

**BIBLE STUDENT STUDY GUIDE**

**TWENTY-SIX LESSONS ON**

# **ROMANS**

**Part One Lessons 1-13**



**SHERWOOD SMITH**

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On the cover: Ancient Rome in the age of Constantine, a detailed re-constructed model by the architect Italo Gismondi. The model is in the Museum of Roman Civilization.

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## Foreword

As indicated on the cover, this volume is a study guide. It is not a commentary. Overviews of paragraphs or large sections of Scripture are presented and general direction of thought is intended rather than dealing with the specifics of words or phrases. The exceptions to this design of writing occur when a knowledge of Pauline expressions is essential to an understanding of the larger scope of thought. Thus, most specifics and technical information must be gleaned from other sources.

Each reader is urged to have commentaries on *Romans* at hand. Availability of commentaries should pose no problem as a host of books have been written about *Romans*. Especially recommended are *Romans Realized*, Don DeWalt and *The Epistle to the Romans*, F. F. Bruce. DeWalt is not quoted in this study guide because it is taken for granted that the reader will have his commentary at hand. Two very small works which may be helpful for each student in a study group to possess are *Romans for the Layman*, Burton Throckmorton, Jr. and a *Work Book on Romans* which includes an outline on *Romans*, an outline of each chapter and forty questions on each chapter, written by Fred W. McClung. A most important companion reading is *Galatians* in which Paul writes much about subjects which appear in *Romans* such as righteousness, law, gospel, grace, works, flesh and spirit.

The American Standard Version (1901) is quoted in the text because

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it is the most literal translation of the Greek to English. It is hoped that other versions will be read in conjunction with the study guide.

Various views of scholars are presented on some subjects. The author's view is usually made known, but each reader is urged to evaluate each view carefully on the basis of all the information he can bring to bear upon the subject and arrive at his own personal conclusion.

Answers to many of the questions found at the close of each chapter may be found in the study guide or in *Romans*. Some questions are designed to cause the student to reason out his own answer.

This study guide is dedicated to my wife, Mary, who has contributed greatly to every accomplishment of mine. Together we place this work in the hand of the Lord to be used as He wills.

# Lesson One

## THE GOSPEL TO ROME

### AUTHORSHIP

"Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ"

The Apostle Paul addressed his longest recorded epistle to Christians who lived in the Imperial city of Rome. Many of the original readers of the letter had probably been Christians for many years. So Paul's letter is not sent to introduce the ABC's of the Gospel but to give reassurance to Christians concerning God's plan of redemption which had been in His mind before the world was created and to indicate that the divine program was right on target. All was proceeding just as God had planned.

There is no question but that this epistle was written by Paul. Even the hyper-critical skeptics of a generation ago at the Tubingen school of Germany gave Romans, along with the two Corinthian letters, as well as Galatians, to Paul. These "big four" epistles are said to be so certainly Pauline that they are used as yardsticks to judge the authorship of all other epistles bearing Paul's name. The vocabulary, style, and theology of other letters must match that of the "big four" if they are to be recognized as Pauline. It is refreshing to turn to a letter bearing

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Paul's name and not be forced by skeptics to spend precious time in the defense of the authenticity and genuineness of the book. Charles Hodge says of the book of Romans, "There is therefore, no book in the Bible, and there is no ancient book in the world, of which the authenticity is more certain than that of this epistle."

Let no one misunderstand. Acceptance of Pauline authorship does not necessarily mean to all persons that the book is now in the form in which it was originally written or that it was inspired. Many who accept Pauline authorship of Romans would categorically reject any concept of divine inspiration of any book of the Bible. Some would suggest that Chapters Nine through Eleven were not a part of the original letter to Rome, but that that section of Romans was written separately by Paul or as a part of some other letter. It has been suggested also that Chapter Sixteen with its greeting to twenty-six individuals was originally the close of the letter to the Ephesians and not a part of the original Roman document. The argument is that Paul spent three years at Ephesus and would know many people there. Having never been to Rome, it is claimed he would not have personally known two dozen persons who were residents of Rome. The truth is, however, that the list of greetings begins with Aquila and Prisca whom he met at Corinth on his second missionary journey (Acts 18:1, 2). This suggests the possibility that during his travels he came to know all those whom he greeted with the exception of his own relatives who were "in Christ" before Paul (16:7). At Ephesus Paul labored "night and day," teaching "publicly, and from house to house" (Acts 20:20, 31). He must have had a multitude of friends and meaningful relationships there. How tactless it would have been to write to a church where he had labored so long and where so many were known and loved and mention only twenty-four by name. It may be courteous to greet only deacons and bishops (Philippians 1:1) when writing to a church where one has served for a long time, but surely it could not be construed to be gracious to mention a few by name but exclude countless others who are known just as well as those who were greeted. The Roman epistle is indeed intact. Chapters Nine through Eleven follow the first eight chapters of doctrine with the most natural progression of thought. These three chapters present a very logical conclusion in defense of God as having functioned in history according to His plan just as the Old Testament prophets had predicted. The sixteenth chapter probably contains greetings to all the individuals Paul knew personally in Rome, and that is reasonable, courteous, and acceptable procedure. No manuscript evidence can be produced to connect the sixteenth chapter with any other epistle. We conclude that the entire book of Romans as found in our Bibles is essentially the same as Paul's autographed original of Romans.



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### DESTINATION

"To all that are in Rome"

Many attempts have been made to determine the nationality of the Christians in Rome to whom Paul wrote. The results of such efforts fail to support any one view to the extent that it is unquestionable. If scholars would speculate as to the national constituency of the Roman church, and then proceed to an unbiased exegesis of the text, no more would need to be said on that subject. The fact is, however, that exegetes are prone to rather arbitrarily posit a church in Rome with a certain ethnic membership and then proceed to interpret the letter to Rome in light of its supposed membership—Jew or Gentile. It is best procedure, therefore, to note various views and come to some conclusion before proceeding to further study of Romans.

Theodore Zahn seems to have no question in his mind but that the Roman church membership was basically Jewish and that the Gentile Christians constituted a comparatively small minority. Zahn notices a direct address to those called Jews in 2:17. He concludes that 7:1-6 could only be written to those who, like the author, had lived under the law and that "no rational man could possibly say this of native Gentiles." Aquila, he notes, was a Jew, and Jewish kinsmen of Paul are living in Rome. Extensive treatment of the law and Gospel early in the epistle and expression of deep concern for the welfare of the Jews in Chapters Nine through Eleven are held to be further evidence that original readers were Jews. One may respond to Zahn that Paul does address Jews, but he also addressed Gentiles (11:13). It is not necessary to conclude that 7:1-6 could only be addressed to Jews. Numerous Gentile proselytes were living under the law and were very well informed about the Old Testament Scriptures. "Strangers of Rome, both Jews and proselytes," were in Jerusalem for the Feast of Pentecost in A.D. 30 (Acts 2:10) when the church was born.

F. B. Meyer holds that the church in Rome was founded by converts of Paul and that the membership of the church was mainly Gentile. Godet agrees with this view of the constituency of the church, and Charles Erdman states flatly that the church was Gentile. Charles Hodge characterizes the church as being "schismatic" and states, "Conflicts now and again arose, both regarding doctrine and discipline, between the believers of the two races." William Sanday holds what is probably the better balanced view suggesting that the Christian community of Rome was mixed "embracing in substantial proportions both Jews and Gentiles." Jewish population in Rome was increasing just previous to the founding and growth of Christianity. Under Augustus Caesar, at the beginning of the Empire in 27 B.C., there were forty thousand

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Jews in Rome, but under the reign of Tiberius which began in A.D. 14, numbers of Jews in Rome had doubled. There were at least seven synagogues in Rome when Josephus wrote about the Jews during the first century. Seneca, the teacher of Nero, speaking of the influence of the Jews in Rome, wrote, "The vanquished have given laws to the victors."

B. K. Kuiper notes that in the time of Christ there were five or six times as many Jews outside of Palestine as there were in Palestine. Freedom of circulation and movement in the Roman Empire was greater than it had been at any previous time. The magnet of economic opportunity drew many Jews to Rome.

In light of all the historic information available, as well as the content of Romans, Sanday and Headlam suggest the safe view that Paul did not have "any exact statistics before him as to the composition of the church to which he was writing. The church is generally Gentile but at the same time, it contains so many born Jews that he (Paul) passes easily and freely from one body to the other."

### THE TIME OF WRITING

It was probably late winter or early spring of A.D. 58 when Paul dictated this epistle to Tertius (16:22). Paul was on the third mission tour and intended to winter at Corinth (I Corinthians 16:6). From the history recorded in Acts, it is learned that Paul left Ephesus, passed through Macedonia and arrived at Greece where he remained for three months (Acts 20:1-3). Because a plot was laid against him with intent to take his life, Paul was forced to retrace his steps into Macedonia rather than sail for Palestine where he probably would like to have arrived for the Passover season. Instead it was after the Passover that he sailed from Philippi. Just a glance at a map tells us that Luke obviously meant that they sailed from Neapolis, the port town of Philippi. The latter was located some ten miles inland. Neapolis was to Philippi what Cencreae was to Corinth. This would be similar language as used by those who say they are flying from the Cincinnati, Ohio airport. Actually the municipal airport of Cincinnati is across the Ohio River and located in the state of Kentucky.

Now that the Passover was past, Paul was in haste that he might arrive in Palestine for the Feast of Pentecost (Acts 20:6, 16). The Passover was always celebrated in the spring of the year and frequently in April. Paul was in Greece three months before the Passover, and if the epistle was written while Paul was there, it must have been penned some time between January and April. It is admitted that A.D. 58 is an arbitrary selection on the part of the author as the year of writing, but

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that choice is predicated upon the chronology of numerous events of the Apostolic Age and secular dates concurrent with Paul's life. The council on circumcision is pivotal and is placed at A.D. 51; the first mission tour is thought to have begun following the death of Herod (Acts 12:20-23), in A.D. 44, the second in A.D. 52, and the third journey was undertaken in A.D. 54 or 55. On the basis of this chronology of events there is very little acceptable latitude for movement of the time of writing of Romans either direction very far from A.D. 58. Floyd Hamilton's work, *The Epistle to the Romans*, pp. 18, 19 is recommended for those who wish to know secular dates which are used to erect a chronological outline for the whole of Paul's Christian life.

### LOCATION OF WRITING

The question was raised above as to where Paul was located when Romans was written. If he was not in Greece at the time of writing, then one guess as to his location is as good as another. There are no allusions to any persons, incidents, or geographical locations other than those associated with Corinth. Some, like Godet, suggest the writing must have been done during the three-year span of time Paul labored at Ephesus. The letter is so long, profound, and orderly, that claim is laid that the book reflects the preparation which Paul made for his lectures delivered at the school of Tyrannus at Ephesus (Acts 18:8-10). Such claims seem to wholly ignore the fertile mind and mental prowess of the apostle Paul without even a mention of the work of the Holy Spirit in supervising the production of Scripture (II Timothy 3:16; II Peter 1:21). The internal evidence for the place of writing is as follows:

#### 1. Geographic (16:1)

Cenchreae, the hometown of Phoebe, was the port town for Corinth. All of the commerce of the Mediterranean which flowed to the great city of Corinth passed through the port of Cenchreae. Corinth, in fact, was the only important city in that area.

#### 2. Persons (16:23)

Erastus was sent ahead of Paul into Macedonia. Paul then left Asia, went to Macedonia and on to Greece. He probably took Erastus with him from Macedonia to Greece. II Timothy 4:20 informs that Erastus remained at Corinth. Notice that Erastus was not mentioned as being among those who accompanied Paul when he left Greece (Acts 20:4).

Gaius, in whose home Paul resided during his stay at Corinth, was one of two whom Paul baptized at Corinth (I Corinthians 1:14). If this is the same Gaius who traveled with Paul, he is not originally from Corinth but was native to the city of Derbe and the country of Macedonia (Acts 19:29; 20:4).

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### 3. Event (15:25-28)

I Corinthians was penned before Romans was written. A common date cited for the year in which I Corinthians was written is A.D. 56. It is safe to conclude that at least a year before Paul visited Corinth he had instructed the Christians there to put together an offering for the poor saints in Judea (I Corinthians 16:1-4). He wanted them to pool their offerings weekly so the sum would be in one place when he arrived, ready to be carried to Judea by himself and other trustworthy persons. If it were not for this specific responsibility to return east to Jerusalem with these contributions, Paul would have traveled west to Rome and on to Spain. Paul must have rejoiced at the giving response of the Corinthians, and the mention of the Corinthian's fulfillment of his directives tie the writing of Romans to Corinth. All internal evidence points to Corinth as the place where Paul was ministering when he took time to write to Rome.

## OCCASION FOR WRITING

When beginning a study of any New Testament epistle, the question must be asked, "What was the occasion which prompted the author to write"? Every New Testament letter was called forth by specific historic circumstances and needs. Numerous factors are suggested as explanation for the writing of Romans at the particular time Paul wrote. Perhaps the most obvious reason for writing when he did was that Phoebe was going to Rome. Paul wanted to commend her to the Christian society at Rome, and she would carry his letter. Obviously Paul would especially expect those at Rome to whom he sent personal greetings to be hospitable and as helpful to her as was possible. A second very obvious reason for writing is that he intended to pass through Rome on his way to Spain, and he wished to inform them of his plans and seek their support. It would be agreed on all hands that writing previous to a visit would be a friendly, courteous thing to do. If, however, that is all Paul intended, Romans is by far the most lengthy, profound, social note ever written. Some think his aim in writing was solely monetary, citing as proof Paul's reference to the offering (15:25, ff.) as a wise, cunning move on Paul's part to gain good will and finances. Those who make such a suggestion are either uninformed or willfully ignore biographical facts about Paul. He has already preached the Gospel throughout all the territory from Jerusalem to Illyricum (modern Albania and Yugoslavia). When necessary to support himself by making tents, he did so. This self-sacrificing Apostle could write to those who had first-hand knowledge about him and his work and say that he did not eat bread for nothing, but in labor

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and travail worked night and day that he might not be a burden to anyone (II Thessalonians 3:7, 8). Paul's motives were such that he invested tears (Acts 20:19, 31) and never coveted any man's silver, gold, or apparel. With his own hands he supplied necessities of life (Acts 20:33-35). Be reminded again that the content of these last two cited passages from Acts were spoken to elders with whom Paul worked personally at Ephesus. They could easily put the lie to such personal testimony if it was not true. It is in that context that Paul gives a quotation from our Lord not recorded in any gospel: "It is more blessed to give than to receive." Another claimed reason for the writing of the epistle is that an anti-Pauline element in the church at Rome occasioned the letter. The basic claim is that Paul wrote to alleviate some of the antagonism towards himself. By writing he would make a good impression and smooth the way for a favorable reception and visit. Those who promote this line of thought usually suggest that the Roman church stems from Jewish influence out of Jerusalem as early as the birthday of the church on the day of Pentecost, A.D. 30 (Acts 2:10) and that the church was not friendly to Paul, because of his being especially associated with the Gentile Christians. The further claim is that Rome would have received a very early, provincial form of Christianity like that known to Peter. Paul, in contrast, is said to preach a late, Hellenistic gospel different from that preached by Peter and the early church. Galatians 2:6-10 is erroneously cited as proof of such a theory. Numerous Scriptures militate against such a theory. The content of Galatians 1:6-10 cannot be ignored and Paul argues strenuously in Romans 3:29, 30 that there is one God and one plan of salvation by which Jews and Gentiles shall be saved. There is not a shred of evidence in the New Testament to support the dual concept of a provincial Petrine gospel as distinct from a universal Pauline gospel. The theory is pure speculation.

Turning back to positive reasons for the writing of Romans, it should be remembered that Rome was the center of the world and thus was of tremendous import to the future of Christianity. It was needful for that influential metropolis to have an orderly and comprehensive statement of the Christian faith. It is highly doubtful that Peter founded the church in Rome. He is not mentioned among those greeted in the sixteenth chapter and if Peter was there, Paul, on the basis of his own principle of operation (15:20, 21) would not have longed for years to go there (15:22, 23). Some suggest that not only was there an absence of apostolic leadership in Rome, but that elders are not once mentioned in the epistle. It is my opinion that Romans 12:6-8 reflects a very well-organized church in Rome and that the phrase, "he that ruleth" may very well reflect the presence of elders (cf. I Timothy 5:17; Hebrews 13:7, 17). Meyer says, "Especially may the existence of Presbyters, which

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was essential to church organization (Acts 14:23) be regarded as a matter of course." Paul must have felt personally responsible for the church in Rome and perhaps he had sent some of his own converts and co-workers there to minister until the time when he could join them personally. With that time growing ever longer he sought in some degree to substitute for his presence by writing. Thus, Paul would do with pen what he had not been able to do in person. It is probable that a combination of influences caused Paul to write the letter to Rome at the particular time he did so.

The book reflects no major doctrinal problems in the Church at Rome and the mention of division so late in the letter (16:17) indicates that divisive false teachers were not a main cause for writing. Romans is not a polemic (attack) and neither is it an apologetic (defense). Rather than either of those kinds of writing the book is correctly described as didactic (teaching).

Whatever the occasion for writing, the letter is of such a calibre that it has elicited praise from every quarter.

Coleridge: Romans is "the profoundest book in existence."

Luther: "This Epistle is the chief book of the N.T., the purest gospel."

Meyer: "The greatest and richest of all the apostolic works"

Schaff: "Epistle of Epistles"

Erdman: ". . . the supreme masterpiece of the great apostle. It is a marvel of intellectual acumen, of logical power and of spiritual insight."

Lindski: "Most dynamic of all N.T. letters"

Barth: "All Christian doctrine must be oriented to the book of Romans."

### READER'S REVIEW:

1. What is the major purpose for the writing of Romans?
2. List the "big four" epistles that are granted to be Pauline even in liberal circles.
3. What are the questions raised about the composition of Romans in its autographed state and in its present state?
4. What is the content of Chapter Sixteen which causes some to assign it originally to some other epistle?
5. Which of the following views of the membership of the Roman Church would you support and why?
  - a. The Church at Rome was mainly Gentile.
  - b. The Church at Rome was mainly Jewish.
  - c. The Church at Rome was probably quite equally divided between Jews and Gentiles.

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6. Cite all possible evidence pointing to the letter as being written in late winter or early spring.
7. What is the basis for the claim that Romans was written in A.D. 58?
8. State three lines of internal evidence advanced in support of Paul being located at Corinth when he wrote.
9. State those factors which you think to be most influential in causing Paul to write Romans.
10. Cite two claimed motivating factors for writing Romans which are critical of Paul and give a defense of the apostle.
11. What is claimed about the difference in the Gospel as preached by Peter and Paul? What is your answer to this claim?
12. Cite three different persons or groups of persons who are said to have been founders of the Church at Rome.
13. What evidence is there in the epistle that the Church was quite well-organized when Paul wrote to Rome?
14. Define the terms "polemic," "apologetic," and "didactic."
15. What is the element in the praise of Luther for Romans which may cast some adverse reflection on the rest of the New Testament?

## **Lesson Two**

(1:1-7)

### **AN UNIQUE SALUTATION**

1 Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God, 2 which he promised afore through his prophets in the holy scriptures, 3 concerning his Son, who was born of the seed of David according to the flesh, 4 who was declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead; even Jesus Christ our Lord, 5 through whom we received grace and apostleship, unto obedience of faith among all the nations for his name's sake; 6 among whom are ye also, called to be Jesus Christ's: 7 to all that are in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Wherein does the uniqueness of this salutation lie? It is the longest of all Pauline salutations and is fitting for the length and formal character of the epistle. Normally three basic elements comprise the total content of a salutation: author, destination, and a greeting. Verses one and seven, if read together, would fulfill all requirements of a normal salutation. Between those verses Paul introduces much of the content



which he intends to include in the epistle. The salutation serves as an introduction both to the apostle Paul and to his message.

### SERVANT AND APOSTLE

Paul introduces himself as a "servant of Jesus Christ." It is not likely that Paul intended the word "servant" to be understood in the authoritative sense in which it is used in the Old Testament (classic example of authoritative usage, Jeremiah 7:25). Rather, Paul expresses humility and establishes rapport with his personally unknown readers by referring to himself as a servant. Paul writes similarly to John who could have referred to himself as an apostle but preferred to humbly designate himself as "your brother" (Revelation 1:9). If the word servant was meant to express authority, it would have been redundant because Paul immediately referred to himself as an Apostle which without question connotes office and its attached authority.

There were many qualifications for one to hold the office of an apostle. Irrespective of what other essential may be cited, the pivotal qualification of an apostle is to be called. Although the saying, "many are called but few are chosen" (Matthew 22:14) has nothing to do with the choice of apostles, the principle expressed is similar. It is true that many might be qualified to fill the office of an apostle but would not be called to do so. Jesus made it clear to the twelve, "You have not chosen me, but I have chosen you" (John 15:16). In its widest meaning the word apostle may be defined as "one who is sent." In this general usage of the word, many people in the New Testament are called apostles. Frequently Epaphroditus is missed when citation is made of those who are not among the Twelve but are called apostles. English translations of Philippians 2:25 call Epaphroditus a "messenger" of the church at Philippi. The Greek, however, clearly calls him an (*apostolon*) apostle. It is my opinion that it is an error to allow that Junias and Andronicus are called apostles, even in the widest latitude of meaning allowable in the word apostle. In reference to these two Christians at Rome, Paul says that they were "of note among the apostles" (16:7), which probably means that the apostles knew them well and had taken note of their effective service for Christ and the church. But the suggestion that Junias and Andronicus are classed with the apostles, even in the most general sense of the word, is highly suspect.

The reason for Paul's call to apostolic authority and mission was that he should be separated unto the Gospel. Paul believed that the act of separation by God had occurred at his birth as stated in Galatians 1:15, "God separated me from my mother's womb." To understand this

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saying as having reference simply to physical birth would mean little as everyone could say in that literal sense that he was separated from his mother's womb. Some spiritual implication must be involved in his statement. Paul was probably like a Fritz Kreisler and many other artists or geniuses who indicate that from their earliest youth they had an awareness of some unique quality in their lives. Fritz Kreisler, the great violinist, said that he knew musical notes and chords instinctively before he knew anything about the abc's. Such an instinctive ability is illustrated by the little girl who disturbed her older sisters greatly because they took piano lessons, and struggled to learn to play simple songs. The little sister would listen to the older sisters practice, and when they finished, she would sit down at the piano and play by ear the melodies the sisters were laboriously picking out note by note. I suppose that it was some awareness in childhood that Paul had of his mission in life when he observed that God had some extraordinary influence upon him at birth. Certainly the unique supernatural experience with Jesus on the Damascus road would have come to Paul's mind when he wrote of being separated unto the things of God.

### SEPARATED UNTO THE GOSPEL

The conversion which began when the Lord appeared in a light above the brightness of the noonday sun separated this persecutor of Christians unto the Gospel in a miraculous way. The separation process continued in the further act of setting Paul apart by a divine directive to the church at Antioch when the Holy Spirit said, "Separate unto me Barnabas and Saul." This decree was a prelude to the first missionary tour when Christ's servants, set apart by divine orders, went to preach the Gospel to the Gentiles (Acts 13:2).

Finally, as a contributing influence to the process of Paul's separation, may I add, the subjective factor of the singleness of mind seen in the statement of the apostle Paul which reflects his determination and discipline, "one thing I do" (Philippians 3:13). The "one thing" was to serve Jesus Christ and press on to fulfill that purpose for which he was called. Everything else was extraneous to the goal of the apostle Paul. It was that kind of singleness of purpose which drove Paul to preach the gospel fully "from Jerusalem, and round about even unto Illyricum" (15:19). With no more virgin territory "in these regions" in which to preach the Gospel, Paul wanted to journey to Rome and on west to Spain (15:23, 24). He must have been keenly aware of the principle of the disciplined life illustrated in the little seed parables of Matthew 6:22-24. Jesus told of the single eye and how one can serve but one

master. You cannot serve two authorities at once, and neither can you have your eyes on heaven and earth at the same time. Singleness of mind and purpose is essential to discipleship. Before Paul became a Christian, he wore a name which means "separated." Paul was a Pharisee and the name of the Jewish sect came from the Hebrew word *parash* which means "to cleave, to separate, to distinguish." Pharisees, by name, were separated ones. Thus, Paul knew long before he became a Christian what it meant to be a separated, dedicated person. As a Pharisee, he was a good one. He said to the leaders of his day that he was "A Pharisee and a son of Pharisees" (Acts 23:6). It may be that Paul came from a long line of Pharisees. Perhaps his ancestors were Pharisees from the time that Phariseeism was founded about one hundred and fifty years before Christ. At any rate, Paul knew what it was to be a separated one and brought to the service of Christ that level of devotion which made him a leader among the Jews.

