

INTRODUCTION TO THE LETTER TO THE ROMANS

The Apostle Peter said that Paul wrote some things which were difficult to understand (2 Pet. 3:15-16). Romans is perhaps the most difficult of Paul's inspired writing, yet for just this reason it is extremely valuable. Luther says: "You find, then, in this epistle, the greatest abundance of things that a Christian ought to know: what the Law is, the Gospel, sin, punishment, grace, faith, righteousness, Christ, God, good works, love, hope, cross-bearing, also how we are to conduct ourselves in every relation toward the godly and toward sinners, toward friends, toward enemies, and toward ourselves . . . It seems, therefore, that the apostle's object in this epistle was to draw up a *syllabus of the entire Christian and evangelical doctrine, and to prepare an introduction to the entire Old Testament.*"

A Judge once said that "every part of a document should be examined in its relation to the whole, and the whole examined in its relation to the different parts." This is true of the entire Bible, but especially so for this Letter to the Romans. Each verse and each statement stands in its relation to the entire Letter, and to the entire Bible. Some have said that Paul took a Jewish Gospel and distorted it with his own opinion. *This cannot be true!* The ONE Holy Spirit guided the sacred writers and each wrote what God wanted written! Compare 2 Tim. 3:16-17.

The controversy about the Law of Moses erupted very early at Rome. A certain type of Jew, both rich and extremist, fought over this question with more bitterness than in other churches. See note on Acts 6:9. The unbelieving Jews joined in the battle, and so great was the controversy that Emperor Claudius banished all the Jews from Rome (see Acts 18:2 and note).

No one knows just when the church was planted in Rome. There were already Christians there before Paul arrived (*Acts 28:14-15*). On the day of Pentecost, there were both Jews and Gentiles converted to Judaism at Jerusalem who had come there from Rome (*Acts 2:10-11*). Paul wrote this letter to the Romans from Corinth, during his three months in Greece (*Acts 20:2-3*). At the time he wrote, he was about to take money to the poor of the messianic community in Jerusalem (*Rom. 15:25-28*). *Ramsay* gives the date of 57 A.D., in the spring, for the time of writing.

THE LETTER OF PAUL TO THE ROMANS

1 From Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, and an apostle chosen and called by God to preach his Good News.

²The Good News was promised long ago by God through his prophets, and written in the Holy Scriptures. ³It is about his Son, our Lord Jesus Christ: as to his humanity, he was born a descendant of David; ⁴as to his divine holiness, he was shown with great power to be the Son of God by being raised from death. ⁵Through him God gave me the privilege of being an apostle, for the sake of Christ, in order to lead people of all nations to believe and obey. ⁶This also includes you who are in Rome, whom God has called to belong to Jesus Christ.

⁷And so I write to all of you in Rome whom God loves and has called to be his own people:

1 Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle and set apart for the gospel of God—the gospel he promised beforehand through his prophets in the Holy Scriptures regarding his Son, who as to his human nature was a descendant of David, and who through the Spirit of holiness was declared with power to be the Son of God by his resurrection from the dead: Jesus Christ our Lord. Through him and for his name's sake, we received grace and apostleship to call people from among all the Gentiles to the obedience that comes from faith. And you also are among those who are called to belong to Jesus Christ.

To all in Rome who are loved by God and called to be saints:

.1-7. **From Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus.** The custom in the first century was for the writer to introduce himself at the beginning of a letter. **Chosen and called by God.** Paul makes this strong statement of his "apostleship," because Jews of the "circumcision party" tried very hard to discredit him. Jesus Christ appointed Paul to be an apostle (*Acts 9:15; 1 Cor. 9:1*). **To preach his Good News.** God himself is the source of the gospel. It is God's act in Christ which sets us free (*compare 1 Cor. 2:8-10*). **Was promised long ago.** The Good News was no "off-beat distortion of Judaism." It was the fulfillment of God's Plan. The prophets of the Old Testament pointed forward to "Someone who is coming." **It is about his Son.** Christianity is based on the *rock-foundation* of this fact: Jesus Christ is the Messiah, the Son of God. Certain Jews were offended by this claim (*see Luke 22:67-71*). **He was born.** Christ was uniquely the "child of the woman" (*see notes on 1 Tim. 2:15; Gal. 4:4*). This made him a descendant of David by his human birth, since his human mother belonged to "David's family." Compare *Matt. 22:41-46*. **As to his divine holiness.** Jesus had no human father, but God himself by means of the Holy Spirit was *directly* the father of Jesus. But more than this, Jesus was the Eternal Logos in human form. Both humanity and divinity were united in him. Compare *Rom. 8:3*. **He was shown.** The "raising from death" proved him to be the son of God!!! **Through him God gave me.** Christ chose the apostles directly. Compare *John 17:6-12*. **An apostle.** "Apostle" originally meant one of the ships which transported grain on the Mediterranean Sea. Apostles had all the miraculous "gifts from the Spirit," and only they could *pass these on* to others (*Acts 8:14-17*). Paul was an apostle and could do these things. **In order.** "To believe and obey" = "unto obedience of faith." Paul's mission was to proclaim the Good News so people could believe and obey. Compare *Rom. 10:17; Acts 26:16-18*. [On *faith*, see note on *James 2:19*.] **This also includes you.** These Christians at Rome had believed and obeyed. God had called them to Christ through the Good News. **And so I write.** Paul sends this letter to all who are "God's people" in Rome. Rome was the capital of the world, home of Emperor Nero, a city of some two million. **Whom God loves.** Compare *Col. 3:12* and note. **His own people.** Christians are *uniquely*

May God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ give you grace and peace.

Prayer of Thanksgiving

⁸First, I thank my God, through Jesus Christ, for all of you; because the whole world is hearing of your faith. ⁹God can prove that what I say is true—the God whom I serve with all my heart by preaching the Good News about his Son. God knows that I always remember you ¹⁰every time I pray. I ask that God, in his good will, may at last make it possible for me to visit you now. ¹¹For I want very much to see you in order to share a spiritual blessing with you, to make you strong. ¹²What I mean is that both you and I will be helped at the same time, you by my faith and I by your faith.

¹³You must remember this, my brothers: many times I have planned to visit you, but something has always kept me from doing so. I want to win converts among you, too, as I have among other

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

Paul's Longing to Visit Rome

First, I thank my God ⁸ through Jesus Christ for all of you, because your faith is being reported all over the world. God, whom I serve ⁹ with my whole heart in preaching the gospel of his Son, is my witness how constantly I remember you ¹⁰ in my prayers at all times; and I pray that now at last by God's will the way may be opened for me to come to you.

I long to see you so that I ¹¹ may impart to you some spiritual gift to make you strong—that is, that you and ¹² I may be mutually encouraged by each other's faith. I ¹³ do not want you to be unaware, brothers, that I planned many times to come to you (but have been prevented from doing so until now) in order that I might have a harvest among you, just as I have had among the other Gentiles.

God's own people. [*Saint* originally meant "one consecrated to God" = "God's own people."] **Give you grace and peace.** This is Paul's greeting to them. It is a prayer for God and Jesus to bless them. Note that Paul was not a "Unitarian." [Paul states the gospel in this introduction: (1) Jesus is the Son of God; (2) he took our humanity; (3) he demonstrated divine power; (4) he was raised from death; (5) men are saved when they believe and obey.]

8-15. **First, I thank my God.** Paul made it a habit to thank God through Jesus Christ for each and every believer. Here he directs these words to the Christians at Rome to show his deep interest in their spiritual health. **Because the whole world.** Rome was the center of civilization, and therefore the church at Rome would be known and talked about everywhere. **God can prove.** Only God could know Paul's private prayers. God does hear his people pray (*see Rev. 8:1-5 and notes*). **Whom I serve with all my heart.** Paul made his whole life a *living sacrifice*! ["All my heart" = "in spirit" (*John 4:23-24*).] **That I always remember you.** This shows his deep love for all God's people. Compare *Eph. 1:15-16; Phil. 1:3-4; Col. 1:3; 1 Thess. 1:2*. **I ask that God.** Paul asked God to allow him to go to Rome. God did do this, but in an unusual way (*see note on Acts 28:16*). **For I want very much to see you.** Compare *1 Thess. 2:11 and note*. **To share a spiritual blessing with you.** This means that so far, no apostle had ever been at Rome. The spiritual blessings (gifts from the Spirit) were *passed on* by the apostles. See note on *Acts 8:17*. **To make you strong.** See note on *1 Cor. 12:7*. This would give them "instant maturity." **Both you and I will be helped.** No hint of despotism here! They were *partners and co-workers* in Christ. **Many times I have planned.** Such as *Acts 19:21*. But the time had not been right. When Paul did go, the whole church watched him (so to speak). **I want to win converts.** This fierce desire burned in Paul

Gentiles. ¹⁴For I have an obligation to all peoples, to the civilized and to the savage, to the educated and to the ignorant. ¹⁵So then, I am eager to preach the Good News to you also who live in Rome.

The Power of the Gospel

¹⁶I have complete confidence in the gospel; it is God's power to save all who believe, first the Jews and also the Gentiles. ¹⁷For the gospel reveals how God puts men right with himself: it is through faith, from beginning to end. As the scripture says, "He who is put right with God through faith shall live."

The Guilt of Mankind

¹⁸God's wrath is revealed coming down from heaven upon all the sin and evil of men whose evil ways prevent the truth from being known.

I am obligated both to 14 Greeks and non-Greeks, both to the wise and the foolish. That is why I am so 15 eager to preach the gospel also to you who are at Rome.

I am not ashamed of the 16 gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile. For in the 17 gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: "The righteous will live by faith."

God's Wrath Against Mankind

The wrath of God is being 18 revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their

like a fire! The Gentiles were his special responsibility (*Acts 9:15*). **For I have an obligation.** God had put Paul right with himself. Now Paul is sent to proclaim the Good News to everyone everywhere!!! The civilized Greeks and Romans had contempt for other people; and the educated had contempt for the ignorant. But Paul's obligation applied to all (*ours does too*). **So then, I am eager.** Not just willing, but eager!

16-17. **I have complete confidence in the gospel.** Paul is making a positive declaration and the TEV words it so! The gospel is the Good News of God's act in Christ to set men free! **It is God's power to save all who believe.** The gospel includes *facts* to be believed, *commands* to be obeyed, and *promises* to be received! The death, burial, and resurrection of Christ (*1 Cor. 15:1-4*) form the *focal-point* of God's offer to put men right with himself. Compare *1 Cor. 1:23-25*. **First the Jews.** This offer from God came first to the Jews. **Also the Gentiles.** [Greek = Gentile.] God's same terms of salvation were preached to both Jew and Gentile. **For the gospel reveals.** The obedient believer has the righteousness of Christ ritually credited (imputed) to him. Compare *Rom 3:21-26; 8:3-4*. **It is through faith.** *Eddins* says: "Further, the actions of obedience are actions growing out of faith. When considered this way God's plan is "faith from beginning to end." [Faith is *obediential*: See note on *James 2:19*.] **As the scripture says.** The quotation is from *Habakuk 2:4*. The Old Testament had predicted this system of *righteousness by means of faith*.

18. **God's wrath is revealed.** The balance of this chapter shows that God is justified in sending his wrath on the sin and evil of men. Salvation is not "make-believe!" The Law shows the reality of sin. Against the background of the Law, God's act in Christ to set men free is clearly seen as a beautiful act of LOVE! **Whose evil ways prevent.** Evil men inflict *blindness* upon themselves and others, and so prevent the truth from being known.

¹⁹God punishes them, because what men can know about God is plain to them. God himself made it plain to them. ²⁰Ever since God created the world, his invisible qualities, both his eternal power and his divine nature, have been clearly seen. Men can perceive them in the things that God has made. So they have no excuse at all! ²¹They know God, but they do not give him the honor that belongs to him, nor do they thank him. Instead, their thoughts have become complete nonsense and their empty minds are filled with darkness. ²²They say they are wise, but they are fools; ²³instead of worshiping the immortal God, they worship images made to look like mortal man or birds or animals or reptiles.

²⁴Because men are such fools, God has given them over to do the filthy things their hearts desire, and they do shameful things with each

wickedness, since what may 19 be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse.

For although they knew 21 God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. Although they 22 claimed to be wise, they became fools and exchanged 23 the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles.

Therefore God gave them 24 over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another.

19. **God punishes them.** God did not "cut off" the Gentiles and leave them with no knowledge at all of him. Melchizedek and Balaam were both priests of God *outside* of the Law of Moses. There could have been others, although the scripture is silent. The point is that there was enough about God which *could be known* that the evil men of *verse 18* have no excuse for their action. Compare *Acts 17:27*.

20. **Ever since God created the world.** "Have been clearly seen" is in the *continuous tense*. Ever since Creation, enough evidence has been present to prevent anyone from worshiping lifeless images. There is no excuse, then, since no one can claim ignorance.

21. **They know God.** *MacKnight* says: "The writings of Plato, Xenophon, Plutarch, Cicero, and other philosophers . . . prove that the learned heathens, though ignorant of the way of salvation, were acquainted with the unity and spirituality of God, and had just notions of his perfections, of the creation and government of the world, and of the duties which men owe to God and to one another." When men in their pride deliberately blind themselves to Truth, they plunge deeper into the darkness of evil. [Heart = mind.]

22. **But they are fools.** Those who repudiate God, are fools. Intelligence does not keep anyone from making a fool of himself. The Greeks and Romans were proud of their wisdom, but their worship of images showed them to be fools.

23. **Instead of worshiping the immortal God.** Nature clearly shows there is an immortal God who is the Creator. When they made themselves *blind* to God, they began worshiping false gods and made images of them.

24. **To do the filthy things.** God himself did not *cause* their sin, but when they rejected him, he allowed them to bring trouble upon themselves. The false religions accelerated the moral decay of the Gentile world. Compare note on *1 Thess. 1:9*.

other. ²⁵They exchange the truth about God for a lie; they worship and serve what God has created instead of the Creator himself, who is to be praised forever! Amen.

²⁶Because men do this, God has given them over to shameful passions. Even the women pervert the natural use of their sex by unnatural acts. ²⁷In the same way the men give up natural sexual relations with women and burn with passion for each other. Men do shameful things with each other, and as a result they themselves are punished as they deserve for their wrongdoing.

²⁸Because men refuse to keep in mind the true knowledge about God, he has given them over to corrupted minds, so that they do the things that they should not. ²⁹They are filled with all kinds of wickedness, evil, greed, and vice; they are full of jealousy, murder, fighting, deceit, and malice. They gossip, ³⁰and speak evil of one another; they are hateful to God, insolent, proud, and boastful; they think of more ways to do evil; they disobey their parents; ³¹they are immoral; they do not keep their promises, and they show no kindness or pity to others.

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

Because of this, God gave 26
them over to shameful lusts.
Even their women ex-
changed natural relations
for unnatural ones. In the 27
same way the men also a-
bandoned natural relations
with women and were in-
flamed with lust for one an-
other. Men committed in-
decent acts with other men,
and received in themselves
the due penalty for their per-
version.

Furthermore, since they 28
did not think it worthwhile
to retain the knowledge of
God, he gave them over to a
depraved mind, to do what
ought not to be done. They 29
have become filled with
every kind of wickedness,
evil, greed and depravity.
They are full of envy, mur-
der, strife, deceit and mal-
ice. They are gossips, slan-
derers, God-haters, inso-
lent, arrogant and boastful;
they invent ways of doing
evil; they disobey their
parents; they are senseless, 31
faithless, heartless, ruthless.

25. **They exchange the truth.** Some think the images were originally intended to help focus the mind on God. In time, the image *became* "god" for them, and God the Creator was forgotten.

26-27. **Because men do this.** That is, because men make themselves and others blind to Truth. **Even the women.** They committed unnatural acts (such as lesbianism) with *other women*. **In the same way the men.** The Romans of the first century felt no guilt about homosexual activity. **Natural sexual relations.** See *1 Cor. 7:1-5* and notes. **They themselves are punished.** Wrongdoing curses and finally destroys the one who practices such things.

28. **To corrupted minds.** Compare *2 Thess. 2:9-12*. Those whom God cannot *convince*, he *confuses*. See note on *Matt. 24:21* for an example of what people bring on themselves by rejecting God.

29. **They are filled.** The language of the TEV shows us clearly the character of those who have *corrupted minds*.

30. **They are hateful to God.** Sin is a hateful thing to God. See note on *Matt. 27:46*.

31. **They are immoral.** ASUNETOUS = without insight into moral and religious things. These are so *amoral* that they have lost all sense of God and evil. **No kindness or pity.** Compare *Matt. 18:21-35* and notes.

³²They know that God's law says that people who live in this way deserve death. Yet, not only do they continue to do these very things, but also approve of others who do them.

God's Judgment

2 Do you, my friend, pass judgment on others? You have no excuse at all, whoever you are. For when you judge others, but do the same things that they do, you condemn yourself. ²We know that God is right when he judges the people who do such things as these. ³But you, my friend, do these very things yourself for which you pass judgment on others! Do you think you will escape God's judgment? ⁴Or perhaps you despise his great kindness, tolerance, and patience. Surely you know that God is kind because he is trying to lead you to repent. ⁵But you have a hard and stubborn heart. So then, you are making your own punishment even greater on the Day when God's wrath and right judgments will be reveal-

Although they know God's 32 righteous decree that those who do such things deserve death, they not only continue to do these very things, but also approve of those who practice them.

God's Righteous Judgment

2 You, therefore, have no excuse, you who pass judgment on someone else, for at whatever point you judge the other, you are condemning yourself, because you who pass judgment do the same things. Now we know that God's judgment against those who do such things is based on truth. So when you, a mere man, pass judgment on them and yet do the same things, do you think you will escape God's judgment? Or do you show contempt for the riches of his kindness, tolerance and patience, not realizing that God's kindness should lead you to repentance?

But because of your stubbornness and your unre-

32. **They know that God's law.** "They" means the evil men and women just described. God's "natural law of right and wrong" is written in the minds of every human being! Compare *verse 19*. **Deserve death.** The Gentile philosophers showed they knew this, by the things they wrote. **Yet, not only.** This is a deliberate act, because they know what God's law (*of nature*) says. Knowing the consequences, they sin, approve of others who do the same things, and actually taught people how to sin!!! Historians such as Tacitus, Horace, Seneca and Juvenal show that this picture of sin which Paul shows to us, is accurate in describing the Gentile world of the first century. This is conclusive proof of the mess man makes of things when he tries to escape God.

1. **Do you?** Paul has shown in *chapter 1* just why God's wrath comes on the Gentiles. Now he shows the Jews that they are no better, even though they had God's special revelation, the Old Testament. The Jews may not have gone as deep into moral decay as did the Gentiles, but the same *root* lay at the bottom of their sin. They rejected God's truth. For this reason, every time they denounced the Gentiles, they denounced themselves also.

