heard]	Did Not Believe	Disputed

I. An examination of the above cases reveals the following:

1. The word of God was presented in every case.
  - a. Not a word was said to them about looking for a direct operation of the Spirit.
  - b. In each case the Spirit gave the message which was presented by the preacher. The Lord's command in Mark 16:15-16 was being fulfilled.
2. In each case the word was heard, even though a specific statement to that effect is not reported. Not everyone who heard the message believed it, hence were not drawn to Christ by the Father: "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day. It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me" (John 6:44-45).
3. Belief is stated or implied in each case of conversion. Without faith in God there is no spiritual blessing (Heb. 11:6); without faith in Christ and his gospel there is no salvation.
  - a. Hebrews 11:6: "But without faith *it is* impossible to please *him*: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and *that* he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him."
  - b. John 8:24: "I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am *he*, ye shall die in your sins."
  - c. Mark 16:15-16: "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."
  - d. Romans 1:16: "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek."
4. Repentance is stated or implied in each case of conversion.
  - a. Luke 13:3: "I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish."
  - b. Acts 17:30: "And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent."
5. Confession of faith is present in each case in stated fact or by implication.
  - a. Matthew 10:32: "Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven."
  - b. Acts 8:37: "And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God."
  - c. Romans 10:9-10: "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine

heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."

6. Baptism is specifically mentioned in each case of conversion.

J. If the direct operation of the Spirit theory is so, there are some awful consequences.

1. The theory would eliminate the mediatorship of Christ: "For *there is* one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus" (1 Tim. 2:5).
2. It would remove the need for the gospel and would thus mean Christ died in vain.
3. It would erase the purpose and mission of the apostles.
4. It would eliminate the work of evangelists then and now.
5. It denies the need for obedience to the gospel.
  - a. Matthew 7:21-23: "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity."
  - b. Luke 6:46: "And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?"
  - c. John 14:21: "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him."
  - d. 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9: "And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power."
  - e. Hebrews 5:8-9: "Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him."
  - f. 1 John 5:3: "For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous."
6. It makes God a respecter of persons: "Then Peter opened *his* mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him" (Acts 10:34-35).
7. It contradicts what Christ said: "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity" (Matt. 7:21-23).
8. It removes all personal responsibility from man and places it all entirely on God.
9. If the theory is true, how and why will we all be judged by the word? John 12:48 "He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day" (John 12:48).

K. The theory is a short-cut, a cheap man-made substitution for God's will.

1. It puts the burden and responsibility on God entirely.
2. It is not only unscriptural (totally lacking in scriptural authority), but it is anti-scriptural (it is a direct repudiation of what the scriptures teach).
3. God's truth is plain and unmistakable on this matter:
  - a. The Holy Spirit convicts and converts alien sinners only through the word; he does so only when the word is faithfully preached, believed and obeyed
    - 1) John 8:32: "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."
    - 2) Acts 18:8: "And Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his house; and many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized."
    - 3) 1 Corinthians 6:11: "And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God."

- 4) 2 Corinthians 2:17: "For we are not as many, which corrupt the word of God: but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God speak we in Christ."
  - 5) Galatians 2:4-5: "And that because of false brethren unawares brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage: To whom we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour; that the truth of the gospel might continue with you."
  - 6) 1 Peter 4:11: "If any man speak, *let him speak* as the oracles of God; if any man minister, *let him do it* as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen."
  - 7) 2 Peter 3:16: "As also in all *his* epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as *they do* also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction."
- b. Our part is simple, easy—**and required!**
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# HOPE

## A. INTRODUCTION

1. Hope is an important feature of our daily affairs.
  - a. When we are sick, have financial or family troubles, have a death in the family, or suffer from some kind of affliction, hope is able to sustain us.
  - b. If there was no possibility of an improvement, there would be no hope, and thus despair would be in the offing.
2. Hope is indispensable to a sincere Christian.
  - a. One could not remain faithful long without hope. But if we believe things will be better farther along, we can endure the present pressures.
  - b. Hope is absolutely essential if we are to be successful Christians: "For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, *then* do we with patience wait for *it*" (Rom. 8:24-25).

## B. DISCUSSION

1. The nature of hope.
  - a. Hope looks forward with happy anticipation. It does not consider condemnation; it ignores the dark clouds and dread that often surround us.
  - b. Hope expects to receive its object. If we did not expect to go to heaven, we would have no hope of gaining heaven. We would have no helpful encouragement in tribulations if we did not expect a better life later.
  - c. Hope includes a desire for the expected object. One may expect something, but live in dread of receiving it. But hope desires that which it expects.
  - d. Hope joyfully looks to the future; it expects and desires better things.
2. Our faith produces our hope.
  - a. Our hope is not produced by science, summit meetings, treaties, space ventures, medical discoveries, secular education, or human wisdom.
  - b. Hebrews 11:1: "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."
    - 1) In this verse, the apostle affirms that faith is the ground (the confidence and substance) of things for which we hope. The word translated "substance" ("assurance"—ASV) "has several shades of meaning, including the thought of *ground* that stands under a proposition; also, it means the *actual substance* as contrasted with the mere vision of a thing, this latter connotation making the passage mean that faith in the believer's soul actually brings reality into his existence, conveying the thought of an earnest, or pledge, of ultimate fulfillment" (Coffman, pp.249f).
    - 2) Our English word *substance* is comprised of two words: **sub**, which means *under*, and **stance**, which means *to stand*, thus giving the meaning "to stand under, to support." This same meaning is found in the Greek term. Faith, therefore, stands under and lends support to those things we hope to obtain. These things we hope for include everything that comprises our inheritance.
    - 3) Faith is the evidence (conviction) of things not seen. The source of information we have about the future and eternity is God's word. He inhabits eternity, and is able to view the past, present, and future with perfect knowledge. When God speaks regarding the events at the end of time, he speaks with absolute knowledge; because we have learned that his word is entirely correct and trustworthy, we accept what he says as the end of all controversy.
      - a) Faith "is to the Christian what a demonstration is to the mathematician: it gives confidence with respect to whatever is promised; and it begets conviction with respect to the truth of whatever is affirmed" (Milligan, p.300).
      - b) God's word states that Christ will return to earth with his mighty angels (1 Th. 4:16; 2 Th. 1:7,8); he will then raise all the dead (John 5:28,29); he will change the living (1 Cor. 15:51,

52); he will bring all humanity into the Judgment (Matt. 25:31-32; Rom. 14:10-12); an eternal destiny will be assigned to each individual (2 Cor. 5:10). In connection with his return, Christ will destroy the earth and the universe (2 Pet. 3:10,11). Our faith in the truthfulness of God's word produces the conviction that these unseen things will be done.

- 4) Johnson gives these comments on the verse: Now faith is the substance of things hoped for. The old meaning of "substance," as well as of "hupostasis," the Greek word here used is "stand under," that is, to be a foundation. Faith is the foundation on which all our hopes for the future are built. The evidence of things not seen. Rather, the conviction or persuasion of things not seen. Without faith we would be limited to the very narrow world comprehended by the senses (*People's New Testament*, PNT).
  - 5) Faith is the substance of things hoped for. The Bible tells us of better things in the hereafter; we believe what it says (Rom. 10:17). Believing God causes us to look to the future, to desire those blessings promised, and to expect to receive them—this is hope.
  - c. Therefore, our hope is on the surest foundation! We have God's word on it! "For men verily swear by the greater: and an oath for confirmation *is* to them an end of all strife. Wherein God, willing more abundantly to show unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed *it* by an oath: That by two immutable things, in which *it was* impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us: Which *hope* we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil" (Heb. 6:17-19). The two unchangeable things presented in this text are God's promise and God's oath.
3. What do we hope to obtain?
- a. We hope to be delivered from the power of death and the grave, and to be given immortality. What assurance is given? "For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised: And if Christ be not raised, your faith *is* vain; ye are yet in your sins. Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished. If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable. But now is Christ risen from the dead, *and* become the firstfruits of them that slept" (1 Cor. 15:16-20) As certainly as Christ was raised up from the grave, so is our own resurrection.
  - b. We hope to stand before God's throne in the Judgment as justified and spotless men and women.
    - 1) Romans 8:32: "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?"
    - 2) 1 Corinthians 3:21-23: "Therefore let no man glory in men. For all things are yours; Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours; And ye are Christ's; and Christ *is* God's."
    - 3) 1 John 1:7: "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin."
    - 4) 1 John 3:2-3: "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure."
    - 5) Hebrews 5:9: "And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him."
    - 6) 2 Corinthians 5:10: "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things *done* in *his* body, according to that he hath done, whether *it be* good or bad."
    - 7) 1 John 4:17-18: "Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world. There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love."
  - c. We hope to receive a glorified body. This spiritual body we anticipate getting will be free from sickness, infirmities, diseases, death, pain, and sorrow. It will be liberated from temptation and sin.
    - 1) Philippians 3:20-21: "For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto

his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself."

- 2) 1 John 3:2-3: "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure."
- d. We hope to be admitted into heaven where we will be able to enjoy its full blessings. This invitation to enter heaven will be the most wonderful of all. We hope to meet and mingle with the redeemed of all ages, to meet the Redeemer, to be with our loved ones again, and to praise God through eternity.
  - 1) Matthew 8:11: "And I say unto you, That many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven."
  - 2) Matthew 25:21: "His lord said unto him, Well done, *thou* good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord."
  - 3) Matthew 25:34: "Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."
4. Hope gives us encouragement.
  - a. Romans 5:1-5: "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. And not only *so*, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; And patience, experience; and experience, hope: And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us."
  - b. It caused the first century saints to endure horrible things for Christ.
    - 1) Tribulation produces patience, which is the strength to endure.
    - 2) Patience produces experience (approvedness with God). "For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise" (Heb. 10:36).
    - 3) Having the approval of God produces hope; and hope causes us to look beyond the present moment of trouble.
    - 4) Hope will not shame us; we will not be disappointed.
  - c. Our soul dwells in an earthly tabernacle at the present, which is surrounded by many problems. We are burdened (2 Cor. 5:4).
    - 1) These burdens may include health difficulties, financial woes, opposition of evil men, and hatred from those who have rejected the truth.
    - 2) But better things await us.
      - a) Romans 8:18: "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time *are* not worthy *to be compared* with the glory which shall be revealed in us."
      - b) 2 Corinthians 4:16-18: "For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward *man* is renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding *and* eternal weight of glory; *18* While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen *are* temporal; but the things which are not seen *are* eternal."
      - c) 2 Corinthians 5:1: "For we know that if our earthly house of *this* tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."

### C. CONCLUSION.

1. When asked about your hope, you can point to the promises of God.
  - a. "Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time" (1 Pet. 1:3-5).



- b. "Which *hope* we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil" (Heb. 6:19).
    - 1) Our hope is anchored in heaven, lending stability to us on earth; and faith is the cable that connects us to our hope.
    - 2) As long as the cable holds, we are safe even though the storms of life may rage; if we let go or if the cable breaks, hope is gone and ruin results.
  - 2. What is your hope? Can you give a reason for it?
    - a. "But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and *be* ready always to *give* an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear" (1 Peter 3:15).
    - b. There is no hope in disobedience.
      - 1) Matthew 7:21-27: "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity. Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock. And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it."
      - 2) Ephesians 2:12: "That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world."
      - 3) 1 Thessalonians 4:13: "But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope."
    - c. There is plenty of hope if we obey the gospel and remain faithful to our Lord!
      - 1) Matthew 10:22: "And ye shall be hated of all *men* for my name's sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved."
      - 2) Hebrews 5:8-9: "Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him."
      - 3) Revelation 2:10: "Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast *some* of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."
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## ROMANS 9

### A. Romans 9:1-5: Paul's Deep Compassion For The Jews.

1. In Romans 9-11, the apostle discusses a new subject. Up to this point, he has shown that man's salvation depends on his obedience to the gospel of Christ. The gospel is God's power to save both Jew and Gentile. But what about the Jews who do not accept the gospel? Before he sets the Jewish situation into proper perspective, he affirms in the strongest possible terms his compassionate regards for the dilemma of those Jews who would not believe.
  - a. In this chapter, "the Apostle brings boldly out the fact that God had, at last, rejected Israel, and accepted the Gentiles. Nothing could be more offensive to the Jew than this. It was therefore necessary to conduct the painful disclosure with the skill of a master; and this the Apostle has done. He is especially happy in the mode in which he handles the fact of God's choices. He shows that no Jew at least could object to these; since he himself, not only approved them, but was proud of them in facts in his own history. It will be necessary for the reader to watch closely the Apostle in his procedure, in order to detect, at every turn, his art, and to discover how steadily he pursues his aim. Without this, the plot of the chapter will escape him" (Lard, p.291).
  - b. In order to reveal the truth of God's eternal plan which finds its fulfillment in the gospel of Christ, Paul must show that the Jewish nation was only a preparatory stage in the development of the strategy to redeem fallen man through Christ. But the Jews failed to see the big picture, thinking that their nation was the ultimate plan. The apostle shows that God made certain decisions in the past, which brought about the nation of Israel. He had to choose which man was to be father of the nation; his selection was Abraham. He had to choose which of Abraham's sons would be the one through whom the lineage would be developed; Isaac was his selection. Then God had to choose between Jacob and Esau; he choose Jacob. In his infinite wisdom, God then chose all the twelve sons of Jacob to be the founding fathers of the tribes of the Israelite nation. God then chose Judah to be the tribe through which he would send Christ into the world.
  - c. In making all these selections, the eternal destiny of the individuals was not a factor. This is the fatal error Calvinists make in interpreting this chapter, for they think God, in his sovereignty, selected each individual to either go to heaven or to be forever condemned in hell, with neither group having any choice.
2. Verse 1: "I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost."
  - a. The statement of this verse forms a strong affirmation of the truthfulness of what he is about to discuss. See Isaiah 38:1 and John 1:20 for similar statements. Paul asserts that he speaks the truth, and does not lie; his conscience and the Holy Spirit bore witness of the truthfulness of his attestation.
    - 1) Isaiah 38:1: "In those days was Hezekiah sick unto death. And Isaiah the prophet the son of Amoz came unto him, and said unto him, Thus saith the LORD, Set thine house in order: for thou shalt die, and not live."
    - 2) John 1:20: "And he confessed, and denied not; but confessed, I am not the Christ."
  - b. The conscience is that part of us that accuses or excuses our actions, based on what we believe to be right. "Which show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and *their* thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another" (Rom. 2:15). The dependability of the conscience in this work hinges on the accuracy of the standard we have accepted. Paul's conscience supported his evil attacks against the Christians (Acts 23:1; 26:9-11); when he learned he was wrong, he made the right change. He knew within his own mind that his feeling for the Jews was what he affirmed it to be (vv. 2-3). If he did not love them, he would not have been willing to suffer so many hardships in their behalf, for he suffered greatly to preach the gospel to them.
  - c. The Holy Spirit supported him in his affirmation of love for the Jews. If he was telling a falsehood, the Spirit would not be working miracles through him, and he would not be used in writing and

- preaching the revelations of the Spirit.
- d. His claim rested on the best of foundations: his own undoubted words and the supernatural work the Spirit did through Paul.
  - e. Concerning the conscience, Whiteside quotes Schaff-Herzog: "The word comes to us from the Latin *consciūs, conscientia* ('conscious,' 'consciousness'); but neither Greek nor Roman used it in our sense. It had no religious bearing. It is unknown in the Old Testament, never used by our Lord, nor by the New Testament writers, except Paul (and those directly inspired by him) and Peter." (p.196).
3. Verses 2-3: "That I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart. For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh."
- a. The truth he is affirming in this context is his great concern for Israel. The great majority of the nation rejected the gospel (Acts 13:45-46; 28:22-29). This was a source of continual sorrow to Paul's tender heart.
    - 1) Acts 13:45-46: "But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy, and spake against those things which were spoken by Paul, contradicting and blaspheming. Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles."
    - 2) Acts 28:22-29: "But we desire to hear of thee what thou thinkest: for as concerning this sect, we know that every where it is spoken against. And when they had appointed him a day, there came many to him into *his* lodging; to whom he expounded and testified the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus, both out of the law of Moses, and *out of* the prophets, from morning till evening. And some believed the things which were spoken, and some believed not. And when they agreed not among themselves, they departed, after that Paul had spoken one word, Well spake the Holy Ghost by Esaias the prophet unto our fathers, Saying, Go unto this people, and say, Hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and not perceive: For the heart of this people is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed; lest they should see with *their* eyes, and hear with *their* ears, and understand with *their* heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them. Be it known therefore unto you, that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and *that* they will hear it. And when he had said these words, the Jews departed, and had great reasoning among themselves."
  - b. Every faithful, knowledgeable saint feels this sorrow when he sees precious souls living in rebellion to the will of God. He would be willing to suffer almost any kind of pain or deprivation if that could bring them to obey the gospel. Indeed, many gospel preachers endure all sorts of hardships, rejections, and deprivations in order to preach the gospel.
  - c. He could wish himself condemned if that would deliver the Jews, but it could not do so and he therefore could not actually make the wish. God will not send anyone to hell or take another into heaven based merely on the desires of some other person. Paul had the willingness to so-wish if it would do any good. His point in making this statement is to show his sincere compassion for the Jews.
  - d. Moses expressed a similar thought in Exodus 32:32-33: "Yet now, if thou wilt forgive their sin--; and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written. And the LORD said unto Moses, Whosoever hath sinned against me, him will I blot out of my book." In Paul's case, if such were permitted and if it were possible, he would be willing to forfeit his own salvation if that would save the Jews.
  - e. Paul himself was a Jew, of the tribe of Benjamin (Phil. 3:5). Thus, he calls attention to his physical and national relationship with these "brethren."
4. Verses 4-5: "Who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises; Whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen."
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- a. In this passage, the apostle lists nine provisions which the Jewish nation had been given by Jehovah. Before discussing the matter of the Jews losing their standing as the special people of God, a most unpleasant truth to them, Paul names some of the advantages God had given them in the Mosaic Age. What he will say later is given with a full awareness of the special relationship Israel previously enjoyed. But their situation was not the ultimate end of God's eternal purpose; it was only a major step toward the goal for which God was aiming (Eph. 3:1-11).
    - 1) Romans 10:1-4: "Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved. For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God. For Christ *is* the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth."
    - 2) Romans 16:25-26: "Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began, But now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith:"
  - b. They were *Israelites*. The name "Israel" means "prince of God" (Gen. 32:28-30; see margin). The name denoted the standing that Jacob had before Jehovah, and so also the status his descendants enjoyed with the Lord.
    - 1) Exodus 4:22: "And thou shalt say unto Pharaoh, Thus saith the LORD, Israel *is* my son, *even* my firstborn."
    - 2) Deuteronomy 14:1: "Ye *are* the children of the LORD your God: ye shall not cut yourselves, nor make any baldness between your eyes for the dead."
    - 3) Jeremiah 31:9: "They shall come with weeping, and with supplications will I lead them: I will cause them to walk by the rivers of waters in a straight way, wherein they shall not stumble: for I am a father to Israel, and Ephraim *is* my firstborn."
  - c. To them pertained *the adoption*. Of all the nations on earth at the time, God chose Israel as his special people; to them only pertained this adoption. Their sonship was on a national level. Merely because they were born as physical descendants of Abraham through Jacob, did not automatically make their eternal salvation certain. To them were given special benefits, but obedience was required. Having Jewish parents did not make the offspring a sincere, dedicated, servant of God. No guarantee of salvation was engraved on a Jew's birth certificate! Their mark of sonship was in the flesh, not on the heart.
    - 1) Ecclesiastes 12:13-14: "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this *is* the whole *duty* of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether *it be* good, or whether *it be* evil."
    - 2) Micah 6:8: "He hath showed thee, O man, what *is* good; and what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?"
  - d. To them pertained the *glory*. There was something glorious about Israel. The most outstanding blessing of the nation was its standing with God; its most prominent possession was God's Law. The presence of God was gloriously manifested as he led Israel in the wilderness; his glory was manifested on the countenance of Moses when that great lawgiver descended Sinai (2 Cor. 3:13; Ex. 34:29-33). God intended for Israel to be a shining example to the Gentile nations of the advantages that pertained to those who serve the Living God.
    - 1) Exodus 34:29-33: "And it came to pass, when Moses came down from mount Sinai with the two tables of testimony in Moses' hand, when he came down from the mount, that Moses wist not that the skin of his face shone while he talked with him. And when Aaron and all the children of Israel saw Moses, behold, the skin of his face shone; and they were afraid to come nigh him. And Moses called unto them; and Aaron and all the rulers of the congregation returned unto him: and Moses talked with them. And afterward all the children of Israel came nigh: and he gave them in
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- commandment all that the LORD had spoken with him in mount Sinai. And *till* Moses had done speaking with them, he put a veil on his face."
- 2) 2 Corinthians 3:13: "And not as Moses, *which* put a veil over his face, that the children of Israel could not stedfastly look to the end of that which is abolished."
  - 3) Deuteronomy 7:6-8: "For thou *art* an holy people unto the LORD thy God: the LORD thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people that *are* upon the face of the earth. The LORD did not set his love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people; for ye *were* the fewest of all people: But because the LORD loved you, and because he would keep the oath which he had sworn unto your fathers, hath the LORD brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you out of the house of bondmen, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt."
  - 4) Acts 13:17: "The God of this people of Israel chose our fathers, and exalted the people when they dwelt as strangers in the land of Egypt, and with an high arm brought he them out of it."
- e. To them pertained the *covenants*. This refers to the covenants God made with Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Israel; these covenants contained the promise to bring the Messiah into the world through the lineage of Abraham; it included the covenant of circumcision, the promise to bless them materially if they followed God's will, and to give them protection from their enemies.
- f. To them pertained the giving of the *law*. There was a wonderfully important blessing involved in having God's Law.
- 1) The Gentile nations did not have this advantage, and wandered through life in ignorance and sin, having only the awareness of right and wrong, and whatever reflected light there may have been from the connection (if any) they had with Israel. Paul stated in Romans 3:1-2 that the chief advantage the Jews had over the Gentiles was having God's oracles (his revealed word). But the Law was an advantage only to the extent that they followed its precepts.
  - 2) The Mosaic Law was given only to the Jews. "And Moses called all Israel, and said unto them, Hear, O Israel, the statutes and judgments which I speak in your ears this day, that ye may learn them, and keep, and do them. The LORD our God made a covenant with us in Horeb. The LORD made not this covenant with our fathers, but with us, *even* us, who *are* all of us here alive this day. The LORD talked with you face to face in the mount out of the midst of the fire, (I stood between the LORD and you at that time, to show you the word of the LORD: for ye were afraid by reason of the fire, and went not up into the mount;) saying, I *am* the LORD thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage" (Deut. 5:1-6).
- g. To them pertained the *service of God*. The reference here is to all the ceremonies and rites prescribed by the Mosaic Law. The Gentiles were not given such a system, and the Jews could observe these only by following certain, well-defined regulations. These items of service were accomplished at the temple, being done by the priests.
- h. To them pertained the *promises*. The initial promise given to Abraham, which extended to his descendants, is related in Genesis 12:1-3. The pledge included the establishment of a great family-nation, a land, and the seed through whom the whole world would be blessed (Gen. 12:1-3; 22:18; Gal. 3:16). The promise included the Messiah, his kingdom, and all the blessings that would pertain to citizenship in his kingdom (Dan. 2:44; Col. 1:13-14; Phil. 3:20-21).
- 1) Genesis 12:1-3: "Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee: And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed."
  - 2) Genesis 22:18: "And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice."
  - 3) Daniel 2:44: "And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall
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- never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, *but* it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever."
- 4) Galatians 3:16: "Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ."
  - 5) Colossians 1:13-14: "Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated *us* into the kingdom of his dear Son: In whom we have redemption through his blood, *even* the forgiveness of sins."
  - 6) Philippians 3:20-21: "For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself."
- i. Whose are the *fathers*. The forebears of the Jewish people are included: Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, the twelve sons of Jacob, David, Solomon, *etal*. The Jews looked back at the fathers with deep respect and pride (2 Cor. 11:22; Phil. 3:5-8).
    - 1) 2 Corinthians 11:22: "Are they Hebrews? so *am* I. Are they Israelites? so *am* I. Are they the seed of Abraham? so *am* I."
    - 2) Philippians 3:5-8: "Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, *of* the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee; Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless. But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things *but* loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them *but* dung, that I may win Christ."
  - j. Of whom as concerning the flesh *Christ came*. Christ has always existed, but his fleshly body was produced through the lineage of Abraham (Rom. 1:3-4; Gal. 4:4-5).
    - 1) The authority of Christ is stated plainly by Paul in our text (vs. 5). He is over all (Matt. 28:18; Phil. 2:9-11). Only a relative few are submissive to his great authority now, in this life, but after this life is over, all will acknowledge his superiority.
    - 2) The present authority of Christ is plainly affirmed by Paul in our text. He is over all. He exercises his authority in his kingdom as he rules from his throne. Paul says he is presently over all, therefore he is reigning over his kingdom, and thus his kingdom is now in existence.
    - 3) Christ has the abiding blessings of God upon himself (Matt. 3:17; 17:5). Some have rendered the verse in the following words: "Whose are the fathers, and of whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ came, who is God over all, blessed for ever" (Godet, as quoted by Coffman, p.330). Coffman also points out that "Christ is called 'God' no less than ten times in the Greek NT, the other nine passages where this is done being John 1:1; 20:28; Acts 20:28; Hebrews 1:8; Philippians 2:8; Colossians 2:9; Titus 2:13; 2 Peter 1:1; and 1 John 2:20" (*ibid.*). The tenth passage is Romans 9:5. The punctuation used in the verse has much to do with the meaning of the statement.
      - a) John 1:1: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."
      - b) John 20:28: "And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God."
      - c) Acts 20:28: "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood."
      - d) Philippians 2:8: "And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross."
      - e) Colossians 2:9: "For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily."
      - f) Titus 2:13: "Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ."
      - g) Hebrews 1:8: "But unto the Son *he saith*, Thy throne, O God, *is* for ever and ever: a sceptre of

righteousness *is* the sceptre of thy kingdom."

- h) 2 Peter 1:1: "Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ."
- i) 1 John 2:20: "But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things."
- 4) It was an obvious fact of history that the majority of the Jews had rejected Jesus as the Messiah. But despite their spurning of the Lord, God hath made him both Lord and Christ (Acts 2:36). A great number of Gentiles had gladly accepted him as such.
- 5) Romans 1:3-4: "Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh; And declared *to be* the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead."
- 6) Galatians 4:4-5: "But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons."

B. Romans 9:6-13: God Made Proper Selections in Choosing the Lineage of Christ.

1. Verse 6: "Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect. For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel."
  - a. God is always true to his word; if this were not so, he would not be God. The fact that the Israelites in general had rejected Christ did not show that God was untrue to his promises.
  - b. God fulfilled his promise precisely as he had always intended. Israel thought that their nation was the ultimate plan; they did not believe the Messiah would be of such nature as they saw Jesus to be. Their expectations of him were wrong. Cf. Isaiah 53.
  - c. God's plan all along was to offer his blessings to the world in the church of Christ. It was always his intention for Jesus to die on the cross and be raised up from the dead. Prophecies were made to that end, but the Jews failed to take them into proper account. Peter showed in Acts 2 that David was not speaking of himself, but of Jesus, when he said, "Because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption" (Acts 2:27-36).
  - d. The millennialists today (and the Jews then) look for a fulfillment of God's promises in some material, earthly kingdom. They both fail to see that God completed his plan in the church, just as he had always intended.
    - 1) Isaiah 2:1-4: "The word that Isaiah the son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem. And it shall come to pass in the last days, *that* the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more."
    - 2) Matthew 16:13-19: "When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I the Son of man am? And they said, Some *say that thou art* John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets. He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed *it* unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."
    - 3) Ephesians 1:20-23: "Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set *him*

- at his own right hand in the heavenly *places*, Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: And hath put all *things* under his feet, and gave him *to be* the head over all *things* to the church, Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all."
- 4) Ephesians 2:12-16: "That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition *between us*; Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, *even* the law of commandments *contained* in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, *so* making peace; And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby:"
  - 5) Ephesians 5:23-27: "For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so *let* the wives *be* to their own husbands in every thing. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish."
  - 6) 1 Timothy 3:15: "But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth."
  - e. Not all of old fleshly Israel became part of the new spiritual Israel (the church). "Even though fleshly Israel had rejected Christ, there was yet a spiritual Israel, and the promise was fulfilled in them. Paul's language in these verses shows that the promise made to Abraham terminated in spiritual Israel. They do greatly err who think the promise to Abraham is yet to be fulfilled in fleshly Israel. Blood descent from Abraham does not entitle one to share in the promise" (Whiteside, p.198).
  - f. When Israel rejected Christ, they signed their own death warrant. Those who were the best prepared to readily receive him, casually examined and cast him away. Without the meddling interference of their religious leaders, greater numbers of the people might have received him, but nevertheless, the average Jew was under obligation to decide for himself, on the evidence presented, whether Jesus is the Christ: "I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am *he*, ye shall die in your sins" (John 8:24).
  2. Verse 7: "Neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children: but, In Isaac shall thy seed be called."
    - a. God did not choose all the descendants of Abraham to form the nation of Israel; but rather, he choose only those descendants of Abraham who came into the world through Isaac, the son of promise.
    - b. Just because one could establish his fleshly kinship to Abraham would not mean he is of the seed of Abraham thereby; that is, that his physical lineage automatically gives him citizenship in the kingdom of God.
      - 1) Matthew 3:9: "And think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to *our* father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham."
      - 2) Acts 2:36-41: "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ. Now when they heard *this*, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men *and* brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, *even* as many as the Lord our God shall call. And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation. Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added *unto them* about three thousand souls."
      - 3) Galatians 3:26-29: "For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.<sup>7</sup> For as many of you



- as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."
- c. God was righteous in making the choice of Isaac; and he is righteous in choosing only those in Christ to be saved during the Christian Age.
  3. Verse 8: "That is, They which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed."
    - a. This verse explains verse seven. God did not choose all the descendants of Abraham to be his special nation; he chose only those who descended through Isaac.
    - b. The Jews had no right to complain about being rejected under Christ, for God had in the long ago, rejected other children of Abraham. Neither Ishmael nor the sons of Abraham by Keturah were made part of the nation of Israel, or part of the lineage of the promised Seed.
      - 1) Genesis 3:15: "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel."
      - 2) Genesis 22:18: "And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice."
      - 3) Galatians 3:16: "Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ."
    - c. Physical connection with Abraham was not sufficient to make an offspring or descendant of that great man a child of God. The Israelites were children of God because they were incorporated into the holy nation of Israel; but each one was required to submit to the law God gave them through Moses.
    - d. But God had a more far-reaching plan in mind, of which the Mosaic economy was only a preparatory stage. For the Israelites who live when the Law of Christ is in force, they must accept the terms laid down in this new order (the New Testament). If they base their claims to be children of God only on the basis of being descendants of Abraham, they will be sorely disappointed. Fleshly kinship to Abraham no longer has any merit. "For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love" (Gal. 5:6).
    - e. Isaac (and not Ishmael) was the son of promise. Both Abraham and Sarah were beyond the age of becoming parents, but God promised them a son (Gen. 17:15-22; 18:9-15). At the appointed time, Isaac was born to this old couple. Christians, as Isaac, are children of promise.
      - 1) Galatians 4:28: "Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise."
      - 2) Galatians 3:26-29: "For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."
    - f. God counted the relationship of Jacob's descendants as making them children of God; he did not so count the descendants of Ishmael and Keturah's sons. As these who were not of Abraham's lineage through Ishmael were cast out, so the fleshly descendants of Abraham through Isaac were now cast out. The only claim fleshly Israel had to sonship was their fleshly kinship to Abraham, and since this was no longer a qualification to being a child of God, each Israelite has to obey Christ in order to become part of God's new order. An entirely new and different birth is now required (John 3:1-8; 1 Pet. 1:18-25; Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:36-41).
      - 1) Mark 16:15-16: "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."
      - 2) John 3:1-8: "There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews: The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him. Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom

- of God. Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born? Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and *of* the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit."
- 3) Acts 2:36-41: "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ. Now when they heard *this*, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men *and* brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, *even* as many as the Lord our God shall call. And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation. Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added *unto them* about three thousand souls."
  - 4) 1 Peter 1:18-25: "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, *as* silver and gold, from your vain conversation *received* by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you, Who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God. Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, *see that ye* love one another with a pure heart fervently: Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever. For all flesh *is* as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you."
  4. Verse 9: "For this is the word of promise, At this time will I come, and Sara shall have a son."
    - a. We are told here how Isaac was the son of promise: God would visit Sarah, and make it possible for her to conceive Isaac. Isaac would never have been if God had not intervened.
    - b. God made and fulfilled the promise to give them this son. God chose Isaac to be the one through whom he would fulfill the great promises which had been given to Abraham (Gen. 12:1-3); Ishmael was not chosen for that role.
    - c. However, the choice made here, and later between Jacob and Esau, did not involve the salvation of the individual chosen. Paul had already shown that there is no respect of persons with God (Rom. 2:1-11).
  5. Verses 10-11: "And not only this; but when Rebecca also had conceived by one, even by our father Isaac; (For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth)."
    - a. Paul here uses another illustration to show the Israelites that God made significant choices in the past and could make one even now. The Jews might respond to the apostle's argument that God had chosen Isaac over Ishmael, by saying that Isaac was the only true son of Abraham and Sarah; but that rejoinder could not be made to fit the case of Jacob and Esau. Both of these were true sons of Isaac; in fact, they were twins.
    - b. When Rebecca had conceived, which resulted from her husband's intercession for her that her barrenness be removed, she was given a heavenly communication (Gen. 25:19-23). Paul discusses that message in the next two verses. "And these *are* the generations of Isaac, Abraham's son: Abraham begat Isaac: And Isaac was forty years old when he took Rebekah to wife, the daughter of Bethuel the Syrian of Padanaram, the sister to Laban the Syrian. And Isaac entreated the LORD for his wife,
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because she *was* barren: and the LORD was entreated of him, and Rebekah his wife conceived. And the children struggled together within her; and she said, *If it be so, why am I thus?* And she went to inquire of the LORD. And the LORD said unto her, Two nations *are* in thy womb, and two manner of people shall be separated from thy bowels; and *the one* people shall be stronger than *the other* people; and the elder shall serve the younger" (Gen. 25:19-23).

- c. Even before these twin boys were born, and therefore having done neither good nor evil, God made his selection as to which would carry on the Messianic line. God had a right to make this choice; this choice did not involve the wishes of either of the boys; and Esau's rejection and Jacob's selection had nothing to do with the salvation or condemnation of either.
  - d. Notice that God's choice was made before either had done good or evil. If the false doctrine of "original sin" is true, Paul could not have made this argument, for both of these unborn infants would have already been contaminated by Adam's sin. Notice also that good and evil are things that are done; they are not inheritable qualities. "The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him" (Ezek. 18:20).
  - e. God made the choice between these twins on the basis of his own wisdom and power; and he had the right to make the choice without the individuals being consulted about it. Again, the choice did not have a bearing on the eternal destiny of either of these two boys; it had relevance to the chosen nation and the Messianic line.
  - f. Just because one had the good fortune to be born of Israelite parents, during the time the Law of Moses was in effect, did not mean his eternal salvation was thereby assured. He could be lost just as easily as any of the Gentiles could be lost. In fact, his obligations before God were multiplied since he had the revealed will of God as his guide. The Gentiles followed the "law of conscience" (Rom. 2:13-15). If the Israelite did not sincerely try to follow all the dictates of the Mosaic Law, he was held accountable for his sins (Hosea 8:13; Heb. 10:1-4).
    - 1) Hosea 8:13: "They sacrifice flesh *for* the sacrifices of mine offerings, and eat *it*; *but* the LORD accepteth them not; now will he remember their iniquity, and visit their sins: they shall return to Egypt."
    - 2) Hebrews 10:1-4: "For the law having a shadow of good things to come, *and* not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect. For then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins. But in those *sacrifices there is* a remembrance again *made* of sins every year. For *it is* not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins."
  - g. Verse eleven does not address the subject of the salvation of the soul; it deals with the selection God made in the lineage by which the chosen nation would be developed, through which the Messiah was to eventually come into the world (Gen. 25:23). The selection actually was the choosing of a people rather than an individual. God did not choose Jacob because he was a better moral man than Esau; he did not reject Esau because he was a more sinful man than Jacob; he chose Jacob before either of them did anything either good or evil. The choice decided the lineage of the nation, not the salvation or condemnation of their souls. There was nothing in the appearance or lives of these two unborn babies which influenced God in his selection.
6. Verses 12-13: "It was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger. As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated."
- a. This message was given to Rebecca, and was immediately defined as being said in reference to the two people who would descend from the twins then in her womb. The heavenly message Rebecca received stated that the elder of the twins should serve the younger. This was never true of the two men, Jacob and Esau; it was true with their descendants, for Israel (the progeny of Jacob) did subjugate Edom (the descendants of Esau).
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- 1) 2 Kings 8:20: "In his days Edom revolted from under the hand of Judah, and made a king over themselves."
  - 2) 2 Kings 14:7: "He slew of Edom in the valley of salt ten thousand, and took Selah by war, and called the name of it Joktheel unto this day."
  - 3) 2 Kings 14:22: "He built Elath, and restored it to Judah, after that the king slept with his fathers."
  - 4) 1 Chronicles 18:12-13: "Moreover Abishai the son of Zeruiah slew of the Edomites in the valley of salt eighteen thousand. And he put garrisons in Edom; and all the Edomites became David's servants. Thus the LORD preserved David whithersoever he went."
- b. In this same connection, Paul cites a statement recorded in the Old Testament: "Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated." This was not part of the message given to the mother of these two men. It was recorded in Malachi 1:1-3, and was issued about 1400 years after these two men were dead. The statement must be understood in the light of other statements made in the Bible regarding love and hate. Frank Young spoke of a sectarian preacher who once wrote on a blackboard, "John 3:16," and blatantly affirmed that he knew one man God did not love. He proceeded to cite our current text as "proof."
- c. It is clear that God does not hate any man, in the sense of having an active ill-will against a human being. The Bible says that Jacob hated Leah, but defines it as his having more love for Rachel than for Leah (Gen. 29:30-31). In the parallel passages of Matthew 10:37 and Luke 14:26, we learn that to hate one's parents, as required by the Lord, is simply to love them less than we love God. It is impossible for God to hate any person, and it is certain that he would not require us to hate anyone. Indeed, he issued many warnings against our allowing any degree of hatred to reside within our hearts or to be expressed in our words or lives.
- 1) Matthew 5:43-48: "Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same? And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more *than others*? do not even the publicans so? Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect."
  - 2) Mark 12:29-31: "And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments *is*, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord: And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this *is* the first commandment. And the second *is* like, *namely* this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these."
  - 3) Galatians 5:19-21: "Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are *these*; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told *you* in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God."
  - 4) 1 John 4:20-21: "If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen? And this commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God love his brother also."
- d. God did not hate Esau; he expressed greater love for Jacob in choosing him to be the one through whom Israel was developed. Furthermore, the statement of Malachi 1:2-3, and cited by Paul in our text, did not have application to Jacob and Esau as individuals; it was stated in reference to their respective descendants: Israel and Edom. God did not hate Edom; he showed more love for Israel in that he chose them to be the special nation through which he would send the Redeemer into the world.
- e. God never decided the eternal fate of any man separate from that man's free choice. To do otherwise
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would place him in direct violation of his own word: "Then Peter opened *his* mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him" (Acts 10:34-35).

C. Romans 9:14-18: God's Dealings With Israel Were Just and Gracious.

1. Verse 14: "What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid."
  - a. A Jew, when confronted with the reality of the rejection of his nation in favor of the spiritual kingdom of Christ, would likely raise this objection: "God is unrighteous if he turns away from his chosen nation (Israel)." Paul denies this idea.
  - b. Since even the most avid Jew would admit that God was not unrighteous in selecting Jacob and rejecting Esau, through whom to develop the Israelite nation, he should be able to see that God would not be unrighteous to reject Israel for Christ's kingdom. This Jew could also see that God maintained his righteousness in rejecting Ishmael and choosing Isaac.
  - c. "If God selected Isaac and Jacob because they would be the best instruments through which to work out his plans, and the Jews gloried in these selections, why should they think that it would be out of harmony with God's nature to reject the Jews because of unbelief and accept the Gentiles who believed in him? Even though God had rejected the Jewish nation as such, they had the same opportunity as did the Gentiles to become children of God" (Whiteside, p.201).
  - d. The Jews did not fully know or adequately understand the Old Testament Scriptures, for had they done so, they would have realized that God's long-range plans included the replacement of the Law of Moses with the New Covenant, and the establishment of the eternal kingdom. The Old Testament also gave many references to the sacrifice, the resurrection, and ascension of the Messiah. Thus, the nation of Israel was only a major feature in the development of the ultimate plan (Eph. 3:1-11; Rom. 16:25-26).
2. Verse 15: "For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion."
  - a. This verse is a quotation from Exodus 33:19, and states God's intention to show mercy to whomsoever he will. This statement is often wrongly taken to mean that God will express his mercy arbitrarily.
  - b. God's grace is made available to humanity in accordance with a definite prescribed format. It is not dispensed indiscriminately.
    - 1) Proverbs 28:13: "He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh *them* shall have mercy."
    - 2) Isaiah 55:7: "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon."
    - 3) John 20:30-31: "And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name."
  - c. When one meets the conditions established by the Lord, only then can he expect to receive the benefits God's grace furnishes. Grace reigns through righteousness (Rom. 5:21), which means that when the individual obeys God's will (Ps. 119:172; Acts 10:34-35), he works righteousness, and is blessed by the grace of God (John 8:24; Lk. 13:3; Matt. 10:32; Acts 2:38; 22:16; Mark 16:15-16).
    - 1) Psalms 119:172: "My tongue shall speak of thy word: for all thy commandments *are* righteousness."
    - 2) John 8:24: "I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am *he*, ye shall die in your sins."
    - 3) Luke 13:3: "I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish."
    - 4) Matthew 10:32: "Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven."
    - 5) Mark 16:16: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be

- damned."
- 6) Acts 2:38: "Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."
  - 7) Acts 10:34-35: "Then Peter opened *his* mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him."
  - 8) Acts 22:16: "And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord."
- d. God will have mercy on the obedient, and he will withhold mercy from the disobedient; he will show compassion on those who obey, and have no compassion on those who disobey.
- 1) Matthew 7:21-23: "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity."
  - 2) 2 Thessalonians 1:7-10: "And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power; When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day."
  - 3) Hebrews 5:8-9: "Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him."
  - 4) Revelation 22:14: "Blessed *are* they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city."
- e. God will not reject one who honestly seeks to obey him, and he will not accept one who has no interest in doing his will.
- 1) Mark 16:15-16: "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."
  - 2) Romans 1:16-17: "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith."
  - 3) Romans 6:16-18: "Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness."
  - 4) Romans 10:1-3: "Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved. For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God."
  - 5) Titus 2:11-12: "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world."
- f. No one can keep God from showing mercy to those to whom he wishes to show it. The statement Paul quotes here was spoken to Moses at a time when that great man's heart was discouraged over Israel's faithlessness. It may be that he could not see why God continued to spare them the full measure of punishment they deserved, but God had a great plan for Israel, and the nation must be spared.
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- g. God showed mercy to Abraham, to Isaac, to Jacob, and to the twelve sons of Jacob and their descendants; he did so in choosing them to be the line through whom he would develop the nation of Israel and by whom he would send the Messiah into the world. He was not unrighteous in making these choices. This is the truth Paul is stressing by his use of the quotation. But it is also true that God is not unrighteous in showing mercy only to the obedient in the Christian Age; he shows mercy to those persons who, as individuals, personally and sincerely obey the gospel of Christ; their national heritage does not enter into the picture. "Then Peter opened *his* mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him" (Acts 10:34-35).
3. Verse 16: "So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy."
- a. Paul does not teach here that individuals have no choice in salvation; he is showing that God made the choices in selecting the ancestral lineage of the Messiah. Only one man could be initially chosen: Abraham was God's choice. Among Abraham's sons, just one could be picked: Isaac was the one. Despite Isaac and Esau's efforts, Jacob was the son of Isaac chosen to continue the line.
  - b. "In bringing to maturity his plans to bless all nations through Abraham's seed, God had followed the counsel of his own will. The promised seed was Christ, and not the Jewish nation, as the Jews thought. These blessings would be bestowed according to God's good pleasure, and not according to any racial distinctions. The Jews willed that it should be otherwise. They would have no Gentile blessed unless he became circumcised and kept the law of Moses" (Whiteside, pp.201f). "Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ" (Gal. 3:16).
  - c. In choosing Abraham over all the other men of his generation, God worked no ill-will toward any of them. When he selected Isaac, he did not do evil to Ishmael. The same is true in selecting Jacob over Esau. The selection had nothing to do with the personal salvation of any of those involved. These men did not choose themselves, but God made the selections. The word **it** refers to this selection process. The choices Jehovah made did not depend on human will or action. Were we able to properly discern the matter, we would doubtless find that God's selections were entirely correct. God's actions are always right.
  - d. In saving lost men, God does not capriciously decide who or when or how each will be saved. Every alien sinner is subject to the same gospel and the same conditions. There is no partiality with God (Rom. 2:11; Acts 10:34-35). Each individual must make the decision whether to be saved (Rev. 22:17; Matt. 11:28-30; 2 Cor. 5:10-11; Acts 13:45-46; Acts 2:36-41). There is no salvation for any person, separate and apart from the full and sincere desire of the individual (Acts 2:40; Phil. 2:12).
    - 1) Acts 2:40: "And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation."
    - 2) Philippians 2:12: "Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling."
4. Verse 17: "For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might shew my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth."
- a. As a further confirmation of the answer given to the question (see vs. 14), the apostle cites the case of the Pharaoh of Egypt whose heart was hardened. God was eminently righteous in hardening that man's heart. But how did God harden his heart? Did he do so tyrannically? Calvinists say that God hardened Pharaoh's heart independently of that man's will, that Pharaoh had no choice in the matter.
    - 1) But if that is so, then here is a case of a man who was compelled to disobey God to his own destruction! How could God retain his impartiality while forcing this man to disobey? How could God be the loving One he claims to be and coerce Pharaoh into rebellion?
    - 2) If God directly hardened Pharaoh's heart, Paul would not and could not have used his case as an example of the righteous conduct of God; it would have proved the very opposite!
  - b. A statement of fact does not always include the method employed in bringing about the fact. How was
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Pharaoh's heart hardened? God hardened his heart.