### THE GOSPEL OF GOD

Paul was separated unto the Gospel of God and he was set for the proclamation of good news about salvation which God had promised through the prophets. The Gospel is properly designated to be "of God" because of its origin. It came from God and was proclaimed by Jesus Christ. This idea that the Gospel is of divine origin, came from God, was planned by Him, and was predicted through the prophets, is recurrent in the book of Romans. That truth is stated clearly here in the introduction, and when Paul comes to the closing doxology of his letter, he returns to that theme again. "Now to him that is able to establish you according to my Gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery which hath been kept in silence through times eternal, but now is manifested, and by the Scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the eternal God, is made known unto all the nations unto obedience of faith" (16:25-27). It was through the Scriptures which Paul calls the "oracles of God" (3:2) that the Gospel was promised. God's plan of redemption was seen limitedly in "bird's eye" views as the prophets wrote predictively, and Paul is fulfilling God's plan by revealing fully what the prophets only revealed in part. Notice the word *musterion* in 16:25 — which is translated "mystery" in English. It is a key word of the vocabulary of the apostle Paul. He uses "mystery" frequently in Ephesians, Colossians, and in the Corinthian letters as well to refer to the good news of the Gospel in general, or to some specific phase of the Gospel plan such as the Jews and Gentiles being united in one body (Ephesians 3:1-6). Coupled with the word "mystery," there

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is regularly the thought of "revelation" indicating that the mystery has been unveiled and the secret revealed. The Gospel was a secret in ages past when the Good News was not fully made known. It was predicted and foreshadowed but was not made known until "now." The "now" concept is typical of Paul also. The "now" of 16:26 has reference to the entire Christian dispensation, not just to the day in which Paul was preaching. It is a reference to God's timetable in which the Patriarchal dispensation came first, then the Mosaic dispensation, and "now" the Christian dispensation. The Christian era is called synonymously "the last days" (Acts 2:16, 17; Hebrews 1:2), "last hour" (I John 2:18), and "end of the time" (I Peter 1:20). If one understands such synonymous usages of terms in the Scriptures, it may help him to avoid the pitfalls of wild, speculative teaching about the "last days" such as that heard via the radio so frequently. Fanciful interpretations of prophecies concerning the end of time are sent over the airwaves regularly and many times the passages quoted have reference to the whole Christian dispensation and not just to a time period immediately preceding the return of our Lord. The "end of the times" of I Peter 1:26 begins when Christ came to Bethlehem's manger. That is the point of time when God introduced through His Son His last dealings with men that have to do with salvation. No other Savior will ever be born, and neither will there be another plan for saving man. No other Good News will ever be announced. The gospel is God's last revelation to man. Hebrews 1:1, 2 shows the finality of God's approach to humanity through His Son. When a teenager, I saw a banner on a large church building located in the heart of Minneapolis. The banner, four to six feet wide and running the full length of that edifice announced in big letters "BATTLE OF ARMAGEDDON NOW BEING FOUGHT." Of course, we wouldn't be here now to write or read about it if the banner's announcement had been true. But one can avoid some such erroneous concepts by an understanding of the "now" of Paul, as being synonymous with the Christian dispensation and as being contrasted with that which was done through the law and the prophets. What Paul is saying, then, is that the Gospel is no innovation. This isn't the product of some Johnny-come-lately with a new scheme that has just come out of the mind of men. This isn't a program someone has lately dreamed up. It was indeed the plan of God as predicted in the Old Testament Scriptures. So, as Grubbs says, "The Gospel is not a novelty of human imagination." Denny observes that "the Gospel is not in principle a new thing, a subversion of the true religion as it has hitherto been known to the people of God." On the contrary, God promised it before through His prophets and their predictions are recorded in the Holy Scriptures. It was a universally applicable message for "all the nations" (v. 5).

## PROMISED THROUGH HIS PROPHETS

"Prophets," in this instance is probably not intended to be restricted to those who were officially prophets. The word prophets, like the word apostle, is used in the New Testament in a generic sense, as well as in a specific or official sense. There are persons referred to in Scriptures as prophets who did not hold the office of a prophet. David is a good example. Did David prophesy? He certainly did, and his numerous prophecies are so well known they need not be cited here. Is he called a prophet in Scripture (Acts 2:30)? But did David fill the office of prophet? It is interesting to note that the Hebrews, in their early division of the Scripture, put the book of Daniel with Esther, Nehemiah, and other books of history and not with the books of the prophets such as Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel. What was Daniel's office? Basically he may be classified as a statesman and counselor to the King. He was a man in authority among the Medes and Persians just like Joseph was second to Pharaoh in authority among the Egyptians. Moses said, "A prophet shall God raise up . . . like unto me" (Acts 7:37). Deuteronomy 34:10 states that there was never another prophet like Moses in Israel. But was Moses officially a prophet? He was a lawgiver, and Numbers 12:6-8 informs us of a difference in the mode of revealing Himself to Moses from the way He made His word known to the prophets. The school of the prophets began under the direction of Samuel. Although there were those of early Biblical history like Abraham (Genesis 20:7), Moses and others who prophesied limitedly (Numbers 11:25), it is not usually thought that the office of the prophet came into being until the time of Samuel.

So there is a sense in which people function as prophets, teaching and speaking prophetically, but who do not fill the office of a prophet. I think that's true of the daughters of Philip (Acts 21:9). Simeon prophesied (Luke 2:34 ff.) as did many others but there is no certainty that every one who prophesied held authoritatively the office of a prophet. It is my opinion that "promised through the prophets" is a general statement which speaks of all the "mouthpieces" who represented God, spoke His will, and revealed His scheme of redemption.

## THE HOLY SCRIPTURES

I Corinthians 15:1-4 provides a good example of Paul's view of the Gospel as being predicted in the Old Testament writings. "Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; and that He was buried; and that he hath been raised on the third day according to the Scriptures."

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It is clear that Paul recognized a certain body of writings as authoritative and true. The claim that there wasn't an Old Testament canon at least until A.D. 90, when at the council of Jamnia the Jews determined what was canonical and what was not, is untenable. In *Antiquities of the Jews*, Josephus speaks of the Jewish canon of Scripture and notes the divisions of the books of the canon. Previous to Josephus persons like Jesus and Paul spoke of a definitive body of writing which they designated with such descriptive nomenclature as "the law and the prophets," the "holy Scriptures," and the "oracles of God." With these terms they referred to a distinctive assemblage of writings which was well defined and well known in their day. In the tenth chapter of Romans Paul argues strenuously on the basis of the content of the Old Testament that God was accomplishing in history just exactly what He said He would do with the Jews and with the Gentiles. Paul cites eleven Old Testament passages in Chapter Ten. Apostolic preaching from Pentecost and forward gives good example of the use of the Old Testament. Christ set the precedent by frequently quoting the Old Testament Scriptures. The apostles, in imitation of their Lord, did the same thing as they preached the Gospel. Tyndale in his prologue to the *Commentary on Romans* makes the astounding statement that "Romans is an introduction to the whole Old Testament."

### GOD'S SON

Paul is called unto the Gospel of God in which His Son is involved. The promises that God will save man from his sin are given through the prophets and are recorded in the Holy Scriptures. All of those promises relate to God's Son. Everything centers in Him. So central is He that Paul could later write, "Whatsoever ye do, in word or in deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus" (Colossians 3:17). God's Son "according to the flesh" is of "the seed of David." Both Matthew and Luke give genealogies. They are important and are recorded with the specific intent of showing clearly that Jesus fulfilled Old Testament predictions concerning His lineage. The word "flesh" in this particular passage means "mankind" or "the ways of man." He was born of the seed of David after the way children are born and according to the way men keep genealogies and biographical records. Paul makes the same claim about the human origin and lineage of Jesus in the sermon delivered at Antioch of Pisidia (Acts 13:22, 23). "Flesh" has reference to His human nature as distinct from His divine nature. Jesus is not just (*anthropos*) man. Neither is He only God. Rather, he is the (*theanthropos*) the God-man. So what we are saying is that Paul does not intend the word "flesh"

to be a distinction between Christ's personal body and His personal spirit, but it is a contrast between His human nature and His divine nature. He is the Son of God, born of a woman. The word "born," when used of Jesus, should never be understood to denote the beginning of His existence. Instead, it points to His entrance into the stream of human history. Many passages of Scripture indicate the pre-existence as well as eternity of Jesus. The author of Hebrews wrote, "A body didst thou prepare for me" (10:5). As Alexander Campbell pointed out in *The Christian System* (p. 9), the "me" was before the "body" (Cf. Colossians 1:15-19; Philippians 2:5-11). Romans 8:3 informs us that God sent His Son "in the likeness of sinful flesh" but He existed before He was sent and appeared among men as the Son of God. Verse four says that Jesus was declared to be the Son of God who possessed power, or the same words may be understood to say that Jesus was powerfully declared to be the Son of God. There was no problem in determining His human nature. He appeared like all other men who walked the pathways of Palestine. He wore Palestinian garb, ate and drank normally, loved, cried, and laughed. Some may think one to be irreverent who suggests that Jesus was human enough to have possessed a sense of humor. Elton Trueblood wrote the volume entitled *The Humor of Jesus*. Perhaps some of his suggestions about humor in Jesus' teaching are a bit strained, but who could deny a twinkle in the eye of our Lord as He talked about swallowing a camel. One of the finest professors under whom I had the privilege to study was George Mark Elliott. He would introduce the keenest of humor into a lecture without a hint of anything humorous to come except the tell-tale twinkle in his eye. His lectures, though deep and meaningful, were punctuated with delightful touches of humor. Jesus must have taught like that. He was a total man and his humanity was easily identifiable.

How could the deity of Jesus be clearly marked out? Paul mentions two ways in which the divine aspect of His nature was made known. The first identifying factor was the spirit of holiness. This may be a typical Hebrew (genitival) expression meaning the Holy Spirit. It is more likely that the American Standard Version has it correct in referring to the personal spirit of holiness of Jesus which was constantly evident. Pilate was not the only one who could find no fault in Him. His perfection could not be hidden. When His life, characterized by holiness, came to an end, God gave the climactic evidence of His deity when He was raised from the dead. The apostles regularly appealed to the resurrection as proof of the true identity of Jesus (Acts 2:24, 32; 3:15, 26; 4:10; 5:30; 10:40; 13:30, 33, 34, 37; 17:30, 31).

## THIRTEEN LESSONS ON ROMANS

### READER'S REVIEW:

1. What is the meaning of the word "servant" in 1:1?
2. Give definitions which indicate the various ways in which the word "apostle" is used in the New Testament.
3. What is the pivotal qualification for being an apostle?
4. State the basic purpose for Paul being "called" and "separated."
5. Cite various autobiographical experiences that may have come to the mind of Paul when he wrote the word "separated."
6. What subjective influence is cited as contributing to Paul's "separated" life?
7. Define the word "mystery" as used by Paul and indicate the companion word which appears frequently with the word "mystery."
8. In what sense is it proper to say that the Gospel is the Gospel of God?
9. What is the chronological involvement of the word "now" as used in 16:26 and how does this involvement relate to the content of the salutation?
10. Define the word "prophet" and give examples of variant usages of the word in the Scriptures.
11. What is the observation concerning Romans by Tyndale which the author labels as "astounding"? Why is the observation so striking?
12. How are the words "flesh" and "spirit" used in the salutation?
13. What are the two lines of testimony cited by Paul to prove that Jesus was declared to be the Son of God?
14. In what way is the universal character of the Gospel introduced in the salutation?



## Lesson Three

(1:16, 17)

### THE THEME OF ROMANS

16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. 17 For therein is revealed a righteousness of God from faith unto faith: as it is written, But the righteous shall live by faith.

These verses contain a concise summary of the doctrinal content of the entire book of Romans and are the meat of the book in a nutshell.

Those who lived in the powerful city to which "all roads lead" were not to construe Paul's absence from Rome to be based upon any such false premise that he was ashamed of his message. Over a lengthy span of time (15:23) Paul had longed to go to the Imperial City to share Christian blessings with the existing church (1:11) and to spread the Gospel more widely in Rome and its environs. It was work and not lack of desire nor any misgivings about his message which kept Paul from preaching at Rome. Paul makes a strong affirmation about the Gospel by the use of a negative, "I am not ashamed of the Gospel." This statement of the apostle is said to be an example of the figure of speech known as *litotes*. The term "*litotes*" stems from the root word *litos* which means smooth,

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plain, or simple. In rhetoric the employment of this figure of speech is an easy, simple way of making a positive statement by negating that which is contrary to that which one wishes to affirm. It was a surprise for me to hear a litotes come from the lips of the baseball sportscaster who was describing the game between the Cincinnati Reds and the San Francisco Giants. When Jim Ray Hart of San Francisco took his stance at the plate, the announcer said, "Jim Ray Hart does not look unlike Willie Mays." Obviously the sportscaster with a double negative was saying that Jim Hart, in his batting stance, looked very much like Willie Mays. Applying the same principle of interpretation Paul is saying positively, "I am *proud* of the Gospel." For another Biblical example of the use of litotes see Acts 21:39 where Paul is affirming with a negative that his hometown, Tarsus, was a great city. Paul was not ashamed of the Gospel for many reasons. Two of these reasons are developed in the theme. First, because by nature it is God's power unto salvation, and secondly, in content it revealed God's plan whereby man might become righteous in God's sight.

### THE POWER OF THE GOSPEL

"It is the power of God unto salvation."

Paul's use of the phrase, "power of God" in this passage does not have primary reference to the omnipotence of God. It is true that God is the all-powerful one, and it is equally true that His omnipotence undergirds the entire scheme of redemption even as it pervades the physical universe. Of what value is any news about salvation if God does not have the personal power to fulfill His promises? Paul appeals to the basic essential of God's power in Philipians 3:20, 21 as a reason for assurance of the transformation which shall occur to the saints when Jesus returns. How can Christians possess such hope apart from the knowledge of the power of God by which "He is able to subject all things unto himself"? Here, however, Paul is speaking of the Gospel as embodying and functioning as the agent of God's power. The Gospel is not a blasting dynamite although the word translated "power" (*dunamis*) is the Greek word from which the English word "dynamite" is derived. The Greeks and Romans of that day knew nothing of explosive powder. The Gospel is not an explosive, blasting destructive force except for its effect upon sin. For man it is a sweet message of love, mercy, and grace. The Gospel power is a drawing power. "And I, if I be lifted up will draw all men unto me" (John 12:32). The "power of God" of which Paul writes is the potent magnetic force of Calvary and the cross stands at the very heart of the Gospel. God, through the good news about

Christ and Calvary is saying pungently and winsomely, "come and experience the dynamic power of the Gospel which is able to make you righteous." The Gospel is more than a good story. It is not merely passive good news. Rather, it is active and dynamic unto salvation. When the disciples did not understand the parable of the sower and asked Jesus for clarification of his story, the very first words of explanation from the lips of our Lord were, "The seed is the word of God" (Luke 8:11). Seed is life giving! Peter understood the Lord and reminded the Christians of Asia Minor that they had been "begotten again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, through the word of God which liveth and abideth forever." Then, following an Old Testament quotation of "the word of the Lord" he said, "This is the word of good tidings which was preached unto you" (I Peter 1:23-25). In the beginning God spoke and the result was dynamic and creative. Today God speaks through the Gospel and the result is dynamic and creative. Jesus said that in this Christian era "the dead" (dead in sin) "shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that hear shall live." They have "passed out of death into life" (John 5:24, 25). So the Christian who is a "born again" person has already experienced one resurrection (Ephesians 2:1, 5, 6; Colossians 3:1-3). How is the voice of Jesus to be heard today and how is the power of the Gospel to be brought to bear upon the sinful condition of man, apart from the presentation of the Gospel to the world? The Gospel truly is "the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth," without any qualification, limitation, or expansion. Thank God for a professor who said to his homiletics class, "Young men, don't you ever preach the Gospel without expecting results." This writer has forgotten much of what that professor said, but these words will continue to be a source of motivation and confidence for him to continue to go around the world a third, fourth, and more times to preach the Gospel if the Lord so wills. Even when the preaching is done in foreign countries, and the preached word must be translated, and sometimes into two or three languages at one session, it is the dynamic, life producing seed which will bear its fruit. Paul had this confidence in the Gospel and made not the slightest apology for God's message which he preached. It was more than powerful enough for the capital city of the most powerful empire on earth. It could convert "Caesar's household," "the praetorian guard" and "all the rest" of the Romans who would come to faith in the marvelous content of the Gospel (Philippians 4:21; 1:13). The only way to dilute the power of the Gospel is by altering its content. It can be changed in degree to the point it is no longer the Gospel at all (Galatians 1:6-10).

## THIRTEEN LESSONS ON ROMANS

### THE CONTENT OF THE GOSPEL

“For therein is revealed a righteousness of God.”

Just as the phrase “power of the Gospel” does not have primary reference to the omnipotence of God so also the phrase “righteousness of God” does not have primary reference to the personal nature of God. There is no question about the character, rectitude or holiness of God, but Paul is not discussing the attributes of God. Rather he speaks of the content of the Gospel which reveals God’s plan whereby man is accepted by God to be righteous. God’s righteous character is absolute, unchangeable, and independent. The righteousness of which Paul speaks, however, is related to and is dependent upon faith. For example, Paul indicates that the righteousness which he possessed was from God “through” (*dia*) and “by” or “upon” (*epi*) faith (Philippians 3:9). Again in Romans 3:22 it is affirmed that this righteousness is from God “through faith.” It is clear that the righteousness of God which Paul discusses is a relative matter. That is, it is related to and dependent upon faith. God’s personal character is in no way affected by faith or the lack of faith in God by men. Another evidence that this righteousness of which Paul speaks is not a reference to the personal nature of God is that it is seen clearly “apart from the law” (Romans 3:21). No one would deny that the character of God was revealed clearly in the law and the prophets. The ninety-eighth Psalm is in its entirety an appeal to the people to praise God for His righteousness. The goodness, holiness, justice and love of God is set forth clearly in the Old Testament. But God’s plan for making men righteous through the death of his Son was only seen dimly through type and prophecy in the Old Testament. “The righteousness of God in 1:17 has primary reference to God’s right way, His Gospel plan, His scheme of redemption. A striking example of the use of the word righteousness with reference to God’s right way is found in Matthew’s account of the baptism of our Lord (Matthew 3:15). After John’s protest that he was not worthy to baptize Jesus, the Lord responded to John: Allow this kind of a relationship and action now, “for thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness.” Jesus was not suggesting that in his obedience he was in some way fulfilling God’s character. Instead he was indicating that God wanted him to be baptized, and he wished to do things God’s way. It appears that Paul, in Romans, is using the word righteousness with the same meaning that Jesus gave to it in his discussion with John when Paul observes that the Jews were “ignorant of God’s righteousness.” They sought to “establish their own” and would not “subject themselves to the righteousness of God” (Romans 10:2). One does not subject himself to attributes or characteristics. Paul says the Jews failed to obey the right way of God which was revealed fully in the Gospel.

This righteousness is said to be of God because God is its author. It is a plan which God wholly approved, revealed, and set into operation so that it would bear dynamically on man's sinful situation. No Bible teaching is more plain than that man does not possess a righteousness of his own and that he is destitute of any means to produce righteousness by himself. (Romans 3:10; cf. Isaiah 64:6; I Corinthians 1:30; II Corinthians 5:21; Romans 5:17; Philippians 3:10; Ephesians 2:8-10)

### RIGHTEOUSNESS DEPENDENT UPON FAITH

17 For therein is revealed a righteousness of God from faith unto faith; as it is written, But the righteous shall live by faith.

Faith is absolutely basic in the Christian system, and it is true that at no time, under any system of worship, has God asked for any act of service or worship apart from faith. God has sent his witnesses to give credible testimony, but men must believe (I Corinthians 1:21; Romans 10:13, ff.; John 5:39, 46, 47). Our faith (Hebrews 11:6) is of no more value than the faith of Abraham (Hebrews 11:13, "These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them and greeted them from afar . . .").

Two words are used regularly by Bible exegetes to explain this phrase which inextricably relates the righteousness which God grants to man to the faith which is resident in his heart and mind. How are we to understand "faith unto faith"?

One word of explanation is "progression." Some would apply the concept of progressive faith to the revelation of God's will given throughout the centuries and suggest that Paul had in mind continuous revelation from the book of Genesis to that of the book of Revelation (Hebrews 1:1, 2). John Calvin thought Paul had in mind the progression of Christian growth so that one would proceed from a weak faith to a strong faith. Calvin's view would be comparable to the common concept of a Christian beginning as a newborn babe and continuing in growth to become a full grown man in Christ. Others apply the concept of progression to evangelism and read into Paul's mind the idea of the faith spreading from person to person and generation to generation and nation to nation.

More frequently the word "intensity" is used to explain the phrase "from faith unto faith." The idea is advanced that Paul means that one is saved "entirely by faith." The New International Version translates: "by faith from first to last." There are numerous examples in Scripture of repetition of terms like "faith unto faith" for the purpose of intensification. See such passages as Romans 6:19, "sin unto sin"; II Corinthians

## THIRTEEN LESSONS ON ROMANS

2:16 "death unto death" or "life unto life"; and John 1:16 where the preposition is changed from "unto" to "for" but the principle of intensification is the same, "grace for grace." This latter suggestion of intensification is probably the best way to understand the repetition of the word faith. The Bible student should beware of theological developments which stem from Luther's *sola fide* (faith only) written in the margin of his Bible at Romans 1:17 and remember that salvation is attributed to some sixteen different things in the New Testament. It is dangerous to add "only" to the text of God's Word at any point. The only place in the New Testament where the words "faith only" are found together is in James 2:24 which states clearly that one is not justified "only by faith." A full discussion of the phrase "faith unto faith" may be read in *The Epistle to the Romans*, Murray, pages 363-374.

There are three historical views of the way by which a man is accepted to be righteous by God.

1. The Pelagian view (Pelagius, A.D. 360-420) Every man has complete freedom of will to choose good, and righteousness is obtained by proper choices and participation in works that are ethically good and proper. For a synopsis of the related teachings of Pelagius, *Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, F. L. Cross, p. 1040.
2. The Romanist view suggests that any good works done apart from grace and before regeneration have no bearing upon one's righteousness. The righteousness which brings acceptance with God is dependent upon a combination of the natural man aided by prevenient grace (this is grace wholly initiated by God apart from any response of man previous to conversion) plus meritorious works done by man after regeneration.
3. The Biblical view is that righteousness received by man from God is not the result of something arranged by man, done by man, nor wrought in man but rather is the result of that which was done for us by Christ and freely bestowed upon us when we choose to believe in God's plan and provision. So righteousness is not obtained by us nor wrought in us. It is "the gift of righteousness . . . through the one, even Jesus Christ" (Romans 5:17). Note that the designation "Biblical View" is used here rather than "Protestant View" or "Reformation Theology View." The reason for this choice of terminology is that there are numerous shadings of the so-called Protestant and Reformation views of righteousness, many of which the author does not consider to be Biblical.

There are five pivotal concepts in the theme of Romans:

1. The Power of God
2. Salvation
3. Revelation
4. Righteousness of God
5. Universality of redemption

It is a bit surprising to note how all five of these concepts, in one form or another, are found in the Old Testament passages (Psalm 98:1, 2; Isaiah 46:13; 51:5-8; 54:17; 56:1; 61:10, 11; 62:1, 2). The readers should keep in mind that Old Testament passages which refer to the "righteousness" of God refer primarily to God's character. His love, for example, may be seen in his planned provision for man's salvation, but the specifics of God's plan to redeem man through His Son were not revealed until the Gospel came.

#### Gospel

1. Powerful
2. Righteousness of God
3. Unto Salvation
4. Universal
5. Belief

#### Law

1. Weak, Romans 8:1-4
2. Human Righteousness, Romans 10:1-3; Philippians 3:9
3. Unto Condemnation, Romans 7:9, 10; Galatians 3:10, 11; II Corinthians 3:6-9
4. Jewish exclusivism, Romans 3:21-23; 10:11-13
5. Legal Works (meritorious), Romans 9:30-32; 10:3-5

### READER'S REVIEW:

1. What figure of speech is used by Paul to declare personal feelings about the Gospel?
2. Cite another Biblical example of Paul's use of the same figure of speech.
3. Explain why the phrase "power of God" does not have a direct primary reference to God's omnipotence.
4. Why is God's omnipotence important to the Gospel plan of salvation?
5. Why is the comparison of the Gospel to dynamite a poor analogy?
6. What is the basic function of the power of the Gospel in the mind of man?

## THIRTEEN LESSONS ON ROMANS

7. Cite an example or two from the teaching of Jesus which would lead his disciples to understand that the Word of God is powerful.
8. How many resurrections will one who becomes a Christian experience?
9. What is it that energizes and gives life in the first resurrection of the Christian?
10. What would influence Paul to place such strong emphasis upon the power of the Gospel in the Roman epistle?
11. What is the statement of Paul as to the content of the Gospel?
12. State two arguments cited by the author to support his contention that the phrase "righteousness of God" does not refer to the personal character of God.
13. In what sense is it proper to say that the righteousness of God was plainly and fully revealed in the Old Testament?
14. Cite one example from the life of Jesus in which the record makes it quite clear that Jesus used the word "righteousness" to refer to God's plan for his own personal life.
15. What was the basic sin of the Jews in their response to God's righteousness?
16. What are the two words used by Bible exegetes to help one to understand the phrase "faith unto faith"?
17. Which of the above two words do you think is best? Defend your choice.
18. What is the major danger of explaining "faith unto faith" to mean "entirely by faith"?
19. List and explain the three historic views of the way by which God accepts men to be righteous.
20. What are the five major theological concepts which are found in these two verses and in the Old Testament as well?



## Lesson Four

(1:18-32)

### KNOWING GOD AND RECOGNIZING SIN

#### THE WRATH OF GOD

18 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hinder the truth in unrighteousness.

Startling, but wholly in harmony with the rest of Scripture, is the lightning like opening statement of this first doctrinal section of Romans: "The wrath of God is revealed . . . against all sin" (1:18). Paul's words about salvation have been tranquil, but like a bolt out of the blue comes the information that God possesses the potential to exercise wrath. George Stevens says of wrath, "It is God's holy displeasure against sin — the reaction of His nature against sin . . . It is the energy with which His love, being holy, repudiates its opposite," (*The Theology of the New Testament*, page 377).

God cannot smile upon even a simple act of sin because his very nature is repulsed by it. Frequently it is heard that God could not be at once a God of wrath and a God of love. Man being what he is prefers the latter and attempts to rationalize a God of wrath out of existence.

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Love and wrath, however, are not opposites. Mercy is the opposite of wrath and hatred is the antithesis of love. Never should love and wrath be positioned as opposites or thought of as being incapable of coexistence. Wrath and mercy as well as hatred and love are attributes of God and all of them meet at the cross. God hates sin. He loves mankind. The wrath of God is somehow alleviated in the death of Jesus who "died for our sins" (1 Corinthians 15:3). Through Christ mercy is channeled to man. There is no impossible paradox in the nature of God because He exercises wrath as well as mercy and hates as well as loves. All of these characteristics are clearly exhibited in man who was made in God's likeness and image. If wrath and mercy and love and hatred are found in man, how is it so impossible for these same elements to be present in man's creator?