2. **We know that God is right.** Truth makes it right for God to judge those who make sin a habit, whether they are Jews or Gentiles. Compare *Rev. 18:4-9*.

3. **These very things yourself.** The Jew did think he was exempt from God's wrath. Read what Jesus said in *Matt. 7:3-5*. Many think their own sin will go unpunished!

4. **Or perhaps you despise.** They did despise God's love, because they did not understand. The fact that God did not punish them immediately for their sin caused them to think they would never be punished. Therefore they despised the Law, because they believed it was inoperative. But God's kindness was intended to make them repent. See *2 Pet. 3:9*.

5. **But you have a hard and stubborn heart.** By misunderstanding God's kindness, they closed their minds to Truth. They used God's *patience* to sin even more against him. This increased the amount of their guilt. [Degrees of punishment? See note on *Luke 12:48*.]

ed. ⁶For God will reward every person according to what he has done. ⁷Some men keep on doing good, and seek glory, honor, and immortal life; to them God will give eternal life. ⁸Other men are selfish and reject what is right, to follow what is wrong; on them God will pour his wrath and anger. ⁹There will be suffering and pain for all men who do what is evil, for the Jews first and also for the Gentiles. ¹⁰But God will give glory, honor, and peace to all who do what is good, to the Jews first, and also to the Gentiles. ¹¹For God judges everyone by the same standard.

¹²The Gentiles do not have the Law of Moses; they sin and are lost apart from the Law. The Jews have the Law; they sin and are judged by the Law. ¹³For it is not by hearing the Law that men are put right with God, but by doing what the

pentant heart, you are storing up wrath against yourself for the day of God's wrath, when his righteous judgment will be revealed. God "will give to each person according to what he has done." To those who by persistence in doing good seek glory, honor and immortality, he will give eternal life. But for those who are self-seeking and who reject the truth and follow evil, there will be wrath and anger. There will be trouble and distress for every human being who does evil: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile; but glory, honor and peace for everyone who does good: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile. For God does not show favoritism.

All who sin apart from the law will also perish apart from the law, and all who sin under the law will be judged by the law. For it is not those who hear the law who are righteous in God's

6. **For God will reward.** Having Abraham for an ancestor will be no help. God treats all men alike. The greatest sin is disbelief. The greatest work is to believe Jesus is the Messiah. [On the nature of faith, see note on *James 2:19*.]

7. **Some men keep on doing good.** Even though salvation is based entirely on God's act in Christ, we save ourselves by a series of actions (see *Phil. 2:12*; *Acts 2:40*; *1 Cor. 15:58*; *2 Pet. 1:10*). Man divides himself into two groups: those who obey God; and those who obey the Devil. Faith is action (see *James 2:22*).

8. **Other men are selfish.** This verse shows the character of the wicked. *Verse 9* shows their punishment. God lets us choose which group we are in, and Jesus is the basis of that choice (see *John 14:21-24*).

9. **There will be suffering and pain.** God's wrath will come on the wicked. See *Jude 14-16*. Compare note on *Rev. 15:1*. **For the Jews first.** The Jews were *first in line* to receive God's truth. Therefore, they will be *first in line* to be judged.

10. **But God will give glory.** Glory, honor, and peace are the eternal reward of those who do what is good. Again, the Jew stands *first in line*, because he heard about it first. [But no man really does good. See *Romans 3:9-20*.]

11. **By the same standard.** Both Jew and Gentile are measured by the same standard. *Acts 10:34-35* explains this.

12. **The Gentiles do not have the Law of Moses.** The subject is "Jews and Gentiles." The TEV restates the subject to make it clear. The Law of Moses was God's revelation to the Jew only. The Gentile had no part in the Law. He sinned and was lost apart from the Law. See also *Acts 17:30*.

13. **But by doing.** The Jew heard the Law, but did not obey it. Therefore it did him no good. Only those who obey the Law can be put right with God by it. [The technical term is *justified*.] Whether there is anyone who actually can obey the Law is not a question asked here.

Law commands. ¹⁴The Gentiles do not have the Law; but whenever of their own free will they do what the Law commands, they are a law to themselves, even though they do not have the Law. ¹⁵Their conduct shows that what the Law commands is written in their hearts. Their consciences also show that this is true, since their thoughts sometimes accuse them and sometimes defend them. ¹⁶And so, according to the Good News I preach, this is how it will be on that Day when God, through Jesus Christ, will judge the secret thoughts of men.

The Jews and the Law

¹⁷What about you? You call yourself a Jew; you depend on the Law and boast about God; ¹⁸you know what God wants you to do, and you have learned from the Law to choose what is right; ¹⁹you are sure that you are a guide for the blind, a light for those who are in darkness,

sight, but it is those who obey the law who will be declared righteous. (Indeed, ¹⁴ when Gentiles, who do not have the law, do by nature things required by the law, they are a law for themselves, even though they do not have the law, since they ¹⁵ show that the requirements of the law are written on their hearts, their consciences also bearing witness, and their thoughts now accusing, now even defending them.) This will take ¹⁶ place on the day when God will judge men's secrets through Jesus Christ, as my gospel declares.

The Jews and the Law

Now you, if you call yourself a Jew; if you rely on the law and brag about your relationship to God; if you ¹⁸ know his will and approve of what is superior because you are instructed by the law; if you are convinced ¹⁹ that you are a guide for the blind, a light for those who

14. **The Gentiles.** When we examine things closely, we see that there is no such thing as a man absolutely without the knowledge of God's will. *Rom. 1:18-32* shows this, therefore Paul's argument is accurate. The Law did not make the Jew closer to God than the Gentile, even though it was an advantage. The whole point of Paul's reasoning is that God has decreed only one method of putting men right with himself, and will follow one rule in rewarding and punishing them.

15. **Their conduct shows.** Their actions show that they do have this Law written in their hearts. Their consciences also demonstrate this by showing they know right from wrong. They have a sense of moral values. The codes of law in the ancient Gentile world showed this also.

16. **And so.** This verse connects with *verses 12-13*. There will be no secrets on that Day! Those who have sinned (the whole human race) will be judged, whether under the Law or apart from the Law. See *verse 3*. **Through Jesus Christ.** The fact that God will judge the whole human race through Jesus Christ is declared many times in the scriptures. See *John 5:22, 27; Acts 17:31; 1 Cor. 4:5; 2 Cor. 5:10*.

17. **What about you?** Some were proud and boasted because they were Jews. Paul has showed that all will be strictly judged according to their actions, whether they have the Law or not. In *verses 17-20*, Paul shows what the Jew claimed for himself. **You call yourself a Jew.** They were proud of this name, because it meant to them that they were "God's chosen people," and this made them proud. **You depend on the Law.** There is an article before *law* in the corrected Greek text. The Law was their "good luck charm." **And boast about God.** They thought of God as "their personal property," and believed they were "eternally secure," no matter what they did!

18. **You know what God wants you to do.** They did have this advantage. But they thought it was enough if they had this knowledge. Compare *verse 13*.

19. **A guide for the blind.** This was their claim. God intended the Jews to be teachers of the Truth. But they failed to do it. Their actions did not match their claims.

²⁰an instructor for the foolish, and a teacher for the young. You are certain that in the Law you have the full content of knowledge and of truth.

²¹You teach others—why don't you teach yourself? You preach, "Do not steal"—but do you yourself steal? ²²You say, "Do not commit adultery"—but do you commit adultery? You detest idols—but do you rob temples? ²³You boast about having God's law—but do you bring shame on God by breaking his law? ²⁴The scripture says, "Because of you Jews, the Gentiles speak evil of God's name."

²⁵If you obey the Law, your circumcision is of value; but if you disobey the Law, you might as well never have been circumcised. ²⁶If the Gentile, who is not circumcised, obeys the commands of the Law, will not God regard him as though he were circumcised? ²⁷And so you Jews will be condemned by the Gentiles, because you break the Law, even though you have it written down and are circumcised, while they obey the Law, even though they are not physically cir-

are in the dark, an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of infants, because you have in the law the embodiment of knowledge and truth—you, then, who teach others, do you not teach yourself? You who preach against stealing, do you steal? You who say that people should not commit adultery, do you commit adultery? You who abhor idols, do you rob temples? You who brag about the law, do you dishonor God by breaking the law? As it is written: "God's name is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you."

Circumcision has value if you observe the law, but if you break the law, you have become as though you had not been circumcised. If those who are not circumcised keep the law's requirements, will they not be regarded as though they were circumcised? The one who is not circumcised physically and yet obeys the law will condemn you who, even

20. You are certain. They believed the Law was God's complete revelation to the world. [It wasn't! God's complete revelation is Jesus Christ. Compare *John 1:17*; *Heb. 1:1-3*; *1 John 1:1-4*. The Law was in charge of us until Christ came (*Gal. 3:24*).]

21. You teach others. In verses 21-24, he shows their actual practice. They did not "practice what they preached." **Do not steal.** The Law said this, but Jews were famous (or infamous) for their *shrewd* business deals.

22. Do not commit adultery. The Law said this, but some of the best known teachers of the Law made a habit of this sin. **You detest idols.** Babylonian captivity taught the Jews never to worship idols again! By "robbing temples," Paul means they conducted business deals which brought them in contact with idols and their temples, defiling themselves, but feeling no guilt about it.

23. You boast about. They were proud of the fact that God had given them the Law. But they shamed God by the way they lived their lives.

24. The scripture says. The quotation is from *Isa. 52:5* in the Septuagint. Their greed, their cheating, and their hypocrisy were well known to the Gentiles. And the Gentiles judged the Law of Moses by what they saw in those who claimed to follow it.

25. If you obey the Law. The Jews were very proud of their circumcision, because this was the seal of the Covenant. But it could not substitute for obedience. Compare Paul's inspired statement in *Gal. 5:12*.

26. If the Gentile. The Gentile who obeys is "circumcised in spirit," that is, he becomes a descendant of Abraham (*Gal. 3:29*). The disobedient Jew is no better than a Gentile. The obedient Gentile is as good as a Jew.

27. Will be condemned by the Gentiles. Compare *Matt. 12:41-42* and notes. The obedience of the Gentiles who did not have the Law, condemned the Jews who did have the Law but did not obey it.

cumcised. ²⁸After all, who is a real Jew, truly circumcised? Not the man who is a Jew on the outside, whose circumcision is a physical thing. ²⁹Rather, the real Jew is the man who is a Jew on the inside, that is, whose heart has been circumcised, which is the work of God's Spirit, not of the written Law. This man receives his praise from God, not from men.

3 Do the Jews have any advantage over the Gentiles then? Or is there any value in being circumcised? ²Much, indeed, in every way! In the first place, God trusted his message to the Jews. ³What if some of them were not faithful? Does it mean that for this reason God will not be faithful? ⁴Certainly not! God must be true, even though every man is a liar. As the scripture says,

"You must be shown to be right when you speak;
you must win your case when you are being tried."

though you have the written code and circumcision, are a lawbreaker.

A man is not a Jew if he ²⁸is only one outwardly, nor is circumcision merely outward and physical. No, a man is a Jew if he is one inwardly; and circumcision is circumcision of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the written code. Such a man's praise is not from men, but from God.

God's Faithfulness

3 What advantage, then, is there in being a Jew, or what value is there in circumcision? Much in every way! First of all, they have been entrusted with the very words of God.

What if some did not have faith? Will their lack of faith nullify God's faithfulness? Not at all! Let God be true, and every man a liar. As it is written:

"So that you may be proved right in your words and prevail in your judging."

28. Who is a real Jew? Nationality and circumcision did not make a real Jew.

29. Who is a Jew on the inside. Circumcision of the heart means inward purity. Compare *Col. 2:11-12*. The work of God's Spirit. This contrasted with the *letter* of the Law. Compare *Phil. 3:3*; *Titus 3:5*; *Rom. 3:24*. This man receives his praise from God. Men may say evil things about one who is a true Jew, a spiritual descendant of Abraham, but God will approve him. The religious advantages which a Jew had, made him that much more guilty when he did not live up to what he knew. Compare *James 4:17* and note.

1. Do the Jews have any advantage? Paul's conclusions in *chapter 2* are contrary to what the Jews believed. We can imagine them asking: "If our advantages will be no help at Judgment, and Gentiles can also be accepted, what good is all this?"

2. In the first place. The advantage of the Jew is explained in *Rom. 9:4-5* and notes. Paul here mentions first: the message or God which is the Old Testament. Next to Christ and the New Testament, the Old Testament was God's greatest gift to mankind. It pointed forward to the Messiah, and gave a description of him so that he could be identified.

3. What if some? "Would not the unfaithfulness of some Jews *invalidate* God's promise?" The Jewish argument runs: "If some of the *chosen people* are lost through their unfaithfulness, doesn't this mean that God has not been faithful himself, since he promised to be a God to Abraham's descendants forever?"

4. Certainly not! [*God forbid* is not in the Greek.] God's promise was conditional (*see Deut. 28:1-14*), and required faith and obedience. "God is true to his promise even though every Jew were unfaithful and proved to be a liar by breaking the promise." The quotation is from *Psalms 51:4* in the Septuagint.

5 But what if our doing wrong serves to show up more clearly God's doing right? What can we say? That God does wrong when he punishes us? (I speak here as men do.) **6** By no means! If God is not just, how can he judge the world?

7 But what if my untruth serves God's glory by making his truth stand out more clearly? Why should I still be condemned as a sinner? **8** Why not say, then, "Let us do evil that good may come"? Some people, indeed, have insulted me by accusing me of saying this very thing! They will be condemned, as they should be.

But if our unrighteousness brings out God's righteousness more clearly, what shall we say? That God is unjust in bringing his wrath on us? (I am using a human argument.) Certainly not! If that were so, how could God judge the world? Someone might argue, "If my falsehood enhances God's truthfulness and so increases his glory, why am I still condemned as a sinner?" Why not say—as we are being slanderously reported and as some claim that we say—"Let us do evil that good may result"? Their condemnation is deserved.

No One Is Righteous

What shall we conclude then? Are we any better? Not at all! We have already made the charge that Jews and Gentiles alike are all under sin. As it is written: **10** "There is no one righteous, not even one;

No Man Is Righteous

9 Well then, are we Jews in any better condition than the Gentiles? Not at all! I have already shown that Jews and Gentiles alike are all under the power of sin. **10** As the Scriptures say:

"There is no one who is righteous,

5. But what if our doing wrong? Israel is under judgment for rejecting Christ. The Jewish argument is: "If our sin in crucifying Christ blessed the whole world, and if our unbelief makes the faithfulness of God stand out; how can God punish us for this good work?" See also *Rom. 6:1-2*. (I speak here as men do.) That is, Paul is saying this is the human reasoning about this question.

6. By no means! God could not judge at all if he were unjust. Because he does judge, he cannot be unjust, even when he judges men whose sin may have helped fulfill the Plan.

7. But what if my untruth? It is plain that a charge of untruth was often made against Paul (*compare Gal. 1:20; Rom. 9:1*). No unbelieving Jew questioned the fact that Paul would come into judgment, in spite of the fact that his "faithlessness in becoming a Christian" had made the faithfulness of God to Israel stand out. Paul takes their idea that he is to be judged as a sinner and turns it on them. They believe he lied, but that some good came from it. Yet they condemn him as a sinner. This shows they already understand that even though good may come from sin, the sin is still not excused. [Scholars cannot agree on verses 7-8.]

8. Why not say, then? If judgment could be escaped by sinning to the glory of God, then we ought to do evil to produce good. The unbelieving Jews were telling people that Paul taught such a thing. **They will be condemned.** God's judgment on those who pervert the truth in such ways as this, is just! God does not permit sin (*1 Pet. 1:13-16*).

9. In any better condition? The Jew was surprised to see his advantages disappear. "Surely we Jews are in better condition than the Gentiles because of our *devoutness!*" **Not at all!** Paul makes this strong, because he has shown that both Jews and Gentiles are all under the power of sin. Not just simply sinful: all mankind are both guilty and unable to escape from that condition by themselves.

10. As the Scriptures say. Paul shows them from the Old Testament that no one is righteous before God (*by themselves*). He quotes language from *Psalms 14:1-3; 53:1-3; 5:9; 140:3; etc.*, all from the Septuagint. **There is no one who is righteous.** If "righteous" means *completely free from sin*, then this is true of all mankind (see *1 John 1:8-10*). Only Jesus lived without sin. See *Heb. 4:15*.

¹¹no one who understands,
or who seeks for God.
¹²All men have turned away from God;
they have all gone wrong;
no one does what is good, not even one.
¹³Their mouths are like an open grave;
wicked lies roll off their tongues,
and deadly words, like snake's poison,
from their lips;
¹⁴ their mouths are full of bitter curses.
¹⁵They are quick to hurt and kill;
¹⁶ they leave ruin and misery wherever
they go.
¹⁷They have not known the path of peace,
¹⁸ nor have they learned to fear God."
¹⁹Now we know that everything in the Law
applies to those who live under the Law, in order
to stop all human excuses and bring the whole
world under God's judgment. ²⁰Because no man
is put right in God's sight by doing what the Law
requires; what the Law does is to make man
know that he has sinned.

there is no one who 11
understands,
no one who searches for
God.
All have turned away 12
and together become
worthless.
There is no one who does
good,
not even one."
"Their throats are open 13
graves;
their tongues practice
deceit."
"The poison of vipers is
on their lips."
"Their mouths are full 14
of cursing and
bitterness."
"Their feet are swift to 15
shed blood;
ruin and misery mark 16
their paths,
and the way of peace they 17
do not know."
"There is no fear of 18
God before their
eyes."
Now we know that what- 19
ever the law says, it says to
those who are under the law,
so that every mouth may be
silenced and the whole world
held accountable to God.
Therefore no one will be de- 20
clared righteous in his sight
by observing the law; rather,
through the law we become
conscious of sin.

11-18. These verses are a general statement of the condition of mankind. Wherever man goes, he leaves a trail of destruction and misery behind him. Human wickedness continually inflicts injury on others. Even when they are clearly shown the "path of Peace," they make themselves *blind* to it. **Nor have they learned to fear God.** This both sums up and explains why man is under the power of sin. When God is not feared [respected, worshiped], nothing else is; and with the final barrier down, sin comes in like a flood! Paul has proved from the Scriptures that no man is righteous!

19. **Now we know.** The things which Paul has just quoted are part of the Law, and apply to Jews. **To stop all human excuses.** Every excuse of the Jew has been demolished by the Law. **And bring the whole world.** Jews believed the Gentiles were already under God's judgment. Now they find that they themselves are also under God's judgment.