- 1) God had a part in the hardening process (Ex. 7:3, 10-13; Rom. 9:17-18). God raised up this man, and caused him to be on the throne at the right time to be confronted by Moses. That God does this we know (Dan. 2:20-21; Rom. 13:1). That God does not cause a man to have a rebellious heart we also know.
  - a) Numbers 16:22: "And they fell upon their faces, and said, O God, the God of the spirits of all flesh, shall one man sin, and wilt thou be wroth with all the congregation?"
  - b) John 3:16: "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."
  - c) Acts 10:34-35: "Then Peter opened *his* mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him."
  - d) Hebrews 12:9: "Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected *us*, and we gave *them* reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live?"
  - e) 1 John 4:8: "He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love."
- 2) God presented Pharaoh with a strong, unpleasant demand: "And afterward Moses and Aaron went in, and told Pharaoh, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Let my people go, that they may hold a feast unto me in the wilderness" (Ex. 5:1). The demand was contrary to the will of Pharaoh: "And Pharaoh said, Who *is* the LORD, that I should obey his voice to let Israel go? I know not the LORD, neither will I let Israel go" (Ex. 5:2). It required a great sacrifice on the part of the king. Pharaoh was unwilling to lose three million slaves. His response was, "Who is Jehovah to tell Pharaoh, the great king of Egypt, what he must do?"
- 3) God gave a demonstration of his supernatural power (Ex. 7:8-13), which was clearly shown to be vastly superior to the counterfeit magic of the Egyptian sorcerers. But instead of yielding, Pharaoh hardened his heart. His heart is described as *stubborn* (Ex. 5:14).
- 4) God has the authority to command and expect obedience. When God stated to Pharaoh his demand that the Israelites be freed, the king refused. The same sun that melts wax, hardens clay; the effect is determined by the nature of the substance. A heart that is teachable, will respond in obedience; a heart that is stubborn, will resist teaching. God hardened Pharaoh's heart only in the sense of providing him the occasion to be softened or hardened in regards to God's demand, with Pharaoh making the decision as to which it would be.
- c. The *magicians* of Pharaoh had a part in the hardening process (Ex. 7:20—8:7). They turned the water into blood by their legerdemain—a deceptive magician's trick.
  - 1) As a result, Pharaoh hardened his heart, thinking that God's power was not greater than those in his employ. They also, by trickery, imitated other miracles Moses wrought, convincing Pharaoh that his court magicians were on a par with God.
  - 2) By their indirect influence, these charlatans hardened Pharaoh's heart. But neither they nor God forced the king to have a hard heart.
- d. Pharaoh hardened his own heart (Ex. 8:8-19). His character was a result of his own thoughts and actions.
  - 1) Passages:
    - a) Proverbs 23:7: "For as he thinketh in his heart, so *is* he: Eat and drink, saith he to thee; but his heart *is* not with thee."
    - b) Matthew 12:34-37: "O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things. But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned."



- c) Matthew 15:18-19: "But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man. For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies."
- d) James 1:13-15: "Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death."
- 2) His character was like many today who undergo difficult trials. He asked that the plagues be removed (Ex. 8:8); when ease came, he hardened his heart (8:15).
- 3) Pharaoh showed signs of repentance, but not unto reformation (Ex. 9:27). Moses knew his sorrow was worldly, not godly (Ex. 9:30; 2 Cor. 7:10). When respite came he "hardened his heart and sinned yet more" (Ex. 9:34).
- 4) Pharaoh became a believer (Ex. 12:29-36). But his belief was as that of the demons, who believe and tremble (Jas. 2:19), but there was no obedience. He gave Israel permission to leave (Ex. 12:31), but when he contemplated his losses, he changed his mind. Compare: "Nevertheless among the chief rulers also many believed on him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess *him*, lest they should be put out of the synagogue: For they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God" (John 12:42-43).
- 5) Each time God demanded that Pharaoh release Israel, Pharaoh determined within his own heart that he would keep them in their slavery. If he had immediately freed Israel at the first instance of the demand, he would have shown himself to the world that he was good and kind.
- e. "The language quoted by Paul was spoken to Pharaoh after miracles had been wrought before Pharaoh, and after six of the ten plagues had been visited upon him and the Egyptians. Each plague further hardened his heart and stirred him to greater determination to hold Israel in bondage" (Whiteside, pp.203f).
- f. God was not unrighteous in setting up Pharaoh as king in Egypt; he was not unjust in making the demand for him to release Israel; neither was he unjust in displaying his power when Pharaoh denied the request. God did not make Pharaoh wicked; and he did not force him to turn down the demand. God no more hardened Pharaoh's heart than he hardens the hearts of rebellious sinners today.
- 5. Verse 18: "Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth."
  - a. "He showed the mercy spoken of to Jacob; but after he had done so, it was no easier for Jacob to be saved than for Esau; and after he had rejected Esau, it was no harder for him to be saved than for Jacob. Faultless justice remains with God....But when a man has so corrupted and hardened himself, as was the case with Pharaoh, that it requires the exercise of miraculous power to subdue him; and where God has exerted that power on him once and again without its producing the desired effect; and when after this, he withholds the power, and the man still remains hard, let no one charge injustice on God" (Lard, p.308).
  - b. "The Israelites thought that in no case could they be abandoned by God, and in no case could the Gentiles be received by him. Paul here shows that they are grievously mistaken" (Lipscomb, pp.175f).
  - c. Whether a man has a hard heart or a soft and teachable heart, is determined by his reaction toward God's word. The individual is solely responsible for the condition of his heart and his response to God's will.
  - d. The parable of the sower illustrates well the different kinds of hearts that are prominent among our race. Some are so impervious to the truth, that no penetration of it is possible. Others are quick to receive truth, but just as quickly abandon it when difficulties arise or when they find it impossible to give up the world. Then there are those who have hearts that readily receive the truth, embrace it wholeheartedly, and produce fruit that will result in eternal life.

**D. Romans 9:19-29: The Supreme Sovereignty and Patience of God.**

1. Verse 19: "Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth he yet find fault? For who hath resisted his will?"

- a. "If God had mercy on the Israelites, no matter who tried to hinder him from doing so, why is he now finding fault with them? Or if he hardens some people, why does he find fault with them?" (Whiteside, p.204).
  - b. "If God has mercy on whom he will, and hardens whom he pleases; if, in other words, he makes the human family just what they are, regardless of their will and agency; and if they neither can nor do resist his will, Why then does he still find fault with them? If God did all this, and still found fault, the faultfinding would certainly appear to us as unjust. But God does not do what is here ascribed to him. He does not make the human family just what they are, and then find fault with them for being what he makes them. Morally, men make themselves what they are, which at the first is always what they should not be. For this only, God faults them. True, God sometimes makes choices, as in the case of Jacob and Esau; but he finds fault with no one for being what his choice makes him. He found none with Jacob, none with Esau. He found fault with each only when he did wrong where he could have done right" (Lard, p.309).
  - c. That man is responsible for his actions is stated repeatedly in the Scriptures, and appears even in this very context. Verse 22 says that God endured with much longsuffering the sinful conduct of the Jewish people. If God had made them to be just what they became, how could it be said that he had to endure their conduct? Why not make them holy? And why did Paul write in Romans 14:10-12 that every one of us must give personal account of our conduct before the Judgment Seat of Christ?
  - d. Romans nine does not teach the Calvinistic dogma that God predestinated every soul to be lost or saved, without the individual having a choice. God did not personally or capriciously decide any person's eternal destiny.
2. Verses 20-21: "Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus? Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour?"
    - a. The statement of verse twenty is not intended as a direct reply to the questions of verse nineteen; it rather goes behind the queries to deny a man's right to interrogate the Almighty and call his actions into question.
    - b. "Who art thou that repliest against God?" Compared to God, man knows nothing, and is in no position to doubt the rightness of any of God's actions! Does a shoe that has been fashioned by the cobbler have any right to chastise its maker for constructing it as he did, or to deny him the right to do so? No more than mortal man has the authority to challenge God's decisions.
    - c. Paul uses the case of the potter as an illustration of God's right to pick and choose as he wishes. The matter at hand is not the salvation of individuals, but the right of God to cast off Israel as his chosen people, and to select those who believe on Christ to be his family.
      - 1) Romans 9:30-33: "What shall we say then? That the Gentiles, which followed not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith. But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness. Wherefore? Because *they sought it* not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumblingstone; As it is written, Behold, I lay in Sion a stumblingstone and rock of offence: and whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed."
      - 2) Romans 11:21-23: "For if God spared not the natural branches, *take heed* lest he also spare not thee. Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in *his* goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off. And they also, if they abide not still in unbelief, shall be grafted in: for God is able to graft them in again."
    - d. The example of the potter and clay is used also in Jeremiah 18:1-12 and Isaiah 45:9.
      - 1) In neither usage does the Bible teach that God made some men to be evil and others to be holy, or in any other way to decide the destiny of either without the direct involvement of each individual. God is not responsible for man's lost soul!
        - a) Matthew 16:25: "For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life

- for my sake shall find it."
- b) 2 Timothy 2:19-26: "Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity. But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honour, and some to dishonour. If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, *and* prepared unto every good work. Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart. But foolish and unlearned questions avoid, knowing that they do gender strifes. And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all *men*, apt to teach, patient, In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; And *that* they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will."
- 2) "The passage in Isaiah proves that God has the right of a sovereign over guilty *individuals*; that in Jeremiah, that he has the same right over *nations*; thus meeting the whole case as it was in the mind of the apostle. These passages, however, assert only the *right* of God to do it, without affirming anything about the *manner* in which it is done. In fact, God bestows his favours in a *mode* very different from that in which a potter moulds his clay. God does not create holiness by a mere act of power, but he produces it in a manner consistent with the moral agency of man..." (Barnes, p.215).
- e. Those vessels (men) fitted for eternal honor became such because they obeyed the conditions God set; and those vessels which were fitted for dishonor became such due to their disobedience to God's will. The former fitted themselves for honor (heaven) by obedience and the latter fitted themselves for dishonor by sinful conduct. God provided the means of escape for all, but only those who desired the honor of being saved would receive it. God does not make a man either good or bad; he would have all men to be saved.
- 1) 1 Timothy 2:4-5: "Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. For *there is* one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus."
- 2) 2 Peter 3:9: "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance."
- f. God has the authority to establish whatever conditions he wishes to determine how his blessings will be dispensed. He could bless men with or without conditions, but with his impartiality (Rom. 2:11; Acts 10:34-35) taken into consideration, he must either bless or curse all men equally, or provide his blessings to man on the basis of their meeting the qualifications he sets. It is the latter plan that God uses.
3. Verse 22: "What if God, willing to shew his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction."
- a. The whole Israelite nation was fitted for destruction, but God did not make them that way. The wrath of God would deliver them into perdition, but this was not what he wanted to do to them.
- 1) Jeremiah 6:16: "Thus saith the LORD, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where *is* the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls. But they said, We will not walk *therein*."
- 2) Matthew 23:37-38: "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, *thou* that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under *her* wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate."
- b. He had been very patient with them, giving them time and opportunity to repent. But when they finally rejected the Messiah, God was finished with them; he had completed his work with them, as far as their part in his great plan to redeem fallen mankind was concerned (Eph. 3:1-11; Rom. 16:25-
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- 26; 10:4).
- c. The very Scriptures that brought them into existence as a nation also contained many predictions, plain and pointed, that the time would come when God would establish a new covenant, which would include the Gentiles (Isa. 2:2-4; Dan. 7:13-14; 2:44; Rom. 9:24-26). The new covenant would give a new kingdom that would endure the ages.
    - 1) Isaiah 2:2-4: "And it shall come to pass in the last days, *that* the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more."
    - 2) Daniel 2:44: "And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, *but* it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever."
    - 3) Daniel 7:13-14: "I saw in the night visions, and, behold, *one* like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion *is* an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom *that* which shall not be destroyed."
    - 4) Romans 9:24-26: "Even us, whom he hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles? As he saith also in Osee, I will call them my people, which were not my people; and her beloved, which was not beloved. And it shall come to pass, *that* in the place where it was said unto them, Ye *are* not my people; there shall they be called the children of the living God."
  - d. The Israelites were greatly disconcerted over the Assyrian and Babylonian conquests. One can well perceive how they could have convinced themselves that God would never allow such a catastrophe to overtake them—but it did. The idea that they could be replaced as God's chosen people by a new economy was beyond their comprehension. It was too much for the majority of the nation to accept.
4. Verses 23-24: "And that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory, Even us, whom he hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles?"
- a. The history of the Hebrew nation is one of rebellion against God. Not only did God have the right to make selections as to the lineage by which he would develop the Jewish nation, he had a right to discard them as his select people due to their many rebellions against him.
  - b. As Coffman pointed out, Israel rejected Moses, and murmured against that great man and against God; they despised the manna God sent them from heaven; they demanded a king so as to be like the nations around them; they went avidly after the idols of the Canaanites; they shunned or slew the prophets God sent to call them back unto righteousness; they ignored, perverted, or corrupted the word of God; and finally they rejected and crucified the Messiah. "Such a nation had long been ripe for destruction; but, as noted above, God was, in a sense, 'stuck with them' until Jesus came" (Coffman, pp.347f).
  - c. God had always had the gospel plan in mind. He did not intend to maintain a special relationship with Israel forever, but had always been resolved to develop the gospel, which would be his means of saving both Jew and Gentile. "How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words, Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ) Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel" (Eph. 3:3-6).
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- d. The "vessels of mercy" are those who obey the gospel, whether of a Jewish or Gentile background. These are those who hear the gospel call (Mark 16:15-16; 2 Th. 2:13-15), and respond (Rom. 10:13-18; Acts 2:36-41).
- 1) Mark 16:15-16: "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."
  - 2) Acts 2:36-41: "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ. Now when they heard *this*, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men *and* brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, *even* as many as the Lord our God shall call. And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation. Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added *unto them* about three thousand souls."
  - 3) Romans 10:13-18: "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things! But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report? So then faith *cometh* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. But I say, Have they not heard? Yes verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world."
  - 4) 2 Thessalonians 2:13-15: "But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth: Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle."
- e. These "vessels of mercy" are said to have been "prepared unto glory." Those who will receive instruction and obey the gospel, are pardoned and are given all the spiritual blessings in Christ (Eph. 1:3; Gal. 3:27). But God did not prepare each of these in an individual sense for the blessings of mercy. The gospel provides its benefits to those who fit into a certain category: that of having the humble, sincere willingness to obey the gospel and conform their lives to its teachings. God did not give them that character; they developed that disposition; they did not so-corrupt themselves to the point of having no desire for truth and holiness; and even if they were greatly corrupted, yet if they retained an honest heart which was willing to examine the evidence, they could come to believe in Christ and be saved. The choice is the individual's. "And the next sabbath day came almost the whole city together to hear the word of God. But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy, and spake against those things which were spoken by Paul, contradicting and blaspheming. Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles" (Acts 13:44-46).
- f. There are both Jews and Gentiles among the redeemed. But the vast majority of both Jews and Gentiles reject the gospel. Today, the kingdom is almost entirely comprised of Gentiles. At the first, it was made up of Jewish believers.
5. Verses 25-26: "As he saith also in Osee, I will call them my people, which were not my people; and her beloved, which was not beloved. And it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people; there shall they be called the children of the living God."
- a. The Scriptures foretold the acceptance of the Gentiles. This idea the Jews despised, for their
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- perception of the Gentiles was usually one of hatred and disgust, partly on account of the idolatry of the nations and partly due to Jewish arrogance.
- b. Hosea predicted the inclusion of the Gentiles.
    - 1) Hosea 2:23: "And I will sow her unto me in the earth; and I will have mercy upon her that had not obtained mercy; and I will say to them which were not my people, Thou art my people; and they shall say, Thou art my God."
    - 2) Hosea 1:10: "Yet the number of the children of Israel shall be as the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured nor numbered; and it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people, there it shall be said unto them, Ye are the sons of the living God."
  - c. Paul's quotation is a compilation of the two verses cited above. Lard observes that "it seems originally designed to apply to reinstated Israel alone; but that it includes also the Gentiles is settled by the use here made of it" (p.313).
  - d. The greatest honor that one can have in this world is to be known to God as his son or daughter. Some of those who were considered outcasts by the Jews would become God's children; and only a relative few from among the Jews would be accorded this excellent name. The Gentiles were not God's people for centuries, but now they are acceptable, on the same basis and with the same conditions, as are the Jews under God's new order.
  - e. Paul cites the passages from Hosea to show that God had always intended to expand his religious system to include the Gentiles, thus breaking down the barrier that had long separated them from the Jews.
    - 1) Isaiah 2:2-4: "And it shall come to pass in the last days, *that* the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more."
    - 2) Ephesians 2:14-16: "For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition *between us*; Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, *even* the law of commandments *contained* in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, *so* making peace; And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby."
    - 3) Colossians 2:14: "Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross."
6. Verses 27-28: "Esaias also crieth concerning Israel, Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, a remnant shall be saved: For he will finish the work, and cut it short in righteousness: because a short work will the Lord make upon the earth."
- a. The apostle now quotes from Isaiah, showing that he too had predicted the cutting off of Israel as God's chosen people, that only a remnant would be saved.
  - b. God had promised to Abraham that his offspring would be comparable in number to the stars of the sky and the sands of the seashore (Gen. 22:17). He fulfilled the promise. But Isaiah predicted the time when only a small part of this vast multitude of people would be saved. This was fulfilled in the gospel system, for only a handful of Jews have been willing to give up their outdated and corrupted religion, and obey Christ.
  - c. Isaiah 10:22-23: "For though thy people Israel be as the sand of the sea, yet a remnant of them shall return: the consumption decreed shall overflow with righteousness. For the Lord GOD of hosts shall make a consumption, even determined, in the midst of all the land."
  - d. The work of cutting off Israel would be a quick and short work; it would be the Lord who would
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accomplish it; he would be righteous in what he did. By fulfilling his earthly mission, Jesus taught the Jews all they needed to know in order to see that he is the Messiah; all the confirmatory works were wrought to convince any fairminded person among them. When he died and was raised again, all in fulfillment of Israel's prophets, further confirmation of his claims was made. In about three and one-half years, Christ did the great work he was sent to do, thus fulfilling Isaiah's prediction Paul here quotes.

7. Verse 29: "And as Esaias said before, Except the Lord of Sabaoth had left us a seed, we had been as Sodoma, and been made like unto Gomorrha."
  - a. The apostle draws another quotation from Isaiah, which also has application to his present point. "Except the LORD of hosts had left unto us a very small remnant, we should have been as Sodom, and we should have been like unto Gomorrah" (Isa. 1:9). *Lord of Sabbaoth* means *Lord of Hosts*.
  - b. "Because a few righteous people were not found in Sodom and Gomorrah, Jehovah utterly destroyed them. Even so the whole nation of Israel would have been destroyed in captivity had not there been some righteous people in the nation; these few righteous people in the nation were the seed mentioned in this quotation from Isaiah" (Whiteside, p.211). The remnant which survived Babylonian captivity later developed into a populous nation again; of this new population, only a remnant would later obey the gospel.
  - c. It was a most difficult thing for the Israelites to think of themselves as sinners. Throughout their lifetime, each one was constantly made aware that he was a child of God, sustaining a very special relationship with Jehovah. But if none of those Jews then had obeyed the gospel, there would have been not even a remnant saved.

E. Romans 9:30-33: The Reason For Israel's Rejection and the Gentiles' Acceptance.

1. Verse 30: "What shall we say then? That the Gentiles, which followed not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith."
  - a. What conclusion could be reached with the above information in mind? That the Gentiles, who formerly followed extremely sinful ways, had now attained righteousness, even the righteousness which is obtained through faith.
  - b. The Jews continued to seek righteousness by means of the works of the Mosaic Law; the Gentiles were willing to obtain it after due order (by obeying the gospel).
  - c. The Gentiles who had not the Law were willing to obey the gospel of Christ. Christ became the Savior of the obedient Gentiles, but to the Jews he was a stumblingblock. Their preconceived notions and ancient traditions, coupled with the prejudices which the Lord's enemies planted in them, caused the majority of the Jews to reject Christ, and thus to suffer the awful consequences, nationally and individually, of rebellion.
2. Verse 31: "But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness."
  - a. Israel merely claimed to follow the Law; they actually were disobedient to it. Rather than being righteous, they were transgressors of the law, and failed to retain the righteousness offered by the Law.
  - b. The arrogant Judaizers in the church insisted that the Gentile converts be circumcised and keep the Law, which neither the Judaizers nor the mainstream Jews kept.
3. Verses 32-33: "Wherefore? Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumblingstone; As it is written, Behold, I lay in Sion a stumblingstone and rock of offence: and whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed."
  - a. "The law could not make righteous the one who had transgressed it. The only hope, therefore, of the Jew, as well as of the Gentile, is to attain righteousness through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ; but because he was not what they expected in the Messiah, the Jews rejected him—to them he was a stone of stumbling" (Whiteside, p.212).
    - 1) Matthew 11:6: "And blessed is *he*, whosoever shall not be offended in me."
    - 2) 1 Corinthians 1:23: "But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the

- Greeks foolishness."
- b. The passage cited in verse 33 is from Isaiah 28:16 and 8:14. God foretold that he would lay in Zion a stone (Christ) which would be rejected by the Jews. He knew well ahead of time what their reaction to the Lord would be. The death of Christ was not an accident, and was not a last-minute substitution. God's plans did not rest on all the Jews accepting him, for he knew they would not do so.
    - 1) Isaiah 8:14: "And he shall be for a sanctuary; but for a stone of stumbling and for a rock of offence to both the houses of Israel, for a gin and for a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem."
    - 2) Isaiah 28:16: "Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner *stone*, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste."
  - c. God has mercy on those who will do his will. The rebellious Jews would not follow his directions, and the first century generation of them were like their ancestors; but the Gentiles were ripe for the gospel, and gladly accepted it!
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## ROMANS 10

### A. Romans 10:1-3: Unbelieving Jews Are Responsible For Their Own Condemnation.

1. Verse 1: "Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved."
  - a. Chapter nine began with Paul's affirmation of his deep concern for the Jews. Even though the great majority of the Jewish nation had rejected the gospel, and his work among them had been shunned, and he had been personally abused at their hands, yet did the beloved apostle retain his love for them all.
  - b. He again states his lofty desires for Israel, namely that they might be saved. His heart's desire and prayer (supplication) for them was to that end. The revelation he had received showed that only a remnant of his nation would be saved, a truth which very much grieved the great heart of Paul.
  - c. Paul declared plainly that he wanted them to be saved, which with equal plainness affirmed that they were presently lost! To make such judgments does not violate the Lord's injunction against judging (Matt. 7:1-5); it is a righteous judgment (John 7:15), which the apostle spoke in love (Eph. 4:15).
    - 1) Matthew 7:1-5: "Judge not, that ye be not judged. For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again. And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and, behold, a beam *is* in thine own eye? Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye."
    - 2) John 7:15: "And the Jews marvelled, saying, How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?"
    - 3) Ephesians 4:15: "But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, *even* Christ."
  - d. He did not pray that they might be saved in their unbelief, for that would have run counter to the will of God. Only those who obey the will of heaven will be saved.
    - 1) Matthew 7:21-27: "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity. Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock. And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it."
    - 2) 2 Thessalonians 1:6-10: "Seeing *it is* a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you; And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, <sup>8</sup> In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power; When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day."
    - 3) Hebrews 5:8-9: "Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him."
    - 4) Revelation 22:14: "Blessed *are* they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city."

- e. Their lost condition was not irrevocably fixed, but the only way they could be saved was by believing in Christ and obeying his gospel. It is right to pray for the salvation of the lost, but not for them to be saved in disobedience. Rather, we may pray that something might be said or done that will give them a heart which is receptive to the gospel.
  - f. That Paul is speaking of the Jews in the passage is beyond question. Although the ASV translates this verse without using the word *Israel*, it is clear that it is Israel who is indicated. "Brethren, my heart's desire and my supplication to God is for them, that they may be saved" (ASV). The antecedent of the pronoun *them* is located in the preceding chapter, at verse 31.
2. Verse 2: "For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge."
- a. The zeal of the Jews is here complimented. But zeal without truth is a great danger. The apostle had reason to appreciate this predicament, for he was once in that very situation before his conversion (Phil. 3:3-8; Acts 26:1-19).
  - b. Being avidly religious is not necessarily a good quality. Zeal is undeniably a prerequisite to salvation; but so is truth (John 8:32). The Jews were zealous for their religion, but were ignorant of the will of God (John 17:17; Matt. 22:29). A very great many of our generation fit into this same category.
  - c. Here is an unclouded case of religious zeal separating people from salvation. They had refused to recognize the fulfillment of prophecies concerning Jesus (Isa. 53; Mic. 5:2). They could have seen the pure life Jesus lived; they had heard his doctrine; he had challenged them to point out any sin in his life (John 8:45-46). No one could gainsay his teachings. When he presented the truth, they rejected it, not because there was insufficient proof of its truthfulness, but from stubbornness. In the same fashion, many reject the truth today, even many who are *in the church*.
  - d. To be saved, one must have a knowledge of God's truth, the gospel. We are told to study (2 Tim. 2:15; 1 Tim. 4:13ff; 2 Pet. 3:18; 1:5-7; Heb. 5:12-14; 2:1-2). The purpose of studying the Bible is to learn; the purpose of learning is to do; the purpose of doing is that God's will be done (obeyed). The purpose of doing God's will is to bring glory to him (1 Cor. 10:31).
  - e. Our hearts must always be kept pliable and receptive; if we allow them to grow hard, we may reject some truth that could mean the difference between eternal life in glory or an unending existence in torment. A hard heart is unteachable, and therefore is unchangeable.
    - 1) Romans 2:5: "But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God."
    - 2) Ephesians 4:18-21: "Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart: Who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness. But ye have not so learned Christ; 21 If so be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus.
    - 3) 1 Timothy 4:1-3: "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; Forbidding to marry, *and commanding* to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth."
  - f. We owe it to ourselves to guard our heart with all diligence, to make sure it is ever ready to learn and obey God's will (Prov. 4:23). Apollos was willing to listen and learn the truth (Acts 18:24-28); Paul wanted to know the truth; most of the Jews did not want to hear the truth (Matt. 22).
3. Verse 3: "For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God."
- a. Paul pointedly accuses the Jews of being ignorant of God's righteousness. They knew about God's personal righteous nature, so he is speaking of some other matter. The righteousness of God was something to which they should have submitted, but which they had not done.
  - b. That the righteousness of God here named is the gospel of Christ, is seen from the general theme of
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the book of Romans (1:16-17). It is also shown by the context of this statement, for in the rest of the chapter Paul discusses the process of being saved by the gospel. Further, the very next verse directly refers to Christ, who provides righteousness to those who believe him.

- c. God's word is always the source of righteousness (Ps. 119:172); the gospel is addressed to all men everywhere (Mark 16:15-16); anyone who will fear God and work righteousness will be accepted by the Lord (Acts 10:34-35); to work righteousness is the same as to obey the gospel.
  - 1) Romans 10:16: "But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report?"
  - 2) 2 Thessalonians 1:8-9: "In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power."
- d. To submit to God's righteousness is simply to obey the gospel, which the Jews had refused to do. As a consequence, they remained in their sins. Instead, they were still trying to establish their own righteousness—by keeping the Mosaic Law. But none of them could keep the Law perfectly (Acts 15:10; Heb. 8:1-5), and without perfect obedience, the Law could not save (Heb. 10:1-4). But the Mosaic Law had been replaced by the Gospel of Christ (Col. 2:14; Eph. 2:15; Mt. 5:17; Heb. 8:1-13).
  - 1) Matthew 5:17: "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil."
  - 2) Acts 15:10: "Now therefore why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?"
  - 3) Ephesians 2:15: "Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, *even* the law of commandments *contained* in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, *so* making peace."
  - 4) Colossians 2:14: "Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross."
  - 5) Hebrews 8:1-5: "Now of the things which we have spoken *this is* the sum: We have such a high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens; A minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man. For every high priest is ordained to offer gifts and sacrifices: wherefore *it is* of necessity that this man have somewhat also to offer. For if he were on earth, he should not be a priest, seeing that there are priests that offer gifts according to the law: Who serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle: for, See, saith he, *that* thou make all things according to the pattern showed to thee in the mount."
  - 6) Hebrews 10:1-4: "For the law having a shadow of good things to come, *and* not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect. For then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins. But in those *sacrifices there is* a remembrance again *made* of sins every year. For *it is* not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins."
- e. Until and unless they submitted to the righteousness of God (obeyed the gospel), they would remain in their sins (John 8:21, 24), and would die separated from God (2 Th. 1:8-9; Rev. 22:14; Matt. 7:21-23).
  - 1) John 8:21: "Then said Jesus again unto them, I go my way, and ye shall seek me, and shall die in your sins: whither I go, ye cannot come."
  - 2) John 8:24: "I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am *he*, ye shall die in your sins."
  - 3) 2 Thessalonians 1:8-9: "In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power."

B. Romans 10:4-11: Christ is the End of the Law.

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1. Verse 4: "For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth."
    - a. The aim or object toward which the Mosaic Law pointed was for those who believe in Christ to be made righteous. The point of this verse is not to establish the time and occasion in which the Law was replaced by the gospel; its point is to show that the Law was intended to lead men to Christ.
    - b. "Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster" (Gal. 3:24-25). A Jew of the first century, schooled in the Law, was prepared to accept Christ; he could see how Jesus fulfilled the Old Testament prophecies and fit the pattern pictured therein given of the Messiah. On learning of what Jesus did, how he was slain and resurrected, he was prepared to become a follower of Christ: "He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, *even* to them that believe on his name" (John 1:11-12).
    - c. The believer sees Christ as the fulfillment of the Old Testament Scriptures and the giver of the gospel. The unbeliever fails to see that the law was pointing to Christ and the gospel.
    - d. The gospel of Christ is intended to be the means of our being made righteous, which is accomplished when the believer obeys the gospel (Rom. 6:1-18; 10:16; Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:38; 10:34-35).
  2. Verse 5: "For Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, That the man which doeth those things shall live by them."
    - a. Paul quotes Leviticus 18:5: "Ye shall therefore keep my statutes, and my judgments: which if a man do, he shall live in them: I am the Lord" (cf. Gal. 3:12). Christ is the only one to have been able to keep the law perfectly.
      - 1) John 8:45-46: "And because I tell *you* the truth, ye believe me not. Which of you convinceth me of sin? And if I say the truth, why do ye not believe me?"
      - 2) Hebrews 4:15: "For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as *we are*, yet without sin."
    - b. The implication in the statement about the Law is that the individual must perfectly keep the law in order to be made righteous by it. In other words, no provision was made in Moses' Law to justify a man after he had violated one of its precepts (Heb. 10:1-4). The blood of animals could not take away guilt; it could only cause God to delay punishment for a time.
    - c. But the blood of Christ is able to completely remove the guilt of sin.
      - 1) Matthew 26:28: "For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins."
      - 2) 1 Peter 1:18-19: "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, *as* silver and gold, from your vain conversation *received* by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot."
      - 3) Revelation 1:5: "And from Jesus Christ, *who is* the faithful witness, *and* the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood."
      - 4) Acts 13:38-39: "Be it known unto you therefore, men *and* brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses."
    - d. Individuals receive the benefits of his blood in obeying the gospel plan of salvation, and subsequently by walking in the light of the gospel: "If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us" (1 John 1:6-10).
  3. Verses 6-8: "But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise, Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down from above:) Or, Who shall descend into the
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deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead.) But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach."

- a. On the other hand, by way of contrast, the gospel is near to us all; it provides righteousness on the basis of faith (Jas. 2:14-26; Heb. 11:30; Rom. 1:5; 16:26).
  - 1) Romans 1:5: "By whom we have received grace and apostleship, for obedience to the faith among all nations, for his name."
  - 2) Romans 16:26: "But now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith."
  - 3) Hebrews 11:30: "By faith the walls of Jericho fell down, after they were compassed about seven days."
- b. Paul uses the language of Moses to draw a parallel point: "For this commandment which I command thee this day, it is not hidden from thee, neither is it far off. It is not in heaven, that thou shouldest say, Who shall go up for us to heaven, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it and do it? Neither is it beyond the sea, that thou shouldest say, Who shall go over the sea for us, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it? But the word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it" (Deut. 30:11-13). The Jews did not have to travel far to get the Law; it was made available to them all, since God had revealed it to Moses on the mount. Moses had just finished reciting the Law to the great assemblage, the second generation of Israel after the exodus from Egypt.
- c. Similarly, the law of the gospel was accessible by all; it had been revealed and broadcast; we now have it in written form; it is still available to all. There is no need to send someone up to heaven to bring Christ back to earth to reveal it again; there is no need to send anyone into the depths of the earth (into the hadean realm) to bring him back from the dead. But the word is near us all. It is unnecessary for Christ to be personally on earth to save a lost soul; he has fulfilled his earthly ministry, and will remain in heaven until the end of time.
  - 1) Acts 3:19-21: "Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began."
  - 2) 1 Thessalonians 4:16: "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first."
  - 3) 2 Peter 3:10: "But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up."
- d. The context speaks of the righteousness of God, to which men are to submit themselves in order to be saved. It is here called "the word." This is the gospel, Christ's law and God's word (Jas. 1:21; 1 Pet. 1:22-25; Heb. 4:12; 1 Thess. 2:13).
  - 1) 1 Thessalonians 2:13: "For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received *it* not *as* the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe."
  - 2) Hebrews 4:12: "For the word of God *is* quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and *is* a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart."
  - 3) James 1:21: "Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls."
  - 4) 1 Peter 1:22-25: "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, *see that ye* love one another with a pure heart fervently: Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever. For all flesh *is* as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And

- this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you."
- e. It is the word which Paul preached, the word which produces faith in those who will examine it with an open mind: "These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so. Therefore many of them believed; also of honourable women which were Greeks, and of men, not a few" (Acts 17:11-12). Romans 10:8 has "the faith" in the Greek text: "the word of the faith."
  - f. There is no need for any miracles today to make known to us the will of God. Many today teach that a direct operation of the Holy Spirit on the human heart is essential before faith can be obtained. They deny that the gospel has the power to create faith. Paul's statement in this passage shows the fallacy of the direct operation idea. The Great Commission fully discloses God's way of saving sinners; that when the gospel is presented to honest hearts, faith will be engendered by the word of God; and that faith will lead the individual to obey the gospel.
    - 1) Matthew 28:18-20: "And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, *even* unto the end of the world. Amen."
    - 2) Mark 16:15-16: "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."
    - 3) Luke 24:47: "And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem."
    - 4) Acts 2:38: "Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."
4. Verse 9: "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved."
- a. What is this word of faith? What does it say? It tells us to confess the Lord Jesus with our mouth (Matt. 10:32-33; Acts 8:37). As Lard so eloquently stated to those who question the necessity of the confession: "Are you ready to assume the responsibility of dispensing with it?" (p.330).
  - b. It tells us to believe in our heart that God has raised him up from the dead. Modernists who deny the Lord's resurrection operate in direct opposition to this requirement. Faith is the underlying principle upon which our salvation is based.
    - 1) John 3:16: "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."
    - 2) John 5:24: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life."
    - 3) John 8:21: "Then said Jesus again unto them, I go my way, and ye shall seek me, and shall die in your sins: whither I go, ye cannot come."
    - 4) John 8:24: "I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am *he*, ye shall die in your sins."
    - 5) Acts 8:35-37: "Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus. And as they went on *their* way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, *here is* water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God."
  - c. Combining the two statements, we can know that mere lip-service is insufficient; rather, our whole life must be committed to the Lord's service. A dead faith cannot save anyone (Jas. 2:17-24). Faith in the heart must precede the confession with the mouth (vs. 10), or else the confession is false.
  - d. The salvation of the verse is justification from sin. Some scholars think the confession is a daily confession of Christ by the way we live, but the verse says this confession is made with the mouth.
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Some think that the confession was that done by the Christians before their tormentors, but nothing is said in the text about persecution.

- e. Justification (salvation) involves more than faith and confession.
  - 1) Belief plus baptism equals salvation (Mark 16:16).
  - 2) Repentance plus baptism equals salvation (Acts 2:38: Remission of sins and salvation are equals).
  - 3) Belief plus confession equals salvation (Rom. 10:9-10; cf. Acts 8:37).
  - 4) Summing up the truth from these verses gives the full picture: Belief + Repentance + Confession + Baptism = Salvation.

- 5. Verse 10: "For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."
  - a. Faith and confession are stated here in their proper order. It is impossible for one to make a true confession of his faith in Christ unless he has that faith in his heart. One cannot sincerely confess what he does not believe.
  - b. The Greek term "unto" (*eis*) denotes the end to be achieved by the action required. Thus, the individual believes in Christ in order to gain righteousness. As seen above, however, believing is not the sole requisite; it is a step toward the goal.
  - c. *Eis* is also used in connection with confession: it is another step toward righteousness. The use of *eis* in other New Testament verses shows the meaning it carries:
    - 1) Matthew 26:28: "For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many **for** (*eis*) the remission of sins."
    - 2) Acts 2:38: "Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ **for** (*eis*) the remission of sins..."
- 6. Verse 11: "For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed."
  - a. Paul states again that salvation is based on Christ. Only those who believe on him can be saved; and belief is essential for that salvation to be obtained; but belief is not the only requirement, as we have already seen.
  - b. Faith without works of obedience is dead; faith is made alive by works of obedience (Jas. 2:14-26). The religious works which a man may invent are not included in the remarks by James; meritorious or human works are meaningless (Eph. 2:9). But works of obedience are essential to the salvation of an alien sinner and for the eternal salvation of Christians (Matt. 7:21-27; Heb. 5:8-9; Rev. 22:14; 2:10).
  - c. "Believeth" is used in this verse in its comprehensive sense, including obedience, as it is used in John 3:16, and as repentance is used in Acts 11:18, and baptism in 1 Peter 3:21.
    - 1) John 3:16: "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."
    - 2) Acts 11:18: "When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life."
    - 3) 1 Peter 3:21: "The like figure whereunto *even* baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ."
  - d. The point of the verse is to show that those who believe in the Lord (believers as opposed to unbelievers) will not be ashamed of their faith. It is often the case that our faith in some man is misplaced, and we are betrayed and suffer shame. But anyone can put his trust in Christ without any possible danger of the Lord putting us to shame—as long as we maintain our faith.

### C. Romans 10:12-17: Both Jew and Gentile May Call Upon the Lord's Name.

- 1. Verse 12: "For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him."
  - a. This verse connects with verse eleven and is expounded in the verses which follow it. No person who maintains faith in Christ will be ashamed (vs. 11); this promise pertains to Jews and Gentiles (vs. 12);

- and for everyone who calls on the Lord's name (vs. 13).
- b. In a statement that expresses the truth exceedingly clear, Paul affirms that the same Lord who saves the Jew can also save the Gentile. There is one Lord who is over all, and there is no difference in his willingness and ability to save Gentiles and Jews.
  - c. This means that the same requirements the Jew must meet in order to be saved, are the same that the Gentiles must each meet (Gal. 3:28; Eph. 2:13-18; Mark 16:15-16; Eph. 4:4-6; 1 Tim. 2:4-5).
2. Verse 13: "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved."
- a. This statement is misunderstood by the average religionist. The usual interpretation forced on the verse has Paul saying that if an alien wants to be saved, all he must do is call out to Christ, and ask him for salvation.
  - b. To "call upon the name of the Lord" and to pray are two different things. The verse does not say "call out to" but "call upon." That he does not mean aliens may pray for salvation is seen in other passages of the Bible.
    - 1) God will not hear the prayer of a sinner (John 9:31; Ps. 66:18; Pr. 28:9). In the case of Cornelius, the Lord did not save that man by prayer; rather he was instructed to send for Peter who would tell him "words whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved" (Acts 11:13-14). The words Peter delivered to Cornelius were the words of the gospel, which led those Gentiles to be baptized (Acts 10:47-48).
    - 2) By merely calling out to the Lord, nothing is gained. "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 7:21).
    - 3) When one cries out to the Lord for salvation, by means of prayer, he has no reason to expect to be saved thereby. As Christ said, those who are acceptable to him are those who obey the will of God (i.e., who obey the gospel).
      - a) Luke 6:46: "And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?"
      - b) Hebrews 5:9: "And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him."
  - c. The statement has a universal application: "Whosoever shall call..."
    - 1) This included Gentiles and Jews, all races and nationalities. The gospel is for all (Rom. 1:16). In every nation, those who fear God and work righteousness are acceptable to him (Acts 10:34-35).
    - 2) There is no separate plan of salvation for the different nations or races (Mark 16:15-16; John 14:6; 6:44-45; Matt. 28:18-20; Luke 24:47).
    - 3) The offer of salvation is extended to everyone (Heb. 2:9) because all accountable persons need it (Rom. 3:23; 5:12; Isa. 56:6).
      - a) Isaiah 56:6: "Also the sons of the stranger, that join themselves to the LORD, to serve him, and to love the name of the LORD, to be his servants, every one that keepeth the sabbath from polluting it, and taketh hold of my covenant."
      - b) Romans 3:23: "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God."
      - c) Romans 5:12: "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned."
      - d) Hebrews 2:9: "But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man."
  - d. The statement gives a condition to salvation: One must call on the Lord's name to be saved.
    - 1) The human response to this requirement is an act of obedience. If one denies the essentiality of baptism for salvation on the basis of it being an act the individual initiates, the same argument could be directed against this calling on the Lord's name. One who denies the purpose of baptism (because it is an act of obedience), but who believes in this calling, contradicts himself.
    - 2) Before one will call on the Lord's name, he must have a desire for the blessing proffered.
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- Whosoever **will**, let him take of the water of life freely (see Rev. 22:17).
- 3) To call and to take the water are equal, and each requires an action. What is the action? The act grows out of faith in Christ, for one cannot call on his name successfully if he does not believe in the Lord's ability to help.
    - a) John 6:68: "Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life."
    - b) John 8:21: "Then said Jesus again unto them, I go my way, and ye shall seek me, and shall die in your sins: whither I go, ye cannot come."
    - c) John 8:24: "I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am *he*, ye shall die in your sins."
    - d) Acts 4:12: "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."
  - e. How does one call on the name of the Lord?
    - 1) It is not done by prayer or by merely uttering words with the lips (Prov. 28:9; Matt. 7:21-23; Luke 6:46; 1 John 3:22). God hears and answers the prayers of the obedient, not the sinful.
      - a) Proverbs 28:9: "He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer *shall be* abomination."
      - b) Matthew 7:21: "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven."
      - c) Luke 6:46: "And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?"
      - d) 1 John 3:22: "And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight."
    - 2) Calling on his name is explained in Acts 2. In verse 21, Peter cites the same Old Testament passage (Joel 2:32) as did Paul in this text. In Acts 2:22-36, the apostles showed why Jesus could be called upon and why we should make that call. They preached the gospel, their message was heard by the great audience, and it was believed by many of them. They asked the apostles in verse 37 what they must do, or in other words, "How can we call on the name of the Lord?" Peter answered their query in verse 38, where he told them they must repent and be baptized for the remission of sins. They issued their call upon the name of Christ by repenting and being baptized.
    - 3) How to call on the Lord's name is illustrated by the conversion story of Saul of Tarsus. He spoke with Christ in a supernatural scene on the way to Damascus. The discussion which ensued caused Saul to believe in Christ. He entered the city, where he fasted and prayed for three days. Ananias, the gospel preacher, came to him, and commanded that Saul cease his delay, and to "arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, **calling on the name of the Lord**" (Acts 22:16). Other details of his conversion are related in Acts 9 and 26. Paul made his call on the Lord's name by being baptized.
    - 4) Romans 10:13 is an Old Testament description of a New Testament process; what the Old Testament said in a figure of speech (Joel 2:32), the New Testament presents in plain language (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; 22:16). To call on the name of the Lord is simply to obey the gospel of Christ!
    - 5) Faithful Christians are those who call on the Lord's name as they live the Christian life. Saul had "authority from the chief priests to bind all **that call on thy name**" (Acts 9:14). To call on his name is to make an appeal to Christ for salvation by believing and obeying his will, sincerely doing everything the Lord requires. He saves only those who do so, whether the individual is an alien sinner or a Christian. The alien is saved from the guilt of his past sins; the Christian is delivered from this world and hell, and gains heaven—by calling on the Lord's name. "Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that **call on the Lord out of a pure heart**" (2 Tim. 2:22).
  - f. That this conclusion is correct is further shown by the very context in which it is found. The next

several verses in Romans ten illustrate it quite adequately.