God's personal wrath is not to be confused with the result of his wrath. Wrath is no more impersonal with God than sin is impersonal with man. It is true that God hates sin but loves the sinner. That truth, however, should never be turned into the error of depersonalizing sin. Sin must never be viewed as something which just happens apart from any responsibility of man for that sin. God does not sin, and when men sin, they fall under the blaze of God's anger. As sin cannot occur independently from man, neither can God's wrath be separated from Him. His wrath is not some kind of an impersonal force in nature which God set in motion at the outset of earth's history and which goes on operating like the law of gravity. It is true that man reaps the consequences of breaking certain laws of nature which were established by God but that fact does not give one the liberty to depersonalize God's wrath, to spell it with capital letters (WRATH) and place it in creation as some impersonal principle which only operates in the realm of natural law. Neither can one properly capitalize the word SIN as if it were some kind of an impersonal force and divorce it from an individual. It is man who sins, and it is the holy God of heaven who is personally affronted by man's sinful thoughts and acts. God's wrath is just as personal as is his love, mercy and forgiveness. For divergent views of "the wrath of God" see Barclay's commentary on Romans pages 17, ff., in which he holds the non-personal, natural law view and Bruce's commentary on Romans, page 83, which contends that God's wrath is personal.

Paul places all sin under the wrath of God and his vocabulary reflects two classes of sins (v. 18). The sin of idolatry and an improper attitude toward God (1:18-23) are the kinds of sins designated by the word "ungodliness." These are sins which relate directly to God and are religious in nature. The sins of immorality discussed in verses 24-28 are catalogued in verses 29-32 and fall naturally under the heading of "unrighteousness" (v. 18).

Just in passing it is interesting to note there is ready agreement among

scholars that Paul's catalogue of sin is not embellished nor overstated. Bruce says Paul is not exaggerating in his catalogue of sin. According to McGarvey, "Petronius, Suetonius, Martial, Seneca, Virgil, Juvenal, Lucian, and other classic writers verify the statements of Paul." Barclay states that fourteen of the first fifteen Roman emperors were homosexuals.

Verse eighteen refers to a negative influence which is universal and timeless. When men possess the truth but live as if they were ignorant of that truth, it is a strong deterrent to the program of God. Sin is always instrumental in hiding, suppressing, and hindering the truth. The "Golden Mouth" preacher of early church history, John Chrysostom, held that the most effective means of conversion of the pagan was a demonstration of righteousness in the lives of those who were members of the Christian society. He taught, "There would be no more heathens if we would be true Christians."

### THE SIN OF ATHEISM

19 Because that which is known of God is manifest in them; for God manifested it unto them. 20 For the invisible things of him since the creation of the world are clearly seen, being perceived through the things that are made, even his everlasting power and divinity; that they may be without excuse: 21 because that, knowing God, they glorified him not as God, neither gave thanks; but became vain in their reasonings, and their senseless heart was darkened. 22 Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, 23 and changed the glory of the incorruptible God for the likeness of an image of corruptible man, and of birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things.

Paul appeals to the forceful testimony of natural revelation to show that all men are responsible for a knowledge of God who is the creator of all as well as for all acts performed by man which are contrary to God's will. God made man a rational being who is capable of receiving information, evaluating information received and arriving at a logical conclusion. The mind of man is an absolutely essential correlative of revelation. What good is a shepherd without sheep and of what value is a broadcasting station unless someone has a receiving set? How can divine revelation function without a rational mind to be cognizant of it? God manifested his own being and presence (v. 19) "in them," that is, in their minds. He made the knowledge of his existence and creative power known to man through the things which He created. The content of

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verse twenty is sometimes indicated to be oxymoronic. The word Oxymoronic is a compound word stemming from *oxys* which means sharp and *moros* from which is derived the word moron. Hence the definition of an oxymoronic statement is, a sharp, dull saying. When one first reads "invisible things . . . are clearly seen" one is apt to say that is a stupid statement, (v. 20). But the more one considers the full force of the saying, and the explanatory phrase "through the things that are made," the more profound and meaningful the statement becomes. The invisible attributes of God are in evidence by the things which he made. This is the declaration also of the Psalmist, (19:1-4).

- 1 The heavens declare the glory of God;  
And the firmament showeth his handiwork.
- 2 Day unto day uttereth speech,  
And night unto night showeth knowledge.
- 3 There is no speech nor language;  
Their voice is not heard.
- 4 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.

No man can excuse himself for not being aware of God (v. 20). Gentiles, according to Paul (v. 21), had known God but "their senseless heart was darkened" (v. 21). The light of revelation had been deliberately extinguished. They were like a man who turns out the light in the room in which he is sitting and curses the darkness. Paul would not have put his approval upon the popular evolutionary view of the origin of man nor upon the humanistic view of the origin of Scripture. He did not believe that man evolved but that he was created. Neither did he believe that so-called "revelation" was the result of man's search for God. Rather than evolving toward God he devolved and that process of devolution led him to the position of being a fool. It is the fool that says in his heart there is no God (v. 22 and Psalm 14:1). It is the fool who contends that inert matter and motion created life; that unintelligent mass created intelligence; that mute matter created speech; that chaos created a cosmos.

Man's mind is never a vacuum. Either truth or error is present. One is as Jesus said, "either for or against" God.

"The spacious firmament on high  
With all the blue ethereal sky,  
And spangled heavens, a shining frame,  
Their great Original proclaim:  
The unwearied sun, from day to day  
Does his creator's power display,  
And publishes to every land  
The work of an almighty hand."

— Author Unknown

## THE SIN OF HOMOSEXUALITY

24 Wherefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts unto uncleanness, that their bodies should be dishonored among themselves; 25 for that they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshipped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed for ever, Amen. 26 For this cause God gave them up unto vile passions: for their women changed the natural use into that which is against nature: 27 and likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another, men with men working unseemliness, and receiving in themselves that recompense of their error which was due.

As there is no excuse for any man not to know God, so also no man can excuse himself for failing to recognize sin. The will of God is "written in their hearts" and their conscience condemns when they do not obey (Romans 2:15).

It is typical of Paul to argue from the general to the specific. Here he moves from the general subject of sin to a particular sin. The one which Paul cites as a particular example is homosexuality. It is not uncommon in our generation to have approval placed upon homosexuality as if it had the total acceptance of God. Apart from the Bible, by natural revelation, one ought to know clearly what the Creator intended as far as the relationship of man and woman is concerned. "By the things made" we know God. The same rule applies to sin. Only a moron could miss the truth about God's original intentions with reference to sexual relations and pro-creation by just looking at a man and at a woman. Man was not made for man nor woman for woman and Paul does not hesitate to pronounce the wrath of God upon those who insist in perversion of the will of God as is clearly evident in creation and later forcefully stated in the supernatural revelation recorded in Scripture.

The pagan temples of Khajuraho, India, were constructed during the tenth and eleventh centuries under the Chandellas dynasty. There were eighty-five temples erected, of which twenty-five remain in varying stages of preservation. One cannot but marvel at the decorative details chiseled by hands possessing consummate ability in the soft limestone with varying shades of pink, buff, and pale yellow. At the same time one cannot but be repulsed by the subject of many of those reliefs which portray erotic couples in highly-contorted postures. Sometimes it is man with man, and more base than homosexuality, numerous works depict humans in union with beasts. The guide called our attention to these works of art with praise not only for their mechanics but for their spiritual interpretation which was that man was trying to transcend

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himself and all desire and find deliverance from the flesh and union with the Divine. A modern Indian author speaking of this sex theme of the artwork of Khajuraho says, "Whatever the interpretation of these erotic scenes, there is certainly nothing sordid or coarse about them." One wonders where our society will stop in its departure from God. How long will it be before bestiality will be condoned again and to what depths of bestiality will men sink? Today men secure licenses to marry men. How long will it be before men want moral liberty to marry a cow? When God made Adam, all the beasts were brought before him. Not one was found to be a suitable companion, so God made "a woman, and brought her unto man." No change in that divine economy has ever been acceptable to God (Genesis 2:18-25).

### GOD GAVE THEM UP

28 And even as they refused to have God in their knowledge, God gave them up into a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not fitting; 29 being filled with all unrighteousness, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malignity; whisperers, 30 backbiters, hateful to God, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, 31 without understanding, covenant-breakers, without natural affection, unmerciful: 32 who, knowing the ordinance of God, that they that practise such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but also consent with them that practise them.

God, in his justice, does not give up any man to sin simply because he has not been taught religious truth and does not know God or sin. But when persons "exchange the truth of God for a lie" (v. 25) and refuse "to have God in their knowledge" (v. 28), God will turn away from them and allow sin to rule their lives. God will give them up! Three times it is stated emphatically that God "gave them up." He gave them up to lust and uncleanness (v. 24); to "vile passion" (v. 26), and to a "reprobate mind" (v. 28). Such sin is, in consequence, the equivalent of the "sin unto death" of 1 John 5:16. John is so certain that one who has fallen away from the faith once embraced is in a lost state that he indicates one may not pray for a person to be saved while he remains in that state of apostasy. "God gave them up," may also be, in consequence, the equivalent of the unforgivable sin against the Holy Spirit. The non-Christian may constantly and finally reject the influence of the Holy Spirit to accept Christ as Savior and Lord. These three sinful states, "sin

unto death," "blasphemy against the Spirit" and the state of sin in which God gives one up may each have some different emphasis. The "sin unto death" may be committed by a "brother" which I interpret to mean a Christian. If Plummer is right when he describes blasphemy against the Spirit as a rejection of Christ which is "constant" and "final," then that act is committed by a non-Christian. When Paul indicates that God has given men up, he may be speaking either of those in apostasy or of those who at no time possessed faith. If there is some shade of difference with reference to who is committing the sin or what the act of sin is, the end result of all three is the same — the wrath of God.

Is there really a place in life wherein one has reached a point of no return? This question has always given me pause. As a much younger man I sang the words at evangelistic meetings,

"There's a line that is drawn  
By rejecting our Lord  
Where the call of His Spirit is lost  
And you hurry along  
With a pleasure made throng  
Have you counted the cost?"

The chorus of that song closed with the lines,

"Even now it may be  
That the line you have crossed.  
Have you counted the cost?"

— A. J. Hodge, 1923

It is my conviction now that on the basis of God's foreknowledge, God can, at a given point in a man's life give him up. When God reaches a decision on the basis of his omniscience, His action is certain and not retractable.

This action of God may not be reduced to some kind of human, angry initiation. It is not simply abandonment of a person or permissive non-interference in the life of an individual on the part of God. This divine action should never be minimized to be nothing more than God saying, "Okay, you go your way and I'll go mine." This is a judicial, judgmental act of God, and it seals a man's destiny as surely and finally as if he were before the great final judgment bar of God.

Line by us unseen,  
By which each path is crossed,  
Beyond which God himself has shown  
That He who goes is lost.

— Author Unknown

God will never violate human freedom of choice. God does not place men in straight jackets. When men give themselves up to unbelief and

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sin, God will give them up (Cf. Ephesians 4:17-19; II Thessalonians 2:8-12).

Two warnings must be given to those who may agree with the author's interpretation of the phrase, "God gave them up" as being judicial. One is that although God is the efficient controller of all things, he does not tempt men to sin. He does not cause men to sin but rather reacts to the sinful state in which man chooses to live and for which a man is wholly, personally responsible.

Secondly, although God gives men up, we must never do so. God has infinite knowledge which we do not possess. We must never play God! As long as a man lives, he must be viewed as a potential candidate for heaven, and we must do all within our power to bring him into that divine fellowship.

### READER'S REVIEW:

1. What is it that makes the opening statement about God's wrath so startling?
2. What is the most basic reason one can cite to explain why God cannot approve of sin?
3. Cite the four attributes of God's character which are included in this lesson.
4. Explain how the four attributes of God you have just listed meet at the cross.
5. What are the potential errors to be avoided by rationalizing and depersonalizing God's wrath to be WRATH and man's sin to be SIN?
6. What is the stated effect of possessing truth but not living in harmony with that truth?
7. According to Chrysostom, what was an effective method of converting pagans?
8. Explain the author's use of the word "devolution."
9. Define the word oxymoronic and give an example of its usage in Chapter One of Romans.
10. What kind of revelation is being discussed by Paul in Chapter One?
11. The Scriptures speak of those who are fools for many reasons. For what reason does Paul call certain people fools?
12. What are the two general classifications of sin which Paul discusses?
13. What are Paul's specific examples of sins which fall under the two general classifications?
14. Why will God give a man up to sinful forces?



15. State your understanding of the force of the phrase, "God gave them up."
16. What other *Biblical phrases depicting men in a sinful state* does the author parallel with the state of sin one has reached when God gives him up?
17. Why is God's omniscience and His foreknowledge important to any discussion of the phrase "God gave them up"?
18. Two warnings are given at the close of this lesson. State the warning which relates to an understanding of God honoring man as a free moral agent.
19. What is the last warning of this lesson which deals with man's attitude toward man?

## Lesson Five

(2:1-16)

### PRINCIPLES OF JUDGMENT

The first sixteen verses of this section are transitional and move tactfully from talking about the Gentiles to a discussion of the Jews. Every verse in the chapter applies to Jews, but the Jew is not specifically mentioned until verse seventeen. Paul's tact reminds one of the boxer who spars carefully, throwing light jabs, until he can land a heavy blow.

Universal judgment is a basic principle enunciated again and again by the prophets and apostles. These verses make it clear that no man can escape giving an account of his life to God. The Jews would heartily agree with Paul that the Gentiles were debased, sinful, and worthy of God's condemnation. They would approve of the apostle's statement that the Gentiles should know that people who commit the sins which Paul accused the Gentiles of doing are worthy of death (1:32). The Jews, however, never dreamed that they were just as guilty of sin before God as were the Gentiles. Whitby quotes passages from Josephus by which he seeks to show that the Jews were guilty of most of the crimes enumerated in chapter one, (see the footnote, *Diaglott*, B. Wilson, p. 514).

## THE BOOMERANG OF JUDGMENT

1 Wherefore thou art without excuse, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest: for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest dost practise the same things. 2 And we know that the judgment of God is according to truth against them that practise such things. 3 And reckonest thou this, O man, who judgest them that practise such things, and doest the same, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God?

Whether the Jews duplicated the sins of the Gentiles or not is beside the point. The Gentiles committed sin and consented with others who did the same (1:32). The Jews committed sin but justified themselves while they condemned others who also sinned. These three verses are referred to as being a Nathan-like passage. Anyone who is familiar with the content of II Samuel 12:1-6 knows why the Nathan-like designation is appropriate. The "O man" of verses one and three are very personal and emphatic. This expression reminds of the moment when Nathan, the prophet of God, pointed his verbal finger at King David and said to the sinful king, "Thou art the man." David was willing that another should die for a sin which was very similar to his own moral deviation. He had no awareness, however, that when he pronounced judgment upon another that he was at the same time condemning himself. Numerous authors supply quotes of Jewish writings which indicate a proud, self-righteous view of their own people and a claim to a unique relationship with God which no other nation enjoyed. They considered God to be a "protector of the Jews, but a judge of the Gentiles." "God loves Israel alone of all the nations of the earth." Another said, "God will judge the Jews with one measure and the Gentiles with another." It is common in Christian countries to hear jokes about St. Peter, with his keys, controlling entrance through the golden gate into heaven. Some misguided persons may even give credence to such a concept about the apostle Peter's personal role in determining who will enter into heaven and who will not be allowed to do so. The Jews, in all seriousness, had Abraham playing such a role although he functioned at the other end of the spirit world. Abraham is pictured as sitting beside the gates of hell, and he will not permit any wicked Israelite to go through. Justin's *Dialogue With Trypho* lends support to such a concept as being then current. In this dialogue with a Jew, the Jew is saying, "They who are the seed of Abraham according to the flesh shall in any case, even if they be sinners and unbelieving and disobedient towards God, share in the eternal kingdom." Jesus had to deal with this kind of Jewish pride and the notions that produced a spirit of national exclusivism among them. As Jesus journeyed from the north, with Jerusalem his destination,

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someone said unto him, "Are they few that be saved?" It is easy to suspect that the questioner was a lawyer who was aware of the controversy which broke out again and again between the conservative and liberal schools of Judaism. The liberals held that many Gentiles would be saved. The conservatives limited salvation mainly to Jews. Perhaps a few Gentiles would be saved if they became proselytes to Judaism and strictly practiced the tenets of the Jewish law. To all who heard this question asked about how many would be saved, Jesus pointed out that salvation was universal and that the redeemed shall "come from the east and west and from the north and south and shall sit down in the kingdom of God." Then Jesus added what seems to be a favorite saying of his, "There are last who shall be first and first who shall be last," (Luke 13:22-30). Sometimes "the last" and "the first" contrast the rich and poor or the self-righteous as distinct from those who admitted they were sinners. In this case, the last were the Gentiles who shall enter into the kingdom of God, and those who considered themselves to be first would be "cast forth without" and for them, according to Jesus, there would be the "weeping and gnashing of teeth."

The warning against judging others by Paul is very much like the prohibitions of Jesus against judging fellowmen recorded in Matthew 7:1-5. In neither instance of warning, however, is one's critical faculties of evaluation to be suspended. Christians must always make judgments with reference to what is good or bad. As early in my life as I can remember, my Christian parents taught me,

"Good, better, best  
Never let it rest  
Until the good is better  
And the better is best."

How could a child or young man fulfill such directives unless he constantly judged the correctness and value of motives, acts, fruit, etc. This evaluation involves what others are doing as well as what one is doing himself. How frequently a young man is lured into that which is questionable by the phrase, "Everybody is doing it." One must always evaluate all things and make careful moral decisions, discerning what is right and wrong, (I Corinthians 2:15; Galatians 6:1). That which both Jesus and Paul strike out against is a harsh, censorious, judgmental spirit which condemns others. That's exactly what the Jews of Paul's day were doing. They condemned others while they wore out their arms patting themselves on the back. God alone has the prerogative to judge and the right to pronounce sentence of eternal condemnation. Far too frequently men put on their legal boots, pretend to be judges, and go

tramping around in God's legislative field. Jesus and Paul try to help us by putting up signs at the perimeter of God's territory in large clear letters, "NO TRESPASSING."

### THE GOODNESS AND JUSTICE OF GOD

4 Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance? 5 but after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up for thyself wrath in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God; 6 who will render to every man according to his works: 7 to them that by patience in well-doing seek for glory and honor and incorruption, eternal life: 8 but unto them that are factious, and obey not the truth, but obey unrighteousness, shall be wrath and indignation, 9 tribulation and anguish upon every soul of man that worketh evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Greek; 10 but glory and honor and peace to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Greek: 11 for there is no respect of persons with God.

The Jew's response to God's goodness resulted in judgment upon themselves. Somehow the Jews considered the goodness of God to be an invitation to sin rather than a motivating force to lead them to repentance. They despised God's goodness and longsuffering (v. 4). Instead of responding to God's love and mercy by turning away from sin, they hardened their hearts and put themselves in a position to receive the wrath of God (v. 5).

The Jews were, in fact, laying up a treasure but what a horrible horde it was which they were accumulating as they amassed for themselves wrath. Their bank account is to be revealed in the final judgment (v. 5). The "day of wrath" timewise, should be understood to be the same as the "day of the Lord" in Obadiah, Joel, Amos, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Zephaniah, Zechariah, Malachi, and Revelation. Paul calls it simply "the day" in I Corinthians 3:13.

Verse six of our text embodies the universal principle of seedtime and harvest. "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap, (Galatians 6:7-10). Charles Hodge thought Paul was expounding the law here and not the Gospel. There is a very real sense in which Hodge is right. According to the Gospel there is a way to avoid reaping the seeds of sin. Through Christ God can remove sin and give a transplant of righteousness and we rejoice that as "law was given through Moses, grace and truth came

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through Jesus Christ" (John 1:16). Paul's emphasis in this passage is not so much a legalistic one in which he is claiming "tit for tat" but rather he contrasts the entire mode and tenor of one man's life with that of another. If a man is controlled by the desire to obey God and his pursuit is after that in which one can glory and not be ashamed, if he seeks for that which brings honor and his life is characterized by purity then he shall receive from God accordingly as he has sown. He shall be the recipient of eternal life (v. 7). On the other hand, if one's life may be described by such words as factious and disobedient, and the ruling principle in life is unrighteousness so that he continually works evil, that one can only reap tribulation and anguish (v. 9). It is of no force that a person is a Gentile or a Jew. "There is no respect of persons with God" (v. 11). The Lord does not judge on the basis of accidentals nor externals. He is a respecter of faith, love, praiseworthy character and good works. The Jews depended upon genealogy, ceremonialism and the fact that God had delivered his revelations to man basically through the Jews. It is in this general sense that Paul is comparing Jews and Gentiles and is applying the natural law of seedtime and harvest as well as the basic truth that God is not partial toward any segment of mankind. So the phrase, "soul of man" (v. 9), should not be understood to mean that God's wrath shall come upon "the soul" of each individual. Rather, "soul" stands for the entire man and "man" stands for humanity so that Paul is saying, "every person of the whole of mankind" is subject to this principle of judgment.

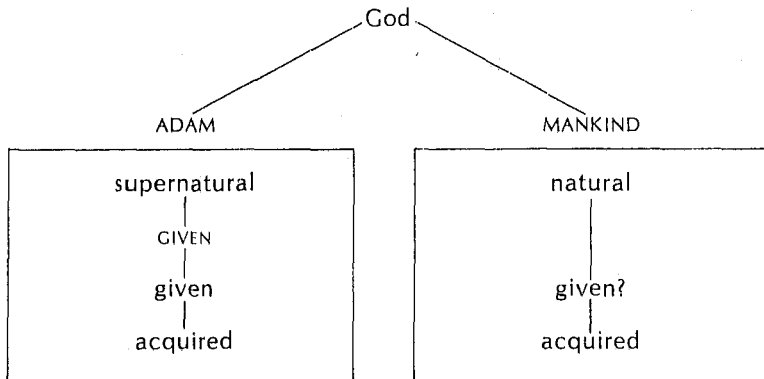
### JUDGMENT BASED ON AVAILABLE KNOWLEDGE

12 For as many as have sinned without the law shall also perish without the law: and as many as have sinned under the law shall be judged by the law; 13 for not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified: 14 (for when Gentiles that have not the law do these, not having the law, are the law unto themselves; 15 in that they show the work of the law written therewith, and their thoughts one with another accusing or else excusing them;) 16 in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men, according to my gospel, by Jesus Christ.

Verses 12-16 continue the contention of Paul that God deals with men impartially. Both Gentiles (those "without the law") and Jews (those "under the law") have sinned. The Gentiles know God and His intentions for man through nature. Obviously they cannot know through nature the personal God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob any more than they

could know the Lord Jesus Christ. Knowledge of a creator God is possible, however, and they can learn from nature some basic principles about His will. One does not need a Bible to know that God gave life to his fellowman, and that it is immoral to murder. It is also obvious that God provided for man to have ample food, and there is nothing immoral about destroying other forms of life, as they are needed, to sustain the life of a man. As stated before, it is abundantly clear through natural revelation that God did not intend man to be homosexual. There is revealed through nature sufficient knowledge of God and His will that the Gentile who has no supernatural revelation to instruct him knows enough to possess a functional conscience (v. 15). Only an informed conscience can function, "accusing or else excusing." It is a common fallacy to think that the conscience is an informer. "My conscience tells me," is a common, but false, statement. To inform is not the function of the conscience. The reverse is true and only after the conscience has become informed by securing knowledge from the intellect can it discern right and wrong. On the basis of truth the good conscience approves or disapproves and exerts its influence upon the will of man. The "branded" or "seared" conscience of 1 Timothy 4:1, 2 is the product of seduction and false doctrine. Any conscience bereft of truth cannot function properly. The Gentiles had natural revelation and the Jews had supernatural revelation in addition to that possessed by the Gentiles. God spoke to the Jewish fathers in many different "portions" and "manners" (Hebrews 1:1). So Paul concludes that all men have known God and His will in one degree or another. Some do "by nature" the will of God. Some receive knowledge above and beyond nature. All of each category have knowledge of both God and sin, and there is a reasonable basis upon which the judgments rendered by personal conscience are valid and upon which all may be judged by God.

Natural and Supernatural Revelation, Verses 12-16:



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Adam had a supernatural beginning, being created, whereas all others begin with a natural birth. So we must allow for an unknown quantity which, in the above diagram, is designated "GIVEN" on the side of Adam. There is no such quantity which can be posited for any other of the human race with the possible exception of Eve. Hence, the corresponding space in the diagram is vacant on the side of mankind. The word "given" may mean something more for Adam than for mankind in general because he walked and talked with God. Perhaps more knowledge was given to Adam in that direct personal exchange with God than any later member of the human race received in an indirect fellowship with God. Thus the question mark after "given?" under the heading of Mankind is meant to signify a possible distinction between the "given" to Adam and to all other men. The knowledge which is "acquired" is the same on both sides. In Adam's case it refers to whatever knowledge he may have acquired after banishment from the Garden of Eden when his state of relationship with God was similar to that which all men have experienced subsequent to the entrance of sin into the stream of human life.

Verse sixteen must be interpreted in the light of all that Paul has taught in Chapters one and two. Paul is not stating that all men will be judged by the Gospel. Such an implication in connection with the phrase "according to my gospel" is exactly the opposite of what Paul has just previously stated. Those with the law are judged by the law. Those without the law become a law unto themselves ("whatsoever is not of faith is sin," Romans 14:23), and they are judged.