20. **Because.** Since Paul is speaking to Jews, he speaks of *the Law*, but this also can apply to law in general. In the present state of human nature, perfect obedience to law is impossible. **What the Law does.** The Law is a standard of measurement which makes man aware that he is a sinner, but does not offer him any hope of a way to escape from guilt.

How God Puts Men Right

²¹But now God's way of putting men right with himself has been revealed, and it has nothing to do with law. The Law and the prophets gave their witness to it: ²²God puts men right through their faith in Jesus Christ. God does this to all who believe in Christ, because there is no difference at all: ²³all men have sinned and are far away from God's saving presence. ²⁴But by the free gift of God's grace they are all put right with him through Christ Jesus, who sets them free. ²⁵God offered him so that by his death he should become the means by which men's sins are forgiven, through their faith in him. God did this in order to demonstrate his righteousness. In the past, he was patient and overlooked men's sins; ²⁶but now in the present time he deals with men's sins, to demonstrate his righteousness. In this way God shows that he himself is righteous and that he puts right everyone who believes in Jesus.

Righteousness Through Faith

But now a righteousness ²¹ from God, apart from law, has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. This righteousness from God comes ²² through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference, for all have ²³ sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified ²⁴ freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. God ²⁵ presented him as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in his blood. He did this to demonstrate his justice, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed ²⁶ beforehand unpunished—he did it to demonstrate his justice at the present time, so as to be just and the one who justifies the man who has faith in Jesus.

21. **But now God's way.** The Law and God's promise were two different things. See what Paul says in *Gal. 3:17-18*. The Law and the prophets told that God would provide a righteousness that did not originate in law. See *Heb. 8:7-13* and notes.

22. **Through their faith in Jesus Christ.** Faith in Christ is the condition. In this sense it is faith alone which saves, but the faith which saves cannot be alone. See note on *James 2:19*. Faith is not a condition of *merit*, but of mercy. **There is no difference at all.** Both Jew and Gentile stand condemned by sin. Both must believe in Jesus Christ to be saved.

23. **All men have sinned.** *Beza* points out the symbolism in the Greek is of one whose strength fails him, and who falls behind in a race. The Jew was as far away from God's saving presence as was the Gentile.

24. **But by the free gift.** God acted in history through Jesus Christ to set men free from their sin. This is a free gift, because we did nothing to earn it! God had it all done before we found out about it! Compare *1 Cor. 2:7-10*.

25. **God offered him.** Blood is often the symbol of death, and it is by the death of Christ—the totality of his sacrifice—that he is the *means* [propitiation = means] by which sins are forgiven. Christ died so that we could live (see *2 Cor. 5:14-21*; *1 Pet. 2:24*; *1 Cor. 15:3*; *Gal. 2:20*). What God has given to the world in Christ, infinitely great and absolutely free, is literally *nothing* unless it is *taken*. We must reach out through faith to seize the sacrifice of Christ and make ourselves part of it! **God did this.** The Jew despised God's patience with sinners (see *Rom. 2:4* and note). But *Heb. 9:15* shows it was on the basis of what Jesus *would do* that God was patient.

26. **But now.** In the past God overlooked men's sins and did not punish them immediately. But now, since the Cross and until time ends, God deals with men's sins. God's righteousness is demonstrated in the Cross, and we see that sin and salvation are not "make-believe!" At the same time, God accepts as righteous (PUTS RIGHT WITH HIMSELF) those who reach out through faith to make themselves part of Christ on the Cross and identify with his death (*Col. 2:12*; *Rom. 6:3-6*).

²⁷What, then, can we boast about? Nothing! And what is the reason for this? Is it that we obey the Law? No, but that we believe. ²⁸For we conclude that a man is put right with God only through faith, and not by doing what the Law commands. ²⁹Or is God only the God of the Jews? Is he not the God of the Gentiles also? Of course he is. ³⁰God is one, and he will put the Jews right with himself on the basis of their faith, and the Gentiles right through their faith. ³¹Does this mean that we do away with the Law by this faith? No, not at all; instead, we uphold the Law.

Where, then, is boasting? ²⁷ It is excluded. On what principle? On that of observing the law? No, but on that of faith. For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from observing the law. Is God the God ²⁹ of Jews only? Is he not the God of Gentiles too? Yes, of Gentiles too, since there is ³⁰ only one God, who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through that same faith. Do ³¹ we, then, nullify the law by this faith? Not at all! Rather, we uphold the law.

27. **What, then, can we boast about?** Every law which requires HUMAN MERIT as a condition of salvation permits boasting and pride. The salvation which comes as a free gift through the merit of Christ's sacrifice, which we seize through faith, gives us nothing to boast about.

28. **For we conclude.** He has proved that we are put right with God [justified] only through faith (which includes the obedience of faith). A clear line is drawn between faith and the works of the Law, as these represent two distinctly different religious systems, and this shows us that faith (and the obedience of faith) must not itself be interpreted as a *work of law*.

29. **Or is God only?** The only way to escape the conclusion of verse 28 would be to say that God is a God of the Jews only. Both Jew and Gentile can only be justified by faith in Jesus Christ.

30. **God is one.** Paul points to *Zech. 14:8-9* to prove that in the *new age* of Good News, God will gather all peoples together, and all will be put right with him through the *one rule* of faith (which includes the obedience of faith).

31. **Does this mean?** The Law = the whole Jewish religion. Does salvation by faith make the Law useless? The answer is no, not at all! The Law is upheld for the first time (*Rom 8:4* and note). See what Jesus said in *Matt. 5:17*, and compare the note there. To be *put right with God* is to be pronounced innocent or guiltless. Since no man could obey the Law perfectly (see *James 2:10* and note), no man could be put right with God through the works of the Law. As we reach out in faith to seize Christ, and make ourselves part of his sacrifice, his merit is **RITUALLY CREDITED** [*imputed*] to us and the Law cannot condemn us.

Three uses of law. 1. **A Fence.** Law serves the purpose of restraining sin and promoting righteousness. Considered from this point of view, law presupposes sin and is necessary on account of sin. It serves the purpose of God's common grace in the world at large. This means that, from this point of view, law cannot be regarded as a means of grace in the technical sense of the word. 2. **A Teacher.** In this capacity law serves the purpose of bringing man under conviction of sin, and of making him conscious of his *inability* to meet the demands of law. In that way law becomes his teacher to lead him *unto* Christ, and so becomes an *assistant* to God's gracious purpose of *setting men free from sin*. 3. **A Rule.** This is the so-called *third use of law*. The law of Christ (*1 Cor. 9:21*) is a rule of life for believers, reminding them of their duties and leading them in the way of life and salvation. The "obedience of faith" is not a thing of merit, but the *living sacrifice* of *Rom. 12:1-2; James 1:26-27; 2:14-17; etc.* This third use of law is denied by the Antinomians.

The Example of Abraham

4 What shall we say, then, of Abraham, our racial ancestor? What was his experience? ²If he was put right with God by the things he did, he would have something to boast about. But he cannot boast before God. ³The scripture says, "Abraham believed God, and because of his faith God accepted him as righteous." "A man who works is paid; his wages are not regarded as a gift, but as something that he has earned. ⁵But the man who has faith, not works, who believes in the God who declares the guilty to be innocent, it is his faith that God takes into account in order to put him right with himself. ⁶This is what David meant when he spoke of the happiness of the man whom God accepts as righteous, apart from any works:

"Happy are those whose wrongs God has forgiven,
whose sins he has covered over!

Abraham Justified by Faith

4 What then shall we say that Abraham, our forefather, discovered in this matter? If, in fact, Abraham was justified by works, he had something to boast about—but not before God. What does the Scripture say? "Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness."

Now when a man works, his wages are not credited to him as a gift, but as an obligation. However, to the man who does not work but trusts God who justifies the wicked, his faith is credited as righteousness. David says the same thing when he speaks of the blessedness of the man to whom God credits righteousness apart from works:

"Blessed are they whose offenses have been forgiven
and whose sins have been covered.

1. **Of Abraham, our racial ancestor.** Paul has said that being put right with God has nothing to do with the Law. It is through faith, from beginning to end (*Rom. 1:17*). Now he shows the example of Abraham. **What was his experience?** Paul asks: "Was Abraham put right with God by works of law, or by faith?"

2. **By the things he did.** If he was *put right with God* by his OWN MERIT, this would give him something to boast about. **But he cannot.** See *Rom. 3:19-20* and notes.

3. **The scripture says.** Paul quotes *Gen. 15:6* here, and in *Gal. 3:6*; also *James 2:23*. Abraham believed God's promise to him of a son by Sarah, and this faith was the basis on which God accepted him as righteous. Faith obeys (see note on *James 2:19*).

4. **A man who works is paid.** *Lipscomb* says: "If one relies on his own works to merit salvation, the reward is reckoned not as a favor [grace] from God, but as payment of debt for works. This is contrary to the whole principle of justification by grace. Man is a lost and helpless sinner, saved by the grace of God; but he must accept [seize it and make himself part of it] that favor by complying with the conditions God has enjoined [decreed] for his enjoying [receiving] it."

5. **But the man who has faith.** This speaks of the man who *does not* try to *earn* salvation through his own merit. If human merit were required for salvation, then no one could be saved at all because of the principle in *James 2:10*. Our actions can never be anything but imperfect (*1 John 1:8-10*). However, faith cannot be *perfect* EXCEPT through the *obedience of faith* (*James 2:19,23* and notes).

6. **This is what David meant.** Paul has shown us Abraham was *put right with God* through his faith, rather than through the things which he did. Now he shows us David speaking about the same faith.

7. **Whose sin he has covered over.** This uses the symbolism of the sacrifices of the Law in which the blood of the sacrifice *covered over* the *sins* so they could be forgiven.

thought of his body, which was already practically dead, or of the fact that Sarah could not have children. ²⁰His faith did not leave him, and he did not doubt God's promise; his faith filled him with power, and he gave praise to God. ²¹He was absolutely sure that God would be able to do what he had promised. ²²That is why Abraham, through faith, "was accepted as righteous by God." ²³The words "He was accepted as righteous" were not written for him alone. ²⁴They were written also for us who are to be accepted as righteous, who believe in him who raised Jesus our Lord from death. ²⁵He was given over to die because of our sins, and was raised to life to put us right with God.

Right with God

5 Now that we have been put right with God through faith, we have peace with God

womb was also dead. Yet he ²⁰ did not waver through unbelief regarding the promise of God, but was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God, being fully persuaded. ²¹ That God had power to do what he had promised. This ²² is why "it was credited to him as righteousness." The ²³ words "it was credited to him" were written not for him alone, but also for us, to ²⁴ whom God will credit righteousness—for us who believe in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead. He ²⁵ was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification.

Peace and Joy

5 Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus

20. **His faith did not leave him.** He did not argue the impossibility of the promise, but waited patiently for it to come true!

21. **That God would be able to do.** He believed God had the ability to do this, and he believed that God would keep his promise to him.

22. **That is why.** Because he was absolutely sure! This faith demonstrated itself in everything he did.

23. **Were not written for him alone.** This speaks of the one who was inspired to write these words [Moses, in Gen. 15:6]. He pointed forward to Christ, and those who would be *accepted as righteous* through their faith in him.

24. **They were written also for us.** We are shown the example of Abraham so that we also might believe. Compare *Rom. 1:16-17*.

25. **He was given over to die.** See *Heb. 2:9-10*. This was God's act in Christ to *set men free*. When Christ was raised to life, this became the guarantee of all our hopes. Paul makes the *death, burial, and resurrection* the focal point of the Good News (*1 Cor. 15:1-4*). Note how he stresses the raising from death (*1 Cor. 15:12-20*). Note how he speaks about the act of baptism (*Col. 2:12; Rom. 6:3-4*).

1. **Put right with God through faith.** Christ's sacrifice changes us, not God. The merit of Christ's *suffering* for us, makes it possible for us to be *put right with God through faith*. In our union with Christ (*2 Cor. 5:17*), we are changed from enemies into friends. The *faith* which puts us right with God: (1) is a faith in Christ as the Messiah; (2) is a faith of the heart (*Rom. 10:9*) which brings the totality of our life into obedience (*Rom. 1:5*). *We have peace with God*. Outside of Christ, all are rebels against God and enemies. Inside of Christ (*Gal. 3:27*), forgiveness brings peace and we are friends. *Luther* says: "Thus we arrive at this result, viz., that faith justifies without any works, and yet it does not follow from this that we must not do any good works, but that genuine works will not be wanting [lacking]. Of these works those who are saints by their own merit know nothing; they frame up works of their own, in which there is neither peace, joy, assurance, love, hope, boldness, nor the quality of any genuine Christian work and faith." Compare *Rom. 10:1-4*.

through our Lord Jesus Christ. ²He has brought us, by faith, into this experience of God's grace, in which we now live. We rejoice, then, in the hope we have of sharing God's glory! ³And we also rejoice in our troubles, because we know that trouble produces endurance, ⁴endurance brings God's approval, and his approval creates hope. ⁵This hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by means of the Holy Spirit, who is God's gift to us.

⁶For when we were still helpless, Christ died for the wicked, at the time that God chose. ⁷It is a difficult thing for someone to die for a righteous person. It may be that someone might dare to die for a good person. ⁸But God has shown us how much he loves us; it was while we were still sinners that Christ died for us! ⁹By his death we are now put right with God; how much more, then, will we be saved by him from God's wrath.

Christ, through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. Not only so, but we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us.

You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous man, though for a good man someone might possibly dare to die. But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath

2. **Into this experience.** Christ brought us, by faith, into this experience of being "put right with God" and "peace." We reach out through faith to make ourselves part of the *experience* of Christ [which is extrinsic to ourselves] as we see from *Rom. 6:5-6*.

3-4. **And we also rejoice.** The Jews boasted about their happiness in the Law. They saw the Christian's *trouble* as a sign of God's disapproval. Not so, says Paul. **Trouble produces endurance, approval, hope,** as a chain of events. Compare *1 Thess. 3:3; Acts 5:41*.

5. **This hope.** The Jews hoped to be saved *because* they were Abraham's descendants. They would be disappointed (*Romans 9*). **God has poured out his love.** *MacKnight* says that ΕΚΚΕΧΥΤΑΙ points to the gifts from the Spirit given to the Gentiles *prove* to the Jews that God does love them. It also means *our awareness* that God loves us.

6. **For when we were still helpless.** Paul has already shown us that *both* Jew and Gentile were helpless under sin's power. It was at this point that God acted in history through Christ to set us free! Compare *Gal. 4:4-5; Rom. 4:25*.

7. **It is a difficult thing.** While we may see a rare example of love in which someone gives up their life to save a good person's life, it is most unusual. This fact categorizes [defines] the amazing love of Christ!

8. **But God has shown us.** This act in history stands for all time as a *monument* to the *infinite love* of God! **It was while.** The false religions of the world show an angry god who must be appeased to escape his wrath. Christ shows us a God who acts in love to make it possible for his children to escape the judgment coming on sinful men. Compare *1 John 3:16-18*.

9. **By his death.** Blood = death. See *Heb. 2:9; 2 Cor. 5:14-21; 1 Pet. 2:24*. *Death* symbolizes the *totality* of Christ's sacrifice (of which blood is a part). **How much more, then.** If Christ died for us while we were still sinners, how much more will Christ save us from the wrath to come, now that we have been put right with God through his death and are not longer sinners,

¹⁰We were God's enemies, but he made us his friends through the death of his Son. Now that we are God's friends, how much more will we be saved by Christ's life! ¹¹But that is not all; we rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, who has now made us God's friends.

through him! For if, when ¹⁰ we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life! Not only is this so, ¹¹ but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.

Adam and Christ

¹²Sin came into the world through one man, and his sin brought death with it. As a result, death spread to the whole human race, because all men sinned. ¹³There was sin in the world before the Law was given; but where there is no law, no account is kept of sins. ¹⁴But from the time of Adam to the time of Moses death ruled over all men, even over those who did not sin as Adam did by disobeying God's command.

Death Through Adam, Life Through Christ

Therefore, just as sin ¹² entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned—for before the law ¹³ was given, sin was in the world. But sin is not taken into account when there is no law. Nevertheless, death ¹⁴ reigned from the time of Adam to the time of Moses,

Adam was a figure of the one who was to come.

10. **But he made us his friends.** Christ's sacrifice does not change God, it changes us (2 Cor. 5:17). We had become God's enemy through our sins. We now become God's friends through the death of his Son. *MacKnight* sees in this a removing of the curse from all mankind - past, present, future - so that all have salvation available to them. Compare verse 18; Heb. 9:15; Eph. 2:16. **By Christ's life.** Compare Rom. 8:11; John 14:19; 1 Pet. 3:21.

11. **But that is not all.** Paul shows us that now the Gentiles can also boast and rejoice that the true God is their God and King and Father, because Christ has abolished the Jewish Law (Eph. 2:15).

12. **Sin came into the world through one man.** The remaining verses of this chapter induce profound theological questions. "Original sin," and "reprobation," as they are taught today are distortions of Bible teaching. A distinction must be made between *physical death* and *spiritual death*. (God knew before Creation that man would sin, and that he would make peace through the death of his Son. See 1 Pet. 1:19-20; Eph. 3:9-11; Col. 1:15-20.) **And his sin brought death with it.** The contrast is between Adam and Christ as each is the **PROXY** for the whole human race. Adam's sin brought physical death to all mankind. Gen. 3:20. **Because all men sinned.** *MacKnight* says: "The meaning is not, that death hath come on all because all have sinned actually; for infants, who have not sinned actually, die; but that they have sinned in Adam as their federal head [proxy]; that is, have involved in the consequences of his sin."

13. **There was sin.** Paul shows us that all mankind must have sinned in Adam (by proxy). Until law is given, no account is kept of sin. Yet death shows that sin was in the world from the time of Adam to Moses.

14. **Death ruled over all men.** None could escape death. Death ruled: (1) even though no law of commands had been given; (2) and no account of sins was kept; (3) even over infants and mental defectives who could not have sinned against natural law (compare Rom. 1:18-23). This shows that all did sin in Adam, who is the proxy of the whole human race. Each of us repeats the acts of Adam *in this sense*; we are born into this world untouched by personal sin. As we grow to accountability, we disobey God's command and become personally guilty. **Adam was a figure.** He was a figure of Jesus Christ. Each as a proxy acted for all mankind. Compare 2 Cor. 5:14-15.

X <

¹⁵But the two are not the same, because God's free gift is not like Adam's sin. It is true that many men died because of the sin of that one man. But God's grace is much greater, and so is his free gift to so many men through the grace of one man, Jesus Christ. ¹⁶And there is a difference between God's gift and the sin of one man. After the one sin came the judgment of "Guilty"; but after so many sins comes the undeserved gift of "Not guilty!" ¹⁷It is true that through the sin of one man death began to rule, because of that one man. But how much greater is the result of what was done by the one man, Jesus Christ! All who receive God's abundant grace and the free gift of his righteousness will rule in life through Christ.