3. Verses 14-15: "How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!"
  - a. Paul raises some questions relative to calling on the Lord's name. How shall anyone call on Christ if they have not come to have faith in him? The obvious answer is, "They cannot do so!" The apostle is stressing here the importance of faith to the calling. God wants all men to call on the name of the Lord, but only those who believe on Christ can make the call.
  - b. How shall anyone believe in Christ if they have not heard of him? "They cannot do so." Faith is produced by hearing (learning).
    - 1) Many religions teach that faith is a direct, supernatural gift from God through the Holy Spirit. If this is so, since faith is essential to salvation, no one could be saved until and unless God takes personal, direct action to cause an individual to have faith; but if that is the way it is, only God could be held responsible if any individual dies lost!
    - 2) "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Rom. 10:17). In recounting his experiences at Cornelius' house, Peter told the brethren: "Men and brethren, ye know how that a good while ago God made choice among us, that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the gospel, and believe" (Acts 15:7). Faith is created when the word of God is received into the mind.
  - c. How shall anyone hear without a preacher?
    - 1) Faith is produced when the gospel is presented to the mind of an accountable person. In the first century, before the gospel was committed to written form, it was necessary that preachers present that word directly, and confirm it with miraculous power. Now that we have the written word, one may read and study the Bible for himself, or be taught it by someone else, and come to have faith.
    - 2) Christ picked twelve men to begin the great work of spreading the message of the gospel. Their commission took them and others throughout the known world. Their presence was essential in those days before the gospel was recorded in written form. There was no other way that any lost soul could learn the will of God.
  - d. How shall those men preach except they be sent?
    - 1) The initial work of preaching the gospel would never have taken place if Christ had not prepared the apostles, giving them the information and guidance and motivation to go. Their great work could never have been accomplished without a definite plan of action.
    - 2) The twelve were called *apostles* because they were **sent**. *One sent* is the meaning of **apostle**. Christ gave the apostles background training and experience, he provided them with the revelation of the gospel which they were to preach, and empowered them with miraculous ability to confirm the spoken message.
      - a) Mark 16:20: "And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with *them*, and confirming the word with signs following. Amen."
      - b) Hebrews 2:1-4: "Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let *them* slip. For if the word spoken by angels was stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward; How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by *them* that heard *him*; God also bearing *them* witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?"
      - c) Luke reports the healing of a crippled middle-aged man in Acts 3-4. He was well-known to those who frequented the temple. His sudden, complete healing at the hands of Peter and John was known by all, even the Jewish leaders (Acts 4:13-22). The miracle opened a marvelous

- door for the two apostles to preach to a large crowd, and many others in the area would be more willing to listen with an attentive mind—because of this mighty work.
- 3) As they went about preaching the gospel, and men obeyed, the apostles had the power to lay hands on certain ones to confer upon them the ability to receive revelations of the gospel and to confirm those messages with supernatural signs. The recipients of these spiritual gifts derived their authority from Christ, by the apostles.
  - 4) Those who teach the gospel today derive their authority from Christ, through the written gospel. "And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also" (2 Tim. 2:2). The gospel is perpetuated in the hearts and lives of one generation by the faithful teaching imparted to them by the preceding generation.
  - 5) "Paul is here speaking of the original proclamation of the gospel. It is a perversion of Paul's language to use it to prove that a preacher now cannot preach unless the church sends him. It is also an argument contrary to facts, for a man can go out now and present the gospel of Christ without being sent by any church or any man. But the original proclamation of the gospel required men whom the Lord qualified and sent. If Jesus had not sent them, they could not have proclaimed the gospel" (Whiteside, p.219).
- e. Paul adds a note of commendation to those who proclaim the gospel, quoting from Isaiah 52:7: "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!" Compare: "Behold upon the mountains the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace! O Judah, keep thy solemn feasts, perform thy vows: for the wicked shall no more pass through thee; he is utterly cut off" (Nah. 1:15).
- 1) Faithful gospel preachers are not worthy of reverence from anyone; they are simple servants of God. Because of the tremendous importance of their work, they are lauded by the apostle.
  - 2) The message they present is the gospel of peace. It is designed to bring about peace between the individual and God, between him and his fellowman, between himself and his family, and within his own mind. However, there are many who reject and oppose the gospel, and work in opposition to those who follow Christ. Christ predicted this (Matt. 10:34-40).
  - 3) The message of gospel preachers is one that brings glad tidings of good things. It tells of the life, death and resurrection of Christ; it reports the teachings of the Savior; it details the blessings that are offered freely to lost mankind; it describes the kind of life the Lord wants men to follow, and the benefits to be derived therefrom; it tells of the glories of heaven, which is the ultimate reward of those who obey Christ. But it also warns of the dangers we face along the way; it exposes false doctrines and practices; it spells out our obligations. Everything in the gospel is designed, in one way or another, to bring blessings and help to us.
  - 4) Isaiah was able to predict, more than 700 years before the fact, the glorious good news of the gospel. That grand old story is one that never grows old to those who love it!
4. Verse 16: "But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report?"
- a. The purpose of proclaiming the gospel was to get people to hear, believe, and obey its soul-saving message. However, "they have not all obeyed the gospel." In fact, only a very small percentage of those who were taught, obeyed Christ.
  - b. Notice the connection between "whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord" in verse 13 and "they have not all obeyed the gospel" in this passage. Notice also the phrase in verse 12, "whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed" in connection with this verse.
    - 1) Believers will not be made ashamed (vs. 13).
    - 2) Those who call on the Lord's name will be saved (vs. 12).
    - 3) There are some who obey the gospel, but not all (vs. 16).
  - c. The three statements just named are parallel; those who believe with a living faith are those who call upon the Lord's name (obey the gospel); these are the ones who are saved (Jas. 2:14-26).
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- d. The quotation cited gives two thoughts in parallel: obey the gospel and believe our report. The use of *believe* is in a comprehensive sense, including the prescribed acts of obedience. To *believe our report* and to *obey the gospel* are equal in meaning.
  - e. Paul quotes a statement from Isaiah 53:1: "Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed?" Isaiah predicted the coming of Christ and the spread of his gospel. He knew that many would reject the gospel to their own destruction. Those who remain in the unsaved condition of sin can blame only themselves; the gospel is available to all, and is daily proclaimed far and near by able and faithful teachers and preachers.
5. Verse 17: "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."
- a. This is a very clear statement of how faith is produced in the human heart. The parable of the sower illustrates it with equal clarity (Matt. 13; Mark 4; Luke 8).
  - b. The response of each person represented by the four kinds of soil was determined by whether they received the seed (the word of God). "Those by the way side are they that hear; then cometh the devil, and taketh away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved" (Luke 8:12).
  - c. Compare:
    - 1) John 8:30-31: "As he spake these words, many believed on him. Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, *then* are ye my disciples indeed."
    - 2) Acts 14:1: "And it came to pass in Iconium, that they went both together into the synagogue of the Jews, and so spake, that a great multitude both of the Jews and also of the Greeks believed."
    - 3) Acts 15:7: "And when there had been much disputing, Peter rose up, and said unto them, Men *and* brethren, ye know how that a good while ago God made choice among us, that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the gospel, and believe."
- D. Romans 10:18-21: Israel's Rejection of the Gospel is Confirmed by the Scriptures.
1. Verse 18: "But I say, Have they not heard? Yes verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world."
    - a. Having stated that not all had obeyed the gospel, the natural query would be, "Why? Did they not hear the word? Were they not given an opportunity to obey the gospel?" Paul raised this question, and quickly answered it. They did have opportunity to believe, for the sound of gospel preaching went into all the earth.
    - b. The apostle pointed out in clear words here that the gospel was taken to the first century generation by the first century saints. In Colossians, Paul stated that the gospel "...Is come unto you, as it is in all the world; and bringeth forth fruit...Which was preached to every creature which is under heaven..." (1:6,23).
    - c. Those who rejected the gospel, whether Jew or Gentile, had only themselves to blame; they will not be able to accuse the faithful gospel preachers of that generation of failure to inform them of the truth. Although there are many false teachers in our land, all of whom are well-equipped and prepared to offer their error to the world, yet in the Judgment, those unsuspecting souls who fell victim to their guile will have no acceptable excuse. The truth can be learned and error can be identified.
  2. Verses 19-20: "But I say, Did not Israel know? First Moses saith, I will provoke you to jealousy by them that are no people, and by a foolish nation I will anger you. But Esaias is very bold, and saith, I was found of them that sought me not; I was made manifest unto them that asked not after me."
    - a. Did not Israel know that the gospel would be preached to the Gentiles? If they did not know, it was because they did not know the Old Testament Scriptures!
    - b. God had shown beforehand that this was his plan, which he revealed through Moses, Isaiah, and other Old Testament prophets.
      - 1) Genesis 12:1-3: "Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee: And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the
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- earth be blessed."
- 2) Deuteronomy 32:21: "They have moved me to jealousy with *that which is* not God; they have provoked me to anger with their vanities: and I will move them to jealousy with *those which are* not a people; I will provoke them to anger with a foolish nation."
  - 3) Isaiah 2:1-4: "The word that Isaiah the son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem. And it shall come to pass in the last days, *that* the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more."
  - 4) Isaiah 61:1: "The spirit of the Lord GOD *is* upon me; because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to *them that are* bound;"
  - 5) Isaiah 62:2: "And the Gentiles shall see thy righteousness, and all kings thy glory: and thou shalt be called by a new name, which the mouth of the LORD shall name."
  - 6) Daniel 2:44: "And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, *but* it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever."
  - 7) Daniel 7:13-14 "I saw in the night visions, and, behold, *one* like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion *is* an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom *that which* shall not be destroyed."
  - 8) Hosea 1:10: "Yet the number of the children of Israel shall be as the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured nor numbered; and it shall come to pass, *that* in the place where it was said unto them, *Ye are* not my people, *there* it shall be said unto them, *Ye are* the sons of the living God."
  - 9) Hosea 2:23: "And I will sow her unto me in the earth; and I will have mercy upon her that had not obtained mercy; and I will say to *them which were* not my people, Thou *art* my people; and they shall say, *Thou art* my God."
- c. When Paul went about preaching the gospel, he first went to the Jews and tried to persuade them to see and accept the truth. In nearly every place, he met with stern rejection on their part. An average case is given in Acts 13:44-48, where he tried to teach the Jews in Antioch of Pisidia. "And the next sabbath day came almost the whole city together to hear the word of God. But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy, and spake against those things which were spoken by Paul, contradicting and blaspheming. Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles. For so hath the Lord commanded us, *saying*, I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of the earth. And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed" (Acts 13:44-48).
  - d. Isaiah had predicted (65:1) that the Gentiles would receive the gospel, even though they had not sought after God on their own. When the gospel was brought to them, they could see how starkly contrasted it was to the paganism they had followed all their lives. Many of them had honest hearts, and eagerly accepted the truth when they saw it. But the Jews had preconceived ideas about the Messiah and his kingdom, and were so devoted to their traditions that they would not turn them loose, especially when the truth about the Messiah did not measure up to their expectations of him.
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3. Verse 21: "But to Israel he saith, All day long I have stretched forth my hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people."
- a. The majority of the Israelites are addressed and described in this verse. God called them a disobedient and gainsaying people.
  - b. They thought they were serving God, but they were only following the traditions handed down by their forefathers which were fed to them by the false teachers who ran the nation's institutions. Paul earlier in this chapter paid tribute to their zeal, but affirmed it was misguided; it was not in accordance to the truth. Despite their being very religious, they were disobedient. The only way one can obey God is to do what he has prescribed in his word.
  - c. God called them a gainsaying people. They were not interested in truth; they would always have some kind of reply to every statement of truth Paul (and other gospel preachers) gave them. A gainsayer is like a little child who can offer all kinds of *arguments* about something he does not want to do or accept.
  - d. A gainsayer is one who keeps on offering petty arguments, even in the face of incontrovertible truth. Many of the arguments given by false teachers are nothing more than gainsaying. They first make up their minds what they intend to believe and practice; the strongest proof imaginable will not sway them from their stubbornness; they will offer every kind of quibble to try to justify their rejection of the truth. That kind of person would never be happy in heaven, and can never be acceptable to God unless there is a genuine change of attitude.
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## ROMANS 11

### A. Romans 11:1-10: God Did Not Cast Away His People.

1. Verse 1: "I say then, Hath God cast away his people? God forbid. For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin."
  - a. With chapters nine and ten in the immediate background, the question raised at the beginning of this chapter is appropriate: Has God cast away his people Israel? The answer is "God forbid," an expression Paul used ten times in Romans.
  - b. It certainly was so that God had cast off the nation of Israel, with all of its traditions; and he had replaced its Law with the Gospel of Christ. The Old Testament system was always intended to be only a temporary arrangement, a major step in preparing for the coming of Christ. The term translated "cast off" is also used in Acts 13:46, Acts 7:27,39, Romans 11:2, and 1 Timothy 1:19.
    - 1) Acts 7:27, 39: "But he that did his neighbour wrong thrust him away, saying, Who made thee a ruler and a judge over us?....To whom our fathers would not obey, but thrust *him* from them, and in their hearts turned back again into Egypt."
    - 2) Acts 13:46: "Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles."
    - 3) Romans 11:2: "God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew. Wot ye not what the scripture saith of Elias? how he maketh intercession to God against Israel...."
    - 4) 1 Timothy 1:19: "Holding faith, and a good conscience; which some having put away concerning faith have made shipwreck."
  - c. To say that the nation was cast away is one thing, and to say that the individuals who comprised the nation were cast off without any hope is another thing altogether. National Israel was gone as a special entity with God, but every Israelite had an equal opportunity to be saved and go to heaven.
  - d. Paul uses himself as an example. He was an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham, a member of the tribe of Benjamin. Yet he was in good standing with God. He was a living illustration that Jewish people can be saved.
  - e. God had replaced the fleshly nation of Israel with the spiritual nation of Israel. He had rejected those Jews who would not believe on Christ.
    - 1) Romans 2:28-29: "For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither *is that* circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: But he *is* a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision *is that* of the heart, in the spirit, *and* not in the letter; whose praise *is* not of men, but of God."
    - 2) Galatians 6:16: "And as many as walk according to this rule, peace *be* on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God."
2. Verses 2-3: "God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew. Wot ye not what the scripture saith of Elias? how he maketh intercession to God against Israel, saying, Lord, they have killed thy prophets, and digged down thine altars; and I am left alone, and they seek my life."
  - a. In view of verse one, Paul could conclude that God has not cast away his people. A remnant of the Jews, those who had obeyed the gospel, were still in communion with God.
  - b. Those who were faithful under the Mosaic Law did not lose all hope of salvation now that the gospel had come; they could obey the gospel, just as the Gentiles were doing, and obtain the blessings God offers through his Son. Even those Jews who were disobedient to God when the Law was in effect could be brought under God's grace by obeying the gospel.
  - c. God had not rejected those Jews who believe in Christ, just as he had not rejected the 7,000 who had not bowed their knee to Baal during Elijah's time. The prophet thought that he was the only faithful Israelite within the entire nation, and was sorely distressed. In making intercession to God against the wicked nation, Elijah asserted that he alone had remained loyal, and that they were seeking to kill him.

3. Verses 4-5: "But what saith the answer of God unto him? I have reserved to myself seven thousand men, who have not bowed the knee to the image of Baal. Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace."
    - a. The Lord told Elijah that he had reserved seven thousand men who had not given up their faith in him. It was a travesty that out of the populous Northern Kingdom of Elijah's time, only 7,000 men were still faithful. But that number was faithful; a mere remnant, but at least there still were some who served God (1 Kings 19).
    - b. So Paul says that at this present time (during the first century), a remnant of Israel was still loyal to the Lord; these were those who were included in the election of grace.
    - c. The election of grace, as we have seen earlier in these studies, describes the process by which people of this dispensation of time become children of God. God extends the offer of salvation to all men through the gospel of Christ (Rom. 1:16-17); his invitation is gracious; those who accept the proposal, obey the gospel and are saved. In this manner, they become part of the elect.
    - d. As in the days of Elijah, a remnant of the Israelites are preserved; their preservation results from their personal choice and involvement. It was not an arbitrary act on God's part.
  4. Verse 6: And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work."
    - a. The apostle once again emphasizes the fact that the salvation of the current remnant from Israel was not of works, but of grace.
    - b. If their redemption was by grace, then it was not by works; if it was by works, then it was not by grace. The impressive rites and ceremonies of the Mosaic Law no longer were in effect, and could not provide any spiritual benefits under Christ.
    - c. "God, moved by love, has presented in Christ gracious terms of mercy that man can appropriate through faith. The salvation did not come of works that would allow boasting, but was given by God to those who through faith accepted it and walked in God's ways" (Lipscomb, p.200). "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: *it is* the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them" (Eph. 2:8-10).
    - d. "No amount of works can blot out sins already committed. Forgiveness is a matter of grace, no matter how many conditions one must fulfill in order to be forgiven. If a man's works had always been perfect, he would have no sins to be forgiven; he would stand justified on his own merit. There is no grace when a man merits justification. Works by which a man merits justification, and commands which one must obey to be saved, are distinct matters. It is unfortunate that many religionists cannot, or will not, see this distinction, which should be plainly seen by any Bible reader" (Whiteside, p.223).
  5. Verses 7-8: "What then? Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded (According as it is written, God hath given them the spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear;) unto this day."
    - a. That which Israel as a whole searched for through the Law and did not obtain, has been obtained by the remnant who accepted the gospel.
    - b. "The most of them had sought righteousness by the works of the law; but righteousness by works of law required perfect obedience to that law, and all had at some time sinned against that law" (Whiteside, p.224).
    - c. Those who obey the gospel receive the remission of sins which the gospel can and does give. Those who obey the gospel are "the election." This is not unconditional election as Calvinism maintains; it is not predestination as they claim. The views of Calvinism violate too many plain passages of Scripture, and make God a respecter of persons, a label which he denies many times in his word.
    - d. Those among Israel in the first century who rejected the gospel were blinded (hardened—ASV). But how were they hardened? "And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive: For this
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people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them" (Matt. 13:14-15). People harden their own hearts. God hardens hearts only in the sense that he gives commands which do not please the hearers; they refuse to obey and thus harden their own hearts.

- e. Verse eight gives a parenthetical statement which is intended to illustrate the matter of hard hearts which was introduced at the end of the previous verse.
  - 1) Paul cites a passage from Isaiah: "For the LORD hath poured out upon you the spirit of deep sleep, and hath closed your eyes: the prophets and your rulers, the seers hath he covered" (Isa. 29:10). Compare: "Son of man, thou dwellest in the midst of a rebellious house, which have eyes to see, and see not; they have ears to hear, and hear not: for they *are* a rebellious house" (Ezek. 12:2).
  - 2) When they rejected Christ when he was present, and later denounced Christ's gospel as false, their hearts were hardened by their own disapproval of him and the gospel. Those who repudiate the truth are allowed to go farther and deeper into their error. "And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness" (2 Thess. 2:10-12).
  - 3) The saddest effect of one person (or group of people) rejecting the gospel is that his prejudice and hatred of the gospel are passed on to others, especially to his children. The rebellious spirit and hardened hearts are thus encouraged in the next generation. Paul added that the attitude the former Jews had was still manifest at the time he wrote the book of Romans.
6. Verses 9-10: "And David saith, Let their table be made a snare, and a trap, and a stumblingblock, and a recompence unto them: Let their eyes be darkened, that they may not see, and bow down their back alway."
  - a. The apostle now quotes David's statement recorded in Psalm 69:22-23: "Let their table become a snare before them: and that which should have been for their welfare, let it become a trap. Let their eyes be darkened, that they see not; and make their loins continually to shake."
  - b. The average Jew blindly followed their leaders and the traditions they taught. Their ignorance of the Law and their blind allegiance to their leaders led to their rejecting Christ, and thus to their ruin (Acts 13:45-46). They lost their nation, their country, their property, and their souls!
  - c. If they had known and believed the Old Testament as they should, they would have been forewarned and prepared to reject the false doctrines of their religious teachers, and would have been ready and willing to accept Christ. Many of them were able to recognize the truth and became Christians, but they were the minority—the remnant.
  - d. David's statement said in effect: "Let the spiritual eyes of those of Israel who reject Christ become darkened; let their perception become blunt, and their understanding dull, that they may remain ignorant. They willfully refuse to see in Christ their own promised Messiah....Lay on those who reject Christ heavy burdens of trouble, burdens which shall bend down their backs; and this do forever, unless they accept Christ" (Lard, p.352). This has happened to the Jews down through the centuries. Their rebellion and unbelief have caused them to be burdened with all manner of difficulty and trouble. They remain without a real homeland; they are scattered throughout the earth; millions of their number were cruelly slain by Hitler's regime; they have been mistrusted and despised by many generations. But they can blame only themselves.

**B. Romans 11:11-24: The Stumbling of Israel Did Not Cast Away All Hope.**

1. Verse 11: "I say then, Have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid: but rather through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy."
    - a. This section of the chapter is begun also with a question which the apostle again answers with his familiar, "God forbid."
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- b. The question: Did Israel stumble that they should fall? That is, did they consciously stumble so as to fall from the standing they formerly had with God? They thought they were within the latitude of what was right when they turned from Christ and the gospel. According to what they had been taught by their religious leaders, Jesus was not the Messiah and the gospel was an unauthorized doctrine. Jesus did not measure up to their expectations of the Messiah, and what he taught was contrary to the traditions of the elders. Although they rejected Christ, they did not think they were falling.
- c. To fall is a "ruinous fall, a fall ending in death" (Macknight). We speak of soldiers who fell in battle, meaning that they lost their lives in the fighting. Was the fall that Israel suffered of such a nature that it is impossible for them to be saved? No, for as long as one is alive and alert in this world, there is the possibility of making a change. But in a practical sense, it is not likely that any of those rebellious Jews would ever be willing to accept the truth (Heb. 6:4-6; 10:23-31). A hard heart makes a poor receptacle for the sincere milk of the word! The only way out of their dreadful predicament was for the individual to soften his heart, learn the gospel, and sincerely believe and obey it.
- d. As long as the Law of Moses stood, a wall was erected between Jews and Gentiles (Col. 2:14; Eph. 2:13ff). The Law contained no provision requiring the conversion of Gentiles to Judaism. It would have been impossible for the majority of the Gentiles to observe the law, since they lived too far from Jerusalem, where the temple was situated and where the services had to be offered.
- e. Moreover, in view of the fact that the Law was intended to last only to a certain point, at which time it was fulfilled and taken away, the Gentiles were able to flood into the Lord's spiritual kingdom. Hence, the fall of national Israel had the happy result of opening the door of salvation to the Gentiles.
- f. But when the Gentiles gladly received the gospel of Christ, were ushered into fellowship with the God of heaven, and provided with all the spiritual blessings God offers to mankind, the Israelites were provoked to jealousy. The Jews had held a low regard for the Gentiles for centuries, coming to think of them as no more than added fuel for the fires of Gehenna. The Gentiles had earned this reputation, to some extent, by the gross idolatry and immorality they commonly practiced. The jealousy of Israel is said to have been produced by God granting to the Gentiles repentance unto life (cf. Acts 11:18). Two views are held by scholars regarding this jealousy:
- 1) One view maintains that the bringing in of the Gentiles would have the effect of producing a desire on the part of the Jews also to be partakers of the good things offered by the gospel [Lipscomb; Macknight]. History does not vindicate this view. The unbelieving Jews violently opposed Paul and the Gentile converts.
  - 2) The other view is that the Gentiles being brought into covenant relationship with God would enrage the Jews. [Whiteside.] This view seems to be correct.
    - a) Acts 13:46: "Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles."
    - b) Acts 22:17-21: "And it came to pass, that, when I was come again to Jerusalem, even while I prayed in the temple, I was in a trance; And saw him saying unto me, Make haste, and get thee quickly out of Jerusalem: for they will not receive thy testimony concerning me. And I said, Lord, they know that I imprisoned and beat in every synagogue them that believed on thee: And when the blood of thy martyr Stephen was shed, I also was standing by, and consenting unto his death, and kept the raiment of them that slew him. And he said unto me, Depart: for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles."
    - c) Romans 10:19: "But I say, Did not Israel know? First Moses saith, I will provoke you to jealousy by *them that are* no people, *and* by a foolish nation I will anger you."
2. Verse 12: "Now if the fall of them be the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles; how much more their fulness?"
- a. Since the fall of the Jews resulted in rich blessings being offered to the world in general, and since the loss the Jews suffered meant God's riches were made available to the Gentiles, how much more would
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- their fullness provide?
- b. The first two clauses are parallel. The Biblical division of humanity gave two camps: Jews and Gentiles; because it recognized only the two categories, the world would be all those who are not Jews; if they are not Jews, they had to be Gentiles.
  - c. "Their fulness" is thought by some to be the full destruction of the Jewish nation. The Jews were for many years the strongest opponents of Christianity, taking direct action against the church in some cases, and in other situations making charges against the saints before Roman authorities (Acts 14; 17:1-9). When the nation was destroyed by the Roman army in 70 A.D., organized Jewish resistance to Christianity came to an end, thus paving the way for the rapid spread of the gospel. This is a plausible explanation, although nothing is directly stated in the verse concerning the full demise of the Jews.
  - d. Another view suggests this thought: if the fall of the Jews from God's favor resulted in the blessing of the Gentiles, how much more blessed would be the world if the Jews also accepted the gospel? This seems to be the more natural interpretation, provided it is not taken too far. The Bible does not here, or in any other place, teach that the whole Jewish population will one day be converted to Christ. The next two verses show that Paul's great desire was for as many of his nation to be saved as possible, but he did not entertain the belief that they would all ever do so.
3. Verses 13-14: "For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office: If by any means I may provoke to emulation them which are my flesh, and might save some of them."
- a. Paul was not exclusively interested in the conversion of Jews. His heart had a natural bent toward them, since they were from a common heritage. But he was the apostle of the Gentiles. When the Lord called him to the apostleship, he gave him instructions that would carry him into Gentile lands (Acts 26:17-18). In his travels, he wisely met with the Jews first, for in their synagogues he found a ready-made audience. From there, he could branch out to meet with the Gentiles of the area.
  - b. In this context, he is discussing the fate of the Jews, but he keeps before the minds of the Gentiles his keen interest in their welfare. It is to Gentile saints in Rome that this epistle is being written. He exulted in being chosen as apostle to the Gentile nations.
  - c. He brought the greatest glory to his noble calling by doing his full duty to all mankind, to both Jew and Gentile. The great apostle did all within his power to provoke the Jews to emulation (jealousy—ASV) to the point that they would also obey the gospel. Verse fourteen may shed some light on the concluding thought of verse twelve.
  - d. Notice that the greatest anticipation Paul held regarding the conversion of the Jews was that some of them might be saved. He well knew the hardened disposition they had developed, and that there was scant chance of a genuine change.
4. Verse 15: "For if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead?"
- a. Since the casting away of the Jews resulted in the opportunity for the rest of the world to be reconciled to God, the obedience of the Jews could be regarded as their being raised from the dead.
  - b. The possibility for a Jew to be saved is clearly indicated here. God would not force their obedience, but he made the door to salvation available to any of them.
  - c. The Jews had brought condemnation upon their own souls by rejecting the gospel; their rejection meant that they were cutting themselves off from everlasting life (Acts 13:45-46); but if any of them decided later to obey the gospel, their return to God was as if they had been resurrected.
5. Verse 16: "For if the firstfruit be holy, the lump is also holy: and if the root be holy, so are the branches."
- a. Paul makes an allusion here to the Old Testament practice of offering the first-fruits of a new harvest to the Lord; in doing this, they made the whole harvest ceremonially clean, and fit for using it for their ordinary purposes.
    - 1) Exodus 23:19: "The first of the firstfruits of thy land thou shalt bring into the house of the LORD

- thy God. Thou shalt not seethe a kid in his mother's milk."
- 2) Leviticus 23:9-14: "And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye be come into the land which I give unto you, and shall reap the harvest thereof, then ye shall bring a sheaf of the firstfruits of your harvest unto the priest: And he shall wave the sheaf before the LORD, to be accepted for you: on the morrow after the sabbath the priest shall wave it. And ye shall offer that day when ye wave the sheaf an he lamb without blemish of the first year for a burnt offering unto the LORD. And the meat offering thereof *shall be* two tenth deals of fine flour mingled with oil, an offering made by fire unto the LORD *for* a sweet savour: and the drink offering thereof *shall be* of wine, the fourth *part* of an hin. And ye shall eat neither bread, nor parched corn, nor green ears, until the selfsame day that ye have brought an offering unto your God: *it shall be* a statute for ever throughout your generations in all your dwellings."
    - b. The grain was ceremonially unclean and the eating of it improper until the first fruits had been offered to the Lord. This was not a meaningless ceremony, but rather taught them the need to be grateful to the Lord for providing the harvest and instilled in their minds a conception of clean and unclean, and showed the importance of accepting God's standard for what is clean and what is unclean.
    - c. "The word *holy* does not here mean free from sin....When the first-fruits were brought to the priest, then the whole harvest became holy to the people, that is, devoted to their use. When God accepted the first Jewish converts, the firstfruits of the gospel harvest, then the whole nation was holy, that is acceptable to God on the terms of the gospel. Only in that sense was the whole Jewish race holy" (Whiteside, pp.232f).
    - d. Although God discontinued his use of the Jewish nation as a part of his special apparatus for mankind, this did not mean he had utterly cast away the people who comprised that nation. They were not forever rejected, but will be welcomed with open arms by the Lord if they will accept the gospel. "And he spake this parable unto them, saying, What man of you, having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it? And when he hath found *it*, he layeth *it* on his shoulders, rejoicing. And when he cometh home, he calleth together *his* friends and neighbours, saying unto them, Rejoice with me; for I have found my sheep which was lost. I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance. Either what woman having ten pieces of silver, if she lose one piece, doth not light a candle, and sweep the house, and seek diligently till she find *it*? And when she hath found *it*, she calleth *her* friends and *her* neighbours together, saying, Rejoice with me; for I have found the piece which I had lost. Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth" (Luke 15:3-10).
    - e. "The root corresponds to the first Jewish converts; the branches to the rejected nation. Assuming the root of a tree to be holy, and we naturally infer the holiness of its branches. Such is the argument. The word holy has here the same meaning as in the preceding clause. If God has accepted the root, or first converts from the Jews, he will accept the whole nation when converted" (Lard, p.360).
  6. Verses 17-18: "And if some of the branches be broken off, and thou, being a wild olive tree, wert grafted in among them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive tree; Boast not against the branches. But if thou boast, thou bearest not the root, but the root thee."
    - a. The branches (the unbelieving Jews) were broken off and the wild olive branches (believing Gentiles) were grafted into God's favor.
    - b. This is a figure of speech, and like all such figurative language, it must not be pressed so as to be made to contradict plain passages of Scripture. To make this illustration teach that some of the Jews were not broken off is to make it clash with Romans 3:9, which says that both Jews and Gentiles were condemned by sin (cf. Rom. 3:23). All accountable Jews had been "broken off" because of sin, but many of them had been grafted back into God's spiritual tree. The unbelieving Jews did not partake
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- of the spiritual root any more than the unbelieving Gentiles did.
- c. Paul is speaking especially to Gentiles (11:13), hence the wild olive tree represented the Gentiles; and since he has been discussing the Jews and Gentiles, the natural branches are Jews. Thus, the believing Gentiles and the believing Jews both partook of the same spiritual root and enjoyed the same spiritual blessings provided by the root.
  - d. Paul admonishes the Gentiles not to boast against the natural branches. In Christ, neither the Jew nor the Gentile was elevated above the other, but all were on the same spiritual level (Gal. 3:26-29; Matt. 23:8-12). The Gentile converts were not to boast against those unbelieving Jews who were broken off; to do so would lead to their being cut off, too.
  - e. One in Christ who thought he could boast because of his spiritual attainments had forgotten that he was borne by the root; he did not bear the root. In other words, we did not save ourselves, but were saved by the grace of God. There is no room for boasting despite our wonderful standing with God.
  - f. Those Jews and Gentiles who had obeyed the gospel had been grafted into the root (a figure representing acceptability with God; being part of his spiritual tree). Even so, the believing Gentiles were not to boast against the unbelieving Jews. Through the Jews came many blessings. Abraham is in a sense our forebear; Jesus came through the Jewish nation; the Old Testament Scriptures were given through the Jews; the first teachers of the gospel were Jews, the writers of the New Testament Scriptures were Jews [Luke may be an exception]. We owe much to the Jews! In America, the church today owes much to the pioneer preachers who suffered many privations and persecutions in order to preach the whole counsel of God and plant the church in our land. We are "warming by fires which we did not build."
7. Verses 19-21: "Thou wilt say then, The branches were broken off, that I might be grafted in. Well; because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith. Be not highminded, but fear: For if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee."
- a. Those Gentiles who were disposed to boast against the unbelieving Jews might argue: "The natural branches were broken off so that I might be grafted in; therefore, I am more greatly exalted than those Jews are; God saw my goodness and thus did he exalt me."
  - b. Paul quickly reminds anyone who might have that sinful disposition that the natural branches were broken off for a reason. It was because of unbelief, a problem that can befall anybody, including the Gentiles.
  - c. The Gentile converts Paul addresses were presently standing—by faith. What would happen if their faith waned? They would fall into sin. What would happen if they fell into sin? They would be cut off just as the sinful Jews had been cut off.
  - d. What disposition should these Gentiles have? They should fear lest they fall. Only by maintaining deep reverence for God, coupled with a strong realization that one can fall from his grace, can one continue to "walk in the light" of the gospel.
    - 1) Ecclesiastes 12:13-14: "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this *is* the whole *duty* of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether *it be* good, or whether *it be* evil."
    - 2) Acts 9:31: "Then had the churches rest throughout all Judaea and Galilee and Samaria, and were edified; and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied."
    - 3) Acts 10:34-35: "Then Peter opened *his* mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him."
    - 4) Hebrews 12:28-29: "Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: For our God *is* a consuming fire."
    - 5) 1 John 1:6-10: "If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do
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- not the truth: But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us."
- 6) 1 John 2:3-5: "And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him."
- e. While we are frequently admonished in the Scriptures to have boldness and confidence, there is likewise the need to avoid highmindedness (pride; haughtiness; self-righteousness). "For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith" (Rom. 12:3).
- f. In verse 21, the apostle states the point plainly: Since God did not spare the natural branches who sinned, he will not spare any of the wild branches (believing Gentiles) who commit sin. Here is one of the very great number of New Testament warnings to Christians of the possibility of so sinning as to fall from God's grace and losing their souls.
- 1) Luke 8:13: "They on the rock *are they*, which, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, which for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away."
  - 2) 1 Corinthians 10:12: "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall."
  - 3) Galatians 5:4: "Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace."
  - 4) Hebrews 12:15: "Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble *you*, and thereby many be defiled."
  - 5) James 5:19-20: "Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins."
- g. Unbelief is used as a synonym for sin and rebellion (disobedience). While it is said that God cuts off those who sin, in reality the sinner cuts himself off.
- 1) Isaiah 59:1-2: "Behold, the LORD'S hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid *his* face from you, that he will not hear."
  - 2) Hebrews 12:1: "Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us."
  - 3) Hebrews 3:12-13: "Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin."
- h. Our standing with God is by faith (Rom. 5:1-2; 2 Cor. 1:24; 5:7). Since faith comes by studying and learning God's word (Rom. 10:17; Acts 15:7; John 17:20-21), we owe it to ourselves to become sincere, devoted, and constant students of the Bible (2 Tim. 2:15; 2 Pet. 3:18). Until we know what the will of God is, we cannot do what he requires or be what he demands.
8. Verses 22-23: "Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off. And they also, if they abide not still in unbelief, shall be grafted in: for God is able to graff them in again."
- a. Paul gives us here a plain statement of God's real nature: he is both good and severe. What he does toward an individual depends on the individual.
- 1) Hebrews 2:1-4: "Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have
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- heard, lest at any time we should let *them* slip. For if the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward; How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard *him*; God also bearing *them* witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?"
- 2) Hebrews 8:9: "Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord."
- b. In the cases just cited, Paul had provided a demonstration of the goodness and severity of God. Toward the unbelieving Jews, he showed severity in that he cut them off from their former standing with him; but toward the believing Gentiles, he showed goodness in saving them by the gospel (10:16).
  - c. Many think that God is altogether love, that he is incapable of harshness. The Bible is filled with examples of God pouring forth his love and his wrath. Paul's statement puts the lie to that false doctrine! That God is love is plainly taught in the holy word (1 John 4:8); but that God can and will take severe steps in punishing sin is likewise taught with plainness.
    - 1) Luke 12:4-5: "And I say unto you my friends, Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: Fear him, which after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear him."
    - 2) Romans 11:22: "Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in *his* goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off."
    - 3) Hebrews 10:23-31: "Let us hold fast the profession of *our* faith without wavering; (for he *is* faithful that promised;) And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some *is*; but exhorting *one another*: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching. For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace? For we know him that hath said, Vengeance *belongeth* unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge his people. *It is* a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God."
    - 4) Hebrews 12:28-29: "Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: For our God *is* a consuming fire."
  - d. To those Jews who disbelieved and fell, God showed severity; toward those Gentiles who believed, God showed goodness. Paul warns the Gentile saints that if they continue in the goodness of God, they would continue to enjoy the fruits of his goodness, otherwise they also would be cut off. To continue in the goodness of God means to continue to live as God requires. God is love (1 John 4:8), but he tells us to, "Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life" (Jude 21). To keep ourselves in his love means that we live lives of obedience to him, and thus enjoy the benefits his love provides the obedient.
  - e. The unbelieving Jews would also obtain the benefits of God's goodness if they turn from their unbelief. God is fully able and willing to graft them in again, but they must make the choice to believe and obey the gospel.
9. Verse 24: "For if thou wert cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature, and wert grafted contrary to nature into a good olive tree: how much more shall these, which be the natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree?"
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- a. What is the *wild olive tree*?" That it is a figure of speech is beyond question. That it is a figurative description of the Gentiles likewise is undoubted. God did not graft the entire Gentile population into his spiritual tree, but only those who obeyed the gospel.
- b. A wild olive tree is an uncultivated olive tree, one that grows in the wild; it is one which is not tended by man and thus would not produce fruit as good and plentiful as a tame olive tree, which was planted and carefully nurtured by man. To graft a branch from a wild olive tree on a tame olive tree would ordinarily improve the fruit of the wild branch. The wild branch could not usually be expected to improve the fruit of the tame tree.
- c. The **tame** olive tree represents the New Testament church; the wild olive tree represents the situation out of which the Gentile converts came; the branches of the wild olive tree represent those Gentiles who obeyed the gospel.
- d. If these Gentiles (the branches from the wild olive tree) were grafted into the tame olive tree (the Lord's church) and produced acceptable fruit, how much more would the natural branches (the Jews who accept Christ) produce acceptable fruit.
- e. Those who practice infant baptism have perverted this passage in a futile attempt to prove that the church has existed from the days of Abraham. If they could establish this point, they think they will have proved the rightness of infant membership in the church, thus justify infant baptism. Proof of their proposition is utterly lacking in this illustration and elsewhere in the Bible.
  - 1) At the time of Matthew 16, Christ had not yet established his church; he spoke of its establishment as being in the future to that time (16:13-19).
  - 2) Paul's illustration in our current text is merely a means of showing the true situation of the Jews and Gentiles, and their respective relationships with God. The believers were grafted in; the unbelievers were cut off.
  - 3) "The perpetuity of a supposed Abrahamic church was not under consideration; Paul was not therefore giving an illustration to prove that point. He had not so much as hinted at such a thought....Two olive trees are in the parable. If the tame olive tree represents the church of God, what church does the wild olive tree represent? What is the wild church?....If the church at Pentecost had been with the Jews all along, who were the hold-over members? Jesus had told Nicodemus, one of the best of the Jews, that he had to be born again. In fact the language of Jesus includes all: 'Except one'—*tis*, any one—'be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.' Hence a Jew, any Jew, had to be born again to enter—to be grafted in....If the church began with Abraham and the olive tree represents that church, then Jews were members by nature, and would not have to be born again to enter it—they were born into it; and all Jewish children are still members of it. If Jews who reached the years of accountability were broken off—turned out of the church—because of unbelief, that would not destroy the fact that they were born into it. If that assumption is correct, then all Jewish children are yet born into it. If not, why not? Can a pedobaptist answer? Natural branches were broken off because of unbelief, but that would not apply to infants. What broke off the Jewish infants?" (Whiteside, pp.236f).