Then if some people never heard the Gospel, having lived before it came or having lived in a land where the name of Jesus was never heard, how could the Gospel be the yardstick by which they are judged? What Paul is affirming unequivocally is that one of the basic doctrines of the Gospel which he preaches is that all men will be judged by God. In that climactic event of judgment even the secrets of men (conscience, etc.) will serve as part of the basis for judgment (v. 16).

### Summary Statements

There are basic principles of the doctrine of the judgment of God stated in this section of study which need to be recalled:

1. The judgment of God is "according to truth" (v. 2).
2. Every man shall be judged according to his works (v. 6). (As set forth earlier in this lesson, "works" in this context has reference more to the overall trend of one's life than to specific acts).
3. God's judgment is wholly impartial (v. 11).
4. The judgment of God is universal (vv. 12-16). (Note also the "everyone" of v. 6.)



The threefold truth which must not be missed is that all have sinned, all shall be judged, and all need a Savior. This truth ought to drive us to the ends of the earth with the blessed Good News about Jesus offering freedom, through faith in Him, from the damning power of sin and from the judgment of God which sin brings upon every soul.

### READER'S REVIEW:

1. How does Paul demonstrate the use of tact in the opening paragraph of Chapter Two?
2. What is a basic difference in the attitude of the Jew and Gentile toward sin?
3. What is meant by the designation, "A Nathan-like passage"?
4. How is the role of Peter and Abraham contrasted with reference to their control of the eternal destiny of men?
5. What evidence can you cite to show that a spirit of Jewish exclusivism was present in Jesus' day?
6. Can you explain the difference in what is meant by the terms "critical evaluation" and "harsh judgment"?
7. To what does the author apply the sign "No Trespassing"?
8. What was it that the Jews were saving up for themselves?
9. How did the Jews interpret the goodness of God?
10. List at least three other Biblical terms which are the equivalent of the "day of wrath."
11. Explain the universal principle of "seedtime and harvest."
12. In what way does the Gospel seem to violate the universal principle of "seedtime and harvest"?
13. If God is no respecter of persons, what is it to which he does pay respect?
14. Explain how God can justly judge both the Jew and the Gentile when the quantity and quality of the revelation given to each is so different?
15. What does Paul mean when he says, "according to my Gospel" all shall be judged?
16. What is the basic function of man's conscience?
17. How does the phrase "whatsoever is not of faith is sin" found in Chapter Fourteen apply to this second chapter?
18. Make comparisons and contrasts between the knowledge for which Adam would be accountable and that for which all other men must give account.
19. List four basic principles of God's judgment learned from this lesson.
20. What are the three specific parts of that statement which the author calls the "threefold truth" given in the summary paragraph of this chapter?

## **Lesson Six**

(2:17 — 3:20)

### **FALSE CLAIMS**

#### **A FALSE CLAIM TO PRAISE**

17 But if thou bearest the name of a Jew, and retest upon the law, and gloriest in God, 18 and knowest his will, and approvest the things that are excellent, being instructed out of the law

As indicated in the last lesson, the first sixteen verses of Chapter Two are transitional as Paul moves carefully from a discussion of the Gentiles in Chapter One to words that are addressed directly to the Jew beginning at verse seventeen. The chosen people of God were proud of the name "Jew." Moses Lard thinks the phrase, "bearest the name of a Jew" is not passive, but middle voice which indicates the subject acts upon itself and should be translated, "call yourself a Jew." The word Jew comes from the word Judah which means "praise." But the Jews forgot that the praise should not flow from within themselves, nor from other men, but from God (2:29). It is obvious from the irony in Paul's pen that the Jews' confidence and self-glory rested in their genealogy, ceremony, and personal attainment. Verses 17 and 18 contain examples

of their boastings. They were proud because they had received the law. This is comparable to a man who boasts because he has a Bible in the house, though he may never read it and does not live according to its content. To know the will of God is excellent, but to boast about such knowledge is evidence one is not governed by what he knows. Hodge observes that "knowledge, when made the ground of confidence, or the fuel of pride and arrogance is perverted and destructive." To approve things that are excellent is fine if such approval issues in observable fruit. But to say and not to do has never pleased God (Cf. Matthew 15:1-9; 7:21-23; James 1:22). The Jews were wrong on two counts: their praise was grounded in self-esteem and pride and they sought the praise of men rather than the praise of God.

### FALSE CLAIM TO MATURITY

19 and art confident that thou thyself art a guide of the blind, a light of them that are in darkness, 20 a corrector of the foolish, a teacher of babes, having in the law the form of knowledge and of the truth; 21 thou therefore that teachest another, teachest thou not thyself? thou that preachest a man should not steal, dost thou steal? 22 thou that sayest a man should not commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery? thou that abhorrest idols, dost thou rob temples? 23 thou who gloriest in the law, through thy transgression of the law dishonorest thou God?

The Jews were really boasting in their privileges rather than because of a proper performance of duties (verses 19-21). They thought of themselves as guides and lights. All others walked in the darkness of blindness. They claimed to be head and shoulder above others in spiritual mentality, and, therefore, to be capable teachers of all others who were merely babes in their sight. They claimed to have the "form of knowledge and of truth" but, in fact, they were like those condemned by Paul in II Timothy 3:5 who had a "form of Godliness, but . . . denied the power thereof," (see also Matthew 23:1-3). For the Jew, the law became an outward show such as the demonstrations of the scribes and Pharisees against which Jesus pronounced the "woes." Continuously Jesus attached the word "hypocrite" to His description of them (Matthew 1:13-39). An able teacher knows that he begins by teaching himself (v. 21). Paul uses concrete examples from the law and everyday life to illustrate this principle of self-teaching: You quote the law, "Thou shalt not steal" or "Thou shalt not commit adultery." How is it that you do those things which you teach others are wrong? The height of irony is reached when

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they are accused of "robbing temples" and this act is set forth as the equivalent of "idolatry," (v. 22). Numerous attempts are made by commentaries on Romans to explain how the robbing of temples could be in some sense the same as participating in idolatry. Some seek to explain the analogy literally, suggesting that Jews went into temples and stole idols made of gold and silver and perhaps took other valuable articles as well. Although such robberies did occur (Acts 19:37), thievery is not the point here as it is in verse 21. It is unlikely that Paul is criticizing a withholding of the temple tax in Jerusalem as some suggest. The leaders of the Jews, if not the common man, seem to have been meticulous about the performance of such things (Matthew 18:12; 23:23). Bruce thinks this criticism by Paul may have some application to a situation like that of the Jews who influenced a very wealthy lady to give a large sum of money for the temple which was used personally by the Jews. Probably the best way to understand this climactic statement of sarcasm against the Jews is in a figurative sense. For example, Colossians 3:5 speaks of covetousness as an expression of idolatry. Covetousness involves strong desire. When one desires anything above his desire to do the will of God, it becomes a form of idolatry. The Pharisees desired greatly the praise of men (Matthew 23:5-12). Accepting personally praise and honor which is due unto God is an idolatrous act. Isaiah Grubbs says, "Irreverent disregard for holy things" or "any form of sacrilege" would fall into this classification of idolatry. Or as another paraphrases Paul's words, "You profess great reverence for God in eschewing idolatry; and yet, in other forms, you are guilty of the greatest irreverence." Verse twenty-three is continued irony. They did not really glory in the law, but rather boasted because God had given it to them. Their satisfaction did not stem from obedient lives but from loud professions and spectacular demonstrations. Boasting about the law was the equivalent of the display of wide borders on their garments, enlarged phylacteries, and standing on the street corner to pray so that they might be heard of men.

## FALSE PROFESSIONS NOT PRACTICED

24 For the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you, even as it is written. 25 For circumcision indeed profiteth, if thou be a doer of the law: but if thou be a transgressor of the law, thy circumcision is become uncircumcision. 26 If therefore the uncircumcision keep the ordinances of the law, shall not his uncircumcision be reckoned for circumcision? 27 and shall not the uncircumcision which is by nature, if it fulfil the law, judge thee, who

with the letter and circumcision art a transgressor of the law? 28 For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh; 29 but he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God.

The result of all of this sham was that the name of God was blasphemed among the heathen (v. 24). Paul suggests that this kind of hypocrisy was foreseen by the Lord and predicted. "As it is written" (v. 24) probably refers to the content of Isaiah 52:5, but it may have reference to other portions of the writings of the prophets as well. For example Amos 3:9, 10; 4:4, 5 are ironic, "tongue in cheek" passages in which the prophet invites God's people to come to the pagan centers of worship in Mount Samaria, Bethel, or Gilgal where they can practice idolatry and multiply their transgressions. The history of Israel during the time of captivity is very similar (Ezekiel 36:21, ff.).

Looking at our day we must confess that it is sad when the name of the Lord Jesus Christ is blasphemed and the church of Jesus Christ loses her reputation because of the way professing Christians act.

Paul levels one more criticism at his own beloved people whose lives were not commensurate with their profession of faith and whose ceremonial practices had become empty and vain. It is a lesson concerning true circumcision which Paul adds. Circumcision of the flesh is meaningless unless the heart is right. No outward form or ceremony has ever had validity apart from faith and obedience from the heart. The Scriptures, Old as well as New, state this general truth repeatedly and circumcision is the specific example (Deuteronomy 10:16; Jeremiah 4:4; 9:25, 26; Ezekiel 44:6, 7; Acts 7:51; Philippians 3:3; Galatians 6:14-16). Careless, willful disobedience of the law made circumcision for the Jews as if it had never occurred. It must have inflamed the Jewish emotions to read that an uncircumcised Gentile who fulfills the law is a judge of the Jew. It is not likely that Paul is suggesting that Gentiles shall at some future day sit as judges and Israelites will pass before them to receive judgment. Rather it is a judgment like the sinful person feels who is ill at ease while in the company of a righteous person. It is not necessarily a verbal exchange which makes the sinner uncomfortable, but the righteousness of the one automatically and silently condemns the other and such condemnation is resented. Such resentment must have run high in a Jew at the very thought of an uncircumcised Gentile judging him. *Jews, in ancestry only, but not in heart, are like Americans who deny all for which America has stood and which made her a great nation. They are Americans in legal citizenship, but they are not true Americans in heart. The church rolls are filled with the names of such*

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members. They profess to be members of the church but their hearts are not in that membership. The non-Christian world stands by in judgment. The true Jew, like the true Christian, is one whose religious and ceremonial acts are not performed just to be seen of men but to receive the plaudits of God (v. 29). All of this discussion about the "heart-Jew" as distinct from the "external Jew" is a prelude to the argument that comes later in Romans (Chapters 9-11) in which Paul claims that there is an Israel within Israel. The inner Israel is the remnant of the nation of those called to be God's own possession. They are the true spiritual Israel.

### FALSE ARGUMENTS

3:1 What advantage then hath the Jew? or what is the profit of circumcision? 2 Much every way: first of all, that they were intrusted with the oracles of God. 3 For what if some were without faith? shall their want of faith make of none effect the faithfulness of God? 4 God forbid; yea, let God be found true, but every man a liar; as it is written, That thou mightest be justified in thy words, And mightest prevail when thou comest into judgment. 5 But if our unrighteousness commendeth the righteousness of God, what shall we say? Is God unrighteous who visiteth with wrath? (I speak after the manner of men.) 6 God forbid: for then how shall God judge the world? 7 But if the truth of God through my lie abounded unto his glory, why am I also still judged as a sinner? 8 and why not (as we are slanderously reported, and as some affirm that we say), Let us do evil, that good may come? whose condemnation is just.

As would be expected, such a critical attack raised a number of questions in Jewish minds. Paul was way ahead of his readers. He anticipated their arguments, stated their questions, and answered them. The opening section of Chapter Three is closely connected to what has been said in Chapter Two. The Jewish reader would conclude upon reading Chapter Two that Paul had proved too much. Is the Jew condemned just like the Gentile? If that be true, then what is the meaning of God's call, promises, covenants and all the dealings of God with the Jewish nation? Doesn't the Jew have any advantage whatsoever, and why should a Jew bother to be circumcised at all? In the light of all that Paul had just written, one would expect him to come right back with a negative answer: No, the Jew does not have any advantage. On the contrary, however, Paul affirms that the Jews are a greatly advantaged people and the number one advantage was the blessing of having received divine revelation which Paul calls "the oracles of God." (For a

large section of study on *logia*, the word translated "oracles" see *Inspiration and Authority of the Bible*, Benjamin Warfield, pages 351-407). Some criticize Paul as being like the modern public speaker who intends to enumerate a number of things when he says, "first of all" and then forgets to add succeeding numbers. It is not Paul's intention to enumerate many advantages. He says they have many and chiefly, right at the head of the list, above all others, the prime advantage is that of being recipients of the Word of God. The Jews, however, were not to construe this blessing to mean that they were exempt from the judgment of God nor that they were the sole objects of God's love. They were the elect, but as with the church, judgment is to begin at the house of God (Ezekiel 9:6; 1 Peter 4:17). The Jews needed to be aware of what has been called "the peril of privilege." The person who grows up in a Christian home is a privileged person. But attendant with every privilege is responsibility. It is a privilege to study God's word in a Bible college or a seminary, but tremendous responsibility is attached to such a privilege. It is exceedingly dangerous not to fulfill obligations which accrue to one who is greatly privileged. The Jew of Paul's day stood under the "peril of privilege."

Paul moves quickly to the next question which he had foreseen in the mind of his readers (vv. 3, 4). If some of the Jews did not believe and were not faithful to God, does that mean that God would respond in kind and not be faithful to keep His promises to His chosen people? The answer begins with a strong negative which may properly be called an ejaculation. This forceful expression appears a number of times in Romans. The phrase is translated "God forbid" but that is an attempt by translators to put into English some of the force of Paul's Greek. Neither the word "God" nor the word "forbid" are in the Greek. Some try to reflect a more literal meaning by translating, "let it never be" or "don't conceive of such a thought." So Paul is saying, "Don't think like that" because God has always been found faithful and true in all things and every man may on occasion be a liar. The apostle uses Psalm 51:4 to figuratively represent God in human circumstances as if God could be brought into a courtroom where His word would be tried and found to be true (v. 4). In that penitential Psalm of David, it is evident that David knew his own sin stood out in stark contrast to the righteousness of God.

The idea of contrast of man's sin with God's righteousness led Paul to state a third question which is basically, if by contrast the sinfulness of man makes the righteousness of God more clearly visible, why should God condemn men when they sin? Here is another example of Paul's thought pattern in which he argues from the general to the specific. His general term is "unrighteousness" and the specific example is "lie."

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Does my lie make the truthfulness of God more clearly seen? Can my blackness make God appear more white? Does the end justify the means? The answer of Paul to this question is that if such reasoning was valid, there could be no final judgment (v. 6). He has already set forth, with absolute certainty, the fact that God will judge every man. There is no need for further support of that which has already been established (2:6, 16). The idea that God is unrighteous when he holds man accountable for sin (v. 5), is about as ludicrous as suggesting that a criminal would be correct in turning to the judge in a courtroom, to say, "Now Judge, don't you condemn or punish me for my crime. If you do, it will show how you are lacking in character." Some people were saying Paul taught that evil works should be done because they would in some way produce good. Inasmuch as Paul labels such teaching as "slander," (v. 8), it is likely that the disseminators of the erroneous information knew that Paul did not so teach. At any rate, whatever the motive of those who spoke falsely, they were worthy of condemnation (v. 8).

### SUMMARY TESTIMONY FROM SCRIPTURE

9 What then? are we better than they? No, in no wise: for we before laid to the charge both of Jews and Greeks, that they are all under sin; 10 as it is written, There is none righteous, no not one; 11 There is none that understandeth, There is none that seeketh after God; 12 They have all turned aside, they are together become unprofitable; There is none that doeth good, no, not so much as one: 13 Their throat is an open sepulchre; With their tongues they have used deceit: The poison of asps is under their lips: 14 Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness: 15 Their feet are swift to shed blood; 16 Destruction and misery are in their ways; 17 And the way of peace have they not known: 18 There is no fear of God before their eyes. 19 Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it speaketh to them that are under the law; that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may be brought under the judgment of God: 20 because by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified in his sight; for through the law cometh the knowledge of sin.

The conclusion of this entire discussion about the relationship of the Jew to God and to the Gentiles is found in verses 9-20. The question is put concisely, "Are we (Jews) better than they (Gentiles)?" The answer is just as concise, "No, in no way!" Old Testament testimony from Psalms and Isaiah is introduced as evidence that both Jew and Gentile are sinners. There is not one person whose character is not blemished



by sin, (vv. 10-12). These verses should not be used to support the doctrine of the "total depravity" of man. To do so is to say more than the Apostle affirms. Much more will be said about the character of man in the lesson which deals with Romans 5:12. Because man does not possess a righteous character, it follows naturally that his speech would reflect that weakness (vv. 13, 14) and his actions would be sinful (vv. 15-17). The basic cause of man's condition is not that Adam sinned, but rather because "There is no fear of God before their eyes," (v. 19). Here is the crux of the matter. "The fear of Jehovah is the beginning of knowledge; But the foolish despise wisdom and instruction" (Proverbs 1:7). Paul is determined not to allow his own countrymen to wiggle out of a personal application of the numerous passages quoted from the Old Testament. "Now we know," he says pointedly, "that the law speaks to them that are under the law," (v. 19) and the "law brings the knowledge of sin," (v. 20). The Jews bragged because God had given His oracles to them. Now they are faced with the truth that they have no immunity from the application of those Scriptures. "Every mouth is stopped!" "All are brought under the judgment of God," including the Jew who wanted all of God's blessings but little or none of the responsibility and obligation attached to those blessings.

### READER'S REVIEW:

1. What is the meaning of the name Jew?
2. What was the basis of the Jews' self-confidence and self-glory?
3. List some of the false claims to maturity of which Paul accuses the Jews.
4. State three possible explanations of Paul's accusation that the Jews rob temples. Which do you think to be best? Why?
5. What is it that must accompany any religious practice for that ceremony to have acceptance with God?
6. What practices and customs of the leaders of the Jews were condemned by Jesus as being hypocritical?
7. How do you understand Paul's statement that Gentiles will judge Jews?
8. State some current illustrations that are comparable to Paul's evaluation of the Jews to be Jews in ancestry only but not in heart.
9. What is Paul's answer to those who would ask, "What advantage does a Jew have?"
10. How does Paul answer those who want to know if God will respond to a faithless people by not keeping His promises to them?

## THIRTEEN LESSONS ON ROMANS

11. What is the response of Paul to those who would argue, "If my sin makes God's righteousness stand out more clearly, why should He condemn me?"
12. From which Old Testament books does Paul quote to support his contention that Jews are no better than Gentiles, but that all have sinned?
13. In what areas of life do the Old Testament quotations show all men to be lacking in moral quality?
14. What is the basic reason for man's sinful condition?
15. List three things which are said to be accomplished by the law (vv. 19, 20).
16. What is the one thing specified which the law does not do?

## **Lesson Seven**

(3:21-31)

### THE ETERNAL ESSENTIAL

The main thrust of this paragraph of writing by Paul is that Jews and Gentiles alike are justified from sin through faith in Jesus Christ. Distinction is made between the Gospel and the law and between the Christian era ("now" of verse 21) and the Mosaic era in which the law and the prophets looked ahead to the coming of Christ. The high point of this section is reached in Christ being set forth for our redemption. The most profound point of this discussion is developed as one is led to contemplate the nature of God and to attempt to explain how the death of Jesus can satisfy God to the degree that God can justify man of sin and at the same time be just and true to Himself. It is here that we see the cross as an eternal essential. It was essential to God and to man. George Mark Elliott observes, "This is one of the deepest sections in the New Testament." The book of Revelation is claimed to be the most difficult to interpret of all the books of the New Testament. If that be true, it is because of the symbolic language of that book. Romans has the reputation of being the most profound book of the New Testament and we are now ready to plunge into one of the deepest parts of Romans.

## THIRTEEN LESSONS ON ROMANS

### THE NEEDS OF MAN

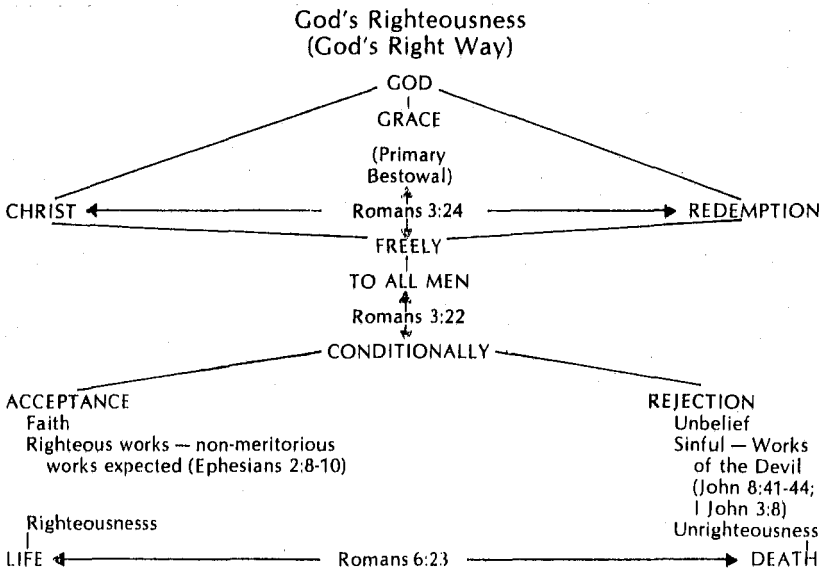
21 But now apart from the law a righteousness of God hath been manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; 22 even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ unto all them that believe; for there is no distinction; 23 for all have sinned, and fall short of the glory of God; 24 being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: 25 whom God set forth to be a propitiation, through faith, in his blood

The phrase, "the righteousness of God" has been discussed at length in lesson three under the heading, "The Content of the Gospel." The reader is now urged to review that lesson. Although the law and Gospel are clearly distinguished from one another in this passage, Paul again affirms that there is no disharmony between the two. The "law and the prophets" gave predictive testimony concerning the coming of the Christ and the Good News about Him, and the law and the Gospel are in perfect accord. It is not the law versus the Gospel in Paul's writings. They are not enemies, but they complement and fulfill each other. The law was never intended to justify men from sin (3:20). According to Luke, Paul preached the same truth while at Antioch of Pisidia, saying, "You could not be justified by the law of Moses" (Acts 13:39). The book of Hebrews is in agreement noting that Christ, the mediator of a New Covenant died for "the transgressions that were under the first covenant," (Hebrews 9:15). Many functions of the law are set forth in the book of Romans, but to justify from sin is not specified to be one of those things which the law could do. Every sacrifice under the Mosaic system looked forward to the one sacrifice which could remove sin (Hebrews 10:4, 12, 14). The most basic function of the law is "to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith," (Galatians 3:24).

Salvation is not gained through any system of merit, but all are saved by grace through faith in Jesus Christ. God makes no distinction in His treatment of men. "All have sinned," and "all them that believe" in Jesus Christ are "justified freely by his grace," (vv. 22-24). One does not merit salvation through faith anymore than he can earn salvation through any other act, mental or physical. A person is no more worthy of salvation after he has believed than before he has arrived at faith. Salvation is free, but conditional. The grace of God is the absolute ground or foundation of our salvation and the thoughts of man cannot probe beyond the grace of God when salvation is pondered. God's grace in its original bestowal is potentially universal and therefore, in its primary offering by God to man may truly be said to be unconditional. The umbrella of God's grace covered all mankind without exception.

So the giving of God's grace is apart from any condition, but the reception of that grace by each individual is conditional. It can only be received by faith. So Paul will later say, "We have access by faith unto this grace" (5:2). As is often said, "King and beggar are on common ground before the cross." There is no other way to enter into God's grace except by faith in Christ and confidence in that which He did for man at Calvary. So Paul can doubly affirm, "by grace have ye been saved," and "Ye have been saved by faith," (Ephesians 2:5, 8). Faith, of course, includes far more than mere mental assent to some facts about Jesus Christ, and it is more than mere trust in God. Faith must be understood to include all that a man secures by the act of faith. Faith is foundational to the Christian system, and we are saved by faith because that act is essential to justification, sanctification, good works, and ultimately glorification. We tend to see faith as a simple act that stands alone. Obviously God views faith inclusively with all that appertains to it. So God's Word declares we are "saved by faith." In the next lesson we shall return to a discussion of faith and all that faith includes in the eyes of God. We shall try to ascertain why God could count Abraham's faith to be righteousness.

The following diagram may help to visualize the content of verses 22-24 and the listing which follows the diagram should help one to see clearly the specifics of God's scheme of redemption.