¹⁸So then, as the one sin condemned all men, in the same way the one righteous act sets all

even over those who did not sin by breaking a command, as did Adam, who was a pattern of the one to come.

But the gift is not like the trespass. For if the many died by the trespass of the one man, how much more did God's grace and the gift that came by the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, overflow to the many! Again, the gift of God is not like the result of the one man's sin: The judgment followed one sin and brought condemnation, but the gift followed many trespasses and brought justification. For if, by the trespass of the one man, death reigned through that one man, how much more will those who receive God's abundant provision of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ.

Consequently, just as the result of one trespass was condemnation for all men, so also the result of one act

15. Because God's free gift is not like Adam's sin. The sin of Adam is not contrasted here to the obedience of Christ; but the *penalty* of Adam's sin is contrasted with the *free gift* of grace through Christ's obedience. *Many men died.* The penalty of physical death came to all because of Adam's sin. *But God's grace is much greater.* In Christ we receive back much more than we lost in Adam. God's ACT in Christ will bring all out of the grave. To those who are *in Christ*, this ACT will bring much more!!!

16. And there is a difference. Adam's *one* sin brought the judgment of "Guilty" to all mankind. But the undeserved gift of "Not guilty!" after so many sins, comes through Christ's obedience.

17. Through the sin of one man. If this is compatible with justice (as *verse 12* shows), then the results of Christ's ACT are also compatible with justice. **ALL WHO RECEIVE.** This implies that the results of Christ's act are limited somewhat by the response of each individual. This would agree with *verse 1*. **God's abundant grace.** The raising from death (*verse 15*). This will mean different things to the believer and to the unbeliever (*John 5:28-29*). **His righteousness.** The undeserved gift of "Not guilty!" (*verse 16*). **Will rule in life through Christ.** "Eternal life begins now for those who are *in Christ!*"

18. So then. This is the second part of the comparison begun in *verse 12*. **As the one sin condemned.** Adam's sin brought physical death to all mankind. **The one righteous act.** *Shepherd* says: "What they [we] lost unconditionally in Adam, they [we] gained unconditionally in Christ." This means any "original sin" is canceled by Christ's act. However, until we are *put right with God through faith*, our personal sin still condemns us. *Lipscomb* says: "By the sin of Adam all die and go to the grave. The grace and gift of God must bring them out of the grave and restore them to life, so that all that was lost in Adam may be regained in Christ; but this is not a matter of debt, but of grace." **Christ's death brings:** (1) **LIFE.** All dead will be raised to life (*Rev. 1:7; 1 Cor. 15:21-22; John 5:28-29*). (2) **PARDON.** Full pardon for our guilt in Adam's sin. Therefore infants and mental defectives are sinless. (3) **LIFE.** Eternal life to those who have no personal sin. (4) **FORGIVENESS.** The opportunity to have personal sin canceled. *1 Pet. 3:21-22; Titus 3:4-7.*

men free and gives them life. ¹⁹And just as many men were made sinners as the result of the disobedience of one man, in the same way many will be put right with God as the result of the obedience of the one man.

²⁰Law was introduced in order to increase wrongdoing; but where sin increased, God's grace increased much more. ²¹So then, just as sin ruled by means of death, so also God's grace rules by means of righteousness, leading us to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Dead to Sin but Alive in Christ

6 What shall we say, then? That we should continue to live in sin so that God's grace will increase? ²Certainly not! We have died to sin—how then can we go on living in it? ³For surely you know this: when we were baptized into union

of righteousness was justification that brings life for all men. For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous.

The law was added so that the trespass might increase. But where sin increased, grace increased all the more, so that, just as sin reigned in death, so also grace might reign through righteousness to bring eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Dead to Sin, Alive in Christ

6 What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? By no means! We died to sin; how can we live in it any longer? Or don't you know that all of us who

19. **Were made sinners.** By Adam's sin, all were counted sinners even though many of them never heard of Adam or his sin. **Will be put right.** All inherited penalty for Adam's sin is canceled for the whole human race (the dead will all be raised). All without personal sin are "Not guilty!" before God. God's terms of salvation are for those who have personally sinned. See *verse 1; Acts 2:37-38; Luke 24:47 and notes.*

20. **Law was introduced.** Not only the Law of Moses, but all divine law. The effect of its introduction was to increase wrongdoing. (See *Rom. 7:7-11*). This is speaking about each person's *personal sin*. **God's grace increased.** God offers forgiveness and eternal life to all who will reach out in faith to seize the sacrifice of Christ. Sin verifies the act of God in Christ.

21. **Just as sin ruled.** Death oppresses all! **Leading us to eternal life.** This is like a hymn of praise to God! Sin rules by death, God's grace rules by righteousness, and leads us to eternal life!!! (1) The number saved will be larger than the number lost. Since half of mankind dies in infancy, and, having no personal sin, will be saved (as we believe), the number lost may be no larger proportion than the inmates of a prison compared to the community. See *Rev. 7:9 and note.* (2) The Logos whom we know as Jesus Christ, by his act to set us free, exalts his people to a much higher level of spiritual development, than humanity would have reached, if unfallen. (3) The benefits of Christ's act to set us free extend beyond the human race. See *Rom. 8:19-22; Col. 1:20.*

1-2. **That we should continue to live in sin?** In *chapter 5* Paul showed us that man's sin provided a reason and a need for God's grace and mercy. Some said, "If that is true, then the more we sin, the more God can show his grace." **Certainly not!** [God forbid is not in the Greek.] Paul makes this plain: the Christian life begins with death to sin. In the next few verses, Paul shows us that in the act of baptism, we died to sin and divorced ourselves from it, and that we have been sealed with the death of Christ (see *note on Rev. 7:2-3*).

3. **For surely you know this.** He reminds them that they already know the meaning of baptism. **When we were baptized into union.** *John Wesley* wrote: "In baptism we, through faith, are ingrafted into Christ; and we draw new spiritual life from this new root, through his Spirit, who fashions us like unto him, and particularly with regard to his death and resurrection." **Into union with his death.** We contact the death of Christ in the act of baptism.

with Christ Jesus, we were baptized into union with his death. ⁴By our baptism, then, we were buried with him and shared his death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from death by the glorious power of the Father, so also we might live a new life.

⁵For if we became one with him in dying as he did, in the same way we shall be one with him by being raised to life as he was. ⁶And we know this: our old being has been put to death with Christ on his cross, in order that the power of the sinful self might be destroyed, so that we should no longer be the slaves of sin. ⁷For when a person dies he is set free from the power of sin. ⁸If we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. ⁹For we know that Christ has been raised from death and will never die again—

were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life. 4

If we have been united with him in his death, we will certainly also be united with him in his resurrection. For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be rendered powerless, that we should no longer be slaves to sin—because anyone who has died has been freed from sin. 5 6 7

Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. For we know that since Christ was raised from the dead, he cannot die again; death no longer has mastery over 8 9

4. **We were buried with him and shared his death.** A burial implies death. Baptism is a burial. As death and burial terminate physical life, Paul reasons, so should baptism into Christ terminate our "love affair" with sin. [The original *mode* of baptism was immersion - a burial in water (and the Spirit, *John 3:5*.)] **In order that.** God's power raised Christ from death. He now lives a new life in heaven. Paul says this is what our baptism means to us. We die to sin, are buried, and raise from the liquid grave to live a new life. Compare *2 Cor. 5:17*.

5. **For if we became one with him.** "*Being raised to life*" is understood as a spiritual raising from death. The next verses show this. "*You were at one time spiritually dead because of your sins*" (see *Col. 2:11-13*). We reach out through faith to seize the sacrifice of Christ to make ourselves part of it. In the climax which is baptism, we die with Christ and are raised to life with Christ.

6. **And we know this.** In our baptism we were crucified with Christ. **The power of the sinful self.** Sin has taken possession of our bodies. When we are "*crucified*," sin can no longer make us its slave. As the crucified body of Christ was insensitive to external forces, so in our being crucified with Christ, we no longer respond to sin. [This does not mean we lose the ability to sin. Compare *Col. 3:5; 1 John 1:8-10*. *Luther* says: "This teaches us that we are not so utterly freed from sin by faith that we can be *idle, lazy and secure*, as though sin did no longer exist."]

7. **For when a person dies.** The claim sin has over a person, ends at death. The death of a slave terminated his period of slavery.

8. **That we will also live with him.** Paul returns to his main line of reasoning. In baptism, the burial in the liquid grave climaxes in **EMERGING** from the water. This is both a symbolic and a real resurrection from the dead.

9. **For we know.** When Christ raised from death, death had no more claim over him. He now lives forever!!! We who have shared his death, must also share his eternal life!!! [On the time factor, see *1 John 3:1-3*.] Notice this also applies to the kind of life we live right now (compare *1 Cor. 6:15-20*).

death has no more power over him. ¹⁰The death he died was death to sin, once and for all; and the life he now lives is life to God. ¹¹In the same way you are to think of yourselves as dead to sin but alive to God in union with Christ Jesus.

¹²Sin must no longer rule in your mortal bodies, so that you obey the desires of your natural self. ¹³Nor must you surrender any part of yourselves to sin, to be used for wicked purposes. Instead, give yourselves to God, as men who have been brought from death to life, and surrender your whole being to him to be used for righteous purposes. ¹⁴Sin must not rule over you; you do not live under law but under God's grace.

Slaves of Righteousness

¹⁵What, then? Shall we sin, because we are not under law but under God's grace? By no

him. The death he died, he ¹⁰died to sin once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God.

In the same way, count ¹¹yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus. Therefore, do not let sin ¹²reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires. Do not offer the parts of ¹³your body to sin, as instruments of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God, as those who have returned from death to life; and offer the parts of your body to him as instruments of righteousness. For sin ¹⁴shall not be your master, because you are not under law, but under grace.

Slaves to Righteousness

What then? Shall we sin ¹⁵because we are not under law but under grace? By no

10. **The death he died was death to sin.** Before Christ died, he was tempted in every way that we are (*Heb. 4:15*), and on the Cross was made to share our sin (*2 Cor. 5:21; compare Lev. 16:21-22*). After he died, sin could no longer make him its victim. Note that Christ raised from death in his **body** and went up to God in his resurrection **body**.

11. **In the same way.** This is the application of the first part of this chapter. The **essence** of our faith is a union to *him* in which *his experience* becomes ours. We die to sin in Christ's death; we become alive to God in Christ's resurrection [*Santification* is the believer taking *justification* seriously.]

12. **Sin must no longer rule.** This shows two possibilities: (1) one who has died with Christ and been raised to new life *could* still return to being the slave of sin (*compare Heb. 6:4-6*); (2) one who is new in Christ *has the option* of living a holy life. [Not the *ascetic* life of human holiness, but the *living sacrifice* of God's holiness.]

13. **Any part of yourselves.** The New Testament teaches a *wholistic* view of man (*1 Thess. 5:23*). Greek thought viewed man as a *soul* imprisoned in a *body of flesh*. The New Testament views man as a **UNITY** of body, soul, and spirit. It makes a lot of difference in our conduct, whether we view our bodies as a prison or a "temple of the Holy Spirit."

14. **Sin must not rule.** Law has no answer for the **power** of sin. It is not *restraint*, but *inspiration*, which sets us free from sin. But the way Paul says this raises the problem of *Rom. 3:8; 4:1* again. He uses the rest of this chapter to settle this question.

15. **What, then? Shall we sin?** Since we are not ruled by commandments of law, but by the **SENSE** of what we owe God for his free gift of grace, are we then to make a habit of sin??? Since God set us free at the Cross, are we to make a habit of sin??? **By no means!** This is Paul's inspired answer for all time! [*God forbid* is not in the Greek.]

means! ¹⁶Surely you know that when you surrender yourselves as slaves to obey someone, you are in fact the slaves of the master you obey—either of sin, which results in death, or of obedience, which results in being put right with God. ¹⁷But thanks be to God! For at one time you were slaves to sin; but then you obeyed with all your heart the truths found in the teaching you received. ¹⁸You were set free from sin and became the slaves of righteousness. ¹⁹I use ordinary words because of the weakness of your natural selves. At one time you surrendered yourselves entirely as slaves to impurity and wickedness, for wicked purposes. In the same way you must now surrender yourselves entirely as slaves of righteousness, for holy purposes.

²⁰When you were the slaves of sin, you were free from righteousness. ²¹What did you gain from doing the things that you are ashamed of now? The result of those things is death! ²²But now you have been set free from sin and are the slaves of God; your gain is a life fully dedicated

means! Don't you know that ¹⁶when you offer yourselves to someone to obey him as slaves, you are slaves to the one whom you obey—whether you are slaves to sin, which leads to death, or to obedience, which leads to righteousness? But thanks ¹⁷be to God that, though you used to be slaves to sin, you wholeheartedly obeyed the form of teaching to which you were committed. You ¹⁸have been set free from sin and have become slaves to righteousness.

I put this in human terms ¹⁹because you are weak in your natural selves. Just as you used to offer the parts of your body in slavery to impurity and to ever-increasing wickedness, so now offer them in slavery to righteousness and holiness. When you were slaves to sin, ²⁰you were free from the control of righteousness. What ²¹benefit did you reap at that time from the things you are now ashamed of? Those things result in death! But ²²now that you have been set free from sin and have be-

16. **That when you surrender yourselves.** If we make ourselves *slaves* to sin, death is the wage we receive! But if through obedience we make ourselves *slaves* to God, we will be put right with him and receive all his promises!

17. **But thanks be to God!** Paul gives thanks to God that his readers have already made their choice - to obey God! **The truths found in the teaching you received.** Paul points back to their baptism as a *point of obedience*. All the apostles taught the same truths (the Good News), so we find a parallel to this in *Acts 2:38; 22:16; 1 Pet. 3:21 and notes*.

18. **You were set free from sin.** When they died to sin and were baptized into union with Christ's death (verses 3-4). **And became the slaves of righteousness.** "*You do not belong to yourselves but to God; he bought you for a price*" (*1 Cor. 6:19-20*);

19. **I use ordinary words.** He apologizes for using the slave-master relationship of human society to teach them a spiritual truth, but their moral weakness (as seen in their past lives) makes it necessary. **Slaves of righteousness.** This means to take God's work in Christ to set men free from sin as a *serious matter!* The Cross is not *make-believe!* The price paid shows God's valuation of we human beings.

20. **When you were slaves of sin.** It is a reasonable thing to devote yourself to God in righteousness, because when you were a slave of sin, you gave no obedience to righteousness.

21. **What did you gain?** Results show true value. They are now ashamed of their sinful acts. Sin brings death (eternal separation from God)!

22. **But now.** Because you have died to sin and are no longer its slave. **Your gain.** The result of a life dedicated to God is eternal life!

to him, and the result is eternal life. ²³For sin pays its wage—death; but God's free gift is eternal life in union with Christ Jesus our Lord.

An Illustration from Marriage

7 Certainly you understand what I am about to say, my brothers, because all of you know about law. The law rules over a man only as long as he lives. ²A married woman, for example, is bound by the law to her husband as long as he lives; but if he dies, then she is free from the law that bound her to him. ³So then, if she lives with another man while her husband is alive, she will be called an adulteress; but if her husband dies, she is legally a free woman, and does not commit adultery if she marries another man. ⁴That is the way it is with you, my brothers. You also have died, as far as the Law is concerned, because you are part of the body of Christ; and now you belong to him who was raised from death in order that we might be

come slaves to God, the benefit you reap leads to holiness, and the result is eternal life. For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord. ²³

An Illustration From Marriage

7 Do you not know, brothers—for I am speaking to men who know the law—that the law has authority over a man only as long as he lives? For example, by law a married woman is bound to her husband as long as he is alive, but if her husband dies, she is released from the law of marriage. So then, if she marries another man while her husband is still alive, she is called an adulteress. But if her husband dies, she is released from that law and is not an adulteress, even though she marries another man. ²

So, my brothers, you also died to the law through the ³

23. For sin pays its wage - death. The slave of sin earns his own death. **But God's free gift.** Man has no ability to earn eternal life. What he cannot do for himself, God offers as a free gift through Jesus Christ. All have the right to come, and to accept the water of life as a gift (*Rev. 22:17*).

1. Certainly you understand. Paul uses an illustration from human life to show that the Christian is dead to the Law. *Luther* says: "When a husband dies, his wife, too, becomes free, and each is released from the other. Not in this sense, that the woman is not to take another husband, but rather in this sense, that she is now truly free to take another, which she could not do before she became released from her former husband." **Only as long as he lives.** Death released a man from the authority of the Law.

2. A married woman. The Jews believed that the Law of Moses formed a perpetual obligation. Paul uses marriage to teach them this lesson. **But if he dies.** The wife was united to her husband during his lifetime, but his death terminated the obligation, leaving her free to marry another.

3. While her husband is alive. She would be an adulteress, because she would be unfaithful to the law (marriage vows) that united her to her husband. Note that the Jewish Christians to whom Paul wrote believed that to abandon the Law of Moses was equal to spiritual adultery.

4. That is the way. "Since marriage is terminated by the death of either spouse, you Jews, who were married to God as your king, and obligated to obey the Law of Moses, are legally free from that marriage and Law." In becoming a Christian, they died with Christ (*Rom. 6:6*), and since the old relationship is terminated, the Law has no claim on them. **Now you belong to him.** [*Marriage is not in the Greek of this verse.*] The church is Christ's bride, however, here he speaks of the individual person being made to BELONG to Christ. He uses a Greek verb-form which points to a specific action in the past, which certainly identifies with *Rom. 6:5*. **In order that.** The law had no help to give the sinner. In Christ, we have much help (*Rom. 8:26; Gal. 5:22-26; etc.*).

useful in the service of God. ⁵For when we lived according to our human nature, the sinful desires stirred up by the Law were at work in our bodies, and we were useful in the service of death. ⁶Now, however, we are free from the Law, because we died to that which once held us prisoners. No longer do we serve in the old way of a written law, but in the new way of the Spirit.

body of Christ, that you might belong to another, to him who was raised from the dead, in order that we might bear fruit to God. For when we were controlled by our sinful nature, the sinful passions aroused by the law were at work in our bodies, so that we bore fruit for death. But now, by dying to what once bound us, we have been released from the law so that we serve in the new way of the Spirit, and not in the old way of the written code.

Law and Sin

⁷What shall we say, then? That the Law itself is sinful? Of course not! But it was the Law that made me know what sin is. I would not have known what it is to covet if the Law had not said, "Do not covet." ⁸Sin found its chance to stir up all kinds of covetousness in me by working through the commandment. For sin is a dead

Struggling With Sin

What shall we say, then? Is the law sin? Far from it! Indeed I would not have known what sin was except through the law. For I would not have known what it was to covet if the law had not said, "Do not covet." But sin, seizing the opportunity afforded by the commandment, produced in me every kind of covetous desire. For apart from law, sin is dead.