C. Romans 11:25-36: Salvation of the Israelites is Possible.

1. Verse 25: "For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in."
  - a. The hardening of the Jews is to continue until the fullness of the Gentiles is come in (accomplished). Paul states that he did not want them to be ignorant of the mystery, hence he provided the information in the context to remove that ignorance.
  - b. One can become arrogant about matters of which he knows little or nothing—because of his ignorance of that subject. Paul forbids them the right to be "wise in your own conceits." False teachers become very arrogant about the plan of salvation, when they decide what the Lord's requirements are, without due consideration given to the New Testament. They will scoff at and ridicule anyone who does not



- accept their preconceived notions; they are "wise in their own conceits" about this and other subjects.
- c. What is the mystery? A mystery is something which cannot be understood without further revelation. This same apostle identifies one mystery in Ephesians 3:2-7: "If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward: How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words, Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ) Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel: Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power." This mystery is God's eternal plan to unite both Jewish and Gentile believers in the church of Christ.
  - d. But the mystery of the present text has to do with the hardening of the Jews. The Gentiles might get the foolish notion that they were of greater wisdom and goodness than the rejected Jews, hence become wise in their own conceits. The enlightenment Paul offered was to prevent their becoming puffed up in self-righteousness on account of their standing with God. "With this knowledge, they would be enabled to take a correct view both of their own condition and of that of the Jews; without it, they were in danger of over-estimating their own importance, and of cultivating a feeling of contempt for the rejected Jews" (Lard, p.369).
  - e. Just because these Gentiles had obeyed the gospel while the majority of the Jews had rejected it, did not mean the Gentiles saints were of greater value than those unbelieving Jews. As the Jews fell from God's favor, so could these Gentile Christians. There was, and continues to be, a great need for God's people to be reminded of this, lest we with haughty heart look down on those who reject the gospel. That disposition is completely inconsistent with the Christian spirit.
  - f. A portion (the unbelieving majority) of the Jews would be blinded (hardened). As we have already seen, God did not directly cause their hearts to be hardened, but when he made demands of them that they were unwilling to accept, they hardened their own hearts and closed their own eyes: "And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive: For this people's heart is waxed gross, and *their* ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with *their* eyes and hear with *their* ears, and should understand with *their* heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them" (Matt. 13:14-15).
  - g. Paul writes that this hardness in part "happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in." Advocates of a future kingdom of Christ in which he will literally reign on earth make uncalled-for assumptions regarding this passage. They assume that the time will come when all the Gentiles who desire to obey the gospel will have done so. At that time, evangelistic efforts directed toward the Gentiles will cease, and all the Jews will turn to Christ. But the word *until* "does not tell what will follow the event or events mentioned in the phrase it introduces, or governs" (Whiteside, p.239).
    - 1) Genesis 8:5: "And the waters decreased continually until the tenth month: in the tenth month, on the first day of the month, were the tops of the mountains seen." There was no change in the decrease of the water after the first day of the tenth month; the historian is simply stating that it was after the ninth month when the tops of the mountains were first seen.
    - 2) Genesis 46:34: "That ye shall say, Thy servants' trade hath been about cattle from our youth even until now, both we, and also our fathers: that ye may dwell in the land of Goshen; for every shepherd is an abomination unto the Egyptians." This did not mean that the Hebrews quit tending to sheep at the time of the statement; it simply declares that they had always followed that line of work.
    - 3) 1 Samuel 15:35: "And Samuel came no more to see Saul until the day of his death: nevertheless Samuel mourned for Saul: and the LORD repented that he had made Saul king over Israel." This does not imply that he started seeing him again after his death.
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- 4) John 5:17: "But Jesus answered them, My Father worketh hitherto, and I work." The ASV says, "My Father worketh until now." Our Lord is not saying, however, that God ceased to work at that time.
  - 5) Romans 8:22: "For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now." Did the whole creation stop groaning and travailing at the instant of Paul's statement?
  - 6) If I should say, "I have been a Christian from 1959 until now," that would not imply that at the time of my statement, I ceased to be a Christian; rather, that my Christian life began in 1959 and has continued to the present moment of my life.
- h. What is the meaning? Whiteside gave this very plausible suggestion: "As the church became more and more made up of Gentile members, hardness among the Jews increased until the church became almost, if not entirely, Gentile in membership—until the fulness of the Gentiles came in; then the hardness among the Jews apparently became complete. If this is not what Paul meant, it is, at least, what really occurred. And aside from inspired interpretations, are not developments the best commentary on a prophecy?" (p.240).
- 1) This view is fully consistent with everything the Bible says on the matter, and it does no damage at all to any passage; it meshes fully with all other statements that address God's manner of dealing with mankind, and it agrees with the usage of *until* in the passages cited above.
  - 2) The view of the millennialists is most assuredly wrong! The kingdom has come (Col. 1:13-14; Rev. 1:9; Matt. 3:2; 4:17; 10:7; Luke 10:9; Mark 9:1; Luke 24:47-49; Acts 1:5,8; 2:1-4). The second coming of Christ will not be to set up an earthly kingdom, but to destroy the earth and the universe (2 Pet. 3:10), to raise all the dead (1 Th. 4:13-18; Acts 24:15; John 5:28-29), and to bring all humanity into the Judgment (Matt. 25:31-46; 2 Cor. 5:10; Rom. 14:10-14).
  - 3) A different interpretation than the one which is forced upon this text by the millennialist is necessary, and the one suggested by Whiteside certainly fits the context.
2. Verses 26-27: "And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins."
- a. Coupled with the preceding verse, millennialists make this statement teach that the whole nation of Israel will be saved, evidently by a miraculous act of God. If their conversion is supernatural, then what about their free moral agency? If God converts them in such a fashion, then he shows partiality toward them, doing for them what he is unwilling to do for others.
  - b. And what about all of those Jews who died in rebellion to God during the past two thousand years? And what about all those Jews who died in rebellion to God during the Old Testament days? If Christ came earlier than the time supposed by the millennialists, Jews would be saved who will not be saved (according to their suppositions). The time of the Lord's return will, therefore, determine which of the Jews will be saved!
  - c. Will all the Jews who ever lived on earth be saved? If so, then God did not mean what he said to them who lived under the Mosaic Law.
    - 1) See Deuteronomy 28 for a discussion of the blessings or curses God would bring upon them. Their obedience to his will would determine which it would be—a blessing or a curse.
    - 2) Deuteronomy 30:15-20: "See, I have set before thee this day life and good, and death and evil; In that I command thee this day to love the LORD thy God, to walk in his ways, and to keep his commandments and his statutes and his judgments, that thou mayest live and multiply: and the LORD thy God shall bless thee in the land whither thou goest to possess it. But if thine heart turn away, so that thou wilt not hear, but shalt be drawn away, and worship other gods, and serve them; I denounce unto you this day, that ye shall surely perish, *and that* ye shall not prolong *your* days upon the land, whither thou passest over Jordan to go to possess it. I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, *that* I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live: That thou mayest love the LORD thy

- God, *and* that thou mayest obey his voice, and that thou mayest cleave unto him: for he *is* thy life, and the length of thy days: that thou mayest dwell in the land which the LORD sware unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give them."
- 3) Psalms 9:17: "The wicked shall be turned into hell, *and* all the nations that forget God."
  - 4) Ecclesiastes 12:13-14: "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this *is* the whole *duty* of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether *it be* good, or whether *it be* evil."
- d. The gospel does not really mean what it says.
- 1) Mark 16:15-16: "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."
  - 2) John 8:21: "Then said Jesus again unto them, I go my way, and ye shall seek me, and shall die in your sins: whither I go, ye cannot come."
  - 3) John 8:24: "I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am *he*, ye shall die in your sins."
  - 4) 1 Corinthians 16:22: "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maranatha."
- e. What, then, does the passage actually teach? First, notice the word **so** (Greek, *houtos*) in both English and Greek is an adverb of manner, and means *in this way (manner)*. In the manner or after the way Paul describes, will the Jews be saved. But what is that way?
- 1) Paul has previously shown that many of the Jews were lost (3:9,23; 9:1-3; 10:1-3, 16; 11:14,21-23). He has also set forth the only means for their salvation: the gospel of Christ (1:16-17; 10:1-3). The majority of the Jews had rejected the gospel, and continued in condemnation (Rom. 8:1ff; 10:1-3). Since the gospel is God's power to save both Jew and Gentile, and since he is no respecter of persons, it follows that the same conditions required of Gentiles for their salvation are also the requirements for the salvation of Jews (Mark 16:15-16; Luke 24:47; Rom. 10:9-10; Acts 8:37; 2:38; 22:16; 10:47-48).
  - 2) The gospel is God's final message to mankind.
    - a) John 14:6: "Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me." [No other Savior is available; no other Savior is necessary].
    - b) Acts 4:11-12: "This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner. Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." [Only Christ can save us; and his way of salvation is his gospel].
    - c) 2 Timothy 3:16-17: "All scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." [Everything necessary to bring any person to spiritual maturity has been given in the gospel].
    - d) Hebrews 4:12: "For the word of God *is* quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and *is* a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." [No other revelation could exceed in power the one we have!].
    - e) 2 Peter 1:3: "According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that *pertain* unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue." [Everything we could ever need is included in the gospel].
    - f) Jude 3: "Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort *you* that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints." [The gospel was "once-for-all-time given; no other revelation is necessary; no other revelation will be given].
    - g) Revelation 14:6: "And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting
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gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people." [The gospel is everlasting; it will survive the ages].

- 3) If any Jews are to be saved during the Gospel Age, it will have to be by the gospel! When the Lord returns, there will not be any time or occasion or opportunity for anyone to be saved then; it will be too late for that! Therefore, if any Jew is to be saved, it will be because he obeyed the gospel of Christ in this life prior to the Lord's second advent. "For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation" (Heb. 9:26-28).
- 4) Paul's point in this verse is simple: In this manner of obeying the gospel will all Israel be saved, if they are to be saved at all. There is no other method by which they can be saved. If any of them are to be saved, it will be in the same manner by which the Gentiles were saved, and that was by obeying the gospel (Rom. 1:16-17; 10:1-3, 13-18; 1 Cor. 15:1-3; 2 Thess. 1:7-9).
- 5) "Of particular interest is a significant change Paul made in Isaiah 59:20, which reads thus in the OT: 'And the Redeemer shall come to Zion, and to them that turn from transgression in Jacob, saith the Lord.' Paul quoted it, 'shall come *out of* Zion.' This change by Paul was due to his avoidance of a misunderstanding. Isaiah's prophecy referred to the first advent of our Lord, in which the Lord both came out of Zion, and also to Zion; and without the change he made, the passage would have seemed to refer to the second advent. By the change, Paul said that the Lord has already come to Zion, and also has already come out of it. This forbids any supposition that Christ will return 'to Zion,' as some vainly suppose will be the case when all the Jews are converted! Paul's use of Isaiah's prophecy makes it mandatory to construe it as already fulfilled" (Coffman, p.416).
- f. Far from saying that all Israel will be saved, the apostle is affirming that in the same way as all others are saved, will Jews be saved. He adds that salvation is possible because the Deliverer has come out of Zion, who will turn Israel from their ungodliness (Isa. 59:20; Psalm 14:7).
  - 1) The Deliverer is obviously Christ; Zion is Jerusalem; it was at Jerusalem that Christ was sacrificed for the sins of the world (Matt. 26:28; Heb. 2:9; John 1:29-34).
  - 2) Without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sins (Heb. 9:22); but the blood of animals cannot take away sin (Heb. 10:1-4); only the blood of Christ can remove the guilt of sin (1 Pet. 1:18-19; Eph. 1:7; Col. 1:13-14; Rev. 1:5; Matt. 26:28).
  - 3) Alien sinners contact the benefits of Christ's blood when they are baptized into Christ (Rom. 6:1-18; Eph. 1:3; Gal. 3:26-27; Rom. 8:1-3).
  - 4) The Deliverer turns Israel from their ungodliness when they obey the gospel! This is the same manner by which he turns any Gentile from ungodliness. When men obey the gospel, they make a complete change from their former ways. This is an individual choice and act.
  - 5) Paul showed in verses 22-23 that Israel would receive the benefits of God's goodness if they did not remain in their unbelief; in other words, if they would believe and obey Christ they would be saved. Peter said in Acts 15:11: "But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they." The pronoun *we* refers to Jews; the pronoun *they* refers to Gentiles. Peter had just shown that Cornelius and his Gentile family were saved by the gospel of Christ; he now states that Jews can only be saved in the same way. But not all of the Gentiles will be saved; neither will all of Israel be saved.
- g. What does verse 27 mean?
  - 1) Old Testament passages having a bearing on this verse are these:
    - a) Isaiah 27:9: "By this therefore shall the iniquity of Jacob be purged; and this *is* all the fruit to take away his sin; when he maketh all the stones of the altar as chalkstones that are beaten in sunder, the groves and images shall not stand up."

- b) Jeremiah 31:31-33: "Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day *that* I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the LORD: But this *shall be* the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people."
- c) Hebrews 8:8-13: "For finding fault with them, he saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah: Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord. For this *is* the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people: And they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest. For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more. In that he saith, A new *covenant*, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old *is* ready to vanish away."
- 2) The New Covenant, of course, is the New Testament (the gospel of Christ). Notice how Paul speaks of the covenant in this passage, and immediately afterward in verse 28 speaks of the gospel. The new covenant (the gospel) was established when the Old Testament was taken away. By means of this new covenant God would take away the sins of Israel, but that blessing applied only to those who obey Christ.
- 3) "This result, that all who would accept Christ should be delivered from sin, is the covenant that God made with them, and this covenant is completed with them when he takes away their sin" (Lipscomb, p.213).
3. Verses 28-29: "As concerning the gospel, they are enemies for your sakes: but as touching the election, they are beloved for the fathers' sakes. For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance."
- a. The Jews were generally enemies of the cross, yet still beloved. Paul loved them, as he has already shown; that God still loved them is obvious.
- b. The unbelieving Jews retained their life-long aversion of the Gentiles. In Peter's case, God had to take certain special steps to convince that apostle that the Gentiles were proper subjects of the gospel (Acts 10,11). The Gentiles were not to be looked upon as unclean. It is not surprising, therefore, that the Jews who rejected the gospel would look with horror and anger on Jewish Christians receiving Gentiles unreservedly into their fellowship. "And it came to pass, that, when I was come again to Jerusalem, even while I prayed in the temple, I was in a trance; And saw him saying unto me, Make haste, and get thee quickly out of Jerusalem: for they will not receive thy testimony concerning me. And I said, Lord, they know that I imprisoned and beat in every synagogue them that believed on thee: And when the blood of thy martyr Stephen was shed, I also was standing by, and consenting unto his death, and kept the raiment of them that slew him. And he said unto me, Depart: for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles. And they gave him audience unto this word, and *then* lifted up their voices, and said, Away with such a *fellow* from the earth: for it is not fit that he should live. And as they cried out, and cast off *their* clothes, and threw dust into the air" (Acts 22:17-23).
- c. These unbelieving Jews became strong and unrelenting enemies of the gospel. Until the downfall of Jerusalem in A.D. 70, they were the most violent enemies the church had.
- d. Paul was expressing his own, and God's, sincere desire for the salvation of the Jews in the various statements along that line in Romans 9 and 10. God had selected Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and their descendants, as the line through which Christ would come into the world. He had not decided that his choice was wrong. "...And even though these descendants had so sinned as to be broken off from
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- his favor, they were beloved on account of the fathers, and not on their own account" (Whiteside, p.241).
- e. The Bible teaches that God loves all of his offspring (Acts 17:28-29; John 3:16; 1 John 3:16; Rom. 5:8-9). He desires the salvation of **all** men (1 Tim. 2:4-5). Christ died for all (Heb. 2:9; Tit. 2:11-12), and his gospel is to be taken to all mankind (Mark 16:15).
  - f. Paul affirmed that God had not regretted the choice he made as to the selection of Abraham as the progenitor of the nation through which Christ would come; neither has God regretted sending his Son to die for the sins of the whole world. He knew perfectly well from the beginning that man would rebel against his will, yet he still followed through with the plan he had developed. It is a foolish mistake to so misapply verse 29 to make it teach that salvation is a gift from God, and that God will not take that gift away even though one willfully rebels against God.
4. Verses 30-32: "For as ye in times past have not believed God, yet have now obtained mercy through their unbelief: Even so have these also now not believed, that through your mercy they also may obtain mercy. For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all."
- a. Addressing Gentile Christians, Paul describes their past as one of unbelief toward God; but they had obtained mercy.
  - b. That mercy (grace) was offered to them by the gospel; the occasion of the offer was in connection with Israel's general rejection of the gospel. The typical case of Acts 13:44-46 shows that Paul first went to the Jews on entering Antioch of Pisidia; when they contradicted and blasphemed the gospel, Paul rebuked their unbelief, and stated his intention of turning to the more receptive Gentile population as the prime audience of his preaching. This was in keeping with the original plan, that the gospel should first be preached to the Jews, and then to the Gentiles (Rom. 1:16-17).
  - c. These Gentile Christians Paul addresses had, therefore, the opportunity of hearing the gospel because the Jews turned away from it. His next point in this passage is to say that as the Gentiles had once lived in unbelief but made a change, so the Jews were now in unbelief but the offer of the gospel was still extended to them to be saved. The Gentiles who had received the gospel could now seek to take it to the unbelieving Jews. At the first, the Jewish city of Jerusalem was the radiating center for the gospel; after the Gentiles were taught, Antioch of Syria, a Gentile city, became the chief radiating center of the gospel.
  - d. Verse 32 describes the Jews as being in unbelief (KJV). The ASV translates the verse: "For God hath shut up all unto disobedience, that he might have mercy upon all." This does not mean that God had caused all accountable men to be disobedient, but that he judged them all to be disobedient (Rom. 3:9; Acts 17:30-31; Rom. 3:23; Luke 19:10).
    - 1) God is not responsible for the sin that any man commits (Jas. 1:13-15; 1 John 3:4). Man condemns his own soul by personally transgressing God's will.
    - 2) Having judged all accountable persons as being sinners, God now has the opportunity to extend the fullness of his mercy to every one of them. God knew from the beginning that man lives in a flesh and blood body, and is subject to all the desires and appetites possessed by the flesh. "Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak" (Matt. 26:41). Knowing that it is futile to expect man to keep his law perfectly, God incorporated into his plan, the means by which man could be forgiven of his transgressions committed after his primary obedience to the gospel (Acts 8:22; 1 John 1:7-10; Jas. 5:16-20).
    - 3) "People are not made sinners by hearing the gospel, but the gospel is preached to them because they are sinners. People are sinners, and they need to realize that they are under condemnation, that they may obtain God's mercy. In this verse Paul ends his argument on the theme that the gospel is the power of God for salvation" (Whiteside, p.242).
5. Verse 33: "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!"
- a. Whiteside's excellent description of this verse is worthy of repeating: "How sublime are these words!
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- They refer to the provisions for salvation as revealed in the gospel, including God's use of men and nations in the development of this plan of salvation, as had been set forth in this letter, and not merely, as some think, to what was said in verses 30 and 31" (pp.243f).
- b. The *knowledge of God* is not what God knows, but what he has revealed to mankind about himself and his will.
  - c. Without revelation we could know nothing of his will.
    - 1) Proverbs 2:5: "Then shalt thou understand the fear of the LORD, and find the knowledge of God."
    - 2) Hosea 4:1: "Hear the word of the LORD, ye children of Israel: for the LORD hath a controversy with the inhabitants of the land, because *there is* no truth, nor mercy, nor knowledge of God in the land."
    - 3) 1 Corinthians 2:9-14: "But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed *them* unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know *them*, because they are spiritually discerned."
    - 4) 1 Corinthians 15:34" "Awake to righteousness, and sin not; for some have not the knowledge of God: I speak *this* to your shame."
    - 5) Colossians 1:9-10: "For this cause we also, since the day we heard *it*, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God."
    - 6) 2 Peter 3:18: "But grow in grace, and *in* the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him *be* glory both now and for ever. Amen."
  - d. "Knowledge of mathematics" does not refer to what mathematics knows, but what an individual knows about mathematics.
  - e. The judgments and ways of God are hidden in the infinite mind of the Almighty; no man, on his own, using the natural powers and strengths he possesses, could ever discover the will, the judgments, or the ways of God. Our knowledge of these things is strictly limited to what he has revealed in his inspired word! Yet the vast majority of mankind, even the vast majority of those who deem themselves to be Christians, reject the Bible as the only and final authority in spiritual affairs. If we did not have the New Testament, our knowledge of Christ would be almost nil, for only a very few brief references are made of him by secular writers of the first century.
  - f. God's judgments include his decisions or pronouncements about many things. What is man permitted to do and what is prohibited? What constitutes sin? What constitutes righteousness and godliness? What lies beyond death? All that we need to know, indeed all that we may be capable of grasping, is revealed in the inspired Record.
6. Verses 34-35: "For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor? Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again?"
    - a. These two verses contain three rhetorical questions. Paul teaches by means of the queries that no man has known the mind of God, and no man has been God's counsellor to advise him what to do.
    - b. No man has been able to give something to God that had not already been given to the man by the Lord (Jas. 1:17).
  7. Verse 36: "For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen."
    - a. All things came from God, they were given by God, and all things are for his honor. He is worthy of
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all the glory that could ever be ascribed to him by his feeble offspring!

- b. This is one of the most important truths that all men need to learn, even members of the Lord's church. We do not take worship as a serious matter, often sleeping through parts of it, frequently merely mouthing the prayers and songs, and pay little attention to properly discerning the Lord's body as we eat his Supper.
    - 1) Psalm 89:7: "God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints, and to be had in reverence of all them that are about him."
    - 2) Hebrews 12:28-29: "Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: For our God is a consuming fire."
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## ROMANS 12

### A. Romans 12:1-8: General Christian Obligations.

1. Verse 1: "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service."
  - a. Having presented information, that in many cases is heavy and difficult, and thrilling and most encouraging in others, the apostle now turns to matters of practical application. We often think of Paul's epistles as being divided into **doctrinal** and **practical** sections, but since *doctrine* means *teaching*, all of the information is doctrinal. But what we call *practical* truly is intended to be applied in our lives.
  - b. He begins this chapter by making an appeal to the saints to follow the instructions he is about to give. Being an apostle of Christ, he had every right to state this in the form of a direct command, but the Holy Spirit guided him into this choice of words. The sacrificial living this passage sets forth must be engendered from within the individual. Sincere devotion is not something that is produced merely by divine decree, but by the person believing the word of God and making that commitment within himself. Christianity requires our willing service.
  - c. Paul bases his tender appeal on "the mercies of God." "The word mercies denotes the sum of the provisions which God has made in the gospel for our salvation" (Lard, p.379). Thus, in view of all that our Heavenly Father has done in our behalf, we ought to desire to serve him with a willing heart. All worthwhile gifts stem from the merciful heart of God (Jas. 1:17).
  - d. The specific thing he appeals for each saint to do is to present his body unto God as a living sacrifice.
    - 1) 1 Corinthians 6:20: "For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's."
    - 2) Romans 6:13,19: "Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God....I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh: for as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness."
    - 3) Our fleshly bodies are essential to the performance of any duty. What could our spirits possibly do in this world without the body? Even our thoughts and motives depend on the human brain and body to be expressed. The apostle calls on Christians to dedicate their bodies to the service of Christ.
    - 4) The Jews brought living animals for the bloody sacrifices required by the Law; those animals were slain and their bodies were burned on the altar. In every sacrifice there was a death. When we present our body as a living sacrifice, the old man of sin has been slain; the new man lives and serves Christ (Col. 3:5ff).
  - e. Our body is to be holy: "devoted to the worship and service of God." "Under the Mosaic law animals free from blemish were presented and devoted to God; under the new dispensation a nobler and more spiritual service is to be rendered; not the oblation of animals, but the consecration of ourselves" (Lipscomb, p.218). "But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy" (1 Pet. 1:15-16).
  - f. Our body is to be acceptable to God. We can make our living sacrifice well-pleasing to God by being pure from sin and following his will to the best of our ability.
    - 1) 2 Corinthians 5:9: "Wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him."
    - 2) Matthew 25:23: "His lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord."

- g. Presenting our body as a living, holy, acceptable sacrifice is our **reasonable service**. "Reasonable" is from the Greek *logikos*. The word only appears here and in 1 Peter 2:2, where it is translated *sincere* (KJV) and *spiritual* (ASV). In our text, the reference apparently is to the **rational** service we tender unto God; it is an intelligent, rational and sincere offering of the spirit; it does not stem from ritualism or emotionalism.
- 1) 1 Corinthians 14:33: "For God is not *the author* of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints."
  - 2) 1 Corinthians 14:40: "Let all things be done decently and in order."
2. Verse 2: "And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God."
- a. Continuing his beseeching appeal, Paul calls on them to refrain from being conformed to this world. Christians are called *saints* because they have been set apart from the world (sanctified) for God's holy purposes. We are to be different from the world; we are not again to be fashioned according to the pattern of the world.
  - b. One of Israel's greatest errors was when she decided to become like the other nations around her, and thus demanded a king (1 Sam. 8). God intended them to be distinct and separate from the pagans. God requires us to be distinctive (2 Cor. 6:14-18; 1 Pet. 2:5-9). It is impossible to serve both God and the world at the same time; it is one or the other (Matt. 6:24; Luke 9:62; 1 John 2:15).
    - 1) Matthew 6:24: "No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon."
    - 2) Luke 9:62: "And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God."
    - 3) 2 Corinthians 6:14-18: "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in *them*; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean *thing*; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty."
    - 4) 2 Peter 2:5-9 "And spared not the old world, but saved Noah the eighth *person*, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly; And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrha into ashes condemned *them* with an overthrow, making *them* an ensample unto those that after should live ungodly; And delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked: (For that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed *his* righteous soul from day to day with *their* unlawful deeds;) The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished."
    - 5) 1 John 2:15: "Love not the world, neither the things *that are* in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him."
  - c. Paul tells us how to keep from being conformed to the world, and that is by being transformed (into the image of Christ: 2 Cor. 3:18). The Greek word translated "transformed" is rendered "transfigured" in Matthew 17:2 and Mark 9:2. As Christ's physical body was transformed into his heavenly body, so we are responsible for transforming our inner man into the spiritual image God requires. It is not a change that can be suddenly obtained; rather it is gradual, as we learn more and grow toward spiritual maturity.
    - 1) 2 Corinthians 3:18: "But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, *even* as by the Spirit of the Lord."
    - 2) 2 Corinthians 4:16: "For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the

- inward *man* is renewed day by day."
- d. The means of this transformation is by the renewing of our minds. The change is wrought from the inside. Our thoughts and motives govern the kind of words and deeds that come from us.
- 1) Proverbs 16:32: "*He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city.*"
  - 2) Proverbs 23:7: "For as he thinketh in his heart, so *is* he: Eat and drink, saith he to thee; but his heart *is* not with thee."
  - 3) Matthew 12:33-35: "Either make the tree good, and his fruit good; or else make the tree corrupt, and his fruit corrupt: for the tree is known by *his* fruit. O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things."
  - 4) Matthew 15:18-20: "But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man. For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies: These are *the things* which defile a man: but to eat with unwashen hands defileth not a man."
  - 5) Philippians 4:8: "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things *are* honest, whatsoever things *are* just, whatsoever things *are* pure, whatsoever things *are* lovely, whatsoever things *are* of good report; if *there be* any virtue, and if *there be* any praise, think on these things."
- e. By changing the way we think and what we think, we can be renewed. We are, therefore, to fill our minds with God's truth.
- 1) 1 Timothy 4:13-16 "Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine....Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all. Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee."
  - 2) 2 Timothy 2:15: "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."
  - 3) 2 Peter 1:5-11: "And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge;6 And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make *you that ye shall* neither *be* barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."
  - 4) 2 Peter 3:18: "But grow in grace, and *in* the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him *be* glory both now and for ever. Amen."
- f. As we learn more, we are to do more and be different. As our knowledge and devotion to Christ increase, we eliminate from our minds and lives those words and practices that are not characteristic of a child of God. The gospel in the heart can effect the change.
- g. The aim of the transformation is to be able to place a correct estimate on the excellency of God's will. To be able to understand and accurately appreciate the value of God's word, to discern the difference between right and wrong, and good and evil, our minds must be renewed so as to see things as God sees them.
- h. Hebrews 5:12-14: "For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use
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have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil."

- 1) Why do many religious people fail to see that instrumental music in worship is wrong? Because they do not look at the subject through God's eyes, with a renewed mind. Why do many people, otherwise very sincere and devout, fail to see the sinfulness of gambling or immodest apparel? For the same reason.
  - 2) But one who has been converted to Christ, and who goes on to learn the word of God, and obtains spiritual maturity, is able to discern both good and evil. He has proved to himself, by means of practical knowledge, that God's will is good, acceptable, and perfect. Those who denigrate the Bible, or who take from it only what pleases them, are ill-equipped to discern the goodness and richness of God's standard of truth.
3. Verse 3: "For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith."
- a. The grace Paul mentioned was that benevolent gift from God that enabled him to preach the gospel of Christ.
    - 1) Romans 1:5: "By whom we have received grace and apostleship, for obedience to the faith among all nations, for his name."
    - 2) Romans 15:15-16: "Nevertheless, brethren, I have written the more boldly unto you in some sort, as putting you in mind, because of the grace that is given to me of God, That I should be the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God, that the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Ghost."
    - 3) 1 Corinthians 3:10: "According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon."
    - 4) 1 Corinthians 15:10: "But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which *was bestowed* upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me."
    - 5) Galatians 2:7-9: "But contrariwise, when they saw that the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me, as *the gospel* of the circumcision *was* unto Peter; (For he that wrought effectually in Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision, the same was mighty in me toward the Gentiles:) And when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship; that *we should go* unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision."
    - 6) Ephesians 3:7-8: "Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power. Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ;"
  - b. The gracious gift that provided him with the powers and rights of apostleship gave him the authority to offer the following directions.
  - c. Paul admonished every Christian against thinking of himself more highly than he ought to think. Thus, he instructs them to be humble. Pride (arrogance; haughtiness) is one of the most common of sins. It afflicted the ancient Israelites; it had infected the Jews of Paul's time; it has contaminated a very great many of our own day.
  - d. Its severity is shown in the effects it has wrought.
    - 1) Proverbs 16:18: "Pride *goeth* before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall."
    - 2) Hosea 5:5; "And the pride of Israel doth testify to his face: therefore shall Israel and Ephraim fall in their iniquity; Judah also shall fall with them."
    - 3) Hosea 7:10: "And the pride of Israel testifieth to his face: and they do not return to the LORD their God, nor seek him for all this."
  - e. The first of the Lord's beatitudes enjoined humility (Matt. 5:3); one of Solomon's most famous
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- proverbs called for humility: "Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths" (Prov. 3:5-6).
- f. The statement ("not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think") implies that we need to have a certain amount of self-confidence (poise; assurance). Without a proper amount of self-confidence, we would be unable to accomplish much for the Lord. Faith helps us to develop courage; trust in God gives us the ability to depend on the Lord to compensate for our lack. We must realize the extent of our own limitations, and believe the Lord's word enough to trust him to make up the difference between what we have and what a given situation requires. 2 Corinthians 12:1-10.
- g. Instead of being proud, we need to think soberly (Luke 17:10; 1 Cor. 4:6-7; Luke 18:10-14). "To 'think soberly' is to form and manifest a right estimate of ourselves and of our gifts and the reality of the gifts of others. A right estimate can never be other than a very humble one, since whatever there is of good in us is not of ourselves, but of God" (Lipscomb, p.220). Whatever talent, or possession, or gift, we have, we have because of God; without his creation and providence, we would have nothing and would be nothing.
- 1) 1 Thessalonians 5:6: "Therefore let us not sleep, as *do* others; but let us watch and be sober."
  - 2) 1 Thessalonians 5:8: "But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation."
  - 3) 1 Timothy 3:2: "A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach."
  - 4) 1 Timothy 3:11: "Even so *must their* wives *be* grave, not slanderers, sober, faithful in all things."
  - 5) Titus 2:2,4,6: "That the aged men be sober, grave, temperate, sound in faith, in charity, in patience....That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children....Young men likewise exhort to be sober minded."
  - 6) Titus 2:11-12: "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world."
  - 7) 1 Peter 1:13: "Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ."
  - 8) 1 Peter 4:7-8: "But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer. And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins."
- h. We are to think soberly, according as God has dealt to every man the measure of faith. Two views of *faith* as used in the verse are:
- 1) "Faith is the measuring instrument, the instrument by which we are to measure our thinking. Whether faith in this place refers to the gospel, as it does in some places, or to our own faith in the gospel, makes no difference; for our faith includes a wholehearted belief in the gospel. It equals the idea that the gospel is the measuring instrument; for our faith cannot go beyond the gospel, and should not fall short of it. Our faith is the gospel written in our hearts" (Whiteside, p.250).
  - 2) "The belief here spoken of was not the ordinary belief which comes by hearing, and saves the soul. It was clearly a miraculous belief; because it was imparted to persons already in possession of the ordinary belief; it was imparted immediately to the soul, and endowed it with one or more supernatural powers. This belief with its accompanying power constituted the *charisma* of which the Apostle speaks in v.6" (Lard, p.282).
    - a) Matthew 17:20: "And Jesus said unto them, Because of your unbelief: for verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you."
    - b) 1 Corinthians 13:2: "And though I have *the gift of* prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing."
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- 3) Both of these views have merit.
4. Verses 4-5: "For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another."
- The whole church is one body, but it is comprised of all the Christians as its component parts. In view of the fact that we all make up the body of Christ, we ought not to think of ourselves as more important than other members.
  - The various members do not all occupy the same *office*. Everyone has his own particular function in the body, possessing talents and opportunities that are peculiar to himself. There are individuals in the world over whom you have more influence than any other Christian. Each member, discharging his responsibilities to the best of his power, works cooperatively with the other members for the building up of the body. No one person can do all the work with any great degree of success, and no one person is indispensable. Each member needs to be duly impressed with the tremendous gravity he sustains because he is a member of Christ's body.
  - Comprising the one body of Christ, Christians are members of each other. We belong to each other; we are part of each other. Paul is emphasizing the closeness of relationship that saints have. As any member of our physical body would not exalt itself over the other members and would not work contrary to the best interests of any other member of that body, so the members of Christ's body should not do such. When one member encourages, supports, and helps another member, he helps himself to that same degree. We need each other; we depend on each other for strength; when one member falters, in the interest of the whole body and one's own self, we support and help the weak member.
5. Verses 6-8: "Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith; Or ministry, let us wait on our ministering: or he that teacheth, on teaching; Or he that exhorteth, on exhortation: he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness."
- God has doled out gifts and abilities for the good of the whole body. Each Christian has one or more strengths. In the list of gifts Paul presents, are to be found supernatural and ordinary abilities. No society could prosper in which everyone had only one talent, if that ability was the same one. If everyone was a blacksmith, who would be the butcher, the baker, and the candlestick-maker? If everyone in the church could do nothing but serve as song-leader, who would do the preaching, the teaching, the overseeing of the flock, etc.? God in his wisdom, gave differing miraculous gifts to the first century church, and he gives varying talents to present day members.
  - Some then were given the spiritual gift of prophecy. A prophet was a spokesman for God; the subject of his message might deal with the past, with the present or with the future. Of the nine spiritual gifts available to the church of the first century (1 Cor. 12:7-10), prophecy was the most important (1 Cor. 14:1). Prophets received direct revelations of truth from heaven, and were able thus to instruct men in the way of salvation. The gift was given in different measures, it appears, for Paul tells the prophets to exercise their gift "according to the proportion (*measure*) of faith." "Even among the inspired the knowledge given by the Spirit was in proportion to the faith. So also among the uninspired the strength of the faith is the measure of the ability to teach and to serve" (Lipscomb, p.222).
    - 1 Corinthians 12:7-10: "But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal. For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another *divers* kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues."
    - 1 Corinthians 14:1: "Follow after charity, and desire spiritual *gifts*, but rather that ye may prophesy."
  - Some are given the talent of ministering. This ministry is serving. "It refers to any kind of service undertaken in the church; and the instruction is that whatever is done should be done enthusiastically and faithfully" (Coffman, p.432). It would include the work done by deacons, but is broader than that.
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- d. Some are given the talent of teaching. In the first century, the first teachers were of necessity inspired men, since the New Testament had not been written at the time. Not everyone has the ability to teach in a public way; but this does not mean they are second-rate citizens in the kingdom. Teaching carries with it a very heavy responsibility, one that is not to be taken lightly: "My brethren, be not many masters, knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation" (Jas. 3:1). Those who have the ability to teach, must be diligent and careful to present the whole counsel of God—with love (Eph. 4:15).
- e. Some have the gift of exhortation. This was one of Barnabas' strong points (Acts 4:36; 11:22ff). "Exhortation was a power of persuading and encouraging others to work, and of counseling, comforting, and consoling them when in distress. This is a peculiar and useful talent" (Lipscomb, p.224).
- f. Some have the ability to make money, and thus bear the duty of giving liberally. Have you noticed that in many small congregations, there is often to be found one or two with this ability? This is just as important to the progress of the kingdom as the ability to serve in other capacities. The giving of him who has the ability and means to give, is to be done with simplicity (*liberality*, ASV).
- g. Some have the ability to rule, to lead the congregation. Some of these were divinely empowered in the first century; it is hardly likely that men naturally developed to be qualified as elders in the short space of time that Paul and Barnabas were away from the congregations they planted during their first missionary journey (Acts 14:23). Those who have the ability to lead (as elders), are to discharge their obligations with diligence (1 Tim. 3:1ff; Tit. 1:5ff; 1 Pet. 5:1ff).
- h. Some have the special ability to show mercy to others. These are naturally endowed with kind hearts and helpful ways. In virtually every congregation, there is one or more kind-hearted lady who possesses the tenderness to want to help, and the compassion to stretch forth a helping hand. These, Paul says, are to exercise this wonderful talent with cheerfulness, without complaint. Although such people are always being sought by those in need, few are they who return the favor. It would be easy for such a compassionate soul to grow weary after a time, when they are always giving and seldom receive. But such a discouragement would last only for a moment, for this kind of person is happiest when he or she is helping. One of the best-known Bible people for such charitable works was Dorcas, who is described as "full of good works and almsdeeds" (Acts 9:36-43).

B. Romans 12:9-21: The Apostle Issues Instructions Regarding Love.

1. Verse 9: "Let love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good."
  - a. Love is commanded; for it to be real, it must be unpretended. *Dissimulation* means hypocrisy. Pretended love in unpretended hatred.
    - 1) 1 John 4:20-21: "If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen? And this commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God love his brother also."
    - 2) John 13:34-35: "A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all *men* know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another."
    - 3) John 14:15: "If ye love me, keep my commandments."
    - 4) 1 Corinthians 13:4-7: "Charity suffereth long, *and* is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things."
    - 5) 2 Corinthians 2:7-8: "So that contrariwise ye *ought* rather to forgive *him*, and comfort *him*, lest perhaps such a one should be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow. Wherefore I beseech you that ye would confirm *your* love toward him."
    - 6) Ephesians 4:2: "With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love."