## THIRTEEN LESSONS ON ROMANS

### Elements of "The Righteousness of God"

(3:21-24)

1. Author	God	v. 22
2. Recipient	Man	
3. Effect	Redemption	v. 24
4. Ground	Grace of God	v. 24
5. Condition	Faith	v. 22
6. Manifested	Involves the incarnation of Christ and the total Gospel message	v. 21
7. Witnessed	The law and the prophets foretold the Gospel with limited previews	v. 21

Jesus Christ is at the heart of God's plan to save man and He was "set forth (to be) a propitiation." The word propitiation (*hilasterios*) is a deeply meaningful word and its meaning is not easy to capture for the English reader. The great variety of translations indicate that there is a problem involved in trying to find a generally accepted definition:

"mercy seat," *New Testament Interlinear*, George Ricker Berry

"A sacrifice of reconciliation," - - - Williams

"A reconciling sacrifice," Berkley Translation, Gerrit Verkuyl

"Put forward as an expiation by his blood," RSV

"Presented him as a sacrifice of atonement," NIV

The same word in the same form is found in Hebrews 9:5. The same word, but a different form is found in I John 2:2 and 4:10. Berry's translation above gives the literal meaning of the word which Thayer defines as: "The well-known cover of the ark of the covenant in the Holy of Holies which was sprinkled with the blood of the expiatory victim on the annual day of atonement." (*Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, p. 301)

Any Jew who read Romans and any Gentile readers who had become Christian via the Jewish proselyte route would have been familiar with the terminology "mercy seat" as used in the Old Testament. The Hebrew verb, *kaphar* means literally, "to cover," whereas figuratively it may mean to cancel, appease, forgive, make atonement or reconcile. *Kapporeth* is a noun which stems from the root *kaphar* and means a lid or cover. In the Old Testament this word is used only of the cover of the sacred ark, the "mercy seat." Exodus 25:10-22 is a helpful paragraph in understanding the origin of the "mercy seat" concept. According to verse 22 of the passage in Exodus, it is at the "mercy seat" where God promised to meet with Israel and commune with them. Occasionally one reads in religious articles of the "shekinah glory" of God although the Anglicized Hebrew word "shekinah" does not appear in the English

Bible. It comes from the Hebrew, *shakan* which means to abide, rest, or remain and involves God's abiding presence and glory in the tabernacle (Exodus 40:34, ff.), and later in the temple where He promised to meet with his people at the "mercy seat." All of this history would pass before the mind of one knowledgeable of the Old Testament when he read this statement by Paul that Christ is our *kaphar-hilastèrios* = "mercy seat." The crux of the whole matter is that Jesus is our mercy seat. It is only in Jesus Christ that Jew or Gentile can come to God. Where else can sinful man meet with God? "There is one mediator between God and man . . . Jesus Christ," (I Timothy 2:5). How else can one hope to have sin forgiven and its effects removed and to share in the glory of God apart from union with Jesus Christ? "Christ in you, the hope of glory" is the only hope realistically possessed by man (Colossians 1:27). Jesus was sent to man to bridge the chasm between God and man, and through Christ, God comes to us. Also, through Christ we are brought to God for "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself" (II Corinthians 5:19). Truly Christ is our "mercy seat," and "there will I meet with thee," (Exodus 25:22). What a rendezvous of God with man!

### THE NEEDS OF GOD

25b to show his righteousness because of the passing over of the sins done aforetime, in the forbearance of God; 26 for the showing, I say, of his righteousness at this present season: that he might himself be just, and the justifier of him that hath faith in Jesus.

It is evident from verses 25b and 26 that God is not indifferent to sin although He had for centuries, in forbearance, passed over sins. In light of the facts that there was no immediate judgment upon the sins of men and nations, it did seem that God was not calling men to give account for their sins. Only occasionally startling judgments occurred like the rain of fire on Sodom and Gomorrah and centuries later the destruction of Jerusalem. Now and then individuals like Korah, Dathan and Abiram experienced immediate judgment by God. But over all one might think that God merely winked at sin. Paul faces this problem and indicates that the defense of God's righteousness and justice is Christ and His blood. God had planned before the creation of the world to handle the sin problem through the death of His Son. Sins being "rolled ahead to the cross" is a good Biblical concept although the words "rolled ahead" cannot be found in the Bible in connection with the word sin. For the truth of the statement see such passages as Hebrews 7:11, 18, 19; 9:8, 15; 10:1-4, 11, 16-18; John 1:51; 3:13; Jeremiah 31:31, ff.

## THIRTEEN LESSONS ON ROMANS

The cross is the eternal essential! It is just as necessary to satisfy the nature of God as it is essential to man for the forgiveness of his sin. God could not ignore sin and be true to Himself. Divine justice is somehow satisfied by the death of Jesus. Mystery is involved.

One wonders what happened in the heart and mind of God when Christ died at Calvary. How could the very nature of God, to which sin is repulsive, be turned to look with forgiveness upon sin? How could the wrath of God against sin be allayed by the death of His Son to the extent that God could love, and long for fellowship with one who has sinned? How can God maintain a moral universe, forgive sin and still be true to Himself. Truly this is a deeply profound passage. It is very superficial to answer that Jesus satisfied God because He was His Son or because Jesus was heaven's best, etc. It is God's nature to be just and "God is love." Both elements of God's nature are met and satisfied in the cross. Perhaps we shall learn how that satisfaction was supplied when we are in heaven and see face to face and know even as we are known. As F. F. Bruce indicates, "It is a problem fit for God."

Paul makes no pretense to know the mind of God when divine revelation is not given to him. He states unequivocally what he does know: that the cross demonstrates that God is just and that He is also a justifier of them that believe in His Son and accept God's plan through which man can be saved. This is all we need to know at the present.

## BOASTING IS OUT OF ORDER

27 Where then is the glorying? It is excluded. By what manner of law? of works? Nay: but by a law of faith. 28 We reckon therefore that a man is justified by faith apart from the works of the law. 29 Or is God the God of Jews only? is he not the God of Gentiles also? Yea, of Gentiles also: 30 if so be that God is one, and he shall justify the circumcision by faith, and the uncircumcision through faith? God forbid: nay, we establish the law.

Paul is ready to draw some conclusions based upon what he has already written. Those conclusions are found in verses 27-31.

The first conclusion is that a man is justified by faith, and he has nothing to boast about. Man is not good because he performs works of law, and faith is nothing one can brag about. Faith, as previously stated, is not in itself meritorious (vv. 27, 28).

The second conclusion is that there is one God of both the Jews and Gentiles. As there is one God, so also there is one plan of salvation. God is saving both the Jew and the Gentile through faith (vv. 29, 30).



The third conclusion is that salvation through faith does not destroy the law but rather, faith complements the law (v. 31). God's plan of righteousness through faith was predicted by the law and the prophets. The law was not designed to justify from sin. Rather it defined sin, convicted concerning sin, restrained from sin and ultimately brought man to the "Mercy Seat," even Christ, that sin might be forgiven. Does faith make the law null and void of meaning? "Don't think like that!" says Paul. Faith establishes the law.

### READER'S REVIEW:

1. Why is this section of Romans considered to be deeply profound?
2. What is the main thrust of Paul's argument in this section?
3. Paul says God's plan is "apart from the law" but how does he relate this plan to the Old Testament?
4. Many functions of the law are noted in Romans. What is the one thing which the law could not do?
5. Give the pros and cons concerning the statement, "A man is not more worthy of salvation after he has believed than he was before in unbelief."
6. Explain the difference between the primary bestowal of God's grace upon man and the reception of that grace by each individual.
7. Can you cite from memory at least the first five elements in God's plan of righteousness?
8. What is the literal meaning of the word "propitiation"? State also a figurative definition.
9. How is the word "propitiation" related to Old Testament history?
10. Putting the above definitions and the Old Testament usage of the word "propitiation" together, state as concisely as possible what this term means to the Christian.
11. Why would some men come to the conclusion that God is not really very concerned about sin?
12. What problem is involved in the statement, "This is a problem fit for God"?
13. Name two basic elements in the nature of God which are satisfied by the cross?
14. What is it that is ruled out if Paul's claim is true that a man is justified by faith and not by law?
15. A basic truth affirmed by every Jew from childhood is that "God is one." What is Paul's argument based upon that truth?
16. At the end of Chapter Three, Paul returns to a discussion of the relationship of the law and the Gospel. What is his conclusion?

# Lesson Eight

(4:1-25)

## ABRAHAM, THE ILLUSTRATION OF JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH

### FAITH AND WORKS

1 What then shall we say that Abraham, our forefather, hath found according to the flesh? 2 For if Abraham was justified by works, he hath whereof to glory; but not toward God. 3 For what saith the scripture? And Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned unto him for righteousness. 4 Now to him that worketh, the reward is not reckoned as of grace, but as of debt. 5 But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is reckoned for righteousness.

To the Jewish mind, Abraham was the epitome of all that a Jew was supposed to be. How often they said with pride, "Our father is Abraham" (John 8:39). Paul introduces to his readers the person whom the Jews idolized and says in effect, "Let's learn a lesson from 'Abraham, our forefather'" (v. 1). The reference to Abraham as "father" is not proof that Paul was writing mainly to Jews. Later Paul speaks of Abraham as the "father of many nations" and the "father of us all" if we have faith

like that of Abraham (vv. 16, 17). The question for Jew and Gentile alike was not, "Of what people was Abraham the forefather?" Rather, the important questions were, "What did Abraham learn about human merits, and how did Abraham become the father of all the faithful?" If he were justified by works, (this would involve sinless perfection) he could boast about his accomplishment. Such boasting or glorying would not be founded in God's grace and love but in Abraham's ability to will correctly and to perform according to his will. There is no room for boasting about an obedient faith. There is a sense in which faith is just as much a work as any other act performed by man. Jesus called faith a work (John 6:28, 29). Charles Hodge agrees that "Faith considered as an act, is as much a work as prayer, repentance, almsgiving or anything of the kind." *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, p. 109. Typically, Paul turns to the Word of God for authoritative support of his argument and asks, "What saith the scripture?" He quotes one of the classic Old Testament passages which deal with man's attaining righteousness through faith. Another such passage (Habakkuk 2:4) has been introduced in the theme of Romans at 1:17. The reader would do well to read the Habakkuk passage and to notice how human pride and faith in God are contrasted in the words of the prophet.

Paul returns to logic and introduces the illustration of the employer-employee relationship (v. 4). One who works for a specified wage places his employer in his debt. When the employee has been hired at a certain wage and has labored to the end of a predetermined work period, he has a right to expect a pay check. The employer is in debt at that point to the employee. If the employer will not fulfill his part of the bargain, he may be sued, brought into court, and forced to pay. Who can so work as to put God in his debt? If men would burn out their lives in constant service to the Lord, they would still confess, "We are unprofitable servants" (Luke 17:10).

God does not justify one who trusts in his own godliness but rather, He justifies the man who believes in the God who justifies the ungodly. Salvation is of grace and not of works and you can't have it both ways. "If it is by grace, it is no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace" (11:6). Salvation is not "by works . . . which we did ourselves but according to his mercy he saved us" (Titus 3:5). The phrase "worketh not" in verse five does not condone spiritual indolence, or lethargic or disobedient faith, nor does it rule out God's expectancy of the Christian to be "zealous of good works" (Titus 2:14). What Paul attempts to do through this statement about works is to turn men's minds away from some kind of a "Brownie Point System" in which a man gets points in God's records for each good deed done, and if he does enough of these good works which earn merit, he will be saved. People who may

## THIRTEEN LESSONS ON ROMANS

never attend church and do not know true Christian doctrine frequently arrive at the conclusion that in the final day of judgment God will add up good works and bad works and if the good works outnumber the bad, they will be saved. That such a view is held by non-Christians surprises no one, but it is amazing that many Christians are in total agreement that works will be the determinative factor when men give account of their lives to God. Sometimes it appears that preachers inadvertently lead the people of the pew to believe in some such point system. The preacher talks to the congregation about being present at all the services and performing duties related to the church program, all of which are worthy, laudible, and should be done, but none of which can save anyone. A preacher had presented a sermon on II Chronicles 7:14 calling the hearers to repentance and to a greater devotion to God. Following the service an elder of the congregation complained to the preacher, "I go to church Sunday morning and night. I attend Sunday School and the Wednesday night Bible Study. I have been baptized and partake of the Lord's Supper every Sunday. What more could God expect of me?" Obviously that elder was working on some kind of a meritorious point system which had been instilled into his thinking and by which he thought he would be saved. His entire complaint centered in "I" and personal accomplishment. Not one word was heard about faith, love, mercy, or grace.

### GOD'S CALCULATOR

6 Even as David also pronounceth blessing upon the man, unto whom God reckoneth righteousness apart from works, 7 saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, And whose sins are covered. 8 Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not reckon sin.

King David's testimony agrees with the experiences of Abraham (vv. 6-8). Psalm 32:1, 2 is cited. This beatitude does not pronounce blessing on those who have earned salvation but upon the one whom God forgives and calculates to be righteous. "Reckon" is a favorite word of Paul as is evidenced by its appearance twenty-seven times in his epistles, exclusive of quotations. The word is found only four other times in the rest of the New Testament.

The word "reckon" (*logizomai*) means to impute, calculate, take inventory, or to put to one's account. Basic in this section of Scripture is the idea that Abraham and David did not conform to God's righteousness anymore than God committed the sins of the patriarch and king.

Because of their personal faith God's approval rested upon each of them and when God totaled up their accounts in the light of their faith, the sum total was "righteousness."

We return now to expand upon a thought which was introduced in a previous lesson but which deserves much more careful consideration than that which could be incorporated into its earlier brief mention. Faith which is reckoned for righteousness, and secures God's approval is not only an isolated act of believing, but must be considered comprehensively to include all which faith apprehends for the believer. There are three other views of faith or the act of believing, none of which are free from major problems:

1. Faith is counted as complete obedience to the law. This suggests that something done by man, comparable to obeying the law, is the basis of salvation. Faith cannot be the ground (foundation) of our acceptance with God but only the means of access (5:1, 2) into the true ground of our salvation, which is the grace of God through Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior.

2. The act of faith is viewed as being "right" and thus "approved" by God. So God's approbation is secured by a just and rewardable act. Those who hold this view would have difficulty in denying that faith is for them tantamount to being a meritorious work.

3. Moral character is determined by the condition of the heart and not by external actions. The idea is that God accepted Abraham because of inward piety which motivated his entire life. This view is the equivalent of the claim that one is saved because "he was a good man" or because "he lived on a high moral plane," or because "his heart was right."

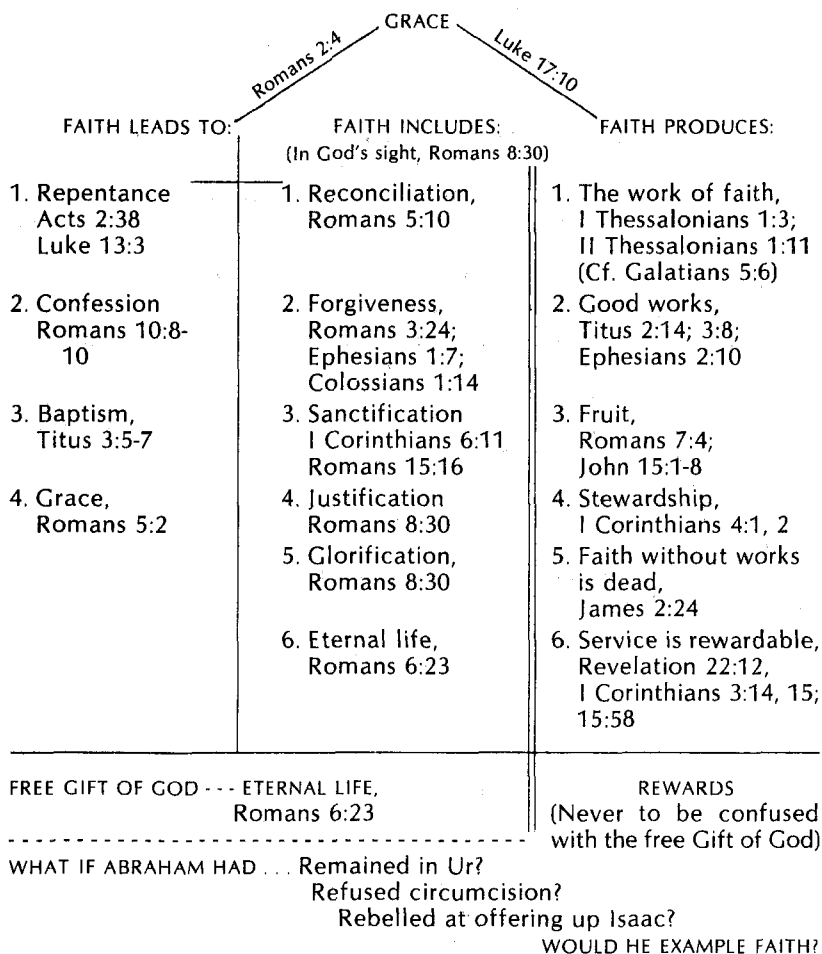
The following outline and graph should help one to formulate a correct view of faith and its operation.

#### God's View of Faith

1. Romans 1:18 — 4:25 All under sin; justified by grace through faith
  - a. Gentile under the condemnation of sin, 1:18-32
  - b. The Jew under the condemnation of sin, 2:1 — 3:20
  - c. All fall short of moral perfection, 3:23
2. Abraham is an example of one justified through faith, 4:1-25
  - a. Not by circumcision, 4:10
  - b. Not by law, 4:13 (law came 430 years later)
  - c. Seen by God to be acceptable because he believed, 4:3, 22
  - d. Paul indicates this was written for us, 4:23, 24

## THIRTEEN LESSONS ON ROMANS

3. How does God view faith?
  - a. Does it have merit?
  - b. Can one boast of faith? 4:2
  - c. When one believes, does God owe something? Is God obligated to reward one who believes in Him? 4:4
4. God sees faith not simply as an isolated act which has merit within itself, but rather He sees faith as including all that faith apprehends for us and all that faith motivates us to do.



Paul does not exclude Christian works; James does not exclude faith; faith is made perfect by works (James 2:20-26)

\* \* \* \* \*

Clues to help identify the kind of works (meritorious) which Paul rules out as being a basis for the hope of salvation:

1. Works in which man may glory, v. 2
2. Works which put God in debt, v. 4
3. Works which void man's faith and God's promise, v. 14

When Paul speaks in opposition to salvation by works he refers only to some kind of a legalistic, meritorious system (like the Jewish law) by which men think that through compliance with certain requirements they will save themselves. He does not exclude Christian works as being essential to please God; James does not exclude faith when he states that "a man is justified by works" (James 2:24); faith is made perfect by works; "faith apart from works is dead" (James 2:26). An American Beauty Rose is grafted to a wild or mediocre rose bush. The fruit of the graft is the lovely, praiseworthy bloom of the American Beauty. But if the bush is not pruned and the basic care essential to roses provided, the old rose root and bush will soon produce its common wild bloom. God will reward for each labor performed in His behalf and for all the fruit that is resultant from faith in Him and His righteousness. Rewards, however, must never be confused with the "free gift of God" which is eternal life.

### THE FAITH-RIGHTEOUSNESS CALCULATION APPLIES UNIVERSALLY

9 Is this blessing then pronounced upon the circumcision, or upon the uncircumcision also? for we say, To Abraham his faith was reckoned for righteousness. 10 How then was it reckoned? when he was in circumcision, or in uncircumcision? Not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision: 11 and he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had while he was in uncircumcision: that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be in uncircumcision, that righteousness might be reckoned unto them; 12 and the father of circumcision to them who not only are of the circumcision, but who also walk in the steps of that faith of our Abraham which he had in uncircumcision. 13 For not through the law was the promise to Abraham or to his seed that he should be heir of the world, but through the righteousness of faith.

## THIRTEEN LESSONS ON ROMANS

Salvation through grace and conditioned upon faith is available to both Jew and Gentile (vv. 9-21). In this section Paul is not discussing either the proper use of nor the abuse of circumcision. He is setting forth the brute fact of the universality of salvation by faith. Long years before circumcision was practiced Abraham was counted to be righteous by God. Long after Abraham was called from Ur, before Isaac was born, when Ishmael was thirteen years old and Abraham approached the century mark in age, he was circumcised (Genesis 17:24). Paul states in verse eleven that circumcision was a "seal of the righteousness of faith," therefore, circumcision cannot be construed to be "mere" ceremony. Alfred Barnes asserts that, "Man's justification is entirely apart from ceremony." Any rite ordained by God involves moral duty, and it is sinful to minimize or ignore any demand by God. What if Abraham had taken the view that obedience to God's commands, ceremonial or otherwise, were matters of choice? What if Jesus had taken that view of baptism or of the cross? On either count we would lose a Savior. If Jesus had not been baptized, He would have sinned because it was the will of God that He should do so. Such disobedience would have disqualified Him from becoming the perfect lamb of God with the potential of taking away the sin of the world. The whole scheme of redemption would have fallen if Jesus had not learned obedience "even unto death" (Philippians 2:8).

Just in passing, it may be well to note that the Scriptures do not once declare that baptism is a sign or seal as is claimed of circumcision. It is not Biblical to contend that baptism is a sign that one's sins have been previously forgiven or that one should be baptized because he has been saved. Neither is it Biblical to say that "baptism stands in the room of circumcision." Colossians 2:11-13 is the only passage in the New Testament in which baptism and circumcision are discussed in the same context. This Scripture makes it clear that the cutting referred to is "not made with hands" (Colossians 2:11). It is God's scalpel which cuts away sin as is explained in Colossians 2:13, where it is affirmed of God that He has "forgiven us all our trespasses." Such a cutting away of sin is the equivalent of "be baptized for the remission of sins" (Acts 2:38) or "be baptized and wash away thy sin" (Acts 22:16). This spiritual "cutting" of sin is the only analogy made by Paul of baptism and circumcision. More comparison than that made by the apostle is highly speculative.

Paul's first point of argument then, was that Abraham was chosen in uncircumcision, so that he might be the father of all them that believe, Gentile as well as Jew (v. 11).

### SALVATION APART FROM LAW

13 For not through the law was the promise to Abraham or to his seed that he should be heir of the world, but through the righteousness



of faith. 14 For if they that are of the law are heirs, faith is made void, and the promise is made of none effect: 15 for the law worketh wrath; but where there is no law, neither is there transgression.

Paul next presents the argument that Abraham was counted to be righteous apart from the law (v. 13). The law came four hundred and thirty years after God covenanted with Abraham (Galatians 3:17, 18). In verse fourteen Paul raises two arguments against salvation being available through the law. If that be true, he says first of all, faith is empty, void and meaningless. Secondly he argues that the promise made to Abraham is utterly useless if it is the law that saves man and not the promised seed of Abraham, even Christ (Galatians 3:16).

Verses 15 and 16 contain an extremely condensed argument and may be augmented both negatively and positively.

Negative: If there were no law, there could be no transgression and no penalty. If there were absolutely no law, there would be no God, no revelation and hence, no moral universe.

Positive: There is a God, law and revelation. Men do transgress the will of God. If God maintained a moral universe, apart from Calvary, he would be forced to immerse men in His wrath. God's wrath is removed by Christ and through grace, apart from law, man is saved.

#### EVIDENCE OF FAITH

16 For this cause it is of faith, that it may be according to grace; to the end that the promise may 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 17 (as it is written, A father of many nations have I made thee) before him whom he believed, even God, who giveth life to the dead, and calleth the things that are not, as though they were. 18 Who in hope believed against hope, to the end that he might become a father of many nations, according to that which had been spoken, So shall thy seed be. 19 And without being weakened in faith he considered his own body now as good as dead (he being about a hundred years old), and the deadness of Sarah's womb; 20 yet looking unto the promise of God, he wavered not through unbelief, but waxed strong through faith, giving glory to God, 21 and being fully assured that what he had promised, he was able also to perform.

## THIRTEEN LESSONS ON ROMANS

The conclusion of Paul's lengthy argument based in the life of Abraham (vv. 16, 17) is that salvation is "of faith . . . according to grace" for all people who are of Abraham's spiritual genealogy (Acts 15:9; Galatians 3:23-29). Added is the evidence of Abraham's amazing faith in God: He believed that God gives life to the dead (v. 17; Hebrews 11:19); God orders things that did not exist as if they were present (v. 17); He hoped when there was no hope that he would be the father of many nations (v. 18); "Without being weakened" (v. 19), "he wavered not" (v. 20); he was fully assured that God could perform that which he has promised (v. 21).

### CURRENT APPLICATION

22 Wherefore also it was reckoned unto him for righteousness.  
23 Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was reckoned unto him; 24 but for our sake also, unto whom it shall be reckoned, who believe on him that raised Jesus our Lord from the dead, 25 who was delivered up for our trespasses, and was raised for our justification.

The practical application of this entire illustration is that all the information given in God's Word about Abraham's faith and specifically the truth that God reckoned his faith for righteousness was written for those of Paul's day ("for our sake"), and, we conclude, for those of every generation who believe in the justification which is received through faith in the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

### READER'S REVIEW:

1. Why was Abraham chosen as an example of one whom God counted to be righteous because of his faith?
2. In what sense may it be said that faith is a work?
3. Cite two Old Testament books which are quoted by Paul in support of his contention about the function of faith.
4. List three clues given by Paul which help one to identify meritorious works. The clues are found in verses 2, 4, and 14.
5. What distinctions should be made between meritorious works and Christian works?
6. How is it that Paul can put his approval upon "him that worketh not"?

7. In what way is King David used to support Paul's contention that righteousness results from faith, not works?
8. What is the evidence that the word "reckon" is a favorite in Paul's vocabulary?
9. Define the word "reckon" as used by Paul in this chapter.
10. Four views of faith which secure God's approval are given in this chapter. State these views with the strength or weakness of each.
11. How is the subject of circumcision introduced into Paul's argument that one is justified by faith?
12. Express your agreement or disagreement with Barnes who claims, "man's justification is entirely apart from ceremony."
13. Circumcision is said to be a "sign" and a "seal." Is it proper to say also that baptism is a "sign" or a "seal"?
14. What are the two things which are void of any meaning if a person is saved by law?
15. Cite at least four evidences that Abraham did possess an amazing faith.
16. What is the practical and current application of this entire illustration based in the life of Abraham?