5. For when we lived. Before we died with Christ. Stirred up by the Law. We would not recognize these desires, if the Law did not identify them (*Gal. 5:24; Rom. 7:9-10*).

6. We are free from the Law. See *Rom. 6:2-4*. But in the new way of the Spirit. This does not mean that the Jews under the Law did not worship God with spiritual worship. Yet the Law was directed toward weak human nature. In contrast to the *old life*, we have a new life in the Spirit (*2 Cor. 3:6*) which only our possession of the Spirit makes possible (*1 Cor. 2:13-15; 3:16-17; Rom. 8:1-4*).

7. That the Law itself is sinful? In verse 5 Paul said that the Law stirred up sinful desires. Of course not! Paul strongly denies that the Law itself was sinful. The restraint of law made him aware of his own sinful nature. [See notes on law at the end of chapter 3.] The experiences which he now gives as examples are those of Saul of Tarsus, yet they also are those of Paul the apostle as well. There is no such thing as the believer beoming "more and more just," [since his being just at all depends upon God's act in Christ], neither does the believer's nature become less and less sinful (*Gal. 5:16-18; 1 John 1:8-10*). Luther described the Christian as: SIMUL JUSTUS ET PECATOR (at the same time righteous and sinful). The Christian constantly fights against his own sinful human nature (*Rom. 8:10-18; 1 Pet. 4:1-2*).

8. Sin found its chance. Sin was given its chance by the commandment which had the effect of awakening and stirring up evil desires. God's word of command to Adam and Eve called their attention to the forbidden fruit. For sin is a dead thing. The restraint of law makes sin spring into life, because our human nature rebels against any restraint.

thing apart from law. ⁹I myself was once alive apart from law; but when the commandment came, sin sprang to life, ¹⁰and I died. And the commandment which was meant to bring life, in my case brought death. ¹¹Sin found its chance and deceived me by working through the commandment; by means of the commandment sin killed me.

¹²So, then, the Law itself is holy, and the commandment is holy, right, and good. ¹³Does this mean that what is good brought about my death? By no means! It was sin that did it; by using what is good, sin brought death to me in order that its true nature as sin might be revealed. And so, by means of the commandment, sin is shown to be even more terribly sinful.

The Conflict in Man

¹⁴We know that the Law is spiritual; but I am

9
law; but when the commandment came, sin sprang to life and I died. I found 10
that the very commandment that was intended to bring life actually brought death. For sin, seizing the opportunity afforded by the commandment, deceived me, and through the commandment put me to death. So 12
then, the law is holy, and the commandment is holy, righteous and good.

Did that which is good, 13
then, become death to me? By no means! But in order that sin might be recognized as sin, it produced death in me through what was good, so that through the commandment sin might become utterly sinful.

We know that the law is 14
spiritual; but I am unspirit-

9. **I myself was once alive.** *Gifford* says: "There is a deep tragic pathos in the brief and simple statement; it seems to point to some definite period full of painful recollections." This could be the time in youth when happy innocence is displaced by the moral conflicts and awareness of mature years. **But when the commandment came.** The Law makes sin a curse (*1 Cor. 15:56*). Without law, sin would have no strength to kill men, since sin is the violation of law.

10. **And I died.** The awareness of sin showed him under the sentence of death. It may have been when Christ said, "I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom you persecute," that Paul first realized that "Christ has brought the Law to an end," and *he died*. **Which was meant to bring life.** The Law promised life (*Rom. 10:5*). **In my case brought death.** The Law is a curse to everyone who violates it.

11. **Sin found its chance.** Because men were under the Law, sin found its chance to first fool them and then to kill them. Yet this result is not due to the Law itself, since this would make God responsible for our sinning by giving the Law. Sin deceives us by: (1) making us think the demands of the law are unreasonable (*compare Gen. 3:5*); (2) to kill us by using the curse attached to the breaking of law.

12. **So then.** The Law itself is holy, even in its curse, as it restrains us from sin by its threat of punishment. Its moral requirements are holy, right, and good.

13. **Does this mean?** Paul has shown us that the Law is holy, right, and good, even though it stirs up evil desires. It was through the Law that sin killed him. But is the Law then death??? **By no means!** The problem is not the Law, but sin. Sin stirs up our human nature to rebel against the Law, to break it, and by this to place ourselves under the curse of the Law. **Sin is shown to be.** This is God's intention: that sin, by turning God's blessing into a curse, would clearly show what it is and ignite in us an urgent desire to escape from it.

14. **The Law is spiritual.** To show us that it is not God's Law, but rather sin that is the source of death, Paul points out the conflict in man. The Law requires actions which are spiritual, as our mind and conscience tells us. **But I am mortal man.** He means this in its worst sense (*compare Rom. 8:5-8*). **Sold as a slave to sin.** Obligated to do whatever evil actions he is prompted to do by sinful desires. Remember

mortal man, sold as a slave to sin. ¹⁵I do not understand what I do; for I don't do what I would like to do, but instead I do what I hate. ¹⁶When I do what I don't want to do, this shows that I agree that the Law is right. ¹⁷So I am not really the one who does this thing; rather it is the sin that lives in me. ¹⁸I know that good does not live in me—that is, in my human nature. For even though the desire to do good is in me, I am not able to do it. ¹⁹I don't do the good I want to do; instead, I do the evil that I do not want to do. ²⁰If I do what I don't want to do, this means that no longer am I the one who does it; instead, it is the sin that lives in me.

²¹So I find that this law is at work: when I want to do what is good, what is evil is the only choice I have. ²²My inner being delights in the law of

ual, sold as a slave to sin. I 15
do not know what I am
doing. For what I want to do
I do not do, but what I hate
I do. And if I do what I do 16
not want to do, I agree that
the law is good. As it is, it is
no longer I myself who do it,
but it is sin living in me. I 18
know that nothing good
lives in me, that is, in my
sinful nature. For I have the
desire to do what is good,
but I cannot carry it out.
For what I do is not the good 19
I want to do; no, the evil I
do not want to do—this I
keep on doing. Now if I do 20
what I do not want to do, it
is no longer I who do it, but
it is sin living in me that
does it.

So I find this law at work: 21
When I want to do good,
evil is right there with me.
For in my inner being I de- 22

Luther's description of the Christian: "*at the same time righteous and sinful.*" A Christian does not find life by trying to reform his human nature, nor by purifying his human nature from its sinfulness; but he gets *above* it and lives in a *new existence* in Christ. Paul explains this in *chapter 8*.

15. **I do not understand what I do.** The word "slavery" explains his actions. "As a slave, my actions are guided by someone else's will."

16. **When I do what I don't want to do.** He knows that sin is wrong, yet he goes on sinning (*compare I John 1:8-10*). The fact that he doesn't want to sin shows he agrees that the Law is right in its commands and its curse.

17. **So I am not really the one.** It is not "Paul the free-man" who sins, but "Paul the slave to sin." The sin that lives in us: (1) interferes with the good we would like to do; (2) like some evil spirit, it tries to destroy our spiritual nature; (3) tries to control us and take us to death (*verse 24*).

18. **In my human nature.** Compare *James 4:5*. See notes on *verse 14* of this chapter.

19. **I don't do the good.** This proves what he said in *verse 18*. How often we resolve to do better, and then give in to temptation when it comes. This repeats *verse 15*, but makes a stronger contrast between *good intentions* and *bad actions*.

20. **This means that no longer am I the one.** The same answer as *verse 17*. To be saved from sin, a man must at the same time *own it* [confess to it] and *disown it* [repudiate it]. This is the Christian paradox—to live in a condition of "confident despair."

21. **This law is at work.** This is similar to *verse 10*. "This is how I find the Law—or life under the rule of the Law—works out in actual practice: when I make up my mind to do good, evil is the only choice I have." Compare *verse 7* and *note*.

22. **My inner being.** The *inner being* is not the same as the new nature; but is the side of human nature that is *tuned in* to God. Compare *Rom. 2:14*.

God. ²³But I see a different law at work in my body—a law that fights against the law that my mind approves of. It makes me a prisoner to the law of sin which is at work in my body. ²⁴What an unhappy man I am! Who will rescue me from this body that is taking me to death? ²⁵Thanks be to God, through our Lord Jesus Christ!

This, then, is my condition: by myself I can serve God's law only with my mind, while my human nature serves the law of sin.

Life in the Spirit

8 There is no condemnation now for those who live in union with Christ Jesus. ²For the law of the Spirit, which brings us life in union with Christ Jesus, has set me free from the law of sin

light in God's law; but I see ²³ another law at work in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me prisoner of the law of sin at work within my members. What a wretched man I am! ²⁴ Who will rescue me from this body of death? Thanks ²⁵ be to God—through Jesus Christ our Lord!

So then, I, of myself, in my mind am a slave to God's law, but in my sinful nature a slave to the law of sin.

Life Through the Spirit

8 Therefore, there is now ² no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law

23. **But I see a different law.** This continual conflict in man goes on between the *inner being* who delights in the law of God, and the law of sin and death which holds him prisoner.

24. **What an unhappy man I am!** This is the despair of natural man, held prisoner by sin, and unable to help himself. [The Christian also feels this constant struggle, but has hope in Christ.] **Who will rescue me?** The Law cannot help, because it is the curse of the Law which is about to kill him. See *verse 9*.

25. **Thanks be to God.** He has acted *already* to set us free! **Through our Lord Jesus Christ!** God sets us free through Jesus Christ! See *Romans 8:2*. **This, then is my condition.** *By myself* - without Christ's help—the best I can do is serve God's law with my mind, while the sin that lives in me perverts my weak human nature. *Luther* says: "*This struggle lasts as long as we live; it is more violent in one person, less so in another, according as the Spirit or the flesh grows stronger. And yet the entire person is himself both Spirit and flesh, struggling with himself until he becomes altogether spiritual.*" [By *flesh*, *Luther* means *human nature*.] Compare what Paul says in *Gal. 5:16-18*.

1. **There is no condemnation now.** Condemnation is in every sense out of the question! [But there are some qualifiers! See note on *James 2:19*.] In chapter 6, Paul shows us that in **BAPTISM**, the Christian dies to sin. In chapter 7, he shows us that this death terminates our "marriage" to the Law. In chapter 8, he shows us that the Holy Spirit living in each **CHRISTIAN** (*John 7:38-39; 1 Cor. 6:19-20; Eph. 2:22*) breaks the power of sin and makes it possible to choose to obey God. **For those who live in union with Christ Jesus.** "No condemnation" applies only to those who are united to Christ in a living union. Compare *1 John 1:7; 2 Cor. 5:17*.

2. **For the law of the Spirit.** *Wesley* says: "Gospel has freed us from the Mosaic Law." The "law of the Spirit" is the **GOSPEL**, the Good News of God's act in Christ to set us free, including the facts, commands, and promises that form part of this. **Has set me free.** "In my union to Christ, I am already set free from the power of sin and the curse of the Law." *Lipscomb* says: "It is imagined that through the death of Christ in some way an indulgence from God was secured by which man might be allowed greater license in neglecting the law of God and in going his own way. This is a fatal mistake."

and death. ³What the Law could not do, because human nature was weak, God did. He condemned sin in human nature by sending his own Son, who came with a nature like man's sinful nature to do away with sin. ⁴God did this so that the righteous demands of the Law might be fully satisfied in us who live according to the Spirit, not according to human nature. ⁵Those who live as their human nature tells them to, have their minds controlled by what human nature wants. Those who live as the Spirit tells them to, have their minds controlled by what the Spirit wants. ⁶To have your mind controlled by human nature results in death; to have your mind controlled by the Spirit results in life and peace.

of sin and death. For what ³ the law was powerless to do in that it was weakened by our sinful nature, God did by sending his own Son in likeness of sinful man to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in sinful man, in order that the right- ⁴eous requirements of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to our sinful nature but according to the Spirit. ⁵Those who live according to their sinful nature have their minds set on what that nature desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires. The mind of sinful ⁶ man is death, but the mind controlled by the Spirit is

3. What the Law could not do. The Law, which Jews were so proud of, could not change human nature. It had no real answer for the problem of sin and death. It was not the righteous demands of the Law that were weak, but human nature. There were many devout and holy men under the Law, but the fact that they were *friends of God* was due to the grace that would come through Christ (*Gal. 3:8; Heb. 9:15*). **By sending his own son.** God acted in history by sending the Eternal Logos in human form with *exactly the same nature as ours!* The Son of God could take the humanity of his human mother Mary without any sinfulness. Some teach "original sin" to mean that sin itself is *built into* human nature, and this requires them to invent an "immaculate conception" for Mary to explain the sinlessness of Jesus. But *not sin itself*; only the guilt and destruction it brings, forms part of our human nature. **To do away with sin.** He did this by: (1) his sinless life (under human limitations); (2) his death to cancel sin; (3) his rising from death to life, which we can reach out and seize through faith (*Rom. 6:4*).

4. So that the righteous demands of the Law. Paul said the Law was spiritual (*Rom. 7:12, 14*). It offered life to all who kept it PERFECTLY, but crucified all who violated its righteous demands. Christ fulfilled the Law (gave it real meaning) in the fact that he perfectly kept all of its righteous demands! When Christ, as the Proxy of all mankind, fulfilled the Law, it was just as if every man had fulfilled the Law. When Christ died to pay the Law's penalty for sin, it was just as if every sinner had died and paid for his sins. Paul reminds us of this in *2 Cor. 5:14, 21*. **Who live according to the Spirit.** *Beza* pictures the believer as absolutely passive in satisfying the righteous demands of the Law in Christ. It is true that our salvation is ENTIRELY due to God's act in Christ, yet we have been set free from the power of sin and the curse of death IN ORDER THAT we may live according to the Spirit. *Luther's* comment helps us put it in the right perspective: "This Spirit makes us spiritual, subdues the flesh [human nature], and assures us that as long as we follow the Spirit, resist sin, and endeavor to slay it, we are, nevertheless, the children of God, no matter how violently sin rages in us." See *James 2:22-23*.

5. As their human nature tells them to. Those who live without Christ are described in *Gal. 5:19-21*. **As the Spirit tells them to.** The Spirit tells us what we should know through the *written word!* It is not *fear of punishment* which makes us live as the Spirit tells us, but *LOVE* (*1 John 4:18*).

6. To have your mind controlled. Compare what Jesus said in *Matt. 6:24*, and see note there. Allowing our human nature to make us its slave, brings death. Allowing the Spirit to make us his "slave" brings life and peace! The quality of our faith is demonstrated in our life.

⁷And so a man becomes an enemy of God when his mind is controlled by human nature; for he does not obey God's law, and in fact he cannot obey it. ⁸Those who obey their human nature cannot please God.

⁹But you do not live as your human nature tells you to; you live as the Spirit tells you to—if, in fact, God's Spirit lives in you. Whoever does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. ¹⁰But if Christ lives in you, although your bodies are going to die because of sin, yet the Spirit is life for you because you have been put right with God. ¹¹If the Spirit of God, who raised Jesus from death, lives in you, then he who raised Christ from death will also give life to your mortal bodies by the presence of his Spirit in you.

¹²So then, my brothers, we have an obligation, but not to live as our human nature wants us to. ¹³For if you live according to your human nature, you are going to die; but if, by the Spirit, you kill

life and peace, because the ⁷ sinful mind is hostile to God, it does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so. Those controlled by their ⁸ sinful nature cannot please God.

You, however, are controlled ⁹ not by your sinful nature but by the Spirit, if the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ. But if Christ is in you, your ¹⁰ body is dead because of sin, yet your spirit is alive because of righteousness. And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his ¹¹ Spirit, who lives in you.

Therefore, brothers, we ¹² have an obligation—but it is not to our sinful nature, to live according to it. For if ¹³ you live according to the sinful nature, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live.

7. **And so a man becomes an enemy of God.** Human nature is hostile to God. All who ALLOW themselves to be slaves to their human nature find it impossible to obey God's law.

8. **Cannot please God.** No one, in all ages of time, could ever please God by allowing the evil desires of human nature to control himself.

9. **But you do not live.** "You can please God, because you are not controlled by your human nature." He speaks to those who have been set free from the law of sin and death. **If, in fact, God's Spirit lives in you.** See verse 16. **The Spirit of Christ** = the Spirit of God = the Holy Spirit. *Shepherd* says: "The possession of the Holy Spirit is declared to be absolutely necessary to our being acceptable to God." See *Gal. 4:6*.

10. **But if Christ lives in you.** Both God and Christ live in the Christian through the Holy Spirit (*Eph. 2:22*). Note that "God's Spirit lives in you," "have the Spirit of Christ," and "Christ lives in you," all express the same important fact. **Are going to die.** Not "dead in sin," nor "dead to sin," but all will die physically because of the sin of Adam (*Rom. 5:17*). **Yet the Spirit is life.** This is in contrast to the phrase: "are going to die." This is explained in verse 11.

11. **If the Spirit of God.** *Lipscomb* says: "The Holy Spirit actually dwells in every obedient believer." **Who raised Jesus from death.** See *John 5:21, 28, 29*. **Will also give life to your mortal bodies.** Compare *Eph. 1:13-14; 1 John 3:1-3; 1 Cor. 15:12-20*.

12. **We have an obligation.** Our HOPE in Christ obligates us to him! But we have no such obligation to our human nature.

13. **For if.** After dying with Christ, you could return to sin and let your human nature drag you down to death (*2 Pet. 2:20-22*). **But if, by the Spirit.** Note it is not your *mortal body* which you *kill*, but the *SINFUL ACTIONS* of your human nature. We cannot do this by our own strength. We do it with the help of the Holy Spirit.

your sinful actions, you will live. ¹⁴Those who led by God's Spirit are God's sons. ¹⁵For the Spirit that God has given you does not make you a slave and cause you to be afraid; instead, the Spirit makes you God's sons, and by the Spirit's power we cry to God, "Father! my Father!" ¹⁶God's Spirit joins himself to our spirits to declare that we are God's children. ¹⁷Since we are his children, we will possess the blessings he keeps for his people, and we will also possess with Christ what God has kept for him; for if we share Christ's suffering, we will also share his glory.

The Future Glory

¹⁸I consider that what we suffer at this present time cannot be compared at all with the glory that is going to be revealed to us. ¹⁹All of creation waits with eager longing for God to reveal his

Those who are led by the Spirit of God are the sons of God. For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you have received the Spirit who makes you sons. And by him we cry, "Abba, Father." The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children. Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.

Future Glory

I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us. The creation waits in eager expectation for the sons of

14. **Those who are led.** See *Acts 10:34-35*. How are they led? (1) They have given themselves as "slaves" to God; (2) the Holy Spirit is their Helper (*verse 26*). Compare *Phil. 2:12-13*. **God's sons.** Compare *John 3:5*.