- 7) 2 Timothy 1:5: "When I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice; and I am persuaded that in thee also."
- 8) 1 Peter 1:22: "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, *see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently.*"
- 9) 1 John 3:17-18: "But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels *of compassion* from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him? My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth."
- b. "It is much to be feared that the love of the primitive disciples is without a parallel in the present day. Our love does not lead us to do for one another what theirs led them to do. Then no man called anything he had his own, if his brother had need. It is not so with us" (Lard, p.389).
- c. "Abhor that which is evil." *Abhor* means *to hate*. This apostolic statement places us under a divine responsibility; it is not something that we may chose to ignore and retain God's approval (Amos. 5:15; cf. Heb. 1:9; Ps. 119:104,128; 97:10). The Lord's mandate here is that we hate everything that is evil, and have no part of that which has the appearance of evil (1 Th. 5:22). We are to hate what God hates.
- 1) Psalms 97:10: "Ye that love the LORD, hate evil: he preserveth the souls of his saints; he delivereth them out of the hand of the wicked."
  - 2) Psalms 119:104: "Through thy precepts I get understanding: therefore I hate every false way."
  - 3) Psalms 119:128: "Therefore I esteem all *thy* precepts *concerning* all *things to be* right; *and* I hate every false way."
  - 4) Proverbs 6:16-19: "These six *things* doth the LORD hate: yea, seven *are* an abomination unto him: A proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, An heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, feet that be swift in running to mischief, A false witness *that* speaketh lies, and he that soweth discord among brethren."
  - 5) Amos 5:15: "Hate the evil, and love the good, and establish judgment in the gate: it may be that the LORD God of hosts will be gracious unto the remnant of Joseph."
  - 6) Hebrews 1:9: "Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, *even* thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows."
- d. "Cleave to that which is good." To cleave to means to cling to. Before we can either abhor evil or cling to that which is good, we must be able to identify both. Many today are saying that there is no absolute standard of good and evil (right and wrong). Paul says otherwise. While there are some things which we can know intuitively are right or wrong (murder; child abuse; robbery), God's revelation (the Bible) is the objective standard. He has revealed what is good (Mic. 6:8) and what is evil (Gal. 5:19-21).
- 1) John 8:32: "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."
  - 2) 1 Corinthians 2:9-14: "But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed *them* unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know *them*, because they are spiritually discerned."
  - 3) 1 Thessalonians 2:13: "For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received *it* not *as* the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe."
  - 4) 1 Thessalonians 5:21: "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good."
  - 5) 2 Timothy 2:15: "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be
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- ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."
- 6) 2 Timothy 3:16-17: "All scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."
  - 7) Hebrews 5:12-14: "For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which *be* the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. For every one that useth milk *is* unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, *even* those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil."
  - 8) 2 Peter 1:3: "According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that *pertain* unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue."
- e. Only by studying the Bible can we come to know what is good and evil; and only by believing what God says in his word can we obtain the motivation to do good and shun evil.
2. Verse 10: "Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another."
- a. *Brotherly love* denotes the tender love that must characterize each child of God toward every other child of God (Heb. 13:1; 2 Pet. 1:7; 1 Pet. 1:22). Again, this is not a prerogative but a command; if we would have the approval of God, here is one of the things required.
    - 1) Hebrews 13:1: "Let brotherly love continue."
    - 2) 1 Peter 1:22: "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, *see that ye* love one another with a pure heart fervently."
    - 3) 2 Peter 1:7: "And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity."
  - b. The "badge of discipleship" is the genuine love manifested between Christians. A Christian maintains no attitude of animosity toward anyone; he develops a genuine concern for all people, especially toward others in the Lord's church.
    - 1) John 13:35: "By this shall all *men* know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another."
    - 2) John 15:12: "This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you."
    - 3) Ephesians 5:2: "And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour."
    - 4) 1 Thessalonians 4:9: "But as touching brotherly love ye need not that I write unto you: for ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another."
    - 5) 1 Peter 2:17: "Honour all *men*. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the king."
    - 6) 1 John 3:14: "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not *his* brother abideth in death."
  - c. The attitude commonly manifested by worldly people is self-interest. One of the great changes which must be made when one becomes a Christian is a shift in our attitude toward ourself and others. As a child of God, we must seek the interests of the other person, to love him as we love ourselves. This sometimes means depriving ourselves of things and situations which we would like to have, in order to advance the welfare of our brother.
    - 1) Romans 15:1-3: "We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves. Let every one of us please *his* neighbour for *his* good to edification. For even Christ pleased not himself; but, as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me."
    - 2) 1 Corinthians 10:24: "Let no man seek his own, but every man another's *wealth*."
    - 3) 1 Corinthians 13:5: "Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil."
    - 4) Philippians 2:1-5: "If *there be* therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies, Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, *being* of one accord, of one mind. *Let* nothing *be done* through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his

- own things, but every man also on the things of others. Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus."
- d. "Preferring one another" means that we give place to the other saint; let him have his way, even if we are deprived or even defrauded:
- 1) "'To go before and lead,' is used in Rom 12:10, in the sense of taking the lead in showing deference one to another, '(in honor) preferring one another'" (Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words, Copyright (c)1985, Thomas Nelson Publishers).
  - 2) "The word 'preferring' means going before, leading, setting an example. Thus, in showing mutual respect and honor, they were to strive to excel; not to see which could obtain most honor, but which could confer most, or manifest most respect; compare 1 Peter 1:5; Eph 5:21. Thus, they were to be studious to show to each other all the respect which was due in the various relations of life; children to show proper respect to parents, parents to children, servants to their masters, etc.; and all to strive by mutual kindness to promote the happiness of the Christian community. How different this from the spirit of the world; the spirit which seeks, not to confer honor, but to obtain it; which aims, not to diffuse respect, but to attract all others to give honor to us. If this single direction were to be obeyed in society, it would put an end at once to no small part of the envy, and ambition, and heartburning, and dissatisfaction of the world. It would produce contentment, harmony, love, and order in the community; and stay the progress of crime, and annihilate the evils of strife, and discord, and malice. And especially, it would give order and beauty to the church. It would humble the ambition of those who, like Diotrefes, love to have the pre-eminence (3 John 9), and make every man willing to occupy the place for which God has designed him, and rejoice that his brethren may be exalted to higher posts of responsibility and honor" (Barnes' Notes, Electronic Database. Copyright (c) 1997 by BibleSoft).
  - 3) Other passages:
    - a) Matthew 5:38-48: "Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth: But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have *thy* cloak also. And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain. Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away. Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same? And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more *than others*? do not even the publicans so? Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect."
    - b) Matthew 7:12: "Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets."
    - c) John 18:22-23: "And when he had thus spoken, one of the officers which stood by struck Jesus with the palm of his hand, saying, Answerest thou the high priest so? Jesus answered him, If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil: but if well, why smitest thou me?"
    - d) 1 Corinthians 6:6-7: "But brother goeth to law with brother, and that before the unbelievers. Now therefore there is utterly a fault among you, because ye go to law one with another. Why do ye not rather take wrong? why do ye not rather *suffer yourselves* to be defrauded?"
  - 4) "Instead of coveting and trying to grasp honors for one's self, the Christian should rather desire to exalt his fellow Christians, even taking the lead in the conveyance of such honors to them..." (Coffman, p.434). "Instead of waiting for others to honor us, we should lead them in the manifestation of esteem and respect" (Lipscomb, p.226).
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3. Verse 11: "Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord."
    - a. The ASV gives this rendition of the verse: "In diligence not slothful; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord." The *business* of the verse (KJV) is spiritual, not worldly; the apostle is giving directions about the discharge of our Christian obligations; he is not setting forth guidelines for conducting our worldly business affairs.
    - b. We are not to be slothful in performing our spiritual duties, but diligent.
      - 1) Job 14:1: "Man *that is* born of a woman *is* of few days, and full of trouble."
      - 2) Psalms 90:9-12: "For all our days are passed away in thy wrath: we spend our years as a tale *that is told*. The days of our years *are* threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength *they be* fourscore years, yet *is* their strength labour and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away.....So teach *us* to number our days, that we may apply *our* hearts unto wisdom."
      - 3) Ecclesiastes 9:10: "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do *it* with thy might; for *there is* no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest."
      - 4) John 9:4: "I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work."
      - 5) Galatians 6:9: "And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not."
      - 6) Ephesians 5:16: "Redeeming the time, because the days are evil."
      - 7) James 4:14-15: "Whereas ye know not what *shall be* on the morrow. For what *is* your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away. For that ye *ought* to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that."
      - 8) James 4:17: "Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth *it* not, to him it is sin."
    - c. We are to be fervent in spirit. "The meaning is: be ardent in mind or in deep earnest in your religious duties. Do nothing coldly or with indifference" (Lard, p.390).
    - d. We are to serve Christ. One can neither be diligent nor fervent in serving Christ without a strong and growing faith (2 Pet. 3:18; 1:5-12; 2 Tim. 2:15; Rom. 10:17; Heb. 11:6). We must cultivate a thirst for knowledge of God's word; we must develop a strong desire to serve Christ to the fullest of our powers; we must seek and maintain the highest level of sincerity and fervency in our service.
    - e. There is no room in Christ's army for half-hearted soldiers! We are either for him or we are against him He is worth serving whole-heartedly!
      - 1) Matthew 6:24: "No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon."
      - 2) Matthew 12:30: "He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad."
    - f. The mission is for the best good of the entire race of mankind. The reward is worth every sacrifice (Rom. 8:18). The penalty for faulty service is far beyond our comprehension (2 Thess. 1:8-9).
      - 1) Romans 8:18: "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time *are* not worthy *to be compared* with the glory which shall be revealed in us."
      - 2) 2 Thessalonians 1:8-9: "In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power."
  4. Verses 12-14: "Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer; Distributing to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality. Bless them which persecute you: bless, and curse not." Seven admirable attributes of sainthood are given in this passage:
    - a. Rejoice in hope. A faithful Christian has nothing to fear in this life. God has promised to provide for his daily needs, to protect him from things too big for the individual to handle, he guides him through his word, and hears his prayers. Even when facing the greatest problem (death), we have no reason to be in terror.
      - 1) Pertinent passages:
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- a) Matthew 10:28: "And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell."
  - b) John 14:1-3: "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if *it were* not *so*, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, *there* ye may be also."
  - c) 1 Corinthians 12:13: "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether *we be* Jews or Gentiles, whether *we be* bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit."
  - d) Philippians 1:21-23: "For to me to live *is* Christ, and to die *is* gain. But if I live in the flesh, this *is* the fruit of my labour: yet what I shall choose I wot not. For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better."
  - e) 2 Timothy 4:6-8: "For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished *my* course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing."
  - f) Hebrews 6:18-19: "That by two immutable things, in which *it was* impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us: Which *hope* we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil."
  - g) 2 Peter 3:9: "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance."
  - h) 1 John 1:7-10: "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us."
- 2) Of all people on earth, the faithful child of God has less to fear or worry about than any other person. He has every reason to have the earnest expectation of receiving God's good will, whether he lives or dies, hence has just cause to rejoice daily (Phil. 4:4).
- b. Patient in tribulation. "My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience" (Jas. 1:2-3). In that day of overt, wide-spread, harsh persecution, this admonition was especially needed.
- 1) To be patient is to be steadfast, to endure, to remain faithful to Christ despite the persecution. The tribulation with which their oppressors afflicted those brethren was intended to force them to become unfaithful to God. But to retain their hope of heaven, they had to remain obedient. To give in to the demands of the tormentors would deliver them from the present distress, but would put them in danger of eternal condemnation (Matt. 25:31-46).
  - 2) To remain faithful requires a high degree of dedication, which in turn requires a strong faith. Since faith comes by hearing God's word (Rom. 10:17), a faithful Christian is one who daily meditates on the word of God.
  - 3) Our difficulties today do not usually include genuine persecution; nevertheless, we have powerful foes who are able to assail our faith. There are many temptations, many false teachers, and many evil people who attempt in every possible way to overthrow our faith.
  - 4) Hebrews 12:1-15; 2 Timothy 3:12; 2 Peter 1:1-12.
- c. Continuing instant in prayer. "Whether in affliction, or in the liberty of a glorious life, this injunction is in place. No where is the child of God safe without prayer; no where is he in much danger with it. It is the divine talisman which secures against every evil" (Lard, p.391).
- 1) To continue "instant in prayer" is equivalent to "pray without ceasing" (1 Thess. 5:17). A mature

and loyal child of God is one who prays with regularity and fervency. The fervent prayer of a righteous person still avails much! "Confess *your* faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much. Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months. And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit" (Jas. 5:16-18).

- 2) Pertinent passages:
  - a) Psalms 42:1-2: "As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before God?"
  - b) Psalms 43:1: "Judge me, O God, and plead my cause against an ungodly nation: O deliver me from the deceitful and unjust man."
  - c) Psalms 119:164: "Seven times a day do I praise thee because of thy righteous judgments."
  - d) Daniel 6:10: "Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went into his house; and his windows being open in his chamber toward Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime."
  - e) Acts 2:42: "And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers."
  - f) Acts 6:4: "But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word."
  - g) Acts 12:5: "Peter therefore was kept in prison: but prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him."
  - h) Acts 12:12: "And when he had considered *the thing*, he came to the house of Mary the mother of John, whose surname was Mark; where many were gathered together praying."
  - i) Philippians 4:6-7: "Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."
  - j) Colossians 4:2: "Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving;"
- 3) Serious students of the Bible cannot imagine Christ passing a single day without communing with the Father through prayer. If the Son of God needed the strength provided by prayer, it is certain that you and I need that strength even more.
- d. Distributing to the necessity of saints. Here is a clear reference to helping poor brethren by giving them what they need, including food, clothing, shelter, protection, and medical attention.
  - 1) In those times of physical persecution, faithful saints often lost their jobs, their houses, their businesses, their possessions, and their protection under the law. They had to flee their persecutors, leaving behind their worldly goods. In those days when Christianity was extremely costly, there was the need for other saints to supply the needs of those who were persecuted.
  - 2) Even in our day of prosperity and peace, there is still the need for the fortunate in this world's goods to share with those who are less fortunate. When Hurricane Hugo hit South Carolina in 1989, brethren all over the country sent to the aid of the victims, especially to the suffering saints. When Hurricane Andrew devastated south Florida (1992), those brethren in South Carolina were quick to send aid to their afflicted brethren. To help a suffering brother is to help ourselves, for we are "members one of another." Cf. Matthew 25:33ff.
  - 3) Our brethren in Jerusalem were quick to help the needy among them (cts 2:44-45; 4:32-37). They understood and practiced the "Golden Rule" (Matt. 7:12). They followed the example of the "Good Samaritan" (Luke 10:30-37).
  - 4) Faith without works is as empty to the Christian as it is to the alien sinner. Without obeying the word of God, no alien sinner can be saved; without obeying the word of God, no Christian can go to heaven (Jas. 2:14-26)
    - a) Mark 12:29-31: "And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments *is*, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord: And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart,

and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this *is* the first commandment. And the second *is* like, *namely* this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these."

- b) 1 John 3:17-18: "But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels *of compassion* from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him? My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth."
  - c) 1 John 5:2-3: "By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous."
- 5) Paul is not teaching that it is wrong for us to help the needy who are not Christians. He knew that there were many saints who were in sore need of the essentials of life. While God has promised to provide these necessities, he depends on Christians to do all they can to that end. In other places, the Bible shows that we are to help all men, as we have opportunity and ability: "And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not. As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all *men*, especially unto them who are of the household of faith" (Gal. 6:9-10)..
- 6) To *distribute* is called *communicate* in other passages (1 Tim. 6:17-18; Rom. 15:27). If it was necessary for Paul to teach on the subject then, surely such is needed today.
- 7) Generally, Christians today do not share on anything like the scale our brethren of the first century did. Lard's description of the brethren of more than a hundred years ago may be all too similar to many of our own day: "I have never seen it practiced except upon a scale so parsimonious as to render it a virtual nullity. The scanty manner in which the rich disciples of the present day share the wants of the poor is a sham. From their thousands, they dole out dimes; and from storehouses full, mete out handfuls. This is no compliance with the precept; and it were better for a Christian that we were without a coat to his name than to have two, and not give to his brother who has none. Such precepts as the present will, in the day of eternity, prove the fatal reef on which many a saintly bark has stranded" (p.391).
- e. Given to hospitality. In those days of persecution, saints who fled from their tormentors were often in need of a place to stay. There were no motels then, although there were inns. But if one was unable to pay, he could not stay. Hence, the need for saints to take in their brethren. Cf. Matthew 25:33-46.
- 1) Hebrews 13:2: "Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares."
  - 2) 1 Timothy 5:10: "Well reported of for good works; if she have brought up children, if she have lodged strangers, if she have washed the saints' feet, if she have relieved the afflicted, if she have diligently followed every good work."
  - 3) 1 Timothy 3:2: "A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good be-haviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach." Cf. Titus 1:8.
  - 4) 1 Peter 4:9: "Use hospitality one to another without grudging."
  - 5) Examples of Old Testament characters who showed hospitality include Abraham (Gen. 18:1-8), Lot (Gen. 19:1-2); Job (Job 31:16-17), and the Shunemite woman (2 Kings 4:8ff).
  - 6) New Testament people who showed hospitality include Mary and Martha (Luke 10:38-42), Simon the Tanner (Acts 10:5-6), Lydia (Acts 16:14-15), Philip (Acts 21:8-10), Publius (Acts 28:7), and certain brethren at Puteoli (Acts 28:14).
- f. Bless them which persecute you. This is one of the chief differences between Christians and people of the world. A faithful Christian is to have this attribute as a prime characteristic of life.
- 1) Christ taught this principle. "Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and

- on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same? And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? do not even the publicans so? Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect" (Matt. 5:43-48).
- 2) The underlying precept promoting this characteristic is love for all men, even our enemies. If we love another person, regardless of his attitude and conduct toward us, we will treat him as we would like to be treated (Matt. 7:12; Mark 12:31). The *Golden Rule* is love for neighbor in action.
  - 3) Paul enlarges on this characteristic in the following verses, teaching what the Lord had earlier taught in the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5:10-12, 44ff).
- g. Bless, and curse not. The common reaction that a man of the world has toward someone who attacks him is to return in kind. But the Lord taught against retaliation. As the apostle teaches in a very practical way in this passage, instead of returning blow for blow, we are to bless the attacker.
- 1) The situation he is considering is one in which the saint is being persecuted for righteousness' sake (Matt. 5:10-12,44-48). In such a case, when a Christian is smitten on one cheek, he is to turn the other; that is, he is to be willing to receive abuse without retaliating. The apostles rejoiced "that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name" when they were beaten for preaching the gospel (Acts 5:29-42).
  - 2) Romans 8:18: "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us."
  - 3) Perhaps the most renowned case of martyrdom this side of the first century is found in the case of Polycarp, an elder in the church at Smyrna. Being arrested for being a Christian, he was offered his freedom if he would revile Christ. His famous reply is related in these words: "For 86 years I have been serving him, and he has done no wrong to me. How then dare I blaspheme my King who saved me?" (*World Book Encyclopedia*, Vol. 15, p.574). He is quoted as further saying, "You threaten with the fire that burns for a time, and is quickly quenched, for you do not know the fire which awaits the wicked in the judgment to come and in everlasting punishment" (*The Eternal Kingdom*, p.64).
  - 4) Alexander Campbell was touring Great Britain in 1847 when a false teacher made some false charges against him. Rather than paying a fine, Mr. Campbell chose to be sent to prison. The cause he promoted was greatly enhanced by this persecution, and he was vindicated later, while his accuser received the denunciation he deserved.
5. Verse 15: "Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep."
- a. If we are to bless our persecutors, how are we to treat our fellow Christians? Paul teaches here that in the case where one saint has reason to rejoice, other Christians are to rejoice with him; if he has cause to weep, others are to weep with him.
  - b. This is an application of the Golden Rule. Since we want others to rejoice or weep with us as we have occasion for one or the other, so should we be quick to respond to others in similar ways.
  - c. The mature Christian's heart is tender. His natural inclination is to weep with those in sorrow. When we see a mother shed tears at the casket containing the body of her little child, none but a hard heart is left untouched by this sorrowful scene! Our world has become too callous. It is not a mark of strength, but of spiritual weakness, to be indifferent toward the sufferings of others. A danger to many, especially to preachers, is the peril of becoming too hard when dealing with false teachers and wayward brethren; we might harden our hearts against their plight.
  - d. While Christians have tender hearts toward the sorrowful, and we easily weep with them that weep, it is not always easy for us to rejoice with others who meet with success. It is all too easy for us to feel envy at the promotion or good fortune of another. But we must not be so small and petty that we will refuse to be happy for the success of another person, especially if he is a faithful Christian.
6. Verse 16: "Be of the same mind one toward another. Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceits."
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- a. We are to treat others equally well. We must not love one brother and hate another; we must not be guilty of honoring one saint while scorning another. If we will weep with one suffering saint and refuse to do so with another, we are showing respect of persons, an attitude which is strongly condemned by the Lord! (James 4:10-12: 2:1-13).
  - b. We are members of one another (Rom. 12:4-5). As the various members of the human body are perfectly united in serving the best interests of the whole body, so should the various members of the body of Christ. If the foot is injured by an accident, the hands rush to its aid, the face shows its discomfiture, and the mouth announces to the world that an injury has been sustained! When some tragedy befalls a fellow saint, the others should suffer with him, and seek to come to his aid.
  - c. Instead of minding things that are high and mighty by this world's standards, God's people are to be more in tune with lowly things. "The general sentiment seems to be: Be not proud in your views and conduct, but be content with an humble, unostentatious life. Set not your heart on high places, high life, high company; for much of these are hollow and insincere; but be led along in life by lowly thoughts, lowly ways, and things that comport with a spirit of humility. Christ was meek and gentle to all men: be like him" (Lard, pp.392f). Cf. 1 Corinthians 1:18ff.
    - 1) Isaiah 55:8-9: "For my thoughts *are* not your thoughts, neither *are* your ways my ways, saith the LORD. For *as* the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts."
    - 2) Jeremiah 45:5: "And seekest thou great things for thyself? seek *them* not: for, behold, I will bring evil upon all flesh, saith the LORD: but thy life will I give unto thee for a prey in all places whither thou goest."
    - 3) Mark 12:37: "David therefore himself calleth him Lord; and whence is he *then* his son? And the common people heard him gladly."
  - d. Instead of seeking after men of high position or wealth, we are to condescend to those of low estate. If we set our minds on the great things and great people of earth, we will allow such things and people to influence us in the wrong way. "Instead of being carried away with admiration of the rich and powerful, Paul said, 'Be carried away...with the lowly'" (Coffman, p.438).
  - e. We are not to be wise in our own conceit. The apostle is warning against being puffed up with a sense of our own importance or wisdom. "For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called" (1 Cor. 1:26).
    - 1) An inflated estimation of self leads to presumptuousness and feelings of superiority, which are direct opposites of the spirit of Christianity. While many false teachers act out of ignorance, many others are such because they have exalted themselves (2 Peter 2:10-22).
    - 2) One of the greatest dangers for a faithful gospel preacher is too much success before he able to handle it. The sad case of Jesse B. Ferguson is a clear example. "Like a meteor which flashes across the horizon, making a trail of glorious light behind it, and then suddenly disappearing and leaving nothing but darkness in its wake, so Jesse B. Ferguson came above the horizon and shone as a great pulpit orator in the church of Christ at Nashville, Tenn., and then as suddenly disappeared and dropped into obscurity. Perhaps no preacher of the gospel ever stood so high in the estimation of the people and received the plaudits of the populace and then dropped so low as did this man" (H. Leo Boles, quoted by Earl West, *The Search for the Ancient Order*, Vol I, p.261).
7. Verse 17: "Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men."
- a. Again the apostle announces heaven's prohibition against rendering evil for evil. So contrary to the spirit of Christianity is this practice that it needed to be emphasized.
  - b. In the face of persecution, it would be very difficult for Christians to keep quiet and calmly receive ill treatment. It is trying for us to accept unjust criticism, today. Our common inclination is to strike back with vigor, but that would put us on the level of the oppressor.
  - c. Paul also admonishes us to provide things honest in the sight of all men. We are to do nothing that would bring reproach on the cause of Christ. The church of Christ is judged by the world by the way
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Christians conduct themselves.

- 1) Romans 13:13: "Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying."
  - 2) Philippians 1:27: "Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel."
  - 3) 1 Timothy 4:12: "Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity."
8. Verse 18: "If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men."
- a. Instead of rendering evil for evil, or being dishonest in our dealings with the world, we must do all within our power to give the world the best possible view of the church.
  - b. We are to get along with the world to the best of our ability. Rather than to allow the world to see division between members of the church, the innocent ones ought to suffer loss.
  - c. Romans 14:19: "Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another."
  - d. 1 Corinthians 6:6-8: "But brother goeth to law with brother, and that before the unbelievers. Now therefore there is utterly a fault among you, because ye go to law one with another. Why do ye not rather take wrong? why do ye not rather *suffer yourselves* to be defrauded? Nay, ye do wrong, and defraud, and that *your* brethren."
  - e. Hebrews 12:14: "Follow peace with all *men*, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord."
9. Verses 19-21: "Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good."
- a. No human has the right to take vengeance into his own hands, for that is God's prerogative (Ps. 24; Heb. 10:23-31; 2 Thess. 1:7-9). God will punish all wrongs in his own time and way.
  - b. To fight back when we are persecuted, or when we are being wronged in some other way, is to put ourselves on the sorry level of our enemy. We are to trust God to take care of matters.
  - c. Instead of retaliating, we are to do good to the enemy. Many an angry and wicked heart has been softened by a kind word or act. When we do good to the enemy, we make the oppressor ashamed of the evil he is directing against us.
    - 1) Proverbs 25:21-23: "If thine enemy be hungry, give him bread to eat; and if he be thirsty, give him water to drink: For thou shalt heap coals of fire upon his head, and the LORD shall reward thee. The north wind driveth away rain: so doth an angry countenance a backbiting tongue."
    - 2) 1 Samuel 24:16-19: "And it came to pass, when David had made an end of speaking these words unto Saul, that Saul said, Is this thy voice, my son David? And Saul lifted up his voice, and wept. And he said to David, Thou art more righteous than I: for thou hast rewarded me good, whereas I have rewarded thee evil. And thou hast showed this day how that thou hast dealt well with me: forasmuch as when the LORD had delivered me into thine hand, thou killedst me not. For if a man find his enemy, will he let him go well away? wherefore the LORD reward thee good for that thou hast done unto me this day."
    - 3) 1 Samuel 26:21: "Then said Saul, I have sinned: return, my son David: for I will no more do thee harm, because my soul was precious in thine eyes this day: behold, I have played the fool, and have erred exceedingly."
  - d. To fight back makes matters worse; it will harden the enemy in his wickedness, and will make us to be no better than he is. We will, thereby, be overcome by evil.
    - 1) Paul teaches us to overcome evil with good; that is the only way it can be done. If we usurp God's authority by wreaking vengeance, we have done evil ourselves. The best way to eliminate an enemy is to convert him into a friend.

- 2) Luke 23:34: "Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. And they parted his raiment, and cast lots."
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## ROMANS 13

### A. Romans 13:1-7: Subjection to Civil Rulers.

1. Verse 1: "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God."
  - a. *Let* prefaces an imperative sentence which is equivalent to a command. The "higher powers" are the civil authorities, at any level. It is certain that church authorities do not bear a sword, which these rulers have (cf. 2 Cor. 10:4-5). Peter gave similar directions regarding civil obedience in 1 Peter 2:13-17: "Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme; Or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well. For so is the will of God, that with well doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men: As free, and not using *your* liberty for a cloak of maliciousness, but as the servants of God. Honour all *men*. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the king."
  - b. God has ordained three institutions, each having responsibility and authority in its own sphere.
    - 1) The home is his oldest institution, and is designed to furnish mankind the companionship, protection and training to be productive and happy citizens of this world (cf. Gen. 2:18-25). The husband and father in the average case is given primary authority in the family (1 Cor. 11:3).
    - 2) The church is God's spiritual institution, and is designed to forward God's work of converting the lost, helping the needy, and edifying the saved (Eph. 4:12). Authority in the church is vested in Christ, its head and founder, and is expressed in the New Testament. In local congregations, elders are appointed to oversee the affairs of the congregation.
      - a) Philippians 1:1: "Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons."
      - b) Hebrews 13:17: "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that *is* unprofitable for you."
      - c) 1 Peter 5:1-4: "The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed: Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight *thereof*, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; Neither as being lords over *God's* heritage, but being ensamples to the flock. And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away."
    - 3) Civil government was likewise appointed by God, with authority divided according to the type of rule decided upon by the controlling force. That a society of men need some kind of directing force is clear. God ordained the original principle of civil government, but has given mankind latitude to select the type that they deem best. However, a repressive rule does not meet with God's approval, nor one which hinders morality and godliness or which promotes immorality and unrighteousness. He may permit such a rule for a while, to accomplish some objective, but will bring it down when that purpose has been served. Hitler's Germany, Hirohito's Japan, and Stalin's Russia were allowed to function for a time, but have since been dismantled.
  - c. Paul gives directions here regarding the Christian's attitude toward civil authority.
    - 1) In the first century, persecution frequently was directed against the church by civil rulers. How should a Christian react? If he could not flee, he was to submit humbly. In many cases, flight was the proper thing to do. Paul fled from his tormentors at Damascus: "In Damascus the governor under Aretas the king kept the city of the Damascenes with a garrison, desirous to apprehend me: And through a window in a basket was I let down by the wall, and escaped his hands" (2 Cor. 11:32-33).
    - 2) In ordinary cases, when a civil authority issues a decree, Christians are to be submissive to that

- order, as are all other citizens. It is in the best interest of mankind to have some power in control, to make decisions in behalf of all, to provide protection for the whole. Democracy was established so that the individuals could express their wishes in regards to how they were to be governed. The democratic form of government provides for the well-being of the whole nation, while insuring the rights and privileges of the individual.
- 3) The passage under consideration places on all the citizens of a nation (or state) the obligation to obey the decrees of its rulers. We are to render unto Caesar the things that pertain to Caesar, and unto God the things that pertain to God (Matt. 22:21). We are to pay taxes, and in all other ways to show that we are loyal subjects of those earthly rulers who are over us. Only when obedience to a civil law would put us in disobedience to God's law, are we to disobey civil authority.
    - a) Acts 4:19-20: "But Peter and John answered and said unto them, Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard."
    - b) Acts 5:29: "Then Peter and the *other* apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men."
  - 4) Unbelievers in the first century falsely accused Christians of being lawbreakers. The saints were told to be obedient to civil rulers and give no occasion for the enemy to speak evil of them. "Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles; that whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation" (1 Pet. 2:12). "...Give none occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully" (1 Tim. 5:14). We are to be characterized by "Sound speech, that cannot be condemned; that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of you" (Titus 2:8; cf. Matt. 5:13-16; 1 Tim. 4:12).
  - d. All power (authority) resides in God; he is the source of all authority. There are two kinds of authority: primary and delegated. His is primary, but he has delegated certain authority to others.
    - 1) He has given his Son all authority to operate in the Christian Age; his Son delegated a certain amount and degree of authority to the apostles, who received and transmitted the fullness of the gospel to humanity by the Holy Spirit (John 16:13; 2 Tim. 3:16-17). In eternity, Christ will return to the Father all things, and with the redeemed of all ages, will be subject to the Father: "Then *cometh* the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy *that* shall be destroyed *is* death. For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith all things are put under *him*, *it is* manifest that he is excepted, which did put all things under him. And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all" (1 Cor. 15:24-28).
    - 2) The authority exercised by civil rulers derives from God. Jesus shocked Governor Pilate by his statement in John 19:11: "Thou couldest have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above...."
    - 3) God operates in the kingdoms of men. When Nebuchadnezzar boasted of his own greatness in building Babylon and conquering the world, God severely rebuked and punished him. "While the word was in the king's mouth, there fell a voice from heaven, saying, O king Nebuchadnezzar, to thee it is spoken; The kingdom is departed from thee. And they shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field; they shall make thee to eat grass as oxen, and seven times shall pass over thee, until thou know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will" (Dan. 4:30-32).
  - e. God promotes and demotes earthly rulers. He can do this because, as Paul affirms, "the powers that be are ordained of God."
2. Verse 2: "Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist
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shall receive to themselves damnation."

- a. Because the statement of verse one is true, the fact of this verse is also true. One who resists the authority of a civil ruler, who is operating within his God-given sphere, also resists the ordinance of God. God requires that we obey our civil rulers; when we disobey the civil ruler, we disobey God.
  - b. What about the civil rights movement of the 1960s? Were those people who conducted *sit-ins*, or who blocked traffic, or who interfered with the normal activities of other people, in violation of God's decree? Would it be right for Christians to try to force their will on the general population by "civil disobedience?"
  - c. Our mission as followers of Christ is to change the world. The means by which we are to effect this change is the gospel. Positively, we can bring about the change by preaching the gospel; indirectly, we can encourage the change by influence, as the gospel lives in us.
    - 1) Matthew 5:13-16: "Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men. Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."
    - 2) Ephesians 5:6-11: "Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience. Be not ye therefore partakers with them. For ye were sometimes darkness, but now *are ye* light in the Lord: walk as children of light: (For the fruit of the Spirit *is* in all goodness and righteousness and truth;) Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord. And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove *them*."
    - 3) Philippians 2:15-16: "That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world; Holding forth the word of life; that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain."
    - 4) 1 Timothy 4:12: "Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity."
  - d. Christ did not fulfill his earthly mission by making disturbances in the streets. That would have been more like a *rabble-rouser* than the Savior of the world! Isaiah predicted that Christ would "...not strive, nor cry; neither shall any man hear his voice in the streets" (Matt. 12:14-21). Our Lord's work was too holy and majestic to be accomplished by ignoble methods. Our work as Christians is not to be done through circus-like tactics. The Lord never employed base procedures; he had too high a regard for his great work. And we should not demean our great mission by resorting to disgraceful methods.
3. Verse 3: "For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same."
    - a. This verse gives a general rule about civil rulers. In normal circumstances, they do not represent a danger to their subjects; they enact laws to encourage peace and safety, and to provide a situation in which the citizens may earn a decent living and provide for their families.
    - b. Only those who violate the law should have any reason to fear the law. Since Christians should be the most law-abiding citizens in a nation, there ought not be any reason for them to fear civil authority. But law breakers, in God's plan, should have much to fear.
    - c. Laws are needed to maintain order and peace in a country. To insure the maintenance of law and order, a police force and a judicial system are essential. But if the law enforcement officials apply the law in an arbitrary manner, the citizens will lose their respect for the law. And if the judicial system favors the criminal, the citizenry will gradually lose its respect for the system. The law must be enforced with fairness, with a measure of mercy.
    - d. A law abiding citizen has nothing to fear from the civil ruler who is operating within his God-given
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- realm. Instead of having terror of the law, such a person might even receive commendation from civil rulers.
4. Verse 4: "For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil."
    - a. The subject of the first clause of the verse is the civil ruler. When a civil authority operates within his God-given realm, he is a minister (servant) of God. The verse does not address the spiritual condition of the ruler; it merely states that the official is filling a role assigned to him by the God of heaven. How many civil rulers realize and admit that they owe their position to Almighty God? Very few in our time.
    - b. If he is operating within the authority God has delivered to him, his work will be productive of good for all his subjects, Christian and non-Christian.
    - c. However, if a citizen (believer or unbeliever) violates the law, there is reason for that lawbreaker to be afraid. Why? The ruler does not have a sword at his disposal merely for show! He has the God-given right to execute lawbreakers found guilty of a capital offense. The government has been charged with the requirement to enforce the law. *Sword* is symbolic of all the authority which civil rulers are given.
    - d. Civil rulers are servants of God in the civil arena; they are charged with the responsibility to maintain law and order. This requires them to punish criminals and others who break the law. Punishment is often thought of as an expression of wrath, but in the case of judges who mete out penalties for criminal activities, their disposition is one of judicial sobriety, not anger. When a criminal is thus punished, the process may properly be viewed as the wrath of God being brought to bear upon the outlaw.
  5. Verse 5: "Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake."
    - a. Two reasons for a Christian being obedient to the civil authority where he lives are given here. The first reason is because of the penalty that he may receive if he violates the law. The second reason pertains to his conscience.
    - b. Obeying the law only to avoid punishment may be good enough for the non-believing citizen, but it is insufficient for the child of God. A Christian operates in the spiritual realm, as well as the physical. He must please civil authorities if possible, but of greater importance is the requirement that he please his God! Obeying the law of the land because of fear is one thing; obeying the law because it is God's will is an entirely different motive.
    - c. God requires that his people maintain a pure conscience. To do so necessitates that we live up to what we know or believe to be right. To violate one's conscience is to do wrong (Rom. 14:23). Thus, to have God's continuing approval, Christians must follow God's will—from the heart. In doing this, he will keep himself well within the requirements of civil law.
    - d. We want to avoid falling under the penalty the law imposes on law breakers, but we especially want to retain God's approval, which includes being obedient to civil law.
  6. Verses 6-7: "For for this cause pay ye tribute also: for they are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing. Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour."
    - a. Because of the truths just presented, Christians are to pay their taxes. We are not responsible for the way governments spend the tax money; they will be held accountable for any misuse. This passage places the obligation on saints to pay their taxes (tribute) as prescribed by law. The reasons Paul assigns for this are those stated in verse five: to avoid penalty and for conscience sake.
    - b. There is no *free ride*. Money is necessary for government to accomplish its mission. We might not agree with the way government spends tax revenues, but that does not give us the right to refuse to pay taxes. Therefore, render tribute to whom tribute is due. Every government must levy taxes; in our case, we pay county, state, and federal assessments. All of these are our God-given duty to pay (Matt.
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22:21).

- c. We are also told to render custom to whom custom is due. "The customs were duties imposed by law upon merchandise, whether imported or exported" (Lard, p.402). This precept prohibits a Christian from smuggling activities. But what about those cases where a country (such as Russia and China) forbids the importation of Bibles? Could Christians scripturally smuggle Bibles into the nation? In such a situation, God's word is being hindered; and precious souls are dying lost. In cases where Christians are forbidden to teach the gospel, we are to teach it anyway. No ruler or government has the right to prohibit the preaching of God's word. On the same basis, a nation that prohibits the importation of the Bible is acting out of harmony with God's will, and Christians may surely bring in Bibles so the people may be taught. If not, why not?
- d. We are told to render fear (reverence, respect) to those to whom it is due. In order to encourage respect for the law, our nation calls on us to show respect to the president, judges, and law-makers. In the military forces, respect for superiors is demanded, not because the person being saluted deserves that respect, but deference is being shown to the position the officer occupies. While Christians are not allowed to worship anyone occupying a position of authority in government, we are taught to pay them the respect due their office.
- e. Paul further tells us to show honor to whom honor is due. Rulers and judges are to be tendered the tributes of honor due their position.

B. Romans 13:8-10: Love Fulfills the Law of God.

1. Verse 8: "Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law."
    - a. The first part of this verse has been made to teach that Christians are not to incur a debt, but this is not the subject of the passage. Paul was willing to take on a debt in the case of Onesimus: "If he hath wronged thee, or oweth *thee* ought, put that on mine account; I Paul have written *it* with mine own hand, I will repay *it*: albeit I do not say to thee how thou owest unto me even thine own self besides" (Phile. 18-19).
    - b. Lying in the background of the verse is the instruction regarding the requirement that we pay our taxes. However, the rest of this verse sets the context for this statement. We have a continuing debt to others, which is to love one another; we are not to let that debt go unpaid. The injunction is stated negatively; the positive requirement is that we show love to each other. Paul is an example of this kind of indebtedness: "I am debtor both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians; both to the wise, and to the unwise. So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also" (Rom. 1:14-15).
    - c. One who shows love has fulfilled the law in this particular. In other words, the law of God requires that we love each other. The second great commandment is to love our neighbor as we love ourself (Mark 12:31). The first is to love God with all our heart, mind, soul, and strength (Mark 12:29-30). We do not fulfill the first only by doing the second; both must be followed.
    - d. It is hard for us to have love for those who are unlovely and unlovable. Nevertheless, that is our God-given duty! But the Lord never expected us to have a warm, close feeling for everyone; that kind of love cannot be commanded—it occurs naturally.
    - e. But the kind of love commanded is a disposition of heart that causes us to desire the best for another person, even an enemy. If we love him, we will not retaliate if he should attack us; we do not rejoice when he falls into a difficulty; we will sincerely pray for and desire that all will be well with him. This debt is always due and is never paid in full this side of eternity.
  2. Verse 9: "For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."
    - a. Having genuine love for another includes adhering to the five prohibitions which Paul names. He lists the last five commandments in the Decalogue.
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- b. One cannot show love for his neighbor if he does any of these five things.
- 1) Thou shalt not commit adultery. To do so, harms one's spouse; it harms the partner in this sinful act; it harms the spouse of the partner; it harms the individual's family; it harms Christ and his church; and it certainly harms the offender.
  - 2) Thou shalt not kill. To commit murder obviously violates the victim's well-being. Jesus interpreted this sixth commandment in Matthew 19:18 as, "Thou shalt do no murder." When civil authorities execute a criminal for a capital offense, they are not violating this precept. When Noah emerged from the ark, one of the first requirements God placed on him and all his descendants was this: "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man" (Gen. 9:6).
  - 3) Thou shalt not steal. To take property from another person clearly violates the victim's interests; we would not want such to be done to us.
  - 4) Thou shalt not bear false witness. To violate this prohibition is to affirm a falsehood against another. This transgression was done when Jezebel connived to have men make false charges against Naboth (1 Kings 21:1-14). The injunction is violated when a lie is told against another, whether in a court of law or privately. Harm is surely done when false witness is borne against another.
  - 5) Thou shalt not covet. There are some things for which any degree of coveting is sinful. One cannot covet a neighbor's wife in any sinless way or degree. To desire something that is wrong, or to desire something that is not wrong in itself to an excessive degree, is sinful. To covet something that does not belong to us is wrong; it violates the law of love. The word translated "covet" in 1 Corinthians 12:31 and 14:39 is the Greek word *zeloo*—"earnestly desire." The word of our text is *epithumeo*. Vine defines it as "to fix the desire upon (*epi*, upon, used intensively, *thumos*, passion), whether good or bad (p.252).
- c. Other aspects of the matter are summed up in the second great commandment: "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself" (cf. Mark 12:31). "Not, you shall love your neighbor as much as yourself; for this is neither possible nor necessary; but you shall love him in like manner as you love yourself. You love yourself so truly that you would never have your neighbor injure you. In like manner, you must love him so truly as never to injure him. Thus loving him, you will do him no harm; and so far you fulfill the law towards him. But if we love our neighbor as ourselves, we shall not stop merely at not injuring him. We will go farther; and whatever good our self-love prompts us to wish him to do us, that good our love for him will prompt us to do him" (Lard, p.405).
3. Verse 10: "Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law."
- a. Paul summarizes the point of this passage by saying, "Love worketh no ill to his neighbor." Stated positively, he teaches that love seeks the best interests of its object.
  - b. If we love another person as we ought, we will not wish him any harm, we will do him no harm, our words and deeds toward him will be such as we would want for ourself (Matt. 7:12).
  - c. "The law requires me not to murder my neighbor, not to steal from him, not to commit adultery against him, not to desire his goods; in a word, not to do him harm of any kind; and if I love him, I will not do him any. Hence, the love of my neighbor is the fulfillment of the law towards him" (Lard, p.406).
  - d. To love our neighbor as we love ourselves is not all of our duty before God. We must still love him with all our being, which includes and requires that we do all that he demands and wishes us to do.
    - 1) John 14:15: "If ye love me, keep my commandments."
    - 2) John 15:14: "Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you."
    - 3) John 14:23: "Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him."
    - 4) 1 John 5:2-3: "By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his
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commandments are not grievous."

- e. If there should be any question as to the identity of our neighbor, let the querist look to the story of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37).

C. Romans 13:11-14: In View of the Approaching Eternity, We Are To Live Holy Lives.

1. Verse 11: "And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed."
  - a. The apostle was fully aware of the swiftness with which time passes. Those who have lived for any length of time on earth will have been impressed with its speed. The Bible has many graphic descriptions of how relatively short are the years of a man's earthly sojourn.
    - 1) Job 7:6: "My days are swifter than a weaver's shuttle, and are spent without hope."
    - 2) Psalms 90:9-12: "For all our days are passed away in thy wrath: we spend our years as a tale *that is told*. The days of our years *are* threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength *they be* fourscore years, yet *is* their strength labour and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away. Who knoweth the power of thine anger? even according to thy fear, *so is* thy wrath. So teach *us* to number our days, that we may apply *our* hearts unto wisdom."
    - 3) James 4:13-14: "Go to now, ye that say, To day or to morrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain: Whereas ye know not what *shall be* on the morrow. For what *is* your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away."
    - 4) John 9:4: "I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work."
  - b. In view of the fact that time is rapidly passing, and our opportunities for doing good are limited, Paul admonishes us to wake up and busy ourselves in the Lord's work.
    - 1) 1 Corinthians 15:34: "Awake to righteousness, and sin not; for some have not the knowledge of God: I speak *this* to your shame."
    - 2) Ephesians 5:14-16: "Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light. See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, *16* Redeeming the time, because the days are evil."
  - c. The day of their salvation was closer at hand at the time Paul wrote, than it was when they first came to believe. They were saved from the guilt of their past sins when they obeyed the gospel (Rom. 6:1-18); the salvation of which he now speaks is the salvation in heaven. Since they were now nearer their departure from earth into eternity (death), their eternal deliverance was nearer to being accomplished. The same can be said about us today.
2. Verse 12: "The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light."
  - a. Christians are always fighting against the habits and temptations of sin. We never reach a point in this life when we can rest easy, without the danger posed by the devil being a factor.
    - 1) 1 Corinthians 10:12: "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall."
    - 2) Ephesians 6:10-18: "Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high *places*. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints."

- 3) 1 Timothy 6:12: "Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses."
  - 4) 1 Thessalonians 5:7-10: "For they that sleep sleep in the night; and they that be drunken are drunken in the night. But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation. For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, Who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him."
  - b. Those saints who are under the bondage of sin must cast off the works of darkness; those who are still valiantly fighting the fight of faith, must continue to reject the works of darkness; and each needs to continually wear the armor of light.
  - c. These are figures of speech, depicting on the one hand, sinful activity, and on the other, the saintly works of a faithful child of God. "And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make *you that ye shall* neither *be* barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" (2 Pet. 1:5-11).
3. Verse 13: "Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying."
    - a. Turning to more practical language, Paul states plainly that our lives are to be honest. We are to live decently; our lives are to be lived as becoming those who live in the light. We are to live straight lives, as one who walks in daylight can travel a straight line. There is no need for stumbling since the path is well-illuminated. We have the light of the full gospel to illuminate our way; we can not claim ignorance.
    - b. Our lives are not to be characterized by rioting (revelling) and drunkenness. This kind of conduct is called *partying* by our worldly generation. Bumper-stickers and tee-shirt signs call for those who read them to "join in the fun." Such a life-style offers a fool's reward. What is not shone are the wrecked lives, the destroyed health, the wasted opportunities, and the sin-stained souls of those who participate.
    - c. Our lives are not to be characterized by chambering and wantonness. Paul forbids unchaste conduct with those of the opposite sex; and we are not to be guilty of lewdness. A generation ago, Americans were generally opposed to the kind of conduct that today is commonly portrayed in movies and on television. But chaste conduct is now seen as the exception, and not the rule.
    - d. Our lives are not to be characterized by strife and envy. Strife is contention or wrangling. What right-thinking person likes to live amid such? Envy is as much opposed to the Christian spirit as anything could be. It is the feeling of pain at the good fortune of another; it is the opposite of love.
  4. Verse 14: "But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof."
    - a. In direct contrast to the sinful dispositions and conduct just discussed is the Christ-like conduct of a faithful child of God.
    - b. Instead of being identified with the former, let us put on Christ; let us become as much like Christ as we can. Doing so will preclude our placing the emphasis on worldly considerations and needs. Our priorities will not be to gratify the lusts of the flesh, but to adorn the spirit.
    - c. 2 Corinthians 3:18: "But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord."
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## ROMANS 14

### A. Romans 14:1-4: Some Are Weak in the Faith in Regards to Meat.

1. There are some preliminary considerations to be noted before examining this chapter. The passage is often misused and abused. It has become a common practice to apply Paul's message here to many subjects in which no connection was intended by the apostle.
  - a. In recent years, brethren claim that one who opposes the use of mechanical instruments of music in worship is the *weaker brother* and one who views their use as a matter of indifference is the *stronger brother*. This assumes the point that must be proved: that instrumental music in worship is a matter of choice. Since God has bound singing as the kind of music he wants in worship (Col. 3:16), and since we are not permitted to go beyond the authority of the written word (1 Cor. 4:6, ASV; 2 John 9; Col. 3:17; 1 John 3:4), therefore the use of mechanical instruments of music in worship is sinful.
    - 1) 1 Corinthians 4:6: "Now these things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself and Apollos for your sakes; that in us ye might learn not *to go* beyond the things which are written; that no one of you be puffed up for the one against the other" (ASV).
    - 2) Colossians 3:16-17: "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, *do* all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him."
    - 3) 1 John 3:4: "Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law."
    - 4) 2 John 9: "Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son."
  - b. This chapter deals with matters that are neither right nor wrong within themselves. The eating of meat is an optional matter: one may choose to eat meat or refrain from eating it. There is no sin necessarily connected with eating meat (Acts 10:9-17; 1 Tim. 4:1-3). The Law of Moses forbade the eating of certain kinds of meat, but this distinction did not exist in nature; it was a positive divine restriction which was designed to inculcate in the Jewish mind the requirement to follow God's will even if they could not understand the necessity of the particular command. In view of the fact that the Law of Moses has been fulfilled and removed, being replaced by the gospel, no meat is ceremonially unclean under the Law of Christ (Matt. 5:17; Col. 2:14-17; Heb. 8:1-13).
  - c. Paul is not dealing here with required principles of God's Law. That is, if the Bible elsewhere had bound or forbidden a practice or belief, what the apostle sets forth here does not set those other requirements aside. Thus, when he writes that "there is nothing unclean of itself," he is not to be understood as saying that fornication is permitted (cf. 1 Cor. 6:18; Gal. 5:19-21). His statement in Romans 14:14 is limited by the context to those things which are neither good nor evil in themselves.
  - d. Romans 14 addresses those who are Christians; not a word of it applies to those who are members of sectarian churches. Those being considered are acceptable to God, and are instructed how they are to conduct themselves so as to remain acceptable. Paul speaks of the conduct of individual saints, and not of denominational congregations (or sectarian individuals).
  - e. The subjects discussed in the chapter pertain to liberty and judgment, and not to matters of faith. The items addressed are matters of which the kingdom of God does not consist (verse 17). The law of the kingdom neither requires its citizens to eat meat, nor does it forbid them to eat meat.
  - f. "In this chapter and in 1 Cor., chapters 8 and 10:14-33, Paul discusses the matter of eating meat; but, in the main the points of emphasis in the two letters are different. In Corinthians he warns brethren against eating meat under circumstances that might lead others to eat certain meat in honor of an idol, but the main point in this fourteenth chapter is somewhat different. The Christian Jews, at least, many of them, had not entirely broken away from the law of Moses. They observed certain days, and were

disposed to condemn the Gentile Christians for not doing so. They would not eat meat that the law declared unclean....The Gentile Christians would consider their conduct as foolishness....All these matters were grounds for a lot of criticisms and strife" (Whiteside, pp.266f).