## Lesson Nine

(5:1-11)

### BLESSINGS BELONGING TO CHRISTIANS

#### AT PEACE WITH GOD

1 Being therefore justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ; 2 through whom also we have had our access by faith into this grace wherein we stand: and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

Paul has argued decisively in previous chapters that all men are sinners and all are justified through faith in Jesus who stands central in God's plan for the salvation of mankind. It is logical to proceed, as Paul does, to the multiple blessings which belong to those who are justified. The word "justified" (*dikaïos*) did not carry the same meaning for Paul and his contemporaries as it does in modern day usage in American courts of law. In our legal system there are rulings such as justifiable homicide. Under this provision of law, the act for which one is being accused is said to be "right" and "justified" because of the circumstances in which the accused acted. The accused may have killed another man, but he may have done so wholly in self-protection. In the sight

of God, however, no sinful act is justifiable and there is no way a man can excuse, rationalize, or justify himself when he has sinned. Therefore, when Paul says, "having been justified" he means that God declares a man to be righteous although he has no defense whatsoever for his sin. On the basis of God's pronouncement that a person is just, the barrier of sin is removed and peace with God is attained. It is very difficult for finite man to grasp the fulness of such grace and the possibility of being at peace with God. This inability is illustrated in a story originally written by H. C. Wells. It is the story of "a man of affairs whose mind was so tensed and strained that he was in serious danger of a complete nervous and mental breakdown. His doctor told him that the only thing that could save him was to find peace that fellowship with God can give. 'What!,' he said, 'to think of that, up there, having fellowship with me! I would as soon think of cooling my throat with the milky way or shaking hands with the stars.' God, to him was the complete unfindable." But Paul says with assurance, "We have peace with God." "Peace" usually carries the idea of harmony, concord, security, safety, or prosperity. Thayer, however, provides a definition which he claims to be distinctly peculiar to Christianity: "the tranquil state of a soul assured of its salvation through Christ, and so fearing nothing from God and content with its earthly lot, of whatever sort that is." He adds that the word peace is "used of those who, assured of salvation, tranquilly await the return of Christ and the transformation of all things which will accompany that event." This state of peace is not dependent upon external circumstances. A man can be at peace with God when involved in intense action on a battlefield or when on a hospital bed his body is wracked with pain.

A contest was held among aspiring young artists. Each was to picture upon the canvas the theme of peace. Most of the pictures were of tranquil pastoral scenes: the meadow, placid stream, and cattle grazing lazily. The painting which won the prize, in contrast to the great majority of those entered in the contest, portrayed tremendous action. Water was hurtling over a precipice into the chasm below. The force of that cascading waterfall threw a spray high above the head of the falls and caused turbulence in the air. An oriole's nest, according to their custom of building, was painted at the very end of a tree limb which extended out over the chasm. There, wholly oblivious of all of nature's potentially destructive action of water, spray and air, a colorful black and orange oriole fed its young. For that family of birds it was a setting of perfect peace. One can be at peace with God when all external circumstances contradict that internal sense of harmony and well-being.

This unique Christian kind of peace is obtained "through our Lord Jesus Christ." The mediatorial work of Jesus is emphasized frequently

## THIRTEEN LESSONS ON ROMANS

in Pauline books. Ephesians 1:13-14 is a good example. Twelve times in those few verses prepositional phrases such as "in Christ," "in Him," "in the Beloved," and "through Jesus" are used to indicate that God's eternal plan which originated before the foundation of the world would be fulfilled in His Son. It is through Christ that we have access by faith into God's grace (v. 2). The word translated "access" (*proago*), literally means to "lead to or before, to present or introduce." Moulton and Milligan say that the word is used with reference to a ship being brought to a dock and secured there. If that ship-dock figure is valid, and followed to its conclusion then we would think of coming by faith in Christ to God where we anchor in the sea of God's grace, at peace in the "Haven of Rest." It is not surprising to have Christ pointed out as the peacemaker between God and man, for He is the "ruler of peace," (Isaiah 9:6; see also II Thessalonians 3:16). Before the birth of Jesus, Zacharias the father of John the Baptist, was filled with the Spirit, and he prophesied that Jesus would "guide our feet in the way of peace" (Luke 1:79). The angelic announcement when He was born included the pronouncement of "peace on earth" (Luke 2:14). It was the Messianic peace which was intended in the post-resurrection greetings of Christians and was included in the salutations of the inspired writings: "peace to you."

### FROM HOPE TO HOPE

3 And not only so, but we also rejoice in our tribulations: knowing that tribulation worketh stedfastness; 4 and stedfastness, approvedness; and approvedness, hope: 5 and hope putteth not to shame; because the love of God hath been shed abroad in our hearts through the Holy Spirit which was given unto us.

From the close of verse two to the end of verse four there is a neat little circle of thought which begins and ends in hope. Christians "rejoice in hope of the glory of God" (v. 2). God's glory has been partially revealed from time to time, but it is more likely that the reference here is to the ultimate revelation of God's glory at the end of time when we shall be set "before the presence of His glory without blemish in exceeding joy" (Jude 24). Actually the word translated "rejoice" (vv. 2, 3), means "to boast." John Murray says, "It is exultant rejoicing and confident glorying" but in light of all that has been said in previous lessons about the absence of anything in man, or that man can do, which is a basis of salvation it should be noted again that the boasting and hope is grounded in "the glory of God" and not in the accomplishment of man. Hope remains steadfast and Christians rejoice even in the most difficult circumstances of life (v. 3). The Christian glories not only in the future

but also in present life circumstances (James 1:2-4; I Peter 4:12, 13). Christians or churches that are plagued with self-pity should remember the appeal of Hebrews 12:1-13 to Christians who had come out of Judaism and admittedly had suffered for it. But they had not yet suffered as had their Lord, and they were to count their problems to be the chastening of a loving heavenly Father. They were not to give up but to assist those whose hands were tied and whose knees were weak. Through all the tribulations they experienced they were to look to Christ as the example. He knew that suffering preceded joy.

Paul had been criticized as a sadist because he found joy in suffering and rejoiced because he bore in his body the marks of his commitment and service to Christ. Paul and all true Christians from his day to the present were in no sense sadists. They are realists! The first time I read Peter Marshall's illustration of Christian realism, it was indelibly impressed on my mind. The oyster does not ignore the grain of sand that enters its shell nor the stab of pain and bleeding which it causes. The oyster begins to deal with a very real situation in a positive way by depositing a substance to cover and isolate the offensive grain of sand. This combination of protective substance and grain of sand ultimately develops into a pearl. Christians ought to function like that. There is a pearl farm on an island close to Manila, where production of pearls is forced. We watched as one of the employees deftly employed a scalpel with all the care of a surgeon to open the oyster and place a bead in just the right place so it would not kill the oyster, but cause it to secrete its precious substance and produce a cultured pearl. Christians should never seek persecutions nor in any way force a situation of "tribulation" in his life. But inevitably such circumstances will arise. In such times the Christian would do well to be aware of the instruction of a beloved professor who said in the classroom, "The worst thing that can happen to a man may be the best thing that can happen to a man, if he does not let the worst get the best of him." As another has said, it is true that, "sore trial makes common Christians into uncommon saints and fits them for uncommon service." Whatever the circumstances of life, the Christian is to be "steadfast" (v. 4). There is a vast difference in being "steadfast" and "stuckfast." The oak tree and the oak post illustrate the difference. Some wag said that the words sung most enthusiastically by Christians are, "I shall not be moved," and most of them can't be moved. An old Scottish preacher is quoted as saying, "Peace is joy resting; joy is peace dancing." The Christian, like the gospel is active and dynamic; he is like his Lord "who went about doing good" (Acts 10:38). So there is a sense in which we are anchored in God's grace and rest in the peace which He gives, but it is also very true that we sail the wide, rough seas of life and while we do so, we are to be faithful deck

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hands. Through it all, we are to be steadfast and to allow steadfastness to produce "approvedness" (v. 4). In defense of the King James Version's translation of *dokimos* as "experience" rather than approvedness, one might cite the classified section of a newspaper. Jobs are offered for which "experience" is necessary. Even if "experience" is not mentioned in the ad the applicant who has previous experience and a good record will probably be chosen for the job over inexperienced persons. So Paul is saying that when one is experienced, when he has stood the tests of life, then he is approved. With the knowledge that one has stood the test, hope is greatly increased. Thus Paul completes his compact circle of thought: hope, tribulations, steadfastness, approvedness, and a hope for which one never need apologize (v. 5). The hope possessed by a Christian is based in the love of God which can never disappoint man. As Lenski puts it, "This hope does not disgrace by being unfulfilled." Hope based in other things or persons may one day lead to disappointment, shame, hurt, and confusion, but as we sing, "There is no disappointment in Jesus." Imagine two people in heaven, one of which has been brought to faith and hope in Christ by the other. Upon arrival in heaven, the soul-winner turns to the one which he has influenced to accept Christ and apologizes saying, "I'm really sorry, fellow, I thought it would be so much better here. Forgive me for overstating the potential of our faith"? Christians have a hope in which there is not an iota of shame. God loves us and sent His Son to demonstrate that love. His love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit and heaven lies just ahead.

The "Holy Spirit which was given unto us" (v. 5) is very active in God's scheme of redemption:

1. Loves men, Romans 15:30
2. Convicts of sin, John 16:8 (such conviction is essential to repentance)
3. Leads one to obedience in baptism, 1 Corinthians 12:13 (McGarvey: "caused to be baptized into one body")
4. Effects adoption into God's family, Romans 8:15-17
5. Leads in the Christian life, Romans 8:14
6. Assists in extreme circumstances of prayer, Romans 8:26
7. Is grieved when Christians sin, Ephesians 4:30
8. Seals unto redemption, Ephesians 1:13, 14; 4:30
9. Agency of life, Romans 8:11; John 3:5
10. "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His," Romans 8:9

## THE FOUNDATION OF HOPE

6 For while we were yet weak, in due season Christ died for the ungodly. 7 For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: for per-



adventure for the good man some one would even dare to die. 8 But God commendeth his own love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

Verses 6-8 set forth the basis for the Christian's hope and glorying in God. First of all, Paul states the central fact of the Gospel that "Christ died for the ungodly." This statement is an interpretation of the four accounts of the life of our Lord by Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. Of what value is history, either sacred or secular, if there is no interpretation? Perhaps that is why some people have been bored with history and abhor the very thought of enrolling in a class in history. Without evaluation, historical facts become dry, academic dust. With interpretation and evaluation, however, those same facts become exciting and meaningful. This same principle applies to the biographical facts set forth in the Gospels. Jesus Christ, a Galilean Jew, was crucified outside the city walls of Jerusalem. Someone may respond, "So what! There were more than a thousand Jews a year, mostly of military age, who were being crucified by the Romans in that general era of time when Jesus Christ lived and died on a cross." But the Gospel is far more than the account of the life and death of just another Jew. It goes well beyond the oft repeated story of another good man who died for a good cause. This is the God-man who "died for the ungodly." "Christ died for us!" (v. 8). What could be more exciting than this central fact of history?

John Calvin made no distinction in meaning between the words "righteous" and "good" (v. 7). He would be perfectly willing that the words be used interchangeably allowing Paul to say, in effect, "It would be hard to find someone to die for a righteous man; well, maybe for a righteous man someone would die." Or the word "good" could replace the word "righteous" and the saying would be identical. The better way to understand this statement is to define the righteous one as being the legalist who coldly and methodically does all that the law requires of him but no more. The good man does all that the "righteous" man does, but he does so in warmth, with the milk of human kindness, and he goes far beyond to do more in love than that which is required. Christ is the supreme example of the latter kind of person. In love, He extended himself far beyond what anyone could expect and died for us "while we were yet sinners" (v. 8).

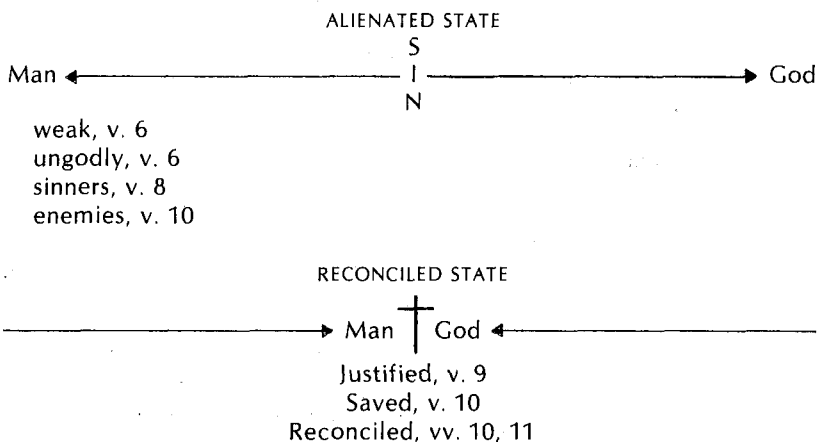
### MUCH MORE

9 Much more then, being now justified by his blood, shall we be saved from the wrath of God through him. 10 For if, while we were

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enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, shall we be saved by his life; 11 and not only so, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation.

It has been noted in these lessons that it is normal for Paul to reason from a general topic to a specific aspect or example of his theme. In verses 9-11, however, the apostle reverses usual procedure and argues from the lesser to the greater. It is very difficult to think of the death of Christ for the sinner as accomplishing less than the resurrected life of Christ gains for the saint. But that is just what Paul has said. "Much more" applies to what Christ does for Christians in their reconciled state which has been accomplished through His blood. Paul argues that if Christ died for us while we were alienated from God by sin, how *much more* will He do for us when we are in harmony and union with God. We rejoice in the reconciliation with God, not only because of the accomplished fact but because of the prospects of "much more" that shall be done for us in the reconciled state (v. 10).



If Christ had remained in the tomb, He could not have saved us. In this present life state He can intercede, hear, and answer prayer, raise us from the dead, transform us into His own likeness and give us eternal life (8:34). Note that He was raised for our justification (4:25), and we are saved by His life (5:10).

The following is a summary listing of the blessings which belong to the Christians and are found in this brief section of 5:1-11.

1. Peace with God, v. 1
2. Access to God's grace, v. 2
3. Rejoice in hope, v. 2
4. Rejoice in present day life situations (daily living), v. 3
5. Love of God has been shed abroad in our hearts, vv. 5, 8
6. Receive the Holy Spirit, v. 5
7. Saved by His blood from the wrath of God, v. 9
8. Reconciled to God through the death of His Son, vv. 10, 11
9. Saved by His life, v. 10
10. Joy in God, v. 11

### READER'S REVIEW:

1. Indicate the change from Paul's day to ours in the meaning of the word "justified."
2. Why is it difficult for men to conceive of being at peace with God?
3. How does Christian peace differ from the general view of peace among non-Christians?
4. Paul presents a circle of thought which begins with, and ends in the same Christian blessing. What is that blessing?
5. Explain the following: How can
  - a) tribulation develop steadfastness?
  - b) steadfastness produce approvedness?
  - c) approvedness generate hope?
6. What is the proper basis for man's boasting or glorying?
7. Explain the phrase, "hope has no shame" (v. 5).
8. List five ways in which the Holy Spirit is involved in God's scheme of redemption.
9. Of all the activities cited in this lesson which the Holy Spirit performs to assist man in salvation, how many are accomplished through the Word of God and how many without? Make two lists.
10. What is it that the author suggests to be the reason some people may be bored by history?
11. What is the major distinction between the death of Jesus for a good cause and the deaths of countless hundreds of others who also died for good causes?
12. Explain the possible difference in meaning between the words "righteous" and "good" as used in verse seven.
13. To what does the relative phrase "Much more" of verses 9 and 10 refer?
14. List from memory the blessings inherited by Christians to be found in 5:1-11.

## **Lesson Ten**

(5:12-21)

### **TWO ACTS OF UNIVERSAL IMPORT**

#### **ORIGIN OF SIN AND DEATH AMONG MEN**

12 Therefore, as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin; and so death passed unto all men, for that all sinned: —

Probably more books have been written about Romans than any other book of the New Testament, and the section of Romans to which we now turn has consumed more pages of those books than any other section of Romans and verse twelve alone, has evoked voluminous writings.

One act of Adam in the Garden of Eden introduced sin into the human race and one act of Christ at Calvary canceled out the results of Adam's sin. It is a very natural progression of thought which influences Paul to launch upon a discussion of the origin of sin among men. The universality of sin and justification from sin through faith in Christ has been argued at length. It is logical to follow such discussion with an explanation of the source and existence of sin. The universal experience of sin in

mankind is explained in Adam's sin. The author beautifully interweaves, through the use of analogy of Christ and Adam, the thought of justification from sin through Christ.

### ANALOGY

<u>Adam</u>	<u>Christ</u>
Disobedient	Obedient
Self-indulgent	Self-sacrificial
Brought death and condemnation	Brought life and grace
One, unrepeatable sin involved	All sins from Adam until the end of time involved
Unconditionally passed to all men	Forgiveness of personal sin is involved

James Long writes humorously but with deadly meaning and accuracy, "Adam's apple was a start of something very unfortunate. Fellowship with God was damaged to the core." Though written in a humorous style, the central truth is surely sad. Sin and death entered the world by one man. These verses provide for many theologians a basic proof text for the doctrine of original sin, and Barclay says, "There is no passage in the New Testament which has had as much influence on theology as this passage." There are three assumptions made in connection with this passage, none of which this writer considers to be Biblical:

1. Calvinism (John Calvin, 1509-1564): All men are totally depraved until a miracle of God (prevenient grace) is performed to free them from depravity. This act of grace is performed by God for each individual arbitrarily on the basis of His own predestination of men. No freedom of human will is allowed.

2. Arminianism (Jacob Arminius, 1560-1609): God, through a universal act of grace removed the greater degree of Adamic depravity from all men. A direct act of God upon the nature of each person is required to relieve him of whatever measure of depravity which remains in him. This miracle is usually applied in the area of man's will which is said to be weak. Intellect, conscience, and emotions are frequently cited as being whole. Man has freedom of will to accept or reject Christ and salvation and is responsible for all his choices.

3. General: That the Holy Spirit works directly upon the spirit of man to offset whatever remnant of depravity remains in man. This suggested direct operation of the Holy Spirit may be an assist to the

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intellect or to the will. It is essential at conversion and will continue throughout one's Christian life.

Those who hold any one of the above assumptions teach that if a person is to be saved, a "divine assist" must be given to a man in addition to the divine directives of the Word of God which informs men how they are to be saved. "The gospel is the power of God unto salvation" (Romans 1:16) can then be true only in some restricted or limited sense.

If any view that man is depraved as a direct result of Adam's sin is accepted along with the companion doctrine that God performs a miracle to correct that depravity apart from the normal Biblical concept of conversion there are interesting questions to answer:

1. Where does the Bible affirm that man is depraved, in one degree or another as a result of Adam's sin?

2. Where does the Bible affirm any act of grace performed by God directly upon man to remove Adamic depravity either in part or in whole?

3. "The Gospel is the power of God unto salvation." In what way is the Gospel weak? Where does it fail?

4. If human will is miraculously corrected by God, why did Paul and John have problems? (Romans 7:15-20; I John 1:9)

5. Why doesn't the Godhead do a complete job on the nature of man so that he may wholly recover from the claimed effects of original sin?

6. Where is vice and virtue if a man does not possess sufficient will power to do what his free will chooses to do, but divine intervention must be relied upon?

7. If a miracle is performed by God to remove depravity and man is miraculously recreated (regenerated), could man undo that miracle of God and be lost?

8. Was Jesus born sinful? If we are so born and Jesus was not, how can He really represent us and what is the meaning of a passage like Hebrews 4:15?

9. In what way are we to become like little children if they come into this world under the blaze of God's wrath, being sinful?

It is surely true that all men have sinned and are sinners. It is equally true that all men are sinful, but the question is, "Were men born sinful or did they become sinful?" Does Paul affirm that all men come into the world possessing sinful nature? Is that what he means when he observes that the Ephesian Christians were "by nature children of wrath" (Ephesians 2:3)? Some take it for granted that Paul meant they were born in that condition. But the word "nature" (*fusis*) is capable of at least four definitions. The definition which seems to best fit this Ephesians passage, in light of all the rest of the teaching of Scripture which bears

on an understanding of the nature of man, is that of Thayer: "A mode of feeling and acting which by long habit has become nature." The following seems to be a reasonable presentation of alternatives as to the cause of men's sinful conditions:

1. Man is sinful because:

- a. God made man that way following Adam's sin?
- b. Adam's sin directly caused all to be depraved in some measure?
- c. The results of Adam's sin have been inherited indirectly in our nature (like father, like son). Is sin in the genes? Are there big sinners and little sinners? Does one inherit ability to sin as an athlete inherits athletic prowess?

2. Man is sinful "by nature" because:

- a. Human nature is something acquired, not inherited.
- b. Sinful nature is produced by Satan not by God.
- c. By long practice and habit man has become what he is, but not because of natal essence, nor as a result of some inherent quality.

The Scriptures have much to say about how the nature of man is corrupted and in reverse, how one develops a "divine nature." The Devil corrupts the mind of man (II Corinthians 11:2, 3). Were the Corinthians born with corrupt minds? Paul does not fear an inherent corrupt mind, but he is fearful that the Corinthians may respond as did the pure mind of Eve to the deception of the Devil and thus believe a lie rather than "the simplicity and purity that is toward Christ." The Devil blinds the eye of the mind (II Corinthians 4:4). "The god of this world that blinded the mind of the unbelieving." There is no suggestion that the blindness is an inherent condition which is universal. The blinding was done so that "the light of the gospel of . . . Christ" would not be seen. It is the Gospel which enlightens the mind and is "the power of God unto salvation" (Romans 1:16). The Devil uses every implement at his disposal to accomplish his ends; the "flesh" of man (see lesson 13), the surroundings of the world with its habitual sin; the attitudes of men such as selfishness, vanity, hostility, jealousy and greed; all forms of deception such as the human philosophy cited in Colossians 2:8.

It is man's responsibility to the best of his ability to avoid the devastating influence of the Devil who would corrupt his nature. Instead men should become "partakers of the divine nature" (II Peter 1:4). According to this passage, it is through God's "exceeding great promises" (written in His Word) that one partakes of divine nature and escapes "the corruption that is in the world." There is no suggestion here of an inherent corrupt nature which is miraculously changed by a direct act of God. Neither is there any hint that the "divine nature" is given by God at birth or that it is inherited from parents. The divine nature is

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acquired and man is responsible to acquire it. Divine nature comes as a result of being "begotten . . . through the Word of God" (I Peter 1:23). Men must "receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls" (James 1:21; see also Luke 8:11, ff.). Jesus is quoted as saying, "No man can come unto me, except it be given unto him of the Father" (John 6:65). Verse 45 of that same chapter makes crystal clear what Jesus means by the words, "given unto him of the Father." "It is written in the prophets, and they shall all be taught of God. Everyone that hath heard from the Father and hath learned, cometh unto me." Man is responsible to hear, learn and respond positively to God's invitation to come to His Son for salvation.

### PHYSICAL DEATH CANCELED FOR ALL UNCONDITIONALLY

18 So then as through one trespass the judgment came unto all men to condemnation; even so through one act of righteousness the free gift came unto all men to justification of life. 19 For as through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, even so through the obedience of the one shall the many be made righteous.

The close of verse twelve is punctuated by most translations in some way to show there is a break in progression of thought. The American Standard Version has both a colon and a dash. The dash indicates a break in thought and the colon suggests that the following verses contain additional information which pertains to that stated in verse twelve. So verses 13-17 are parenthetical and verses 12, 18, and 19 should be read together for natural and connected thought progression. It is obvious from what is said in verses 18, 19 that if Paul had finished stating his thoughts in verse twelve, it would read "for that all sinned:—" *in Adam*. "For as through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners." The reason for the continuous results of this one sin is that when Adam sinned he was not just a man, he was mankind; the whole human race was in him; his act was an act of humanity. Our connection with Adam is absolute. We have no more choice in this matter than a child chooses a father. Hebrews 7:9, 10 expresses the same principle of the connection of a later generation of people with a person who has preceded them. Levi, who came four generations later than Abraham is said to have paid tithes to Melchizedek who was contemporary with Abraham. Through Abraham Levi paid tithes, because he was in the loins of Abraham. So in Adam all are "made to be sinners." No analogy from life is wholly comparable in scope to what is said in verse 19, but it is generally true that men are "made to be sinners" just like they are



made to be Italian, German, English, or Yellow, Black, or White. Our father Adam made us sinners. We made ourselves or allow ourselves to become sinful.

### PHYSICAL DEATH

13 for until the law sin was in the world; but sin is not imputed when there is no law. 14 Nevertheless death reigned from Adam until Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the likeness of Adam's transgression, who is a figure of him that was to come.

Death entered into the human race through sin and because we are sinners we will die. It is not because of personal sin that we die. If one could live an absolutely perfect life, he would die. "By the trespass of one the many died" (v. 15) and through "one disobedience," "death passed unto all men" (v. 12). God ordained that all men shall die (Hebrews 9:27). Verses 13, 14 show clearly that Paul is talking about physical death which came to all men as a result of Adam's sin. There was no law (Mosaic) and where no law exists it cannot be broken. No penalty can be exacted if there has been no breach of the law. Law and penalty are inseparable. How can one receive a ticket for speeding if there is no speed limit? So it was not what men were doing that caused them to die. Ethics or moral responsibilities were not involved. People just kept dying over that span of time from Adam to Moses. Why? Because physical death came to all through Adam's sin. No one ever sinned like Adam (v. 14). Who else, besides Adam, ever committed a sin that brought physical death to every other person of the human race? I Corinthians 15:22 states, "For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive." The universal experience of death in Adam is physical just as the universal experience of resurrection in Christ is physical when all that are in the grave shall be raised. After the resurrection spiritual and eternal life shall be determined in the judgment. "It is appointed unto men once to die, and after this cometh judgment" (Hebrews 9:27). A man does not have to do one thing in order to be raised from the dead except to have lived and died. God in His justice sent His Son to unconditionally cancel out the effect of Adam's sin. Physical death will be overthrown when the Lord of life puts the last enemy, death, beneath his feet (I Corinthians 15:26).

### SPIRITUAL DEATH CANCELED CONDITIONALLY

15 But not as the trespass, so also is the free gift. For if by the trespass of the one the many died, much more did the grace of God, and the

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gift by the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, abound unto the many. 16 And not as through one that sinned so is the gift: for the judgment came of one unto condemnation, but the free gift came of many trespasses unto justification. 17 For if, by the trespass of the one, death reigned through the one; much more shall they that receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one, even Jesus Christ.