15. **Does not make you a slave.** *Slave* is contrasted with *son*. In the world of the first century, about half the population were slaves. They knew the fear and terror of slavery. This is not what God's Spirit gives. Christians are God's sons (and daughters) through the Spirit. Compare *Gal. 4:6* **Father! My Father!** We have both the status and the spirit of sons! Paul is pointing back to their baptism (*Rom. 6:5-6; Acts 2:38* and notes) as the time they were *adopted* into the family of God and received the Holy Spirit.

16. **To declare that we are God's children.** See *2 Cor. 1:21-22; 5:5; Eph. 1:13-14*. *Lipscomb* says: "The Spirit gives directions through the word of truth how to become children of God. Our spirits bear witness as to whether from the heart we have complied with these conditions, and so they jointly bear testimony that we are children of God."

17. **Since we are his children.** He speaks to those who can look back to a point in time where they were adopted as God's children. See note on *Col. 2:12*. **We will possess the blessings.** A son inherits everything his father has. We, as God's children, will inherit the riches of Eternity! Everything that belongs to Christ as a natural son, belongs to us as well, in our union with him. **For if we share Christ's suffering.** Compare *1 Thess. 3:3* and note.

18. **I consider.** "The thoughts of suffering with Christ should not terrify you." Paul gives three reasons: (1) the groaning of creation (*verses 19-22*); (2) we groan as we wait in hope (*verses 23-25*); (3) the groaning of the Holy Spirit, who is our prayer-partner (*verses 26-27*). **Cannot be compared at all.** See *2 Cor. 4:16-18*.

19. **All of creation waits.** *Chrysostom* says: "Paul personifies the world, just as the prophets do when they make the floods to clap their hands." The total created universe looks forward to that time when God's children will have reached their climax and be revealed in all their glory! Compare *Col. 1:20*.

sons. ²⁰For creation was condemned to become worthless, not of its own will, but because God willed it to be so. Yet there was this hope, ²¹that creation itself would one day be set free from its slavery to decay, and share the glorious freedom of the children of God. ²²For we know that up to the present time all of creation groans with pain like the pain of childbirth. ²³But not just creation alone; we who have the Spirit as the first of God's gifts, we also groan within ourselves as we wait for God to make us his sons and set our whole being free. ²⁴For it was by hope that we were saved; but if we see what we hope for, then it is not really hope. For who hopes for something that he sees? ²⁵But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.

²⁶In the same way the Spirit also comes to help us, weak that we are. For we do not know how we ought to pray; the Spirit himself pleads with God for us, in groans that words cannot express.

God to be revealed. For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God.

We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the first-fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. For in this hope we were saved. But hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what he already has? But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently.

In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know how

20. **For creation was condemned.** *Lipscomb* says: "As a result of Adam's sin, the whole creation was cursed and fell away from its original design and became subject to the reign of death." "*Was condemned*" points back to the sin of Adam, when God cursed the earth (and all creation). See *Gen. 3:17; Isa. 24:6; Jer. 12:4*. **Yet there was this hope.** Even before creation, it was decided that Christ would come as the "second Adam." *Gen. 3:15* is a promise.

21. **That creation itself.** This *ties in* with the promise of *Isa. 65:17; 2 Pet. 3:13; Rev. 21:1*.

22. **All of creation groans with pain.** These groans of pain are a prophecy of the time of future freedom!

23. **We who have the Spirit.** This is Paul's second reason (see *verse 18*). This also points to the glorious future! **As the first of God's gifts.** *APARCHE - FIRST-PORION* (Jewish term for anything set apart to God before the remainder could be used). The Spirit is the guarantee that we will receive everything God has for us. **We also groan.** We have experienced this new life in the Spirit, and this makes us want to escape from this life and rise triumphant in our new bodies. Therefore, we groan as we wait in hope. **And set out whole being free.** Only after death is destroyed, can we be totally free. Compare *Phil. 3:21; 1 Cor. 15:51; 2 Cor. 5:2*.

24. **For it was by hope.** In the Bible, "hope" is something you expect to happen. We are "put right with God" now, and we are children of God now! However, our whole being has not been set free yet, and we look into the future *expecting* this to happen! *Verses 24-25* explain the "we wait" of *verse 23*.

25. **But if we hope.** Read the introduction to Revelation. Without hope, we would sink into despair!

26. **In the same way.** This is Paul's third reason (see *verse 18*). The Spirit himself helps our weakness and is our prayer-partner. *R. W. Dale* wrote: "The whole passage illustrates in even a startling manner the truth and reality of the 'coming' of the Holy Spirit - the extent to which, if I may venture to say it, He has separated Himself - as Christ did at His Incarnation - from His eternal glory and blessedness, and entered into the life of man . . . His intercession for us - so intimately does He share all the evils of our condition - is a kind of *agony*."

²⁷And God, who sees into the hearts of men, knows what the thought of the Spirit is; because the Spirit pleads with God on behalf of his people and in accordance with his will.

²⁸We know that in all things God works for good with those who love him, those whom he has called according to his purpose. ²⁹Those whom God had already chosen he had also set apart to become like his Son, so that the Son would be the first among many brothers. ³⁰And so God called those that he had set apart; and those that he called he also put right with himself; and with those that he put right with himself he also shared his glory.

God's Love in Christ Jesus

³¹Faced with all this, what can we say? If God

we ought to pray, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express. And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with God's will. 27

More than Conquerors

And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the first-born among many brothers. And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified. 29

What, then, shall we say in response to this? If God is for us, who can be against 31

27. **And God . . . knows.** Neither the Spirit nor Christ plead with God for men in general, but only for those who are united to Christ - his people. Only Jesus brings God and men together [mediator] (*1 Tim.* 2:5), but others can plead with God for us (compare *Gen.* 18:23-33). Even though we cannot find words to pray, or are ignorant of the true nature of things (such as in a crisis), the Holy Spirit is our prayer-partner, and pleads with God for us. **And in accordance with his will.** This is explained in the next verse.

28. **We know that in all things.** God is able to use suffering, sadness, poverty, imprisonment, death, etc., to call his people to Eternity. "Every problem contains an opportunity, and every opportunity contains a problem." Compare *2 Cor.* 7:9-11; *Acts* 28:16 and note. **Those whom he has called.** The best comment on this is *2 Thess.* 2:13-14. See notes there also.

29. **Had already chosen.** Lipscomb understands this in the sense of *Heb.* 11:39-40. That is, the men of the Old Testament who "would be made perfect only with us." Add to this the men of old who raised from death after Jesus' resurrection (*Matt.* 27:52-53), who Lipscomb thinks went into Eternity with Jesus. All this, then, is strong proof that "God works for good with those who love him." Johnson sees in this a "choosing on the basis of foreknowledge." Compare *Psalms* 139:16: "You saw me before I was born. The days that had been created for me had all been recorded in your book, before any of them had ever begun." See also *Rev.* 13:8; 17:8; 21:27. A third factor is that we had nothing to do with the planning of God's act in Christ to set us free. In this sense, the whole thing is taken out of our hands. The truth of *Rom.* 5:18 was an accomplished fact before mankind found out about it. Compare *1 Thess.* 5:9-10.

30. **He also shared his glory.** We can imagine God saying: "I see that you love me and believe in Christ; and therefore I decree that you will become like My Son and share His glory."

31. **Faced with all this, what can we say?** He has shown us God's love and mercy, and the future glory of God's people. **If God is for us?** No doubt about it! God is for us (who believe in him). **Who can be against us?** No one, man or angel or Devil, can cheat us of our promise in Christ! They may persecute us, and even kill us physically, but because we are united to Christ, they cannot destroy our relationship with him! [But we can ourselves.]

is for us, who can be against us? ³²He did not even keep back his own Son, but offered him for us all! He gave us his Son—will he not also freely give us all things? ³³Who will accuse God's chosen people? God himself declares them not guilty! ³⁴Can anyone, then, condemn them? Christ Jesus is the one who died, or rather, who was raised to life and is at the right side of God. He pleads with God for us! ³⁵Who, then, can separate us from the love of Christ? Can trouble do it, or hardship, or persecution, or hunger, or poverty, or danger, or death? ³⁶As the scripture says,

“For your sake we are in danger of death the whole day long; we are treated like sheep that are going to be slaughtered.”

³⁷No, in all these things we have complete victory through him who loved us! ³⁸For I am certain that nothing can separate us from his love: neither death nor life; neither angels nor other heavenly rulers or powers; neither the present

us? He who did not spare his 32
own Son, but gave him up
for us all—how will he not
also, along with him, gra-
ciously give us all things?
Who will bring any charge 33
against those whom God has
chosen? It is God who justi-
fies. Who is he that con- 34
demns? Christ Jesus, who
died—more than that, who
was raised to life—is at the
right hand of God and is
also interceding for us. Who 35
shall separate us from the
love of Christ? Shall trouble
or hardship or persecution
or famine or nakedness or
danger or sword? As it is 36
written:

“For your sake we face death all the day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered.”

No, in all these things we 37
are more than conquerors
through him who loved us.
For I am convinced that nei- 38
ther death nor life, neither
angels nor demons, neither
the present nor the future,

32. **He did not even keep back his own Son.** If he gave his Son to die for us, it is impossible that God would be against us or cancel his promises.

33. **Who will accuse God's chosen people.** Neither God nor Christ will do this, and Satan cannot, since we are pronounced “Not Guilty.” This shows how *secure* we are in God's love!!! But note we are still responsible for our own actions (*Heb. 6:4-6; Rom. 2:5-6; Matt. 12:41-42*).

34. **Can anyone, then, condemn them?** See *Rom. 8:1*.

35. **Who, then, can separate us?** No external force or condition can do it!!! The Book of Revelation is written to show us the victory that is already won in Christ!!! It may *look like* the Devil is winning, but Christ conquered the Devil at the Cross and the Empty Tomb!!!

36. **As the scripture says.** He quotes *Psalms 44:22* in the Septuagint, to show that the suffering mentioned in *verse 35* is in perfect harmony with God's promises.

37. **No, in all these things.** Suffering will not cause us to abandon Christ! **We have complete victory!** The ordeal of suffering not only *does not cut us off* from Christ's love, but it actually gives us more intimate [intrinsic] and thrilling experiences of it!!!

38. **For I am certain.** Paul is certain that no hostile power in all the universe can separate us from his love!!! **Neither death nor life.** These go in pairs. “If Christ's love can hold us in and through death, what is left for us to fear?” See *John 8:51; 10:28; 11:25; 1 Thess. 4:13-18; Heb. 2:14-15*. **Neither angels nor other heavenly rulers or powers.** Good and bad angels (see *Eph. 6:12*). **Neither the present nor the future.** Whatever happens. *1 Cor. 3:22*.

nor the future; ³⁹neither the world above nor the world below—there is nothing in all creation that will ever be able to separate us from the love of God which is ours through Christ Jesus our Lord.

God and His Chosen People

9 What I say is true; I belong to Christ and I do not lie. My conscience, ruled by the Holy Spirit, also assures me that I am not lying. ²How great is my sorrow, how endless the pain in my heart for my people, my own flesh and blood! ³For their sake I could wish that I myself were under God's curse and separated from Christ. ⁴They are God's chosen people; he made them his sons and shared his glory with them; he made his covenants with them and gave them the Law; they have the true worship; they have re-

nor any powers, neither ³⁹ height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

God's Sovereign Choice

9 I speak the truth in Christ—I am not lying, my conscience confirms it in the Holy Spirit—I have great ² sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart. For I ³ could wish that I myself were cursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my brothers, those of my own race, the people of Israel. ⁴ Theirs is the adoption as sons; theirs the divine glory, the covenants, the receiving of the law, the temple worship and the promises.

39. Neither the world above nor the world below. No limitations of time or space. **There is nothing.** This shows our promise through Christ!!! God gives us his love through Jesus Christ, and Paul sings his praises in these last eight verses!!! Only Eternity will show us the completeness of God's love in Christ to us.

1. What I say is true. Paul implied in *Rom. 3:3* that God would reject the Jewish Nation because they disbelieved Christ. Some Jews then said: "If this is true, then God has broken his own promise and repudiated his own chosen people." To answer this, Paul shows: (1) the promise was not to all of the descendants of Abraham; (2) God has the right to choose whoever he wants to. Individual or personal "election" is not the subject here. Paul looks at the choosing of the Jews, their rejection later, and the choosing of the Gentiles. Paul speaks so strongly in chapters 9, 10, 11, because his fellow Jews were saying he was a traitor to his nation.

2. How great is my sorrow! Because many of his nation were without the blessing of Christ.

3. For their sake. What he says is that he would be willing to be under God's curse himself and lost eternally, if it would help to bring his nation to Christ!!! This shows how much he loved his Jewish race!

4. They are God's chosen people. In *verses 4-5*, Paul speaks about the honor which God gave Israel. "Israel" means "a Prince with God." *He made them his sons.* (*Deut. 7:6*). This is not Christian sonship, but the sonship mentioned in *Exod. 4:22; Hosea 11:1* in which every Israelite was a son (*Hosea 1:10*). *Shared his glory with them.* The Shekinah of God's presence, the box of the covenant, etc. See *1 Sam. 4:21; Heb. 9:1-5*. **He made his covenants with them.** With Abraham, and at Sinai. **Gave them the Law.** "The holy law made and given by God" (*2 Maccabees 6:23*). The Law was a "GOOD LUCK CHARM" to the Jew (see *Rom. 2:17*). **The true worship.** Compare *John 4:22*. **God's promises.** Especially the promise of the Messiah.

ceived God's promises; ⁵they are descended from the patriarchs, and Christ, as a human being, belongs to their race. May God, who rules over all, be praised forever! Amen.

⁶I am not saying that the promise of God has failed; because not all the people of 'Israel are the chosen people of God. ⁷Neither are all Abraham's descendants the children of God. God said to Abraham, "The descendants of Isaac will be counted as yours." ⁸This means that the children born in the natural way are not the children of God; instead, the children born as a result of God's promise are regarded as the true descendants. ⁹For God's promise was made in these words: "At the right time I will come back and Sarah will have a son."

¹⁰And this is not all. For Rebecca's two sons

Theirs are the patriarchs, ⁵ and from them is traced the human ancestry of Christ, who is God over all, forever praised! Amen.

It is not as though God's ⁶ word had failed. For not all who are descended from Israel are Israel. Nor because ⁷ they are his descendants are they all Abraham's children. On the contrary, "Through Isaac shall your offspring come." In other words, it is ⁸ not the natural children who are God's children, but it is the children of the promise who are regarded as Abraham's offspring. For this ⁹ was how the promise was stated: "At the appointed time I will return, and Sarah shall have a son."

Not only that, but Rebecca's ¹⁰ children had one and the same father, our ances-

5. **From the patriarchs.** Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The sons of such fathers were forfeiting everything for which their ancestors had been chosen! **And Christ.** As a human being, Jesus belonged to their race, the tribe of Judah, a descendant of David the king. **May God.** [The best Greek texts make this refer to the father.] Paul's purpose is to imply that the tragic apostasy of the Jews (*verses 2-3*) is itself part of the "master-plan" of God. Compare *Rev. 5: Rom. 11:11-12*. God is able to bring good out of evil.

6. **I am not saying.** The Jew might say: "If Israel had such honor from God, why is the nation rejected? If Jesus really is the Messiah, has God canceled his promises?" Paul uses the rest of this chapter to answer this. **Because not all the people of Israel.** God's promise will not fail, even if the Jewish Nation is rejected. They do not make up the whole chosen people of God.

7. **Neither are all Abraham's descendants.** Ishmael and others were Abraham's children (*1 Chron. 1:28, 32*). **The descendants of Isaac.** The promise did not come through the children of Ishmael or the sons of Keturah.

8. **This means.** This illustrates the contrast between the natural family-line of race, and the spiritual family-line of *faith*. This destroys the claim of the Jews: "Abraham is our ancestor" (*Matt. 3:9 and note*).

9. **For God's promise.** This promise made the birth of Isaac *supernormal*. Isaac is called: "his only son" (*Heb. 11:17*); even though Abraham had other sons; because Isaac was the son of promise. Only the children by God's promise are the "chosen people." Christians are children by God's promise (*Gal. 4:28*).

10. **And this is not all.** The Jew might say: "Ishmael was illegitimate and had no rights. We are legitimate descendants of the patriarch and have 'Chosen People' status." Paul now shows that God has the right to reject any nation, including the Jews, and to choose other people, if it suits his purpose. **Isaac** was the father of Rebecca's twin sons.

had the same father, our ancestor Isaac. ¹¹⁻¹²But in order that the choice of one son might be completely the result of God's own purpose, God said to her, "The older will serve the younger." He said this before they were born, before they had done anything either good or bad; so God's choice was based on his call, and not on anything they did. ¹³As the scripture says, "I loved Jacob, but I hated Esau."

¹⁴What shall we say, then? That God is unjust? Not at all. ¹⁵For he said to Moses, "I will have mercy on whom I wish, I will take pity on whom I wish." ¹⁶So then, it does not depend on what man wants or does, but only on God's mercy. ¹⁷For the scripture says to Pharaoh, "I made you king for this very purpose, to use you to show my power, and to make my name known in all the

tor Isaac. Yet, before the 11
twins were born or had done
anything good or bad—in
order that God's purpose in
election might stand: not by 12
works but by him who
calls—she was told, "The
older will serve the younger."
Just as it is written: "Jacob 13
I loved, but Esau I hated."

What then shall we say? 14
Is God unjust? Not at all!
For he says to Moses, 15

"I will have mercy on
whom I have mercy,
and I will have compas-
sion on whom I have
compassion."

It does not, therefore, de- 16
pend on man's desire or
effort, but on God's mercy.
For the Scripture says to 17
Pharaoh: "I raised you up
for this very purpose, that I
might display my power in
you and that my name might
be proclaimed in all the

11-12. **But in order that.** The only possible basis of choice would seem to be on the "priority of birth," yet God ignored this to choose Jacob. It may be said that God chose between them because of what they would do (see note on *Rom. 8:29*). Yet Paul uses this to show that God's choice was not based on either family-line or actions.

13. **As the scripture says.** [*Malachi 1:2* Septuagint.] *The Expositor's Greek Testament* says: "Yet it would not be right to say that Paul is here considering merely the parts assigned by God to nations in the drama of providence; He is obviously thinking of Jacob and Esau as individuals, whose own relation to God's promise and inheritance (involving no doubt that of their posterity [descendants]) was determined by God before they were born or had done either good or ill. On the other hand, it would not be right to say that Paul here refers the eternal salvation or perdition [condemnation] of individuals to an absolute decree of God which has no relation to what they are or do, but rests simply on His inscrutable will."