2. Verse 1: "Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations."
  - a. Every Christian is to be received into the fellowship of all of the other saints; this applies even to those Christians who are weak in the faith. No divisions are permitted to separate those of like precious faith.
    - 1) 1 Corinthians 1:10: "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and *that* there be no divisions among you; but *that* ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment."
    - 2) 2 Peter 1:1: "Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ:"
  - b. To be weak in the faith is to have a deficiency in regard to the faith (the gospel). That weakness does not necessarily relate to the amount of knowledge the weak brother does or does not possess. The weak brother is one who is unable or unwilling to stand fast in his convictions (see verses 22-23). This weak brother is a Christian, hence his standing with Christ is without question. We are not allowed to fellowship a brother who walks disorderly (2 Thess. 3:6; Rom. 16:17-18; 1 Cor. 5:1-7; Matt. 18:15-17). We are to fellowship every faithful Christian.
    - 1) Matthew 18:15-17: "Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear *thee*, *then* take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell *it* unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as a heathen man and a publican."
    - 2) Romans 16:17-18: "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple."
    - 3) 1 Corinthians 5:1-7: "It is reported commonly *that there is* fornication among you, and such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles, that one should have his father's wife. And ye are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he that hath done this deed might be taken away from among you. For I verily, as absent in body, but present in spirit, have judged already, as though I were present, *concerning* him that hath so done this deed, In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus. Your glorying *is* not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us."
    - 4) 2 Thessalonians 3:6: "Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us."
  - c. We are to receive other brethren into fellowship, but not for the purpose of disputing their scruples. The ASV renders the verse, "But him that is weak in faith receive ye, yet not for decision of scruples."
  - d. There has always been the problem in the church of maintaining peace and harmony among members. This is true even if they are all from similar backgrounds. But in the first century, the problem was of far greater proportions; Jewish Christians had a life time of training in the Mosaic Law, plus the traditions that had developed through the centuries. Gentile Christians came from an idolatrous background which carried with it certain propensities which irritated the Jewish saints.
  - e. Accordingly, Jewish members often had scruples about eating certain kinds of meat; Gentile saints had no such reservations. There was a grave danger that these differences would create an open strife

which could lead to a serious rent in the ranks of the believers.

- f. Paul's purpose in this chapter is to lay down some principles and instructions which would make it possible for Christians of all backgrounds to live together in harmony. In the first verse, he warns against allowing a condition to develop in which the various members questioned the soundness of other Christians in matters on which God had not legislated. The cases he brings up shows that he is speaking only about activities which are neither right nor wrong.
3. Verse 2: "For one believeth that he may eat all things: another, who is weak, eateth herbs."
    - a. The first situation has to do with the prevalent problem about the rightness of eating meats. In this chapter, he is not specifically discussing meat which had been offered to idols; rather, he is addressing the more general question of whether it was right to eat those meats forbidden by the Mosaic Law.
    - b. In the book of Romans, Paul shows the distinctions between the Law of Moses and the Law of Christ (the gospel). He has strongly emphasized the fact that salvation is not obtained by the keeping of the old law.
    - c. With this forming the background, the apostle has reached the logical point where he can address the matter of eating meats. He revealed in 1 Timothy 4:1-3 that it is proper and right for Christians to eat meat, any meat; the distinctions between certain meats imposed on the Jews by the law had been removed when the New Testament took effect. Galatians and Hebrews address this subject in detail.
    - d. The problem Paul here strives to resolve is plainly stated in this verse. One brother (a Gentile) believed that he could properly eat any meat; another brother (a Jew) believed that he could not eat certain meats, and thus ate herbs (vegetables). How could such brethren get along in peace? The apostle begins to give the solution in the next verse.
  4. Verse 3: "Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not; and let not him which eateth not judge him that eateth: for God hath received him."
    - a. God accepts each of these two brethren, therefore the position each holds is consistent with the gospel. The Lord, however, forbids each of these brethren to denounce the other and to bind his opinion as a matter of law. Since God accepts both, neither is to condemn the other. The word *judge* is used in the sense of *condemning*.
    - b. As already stated, God has neither condemned the eating of meat, nor has he required the eating of meat; and we are not to bind either of these on others; each is in the realm of opinion.
    - c. The old adage growing out of the early part of the Restoration Movement addresses the principles involved in the issue. "In matters of faith, let us be united; in matters of opinion, let us exercise liberty; in all things, let us show love."
  5. Verse 4: "Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be holden up: for God is able to make him stand."
    - a. Illustrating the subject, Paul speaks of the servants of another person. If a servant pleases his master, the third party has no need to be concerned. That servant may not please this third party, but if the master is happy with the servant, the third party must keep quiet about it; it is none of his business.
    - b. God is pleased with the Christian who does not eat meat because of scruples against doing so; God is pleased with the Christian who has no scruples against eating meat; that is, providing there is nothing else in their lives which would estrange them from God.
    - c. God accepts and helps the weaker brother; the stronger brother, whose understanding is more fully developed, must be content with that situation.
    - d. If the meat-eater allows the non-meat-eater the right to refrain from eating meat, harmony exists; if the non-meat-eater allows the meat-eater the right to eat meat, harmony exists.
- B. Romans 14:5-6: Some Are Weak in Regards to Observing Days.
1. Verse 5: "One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind."
    - a. Under the Law, certain days were to be observed as part of God's requirements. There were other days which God permitted the Jews to observe (Purim, for example). While the Law of Moses was in
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- effect, those *permitted* holy days were not to be bound; they were not part of God's Law.
- b. In the first century, Jews were converted to Christ who had followed the Law of Moses all their lives; it was their lifelong practice to rest on the Sabbath day. To suddenly begin to carry on normal affairs of life on Saturday was doubtless beyond the capability of many of them. But the Gentile converts had no such scruples.
  - c. Which position was the correct one? The Sabbath had been removed, but the Jewish Christians had the right to refrain from working on the Sabbath. But the Jewish believer did not have the right to require the Gentile believer to observe the Sabbath. "Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross; *And* having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it. Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath *days*: Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body *is* of Christ" (Col. 2:14-17).
  - d. The issue was a matter of conscience. Each saint had to make up his own mind as to how he would operate on Saturday. Each was to be fully persuaded in his own mind. It was not an issue that could be bound on anyone. The same formula was to be followed in regard to other Jewish special days.
  - e. Judaizing teachers in the church fomented much strife over the relationship of Gentile Christians to the Mosaic Law; they maintained that the Gentiles had to be circumcised and keep the Law (cf. Acts 15; Gal. 2:4-4; 4:10-11). Their evil work disrupted the peace of Gentile congregations, and formed the background for the Roman epistle. The Law was not to be forced upon Gentile saints; but God gave the Jewish saints time to adjust to the new order (cf. Acts 21).
2. Verse 6: "He that regardeth the day, regardeth it unto the Lord; and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it. He that eateth, eateth to the Lord, for he giveth God thanks; and he that eateth not, to the Lord he eateth not, and giveth God thanks."
- a. If a Christian wants to devote a day to fasting, praying, and meditation, that is his prerogative. But he is not given the right to force another Christian to join him in the activity. If a Jewish saint spent each Saturday in such activities, and did no manual labor on that day, no one should interfere; he was devoting that time to the Lord. However, he had no right to require another Christian to follow the same routine.
  - b. "In Paul's discussion of these matters of opinion, the Lord's appointments were not included. The Lord has set apart the Lord's day for worship; its observance is therefore not a matter of opinion or indifference. 'Let each man be fully assured in his own mind' as to whether he will or will not devote any other day to study, meditation, and prayer. Concerning this the Lord has bound no one, and concerning such matters no one should seek to bind his notions" (Whiteside, pp.268f).
  - c. Paul states that when a saint observes a special day, he does so unto the Lord; and when a saint eats (meat, verse 2), he does so unto the Lord because he gives God thanks for it. God accepts either of these two Christians; both are grateful to God for his blessings; both are trying to serve God.
  - d. Does this passage give us the right to set aside certain days of the year to be observed as religious holidays? Are we authorized to celebrate Christmas as Christ's birthday? Are we allowed to set up one Sunday during the year (Easter) to honor the Lord's resurrection?
    - 1) The Lord's requirements do not include the authority to celebrate his birth. We do not even know when he was born! His birth has significance only because of his life, his teachings, his sacrificial death, his burial, and his resurrection (1 Cor. 15:1-20; Rom. 1:4). If a man decides to spend a day or part of a day devoted to reading, meditating, and praying in regard to the birth of Christ, that is his privilege; but he could not require another to join him in those activities.
    - 2) God has designed the first day of every week as the day in which saints are to congregate to remember the Lord's death and resurrection (Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 16:1-2; Rev. 1:10). We have no right to limit this honor to only one day a year.
    - 3) No one has the right to bind where the Lord did not bind; no one has the right to loose what the
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Lord has bound. Our obligations and rights are determined by the New Testament; we must not go beyond our authority; we must not fall short of any of our duties; we must not bind upon any one else what is our right but not the duty to do (Col. 3:17; 2 John 9-11; 1 Cor. 4:6; Rev. 22:18-19; Matt. 7:21-27; John 14:15; Matt. 16:16-19; 18:18).

- a) Matthew 7:21-23: "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity."
- b) Matthew 16:16-19: "And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed *it* unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."
- c) Matthew 18:18: "Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."
- d) John 14:15: "If ye love me, keep my commandments."
- e) 1 Corinthians 4:6: "Now these things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself and Apollos for your sakes; that in us ye might learn not *to go* beyond the things which are written; that no one of you be puffed up for the one against the other" (ASV).
- f) Colossians 3:17: "And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, *do* all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him."
- g) 2 John 9-11: "Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into *your* house, neither bid him God speed: For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds."
- h) Revelation 22:18-19: "For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and *from* the things which are written in this book."

C. Romans 14:7-9: All Faithful Christians Have The Same Standing Before The Lord.

1. Verses 7-8: "For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's."
  - a. "So whatever we do, whether it involves the eating of meats, the observances of rites and special days, must have as its object the fact that we belong to the Lord and we should desire to please him. Since we belong to the Lord we should act in keeping with this fact and not be intolerant or contemptuous of our weak brethren" (Noel Merideth, 1983 *Spiritual Sword Lectures*, p.218).
  - b. That every human being is an offspring of God is clearly affirmed in the Bible (Gen. 1:26-27; Acts 17:24-29); that Christians belong to the Lord in a special sense is likewise plainly stated (1 Cor. 6:19-20). That God has authority over every person and that we owe our allegiance to him is a basic Bible truth (Acts 17:30-31).
  - c. Each of the parties Paul is discussing in the context (the one who eats meat; the one who does not eat meat; the one who observes special days; the one who does not observe special days) is on equal footing before God. Each one's life belongs to the Lord; even in death, each one belongs to him.
  - d. "The point in verse 7 is generally missed by assuming that Paul was speaking of our relations one with

- another. It is true that we cannot cut ourselves off from all relations with our fellow men, but that is not the lesson Paul is teaching. He was speaking of our relations to the Lord" (Whiteside, p.269).
- e. The connection of this passage to the context is this: whether one eats meat or does not eat meat, or whether he does or does not observe special days, he lives a life of service to the Lord; his desire is to please the Savior. His chief aim in life and death is to serve Christ; therefore, in life and in death he belongs to the Lord, he is the Lord's servant.
  - f. In verse seven, the apostle is speaking about Christians: none of us (the followers of Christ) lives to please himself; we serve Christ. And even in death, our goal is to honor him who died for us. Verse eight explains verse seven.
2. Verse 9: "For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living."
- a. Christ lived, died, and rose again to become the Lord of both the living and the dead. While we live on earth, we are willingly under his dominion; and after our departure from this world, we remain under his authority (Matt. 28:18; Acts 17:30-31).
  - b. In this life, the great majority of mankind refuses to believe and obey the Savior; and after this life is over for them, it is too late to honor him to any personal benefit (Phil. 2:10-11; Heb. 9:27). No one can ignore Christ on earth and expect to avoid him in eternity (Rom. 14:1-12).
  - c. Since he has been proved to be the Son of God by his resurrection from the dead, he is thereby shown to possess all authority—on earth and in heaven.
    - 1) Romans 1:4: "And declared *to be* the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead."
    - 2) 1 Peter 3:18-22: "For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit: By which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison; Which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water. The like figure whereunto *even* baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ: Who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him."
    - 3) Revelation 1:17-18: "And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last: I *am* he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death."
    - 4) Revelation 22:10-21: "And he saith unto me, Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book: for the time is at hand. He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still. And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward *is* with me, to give every man according as his work shall be. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last. Blessed *are* they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city. For without *are* dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie. I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, *and* the bright and morning star. And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely. For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and *from* the things which are written in this book. He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with you all. Amen."
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- d. The ASV rendering of the verse is given in these words: "For to this end Christ died and lived again, that he might be Lord of both the dead and the living."

D. Romans 14:10-12: We Must All Give Account Before God.

1. Verse 10: "But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ."
  - a. The subject under consideration in the context is a discussion of things which are matters of indifference, things which are neither required nor prohibited. To condemn a brother in one of these things is to act presumptuously. It is not our prerogative to condemn a brother in such activities; we are not to despise him, but love him.
  - b. Paul showed in the preceding verse that Christ is the Lord of all, both the living and the dead. Even if one were the best Christian who has ever lived, he is not Lord over anyone. Therefore, none of us has the right to condemn a fellow-saint in the matters being discussed.
  - c. If we follow the precepts of Romans, pride will be destroyed in our hearts. Every accountable person is included in the divine declaration of Romans 3:23 that all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. In view of the fact that out of Christ we are all lost, and since we cannot save ourselves, we ought to see how spiritually poverty-stricken we are without Christ! The problem a brother has who condemns another for eating or not eating meat, or who observed or did not observe a special day, is evincing pride.
  - d. All judging is not forbidden. In fact, some judging is necessary if we are to do our duty as Christians.
    - 1) The Lord requires righteous judging: "Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment" (John 7:24).
    - 2) Before we can refrain from casting pearls before swine, we must decide who is a swine (Matt. 7:6); this verse immediately follows the Lord's edict against certain kinds of judging (Matt. 7:1-5): "Judge not, that ye be not judged. For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again. And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and, behold, a beam is in thine own eye? Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye. Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you" (Matt, 7:1-6).
    - 3) We are instructed to beware of false teachers (Matt. 7:15-20), which necessitates passing a judgment: "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither *can* a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them" (Matt. 7:15-20).
    - 4) We are commanded to withdraw from brethren who walk disorderly, which requires us to decide who is out of step with the truth: "Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us" (2 Thess. 3:6).
    - 5) Romans 16:17-18: "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple."
    - 6) Philippians 3:2; "Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the concision."
    - 7) 2 Timothy 2:2: "And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also."

- e. Christ is Lord over all, and we all must stand before him in the Judgment. This Judgment is scheduled for the last day (John 12:48; 2 Cor. 5:10-11; Acts 17:30-31). Paul's statement in the text is a warning against condemning a brother since we all must one day stand before the judgment seat of Christ.
2. Verse 11: "For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God."
  - a. The apostle cites from Isaiah 45:23: "I have sworn by myself, the word is gone out of my mouth *in* righteousness, and shall not return, That unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear." To bend the knee is to bow in submission to another's authority; to confess to God is to orally declare faith and submission to his will. The setting for the actions described is the Judgment.
  - b. So awe-inspiring will be that great occasion that there will be no unbelievers present; but for those who prostrate themselves before the Lord then, not having submitted to his will on earth, no hope will be available (Matt. 7:21-23; Phil. 2:10-11; Matt. 12:36; Gal. 6:5; 1 Pet. 4:5).
    - 1) Matthew 12:36: "But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment."
    - 2) Galatians 6:5: "For every man shall bear his own burden."
    - 3) Philippians 2:10-11: "That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of *things* in heaven, and *things* in earth, and *things* under the earth; And *that* every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ *is* Lord, to the glory of God the Father."
    - 4) 1 Peter 4:5: "Who shall give account to him that is ready to judge the quick and the dead."
3. Verse 12: "So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God."
  - a. It is a hard fact of the gospel message that we shall all stand before Christ's judgment seat, and give a personal account of ourselves before the Lord. Such a thought is awesome! Paul speaks especially of Christians being in the Judgment; that every one will be present on that occasion is stated plainly in other passages also:
    - 1) Matthew 25:31-32: "When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth *his* sheep from the goats."
    - 2) 2 Corinthians 5:10: "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things *done* in *his* body, according to that he hath done, whether *it be* good or bad."
  - b. But the faithful child of God is in such a state that he has no need to live in terror over the prospect of facing the Judgment: "Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world. There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love" (1 John 4:17-18).
  - c. "The Lordship of Jesus Christ, the inevitability of final judgment, the responsibility of every man to bear his own burden and give an account of himself to God, the certainty of every man's need of mercy at last, and the common tie of filial love within the redeemed community—these and a thousand other considerations should make an end of censorious judgments passed upon the strong and deprecatory judgments upon the weak, and deal a mortal blow upon the human conceit in which such judgments are invariably formed" (Coffman, p.474).

E. Romans 14:13-15: We Are Not To Allow Our Liberty To Destroy A Brother.

1. Verse 13: "Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumbling-block or an occasion to fall in his brother's way."
  - a. In view of the amazing reality of the Judgment, Paul calls on the brethren to refrain from condemning each other in these matters of indifference.
  - b. "God is the one who will pass judgment on all of us. So, let the strong brother cease showing contempt for the weak brother's scruples, and let the weak brother stop charging the strong brother with apostasy because he does not adopt the weak brother's hobbies" (Merideth, *ibid.*, pp.218f).
  - c. Instead, let each commit himself to this proposition: never to place a stumblingblock or an occasion to stumble in a brother's path. But often, brethren think too much of their own way and desires, and

- with little regard for their brethren, they do and say things which have discouraging and hurtful effects on them.
- d. The apostle taught in Romans 13:8 that each Christian has a debt he owes each of his brethren, a debt of love that is always due and which can never be fully satisfied.
  - e. This verse issues a warning which is directed toward keeping Christians from doing things which would result in their losing their souls. A stumblingblock causes one to fall; the fall contemplated is a fall into sin and away from God's grace (1 Cor. 10:12-13; Gal. 5:4; Heb. 12:15). To cause another Christian to fall into sin is to cause him to be lost (unless he can repent); and he who thus prompts another to fall, falls himself. "And through thy knowledge shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died? But when ye sin so against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, ye sin against Christ" (1 Cor. 8:11-12).
2. Verse 14: "I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that there is nothing unclean of itself: but to him that esteemeth any thing to be unclean, to him it is unclean."
- a. This statement is not to be applied universally. Paul is not saying that there is nothing at all that is unclean. There are many things that are unclean, in the sense that they contaminate the soul. The works of the flesh (Gal. 5:19-21) pollute the spirit, and are to be avoided. The apostle has a built-in limitation to the statement.
  - b. He is discussing the eating of meats (verse 2-3). The immediate context discusses the eating of meats (verse 15). Therefore, the statement is to be limited to that particular subject.
  - c. The Old Mosaic distinctions that made some meats acceptable for the Israelites to eat and forbade other kinds of meat had been removed when the New Testament took effect. The gospel eliminated these distinctions, and made all meat proper for a child of God to consume, if the individual so-desired (1 Tim. 4:1-3; cf. Acts 10:9-16; Heb. 8:1-13). There was nothing inherently unclean in meats of any kind; the only reason they were considered ceremonially unclean in Old Testament days was because of God's restriction. God had definite purposes to be served by the prohibitions he placed on those forbidden meats.
  - d. The knowledge that Paul expressed in this verse was part of the revelation he received from Christ.
    - 1) 2 Corinthians 12:7: "And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure."
    - 2) Galatians 1:11-12: "But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught *it*, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ."
    - 3) Ephesians 3:1-11: "For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles, If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward: How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words, Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ) Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel: Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power. Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; And to make all *men* see what *is* the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ: To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly *places* might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord."
  - e. The apostle introduced a thought in the latter part of the verse which he brings to a point in verses twenty-two and twenty-three. If a man earnestly believes it is wrong to eat meat, then to him it is unclean, and thus it is wrong for him to eat it. Why? Because he would be violating his conscience
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if he ate it. It is hazardous to the soul for one to violate his conscience.

3. Verse 15: "But if thy brother be grieved with thy meat, now walkest thou not charitably. Destroy not him with thy meat, for whom Christ died."
  - a. The first brother in the illustration given here believes it is right to eat meat, but the second brother believes it is wrong to eat meat.
  - b. If the first brother insists on eating meat, without regard to the other brother's convictions, he encourages that weaker brother to violate his conscience—and to commit sin. There is nothing wrong with eating meat, but when the weak brother eats meat, believing it is wrong to do so, he commits sin by thus violating his conscience.
  - c. The first brother has not acted with love in this case, and is himself also to be blamed. The effect of the episode is that the first brother has brought his weaker brother to destruction.
  - d. Such language would not have been used by Paul if a Christian cannot fall from grace so as to be lost. Christ died for this brother, but the first brother, through his indirect influence and argumentation, has lead him to be destroyed.
  - e. This verse connects with verse thirteen, and delineates the stumblingblock and occasion to fall introduced in that earlier verse.
  - f. When Paul describes the brother as having been brought to grief, he means far more than hurt feelings. What he calls being grieved in the first part of the verse, he affirms as being destroyed, in the last part of the same verse.

F. Romans 14:16-18: Our Liberty Requires Self-Denial.

1. Verse 16: "Let not then your good be evil spoken of."
  - a. The activity considered is a matter of indifference; it is something that God does not require and does not forbid. There is nothing wrong in the action under ordinary circumstances; however, in the situation Paul describes, insisting on one's privilege at the expense of another's spiritual well-being becomes a sinful exercise.
  - b. The apostle properly concludes, therefore, that the more knowledgeable brother is not to participate in something, even though he has liberty to do so, when evil is the result. "The good here in this context is that which the strong have liberty to do, that which in the field of indifference they are allowed to so. But, they are to deny themselves the pleasure of doing it lest the weak be destroyed" (Merideth, *ibid.*, p.220).
  - c. There must be a logical limit to the principle involved here, otherwise we would be at the mercy of every *crank* in the church. Virtually everything that one could do, might have its objectors.
2. Verse 17: "For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost."
  - a. Paul discusses here the nature of the kingdom of God. It is not meat and drink. "It does not consist of temporal things like eating and drinking. One's standing in the kingdom is not determined nor measured by his eating and drinking things clean or unclean" (Merideth, *ibid.*)
  - b. The things that pollute a man's soul are not things he eats (cf. Matt. 15:10-20). This is a general rule only. The consumption of blood is wrong (Gen. 9:3-4; Deut. 12:23; Acts 15:19-20,29).
    - 1) Genesis 9:3-4: "Every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you; even as the green herb have I given you all things. But flesh with the life thereof, *which is* the blood thereof, shall ye not eat."
    - 2) Deuteronomy 12:23: "Only be sure that thou eat not the blood: for the blood *is* the life; and thou mayest not eat the life with the flesh."
    - 3) Acts 15:19-20,29: "Wherefore my sentence is, that we trouble not them, which from among the Gentiles are turned to God: But that we write unto them, that they abstain from pollutions of idols, and *from* fornication, and *from* things strangled, and *from* blood....That ye abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication: from which if ye keep yourselves, ye shall do well. Fare ye well."
  - c. Drunkenness is wrong—in all degrees.

- 1) Proverbs 20:1: "Wine *is* a mocker, strong drink *is* raging; and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise."
  - 2) Proverbs 23:29-35: "Who hath woe? who hath sorrow? who hath contentions? who hath babbling? who hath wounds without cause? who hath redness of eyes? They that tarry long at the wine; they that go to seek mixed wine. Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth his colour in the cup, *when* it moveth itself aright. At the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder. Thine eyes shall behold strange women, and thine heart shall utter perverse things. Yea, thou shalt be as he that lieth down in the midst of the sea, or as he that lieth upon the top of a mast. They have stricken me, *shalt thou say*, and I was not sick; they have beaten me, *and* I felt it not: when shall I awake? I will seek it yet again."
  - 3) Ephesians 5:21: "Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God."
  - d. "The kingdom of God does not consist in distinctions about meats and drinks; but no man should conclude that freedom from the law in which such distinctions were made gives him the right to eat and drink as he pleases regardless of consequences" (Whiteside, p.273).
  - e. The kingdom does consist of such things as righteousness, peace, and joy.
    - 1) Righteousness is doing God's will (Acts 10:34-35; 1 John 3:7; Ps. 119:172).
    - 2) Peace is the result of walking with God, for one who has peace with God, is at peace within himself, and feels no animosity toward those in the world: "Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus" (Phil. 4:6-7).
    - 3) Joy is an outgrowth of righteousness and peace; it is a contentedness that permits us to face life's challenges and troubles with resolve and purpose; it is an inner happiness that perseveres despite outward turmoil. The Holy Spirit is the author of this joy, for in the inspired revelation of the gospel he provided us with the information and directions which lead to a joyful life.
  - f. The kingdom of God is not a worldly kingdom; it is the spiritual rule of Christ in the hearts of those who sincerely devote themselves to serving him.
    - 1) Luke 17:20-21: "And when he was demanded of the Pharisees, when the kingdom of God should come, he answered them and said, The kingdom of God cometh not with observation: Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you."
    - 2) John 18:36: "Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence."
  3. Verse 18: "For he that in these things serveth Christ is acceptable to God, and approved of men."
    - a. Those who serve Christ in these spiritual enterprises (righteousness; peace; joy; etc.) are acceptable to the Lord, and their conduct is approved by all right-thinking men.
    - b. The Lord does not spell out every particular item of our responsibility. He provides many details, it is true, but he also gives many principles by which we are to order our lives.
    - c. Only those who are genuinely dedicated to spiritual values will search out and apply the precepts of the gospel to their daily lives. These are they who exercise their senses to discern what is good and what is evil (Heb. 5:12-14).
- G. Romans 14:19-23: Our Liberty And Our Conscience.
1. Verse 19: "Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another."
    - a. With the foregoing in mind, Paul draws a practical conclusion. We are told to follow those actions in life that will promote peace and engender spiritual strength in each other. This is just the opposite of the situation he has been considering.
    - b. When one saint knew the eating of meats was proper, but another still believed it was sinful to eat certain meats, and each insisted on having his own way in the affair, division and dissension would
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- arise, and the church would be weakened and spiritual growth would be stymied.
- c. The New Testament is sufficiently clear for anyone, even the Jews who had served the Law all their lives until they obeyed the gospel, to see and know that the Old Testament restrictions no longer apply. And the Gentiles who had never been taught the Mosaic distinctions between these meats could know that they ought not to push their views on their Jewish brethren, lest there be the problem Paul labors in this chapter to remove.
  - d. There are, therefore, some limitations on our liberty. No one has the right to trample underfoot the tender consciences of other brethren. But every saint is under God's never-ending decree to seek to promote the welfare of others and foster peace within the brotherhood of Christ.
2. Verse 20: "For meat destroy not the work of God. All things indeed are pure; but it is evil for that man who eateth with offence."
- a. The eating of meats is not prohibited by God's law today; it does not destroy or interfere with God's purposes. Restating the point he made in verses 14-15, Paul affirms that all things (in the context) are pure.
  - b. However, again stating the point of verse 15b, the apostle maintains that if a man eats meat, thinking that doing so is wrong, he does evil by eating. His example of eating meat is evil if he thereby urges the practice on another; it is evil if he asserts the others must agree.
3. Verse 21: "It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor any thing whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak."
- a. Paul drives home the point in the chapter by strongly affirming that it is good to abstain from anything that could cause a brother to stumble, to commit an offense, or to be weakened.
  - b. "If a professed Christian indulges in questionable practices, or in his determination to have his way about things of no importance, he may overthrow the faith of one whose faith is not very strong....In overthrowing the faith of a Christian we destroy the work of God, and that is a serious matter" (Whiteside, p.274).
  - c. Offending another has no reference to simply hurting his feelings. There are many unstable people in this world, and many such people are in the church, who feel offended over the least things; these are often described as "carrying a chip on their shoulder," and must be "handled with silk gloves." The Greek term means "to stumble." Thus, what is forbidden is causing another to stumble into sin.
  - d. Paul does not specify what kind of wine he has in mind; he merely uses the Greek term *oinos*, which is used in reference to grape juice and to alcoholic wine. The interpretation must agree with what the Bible teaches in other places. If the Bible forbids consuming alcoholic beverages in others places, then it does not make it a matter of indifference here; however, one can readily see that if a first century saint saw another saint drinking wine, and did not know it was non-alcoholic, the observer knowing it was wrong to drink the alcoholic variety, might think harshly of the first brother, or perhaps he would be emboldened to follow the first brother's example
4. Verse 22: "Hast thou faith? have it to thyself before God. Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth."
- a. In the case of a brother who knew the truth on the activity (eating meat, e.g.), he was to be content to have that assurance within himself, without practicing it lest he cause a weaker brother to offend.
  - b. If we can engage in an activity, which is harmless of itself, without violating our conscience, fine, but not so if it hurts another.
5. Verse 23: "And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith: for whatsoever is not of faith is sin."
- a. If a brother thought the meats were not to be eaten, he must refrain from eating it. If he firmly believes it is wrong and eats anyway, he condemns his own soul. He does not believe it is right, but he still eats it. In such a case he has not acted in harmony with his convictions, and commits sin thereby.
  - b. Why is it wrong? He has gone against his conscience. The conscience is not a perfect guide, but if
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it is functioning, it tells us whether we have acted in harmony with our beliefs. It smites us when we do something contrary to what we believe to be right; it commends us when we do what we deem to be good things.

c. The "faith" of the passage is the individual's convictions on a given subject. We are to act in accord with our convictions (and not violate our conscience).

6. Concerning verse 21, Robert Taylor writes: "Another major abuse of Romans 14 is based upon an extremely faulty exegesis of verse 21. Proponents of the acceptability of so-called social or moderate imbibing of alcoholic beverages...like to park at this verse. They claim that social drinking is simply an indifferent matter and is neither right nor wrong as long as others are not harmed by their practices. But alcoholic beverages do not fit matters of indifference. They are wrong *per se*. Passages such as Proverbs 20:1; 23:29-34; Hab. 2:15 set forth the grievous wrong in imbibing alcoholic beverages of any and all amounts. I maintain that Paul uses meats and wine here in the same category. Meats are indifferent; the wine is indifferent. The wine could not be a matter of indifference if alcoholic in content. Therefore it must be wine that is unfermented. The strong brother should willingly forego all these, meat eating, wine drinking, or anything else, if, by so doing, he causes a weak brother to stumble, to become offended, or is made weaker" (Ripley Church Bulletin article, July 17, 1988). [Brother Taylor is one of the best gospel preachers, Bible scholars, and writers in the Lord's church today; his soundness is unquestioned, his logic flawless, and his spirituality undoubted].

H. Robert Taylor (ibid., July 24, 1988) has listed the following practical points on Romans 14:

1. This chapter majors in depicting matters of opinion or matters of indifference.
2. There is absolutely no justifiable exegesis of this chapter in making it a proving ground for the authorization of mechanical music in Christian worship.
3. It is a terribly deceitful handling of this chapter to equate the strong brother with the Independent Christian Church preacher, an adamant devotee of mechanical machinery in Christian worship, who, in a so-called summit or new unity meeting, will temporarily forego the usage of his pet idol for the sake of non-instrumental worshippers but gives no ground at all in his contention that the mechanical instrument is justified.
4. It is equally a deceitful handling of this chapter to equate the weak brother with the non-user of mechanical music in Christian worship, the one who adamantly opposes its usage.
5. Romans 14 is not a doctrinal discourse in what should be in Christian worship or what should not be in Christian worship.
6. Matters of indifference such as are discussed in Romans 14 cannot ever be equated with the essentials such as what constitutes true and acceptable worship.
7. It is a terribly deceitful handling of this chapter to make it a proving ground for making so-called social or moderate drinking of alcoholic beverages perfectly acceptable before God and men.
8. Meats and wine occupy the same position in Romans 14:21. If the meats are indifferent and innocent in and of themselves, the wine would be of the same order. But for the wine to be of an indifferent or innocent order, it would have to be unfermented, for wine which makes men drunk has never been indifferent or innocent in its noxious influence for great and far-reaching evil.
9. Strength and weakness in this chapter are associated with personal feelings toward indifferent matters and not with the degree of strength or weakness of one's faith in God, in Christ, in the Bible....
10. God has received the weak brother. This should be a sufficient ground for the strong brother's receiving him likewise.
11. God has received the strong brother. This should be a sufficient ground for the weak brother's reception of him.
12. Jesus Christ is Lord of both the strong brother and also of the weak brother. This towering truth should have done much to dissolve differences between the two groups.
13. What Jesus did at Calvary, and by the marvelous means of his triumphant resurrection should be a majestic motivation for a strong brother and a weak brother to dissolve their troubling problems about

matters of opinion, items of indifference.

14. That both the strong and the weak will appear at the same time before the judgment bar of God's Son makes mighty inconsequential these separating differences relative to indifferent matters.
  15. We are here to help our brethren in Christ—never to hinder, never to hurt, never to injure, never to destroy them spiritually.
  16. Practice of the Golden Rule will work wonders when a strong brother and weak brother have similar problems today about indifferent matters as the strong and weak were experiencing in Romans 14.
  17. Christian charity works wonders in the interpersonal relationships among brethren.
  18. Christian selflessness will keep us from doing anything that will destroy a brother for whom Christ died.
  19. True workers for peace are at a desperate minimum in the Lord's church today.
  20. Edification is a true mission of major proportions for the Lord's church.
  21. Conscience is a sensitive entity that cannot be violated without suffering the most grievous of far-reaching consequences.
  22. A good, sensitive, pure and tender conscience is of the greatest price to a Christian.
  23. We must believe in the rightness of what we do or else we greatly injure our personality make-up.
  24. A good conscience is an imperative for happy, joyful, vibrant and fruitful living.
  25. Romans 14 should never be used to condone any error or falsehood for it upholds only truth and condones neither error nor falsehood.
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## ROMANS 15

### A. Romans 15:1-12: Paul Urges Christians to Show Love By Self-Denial.

1. Verse 1: "We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves."
  - a. In Romans 13:8-10, the apostle showed how the principle of love fulfills the Law of Christ. In chapter 14, he applied the principle of love to Christian liberty, showing that we are to forego eating meat or observing special days (or the reverse of these) so as not to cast a stumblingblock before a weaker brother. In the present text, he shows that the stronger brother ought to be willing to bear the infirmities of the weaker brother.
  - b. In view of the preceding information, especially in chapter fourteen, Paul urges strong Christians to bear the infirmities of the weak members. The word *ought* expresses an obligation.
  - c. The *infirmities* of the weak brother are such things as Paul discussed in the chapter 14, the eating of certain meats or observing a special day, or some other matter of liberty. The brother is weak in that he thought it was wrong to eat meat or to fail to observe a special day (e.g., the sabbath).
  - d. To *bear* his infirmities means to "refrain from eating on account of their weakness, as though we ourselves were weak. It is to put ourselves in their places, feel their weaknesses, and to act so as to lead them away from temptation. This is an example of becoming all things to all men that we may save some (1 Cor. 9:22), and not to do the things that gratify ourselves" (Lipscomb, p.255).
  - e. We ought not to please ourselves in these matters. One or the other of the two brethren must give way to the other. The general spirit of Christianity is for the faithful child of God to permit the other person to have his preference, as long as nothing sinful is involved (Matt. 5:38-42; 7:12).
  - f. "We should be willing to deny ourselves, if by it we may promote the happiness of others. This refers particularly to 'opinions' about meats and drinks; but it may be applied to Christian conduct generally, as denoting that we are not to make our own happiness or gratification the standard of our conduct, but are to seek the welfare of others; see the example of Paul, 1 Cor 9:19,22; see also Phil 2:4; 1 Cor 13:5, 'Love seeketh not her own;' 1 Cor 10:24, "Let no man seek his own, but every man another's wealth; also Matt 16:24. [Barnes' Notes, Electronic Database. Copyright (c) 1997 by BibleSoft].
2. Verse 2: "Let every one of us please his neighbour for his good to edification."
  - a. Doing and saying only those things which will edify our brethren ought to become second nature to every saint; and acting selfishly ought to be banned from our thoughts and attitudes, as well as from our practices (cf. Eccl. 10:12; Phil. 2:14-16). We ought to school ourselves to look always after the other person's interests and good. If this is so, we will try to do and say that which will edify; we will abstain from that which will hurt, discourage, or weaken our brother or sister.
  - b. Ecclesiastes 10:12: "The words of a wise man's mouth *are* gracious; but the lips of a fool will swallow up himself."
  - c. Philippians 2:14-16: "Do all things without murmurings and disputings: That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world; Holding forth the word of life; that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain."
  - d. Romans 14:15: "...Destroy not him with thy meat, for whom Christ died."
  - e. Romans 14:19: "Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another."
  - f. Ephesians 4:29: "Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers."
  - g. Colossians 4:6: "Let your speech be alway with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man."
3. Verse 3: "For even Christ pleased not himself; but, as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me."