We have met the phrase "much more" in verses 9, 10 and rejoiced in the blessings that are ours through Christ's life above and beyond those received through His death.

The heart cannot but leap with joy as it contemplates what is involved in the "much more" of verses 15 and 17. Not only has the death of our Lord canceled out the physical death which came through one sin of Adam, but in addition, His death is capable of canceling out all my personal sin so that I may not experience a second death (spiritual, Revelation 20:14). The major difference between the two cancellations is that the effect of Adam's sin is canceled unconditionally for all men. The effect of personal sin is canceled only upon the condition that one believes in Christ and accepts the provision which God has made for the removal of sin. This conditionality is wholly in keeping with Paul's previous contention that sinners are justified by grace, through faith. Paul adds in verse 17 that if death reigned because of Adam, then "much more" shall life be the controlling force because of Christ, for "where sin abounded grace did abound more exceedingly." (The King James Version uses "much more" again in verse 20 although the Greek (*pollō mallon*) which is translated "much more" in verses 9, 10, 15, 17 is not found in verse 20).

<u>Adam</u>		<u>Christ</u>
Results are unconditional and universal for the non-personal sin of Adam, I Corinthians 5:22	R I S U R R I C I O N	Benefits are conditional for personal sin, Romans 3:22, 23
One sin involved		Many sins involved
Reign of sin and death, Romans 5:17, 21		Reign of righteousness and life, Romans 5:17, 21

### AN EPILOGUE

20 And the law came in besides, that the trespass might abound; but where sin abounded, grace did abound more exceedingly:

21 that, as sin reigned in death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Verses 20, 21 form an epilogue and are incidental to the main argument of this section. Paul's argument stands complete at the end of verse 19, but he adds that the law was given "that the trespass might abound." A child knows that the law with its commands, "Thou shalt" and "Thou shalt not" was not given to sponsor sin. The law was given to assist in the recognition of sin, so that an awareness of sin might increase in the minds of men. But Christ came with a super-abundance of grace to offset the knowledge of sin and the condemnation it brings. Sin and death cannot maintain the upperhand but righteousness and life are victorious.

Summarizing the thoughts of this lesson it may be said that every individual of the human race was made to be a sinner; each was so constituted unconditionally. This is not to say, however, that one is born sinful in essence or that he comes into this world as a baby with a sinful nature. Rather we may understand our relationship to Adam in the same way our relationship to Christ is understood. A man who becomes a Christian recognizes that he is "made to be righteous" because he is in Christ. The Christian is not righteous in essence, but he receives the righteousness which comes to him through one righteous act of Christ at Calvary. Like Abraham, he is counted to be righteous while in truth, he is still a sinner (1 John 1:8, 9). In reality I did not die personally at Calvary. Only ideally and mystically through faith and in spiritual union with Christ can I say, "I have been crucified with Christ" and benefit from Christ's death. He is my spiritual Head and representative, and I am a sinner saved by grace. So also was my previous relationship with Adam as my physical head and representative before I became a Christian. Through his representative act, I was constituted a sinner, but I did not partake of his sinfulness in essence any more than I received in essence the righteousness of Jesus when I became a Christian.

In the judgment I will not have to answer for the sin of Adam. I was not in Eden, and I did not personally sin there. I am not guilty of Adam's sin, and though I am a sinner because I am of Adam's race, I am not sinful because of his sin. I became sinful because I sinned and "fell short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). Romans 3:23 and Romans 5:12 *should not* be understood to say the same thing; 3:23 speaks of personal sin for which each sinner has responsibility; 5:12 refers to impersonal sin for which no man other than Adam has personal responsibility.

Without any conditions whatsoever Christ canceled out the result

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of Adam's sin to the human race which is physical death. The worst sinner you can think of will be raised from the dead. But, thank God, there is "much more." God's grace is greater than the sins of all men who will meet the condition of faith in Christ, including all that the word "faith" involves.

### READER'S REVIEW:

1. What are the two acts of universal import discussed in this lesson?
2. Why is it logical for Paul to introduce discussion about the origin of sin at this point in Romans?
3. Which verse of Chapter Five is said to be a "proof text" for the doctrine of original sin and total depravity?
4. State concisely the three main assumptions based on this section of Romans, all of which the author rejects, as being unbiblical.
5. What is it that the author holds to be absolutely essential for one to be saved if any one of the above three assumptions you have just written are accepted as true?
6. What are some pertinent questions which may be asked of one who holds that man's nature is miraculously changed by a direct act of God at conversion?
7. What is the difference in the two following statements: all men are sinful; all men are sinners?
8. Write, in your own words, a definition of "nature" which is harmonious with Thayer's definition of the nature of man.
9. How does man become a partaker of the "divine nature"?
10. How does one become the possessor of a corrupt nature?
11. What is involved in the punctuation at the close of verse twelve and how does the punctuation bear on the interpretation of that verse.
12. What is the proof that the death of which Paul speaks directly in verse twelve is physical?
13. In what sense is Adam the representative of the whole human race with respect to sin?
14. What Biblical example of this kind of representation is cited from the book of Hebrews?
15. To what degree is Christ the representative of the whole human race with respect to righteousness?
16. What is the distinct difference in meaning of the content of Romans 3:23 and 5:12?
17. What is involved in the "much more" of verses 15-17?
18. Why are verses 20, 21 called an epilogue?
19. Write a concise summary statement of the content of verses 20 and 21.
20. In two columns reproduce from memory all the comparisons and contrasts made between Adam and Christ in this chapter.

## **Lesson Eleven**

(6:1 — 7:6)

### **CHRIST, THE AUTHORITY FOR LIFE**

For Christians there are obligations to fulfill as well as blessings to enjoy. The disciple of Christ is responsible to live a Christlike life. Reproduction of the Christ-life can only be accomplished by one who makes Christ's example and his teaching the supreme goal and authority for life.

Paul appeals to his readers to recognize their union with the sinless Christ to turn from sin to righteousness and to "bring forth fruit unto God." Three successive illustrations are used to support his appeal: Union with Christ and thus living like Him is illustrated by baptism (6:1-14); change of authority from the rule of sin to the reign of righteousness is illustrated in the master slave analogy (6:15-23); living in harmony with the will of Christ is set forth in the example of the relationship of husband and wife (7:1-6). The basic teaching in all three illustrations is that the authority of Christ must be recognized.

### **IN UNION WITH CHRIST**

1 What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? 2 God forbid. We who died to sin, how shall we any longer

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live therein? 3 Or are ye ignorant that all we who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? 4 We were buried therefore with him through baptism into death; that like as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we also might walk in newness of life. 5 For if we have become united with him in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection; 6 knowing this, that our old man was crucified with him, that the body of sin might be done away, that so we should no longer be in bondage to sin; 7 for he that hath died is justified from sin. 8 But if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him; 9 knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death no more hath dominion over him. 10 For the death that he died, he died unto sin once: but the life that he liveth, he liveth unto God. 11 Even so reckon ye also yourselves to be dead unto sin, but alive unto God in Christ Jesus.

Chapter six is connected to the content of the preceding lesson by questions with which the chapter begins. What are we to conclude from all that has been written, asks Paul. Because of the super abundance of God's grace, shall we just go on sinning so that this grace, which already abounds, may yet increase? Paul answers his own question with eight good reasons why Christians should not continue to sin. All eight reasons are closely related to the ordinance of baptism and are based in the true meaning of being baptized into Jesus Christ.

1. We have died to sin (v. 2) and dead men do not continue the activities in which they were previously engaged.

2. Those who have been baptized were as Williams translates, "baptized into union with Christ" (v. 3), and He is the sinless one. How can a person be in union with the Christ who is wholly sinless and continue in sin? (Cf. Galatians 3:27).

3. One is baptized into the death of Christ (v. 3). The death of our Lord occurred for the specific purpose of taking away sin. How can a true disciple of Christ deliberately perpetuate sin which Christ died to remove?

4. Following the burial in baptism we were resurrected to a new life (vv. 4, 5). This is the new birth of John 3:3-5; it is the ethical resurrection of Ephesians 2:1, 5; Colossians 3:1-3 and John 5:24, 25. Is it possible to live at the old sinful level if we have been raised to a new high ethical level in Christ? (Cf. II Corinthians 5:17).

5. The old man is crucified with Christ to remove sin and free the sinner from the control of sin (v. 6). This is the equivalent of Paul's statement, "I have been crucified with Christ, and it is no longer I that live, but Christ liveth in me, and the life which I now live in the flesh I live

in faith, the faith which is in the Son of God who loved me, and gave himself up for me" (Galatians 2:20).

6. It is a legal fact that a dead man cannot be accused and tried in court (v. 7); (Cf. Romans 7:1). Records of posthumous trials which have occurred are found in the annals of history, but they are a mockery of law. No matter what the severity of crimes against society, death frees the criminal from prosecution. How then can sin lay any claim to the life of the one who is dead to sin?

7. We died with Christ when he died and were with him in the resurrection. Therefore, we should live like Him in a resurrected state (vv. 8, 9). Verses 10, 11 help us to understand that Paul is talking about present life status rather than the ultimate state of the redeemed person who has experienced the final, transcendent resurrection. Paul speaks of a here and now situation in which the Christian lives with Christ and like Him.

8. Christ died just once but the life which he lives unto God is continuous (vv. 10, 11). We too should die to sin once for all and continually live a God-oriented life.

### INSTRUMENTS OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

12 Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey the lusts thereof; 13 neither present your members unto sin as instruments of unrighteousness; but present yourselves unto God, as alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God. 14 For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under law, but under grace.

The imperative of verse twelve and the instruction which follows form a natural conclusion to the eight arguments just stated. The physical body of man is amoral. The human body in which I live is neither good or bad, ethically speaking, any more than the instrument with which I write is good or bad. The pen in my hand could be made to write the filthy concepts of the world, or it may be used as an instrument to express that which is honorable. So, also, the human body may be made to be a servant of sin, or it may be an instrument of glory for God. Sin which operates in the body, is the culprit. The body should not be allowed to become subject to the forceful influences of sin and its lust. The word "lust" as used in America suggests immediately the desire for something evil. Actually it is the object of lust which determines whether lust is good or evil. The word translated "lust" (*epithumia*) is used without any connotation of evil by Jesus when he says, according to Luke 22:15

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where the same Greek word is used, "With lust (desire) I have lusted (desired) to eat this passover with you before I suffer." The English use an interesting expression to describe a youngster. They say, "He is a lusty little fellow." They do not mean that the child is full of evil thoughts and desires. Rather, they are describing youth which is full of vitality and life. He has strong desire for all that life has to offer, and he wants to participate in it. When one thinks of the exercise of strong desire, he should remember that Jesus pronounced blessing upon those who "hunger and thirst after righteousness." The Christian is commanded in verse twelve not to allow strong desire for that which is sinful to become the controlling factor in his life. Again Paul argues from the general to the specific. The body, as a whole, is not to become obedient to evil lust, but more specifically not any individual member of the body is to be used as an instrument of sin. Instead, the members of the body should be presented to God as "instruments of righteousness" (v. 13). Verse fourteen does not contain a command as does verse twelve. "For sin shall not have dominion over you" indicates the state of freedom from sin in which, by God's grace, the Roman Christians lived.

### THE SLAVE MART ANALOGY

15 What then? shall we sin, because we are not under law, but under grace? God forbid. 16 Know ye not, that to whom ye present yourselves as servants unto obedience, his servants ye are whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? 17 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; 18 and being made free from sin, ye became servants of righteousness. 19 I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh: for as ye presented your members as servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity, even so now present your members as servants to righteousness unto sanctification. 20 For when ye were servants of sin, ye were free in regard of righteousness. 21 What fruit then had ye at that time in the things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things is death. 22 But now being made free from sin and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto sanctification, and the end eternal life. 23 For the wages of sin is death; but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

The question of verse fifteen, "shall we sin because we are not under the law?", is very much like the question of verse one and shows that



as Paul introduces his second illustration, he is still pursuing the same general line of thought. The caption for this section of verses (15-23) has been borrowed from Bruce and I can think of no other designation which would be more picturesque or accurate than "The Slave Mart Analogy." Like Jesus, the master teacher, Paul used illustrations which were common to everyday life. Baptism was common among Christians for every Christian had been baptized and baptism was not considered to be optional. Marriage, though greatly abused, was an everyday occurrence in Rome. And how common was slavery in an empire whose populace was fifty percent slaves. The auction block on which men and women were sold and transferred from one owner to another was a common sight. Owners were proud of their assets which included not only hundreds but sometimes thousands of slaves. "Know ye not" of verse sixteen is Paul's way of referring to common knowledge. Every normal mind in the Roman Empire was keenly aware that a servant (*doulos* = slave) belongs to the person whom he obeys as master. Just two ethical masters are bidding for the services of the Romans: sin, with its payment of death or righteousness with its gift of life (v. 16). Paul rejoices that his readers had made choice of the right master. At this point the master-slave analogy breaks down because a slave seldom had any say about whom he would serve. God never violates the free moral agency of man, and that power of choice is honored even in an illustration which basically militates against it. Verse sixteen makes it plain that men "present themselves" to one master or another. The Romans had shifted their allegiance from the old master of sin, to the new master, righteousness (vv. 17, 18). Their obedience to the new master was not the kind of service a slave rendered bodily, but it was "from the heart." The phrase, "that form of teaching" (*doctrine*) has caused a good bit of speculation. Some think this is to be a reference to the Gospel Paul presented with its special emphasis upon justification through faith. The weakness of this explanation is that it implies that Paul's teaching was unique in its emphasis of faith and grace. Both of those aspects of the Christian teaching, however, are seen vividly in the prophet's predictions concerning the Gospel in general as well as with more specific reference to the person and work of Christ. Both faith and grace were preached regularly from the Day of Pentecost, when the church was born, and throughout the history of the Church as recorded in the book of Acts. Galatians 2:1-10 records the information that Paul was preaching the same Gospel as those preached who were of reputation at Jerusalem. It is sheer speculation to suggest that Paul received a gospel for the Gentiles which was different from that preached by Peter to the Jews.

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A second view of the phrase, "form of teaching" is that it refers generally to the Gospel as a whole without any emphasis upon Pauline uniqueness.

A third view, held by Moses Lard, and he is the only one of whom I am aware who holds this view, is that the word "form" (*tupos* = type) has specific reference to baptism. His reasoning is that Paul defines the Gospel to be the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus (I Corinthians 15:1-4). The only act of obedience which in "form" encompasses the "death, burial and resurrection" is baptism. The idea is that Paul still has in mind the lengthy discussion in verses 1-11 about baptism and compliments the Romans for "obeying from the heart" that "form" which embodies the heart of the Gospel message.

"Speaking after the manner of men" (v. 19) may refer to the immediate observation about the weakness of flesh which follows and surely we must admit that spiritual weakness is common to man. Or Paul may be speaking more generally about the content of this entire chapter of his book and the beginning of the next in which he uses illustrations which surely fall under the heading of "the ways of man." At any rate, the discussion turns back at this point to the master-slave analogy. Phrases like "iniquity unto iniquity," "righteousness unto sanctification," or "faith unto faith" appear to be a literary device used to intensify the meaning. Previous to becoming Christians the pagans of Rome had piled up sin upon sin upon sin. Now they were to heap up righteous act upon righteous act upon righteous act until their lives were characterized by sanctification. Some understand verse twenty to teach the doctrine of the total depravity of man. Alfred Barnes for example, says "that settles it" in favor of man's depravity. If one, however, contends that verse twenty teaches total depravity, by the same logic one would be forced, on the basis of the content of verse twenty-two, to teach the absolute holiness of the saint. If "free in regard to righteousness" (v. 20), means a man has no native goodness whatsoever, then "free from sin" in verse twenty-two could mean nothing other than that the Christian is incapable of sin.

The end of serving sin is shame and death; the result of serving righteousness is sanctification and life (vv. 22, 23). Note that salvation is a gift, not a wage, and salvation cannot be earned.

## THE MARRIAGE ANALOGY

7:1 Or are ye ignorant, brethren (for I speak to men who know the law), that the law hath dominion over a man for so long time as he liveth? 2 For the woman that hath a husband is bound by law to the

husband while he liveth; but if the husband die, she is discharged from the law of the husband. 3 So then if, while the husband liveth, she be joined to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if the husband die, she is free from the law, so that she is no adulteress, though she be joined to another man. 4 Wherefore, my brethren, ye also were made dead to the law through the body of Christ; that ye should be joined to another, even to him who was raised from the dead, that we might bring forth fruit unto God. 5 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. 6 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.

The last in this triplet of illustrations is matrimony (7:1-6). The main line of thought in 5:1-11 is not baptism. Baptism is introduced incidentally as an illustration just as slavery is only an example and not the main subject of discussion. The same may be said about marriage. There is no intention to give direct teaching about the relationship of the husband and wife as is the case in the household instruction of Ephesians 5:22, ff. and Colossians 3:18-25. So Paul's allusion to the law of marriage as reflected in the Old Testament, or in Roman law, should not be used as a legalistic club to hold over the heads of those who may have already been nearly destroyed by marital problems.

Three laws may be involved in the discussion of verses 1-3: law in general (Roman); the Mosaic law; the law (authority) of the husband.

Any spiritual interpretation of these verses involving a marriage of the Christian to Christ is ruled out by many scholars. They contend, as does Lard, that "The disciples are not here viewed as a wife and Christ as a husband . . . Accordingly the common rendering 'that you might become married to another' is gratuitous and inept." A literal translation of the phrase, "joined to another man" of verse three would read, "be to another man." English versions suggest similar ideas such as: lives with another, gives herself to another or consorts with another man. "Be joined to another" of verse four is the same in the original language. So it is claimed that the marriage concept is gratuitous. No one would deny that the basic element of the illustration is marriage or that betrothal and marriage to Christ is Scriptural (Ephesians 5:25-33; II Corinthians 11:2; Revelation 19:7, 8). God is spoken of as married to Israel (Jeremiah 3:14). Whatever Paul had in mind as he penned verse four is not now certain. Neither those who oppose nor those who support the marriage concept in verse four do any violence to Scripture. Bruce accepts the idea that verse four does suggest marriage to Christ, but

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he thinks it farfetched that the "fruit here spoken of is viewed as the offspring of the new marriage." He holds that the figure of marriage changes to a tree and its fruit. It is true that the fertile mind of Paul functions like that. He can move rapidly from figure to figure as he does in Ephesians 2:19-22 where, in rapid succession, Christians are pictured as a civil kingdom, a household, and a holy temple. I do not think, however, that the person who was familiar with Scripture terminology would have any problem with the single figure of marriage. Note the Biblical usage of the word "fruit":

Fruit of the womb,	Genesis 30:2; Deuteronomy 7:13; Psalm 127:3; Luke 1:42
Fruit of thy seed,	Deuteronomy 22:9
Fruit of thy body,	Deuteronomy 28:4, 11, 18; 30:9; Psalm 132:11
Fruit of thy loins,	Acts 2:30

A strict literal interpretation of the marriage analogy holds the first husband to be the law of Moses (Cf. Colossians 2:14), the second husband to be Christ, and the wife to be persons under grace who are freed from the law. There are two allegorical interpretations, the most common of which is the universal, corporate church theory. In this interpretation the first husband is the law of sin. The second husband is Christ and the wife is the church (II Corinthians 11:2; Revelation 19:6-8). The other allegorical interpretation is limited and personal. Gleason Archer, a current writer, and John Calvin of the sixteenth century are examples of those holding this view. The first husband is the lower nature of man, the carnal man, which is put to death in conversion (Cf. Galatians 2:20; Colossians 2:14). The second husband, as in each of the other views, is Christ. The wife is the higher nature of man, the inward man, spirit or soul man. H. C. G. Moule reflects both the corporate and personal allegorical views in one sentence, "The church, the soul, is married to her Lord."

Immortality seals the permanence of this marriage bond. Neither Christ (Romans 6:9) nor the Christian (II Corinthians 5:4, 5; I Corinthians 15:54) shall die. If Christ were dead, the union would be broken and one could only belong to Him in memory or ideally, like the one who after losing a mate in death, keeps a picture in a convenient place for viewing to remind of the ideal relationship which once existed. Christians, however, actually, really, and eternally belong to Him who lives.

"In the flesh" (v. 5) means that one is responsive to the passions, forces, and directives of the principle or force operating in man which Paul calls, "the law (principle) in my members" and "the law of sin" (Romans 7:23). Much will be said about Paul's unique usage of the word "flesh"

in the next lesson. The attacking force of the flesh is in some sense, inadvertently, assisted by the law. Verse seven speaks of "sinful passions, which were through the law," verse eight adds, "sin . . . wrought in me through the commandment all manner of coveting" and verse eleven echoes the same thought, "sin, finding occasion, through the commandment." Perhaps the law functions like the parent who unintentionally creates a desire in the child to do something by prohibiting it. Many times a child has no desire to touch or to do until he has heard, "no, no." Charles Erdman quotes old Roman authors: "We always endeavor to obtain that which is forbidden, and desire that which is denied." "The permitted is unpleasing, the forbidden consumes us fiercely." In *Gargantua and Pantagruel* Francis Rabelais has his monk opposing all the rules of the strictly ordered monastic life of his day and puts into his mouth this observation: "It is agreeable with the nature of man to long after things forbidden and to desire what is denied us." Bible College students illustrated this principle of human nature when they went on a venture of stealing apples. They had to cross over a six-foot high woven wire fence with barbed wire strands above it. They were not hungry. They could have purchased apples. They were not bad people and most of them have been highly successful in Christian service. One of the errant students later became the wife of a fine Christian educator who served as president of a Bible College. She stands faithfully at his side in support of his labors today. As Augustine says in his *Confessions*, "The desire to steal was awakened simply by the prohibition of stealing."

Verses five and six indicate two results to the one who has died to the flesh. He has been made free from the law, sin, condemnation and death. Secondly, his motivation for service is changed. "Oldness of the letter" refers to service rendered under an external, legalistic code. "Newness of the spirit" has reference to internal compulsion. One is motivated by a spirit which is subservient to the Holy Spirit to serve the living Christ.

### READER'S REVIEW:

1. Cite the three illustrations used by Paul in this section of study and indicate in one summary sentence for each what is the basic lesson to learn from each illustration.
2. How is the opening question of Chapter Six connected to the closing content of Chapter Five?
3. From memory list six of the eight reasons given by Paul for Christians to refrain from sinning.
4. What is the imperative of verse twelve?

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5. How do you explain the author's statement, "The physical body of man is amoral."
6. What is it that makes "lust" good or bad?
7. Cite one example from this lesson and one from a previous lesson of how Paul argues from a general concept to a specific example of the general concept which he has stated.
8. In what sense may it be said that 6:1-11 contains an incidental allusion to baptism and that baptism, itself, is not the main-line thought of that paragraph?
9. Relate the various views of the meaning of the phrase, "the form of doctrine." Support your choice of the view which you consider to be best.
10. What evidence would you use to oppose the contention that Peter and Paul preached a different gospel?
11. What does Paul mean when he indicates that he is "speaking after the manner of men"?
12. What is Paul's literary device used to intensify meaning?
13. In what way are the doctrines of "total depravity" and the "absolute holiness of the saint" introduced at the close of Chapter Six? If these doctrines are not taught in verses 20-22, what is the meaning of these verses?
14. List the three laws which may be involved in the marriage analogy.
15. Cite two claims made in connection with the marriage illustration which are commonly accepted by many but are rejected and are even repulsive to some.
16. What is the strictly literal interpretation of the marriage illustration?
17. State two allegorical interpretations of the marriage illustration.
18. What difference would it make in the marriage analogy if Christ had not been raised from the dead?
19. In what sense may it be said that the law gives an assist to sin?
20. What are the two results of the dying to the flesh (7:6)?

## Lesson Twelve

(7:7-25)

### THE CLASH OF THE FLESH AND SPIRIT

#### FUNCTIONS OF THE LAW

7 What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Howbeit, I had not known sin, except through the law: for I had not known coveting, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet: 8 but sin, finding occasion, wrought in me through the commandment all manner of coveting: for apart from the law sin is dead. 9 And I was alive apart from the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died; 10 and the commandment, which was unto life, this I found to be unto death: 11 for sin, finding occasion, through the commandment beguiled me, and through it slew me. 12 So that the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and righteous, and good. 13 Did then that which is good become death unto me? God forbid. But sin, that it might be shown to be sin, by working death to me through that which is good; — that through the commandment sin might become exceeding sinful.

The paragraph which begins at verse seven opens with a question. We have found the question-answer method of teaching to be used

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regularly by Paul. Chapters 3, 4, 6, and 7 began with questions. We now address our attention to the second and major question of Chapter Seven, "Is the law sin?" The law is, in itself, not sinful, but is, in fact, perfect. It came from exactly the same source as that from which the Gospel came, and it accomplished all that it was intended to do. To suggest an imperfect law is to posit an imperfect God. Paul appears to argue in verses 1-6 that we are free from the law as if it were something detrimental. But when the last word is said, it is quite clear that weakness is not in the law, but in flesh (Romans 8:3). Paul states plainly that "the law is holy" (v. 12). As is his custom, he moves from the general to the specific: not only is the law, in its entirety, perfect, but each commandment is holy, righteous and good (v. 12). He further praises the law as being "spiritual" and at once confesses his own carnality (v. 14).

What are the functions of the law (vv. 7-13)? Defining sin and thus pointing it out clearly is one capability of the law. Once more Paul introduces his subject generally: "I had not known sin." The specific example is the sin of covetousness, chosen out of a host of sins which would have illustrated his point.

Sin is personified in verse eight. The process of "finding occasion" is as a person looking for an opportunity and sin uses the commandment as a tool to probe and accomplish its own ends.