14. **That God is unjust?** God treats all men on the same basis (*Acts 10:34-35*). The Jew would say that God was being unjust, if he did not choose on the basis of family-line or actions. Paul shows now that the Jewish Scriptures [the Old Testament] declare God's right to do this. **Not at all.** It is not possible for God to be unjust. [*God forbid* does not appear in the Greek.]

15. **For he said to Moses.** [*Exod. 33:19* Septuagint.] He said this in answer to Moses' prayer. The point is that in *having mercy*, God is influenced by nothing outside of *his mercy* itself.

16. **So then.** This repeats the reasoning of *verses 11-13*. Esau was Isaac's favorite son and the one first-born. Esau acted to receive his *birthright*. Yet God was influenced by none of this, and blessed Jacob.

17. **For the scripture says to Pharaoh.** It does not say Pharaoh was *born* for this purpose, but that he was made king. [Compare Christ's choice of Judas (*John 6:64, 70, 71; 2 Tim. 2:19-21*).]

world." ¹⁸So then, God has mercy on whom he wishes, and he makes stubborn whom he wishes.

God's Wrath and Mercy

¹⁹One of you, then, will say to me, "If this is so, how can God find fault with a man? Who can resist God's will?" ²⁰But who are you, my friend, to talk back to God? A clay pot does not ask the man who made it, "Why did you make me like this?" ²¹After all, the man who makes the pots has the right to use the clay as he wishes, and to make two pots from the same lump of clay, one for special occasions, and the other for ordinary use.

²²And the same is true what God has done. He wanted to show his wrath and to make his power known. So he was very patient in enduring those who were the objects of his wrath, who were

earth." Therefore God has mercy on whom he wants to have mercy, and he hardens whom he wants to harden.

One of you will say to me: ¹⁹"Then why does God still blame us? For who resists his will?" But who are you, ²⁰O man, to talk back to God?

"Shall what is formed say to him who formed it, 'Why did you make me like this?'" ²¹Does not the potter have the right to make out of the same lump of clay some pottery for noble purposes and some for common use?

What if God, choosing to ²²show his wrath and make his power known, bore with great patience the objects of his wrath—prepared for des-

18. **God has mercy on whom he wishes.** God's mercy and wrath are not influenced by human claims. The "making stubborn" of Pharaoh is explained by *2 Thess. 2:10-12*. *Godet* says that Paul is not writing theology here, but answering the proud claims of Jewish *pharisaism*, showing that no human can place an obligation on God by anything he does or says or is. For a Jew, the contrast between the examples of Moses and Pharaoh are proof, interpreted by the words of God himself. But Paul neither raises nor answers the questions of exactly what the "making stubborn" means, nor the relationship between God "making Pharaoh stubborn," and Pharaoh making himself stubborn. The Jews thought that God **COULD NOT** abandon them, and that he would not accept the Gentiles.

19. **One of you, then.** "If the character of Moses and Pharaoh are **ENTIRELY** the result of God's will, doesn't the difference between them disappear? Doesn't this make men the helpless tools of God? How can he find fault with them?" Paul does not answer this objection, but says in effect: "Even if that is true, what right has the Jewish Nation to object to it? It is a lump of clay in the hands of the man who makes pots."

20. **To talk back to God?** He has the right to decree the terms of his own mercy.

21. **After all.** Not the quality of the clay, but the will of the man who makes the pots, decides what use will be made of each part of the lump. *The Expositor's Greek Testament* says: "True, the objector might say, but irrelevant. For man is not clay, and the relation of God to man is not that of the potter to dead matter. To say that it is, is just to concede the objector's point - the moral significance is taken out of life, and God has no room any longer to pronounce moral judgments, or to speak of man in terms of praise or blame." [Christians have argued for centuries over the exact relation between God's **SOVEREIGN WILL** and man's **FREE WILL**.]

22. **He wanted to show.** "God's will in relation to man is difficult to understand, but if his actual treatment of them is "patient in enduring," what can you say against that?" [Destroyed = condemned to hell.] God's long history of patience with the Jewish Nation is probably in Paul's mind at this point.

ready to be destroyed. ²³And he wanted also to reveal his rich glory, which was poured out on us who are the objects of his mercy, those of us whom he has prepared to receive his glory. ²⁴For we are the ones whom he called, not only from among the Jews but also from among the Gentiles. ²⁵This is what he says in the book of Hosea,

"The people who were not mine,
I will call 'My People.'

The nation that I did not love,
I will call 'My Beloved.'

²⁶And in the very place where they were told, 'You are not my people,' there they will be called the sons of the living God."

²⁷And Isaiah exclaims about Israel, "Even if the people of Israel are as many as the grains of sand by the sea, yet only a few of them will be saved; ²⁸for the Lord will quickly settle his full account with all the world." ²⁹It is as Isaiah had said before, "If the Lord Almighty had not left us some descendants, we would have become like Sodom, we would have been like Gomorrah."

struction? What if he did this ²³
to make the riches of his
glory known to the objects of
his mercy, whom he pre-
pared in advance for glory—
even us, whom he also ²⁴
called, not only from the
Jews but also from the Gen-
tiles? As he says in Hosea: ²⁵

"I will call them 'my
people' who are not
my people;
and I will call her 'my
loved one' who is not
my loved one,"

and, ²⁶

"It will happen that in
the very place where it
was said to them,

'You are not my people,
they will be called 'sons
of the living God.' "

Isaiah cries out concern- ²⁷
ing Israel: "Though the
number of the Israelites
should be like the sand by
the sea, only the remnant
will be saved. For the Lord ²⁸
will carry out his sentence on
earth with speed and final-
ity."

It is just as Isaiah said pre- ²⁹
viously:

"Unless the Lord All-
powerful had left us
descendants,

23. And he wanted also to reveal. This completes the thought in *verse 22*. God: (1) shows his wrath and power; (2) reveals his rich glory. But in both of these, God acts in such a way that not only can man *not* complain, but must stand in amazement and worship!!!

24. For we are the ones. This explains the "on us" of *verse 23*. The fact that those called are from among both Jews and Gentiles shows that no one can claim God's mercy as a right of his racial heritage! Johnson sees in this a restraining of the destruction of the Jewish Nation until the entire world heard the Good News of Christ (*Compare Matt. 24:14; Col. 1:23*).

25-26. This is what he says. [Verse 25 quotes Hosea 2:23; verse 26, Hosea 1:10; both from the Septuagint.] God's action in calling people from among both Jews and Gentiles, agrees with what he has already said in the Scripture. When God calls Gentiles, he is doing what he already said he would do.

27. And Isaiah exclaims about Israel. [A paraphrase of *Isa. 10:22-23*.] Paul shows that God had already said that only *part* of Israel would be called. The Jews dare not complain about their dilemma, since it is exactly what the Word of God says. See note on *verse 6*.

28. For the Lord. The meaning is: "God fulfills his promise, but also limits it [to those who have faith]." This is why only part of Israel will be saved. [*Compare note on Rom. 11:26*.]

29. It is as Isaiah had said before. [*Isa. 1:9* Septuagint.] The "descendants" are the same as the "only a few" of *verse 27*. Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed for their sins, and no trace of them was to be found. A few of Israel will be saved. **God Almighty.** ΣΑΒΑΟΤΗ. Ainsworth says the Rabbins teach, that when God judges his creation he is called *Elohim*; when he shows mercy he is called *Jehovah*; when he fights against the wicked he is called *Sabaoth*.

Israel and the Gospel

³⁰What shall we say, then? This: that the Gentiles, who were not trying to put themselves right with God, were put right with him through faith; ³¹while the chosen people, who were seeking a law that would put them right with God, did not find it. ³²And why not? Because what they did was not based on faith but on works. They stumbled over the "stumbling stone" ³³that the scripture speaks of:

"Look, I place in Zion a stone that will make people stumble, a rock that will make them fall.

But whoever believes in him will not be disappointed."

10 My brothers, how I wish with all my heart that my own people might be saved! How I pray to God for them! ²I can be a witness for them that they are deeply devoted to God. But their devotion is not based on true knowledge.

we would have become like Sodom, and we would have been like Gomorrah."

Israel's Unbelief

What then shall we say? **30** That the Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, have obtained it, a righteousness that is by faith; but **31** Israel, who pursued a law of righteousness, has not attained it. Why not? Because **32** they pursued it not by faith but as if it were by works. They stumbled over the "stumbling stone." As it is **33** written:

"See, I lay in Zion a stone that causes men to stumble and a rock that makes them fall, and the one who trusts in him will never be put to shame."

10 Brothers, my heart's desire and prayer to God for the Israelites is that they may be saved. For I can testify about them that they are zealous for God, but their zeal is not based on

30-31. What shall we say, then? Up to this point in chapter 9, Paul has looked at the problem of Jewish unbelief, and shown us that no one has any *claim* on God to put him under obligation. Now in these last few verses, he shows it was their own guilt which cut them off from God. **That the Gentiles.** They knew nothing about the Law and its demands. It is a paradox that they did not try to put themselves right with God, yet were put right with him through faith. **But the Jews, chosen people,** who did have the Law, and tried to bring God to themselves with it, failed to do so. The argument between Paul and the Jews is: "being put right with God - what is it, and how can you receive it?"

32. And why not? How do you explain the paradox of Jew and Gentile? Scripture has not failed (*verse 6*), because it predicted all that has happened. **Because what they did.** We immediately think of their relationship to the Law. What they did in obeying the Law, they thought of as placing an obligation on God. We could have the same attitude toward Christianity, with the same results. **They stumbled.** This points directly to Christ! He is the "stumbling stone." The thought of a "crucified Savior" was *offensive* to the Jews (*1 Cor. 1:23*). Unbelief cut them off from God's promise.

33. That the scripture speaks of. Paul blends and paraphrases *Isa. 28:16* and *18:14* as proof that this very thing would happen. **But whoever believes in him.** See *Rom. 5:1*. One who has *peace* will not be *disappointed* at the Judgment.

1. How I wish. His knowledge of the punishment God's wrath will bring on unbelievers causes him deep grief. **How I pray.** Compare *Rom. 9:1-3*.

2. They are deeply devoted to God. This increases the paradox of Jew versus Gentile. **Not based on true knowledge.** Only Truth promises to set you free (*John 8:32*). Devotion not based on Truth becomes *fanaticism* (compare *Acts 17:5; 21:27-31; 22:4*).

³They have not known the way in which God puts men right with himself, and have tried to set up their own way; and so they did not submit themselves to God's way of putting men right. ⁴For Christ has brought the Law to an end, so that everyone who believes is put right with God.

Salvation Is for All

⁵This is what Moses wrote about being put right with God by obeying the Law: "Whoever does what the Law commands will live by it." ⁶But this is what is said about being put right with God through faith: "Do not say to yourself, Who will go up into heaven?" (that is, to bring Christ down). ⁷"Do not say either, Who will go down into the world below?" (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead). ⁸What it says is this: "God's message is near you, on your lips and in your heart"—that is, the message of faith

knowledge. Since they disregarded the righteousness that comes from God and sought to establish their own, they did not submit to God's righteousness. Christ is the end of the law so that there may be righteousness for everyone who believes.

Moses describes in this way the righteousness that is by the law: "The man who does these things will live by them." But the righteousness that is by faith says: "Do not say in your heart, 'Who will ascend into heaven?' " (that is, to bring Christ down), or " 'Who will descend into the deep?' " (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead). But what does it say?

"The word is near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart"; that is, the word of faith we

3. **They have not known.** Compare note on *Rom. 9:32*. Because of their ignorance of Truth, their attitude and their motives were wrong. They tried to *obligate* God to save them. **Their own way.** They were actually guilty of substitution. See notes on *Matt. 7:21-23*; *Mark 7:7-8*. They set up the *merit* of their own experience and actions, and said: "*Now, God, you are obligated to save me.*" **So they did not submit.** This says that they could have done so, but did not. It is a paradox that only as we see we have *no merit*, can we submit to God and live our lives as a *living sacrifice*.

4. **For Christ has brought.** God gave the Law; and it pointed forward to Christ. But Jesus "*closed out*" the Law, "*gave it real meaning,*" "*fulfilled it,*" "*satisfied its righteous demands,*" and "*nailed it to his cross.*" Yet the Jew chained himself to the Law and would not believe in Christ. **So that everyone who believes.** The moment a man *sees* Christ and understands *what* He is and *what* He has done, he feels that *legal religion* is a thing of the past!!! [But see notes on *law* at the end of *chapter 3*, and the nature of faith, *James 2:19*.]

5. **This is what Moses wrote.** The Law is *self-defeating* as a means of being put right with God, because it demands *perfect obedience* (compare note on *James 2:10*). [The quotation is *Lev. 18:5*.]

6. **But this is what is said.** Paul paraphrases what Moses said in *Deut. 30:11-14*. Being "put right by faith" is God's way. Human religion speaks in terms of what man must accomplish by his own efforts. Christianity is based upon God's act in history through Christ - something that is already an ACCOMPLISHED FACT!!! **Who will go up?** "As is that were necessary to one's believing on him" *MacKnight*.

7. **Who will go down?** "As if the crucifixion of Christ had proved him an impostor" *MacKnight*.

8. **God's message is near you.** "The righteousness appointed by God . . . is easily understood and attained" *MacKnight*. It is not to be *achieved* but *seized!* See *verse 17*.

that we preach. ⁹If you declare with your lips, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

¹⁰For we believe in our hearts and are put right with God; we declare with our lips and are saved.

¹¹The scripture says, "Whoever believes in him will not be disappointed." ¹²This included everyone, because there is no difference between Jews and Gentiles; God is the same Lord of all, and richly blesses all who call to him. ¹³As the scripture says, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."

¹⁴But how can they call to him, if they have not believed? And how can they believe, if they have not heard the message? And how can they hear, if the message is not proclaimed? ¹⁵And how can the message be proclaimed, if the messengers are not sent out? As the scripture says, "How wonderful is the coming of those

are proclaiming: That if you ⁹confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved. As the Scrip- ¹¹ture says, "He who believes in him will not be put to shame." For there is no difference between Jew and Gentile—the same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on him, for, ¹³"Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."

How, then, can they call ¹⁴on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? And how can they preach ¹⁵unless they are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!"

9. **If you declare.** This shows the content of the message of faith that Paul preached. The duty of faith requires us to declare that Jesus is Lord (compare *Acts 2:36-37*). **And believe in your heart.** Paul here emphasizes faith in the Resurrection! The whole gospel stands or falls on this one fact (compare *1 Cor. 15:17*). See also *1 Pet. 3:21*.

10. **For we believe in our hearts.** Believing and declaring are opposite sides of the same coin. It is true that such a declaration was made at baptism (compare *Acts 8:37*), but it should not be limited to that. See also *Matt. 10:32*.

11. **The scripture says.** [*Isa. 28:16.*] This proves that God's Plan had salvation for both Jew and Gentile. 12-13. **This includes everyone.** [Greek = Gentile.] Paul has shown that no one can be saved by the Law, and that the prophets predicted God would put people right with himself through faith. But the Jew still believed the Good News was only for themselves, not for the Gentiles, and that Paul made himself a traitor by preaching to the Gentiles. **God is the same Lord of all.** Christ is here identified as God, that is, has the same RELIGIOUS VALUE as God (see *Acts 10:36; Phil. 2:10-11*). Salvation depends upon the sinner *invoking* the name of Christ (*Acts 4:12; 22:16*). See also *Matt. 7:21-22* and notes. **As the scripture says.** See note on *Acts 2:21*.

14. **But how can they call to him?** *Verses 14-21* form a continuous section. At least three ideas are involved here: (1) Paul is proving that he did the right thing by preaching the Good News to the Gentiles; (2) the Jews were given every chance to hear, know, and obey; (3) the chain of *invoking, hearing, proclaiming, sending* - the channel through which man is brought to God.

15. **And how can the message be proclaimed?** Compare *Acts 13:1-3*. **As the scripture says.** He quotes *Isa. 52:7* to show the joy in the spread of the gospel. The Jews expected this prophecy to be fulfilled when the Messiah came.

who bring good news!" ¹⁶But they have not all accepted the Good News. Isaiah himself said, "Lord, who believed our message?" ¹⁷So then, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message comes through preaching Christ.

¹⁸But I ask: Is it true that they did not hear the message? Of course they did—as the scripture says:

"The sound of their voices went out to all the world;
their words reached the ends of the earth."

¹⁹Again I ask: Did the people of Israel not know? Moses himself is the first one to answer:

"I will make you jealous of a people who are not a real nation;
I will make you angry with a nation of foolish people."

²⁰And Isaiah is bolder when he says,
"I was found by those who were not looking for me,
I appeared to those who were not asking for me."

But not all the Israelites ¹⁶ responded to the good news. For Isaiah says, "Lord, who has believed our message?" Consequently, faith comes ¹⁷ from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ. But I ask, did they not hear? ¹⁸ Of course they did?

"Their voice has gone out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world."

Again I ask, did Israel not ¹⁹ understand? First, Moses says,

"I will make you envious by means of those who are not a nation;
I will make you angry by a nation that has no understanding."

Then Isaiah boldly says, ²⁰

"I was found by those who did not seek me;
I revealed myself to those who did not ask for me."

16. But they have not all accepted. There never has been a universal belief in the gospel. But notice that "not all" means *some did!* Compare *Acts 21:20*. Josephus, the Jewish historian, says that by the end of the first century, more than one-third of the Jewish population did believe in Christ!!!

17. Faith comes from hearing the message. Preaching is the method of Jesus himself (*see Matt. 9:35*). As Paul has shown us, the chain of faith begins by someone being sent to preach the message.

18. But I ask? "They must hear in order to believe; do you mean to say they did not hear?" **Of course they did.** This is so clearly the case that there is a touch of irony in Paul's voice. He quotes *Psalms 19:4* from the Septuagint as proof, and he himself knew just how wide-spread the proclaiming of the Good News had been (*Col. 1:6,23*).

19. Again I ask? Yes, Israel did know what God wanted of her, but as a nation she did not put it into practice. **Moses himself.** He quotes *Deut. 32:20-21*. The point is that if people outside the covenant (who were therefore non-people, not a real nation) could understand the Good News, a gifted people like the Jews had no excuse if they failed to believe it.

20. And Isaiah is bolder. *1 Cor. 6:9-11* shows how far away from God the Gentiles were, when God appeared to them. He sent Paul to them with the Good News of Christ (*Acts 9:15*). God "beat us to the draw!" He acted in history through Jesus Christ before we knew anything about it. But to Peter and the other Jewish Christians, what happened at the house of Cornelius was almost *unthinkable* (*Acts 10:44-45*).

²¹But concerning Israel he says, "I held out my hands the whole day long to a disobedient and rebellious people."