- a. Paul used the case of Christ as the perfect example of self-denial in such situations. Christ did not do what pleased himself. His supreme goal was to do the will of God, without regard to the adverse consequences that obedience would entail.
  - 1) "And he went a little farther, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt" (Matt. 26:39).
  - 2) "Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God..." (Heb. 10:9; cf. John 5:30; 6:38).
- b. The apostle cites Psalm 69:9 as evidence of the fact just affirmed: "For the zeal of thine house hath eaten me up; and the reproaches of them that reproached thee are fallen upon me." As Coffman wrote, this quotation establishes the fact that Psalm 69 is Messianic; there are several other New Testament passages which quote from that same Psalm [John 15:25 (69:4); Matthew 27:34 (69:21); Romans 11:9-10 (69:22-23); Acts 1:20 (69:25)].
  - 1) Psalms 69:4: "They that hate me without a cause are more than the hairs of mine head: they that would destroy me, *being* mine enemies wrongfully, are mighty: then I restored *that* which I took not away." John 15:25: "But *this cometh to pass*, that the word might be fulfilled that is written in their law, They hated me without a cause."
  - 2) Psalms 69:21: "They gave me also gall for my meat; and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink." Matthew 27:34: "They gave him vinegar to drink mingled with gall: and when he had tasted *thereof*, he would not drink."
  - 3) Psalms 69:22-23: "Let their table become a snare before them: and *that which should have been* for *their* welfare, *let it become* a trap. Let their eyes be darkened, that they see not; and make their loins continually to shake." Romans 11:9-10: "And David saith, Let their table be made a snare, and a trap, and a stumblingblock, and a recompense unto them: Let their eyes be darkened that they may not see, and bow down their back alway."
  - 4) Psalms 69:25: "Let their habitation be desolate; *and* let none dwell in their tents." Acts 1:20: "For it is written in the book of Psalms, Let his habitation be desolate, and let no man dwell therein: and his bishopric let another take."
- c. The self-sacrificing nature of Christ is prominently featured in the New Testament.
  - 1) Matthew 8:20: "And Jesus saith unto him, The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air *have* nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay *his* head."
  - 2) Matthew 27:39-50: "And they that passed by reviled him, wagging their heads, And saying, Thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest *it* in three days, save thyself. If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross. Likewise also the chief priests mocking *him*, with the scribes and elders, said, He saved others; himself he cannot save. If he be the King of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him. He trusted in God; let him deliver him now, if he will have him: for he said, I am the Son of God. The thieves also, which were crucified with him, cast the same in his teeth. Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land unto the ninth hour. And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? Some of them that stood there, when they heard *that*, said, This *man* calleth for Elias. And straightway one of them ran, and took a sponge, and filled *it* with vinegar, and put *it* on a reed, and gave him to drink. The rest said, Let be, let us see whether Elias will come to save him. Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost."
  - 3) Luke 19:10: "For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost."
  - 4) Romans 5:6-9: "For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him."
  - 5) 2 Corinthians 8:9: "For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet

- for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich."
- d. The quotation Paul cites shows that those who opposed Christ were actually opposing God the Father. They did not like what Christ said and did in exposing their doctrines and practices as evil.
- 1) John 3:14-21: "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God."
  - 2) John 8:28-59: "Then said Jesus unto them, When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am *he*, and *that* I do nothing of myself; but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things. And he that sent me is with me: the Father hath not left me alone; for I do always those things that please him. As he spake these words, many believed on him. Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, *then* are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. They answered him, We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free? Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin. And the servant abideth not in the house for ever: *but* the Son abideth ever. If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed. I know that ye are Abraham's seed; but ye seek to kill me, because my word hath no place in you. I speak that which I have seen with my Father: and ye do that which ye have seen with your father. They answered and said unto him, Abraham is our father. Jesus saith unto them, If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham. But now ye seek to kill me, a man that hath told you the truth, which I have heard of God: this did not Abraham. Ye do the deeds of your father. Then said they to him, We be not born of fornication; we have one Father, *even* God. Jesus said unto them, If God were your Father, ye would love me: for I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of myself, but he sent me. Why do ye not understand my speech? *even* because ye cannot hear my word. Ye are of *your* father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it. And because I tell *you* the truth, ye believe me not. Which of you convinceth me of sin? And if I say the truth, why do ye not believe me? He that is of God heareth God's words: ye therefore hear *them* not, because ye are not of God. Then answered the Jews, and said unto him, Say we not well that thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil? Jesus answered, I have not a devil; but I honour my Father, and ye do dishonour me. And I seek not mine own glory: there is one that seeketh and judgeth. Verily, verily, I say unto you, If a man keep my saying, he shall never see death. Then said the Jews unto him, Now we know that thou hast a devil. Abraham is dead, and the prophets; and thou sayest, If a man keep my saying, he shall never taste of death. Art thou greater than our father Abraham, which is dead? and the prophets are dead: whom makest thou thyself? Jesus answered, If I honour myself, my honour is nothing: it is my Father that honoureth me; of whom ye say, that he is your God: Yet ye have not known him; but I know him: and if I should say, I know him not, I shall be a liar like unto you: but I know him, and keep his saying. Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw *it*, and was glad. Then said the Jews unto him, Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham? Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am. Then took they up stones to cast at him: but Jesus hid himself, and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed

- by."
- e. Because the world hated Christ, it also hated his apostles; because it hated the truth delivered through the apostles, it will hate us when we preach those same principles of truth. The truth is always hated and opposed by the world, and those who espouse the truth must be prepared for this opposition and hatred.
    - 1) John 15:18-21: "If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before *it hated* you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also. But all these things will they do unto you for my name's sake, because they know not him that sent me."
    - 2) 1 Peter 4:4: "Wherein they think it strange that ye run not with *them* to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of *you*."
    - 3) 1 Peter 4:11-16: "If any man speak, *let him speak* as the oracles of God; if any man minister, *let him do it* as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen. Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy. If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy *are ye*; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified. But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or *as* a thief, or *as* an evildoer, or as a busybody in other men's matters. Yet if *any man suffer* as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf."
  4. Verse 4: "For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope" (KJV). "For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that through patience and through comfort of the scriptures we might have hope" (ASV).
    - a. Having just cited a passage from the Old Testament Scriptures, Paul hastens to add that those things found in the Old Testament were not recorded for the exclusive use of those who lived during the time the Mosaic Law was in effect. It is true, as Paul has abundantly shown in Romans, that the Old Law has been replaced by the Law of Christ; but it is also true, as he shows here, that the principles of truth given back then are still true under Christ.
    - b. The immediate point is, that since it was right and necessary for Christ patiently to endure the many reproaches that God's enemies directed toward him (God's Son), it is right and necessary that God's people today likewise endure the reproaches directed toward them. The broader point, stated in this verse, is that those truths presented in the Old Testament still have meaning today; there is much we can learn from that ancient revelation (1 Cor. 10:1-11; Heb. 2:1-4).
    - c. The flow of thought through the first five verses is this:
      - 1) The strong Christian ought to support the weaker Christian, instead of pleasing himself.
      - 2) Each Christian is to please his neighbor, not himself, to the end that the neighbor might be edified.
      - 3) Christ did not please himself, but rather accepted the reproaches that evil men poured upon him; this was in fulfillment of Old Testament Scripture.
      - 4) Old Testament Scripture has meaning to Christians; that which is included in it are patience and comfort, to the end that we might have hope.
      - 5) Paul's earnest desire is that the God of patience and consolation should enable them to have the same mind toward each other, in keeping with the example of Christ (as per verse three).
    - d. The *things written afore time* were the Old Testament Scriptures.
      - 1) John 5:39: "Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me."
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- 2) John 5:46-47: "For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me: for he wrote of me. But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words?"
  - 3) Acts 17:11: "These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so."
  - 4) 1 Timothy 3:14-15: "These things write I unto thee, hoping to come unto thee shortly: But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth."
  - 5) 2 Timothy 1:5: "When I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice; and I am persuaded that in thee also."
  - 6) 2 Timothy 3:15-17: "And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."
- e. *Through patience* of the Scriptures we may have hope. It is by a continuing, enduring, and steadfast study of the Scriptures that we are able to learn the Scriptures. The Scriptures are preserved for our learning [teaching, instruction]. Patience [endurance; steadfastness] in study, in application, in proclamation, and in defense of the Scriptures is our duty. Rome was not built in a day, and a thorough and accurate understanding of the Bible is not acquired by a spasmodic or shallow study. When we have been instructed by the Scriptures, we are motivated to steadfastness and are provided comfort [consolation, comfort, solace].
- 1) Moses Lard gave this translation and comment on of the verse: "For whatever was formerly written, was written for our instruction, that through patience and through comfort from the scriptures, we might retain hope." He understood this patience to be a reference to what is derived from the Scriptures, not to the process of learning the Scriptures: "The word 'scriptures' in the original is Genitive of source. Hence the patience and comfort are produced by the scriptures, or they result from reading and studying them. This I indicate by the use of *from*, instead of *of*" (Moses Lard, p.433).
  - 2) Matthew Henry wrote: "That we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope. That hope which hath eternal life for its object is here proposed as the end of scripture-learning. The scripture was written that we might know what to hope for from God, and upon what grounds, and in what way. This should recommend the scripture to us that it is a special friend to Christian hope. Now the way of attaining this hope is through patience and comfort of the scripture. Patience and comfort suppose trouble and sorrow; such is the lot of the saints in this world; and, were it not so, we should have no occasion for patience and comfort. But both these befriend that hope which is the life of our souls. Patience works experience, and experience hope, which maketh not ashamed, Rom 5:3-5. The more patience we exercise under troubles the more hopefully we may look through our troubles; nothing is more destructive to hope than impatience. And the comfort of the scriptures, that comfort which springs from the word of God (that is the surest and sweetest comfort) is likewise a great stay to hope, as it is an earnest in hand of the good hoped for."
  - 3) Pulpit Commentary: "For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning (in the old sense of teaching, or instruction), that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures (or, as the form of the Greek rather suggests, and as is confirmed by the repetition of the words conjoined in ver. 5, through the patience and the comfort of the Scriptures) might have hope."
- f. *Comfort of the Scriptures* shows the Scriptures are able to provide much needed consolation and comfort to every child of God.
- 1) 2 Corinthians 1:3-5: "Blessed *be* God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted

- of God. For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ."
- 2) 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18: "But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive *and* remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive *and* remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words."
  - 3) Hebrews 4:12: "For the word of God *is* quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and *is* a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."
- g. The Scriptures are able to provide hope for us: "For God *is* not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have showed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister. And we desire that every one of you do show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end: That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises. For when God made promise to Abraham, because he could swear by no greater, he sware by himself, Saying, Surely blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee. And so, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise. For men verily swear by the greater: and an oath for confirmation *is* to them an end of all strife. Wherein God, willing more abundantly to show unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed *it* by an oath: That by two immutable things, in which *it was* impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us: Which *hope* we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil" (Heb. 6:10-19).
5. Verses 5-6: "Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be likeminded one toward another according to Christ Jesus: That ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ."
    - a. This passage amounts to a heartfelt prayer from Paul in behalf of his readers. He describes God as the Being of patience and consolation. One cannot separate God from his word; what his word does, he does.
    - b. God is able, through his word, to produce steadfastness in us; this he does by means of the direct commands and instructions, and by the beautiful examples of faithful endurance on the part of great Bible characters, such as Job (Jas. 5:11), Abraham (Heb. 11:8ff), and Christ.
    - c. God is able to comfort our hearts in times of loss, tribulation, and pain.
      - 1) Psalms 46:1: "God *is* our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble."
      - 2) Nahum 1:7: "The LORD *is* good, a strong hold in the day of trouble; and he knoweth them that trust in him."
      - 3) John 14:1-3: "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if *it were* not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, *there* ye may be also."
      - 4) Philippians 3:20-21: "For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself."
      - 5) 1 Peter 1:3-5: "Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in

- heaven for you, Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time."
- 6) Revelation 21:4: "And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away."
- d. God is able to make Christians to be of one mind, or else Paul's prayer was in vain (cf. John 17:20-23; 1 Cor. 1:10-13; Phil. 3:16; 1 Cor. 3:1-4). As we all follow the teachings of the gospel, we are conformed to the same image, we teach the same truths, we practice the same requirements, and we have the same sentiments and disposition.
- 1) John 17:20-23: "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; That they all may be one; as thou, Father, *art* in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me."
- 2) 1 Corinthians 1:10-13: "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and *that* there be no divisions among you; but *that* ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment. For it hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them *which are of the house* of Chloe, that there are contentions among you. Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ. Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?"
- 3) 1 Corinthians 3:1-4: "And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, *even* as unto babes in Christ. I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able *to bear it*, neither yet now are ye able. For ye are yet carnal: for whereas *there is* among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men? For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I *am* of Apollos; are ye not carnal?"
- 4) Philippians 3:16: "Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing."
- e. This is after the example of Christ, or according to Christ, with both ideas probably included in the statement. Christ showed us the right attitude to maintain toward God; he taught that we should follow his example and be obedient to the will of God. As we walk in the light of his gospel, we are changed into the likeness of his image: "But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, *even* as by the Spirit of the Lord" (2 Cor. 3:18).
- f. In verse six, the apostle plainly states, as part of his prayer, that all Christians with one mind and one mouth glorify God. God receives no glory from the heart of one who will not worship in accordance with the truth.
- 1) Matthew 15:8-9: "This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with *their* lips; but their heart is far from me. But in vain they do worship me, teaching *for* doctrines the commandments of men."
- 2) John 4:23-24: "But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God *is* a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship *him* in spirit and in truth."
- 3) Acts 4:32: "And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any *of them* that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common."
- 4) Ephesians 3:21: "Unto him *be* glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen."
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- 5) Philippians 1:27: "Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel."
- g. Paul concludes this passage by affirming that God is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.
- 1) Being the Father of Christ does not imply that Christ had a beginning. Rather, when God sent Christ into the world, he was his Father; but that does not mean Christ began his existence when he was conceived in Mary; he began his *earthly life* at that point. The Bible also speaks of God begetting Christ when he raised him from the dead (Acts 13:33).
  - 2) God is the Father of Christ in these ways, but he is his Father also in the sense that he possesses greater authority than Christ.
    - a) John 3:16-17: "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved."
    - b) John 13:16: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him."
    - c) 1 Corinthians 15:24-28: "Then *cometh* the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy *that* shall be destroyed *is* death. For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith all things are put under *him*, *it is* manifest that he is excepted, which did put all things under him. And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all."
  - 3) Christ is as much a Divine Being as is God the Father (Heb. 1:1-14).
    - a) Micah 5:2: "But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, *though* thou be little among the thousands of Judah, *yet* out of thee shall he come forth unto me *that is* to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth *have been* from of old, from everlasting."
    - b) John 8:58: "Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am."
    - c) John 10:30: "I and *my* Father are one."
    - d) Hebrews 1:8: "But unto the Son *he saith*, Thy throne, O God, *is* for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness *is* the sceptre of thy kingdom."
6. Verse 7: "Wherefore receive ye one another, as Christ also received us to the glory of God."
- a. The apostle directs Christians to receive one another, a point he raised in chapter 14, verse one. To receive another Christian is to receive him into fellowship, to accept him as a faithful child of God.
  - b. We cannot follow this inspired decree unless we are willing to accept every other Christian into our fellowship, regardless of his nationality, race, or background. A prostitute who obeys the gospel and follows the will of Christ is a faithful saint, and is to be received as such. A former homosexual who obeys the gospel and follows the gospel, is to be received. "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God" (1 Cor. 6:9-11).
  - c. Humans tend to make distinctions between different kinds of sin, attributing greater guilt and vileness to some over others. Those who practiced lying in their alien days are sometimes more readily accepted than those who were drug addicts or harlots. Some sins incur greater social disfavor than others, but each sin is a transgression of God's law, and condemns the soul (1 John 3:4; Rom. 6:23). Some sins have greater evil consequences on the innocent than others; murder is more severe in this matter than lying.
  - d. Every alien has been polluted by sin. The guilt of sin cannot be removed by human merit or man-
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made law. But Christ received us when we obeyed his gospel, and we must receive each other..

- 1) Mark 16:15-16: "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."
- 2) Acts 2:36-47: "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ. Now when they heard *this*, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men *and* brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, *even* as many as the Lord our God shall call. And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation. Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added *unto them* about three thousand souls. And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers. And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles. And all that believed were together, and had all things common; And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all *men*, as every man had need. And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved."
- 3) Romans 5:6-9: "For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him."
- 4) Hebrews 5:8-9: "Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him."
- e. Christ received us when we obeyed the gospel, for the holy purpose of our bringing glory to God. God deserves this glory, and it is in our best interests to glorify his holy name.
  - 1) Ecclesiastes 5:1-2: "Keep thy foot when thou goest to the house of God, and be more ready to hear, than to give the sacrifice of fools: for they consider not that they do evil. Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter *any* thing before God: for God *is* in heaven, and thou upon earth: therefore let thy words be few."
  - 2) Ezekiel 18:31-32: "Cast away from you all your transgressions, whereby ye have transgressed; and make you a new heart and a new spirit: for why will ye die, O house of Israel? For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord GOD: wherefore turn *yourselves*, and live ye."
  - 3) John 3:16: "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."
  - 4) John 14:1-3: "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if *it were* not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, *there* ye may be also."
  - 5) Ephesians 3:20-21: "Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, Unto him *be* glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen."
7. Verse 8: "Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers."
  - a. Paul states that Christ was a minister of the circumcision (the Jews). His personal ministry was, there-

fore, limited to the Jews.

- 1) Matthew 10:5-6: "These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying, Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into *any* city of the Samaritans enter ye not: But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel."
  - 2) Matthew 15:21-28: "Then Jesus went thence, and departed into the coasts of Tyre and Sidon. And, behold, a woman of Canaan came out of the same coasts, and cried unto him, saying, Have mercy on me, O Lord, *thou* son of David; my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil. But he answered her not a word. And his disciples came and besought him, saying, Send her away; for she crieth after us. But he answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Then came she and worshipped him, saying, Lord, help me. But he answered and said, It is not meet to take the children's bread, and cast *it* to dogs. And she said, Truth, Lord: yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters' table. Then Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great *is* thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt. And her daughter was made whole from that very hour."
  - 3) Galatians 4:4-5: "But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons."
- b. His ultimate mission was to reveal the truth of God to all the lost.
- 1) John 6:38: "For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me."
  - 2) John 8:32 "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."
  - 3) John 17:17: "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth."
- c. He came also to confirm the promises made to Abraham and others (Isa. 53)..
- 1) Genesis 12:1-3: "Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee: And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed."
  - 2) Genesis 22:15-18: "And the angel of the LORD called unto Abraham out of heaven the second time, And said, By myself have I sworn, saith the LORD, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only *son*: That in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which *is* upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies; And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice."
  - 3) Genesis 26:3-4: "Sojourn in this land, and I will be with thee, and will bless thee; for unto thee, and unto thy seed, I will give all these countries, and I will perform the oath which I sware unto Abraham thy father; And I will make thy seed to multiply as the stars of heaven, and will give unto thy seed all these countries; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed."
  - 4) Genesis 28:13-14: "And, behold, the LORD stood above it, and said, I *am* the LORD God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac: the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed; And thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south: and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed."
- d. He made it possible for the Gentiles to be given the gospel, by which they and the Jews could be saved.
- 1) Acts 13:44-49: "And the next sabbath day came almost the whole city together to hear the word of God. But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy, and spake against those things which were spoken by Paul, contradicting and blaspheming. Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but
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seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles. For so hath the Lord commanded us, *saying*, I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of the earth. And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed. And the word of the Lord was published throughout all the region."

2) Romans 1:16-17: "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith."

8. Verses 9-12: "And that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy; as it is written, For this cause I will confess to thee among the Gentiles, and sing unto thy name. And again he saith, Rejoice, ye Gentiles, with his people. And again, Praise the Lord, all ye Gentiles; and laud him, all ye people. And again, Esaias saith, There shall be a root of Jesse, and he that shall rise to reign over the Gentiles; in him shall the Gentiles trust."

a. Christ not only received the people of Israel who would obey him, he also extends a warm welcome to Gentiles who will follow him. In his personal ministry, his work was limited to the Jews, but when he fulfilled his earthly work, the offer of salvation was broadened to include the Gentiles.

b. In verse nine, we are told that the work of Christ was aimed also toward the Gentiles, that they might glorify God because of his mercy. Paul quotes Psalm 18:49 (2 Sam. 22:50). "When David represents himself as among the Gentiles, as confessing to God, and singing with them, he foreshows that the time was coming when Jews and Gentiles would...be so completely one as to recognize the same God and sing the same song..." (Lard, p.435).

c. In verse ten, the apostle here cites Deuteronomy 32:43, which declared: "Rejoice, ye Gentiles, with his people." What Christ brought about in the gospel, and which Paul was setting forth in Romans, was intended to be accomplished by Jehovah from the beginning. Paul shows from the quoted passage that even Moses pointed to the day when this plan would be in operation.

d. In verse eleven, Paul quotes again from the Old Testament Scriptures, Psalm 117:1. The Psalmist calls on the Gentiles to praise the Lord, and urges all the people to laud him. The doctrine Paul was promoting was not of recent invention, but was anticipated by Old Testament writers, and intended by God from eternity.

e. Verse twelve quotes from Isaiah 11:1,10, from which the apostle finds another Old Testament reference to the anticipation of the time when Gentiles would be acceptable to God.

1) If the Jews had understood and accepted what was plainly affirmed in the Old Testament, they would have been ready for the bringing in of the Gentiles. In the initial statement to Abraham (Gen. 12:1-3), God showed that his ultimate plan, which he intended to work out through that Patriarch's descendants included blessing all the nations of the earth, not merely the nation of Israel.

2) God intended that the Gentiles, through the *root of Jesse*, should have trust, and that this same One should rise to reign over the Gentiles.

9. Five verses (8-12) are used to present information which confirms the statement of verse 7. "From his amplification of proof we must conclude that he regards the point before him as of great importance. That point is, that we must accept one another. Judging and despising on account of meats are to be at an end. The more lovely course of accepting and holding one another in fraternal affection must take their place" (Lard, p.436). Since God and Christ have accepted the Gentiles, the Jews and Gentiles must accept each other.

B. Romans 15:13-21: Paul's Prayer, His Confidence in the Brethren, and Dedication in Preaching the Gospel.

1. Verse 13: "Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost."

a. Scholars usually connect this verse with the previous twelve verses, but it appears to this writer that it better connects with the section of the chapter which extends through verse twenty-one. In this

- verse, Paul expresses a strong desire in the behalf of his brethren, which amounts to a prayer for them.
- b. God is described as the God of hope. He is the author of hope. Hope looks to the future (Rom. 8:24-24); it is comprised of a desire for the object in view and of a reasonable expectation of receiving it. If we do not want it, we cannot hope for it; if we cannot obtain it, we cannot hope to get it. By making certain blessings available to us, by showing us the means by which these blessings can be obtained, and by furnishing us with the motivation to seek after them, God grants us hope.
  - c. God is able to fill his people with joy. Because we have hope of heaven, we are filled with joy. What our outward circumstances are has little or nothing to do with diminishing our joy, if our faith is strong.
    - 1) Philippians 4:4: "Rejoice in the Lord alway: *and* again I say, Rejoice."
    - 2) Philippians 4:11: "Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, *therewith* to be content."
    - 3) Philippians 4:13: "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me."
    - 4) Philippians 4:19: "But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus."
  - d. God is able to fill his people with peace. When we obey the gospel, we understand that the guilt of all of our past sins has been removed; we have the comforting knowledge that we are in the proper relationship with God; we have the right attitude toward other people, our enemies, and ourselves. We possess a peace that is beyond human production or comprehension.
    - 1) Philippians 4:6-7: "Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."
    - 2) Hebrews 8:12: "For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more."
  - e. The blessings of hope, joy, and peace grow out of believing—a continually obedient faith (Jas. 2:14ff). *Believing* refers to our obedience to the gospel, an obedience which involves the essentials of first becoming a Christian and which keeps us walking in the light of the gospel.
    - 1) Acts 2:38: "Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."
    - 2) Acts 10:34-35: "Then Peter opened *his* mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him."
    - 3) Romans 10:16: "But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report?"
    - 4) Hebrews 5:8-9: "Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him."
    - 5) 1 John 1:6-10: "If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us."
  - f. The God of hope causes us to abound in hope by the Holy Spirit. Some would read into this simple statement of fact a complicated theory which calls for a direct operation of the Holy Spirit, involving supernatural activities on the Spirit's part. But Paul has given us a sketch, in this very verse, of the method by which the Spirit provides this hope. God is the author of it; the Spirit (through the gospel message) leads us to believe and obey the will of God; hope floods our hearts; peace and joy result. God, operating through the Holy Spirit, who in turn operates through the inspired word, produces joy, peace, and hope.
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- g. The Holy Spirit operates through the inspired word of God which he revealed to certain hand-picked men of Bible times (1 Cor. 2:9-14; John 16:13-14; 14:26; Eph. 3:1-11).
2. Verse 14: "And I myself also am persuaded of you, my brethren, that ye also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another."
- a. The apostle here expresses good confidence in the brethren in Rome. From what he knew of the saints there, he could give several positive descriptions of them. It is to be remembered that Paul was an inspired apostle, and writing by the supernatural power of the Holy Spirit, he could give these accurate depictions of the brethren, even though he had never been to Rome. However, he knew some of the brethren, as he shows in chapter sixteen.
- b. These words of praise he gives here are directed to the church as a whole; they likely would not fit every individual, for in most congregations there are some who are uncommitted and worldly.
- c. They were full of goodness. Evidently, the church in Rome had disputes over the issues of meats and days, and needed instruction from the apostle to remove the problem (Rom. 14). That these problems were minor is seen by his commendation of their inherent goodness. To be good, they needed to be pure of heart and life, teachable, and dedicated to the truth. They likely had a worldly minority which were the cause of the difficulties addressed in the previous chapter.
- d. They were filled with knowledge. No one ever reaches a stage in this world where he has no need of further study and instruction. Only a few of the New Testament books had been written at the time Paul wrote Romans. The first century church was dependent on inspired men for their knowledge, for many years, until the New Testament revelation was completely revealed and recorded. Inspired men had obviously been in Rome to edify the church. Likely the church was planted there when Jews from Rome obeyed the gospel in Jerusalem (Acts 2), and returned home to preach the gospel. There were those in Rome who doubtless had received spiritual gifts elsewhere from the apostles. Thus, through whatever letters they had received and from the ministry of Spirit-endowed men, the church had received much instruction. Paul expressed his desire in Romans 1:11 to travel to Rome so that he could impart more spiritual gifts to them to the end that they might be fully established.
- e. They were able to admonish one another. The spiritual gifts enabled brethren to admonish each other, just as the written word is able to do. With a greater number of people with spiritual gifts or with more of the written revelation, the brethren would be able to improve their admonishing abilities. To admonish is *to put in mind*. This action describes the process of instructing, warning, rebuking, and encouraging.
- 1) Acts 20:32: "And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified."
- 2) 2 Timothy 3:16-17: "All scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."
- 3) 2 Timothy 4:2: "Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine."
3. Verse 15: "Nevertheless, brethren, I have written the more boldly unto you in some sort, as putting you in mind, because of the grace that is given to me of God."
- a. Paul says he is writing to them so that he can put them in mind of things they need to know and remember. The ASV rendering says: "But I write the more boldly unto you in some measure, as putting you again in remembrance, because of the grace that was given me of God." Some of the instructions included in the epistle they had already been taught, but there is ever the need for Christians to be reminded of the details of God's word.
- 1) 2 Peter 1:12: "Wherefore I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, though ye know *them*, and be established in the present truth."
- 2) 2 Peter 3:1-2: "This second epistle, beloved, I now write unto you; in *both* which I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance: That ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken
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- before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Saviour."
- b. The apostle wrote with some measure of boldness to accomplish the aims intended. Paul had the authority to write such a letter because of his apostleship. He sometimes speaks of his apostleship as *grace* (Eph. 3:6-11; Rom. 1:5; Gal. 2:1-9). The apostles received authority and power vouchsafed to no other Christian.
    - 1) Matthew 19:28: "And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel."
    - 2) 2 Corinthians 12:12: "Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, in signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds."
  4. Verse 16: "That I should be the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God, that the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Ghost."
    - a. The apostle states here that the *grace* granted to him (verse 15) was the commission and power Christ gave him to be his minister to the Gentiles (Acts 26:15-19).
    - b. Paul did not limit himself, of course, to preaching only to Gentiles. His practice was, on entering a new city, to meet with the Jews and try to teach them first; afterwards, he sought out the Gentiles (Rom. 1:16-17; Acts 13:14-48). Usually there were proselyted Gentiles who assembled with the Jews; these made excellent prospects for the gospel.
    - c. Paul's calling took him especially to Gentile lands, and more than any other one person, he was able to reap a great harvest of souls among them. The other apostles gave themselves especially to work among the Jews: "Then fourteen years after I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, and took Titus with *me* also. And I went up by revelation, and communicated unto them that gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, but privately to them which were of reputation, lest by any means I should run, or had run, in vain. But neither Titus, who was with me, being a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised: And that because of false brethren unawares brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage: To whom we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour; that the truth of the gospel might continue with you. But of these who seemed to be somewhat, (whatsoever they were, it maketh no matter to me: God accepteth no man's person:) for they who seemed *to be somewhat* in conference added nothing to me: But contrariwise, when they saw that the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me, as *the gospel* of the circumcision *was* unto Peter; For he that wrought effectually in Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision, the same was mighty in me toward the Gentiles" (Gal. 2:1-8).
    - d. The remnant of the Gentiles obeyed the gospel; these were acceptable before God. The Gentiles were the offering that was acceptable to God. They were sanctified (set apart) by the Holy Spirit. This statement of fact does not tell how the Holy Spirit sanctified these people who obeyed the gospel. Jesus spoke about people being sanctified by God's word (John 17:17); since the Holy Spirit revealed the word of God, the way the Spirit sanctifies people is by that word, the gospel. The Holy Spirit appoints elders (Acts 20:28), but he does not do so by a supernatural fiat directly from heaven; he does so by men meeting the qualifications set forth in the inspired word, and being selected by the church to serve as elders.
    - e. We are baptized by the Spirit into the body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:13), but the Spirit does not personally immerse us; rather, as individuals believe the gospel and obey it by being baptized, they are sanctified thereby; the Spirit's role in the process is one he accomplished by revealing the gospel.
    - f. When men do not follow sound procedures in interpreting the Bible, they accept all kinds of foolish and hurtful beliefs and practices (2 Tim. 2:15).
  5. Verse 17: "I have therefore whereof I may glory through Jesus Christ in those things which pertain to God."
    - a. Paul had a part in the sanctification of the Gentiles. It was his privilege to preach the gospel to them; but his preaching was guided by the Holy Spirit; he did not originate the message or make the decision
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- to serve Christ among the Gentiles. Christ commissioned him to serve as an apostle, with all of the authority and power of that calling; he exercised his calling primarily among the Gentiles.
- b. In accomplishing this great work, Paul had something of which to be proud (in the good sense of the word). "He thus reminded the Judaizers and all who might be influenced by them that he did not glory in his Jewish blood nor in anything that pertained to Judaism, but only in Christ Jesus in things pertaining to God..." (Whiteside, p.286).
    - 1) 1 Corinthians 2:2: "For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified."
    - 2) Galatians 6:13-14: "For neither they themselves who are circumcised keep the law; but desire to have you circumcised, that they may glory in your flesh. But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world."
  6. Verse 18: "For I will not dare to speak of any of those things which Christ hath not wrought by me, to make the Gentiles obedient, by word and deed."
    - a. Paul refused to take any personal credit for the successes in winning Gentiles to Christ. "I will not dare to speak of any of those things which Christ hath wrought by me." Paul did and said much to bring men to obey the gospel, but he was merely an instrument in the Lord's hands; he was determined to give the glory to Christ.
    - b. Three thousand people obeyed the gospel on the Pentecost Day of Acts 2 as a result of the preaching the twelve apostles did. But the apostles could take no credit for that huge success. It was the convicting power of the gospel that "pricked" those tender hearts so that they obeyed. The message they preached was not of their own choosing or doing, for they spake as the Holy Spirit gave them utterance (2:1-4).
    - c. No **man** originated the glorious gospel; no man is able to save a single soul or cause a single sin to be forgiven. God gave the gospel through the Holy Spirit's work in the first century; Christ's sacrifice lies at the heart of the gospel story; the love of God permeates every word of the gospel message.
    - d. When we preach the gospel, and precious souls respond in obedience, it is not our eloquence that has moved them, and it is not our wisdom and power that saves them. The power to save is God's, and that saving power is the gospel (Rom. 1:16).
    - e. When we labor with much expenditure of time and effort to get men to obey the gospel, and none will respond, the lack of success is not our fault, if we taught the whole counsel of God in the best way we were able. The gospel cannot save anyone who will not believe it or who refuses to commit himself to following it wholeheartedly.
      - 1) Luke 14:26-33: "If any *man* come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple. And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple. For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have *sufficient* to finish *it*? Lest haply, after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish *it*, all that behold *it* begin to mock him, Saying, This man began to build, and was not able to finish. Or what king, going to make war against another king, sitteth not down first, and consulteth whether he be able with ten thousand to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand? Or else, while the other is yet a great way off, he sendeth an ambassage, and desireth conditions of peace. So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple."
      - 2) John 8:24: "I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am *he*, ye shall die in your sins."
      - 3) Hebrews 10:36-39: "For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise. For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry. Now the just shall live by faith: but if *any man* draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the

- saving of the soul."
- 4) Hebrews 11:6: "But without faith *it is* impossible to please *him*: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and *that* he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him."
7. Verse 19: "Through mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God; so that from Jerusalem, and round about unto Illyricum, I have fully preached the gospel of Christ."
- a. Directly involved with the ministry of Paul were many mighty signs and wonders wrought by the Holy Spirit. Those miraculous works were essential in that day when the written word had not been entirely revealed.
  - b. Supernatural acts were done for the specific purpose of confirming the spoken word of those inspired men (Mark 16:20; Heb. 2:1-4; 2 Cor. 12:12; Mark 2:1-12). They were not done to save the lost directly, but to confirm the message which, when believed and obeyed, would provide salvation: "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned. And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover. So then after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God. And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with *them*, and confirming the word with signs following. Amen" (Mark 16:15-20).
  - c. Miracles of healing were designed, not mainly for the benefit of the person healed, but for the greater purpose of convincing lost souls of the truthfulness of the gospel message, and thus their need to be obedient to it.
  - d. Paul journeyed far and wide preaching the gospel, from Jerusalem to the region of Illyricum. This last place was northeast of the Adriatic Sea, across from Italy.
  - e. Paul fully preached the gospel of Christ. This implies that the gospel of Christ can be partially preached. To partially preach the gospel is to exclude parts of it; but to omit part of the gospel is to mutilate it; a mutilated gospel is not the power of God unto salvation.
    - 1) Matthew 28:18-20: "And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: 20 Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, *even* unto the end of the world. Amen."
    - 2) Acts 20:17-32: "And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus, and called the elders of the church. And when they were come to him, he said unto them, Ye know, from the first day that I came into Asia, after what manner I have been with you at all seasons, Serving the Lord with all humility of mind, and with many tears, and temptations, which befell me by the lying in wait of the Jews: *And* how I kept back nothing that was profitable *unto you*, but have showed you, and have taught you publicly, and from house to house, Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. And now, behold, I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there: Save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me. But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God. And now, behold, I know that ye all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, shall see my face no more. Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I *am* pure from the blood of all *men*. For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God. Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day
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with tears. And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified."

- 3) Galatians 1:6-9: "I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any *man* preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed."
  - 4) Revelation 22:18-19: "For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and *from* the things which are written in this book."
8. Verses 20-21: "Yea, so have I strived to preach the gospel, not where Christ was named, lest I should build upon another man's foundation: But as it is written, To whom he was not spoken of, they shall see: and they that have not heard shall understand."
- a. "Paul did not seek easy places, nor places that paid the most money. He preached where the gospel was most needed, and where there appeared to be an opportunity to reap a harvest....Every place needed the gospel, but not every place was ripe unto harvest" (Whiteside, pp.287f).
  - b. The apostle went to places where Christ had not been preached before, although he did not shun those places entirely where others had already labored. His prime goal was to go where Christ was not known. In this, no one could accuse him of building on another's foundation. Much more is involved in Paul's ministry than his own personal glory.
  - c. He was an apostle of Christ, and as such he was the author of 14 New Testament books (including Hebrews). He has exerted greater influence on the world than the other apostles because of his inspired writings. If his enemies back then could have established their charges that he was no proper apostle, think of the damage that would have done to the cause of Christ, even in our day. The New Testament without the writings of Paul would not be the New Testament; only 13 books would have remained.
  - d. His actions were right because he fulfilled an Old Testament prophecy (Isa. 52:15) that said as much. Isaiah foresaw the time when the word of God would be taken to the Gentiles. The apostle made this same strong point earlier in the chapter (15:8-12).
    - 1) Isaiah 52:15: "So shall he sprinkle many nations; the kings shall shut their mouths at him: for *that* which had not been told them shall they see; and *that* which they had not heard shall they consider."
    - 2) Romans 15:8-12: "Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises *made* unto the fathers: And that the Gentiles might glorify God for *his* mercy; as it is written, For this cause I will confess to thee among the Gentiles, and sing unto thy name. And again he saith, Rejoice, ye Gentiles, with his people. And again, Praise the Lord, all ye Gentiles; and laud him, all ye people. And again, Esaias saith, There shall be a root of Jesse, and he that shall rise to reign over the Gentiles; in him shall the Gentiles trust."

C. Romans 15:22-29: Paul's Desire to Journey to Rome.

1. Verse 22: "For which cause also I have been much hindered from coming to you."
  - a. Because the apostle was busy teaching the gospel to the lost, he had not been able to journey to Rome to meet with the brethren.
  - b. There were far too many places where the gospel was unknown to permit Paul the pleasure of visiting them.
    - 1) Acts 19:21: "After these things were ended, Paul purposed in the spirit, when he had passed through Macedonia and Achaia, to go to Jerusalem, saying, After I have been there, I must also

- see Rome."
- 2) Romans 1:9-13: "For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son, that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers; Making request, if by any means now at length I might have a prosperous journey by the will of God to come unto you. For I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established; That is, that I may be comforted together with you by the mutual faith both of you and me. Now I would not have you ignorant, brethren, that oftentimes I purposed to come unto you, (but was let hitherto,) that I might have some fruit among you also, even as among other Gentiles."
2. Verse 23: "But now having no more place in these parts, and having a great desire these many years to come unto you."
    - a. The epistle was written in Corinth during his three-month stay in Greece, prior to his return to Jerusalem from his third missionary journey (see 2 Cor. 8-9). He had fulfilled his commitment to the area where he was, and saw that the time would soon be ripe for a journey to Rome.
      - 1) Acts 20:2-3: "And when he had gone over those parts, and had given them much exhortation, he came into Greece, And *there* abode three months. And when the Jews laid wait for him, as he was about to sail into Syria, he purposed to return through Macedonia."
      - 2) Romans 15:25-27: "But now I go unto Jerusalem to minister unto the saints. For it hath pleased them of Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor saints which are at Jerusalem. It hath pleased them verily; and their debtors they are. For if the Gentiles have been made partakers of their spiritual things, their duty is also to minister unto them in carnal things."
      - 3) 1 Corinthians 16:1-4: "Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. Upon the first *day* of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as *God* hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come. And when I come, whomsoever ye shall approve by *your* letters, them will I send to bring your liberality unto Jerusalem. And if it be meet that I go also, they shall go with me."
    - b. He had entertained a desire to travel to the imperial capital, but did not know the circumstances which would ultimately achieve his wishes (Acts 21-28).
  3. Verse 24: "Whensoever I take my journey into Spain, I will come to you: for I trust to see you in my journey, and to be brought on my way thitherward by you, if first I be somewhat filled with your company."
    - a. The apostle's plans called for him to return to Jerusalem, and some time later to begin another journey, with the ultimate destination being Spain, going by way of Rome.
    - b. However, as Acts 21-28 relates, Paul was arrested when he got back to Jerusalem, imprisoned for two years at Caesarea, and sent to Rome as a prisoner. The book of Acts closes with Paul in Rome, having been incarcerated there for two years.
    - c. As an inspired apostle, the plans for conducting the work of spreading the gospel was largely in his own hands. But on the second missionary tour, he and his company endeavored to go into certain areas of Asia Minor to preach, but were deterred by the Holy Spirit, who led them into Europe (Acts 16).
    - d. Was Paul ever able to go to Spain? There is no full proof in the New Testament that he did. Some have argued that he was released from his imprisonment in Rome, and subsequently visited Spain, and that he was later arrested again, taken to Rome, where he was beheaded. This appears to have been the case. [See under Introduction for a detailed discussion].
    - e. His stated wish was that, on visiting the brethren in Rome, they would bring him on his way to Spain (Acts 15:3; 21:5; 1 Cor. 16:6; 2 Cor. 1:16). While with them, he happily anticipated having a pleasurable time being in their company.
      - 1) Acts 15:3: "And being brought on their way by the church, they passed through Phenice and Samaria, declaring the conversion of the Gentiles: and they caused great joy unto all the brethren."
      - 2) Acts 21:5: "And when we had accomplished those days, we departed and went our way; and they

- all brought us on our way, with wives and children, till *we were* out of the city: and we kneeled down on the shore, and prayed."
- 3) 1 Corinthians 16:6: "And it may be that I will abide, yea, and winter with you, that ye may bring me on my journey whithersoever I go."
  - 4) 2 Corinthians 1:16: "And to pass by you into Macedonia, and to come again out of Macedonia unto you, and of you to be brought on my way toward Judaea."
4. Verse 25: "But now I go unto Jerusalem to minister unto the saints."
- a. His trip to Jerusalem was intended to provide service to the brethren. His presence there would give him the occasion to preach the gospel and instruct them, but the point here was that he carried with him a collection from the Gentile congregations which was intended to relieve the needs of the saints in Judea.
  - b. Details regarding this collection are given in 1 Corinthians 16:1ff; 2 Corinthians 8:1-17; 9:1-15.
5. Verses 26-27: "For it hath pleased them of Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor saints which are at Jerusalem. It hath pleased them verily; and their debtors they are. For if the Gentiles have been made partakers of their spiritual things, their duty is also to minister unto them in carnal things."
- a. Paul addresses the subject of the collection directly here, stating that it was gathered by the brethren in Macedonia and Achaia, and was being sent to relieve the sufferings of the poor saints at Jerusalem. Other congregations in other places doubtless took part in this good work.
  - b. The brethren in Judea were in need due in part perhaps to being deprived of their goods and means of livelihood by persecution; possibly the effects of the great famine of Acts 11:27-30 (about 45 A.D.) had not entirely subsided.
  - c. The poor saints would have their needs met by the contribution, but it would probably do its greatest work by cementing the Gentile and Jewish Christians together in their common cause. The natural tendencies toward suspicion between the Gentiles and Jews did not disappear immediately when individuals from the two different backgrounds obeyed the gospel. The dissensions Paul sought to remove by the instructions of Romans 14 and 15 were those caused by the different backgrounds of the brethren. This gift from Gentile Christians to aid Jewish Christians would go a long way toward removing suspicion, and in bonding them together as fellow-servants of Christ.
  - d. The Gentile saints from Achaia and Macedonia, representing congregations in Corinth, Berea, Thessalonica, and other cities, were more prosperous than their Jewish counterparts at Jerusalem. These Gentile Christians were grateful to their Jewish brethren for sending Paul to them with the gospel (cf. Acts 13:1ff). They viewed themselves as debtors to the brethren in Jerusalem, and in a small measure, repaid them by helping those brethren in their material needs.
6. Verse 28-29: "When therefore I have performed this, and have sealed to them this fruit, I will come by you into Spain. And I am sure that, when I come unto you, I shall come in the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ."
- a. He states again his determined purpose to come to them in Rome as he made his journey into Spain. He would begin that long and hazardous trip after delivering the contribution to the brethren in Jerusalem. "Sealed to them this fruit" is to deliver the gift securely into their hands where it could be put to proper use.
  - b. Paul was confident that he would arrive safely in Rome, if it was the Lord's will. God did bring him to Rome, but under different circumstances from what he had envisioned. Acts 28.
  - c. His confidence was that he would be able to bring to them certain blessings offered by the gospel. Anytime the gospel is preached, blessings are announced and proffered.
    - 1) Acts 20:32: "And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified."
    - 2) Ephesians 1:3: "Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly *places* in Christ."
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- 3) 2 Timothy 3:16-17: "All scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."
- 4) James 1:17: "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning."
- 5) 1 Peter 1:3-5: "Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time."
- 6) 2 Peter 1:3-12: "According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that *pertain* unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make *you that ye shall* neither *be* barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Wherefore I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, though ye know *them*, and be established in the present truth."
- d. Since it was his stated intention to confer upon them certain spiritual gifts when he came (1:11), these spiritual gifts were doubtless included in his statement of verse 29. But the spiritual gifts were only a means to the end; the exercise of those gifts would instruct and edify the brethren. When the full revelation of the gospel message had been revealed and confirmed, the gospel would be able to do all that the spiritual gifts could accomplish.

D. Romans 15:30-33: Paul Asks the Brethren to Pray in His Behalf.

1. Verse 30: "Now I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, and for the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with me in your prayers to God for me."
  - a. Paul recognized that the future without the guidance and help of God would be uncertain and hazardous. He needed God's help. Thus, he pleads with the brethren that they strive together with him in prayer in his behalf.
  - b. The prayers of the righteous avail more than we can know (Jas. 5:16; 1 John 3:22; 5:14-15). Paul knew that he would be better able to come to them in Rome if they prayed with him to that end. He also needed their prayers as he made his journey toward Jerusalem, and as he faced the many challenges that lay ahead of him in preaching the gospel.
    - 1) James 5:16: "Confess *your* faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much."
    - 2) 1 John 3:22: "And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight."
    - 3) 1 John 5:14-15: "And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us: And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him."
  - c. He besought them that they strive together with me in prayer. The Greek for *strive together with me* (*sunagon-izomai*) "means to carry on a combat or conflict in company with another" (Lard, p.448). With several faithful brethren approaching God with the same request, the prospects for a positive

answer are improved.

- 1) Luke 18:1-14: "And he spake a parable unto them *to this end*, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint; Saying, There was in a city a judge, which feared not God, neither regarded man: And there was a widow in that city; and she came unto him, saying, Avenge me of mine adversary. And he would not for a while: but afterward he said within himself, Though I fear not God, nor regard man; Yet because this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me. And the Lord said, Hear what the unjust judge saith. And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them? I tell you that he will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth? And he spake this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others: Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men *are*, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess. And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as *his eyes* unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. I tell you, this man went down to his house justified *rather* than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted."
- 2) Romans 12:12: "Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer."
- 3) 1 Thessalonians 5:17: "Pray without ceasing."
- d. The three persons of the Godhead are named separately in the verse: the Lord Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit, and God. Oneness Pentecostals are hard-pressed to defend their false doctrine in the light of such clear and compelling statements of Scripture!
- e. The apostle makes his appeal to the brethren on the basis of (1) the sake of the Lord Jesus Christ and (2) the love of the Spirit. His request was not selfish, but in behalf of the Cause of Christ. The brethren in Rome would directly benefit from these prayers also, for if the apostle came to them safely, he would build them up in the holy faith.
- f. His appeal is based on the love of the Spirit. One of the fruits of the Spirit is love (Gal. 5:22-23). He engenders love in the hearts of men by teaching; the Spirit's part was in revealing the truth, which is then taught to men. When individuals believe the teachings, an earnest and sincere desire for the best for others, and obedience to God's will, result (Rom. 13:10; 1 John 5:3; Mark 12:29-31). If the Holy Spirit imbued love directly into our hearts independent of our obedience, we would be hardly more than inanimate machines; and if we did not receive that love, it would be the Spirit's fault. "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maranatha" (1 Cor. 16:22). Since we are assured in the Scriptures of the love God and Christ have for us, we may be likewise sure the Spirit also loves us.
- g. Paul was asking them to pray in his behalf, but his request was not selfish in any sense. If Paul's efforts were blessed by God, the cause of Christ would be enhanced, souls would be saved, and the saints in Rome (and elsewhere) would be edified. The apostle was a tremendously valuable tool in the hands of God!
  - 1) Philippians 1:27: "Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel."
  - 2) 2 Corinthians 12:15: "And I will very gladly spend and be spent for you; though the more abundantly I love you, the less I be loved."
2. Verse 31: "That I may be delivered from them that do not believe in Judaea; and that my service which I have for Jerusalem may be accepted of the saints."
  - a. Specifically, Paul asks that they pray that he would be delivered from the evil hands of Jewish unbelievers in Judea, and that the contribution would be well-received by the brethren there.
  - b. His desire to be kept from his enemies was not primarily for his own personal benefit. If they had

their way with him, he would be imprisoned or slain forthwith!