Empowering sin is another ability of the law, "for apart from the law sin is dead" (v. 8)! "The power of sin is the law" (1 Corinthians 15:56). When the law came, death resulted. Physical death is not the subject here as it is in 5:12, ff. where Paul contends that men died because of Adam's sin and kept dying when the law had not as yet been given. But the law came giving knowledge of God's will. Man failed to conform to the will of God, sinned personally and spiritual death resulted. The coming of the law does not have primary reference to the original writing on tables of stone at Mt. Sinai, but refers to the individual coming to an awareness of sin as in 6:20, "And the law came in besides that the trespass might abound" — in man's awareness and conscience.

A third function of the law is to preserve life. We have previously noted that the law was not designed to justify from sin (Acts 13:39; Romans 3:20). Neither can the law produce life in the sense of bringing about what Jesus called being "born again" (Galatians 3:21). The greater one's knowledge of the law, the greater his despair and sense of condemnation if he does not keep the law. The greater one's knowledge of the Gospel, the greater his joy and assurance if he walks by faith and commitment to God. Alexander Campbell, on the basis of Galatians 3:21, ff. held that Romans 7:10 should be understood to say, "And the commandment which I *thought to be* unto life." But Paul was not suggesting



that at one time he erroneously thought the law to function in a way in which, in truth, it did not function. The law was "unto life" in the sense that its commandments, if followed, would enhance earthly life and improve one's conscience and relationship with God. The law was not destructive nor was it in any sense a foe of life.

The fourth action of the law is that it indicates the true character of sin (v. 13). Through the law sin is seen to be "exceeding sinful." Sin is not something with which to toy. Physical life would be no more endangered by playing with a stick of dynamite than spiritual life would be threatened by playing with sin. Carlyle speaks of "the infinite damnability of sin." If people knew the destructive and damning power of sin, they would not be so quick to rationalize sin in their lives or treat any sin lightly. Again the consciousness of man is involved. The law did not make sin sinful, but the law possessed the ability to plant in the mind of man a keen awareness of the destructive power of sin.

### THE UNIVERSAL PROBLEM OF BEHAVIOR

14 For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin. 15 For that which I do I know not: for not what I would, that do I practise; but what I hate, that I do. 16 But if what I would not, that I do, I consent unto the law that it is good. 17 So now it is no more I that do it, but sin which dwelleth in me. 18 For I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me, but to do that which is good is not. 19 For the good which I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I practise. 20 But if what I would not, that I do, it is no more I that do it, but sin which dwelleth in me. 21 I find then the law, that, to me who would do good, evil is present. 22 For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: 23 but I see a different law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity under the law of sin which is in my members. 24 Wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me out of the body of this death? 25 I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then I of myself with the mind, indeed, serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.

Verses fourteen through twenty-five of Chapter Seven deal with the universal problems of behavior. Paul's conclusion about the law is that it "is spiritual" but his evaluation of man is quite different, "I am carnal" he admits, "sold under sin." (The same kind of contrast is made between "spiritual" and "carnal" in I Corinthians 3:1). The questions raised here

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in commentaries are: Does Paul speak of himself? does the pronoun "I" refer figuratively to others only or is it an editorial, "I" in which the author speaks only of himself? If the reference is to others, excluding Paul, who are they? Hodge says it is almost universally admitted that Paul does not speak only of himself. There are those who think Paul is speaking of the whole human race before the law was given. Others hold that he writes figuratively of the Jewish race and this was the most common view of authors from the Reformation to modern times. Many modern writers take the view that Paul is writing about the unregenerate man or non-Christian. Obviously if the last view be the correct one, Paul could not include himself in the discussion.

The most acceptable view is that Paul spoke of his own personal experience as typical of all Christians. Barclay writes, "Here Paul is giving us his own spiritual autobiography and laying bare his heart and soul." Bruce agrees with T. W. Manson who puts it succinctly, "Paul's autobiography is the biography of Everyman." Admittedly there are problems for those who hold this view. For example, in the light of the "slave-mart analogy" of Chapter Six with which Paul teaches that Christians have changed from the master of sin to the master of righteousness, how could he as a Christian say, I am "sold under sin" (v. 14). My answer to the seeming dilemma is that one must understand this troublesome phrase, "sold under sin" in a relative and not an absolute sense. Paul uses other phrases that must be interpreted in a relative framework. An example would be Paul's strong desire to "know" Christ (Philippians 3:10). When those words were written, Paul had been preaching the Gospel for two and one-half decades. He had labored for Christ over vast territories, from Jerusalem to Illyricum (Romans 15:19). So when he says in prayerful tones, "that I may know him" one understands immediately that Paul speaks in a relative, quantitative sense. It is not that the apostle wants to be introduced to Christ. He already knows him well, but he wants to know him more and more until ultimately he knows him fully. We have the reverse application of a quantitative, relative statement in 7:14 in that Paul does not mean he is continually, nor totally sold under sin, as is the non-Christian, but he does still struggle with the sin principle which raises its head and exerts its influence in Paul from time to time. The succeeding verses develop the thought of verse 14 and show clearly that this limited quantitative view of "sold under sin" is correct and applies only to a limited number of times and circumstances in Paul's life.

There are five good solid lines of argument in favor of Paul speaking biographically as well as of every other regenerate man in general.

1. It is abnormal for any writer to use pronouns in a strictly figurative sense as prolifically as they appear throughout this paragraph. The

pronoun "I" is used thirty times; the pronoun "me" may be counted twelve times; add "my" or "myself" five times and there are a total of forty-seven pronouns which point to Paul as surely as the needle of the compass points to the north.

2. Paul affirms in verse fifteen, "What I hate, that I do." How can this expression of hatred of sin be properly applied to the non-converted sinner who revels in his sin? He may be aware that what he does is not right and even admit that the judgment of God is just, and that he is worthy of death (Romans 1:32), but he still loves to sin. Hatred of sin is hardly characteristic of any other than the Christian who knows what it cost God at Calvary to conquer sin.

3. The unregenerate man does not "delight in the law of God" (v. 22). How many worldlings do you know who love God's Word, who "meditate upon it day and night" (Psalm 1:2; 119:15, 23, 24), who judge the Word of God to be "sweeter than the honeycomb" and desire it more "than gold" (Psalm 19:9, 10)?

4. At verse fourteen the verb tense changes from the past to the present and the present tense is used throughout the rest of the chapter. It would be strange, indeed, to refer, even figuratively, to people before the time of Moses and the law, or to the Jewish race during the Mosaic dispensation, with the continuous use of a verb in the present tense. Such a "present" expression does not even fit the view that Paul speaks of himself before his conversion from Judaism to Christianity.

5. The paragraph, understood very literally, makes good common sense because it reflects accurately the universal experience of man. Through the years I have asked of my students, "Is there any person in the classroom who does not occasionally do what he hates? Is there anyone present who does not yet struggle with sin and sometimes yields to temptation? To date no one has raised a hand. It is more than modesty which keeps those hands from being raised. It is reality, Paul's experience, your experience, and my experience with sin. It is the universal problem of behavior.

Barclay cites three areas in which human inadequacies are plainly evident. "Human knowledge" is not adequate to handle the sin problem. To know the right does not guarantee that one will do that which is ethical. Hamilton says, "The devil has all the knowledge the angels have, and he is wholly evil." The second inadequacy cited is "human resolution." When human will is confronted with opposition, it frequently fails. Peter is an outstanding example of one whose willpower failed his desire and intention. The third inadequacy is related to "human diagnosis." It is one thing for the doctor to diagnose an illness, but quite another thing to prescribe a successful remedy. Today most doctors can recognize cancer rather readily and even specify the particular

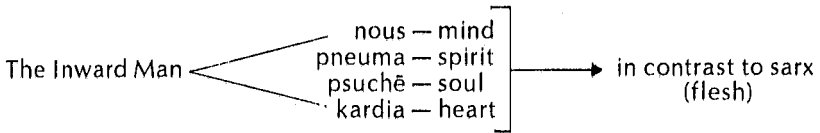
## THIRTEEN LESSONS ON ROMANS

kind of cancer with which one is afflicted. The doctor or scientist who can write a prescription for successful treatment will become a world-hero overnight. Paul knew very well what was wrong in his life, and he was wretched over it. Within him was no ability to solve the problem, nor could the solution be found among men (v. 24). Victory could only be found "through Jesus Christ our Lord" (v. 25).

There are three laws (principles or motivating forces) of which Paul speaks in verses 22-25. The first of these forces is the "law of God" as written in the Scriptures. The "law of God" is the will of God expressed. In a democracy law should be an expression of the will of the people. It has been a custom in some areas of the United States for people to say, "Here comes the law" when a policeman or patrolman approached. Obviously what is meant by that saying is, "Here comes a representative of the law" and if law were traced to its ultimate in a democracy, it would be proper upon seeing an officer of law to say, "Here comes a representative of the people" because he enforces their will. The law of God and the will of God are identical. To limit the power and force of the written Word of God is to limit and depreciate the ability of God to will, or to express His will and see that it is recorded correctly, or to enforce his will and bring into existence that which he desires. The Bible begins with the dynamic Word of God speaking the worlds into existence. The entire account of creation pivots on the phrase, "and God said." "The Word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing even to the dividing of soul and spirit of both joints and marrow, and quick to discern the thoughts and intents of the heart." The written Word of God is potent and an undeniable force when its content is given lodging in the mind of man. It is "living" and possesses the power infused into it, by God Himself, to beget life. (See the discussion of Romans 1:16 and the statement that the Gospel is the "power of God unto salvation.")

The second motivating force introduced is "the law in my members" (v. 22) which is also called, "the law of sin" (vv. 23, 25). Inasmuch as much of the next lesson will be devoted to Paul's use of the word "flesh" suffice it to say at this point that "flesh" is used by Paul to mean that which is an operating force within the body and flesh uses the members of the body to fulfill its own designs. "The law in my members," "the law of sin," and "flesh" are all quite synonymous with Paul and all must experience an incarnation to be effective. This law, principle, or force can only function "in my members" (v. 23) or "the body" to produce its ultimate product which is death (v. 24).

The third law discussed is that of "the mind." The law of God operates in conjunction with the law of the mind. The inward man delights in the law of God (v. 22), and it is with the mind that the law of God is served (v. 25).



God addresses himself to the intellectual, spiritual, inward man. The Devil appeals to man through the flesh and uses things physical to promote his program which can be summarized in three words, deception, sin, and death.

### READER'S REVIEW:

1. What is the major question asked in Chapter Seven?
2. What is the unacceptable, but unavoidable implication which is made by suggesting that the law of God is weak or imperfect?
3. State evidence that Paul thought of the law positively rather than negatively.
4. How is sin personified by Paul?
5. List four functions of the law discussed in this section of study.
6. What is the distinction which should be made in the meaning of the word "death" between its usage here in 7:9-11 and the discussion of "death" in 5:12-14?
7. How can you harmonize the ideas that the law was given unto life and the law kills?
8. What is it that one should know about sin which would discourage him from rationalizing sin or treating it lightly?
9. What are the various views of the meaning of the personal pronoun "I" as used in verses 14-25?
10. Which of the above views you have stated do you consider to be incorrect and why?
11. The author states that there are "five good solid lines of argument in favor of Paul speaking biographically" when he uses the pronoun "I." State these arguments and indicate why you agree or disagree with them.
12. List the three areas in which Barclay states that men are inadequate when they face the sin problem.
13. Cite the three laws or forces which are operative in man and identify or define each of them.
14. What is meant by the statement that all of the laws you have just cited "must experience an incarnation to be effective"?
15. In what sense may it be said that the "law of God" and the "will of God" are synonymous?
16. List the various parts of man that are used interchangeably at times in the Bible to denote the inner man which stands in stark contrast to the sarx or fleshly man.

## **Lesson Thirteen**

(8:1-11)

### **VICTORY OF THE SPIRIT**

The eighth chapter receives more praise than other chapters of Romans. Erdman, building upon words of praise for the entire letter writes, "If the Roman Epistle has been rightly called the cathedral of the Christian faith, then the eighth chapter is its innermost shrine." Spencer states, "If the Holy Bible were considered a ring, the book of Romans would be a gem. The eighth chapter would be its very most sparkling point." This chapter is greatly praised because it contains so many blessings for God's children and ends with a declaration of certain victory for them. Much of the content of the eighth chapter must be left for consideration in a second volume. It may seem strange to some that this first volume introduces a limited portion of Chapter Eight. Why not conclude at the end of Chapter Seven? The opening paragraph of Chapter Eight and Chapter Seven cooperate beautifully in shedding light and understanding upon each other. They belong in the same volume.

### **THE POWER OF SIN REMOVED**

1 There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus. 2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus made

me free from the law of sin and of death. 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: 4 that the ordinance of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

The chapter opens with a major blessing in which every Christian revels. Christ accomplished that which the law could not do. The sting and power of sin has been removed through Christ's death at Calvary and there is therefore no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. The first Adam committed one sin which brought sin and death to all whom he represents (the human race). The second Adam performed one act of grace which removed condemnation for all those who come to Him in faith in His redemptive role. Paul did not write in chapters and verses and his thought progression extends beyond the end of Chapter Seven into Chapter Eight. The word "law" in 8:2-4 reflects its usage in 7:21-25 where "law" means an operative principle or force which has negative effects in man. The "law of the Spirit of life" is identical with the "law of my mind" in 7:23. (See the closing paragraph and diagram of the preceding lesson.) It is unfortunate that most English translations capitalize the word "spirit" in verse 2. It is far more likely that the word "spirit" should not be capitalized because of the trend of the discussion in the general context. At the close of Chapter Seven the "law of the mind" (spirit) and the "law in my members" (flesh) are contrasted and in the opening verses in Chapter Eight it is obvious that Paul is contrasting flesh and spirit. The "spirit" therefore, has reference to the spiritual life principle, (a combination of soul, heart, mind), resident in man. It is the spirit of a man, under the direction of the Holy Spirit, alive in Christ and free from sin and death. The Holy Spirit has only been mentioned once with certainty thus far (5:5). It is open to question whether "Spirit" should or should not be capitalized in 1:4. The word "spirit" need not be capitalized in Chapter Eight until its second appearance in verse nine where it is the "Spirit of God." These observations about the possible use of a capital or a small "s" are in no way intended to minimize the person of the Holy Spirit nor to depreciate His presence and work. The prominence of the Holy Spirit and His work has been emphasized in Lesson Nine. The truth stands out as if written in letters of neon lights. "If any man hath not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his" (v. 9). The attempt here is to determine what the apostle Paul means to say to us through his choice of words. Of course, we would not be faced with the problem of choice of upper case or lower case letters if the Greeks had capitalized proper nouns as we do today. The

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question can only be decided on the basis of context and other comparable teaching in the Scriptures. "The law of sin and death" (v. 2) surely reflects "the law in my members" and "the law of sin" of 7:23. All three of these designations point to the lower nature in man. Distinct, then, from the man whose spirit is controlled by the Holy Spirit is the carnal man who is under the control of Satan. The law in verse three is identical with "the law of God" in 7:22. The motivational force of this law, though dynamic, is thwarted from accomplishing its purpose by the weakness in man which Paul chooses to call "flesh" (v. 3). The intent of the law of God as expressed in its ordinance (requirements) is satisfied by those who walk by the inner drive of the mind and spirit and not according to the influence of "the flesh" which for Paul is also a motivational force in men (v. 4).

### THE ANTITHESIS OF FLESH AND SPIRIT

5 For they that are after the flesh mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. 6 For the mind of the flesh is death; but the mind of the Spirit is life and peace: 7 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: 8 and they that are in the flesh cannot please God. 9 But ye are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you. But if any man hath not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.

Before proceeding further in this section of study, it would be well to pause to look at a Pauline antithesis of flesh and spirit and to investigate more fully into Paul's use of the word "flesh."

#### Flesh

1. After the flesh,  
vv. 4, 5, 12, 13
2. The mind of the flesh,  
vv. 5, 6, 7
3. In the flesh,  
vv. 8, 9
4. The mind of the flesh is death,  
v. 6

#### Spirit

1. After the spirit,  
vv. 4, 5
2. The mind of the spirit,  
v. 6
3. In the spirit,  
v. 9
4. The mind of the spirit is life and  
peace, v. 6

Progression is probably intended in the above phrases relating to both flesh and spirit. To have the "mind of the flesh" would express a



greater degree of influence of the flesh than being "after the flesh" and to be "in the flesh" would actually place one in the "conditioning sphere" of the flesh where all that is done would be under fleshly influence. All that is said here of the flesh would apply to the phrases relating to the spirit.

Flesh (*sarx*) is a versatile word with a variety of meanings. The little work, *Flesh and Spirit*, by William Barclay is worth far more than its size would indicate. In this book Barclay says of "flesh," "It is a word of which there is no adequate English translation, a word of which the meaning cannot be sharply and simply defined, a word towards the meaning of which we have to grope our way, and yet a word which stands for certain facts in the human situation which are part of the basic experience of life of every man."

1. The broadest meaning of *sarx* is the whole of humanity (Romans 3:20; 8:3; I Corinthians 1:29; Galatians 2:16).

2. Sometimes "flesh" is used of the human body or to indicate some physical condition (Romans 2:28; Galatians 2:20; 4:13).

3. "Flesh" is used on occasion to refer to human thought patterns, as man sees it, or from a human point of view (Romans 1:3; 4:1; 9:5).

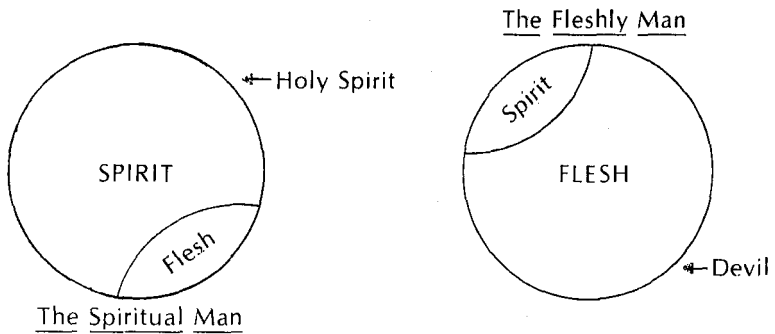
4. "Flesh" is also used to mean "evaluations or judgments based on human standards" (I Corinthians 1:26; II Corinthians 1:17; 5:16).

5. There is yet another usage of "flesh" by Paul which must be considered. As G. B. Stevens writes, "no definition of *sarx* can be given which will be equally applicable to all the uses which Paul makes of that word." If this last definition of "flesh" is missed, however, the student will have difficulty understanding the content of Romans. Flesh is a great deal more than the body (Galatians 5:19-21; Romans 8:8). "Flesh" is a deadly enemy of the spirit (Galatians 5:17).

- a. "Flesh" is hostile to God and cannot please Him (Romans 8:7, 8). The body may be saved (I Thessalonians 5:23), but not the "flesh." All that can be done with the flesh is to put it to death, crucify it.
- b. It follows then, that to live in the "flesh" is the exact opposite of being spiritual or Christian (Romans 7:5; 8:5, 9; Galatians 5:24).
- c. To be dominated by the "flesh" is the equivalent of being under sin (Romans 7:5, 14).
- d. It is with "flesh" that one serves "the law of sin" (Romans 7:25).
- e. The "flesh" has never done anything good for any man and no man is in debt to the flesh (Romans 8:12). Such a statement cannot be accurate if made about the body which houses man's spirit and with which he serves God. The body (members) can be instruments of righteousness (Romans 7:13) with which to glorify God and no man has ever rendered any service for God apart from his body.
- f. Finally it should be noted again that it is "flesh" which makes the law of God incapable of functioning successfully in man (Romans 8:3).

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Because of the clarity of the illustration this citation is made from *Flesh and Spirit*. "The essence of the flesh is this. No army can invade a country from the sea unless it can obtain a bridgehead. Temptation would be powerless to affect men, unless there was something already in man to respond to temptation. Sin could gain no foothold in a man's mind and heart and soul and life unless there was an enemy within the gates who was willing to open to sin. The flesh is exactly the bridgehead through which sin invades the human personality. The flesh is like the enemy within the gates who opens the way to the enemy who is pressing in through the gates."



The circles above are intended to represent men in exact opposites of spiritual life. The one on the left is the man who is living under the controlling principle of the spirit. He has subdued the flesh to the point that it is no longer a controlling factor in his life. "Flesh" is still present within the man and it will be there until he dies. If that were not true, he could no longer be tempted. A man will continue to struggle with "flesh" until the release of death places him wholly in the spirit world. Today business enterprises make their sales through the use of telephones. There was a time when all such sales work was done house to house by knocking on doors. Salespeople were instructed on how to approach the resident so as to gain entrance to the home. The slogan was popularized, "Get your foot in the door." The Devil knows how to approach man and gain entrance into his life. If it were not for the "flesh" there would be no door for the Devil's entrance. As man is, however, the Devil just keeps putting his foot in the door. Every man must decide whether he will or will not open the door. There is no sin in being tempted but to welcome or throw open the door to temptation results in sin. When Jesus said, "Get thee behind me, Satan" he was slamming the door to temptation. The circle above on the right represents the man

who has thrown the door of his life wide open to the input of the Devil. He is not only "after the flesh" but he has the "mind of the flesh" to the degree that it may be said of him he is "in the flesh." Thus, he lives in a "conditioning sphere" and there is a causal relationship, that is, the "flesh" is what a man has made himself to be by deliberately dwelling in the sphere of the flesh rather than in the sphere of the spirit. A seamstress follows "after" a pattern as she cuts out a dress. Later she may be clothed "in" that dress. It should not be said that "flesh" is what God made man to be. Rather, "flesh" is that which becomes a controlling force in man when God is shut out of his life. The "flesh" is an enemy of God, and God cannot communicate with "flesh." One who follows the flesh quenches the Spirit (1 Thessalonians 5:19). The Holy Spirit of God communicates with the spirit of man. If a man quenches his own personal spirit, he concomitantly destroys the possibility of receiving communication from the Holy Spirit. Thousands of circles would need to be drawn to represent men in their various conditions of spiritual life. It is possible for a man to be so controlled by the flesh that God no longer has access to his life and without any line of communication, God gives him up. (See the previous discussion on Romans 1:24-28). Day by day the Christian is involved in eradicating the flesh and opening his life more fully to the Lord. The whole paragraph of Galatians 5:16-25 is pertinent to this discussion. If you "walk by the Spirit" you will "not fulfill the lust of the flesh." One whose spirit is under the direction of the Holy Spirit is not under the law of the flesh nor is he condemned by the law of God. There is no law or force of any kind which can destroy the life of one who is so open to the Spirit of God that he is bearing the "fruit of the Spirit." "They that are of Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with the passions and the lusts thereof. If we live by the Spirit, by the Spirit let us also walk."

### FINAL RESURRECTION VICTORY

10 And if Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the spirit is life because of righteousness. 11 But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwelleth in you, he that raised up Christ Jesus from the dead shall give life also to your mortal bodies through his Spirit that dwelleth in you.

The content of verse ten takes us back to the physical death of 5:12. "If Christ is in you" the body is still dead because of sin. Christians, just like all other members of the human race, continue to die. It has already been noted in lesson ten that men, good or bad, and any who

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are at any point between those ethical poles have died and will continue to do so because of Adam's sin. Man is given no choice in this matter. Some claim the word "dead" in this verse to have a good connotation and refer it to conversion or being dead to sin. If that were true, however, one would expect the verse to read, "dead because of repentance" and not as is stated, "because of sin." So the better understanding is that even if one is living in union with Christ, he cannot avoid the universal experience of physical death. But man does have the choice of subduing the flesh and living according to the spirit which produces life. The spirit is equated with life in verse ten because when the spirit of man responds to God in faith, God counts that one to be righteous and God has access to that life to shepherd it "in the paths of righteousness" (Psalm 23:3). That is not the end of the story. It would be proper to introduce the apostle's own expression of "much more" at this point even though Paul does not use it here. Not only does the spirit of a man direct him to life through God's plan for man to be righteous, (only the spirit of man can respond to that plan) but "much more" than that, the Spirit of God who dwells in the Christian will give life to the dead, mortal body. All three members of the Godhead are associated with the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. In Acts 2:32; 17:29-31 it is God who raised up the Lord Jesus Christ. John 2:19 and 10:17, 18 make it clear that Jesus had power to take up His life again. In this verse it is the Holy Spirit of God who is the agent of life. He is mentioned in connection with the raising of Jesus from the dead and is cited to be the life giving Spirit who will infuse life into dead mortal bodies in the final transcendent resurrection.

### READER'S REVIEW:

1. Why is the eighth chapter praised above all others of Romans?
2. How is the opening paragraph of Romans connected to the closing discussion of Chapter Seven?
3. What is the major problem in determining the meaning of the word "spirit" in this paragraph as well as in many other Scriptural passages?
4. What are the two sources of assistance which aid the reader to determine whether Paul refers to the Holy Spirit or to the human spirit?
5. How many times has the Holy Spirit been mentioned in the first seven chapters of Romans?
6. How far may one proceed in the study of Chapter Eight before he is forced to capitalize the word "spirit"?

7. What is the difference of meaning between the phrases, "after the flesh" and "in the flesh"? Include in your answer the terminology, "conditioning sphere."
8. Cite some of the meanings of the word "flesh" other than the distinctive meaning which is uniquely Pauline.
9. What is the definition of "flesh" which the author indicates is essential to the understanding of Romans?
10. What is the figure used by Barclay to illustrate the meaning of "flesh"?
11. At what time does man have the potential of being released from the force of "flesh"?
12. What is the first blessing promised in Chapter Eight?
13. What is the meaning of the clause, "that the ordinance of the law might be fulfilled in us" (v. 4)?
14. What are the two laws of 8:1-4 which have been discussed in Chapter Seven?
15. What truth is stated so specifically, pointedly, and clearly by Paul that the author observes that it stands out "as if in letters of neon lights"?
16. Is it physical or spiritual death referred to in 8:10? Support your answer.
17. How can Paul equate spirit and life (v. 10)?
18. Which members of the Godhead are said to be involved in the resurrection of Jesus from the dead?