- 1) If either of these evils happened, it would be to the detriment of the cause of Christ, and would deprive the saints in Rome of his aid. Personally, he was ready to suffer imprisonment and death in Jerusalem.
  - 2) Acts 21:10-13: "And as we tarried there many days, there came down from Judea a certain prophet, named Agabus. And when he was come unto us, he took Paul's girdle, and bound his own hands and feet, and said, thus saith the Holy Ghost, So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man that owneth this girdle, and shall deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles. And when we heard these things, both we, and they of that place, besought him not to go up to Jerusalem. Then Paul answered, What mean ye to weep and to break mine heart? for I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus."
  - c. He wanted the Jewish saints to gladly receive the contribution from their Gentile brethren. His request that they pray for the gift to be received indicates the possibility that it might be rejected. Why would they reject it? The Judaizers might have raised prejudice among the Jews against their Gentile brethren. If the Jewish Christians rejected the gift, the cause of Christ would have suffered a horrible blow. Acceptance of the gift would indicate a bond between the two segments of the brotherhood of Christ.
    - 1) John 17:20-21: "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us; that the world may believe that thou hast sent me."
    - 2) 1 Corinthians 1:10: "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment."
    - 3) Philippians 3:16: "Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing."
    - 4) Galatians 3:26-29: "For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's see, and heirs according to the promise."
  3. Verse 32: "That I may come unto you with joy by the will of God, and may with you be refreshed."
    - a. He further asked that they pray that he might be able to come to them under happy circumstances. He longed for the opportunity to meet them, so that he could be refreshed with them.
    - b. If the Jewish saints gladly received the gift, a great worry would have been lifted from the apostle's heart, and he could joyfully journey to Rome. If they did not receive it, perhaps he would have to remain in Judea to try to rectify the situation.
    - c. His prayer is that they might be refreshed together. To be refreshed is to find "rest" (ASV). He would be able to bring them information, instruction, and spiritual gifts which would give them rest; and the same process would likewise be a blessing to him. Faithful servants of Christ are happiest when they are able to help someone else.
    - d. The apostle tempers his request by affirming his wish that God's will be done. Our view of affairs is extremely limited; God has a perfect view of the entire field; we might ask for something that would be hurtful to ourselves, to others, or to the gospel. He recognized, therefore, that it might not be in keeping with God's will for him to make the journey as contemplated.
  4. Verse 33: "Now the God of peace be with you all. Amen."
    - a. He concludes this request, and the chapter, by stating his desire that the God of peace be with them. His benevolent wish was in behalf of every one of them, not merely to a selected few.
    - b. God is the God of peace, even though following him might create strife between us and the world. But obeying the word of God will establish peace between us and God. In the final analysis, at the end of life and in the Judgment, having God's approval is all that matters!
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- c. Philippians 4:6-7: "Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."
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## ROMANS 16

### A. Romans 16:1-2: Paul Commends Phebe to the Brethren at Rome.

1. Verse 1: "I commend unto you Phebe our sister, which is a servant of the church which is at Cenchrea."
  - a. Phebe was from the city of Cenchrea, where Paul shaved his head when he returned from his second missionary journey (Acts 18:18). Located about nine miles southeast of Corinth, it was the port city of Corinth for those travelling eastward by ship.
  - b. We are not told how the church in Cenchrea was started, but possibly as a result of Paul's stop there, or perhaps by the work of the brethren in Corinth.
  - c. Paul could personally vouch for this good woman, commending her to the church at Rome for the help she gave to Paul and many others, and because she was a servant of the church at Cenchrea.
  - d. This verse states plainly that she was a servant of the church; *servant* is translated from the Greek *diakonos*. From this word our English word *deacon* derives, and is so translated in 1 Timothy 3:8 and Philippians 1:1. When the Greek word carries an official connotation in the context, it is properly translated *deacon*; when the word is used in its ordinary sense, *servant* is the appropriate rendering. Should this instance of the word be translated "servant" (feminine gender) or "deaconess?"
    - 1) Those who are supportive of the modern feminist movement assert that it ought to be *deaconess*. There are some in the brotherhood who accept this view. If Phebe was an official female deacon, serving the Lord's church at Cenchrea, where are the qualifications she had to meet to be appointed? No list of qualifications is given in the New Testament for deaconesses. There is a list of prerequisites for those widows who were to be enrolled for the church to support (1 Tim. 5:3-16); and there is another list giving the criteria that the wives of elders and deacons were to meet (1 Tim. 3:11). But neither of these lists is connected to any supposed *deaconesses*! If Paul had intended to give qualifications for deaconesses, he would have specifically addressed that issue. Since there is no New Testament criteria for the office of female deacon, and there is no definite example of anyone holding that position, then there is no New Testament authority for such an official office today.
    - 2) It is obvious that *servant* is used in the Bible to identify the general good work which God has given all of his people to do. Just because one is spoken of as a servant of the church does not make that person automatically the holder of some official position in the church. As Whiteside observed, "We let our minds run to officialism too much....To select a person for a certain work does not necessarily make him an officer in the common acceptance of that term. To select a man to hold a series of meetings does not make him an officer, and no one thinks so. Selecting certain women to attend to certain duties does not make them deaconesses in any official sense" (p.293).
    - 3) Phebe was no more a deaconess than a civil ruler is a deacon or deaconess (Rom. 13:4). Paul spoke of himself as a servant (1 Cor. 3:5; 2 Cor. 3:6; 6:4), but no one understands him to be claiming to be a deacon. Christ is called a servant (Rom. 15:8), but our Savior does not serve tables!
    - 4) When Paul addressed his epistle to the brethren in Philippi, he described the entire membership under the three headings of saints, bishops, and deacons; no deaconesses are indicated. The bishops (or elders) and deacons are distinguished from the rest of the saints; if there were deaconesses in the church at Philippi they should have likewise been addressed separately. If there were no deaconesses in Philippi, there were none in the other congregations.
    - 5) The word *apostle* means "one sent on a particular mission." The word is commonly used in the New Testament in reference to those men who were specially chosen and equipped to bear witness of the resurrection of Christ, and to do other things which only they were empowered to do (Acts 10:34-42; 2 Cor. 12:12; John 16:13-14; 14:26; Matt. 19:28). The word, however, is used in reference to Christ's earthly ministry (Heb. 3:1), and to certain other men who served the church:



Barnabas (Acts 14:4,14); and Epaphroditis (Ph. 2:25; the word *messenger* is from the same word translated *apostle* elsewhere). The word is used in a special sense with reference to the Twelve (and Paul), but in a more general sense in reference to Barnabas and Epaphroditis, who were sent by the local church. Similarly, Phebe was a servant of the church at Cenchrea; she did not occupy an official position as a lady deacon.

6) *Deaconesses* violate 1 Timothy 2:8-15 and 1 Corinthians 14:34-35.

a) 1 Corinthians 14:34-35: "Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but *they are commanded* to be under obedience, as also saith the law. And if they will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in the church."

b) 1 Timothy 2:8-15: "I will therefore that men pray every where, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting. In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; But (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works. Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence. For Adam was first formed, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression. Notwithstanding she shall be saved in childbearing, if they continue in faith and charity and holiness with sobriety."

e. Phebe was a willing servant of God in the church at Cenchrea. The exact nature of her work is left unspecified. It is thought by some that Paul's statement here indicates that she bore the letter to the brethren in Rome, but that conclusion is uncertain.

f. Paul describes Phebe as "our sister." The relationship is spiritual. The closeness of association is thus shown to be very high between members of the Lord's family. Such a pure and intimate relationship is incumbent and becoming of saints today.

g. Paul commended this good and faithful sister to the brethren. With Paul's commendation, she was sure to be well-received by all those who recognized Paul as an inspired apostle of Christ. Such a recommendation by brethren could facilitate changing of membership from one congregation to another, and quite possibly prevent a wayward brother from finding acceptance in another congregation until he repents.

2. Verse 2: "That ye receive her in the Lord, as becometh saints, and that ye assist her in whatsoever business she hath need of you: for she hath been a succourer of many, and of myself also."

a. Paul requested that the brethren in Rome receive Phebe; it was (and is) becoming of saints to thus receive into their fellowship all others who walk in the light of the gospel.

b. Their reception of Phebe had a practical application. He desired that they accept her and render to her whatever assistance she needed. He refers to her business in Rome only in a very general way, which might be primarily of a secular nature.

c. The apostle's recommendation of Phebe rested in part on the fact that she had been a succourer of many, including the apostle himself. The word is translated *helper* in the ASV. This description shows that her work was a service rendered to others, and not to some official activity.

#### B. Romans 16:3-16: Salutations to Various Saints in Rome Known to Paul.

1. Verses 3-5: "Greet Priscilla and Aquila my helpers in Christ Jesus: Who have for my life laid down their own necks: unto whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles. Likewise greet the church that is in their house. Salute my wellbeloved Epaenetus, who is the firstfruits of Achaia unto Christ."

a. The apostle sent greetings to Priscilla and Aquila, with whom Paul had labored (Acts 18:1-3, 24-26). They had risked their own lives for Paul. He does not identify the occasion, but possibly it was during the great uproar in Ephesus (Acts 19:33-41).

1) Acts 18:1-3: "After these things Paul departed from Athens, and came to Corinth; And found a certain Jew named Aquila, born in Pontus, lately come from Italy, with his wife Priscilla; (because

- that Claudius had commanded all Jews to depart from Rome:) and came unto them. And because he was of the same craft, he abode with them, and wrought: for by their occupation they were tentmakers."
- 2) Acts 18:24-26: "And a certain Jew named Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man, *and* mighty in the scriptures, came to Ephesus. This man was instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in the spirit, he spake and taught diligently the things of the Lord, knowing only the baptism of John. And he began to speak boldly in the synagogue: whom when Aquila and Priscilla had heard, they took him unto *them*, and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly."
  - 3) Acts 19:33-41: "And they drew Alexander out of the multitude, the Jews putting him forward. And Alexander beckoned with the hand, and would have made his defence unto the people. But when they knew that he was a Jew, all with one voice about the space of two hours cried out, Great *is* Diana of the Ephesians. And when the townclerk had appeased the people, he said, *Ye* men of Ephesus, what man is there that knoweth not how that the city of the Ephesians is a worshipper of the great goddess Diana, and of the *image* which fell down from Jupiter? Seeing then that these things cannot be spoken against, ye ought to be quiet, and to do nothing rashly. For ye have brought hither these men, which are neither robbers of churches, nor yet blasphemers of your goddess. Wherefore if Demetrius, and the craftsmen which are with him, have a matter against any man, the law is open, and there are deputies: let them implead one another. But if ye inquire any thing concerning other matters, it shall be determined in a lawful assembly. For we are in danger to be called in question for this day's uproar, there being no cause whereby we may give an account of this concourse. And when he had thus spoken, he dismissed the assembly."
- b. Paul was deeply grateful for these two outstanding saints, as were all the congregations among the Gentiles where they were known.
  - c. He likewise sent greetings to the church which met in the house of Aquila and Priscilla. They had offered a place in their home in Ephesus for the saints to meet (1 Cor. 16:19). When these two went into a new city to take up residence, they did not lose themselves, but remained busy in the Lord's cause, even to offering their home as a place for the church to meet. The church is not a meeting place, but the people who comprise the local congregation.
  - d. Paul appended to their greeting, a salutation also to Epaenetus, who was the first convert to Christ in Achaia, the province in which Corinth was located. The ASV has Asia instead of Achaia, with Ephesus being the likely place of his conversion, if Asia is truly meant. Wherever he was converted, and without regard to the one who was instrumental to bringing him to Christ, he was well-beloved to Paul. Other than this brief reference, we know nothing about Epaenetus.
2. Verses 6-15: Salutations are sent to various individuals, most of whom are unknown except for the brief statements given here. It is interesting to note that Paul knew so many of the saints in Rome, although he had never visited the city. Obviously, he had met these Christians in other places.
    - a. Verse 6: "Greet Mary, who bestowed much labour on us."
      - 1) Which Mary did the apostle mean? There were several with this name in the New Testament. That she was a zealous and faithful saint is seen in the fact that Paul said she had bestowed much labor upon him and his fellow-workers. The ASV has the object of Mary's labor those brethren in Rome.
      - 2) We have no way—and no need—to know the exact identity of this Mary.
    - b. Verse 7: "Salute Andronicus and Junia, my kinsmen, and my fellowprisoners, who are of note among the apostles, who also were in Christ before me."
      - 1) Paul next names two of his relatives, Andronicus and Junia. These were held in esteem by the apostles, they were in Christ before Paul was converted, and were also prisoners with Paul. Junia can be masculine or feminine. It is spelled *Junias* in the ASV.
      - 2) Some have supposed that they were only kin to Paul by being Jews; but the same could have been said about Aquila and Priscilla, who were Jews, but were not cited as being Paul's kinsmen. We
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- cannot know their precise kinship to Paul; inspiration does not satisfy mere curiosity.
- c. Verse 8: "Greet Amplias my beloved in the Lord."
    - 1) Another of those who were dear to Paul's heart was Amplias. He is also specified as being in the Lord.
      - a) Ephesians 1:3: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ."
      - b) Galatians 3:27: "For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ."
      - c) Romans 6:1-4: "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life."
      - d) Romans 8:1-3: "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh."
    - 2) His being in Christ is sufficient reason for him to be loved by the apostle.
  - d. Verse 9: "Salute Urbane, our helper in Christ, and Stachys my beloved."
    - 1) Greetings were also sent to Urbane and Stachys. The former is said to be the helper of Paul and the other saints, and the latter is claimed be loved by the apostle.
    - 2) *Urbane* means "citizen," and *Stachys* means "ear of corn" (Coffman, p.518).
  - e. Verse 10: "Salute Apelles approved in Christ. Salute them which are of Aristobulus' household."
    - 1) Paul salutes Apellus and those who are of the household of Aristobulus. Apellus is affirmed to have the approval of Christ, an honor and blessing exceeded by none other! There was something about the person or experiences of this person to warrant such an accolade by the Holy Spirit. Since Aristobulus is not greeted, he was either dead or was an unbeliever.
    - 2) Some scholars think this person [Aristobulus] was the grandson of Herod the Great. It is known that he lived in Rome. It is possible, therefore, that some of his servants had become Christians, and were addressed by Paul.
  - f. Verse 11: "Salute Herodion my kinsman. Greet them that be of the household of Narcissus, which are in the Lord."
    - 1) Another of Paul's kinsmen is greeted: Herodion. This man was likewise a Christian, for saints are being addressed, and are told to convey greetings to other saints.
    - 2) The identity of Narcissus is not known. Some have supposed that he was the man bearing that name who was closely connected to Claudius, but that is mere conjecture. It is not Narcissus, but those in his household, who were being saluted.
  - g. Verse 12: "Salute Tryphena and Tryphosa, who labour in the Lord. Salute the beloved Persis, which laboured much in the Lord."
    - 1) Tryphena and Tryphosa are thought by some to be twins, since their names are so similar, but that conclusion is uncertain. Their names are feminine. What is certain about them is they labored in the Lord.
      - a) Ecclesiastes 12:13: "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man."
      - b) 1 Corinthians 15:58: "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord."
    - 2) Persis is commended highly for the abundance of labor he had wrought in the Lord, and was beloved because of it. Diligent efforts in Christ are not unnoticed, and will be rewarded.
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- a) Hebrews 6:10: "For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have showed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister."
- b) Revelation 14:13: "And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them."
- h. Verse 13: "Salute Rufus chosen in the Lord, and his mother and mine."
  - 1) Salutation is sent to Rufus, one who was chosen in the Lord. The idea in this phrase is that he was a choice individual, an excellent and highly valued member of the church. If the mother of Rufus was also the mother of Paul, then they were brothers in the flesh, but Paul does not thus identify their relationship.
  - 2) The lady mentioned was the actual mother to Rufus, but probably was Paul's mother in a less literal sense. There are ladies to whom we may look with deep respect and devotion, who bear no physical kinship to us. This is likely the case with the mother of Rufus in Paul's estimation.
  - 3) "'His mother in a literal sense, and mine in a figurative one.' An instance of the delicacy and tenderness of Paul; of his love for this disciple and his mother, as if he were of the same family. Religion binds the hearts of all who embrace it tenderly together. It makes them feel that they are one great family, united by tender ties, and joined by special attachments. See what the Lord Jesus declared in Matt 12:47-50, and his tender address to John when he was on the cross; John 19:26-27" [Barnes' Notes, Electronic Database. Copyright (c) 1997 by BibleSoft].
- i. Verse 14: "Salute Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermas, Patrobas, Hermes, and the brethren which are with them."
  - 1) Several brethren are here saluted, specifically Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermas, Patrobas, and Hermes; and the apostle also includes "the brethren which are with them." Nothing is definitely known about these men, although tradition asserts that Phlegon and Hermes were members of the band of 70 disciples and that Hermes was the author of the uninspired writing known as "the Shepherd" (cf. Lard, pp.458f).
  - 2) These were worthy of being noted by the apostle, even though they are still strangers to us.
- j. Verse 15: "Salute Philologus, and Julia, Nereus, and his sister, and Olympas, and all the saints which are with them."
  - 1) Salutation are sent to Philologus, Julia, Nereus and his sister, and Olympas, plus all that were with them. Apparently, these were closely associated.
  - 2) Nothing is known from other records about any of these people. It may be that they lived in the same locality, and met together regularly for worship.
- 3. Verse 16: "Salute one another with an holy kiss. The churches of Christ salute you."
  - a. Paul concludes this section of the chapter by calling on the brethren to greet each other with a holy kiss. This has been interpreted to mean that the proper greeting for Christians is a kiss.
  - b. Kissing was an ancient means of greeting or parting. Jesus reminded a certain Simon that he had not greeted the Lord with a kiss when he entered his house (Luke 7:45); Judas betrayed Christ with a kiss (Matt. 26:49); Joab slew Amasa by deceiving him by feigning a kiss: "And Joab said to Amasa, Art thou in health, my brother? And Joab took Amasa by the beard with the right hand to kiss him. But Amasa took no heed to the sword that was in Joab's hand: so he smote him therewith in the fifth rib, and shed out his bowels to the ground, and struck him not again; and he died. So Joab and Abishai his brother pursued after Sheba the son of Bichri" (2 Sam. 20:9-10).
  - c. The New Testament speaks of more than one method of greeting. An embrace without any mention of a kiss is found in Acts 20:1; giving the right hand of fellowship is mentioned in Galatians 2:9. Since the Bible cites several ways of greeting, we may know that it did not bind the kiss as the exclusive method.
    - 1) Acts 20:1: "And after the uproar was ceased, Paul called unto *him* the disciples, and embraced *them*, and departed for to go into Macedonia."

- 2) Galatians 2:9: "And when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship; that we *should go* unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision."
  - d. What is bound by Paul in this passage is the holy kiss. Since a greeting might be by the exchange of kisses, the apostle says the kiss must be holy. There is such a thing as an unholy kiss; such is not to be practiced by Christians. Some might want only to kiss the opposite sex; that would show the intent.
  - e. Kissing was a common greeting in ancient days, and still is in some societies. But in our nation, handshakes are used. Paul was not binding the kiss as the only proper greeting, but was regulating the kind of kiss that was to be given, if any was given: the kiss was to be holy (not unholy).
    - 1) If the statement here is bound as a law, then both men and women are duty-bound to greet each other with a kiss. We would have no right to use another procedure. In our society, we are facing a tremendous problem with immorality; requiring a kiss as the greeting would make that problem even greater, humanity being what it is.
    - 2) However, kissing was the common custom in Paul's day. Rather than forbidding the saints the right to practice this usual greeting, the apostle placed a restriction on it: "Salute one another with an holy kiss.
  - f. Paul was in direct contact with several congregations in the general area he was residing when he penned the Roman epistle.
    - 1) Each of these congregations sent their greetings to their brethren in Rome. Paul was not saying there were several denominations which sent greetings, but several congregations of the one body (church) of Christ.
    - 2) The term is not used as a proper name for the church, but to designate ownership: each of these local churches belongs to Christ. Together, the individuals which comprise the many congregations around the world, make up the one body of Christ (his church; Matt. 16:18; Eph. 4:4-5; 1 Cor. 12:13).
    - 3) If congregations are what they should be, there will be full fellowship between them all, just as there will be full fellowship between all of the individual Christians of which they are comprised. If each congregation is as it ought to be, there will be no differences in the message they preach and practice; and anywhere one goes, and assembles with the local congregation, he will be at home.
- C. Romans 16:17-20: Paul Encourages Their Faithfulness in Opposing Error.
1. Verse 17: "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them."
    - a. It was fitting for Paul to include the thought of this passage as he concluded the epistle. If purity of teaching is unimportant, why did he issue such a strong statement here? If truth cannot be known, why did Paul teach the opposite here?
    - b. He begins the passage with a tender plea: I beseech you. Although stated as a plea, it is intended to be a strong demand. It was his inspired desire that they (and we) heed the admonition, hence it stated the requirement of God on the matter.
    - c. The requirement stated first is to mark those who cause division and offenses which are contrary to the true doctrine delivered to them (Gal. 1:6-9). This is not a polite suggestion, but a demand of God: "If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord" (1 Cor. 14:37). The authority of 1 Corinthians pertains also to Romans—and to every other inspired epistle in the Bible.
      - 1) Obviously, no physical mark was to be placed on false teachers to identify them as such, but they were to be identified before the brethren as errorists. Unstated is the fact that efforts should first be made to correct them and bring them back into salvation. If they would not repent, they were to be marked as false teachers.
        - a) 2 Thessalonians 2:15: "Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have

- been taught, whether by word, or our epistle."
- b) 2 Thessalonians 3:6: "Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us."
  - c) 2 Thessalonians 3:14-15: "And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed. Yet count *him* not as an enemy, but admonish *him* as a brother."
  - d) Titus 3:10: "A man that is an heretic after the first and second admonition reject."
  - e) 1 John 4:1: "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world."
- 2) If there is no standard of truth by which doctrines and practices may be measured, the requirement of this verse is utterly meaningless! But there is a standard; it is God's truth (his word: John 8:32; 17:17; 2 Tim. 3:16-17; 1 Cor. 4:6 (ASV); 2 John 9; 1 Pet. 4:11; Rev. 22:18-19; Gal. 1:6-12).
- 3) The false teachers on the scene at the time were the Judaizers (Gal. 2:4-5; Acts 15; Gal. 2:11-14). But the facts of the case fit every other false teacher; they are all to be opposed, warned, marked, and avoided. Anything that is contrary to the doctrine of Christ (2 John 9) is false doctrine, and must be rejected and opposed. As much as we all detest controversy and love peace, for the good of precious souls and for the purity of the gospel, we must be negative at times.
- d. The second thing commanded is the requirement that they avoid these false teachers (2 John 9-11). They were to be withdrawn from, brethren were to be warned about them, and the saints were to have no dealings with them that would give the impression of approval or which might cause the faithful brother to be contaminated with the false teachers' errors. The term translated *avoid them* is from the same word which is translated *eschew* in 1 Peter 3:11: "Let him eschew evil, and do good; let him seek peace, and ensue it."
- e. If this injunction were followed by brethren today, error would have small chance of developing and spreading. All too often, brethren are not fully appraised of the truth, and cannot therefore recognize error as false doctrine.
- 1) Many preachers do not know or believe the truth, or will not preach the whole counsel of God; elders do not demand that their preachers preach God's word accurately and fully; consequently, many members are unlearned in the word of truth.
  - 2) A disposition of rebellion arises in the Lord's church, as predicted in 2 Timothy 4:1-5 and 1 Timothy 4:1-3; the common attitude is then to hear and accept just about anything but the truth. We are living in such a time. Brethren who ought to know better, are urging a "new hermeneutic" on us, saying that the inductive method of interpreting the Bible is no longer valid. But this method was used by inspired preachers in the Bible, including Christ (cf. Matt. 22).
- f. The effect of false teaching is at least two-fold.
- 1) It causes divisions to develop between brethren. When division occurs, sin lies in the background as the cause and result. Division means the Lord's will has not been followed by someone.
    - a) John 17:20-21: "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; That they all may be one; as thou, Father, *art* in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me."
    - b) 1 Corinthians 1:10: "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and *that* there be no divisions among you; but *that* ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment."
    - c) Philippians 1:27: "Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel."
    - d) Philippians 3:16: "Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing."
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- 2) Offenses result. Brethren are hurt in one or more ways; the false doctrine itself is an offense against God; and with each new person who accepts the error, a new offense against God is raised. But it is not wrong for faithful brethren to mark, disfellowship, and avoid false teachers; it is God's mandate that such be done. Vine gives this definition of *offenses*: "skandalon NT:4625 originally was 'the name of the part of a trap to which the bait is attached, hence, the trap or snare itself, as in Rom 11:9, RV, 'stumblingblock,' quoted from Ps 69:22, and in Rev 2:14, for Balaam's device was rather a trap for Israel than a stumblingblock to them, and in Matt 16:23, for in Peter's words the Lord perceived a snare laid for Him by Satan. In NT skandalon is always used metaphorically, and ordinarily of anything that arouses prejudice, or becomes a hindrance to others, or causes them to fall by the way. Sometimes the hindrance is in itself good, and those stumbled by it are the wicked" [Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words, Copyright (c)1985, Thomas Nelson Publishers].
2. Verse 18: "For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple."
- a. The apostle gives an accurate description of those who preach false doctrine and will not receive correction. They do not serve Christ, but their own selfish ends. Selfishness is the single greatest problem that men face. Those who will not obey the will of God when they learn it have failed the first test; and as long as they continue in that frame of mind, they cannot please God.
- 1) Matthew 6:24: "No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon."
  - 2) Matthew 12:30: "He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad."
  - 3) Romans 6:16-18: "Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness."
  - 4) Philippians 3:18 -18: "For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: Whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things."
- b. This teaches that we serve Christ only if we follow his directions. Many claim to love the Lord, but will not submit themselves to doing what the Lord requires. The only source of information we have to know his will is the New Testament. The modern notion is that we do what seems right to us, but that is Satan's doctrine!
- 1) Deuteronomy 12:8: "Ye shall not do after all *the things* that we do here this day, every man whatsoever *is* right in his own eyes."
  - 2) Judges 21:25: "In those days *there was* no king in Israel: every man did *that which was* right in his own eyes."
  - 3) Proverbs 16:25: "There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof *are* the ways of death."
- c. The smooth methods of false teachers are so effective that even knowledgeable brethren are sometimes deceived. False teachers are still clothed in wolves' clothing (Matt. 7:15-20); none of them ever wears a sign identifying himself as a false prophet.
- 1) The only way a false teacher can be identified is by an examination of his "fruits" (his doctrines), using the Bible as the standard of judgment. This is the way, the only way, they can be put to the test.
  - 2) Smooth, deceptive words and tactics have always characterized errorists.
    - a) Isaiah 5:20-21: "Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter! Woe unto *them that are*
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- wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight!"
- b) Isaiah 30:10: "Which say to the seers, See not; and to the prophets, Prophecy not unto us right things, speak unto us smooth things, prophesy deceits."
  - c) 2 Corinthians 11:13-15: "For such *are* false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore *it is* no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works."
  - d) Colossians 2:4: "And this I say, lest any man should beguile you with enticing words."
  - e) 2 Peter 2:3: "And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not."
- d. Satan operated through the serpent in Eden to deceive Eve; he used smooth words and argumentation to persuade her to violate God's will. When Absalom sought to become king in the place of his father David, who was still on the throne, he used "smooth words" to win the hearts of Israel (2 Sam. 15). To read his story is to see the deceptive methods employed by false prophets today.
  - e. The apostle would not have been moved by the Holy Spirit to issue this requirement to mark and avoid false teachers and their doctrines if they were harmless. It necessarily follows that there is such a thing as a religious error that can destroy our souls. Also, no warning would be needed if a Christian is forever saved and cannot be lost; otherwise, why did Paul issue this strong demand?
3. Verse 19: "For your obedience is come abroad unto all men. I am glad therefore on your behalf: but yet I would have you wise unto that which is good, and simple concerning evil."
    - a. Paul commends the brethren in Rome on account of their faith. As the saints circulated around the empire of Rome, they carried reports of the welfare of the cause in other places. There would quite naturally be much traffic to and from Rome, hence reports of the obedience of these Roman saints had gone forth.
    - b. One can see the faith of another only as it is manifested in obedience to God's word. The difference between a dead faith and a living faith is obedience (Jas. 2:14-26; Gal. 5:6). We express our love for God by doing what he says (1 John 5:3). As these brethren in Rome walked in the light of God's word, their faith was seen by their works of obedience, and could be reported to the brotherhood.
    - c. Paul was glad that this was so. Their obedience indicated their acceptance before God. When we see a brother doing what is right, we ought to rejoice; we ought to encourage him. There is genuine reason for rejoicing (cf. Luke 15:1ff). When we see a brother violate God's word, we ought to be filled with profound sorrow; we are seeing a soul fall under the condemnation of sin!
      - 1) Matthew 25:46: "And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal."
      - 2) Romans 6:23: "For the wages of sin *is* death; but the gift of God *is* eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."
      - 3) 2 Thessalonians 1:8-9: "In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power."
      - 4) 1 John 3:4: "Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law."
    - d. The apostle states his desire to see the brethren wise about things which are good, and simple in matters of evil. It is far better, with eternity in view, for one to be ignorant and innocent of evil ways, and be wise in righteous conduct. False teachers sometimes ridicule those of us who insist on a "thus saith the Lord" in spiritual affairs, denouncing us as *old-fashioned, out of date, mossy-horned relics of an ignorant past*. Since most of us who seek to know and follow only the Lord's will use the KJV or ASV of the Bible, we are mocked as *sputters of Elizabethan English*.
    - e. How much better it is to be right with the Lord, even though we may be out of step with current religious trends! The majority has almost always been wrong in spiritual matters (Gen. 6-9).
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- 1) Exodus 23:2: "Thou shalt not follow a multitude to *do* evil; neither shalt thou speak in a cause to decline after many to wrest *judgment*."
- 2) Matthew 7:13-14: "Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide *is* the gate, and broad *is* the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait *is* the gate, and narrow *is* the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it."
- f. To recognize good and evil, a knowledge of God's word is essential: "For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which *be* the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. For every one that useth milk *is* unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, *even* those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil" (Heb. 5:12-14).
4. Verse 20: "And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen."
  - a. The God of peace would soon bruise Satan under the feet of these brethren. This does not mean that Paul thought that Christ would return very soon. He was writing by inspiration, and his statement was accurate. Since Christ did not return in that century, the second coming of Christ was not the subject of the apostle's words here.
  - b. He may mean nothing more than a general promise of success for the work of the saints in opposing the errors coming into the church and those which assailed the church from without. The gospel is able to put all errorists to flight, if it is in the hands of one who is skilled and knowledgeable of its truths.
    - 1) It would be the God of peace who would accomplish this bruising of Satan. God hates and opposes all evil. It seems incongruous to some to see God as the God of peace but who uses strong measures to oppose sin and error. It is difficult for some to view God as the God of love, but who hates and opposes anything. God loves us all, but he truly hates sin and error; he earnestly seeks peace for all, but he will not compromise his truth and holiness.
    - 2) When Christ died on the cross, Satan mistakenly perceived that he had obtained the ultimate victory over the will of God. He knew the identity of Christ, and did everything within his power to defeat God's plans. He sought to get Christ to commit sin (Matt. 4:1-11; Luke 4:1-13); if he had been successful, we would have no hope today! The eternal welfare of every soul was in the balance when the Lord was tempted. Satan worked feverishly to bring about the death of Christ; he devised many schemes to that end, but our Lord defeated them all. When Christ meekly submitted to crucifixion, Satan exulted, thinking he had won! But Genesis 3:15, that dim promise made back in the dark ages of the ancient past, was fulfilled. His resurrection from the grave dealt a death blow to Satan.
      - a) Genesis 3:15: "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel."
      - b) Hebrews 2:14-18: "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. For verily he took not on *him* the nature of angels; but he took on *him* the seed of Abraham. Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto *his* brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things *pertaining* to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted."
    - 3) As long as the world stands, sin and religious error will abound here. But where the truth is preached and followed, to that extent Satan is bruised. Every time an alien sinner obeys the gospel, Satan's kingdom is diminished by one. With each convert to Christ down through the centuries, the head of Satan sustains further damage. When a Christian dies in the Lord (Rev.

- 14:13), one more blow to the devil is delivered. God would be the source of the power that would bruise Satan, but it would be under the feet of the saints that he would be injured. Somehow they would be involved in the battle, and in some fashion would partake of the victory.
- c. Some think that Paul's statement here is in reference the overthrow of Judaism, which occurred about twelve years after this epistle was written. The chief opposition to the church to this point was Jewish.
- 1) When Jerusalem was destroyed and the Jews scattered by the Roman army in 70 A.D., the tyranny of that powerful foe was largely removed. What actually occurred historically, accurately fulfilled the thought of the verse, whether or not that was the event Paul had in mind.
    - a) Philippians 4:5: "Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord *is* at hand."
    - b) James 5:8: "Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh."
    - c) 1 Peter 4:7: "But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer."
  - 2) This view must not be pressed to the sinful extreme that some have urged. The second coming of Christ did not take place in A.D. 70. When Christ returns, the earth and the whole universe will be literally burned up and dissolved (2 Pet. 3:10-11). Attempts to make 2 Peter 3:10 figurative clearly deny the plain import of the passage! Since the earth is still here, the second advent of Christ has not occurred. No one will need to be told when he returns, for all will behold him and his mighty angels (Matt. 25:31-46).
    - a) Matthew 24:26-27: "Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the desert; go not forth: behold, *he is* in the secret chambers; believe *it* not. For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be."
    - b) 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18: "But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive *and* remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive *and* remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words."
    - c) 2 Thessalonians 1:6-9: "Seeing *it is* a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you; And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power."
    - d) 2 Peter 3:9-14: "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. *Seeing* then *that* all these things shall be dissolved, what manner *of persons* ought ye to be in *all* holy conversation and godliness, Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless."
- d. The apostle closes this section by pronouncing the good pleasure of Christ upon them. His statement is a prayer that they might continue to receive the benefits of heaven's grace. This was not a meaningless expression of empty words! It was the expression of Paul's heartfelt desire for their well-being, in the spiritual realm and in their material pursuits. His sincere interest in their affairs is seen,
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not merely in his words, but in his stated intent on making the hazardous journey to Rome.

D. Romans 16:21-27: Closing Statements of Salutation and Encouragement.

1. Verses 21-23: "Timotheus my workfellow, and Lucius, and Jason, and Sosipater, my kinsmen, salute you. I Tertius, who wrote this epistle, salute you in the Lord. Gaius mine host, and of the whole church, saluteth you. Erastus the chamberlain of the city saluteth you, and Quartus a brother."
  - a. Salutations to the brethren in Rome are sent by Paul from Timothy, Lucius, Jason, and Sosipater. Timothy was the apostle's *work-fellow*, his son in the gospel (1 Tim. 1:1-2; 2 Tim. 1:1-2; Phil. 2:19-20). Lucius may be the same as Lucius of Cyrene (Acts 13:1); Jason may be the one who was Paul's host in Thessalonica (Acts 17:7); Sosipater, another of Paul's relatives, could possibly be the Sopater of Berea (Acts 20:4). We must remember, of course, that there were likely others who wore these names.
  - b. Verse 22. Tertius says here that he was the person who actually penned the words of the epistle, but the Holy Spirit gave the message to Paul. The apostle did not usually write the letters; he stated in Galatians 6:11 that he had written that epistle, but indicates that that was a departure from the usual. He did sometimes pen the closing salutations (1 Cor. 16:21; 2 Thess. 3:17). Nothing beyond this verse is known of Tertius. The name is Roman, and means *third*.
  - c. Verse 23. Some think that this verse is a continuation of Tertius' statement in the previous verse. That is uncertain; it could be taken as Paul's statement. Gaius served as host in Corinth, and he and the entire church sent their greetings to the brethren in Rome. Erastus, the chamberlain (treasurer) of the city (Acts 19:22) sent his greetings; and Quartus, a brother in Christ, likewise sent his greetings. Gaius is named in 1 Corinthians 1:14 as one of the few that Paul had personally baptized. It is interesting to notice that a high-ranking official of Corinth had obeyed the gospel—Erastus.
2. Verse 24: "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen."
  - a. The familiar statement, found in many of Paul's epistles, is included again at this point in this letter: a pronouncement of the Lord's grace upon all the saints in Rome.
  - b. This may lend credence to the view that verses 22-23 were both from Tertius, for it would seem strange for Paul to repeat what he had already stated in verse 20. However, such a repeat is not unwarranted.
3. Verse 25: "Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began."
  - a. God has the power to establish Christians (to make them strong and steadfast). This power to strengthen is in the gospel which Paul preached (Acts 20:32; Heb. 4:12; 2 Pet. 1:1-12).
  - b. It was Paul's gospel in the sense that it was not the gospel preached by the Judaizers; his gospel was the message Christ gave him (Gal. 1:6-12). There was no difference in the message preached by Paul and that preached by the other apostles (John 16:13; Gal. 2:1-10,14; 1 Pet. 1:22-25). The strength we need is developed by the gospel being in our hearts and lives: "Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings, As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby" (1 Pet. 2:1-2).
  - c. The preaching of Jesus Christ is the preaching the Savior commanded—the gospel of Christ (Rom. 1:16-17; Mark 16:15-16). To preach Christ is identical to preaching the gospel (Acts 8:5,12,25; 8:35-38). Paul preached Christ to the Corinthians (1 Cor. 2:1-2); Acts 18:1-11 shows that he preached the word of God (the gospel) to them. Christ cannot be separated from his gospel! And neither can he be separated from his church (Matt. 16:18; Eph. 4:4-5; 5:25-27; Acts 20:28). The strength they needed was furnished by the preaching of Christ.
  - d. Their strength came through the revelation of the great mystery which God kept hidden from the foundation of the world. Verse 26 shows that that mystery has now been revealed. This mystery was the plan that God developed before the world began; it was learned only when God revealed it.
    - 1) Holy men of ancient times and angels desired to know it ahead of time, but were unable (1 Pet. 1:9-12; Matt. 13:17). Isaiah and the other prophets who predicted the coming of the Messiah did

- not understand their God-given prophecies. Apart from the New Testament, no one could learn the details of God's plan. The man from Ethiopia failed to grasp the meaning of Isaiah 53, but with the information supplied to him by the inspired preacher, he came to understand it. Few are aware of how wonderfully blessed we are who live on this side of the cross! We know far more about God's purposes than did such great men as Abraham and David.
- 2) This great plan provided for the salvation of Jews and Gentiles in the one body of Christ (the church), which required the death, burial, and resurrection of the Messiah (Eph. 3:1-11; Gal. 3:8; Rom. 1:1-3). People who lived in the first century learned this plan when they heard the preaching of the inspired apostles and other Spirit-guided spokesmen; those inspired men are no longer on earth, but they left behind the inspired record of that plan, so when we read their writings, we learn it (Eph. 3:4; 1:9; Col. 1:23-29).
  - 3) The plan originated in God's mind in eternity, even before time and the universe began. This plan is more marvelous and wonderful than any man can tell.
4. Verse 26: "But now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith."
- a. That plan that had been kept secret from the beginning of the world has now been revealed; it is made manifest to all who will open their minds to receive it: "And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive: For this people's heart is waxed gross, and *their* ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with *their* eyes and hear with *their* ears, and should understand with *their* heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them. But blessed *are* your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear. For verily I say unto you, That many prophets and righteous *men* have desired to see *those things* which ye see, and have not seen *them*; and to hear *those things* which ye hear, and have not heard *them*" (Matt. 13:14-17).
  - b. It is manifested by the scriptures of the prophets. Which prophets? Partly by the Old Testament prophets who gave a veiled picture of Christ and his kingdom; but the full picture with all its beautiful details was given by the New Testament prophets: "Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit" (Eph. 3:5).
  - c. A prophet is a spokesman for God; what was revealed by a prophet might deal with the future; but it might also reveal something about the past; and in many cases, the prophets dealt with present concerns. All of the apostles were prophets: "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, *that* shall he speak: and he will show you things to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall show *it* unto you" (John 16:13-14). But there were others who revealed inspired information (1 Cor. 12:8-10); these others received their gifts by the imposition of apostolic hands (Rom. 1:11; Acts 8:14-20; 19:1-7). All of the apostles of Christ were prophets; but not all prophets were apostles of Christ.
  - d. God gave the commandment through Christ that the gospel be taken throughout the whole world and to every accountable human being (Mark 16:15-16; Matt. 28:18-20; Luke 24:44-49). God is eternal in being; his plan originated in eternity and will bear fruit in eternity after time ends; his plan is designed to prepare as many people as possible to live with him in eternity: "Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou *art* God....The days of our years *are* threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength *they be* fourscore years, yet *is* their strength labour and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away" (Ps. 90:2, 10).
  - e. The purpose of sounding forth the gospel message throughout the whole world was to bring sinful men to believe, repent, and obey God's will. Paul began his inspired epistle with a reference to obedience to the faith (the gospel: Jude 3); he concludes the epistle with a reference to the obedience of faith.
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- 1) This has been his theme in the epistle, that the gospel of Christ is God's power to save all men who will believe (an obedient faith) the gospel. He showed in Romans 6:1-18 that it is at the point when we are baptized into Christ (and thus obey the gospel: Romans 10:13-18) that we are saved from the guilt of our past sins (Acts 2:38; 22:16; 1 Pet. 3:21; Mark 16:15-16).
  - 2) The gospel without our faith cannot save us (Heb. 11:6; John 8:24); faith without our obedience cannot save us (Matt. 7:21-23; Jas. 2:14-26; Lk. 6:46; Acts 10:34-35; Mk. 16:15-16; Acts 2:38; 22:16).
  - 3) The New Testament contains all the information we need to have to be acceptable unto God. It has all the information we need in order to have faith (Rom. 10:17) and to obey the gospel; sufficient information is included to motivate us to obey (Rom. 5:6-9) and to remain faithful (Rom. 14:10-14).
5. Verse 27: "To God only wise, be glory through Jesus Christ for ever. Amen."
- a. The apostle concludes the epistle by giving a fitting tribute of praise unto God. God is wise, possessing all wisdom.
  - b. He calls on us to give God the glory that he deserves. To read the Bible with a measure of comprehension is to be strongly impressed with the awesome majesty of God! This concept lies behind Christianity. All who have reverence for God will obey his will. When men lose their respect for God and his authority, they go deeper and deeper into sin and religious error. Cf. Isaiah 6:1-8.
  - c. The only avenue by which we can approach God, obey God, and have reverence and love for God, is by Jesus Christ.
    - 1) John 14:6: "Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me."
    - 2) Acts 4:11-12: "This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner. Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."
  - d. We offer glory to God by Jesus Christ in the Lord's church. "Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen" (Eph. 3:20-21).

E. The Gist of Romans by Chapter.

1. Romans 1: The gospel is the power of God unto salvation; The Gentiles need the Gospel.
  2. Romans 2: The Jews need the Gospel.
  3. Romans 3: Every accountable person has sinned; both Jew and Gentile are sinful; the Law of Moses cannot save.
  4. Romans 4: Abraham, who lived before the Law of Moses was given, was justified; hence, it is possible for one to be justified separate and apart from Moses' Law.
  5. Romans 5: We are justified by the system of faith, not by the Law of Moses.
  6. Romans 6: We are saved when we obey the Gospel in baptism.
  7. Romans 7: The condition of a Jew under the Law of Moses.
  8. Romans 8: In Christ, there is no condemnation; instead, we have an abundance of spiritual blessings.
  9. Romans 9: What about the Israelites? God will save Gentiles and Jews. He made choices in the past; under the Gospel system, he saves without considering national or racial connections.
  10. Romans 10: The Gospel is offered to all; it saves those who obey its precepts.
  11. Romans 11: The Jews can be saved if they obey the Gospel.
  12. Romans 12: The spiritual attributes of those in Christ who are acceptable to God are delineated
  13. Romans 13: Those who are pleasing to God must be obedient to civil authority.
  14. Romans 14: Opinions must not be bound by one Christian on another Christian.
  15. Romans 15: Jewish and Gentile saints are to be of one mind.
  16. Romans 16: Salutations and admonitions.
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