God's Mercy on Israel

11 I ask, then: Did God reject his own people? Certainly not! I myself am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham, a member of the tribe of Benjamin. ²God has not rejected his people, whom he chose from the beginning. You know what the scripture says in the passage where Elijah pleads with God against Israel: ³"Lord, they have killed your prophets and torn down your altars; I am the only one left, and they

But concerning Israel he 21
says, "All day long I have
held out my hands to a
disobedient and obstinate
people."

The Remnant of Israel

11 I ask then, Did God
reject his people? By
no means! I am an Israelite
myself, a descendant of A-
braham, from the tribe of
Benjamin. God did not re- 2
ject his people, whom he
foreknew. Don't you know
what the Scripture says in
the passage about Elijah—
how he appealed to God
against Israel: "Lord, they 3
have killed your prophets,
torn down your altars; I am
the only one left, and they

21. **But concerning Israel he says.** The "hands held out" symbolize that love which pleads with Israel all through its history, and which they constantly despised and turned away from. Their problem was not lack of knowledge or intelligence, but of deliberate rebellion and disobedience. Compare *verse 3*. But the reason they did not know, was that they made themselves *blind* to God's Truth. But has God been "caught with his back turned?" God's plans are never changed, since he knows the *end* from the *beginning!* The questions which may have been in Paul's mind are brought up and answered in *chapter 11*.

1. **Did God reject his own people?** Chapters 9, 10, 11 must be understood in view of the fact that God does call every man (*John 6:44-45*); every man responds to this call in some way (*Matt. 13:18-23*); It is God's desire that everyone come to him and be saved (*2 Pet. 3:9*). The questions which Paul deals with in these chapters was in the mind of every Jew: "If the birth of Christ's CHURCH and the conversion of the Gentiles fulfilled God's Plan to bless and save men, then did not God reverse himself, break his promise to Israel, and reject his own chosen people?" **Certainly not!** [*God forbid* is not in the Greek.] God does not reverse himself and change his mind and Plan! In *verses 1-10* Paul examines the question of whether Israel's unbelief involves God's rejection of his chosen people. *Verses 11-24* examines the result of some Jews being excluded from the Messianic Kingdom/Church. *Verses 25-36* praise God's love, wisdom, and faithfulness, as it is revealed in the ONE PLAN OF SALVATION for both Jew and Gentile. **I myself am an Israelite.** *The Expositor's Greek Testament* says this should be taken as meaning: "I, too, am an Israelite, to whom the very idea of God's rejection of His people is an impious and incredible idea, to be repelled with horror."

2. **God has not rejected his people.** Paul formally states that God has not rejected his nation of Israel in the fact of choosing the Gentiles. **Where Elijah pleads with God against Israel.** "Whoever says God has rejected his people Israel, must be ignorant of what the scripture says." Paul quotes *1 Kings 19:10* as proof of his claim. The quotation shows Elijah impeaching Israel as a nation.

3. **I am the only one left.** Paul, like Elijah, was lonely and persecuted, and Israel as a nation seemed to have abandoned God or been abandoned by Him. But Paul better understands God's way (and His faithfulness).

are trying to kill me." "What answer did God give him? "I have kept for myself seven thousand men who have not worshiped the false god Baal."

"It is the same way now at this time: there is a small number of those whom God has chosen, because of his mercy. "His choice is based on his mercy, not on what they have done. For if God's choice were based on what men do, then his mercy would not be true mercy.

"What then? The people of Israel did not find what they were looking for. It was the small group that God chose who found it; the rest grew deaf to God's call. "As the scripture says, "God made them dull of heart and mind; to this very day they cannot see with their eyes or hear

are trying to kill me"? And 4
what was God's answer to
him? "I have reserved for
myself seven thousand who
have not bowed the knee to
Baal." So too, at the present
time there is a remnant
chosen by grace. And if by
grace, then it is no longer by
works; if it were, grace
would no longer be grace.

What then? What Israel 7
sought so earnestly it did not
obtain, but the elect did.
The others became harden-
ed, as it is written: 8

"God gave them a spirit
of stupor,
eyes so that they could
not see,
and ears so that they
could not hear,
to this very day."

4. **What answer did God give him?** This quotes *1 Kings 19:18* as the answer. **Seven thousand men.** *The Expositor's Greek Testament* says: "God has reserved the seven thousand; He has reserved them for Himself; it is on this the proof depends that He has not cast off His people. The seven thousand are Israel to Him." Women and children were not mentioned, only men, yet there were surely many of them as well who followed God. [Baal was the sun-god worshiped by the ancient people of Canaan. Compare *1 Kings 16:31-33; 18:28.*]

5. **It is the same way now.** God's answer in *verse 4*. **At this time.** In the Greek, this points to the present time (as Paul writes) as a CLIMAX. The idea is the same as *Romans 9:6-13*. **Because of his mercy.** The emphasis is on this fact. But note that God's faithfulness in keeping his people is not based on an unconditional arbitrary decree. The "seven thousand" had not worshiped the false god Baal. The "small number" whom God has chosen have faith in Christ! These Jewish Christians form an integral part of the church of Christ. We should also notice that the Devil is limited in what he can do. See *Job 1:6-12; Luke 10:18; 1 John 3:8; 1 Cor. 10:13.*

6. **His choice is based on his mercy.** Paul again emphasizes that nothing a man can do will give him the right to place an obligation on God. God did not accept this "small number" because they obeyed the Law, but because they accepted his offer of mercy! *Salvation is not achieved but seized! For if God's choice. Mercy is undeserved!* If God saved on the basis of law, it would be deserved, and could not be on the basis of mercy.

7. **What then?** "How will we describe the present situation, if not in the painful language of *verse 1?*" **It was the small group.** See *verse 5*. **The rest grew deaf to God's call.** [EPOROSETHAN is 3 pers. pl. aor. 1, ind. passive.] Compare *2 Cor. 3:14*. Paul is purposely vague about how they grew deaf to God.

8. **As the scripture says.** The quotation is a paraphrase of *Deut. 29:4; Isa. 29:10; 6:9-10*. **God made them dull.** It is God who sends this *spirit* of dullness - not arbitrarily or at random, but as a JUDGMENT. When God cannot convince, he confuses! Compare *Isa. 29:13; Psalm 95:7-8; 2 Thess. 2:11-12*. **To this very day.** *2 Cor. 3:14-15.*

with their ears." ⁹And David says,
 "May they be caught and trapped at
 their feasts;
 may they fall, may they be punished!
¹⁰May their eyes be closed so that they
 cannot see;
 and make them bend under their
 troubles at all times."

¹¹I ask, then: When the Jews stumbled, did
 they fall to their ruin? By no means! Because
 they sinned, salvation has come to the Gentiles,
 to make the Jews jealous of them. ¹²The sin of
 the Jews brought rich blessings to the world, and
 their spiritual poverty brought rich blessings
 to the Gentiles. How much greater the blessings
 will be, then, when the complete number of Jews
 is included!

And David says: 9
 "May their table become
 a snare and a trap,
 a stumbling block and a
 retribution for them.
 "May their eyes be dark-
 ened so that they can-
 not see,
 and their backs be bent
 forever."

Ingrafted Branches

Again I ask, Did they 11
 stumble so as to fall beyond
 recovery? Not at all! Rather,
 because of their transgres-
 sion, salvation has come to
 the Gentiles to make Israel
 envious. But if their trans-
 gression means riches for 12
 the world, and their loss
 means riches for the Gen-
 tiles, how much greater
 riches will their fullness
 bring!

9-10. **And David says.** The quotation is *Psalm 69:22-23* in the Septuagint. This does not mean the Jews are more sinful than the Gentiles. The Jew loved the Law of God, but the Law misunderstood, destroyed him. See also what Peter said in *Acts 15:10*. "This veil is removed only when a man is joined to Christ" (*2 Cor. 3:15; compare Matt. 23:39*).

11. **Did they fall to their ruin?** "Have they been irrevocably doomed to hell, with no chance at all for salvation?" **By no means!** [*God forbid* is not in the Greek.] God has no desire to see anyone be lost eternally (*Matt. 18:14*). **Because they sinned.** God did not decree that they should sin, but he used their sin to bless the Gentiles. Compare *Acts 13:46-48; 18:6; 28:25-28*. *Lipscomb* says: "Much of the dealing of God with the Jews and much of the teaching of the prophets was intended to affect the Gentiles fully as much as the Jews. Pharaoh was raised up that God might show to the Egyptians and other nations the power of God. David, the shepherd lad, slew Goliath, a skilled giant, "that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel." (*1 Sam. 17:46*)" **To make the Jews jealous.** As God used the sin of the Jews to bless the Gentiles, he would use the faith of the Gentiles to bless the Jews. Compare *Deut. 32:21*.

12. **Brought rich blessings.** The Jews scattered throughout the world among the Gentiles were a big help in spreading the Good News of Christ (compare *Acts 2:5*). But this *scattering* was the result of their own rebellion (compare *2 Macc. 1:27*). God made use of the unbelief (and rejection) of the Jewish Nation to complete his Plan for blessing the Gentiles and the Jews. **When the complete number of Jews is included!** [PLEROMA = completeness.] The blessing for both Jew and Gentile comes through participating in the Good News of Christ (the gospel). The *small number* (verse 5) were a priceless blessing to the spread of Christianity. *MacKnight*; "How much more will their filling the church be followed with great advantages to the Gentiles?"

The Salvation of the Gentiles

¹³I am speaking now to you Gentiles: as long as I am an apostle to the Gentiles I will take pride in my work. ¹⁴Perhaps I can make the people of my own race jealous, and so be able to save some of them. ¹⁵For when they were rejected, the world was made friends with God. What will it be, then, when they are accepted? It will be life for the dead!

¹⁶If the first piece of bread is given to God, then the whole loaf is his also; and if the roots of a tree are offered to God, the branches are his

I am talking to you Gentiles. Inasmuch as I am the apostle to the Gentiles, I make much of my ministry in the hope that I may somehow arouse my own people to envy and save some of them. For if their rejection is the reconciliation of the world, what will their acceptance be, but life from the dead? If the part of the dough offered as firstfruits is holy, then the whole batch is holy; if the root is holy, so are the branches. 13
14
15
16

13. **I am speaking now.** The church at Rome was made up of both Jewish and Gentile Christians. It is important for Gentile Christians to have the right attitude toward Jewish Christians, since they are ONE in Christ (*Gal. 3:28*)! **An apostle to the Gentiles.** "As *apostleship* to the Gentiles is represented by me, I take pride in my work (by working hard at it), hoping to save some of my own people by making them jealous."

14. **And so be able to save some of them.** Paul was willing to use every resource and even be sacrificed as a martyr, to turn his people to Christ! Each Jew who is saved, goes to make up the *complete number* of *verse 12*.

15. **For when they were rejected.** This returns to the reasoning of *verse 12*. See notes on *verse 11*. The unbelieving Jews have become "undigested Jonahs," running from God. **It will be life for the dead!** *Jowett* says: "Words fall him and he employs the strongest he can find, thinking rather of their general force than of their precise signification." The meaning is: a *blessing beyond human imagination*. Compare *1 Cor. 2:9*; *1 Pet. 4:6*.

16. **If the first piece of bread.** The symbolism is taken from *Num. 15:17-21*. A portion of the grain-harvest was baked into two loaves (*Lev. 23:17*) which were presented to God as a sacrifice. This "first-portion" or *first piece* made the whole loaf holy, including the produce of the entire land. Two thoughts are presented by this symbolism. (1) *MacKnight* says: "By this similitude [symbolism] the apostle teaches, that as the first converts from among the Jews were most acceptable to God, and became members of his newly-erected visible church, so, when the whole mass or body of the nation is converted, they, in like manner, will be most acceptable to God, and will become members of his visible church. Other holiness is not competent to a whole nation." (2) The "first piece of bread" is Abraham himself, and the whole loaf is "God's Chosen People." This seems to best fit in with Paul's line of reasoning here. See also *Gal. 3:17-18, 29*. *Verse 16* is also further proof of Paul's claim in *verses 1-2*. *National Israel* and *God's Chosen People* are not identically the same; and in rejecting most of *National Israel*, God has not rejected his Chosen People. **If the roots.** The root is Abraham, and the branches are God's Chosen People. The symbolism is taken from *Jer. 11:16-17*.

also. ¹⁷Some of the branches of the cultivated olive tree have been broken off, and the branch of a wild olive tree has been joined to it. You Gentiles are like that wild olive tree, and now you share the strength and rich life of the Jews. ¹⁸So then, you must not despise those who were broken off like branches. How can you be proud? You are just a branch; you don't support the root—the root supports you.

¹⁹But you will say, "Yes, but the branches were broken off to make room for me." ²⁰This is true. They were broken off because they did not believe, while you remain in place because you believe. But do not have proud thoughts about it; instead, be afraid. ²¹God did not spare the Jews, who are like natural branches; do you think he

If some of the branches ¹⁷ have been broken off, and you, though a wild olive shoot, have been grafted in among the others and now share in the nourishing sap from the olive root, do not ¹⁸ boast over those branches. If you do, consider this: You do not support the root, but the root supports you. You ¹⁹ will say then, "Branches were broken off so that I could be grafted in." Grant- ²⁰ ed. But they were broken off because of unbelief, and you stand by faith. Do not be arrogant, but be afraid. For ²¹ if God did not spare the natural branches, he will not spare you either.

17. Some of the branches. In the next seven verses, Paul answers an objection which a Gentile Christian might have to his use of the "root and branches" symbolism. The olive tree, of which Abraham is the root, is the *chosen family of Abraham* - not his descendants in a natural way (of the flesh), but his descendants in a spiritual way (through faith) who are "children of the promise." Paul draws two special lessons from this: (1) humility, for the Gentiles; (2) hope, for Israel. **Have been broken off.** Note: not *all*, but *some*. **And the branch of a wild olive tree.** It is very important to notice that the whole cultivated olive tree is *not cut down!* Only *some branches* were broken off because of unbelief (*verse 20*). The wild olive has been joined to the tree *among*, not *instead of*, the natural branches which remain. It was the *small group* of Jewish Christians (*verses 5 & 7*) who took the Good News of Christ to the Gentiles!!!

18. You must not despise. Paul tells the Gentile Christians that they must not despise those Jews who do not believe in Christ (those who were broken off). A farmer grafts cultivated branches on wild stock; the grafting in of the Gentiles is contrary to nature (but no less real). But it is the Gentile who shares the strength and rich life of the Jews, not the other way around.

19. Yes, but. "I know I am not the root, but the branches were broken off to make room for me. Doesn't this make me superior to them?"

20. This is true. This means: "There is some truth in this line of reasoning." But these branches were not just broken off to make room for the Gentiles. **Because they did not believe.** What Paul is saying here, helps to explain what he said in *Rom. 9:14-18*. It was their own unbelief which caused them to be broken off. **Because you believe.** It is faith which joins the Gentile to the tree. **Instead, be afraid.** This is contrasted with "being proud of yourself." A religion based on faith (*Rom. 3:27*) does not permit boasting and being proud. See also *Eph. 2:8-10*. Unbelief would also break them off!

21. God did not spare the Jews. If God broke off the natural branches because of their disbelief, he will break off the Gentile branches who cease to believe.

will spare you? ²²Here we see how kind and how severe God is. He is severe toward those who have fallen, but kind to you—if you continue in his kindness; but if you do not, you too will be broken off. ²³And the Jews, if they abandon their unbelief, will be put back in the place where they were, because God is able to put them back again. ²⁴You Gentiles are like the branch of a wild olive tree that is broken off, and then, contrary to nature, is joined to the cultivated olive tree. The Jews are like this cultivated tree; and it will be much easier, then, for God to join these broken-off branches back to their own tree.

God's Mercy on All

²⁵There is a secret truth, my brothers, which I want you to know. It will keep you from thinking how wise you are. It is this: the stubbornness of the people of Israel is not permanent, but will last only until the complete number of Gentiles

Consider therefore the ²² kindness and sternness of God: sternness to those who fell, but kindness to you, provided that you continue in his kindness. Otherwise, you also will be cut off. And ²³ if they do not persist in unbelief, they will be grafted in, for God is able to graft them in again. After all, if ²⁴ you were cut out of an olive tree that is wild by nature, and contrary to nature were grafted into a cultivated olive tree, how much more readily will these, the natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree?

All Israel Will Be Saved

I do not want you to be ²⁵ ignorant of this mystery, brothers, so that you may not be conceited: Israel has experienced a hardening in part until the full number of the Gentiles has come in.

22. How kind and how severe God is. To those Jews who have fallen, Christ said: "the Kingdom of God will be taken away from you" (*Matt. 21:43*). Some twelve years after Paul wrote these words, the Roman army surrounded Jerusalem and 1,100,000 Jews (who had fallen) DESTROYED THEMSELVES (see note on *Matt. 24:21*). But kind to you. God offered the Gentiles a chance to be part of the tree.

23. And the Jews. They can be part of the tree also. See note on *verse 11*. The curse of *dullness* in *verses 7-10* is not absolute, then, but vanishes when the Jew believes in Christ (*2 Cor. 3:14*). This proves the Jew has *free will* in this matter. (As this is being written, many Jewish young people are converting to Christ.) [Some see in this a promise that Israel as a nation will declare their faith in Christ, at some future time.]

24. You Gentiles. If God saves the Gentile, this is proof he will also save the Jew! If the Gentile can be joined to the tree of Abraham by faith, how much easier will it be to re-join the Jew who believes in Christ.

25. There is a secret truth. [MUSTERION = something hidden, which has now been revealed. Compare *1 Cor. 2:7-10*] Otis Gatewood writes: "*Romans 11:25* does not say that by a special act of God the Jews are blinded until the end of time and the Gentiles come to fully control the political kingdoms of the world. This is exactly what a large host of Gentile preachers teach. They are the ones who are blinded - not the Jews." Gatewood also says: "Faith comes by hearing the Word of the Lord (*Rom. 10:17*), so when the Word of the Lord was preached, the Jew's partial blindness was removed and the "fullness of the Gentiles" came in and they were accepted by the Jews on an equal footing with them. This is explained by the Apostle Paul when he said: 'As a result, there are no Gentiles and Jews, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarians, savages, slaves, or free men, but Christ is all, Christ is in all' (*Col. 3:11*)."
Compare *Eph. 2:14-18; 3:4-6; Luke 21:24; Matt. 24:14* and notes on each verse. The unbelieving Jews, as a source of persecution, ceased to be a factor after Jerusalem was destroyed in 70 A.D.

comes to God. ²⁶And this is how all Israel will be saved. As the scripture says,

“The Savior will come from Zion,
and remove all wickedness from the descendants of Jacob.

²⁷I will make this covenant with them,
when I take away their sins.”

²⁸Because they reject the Good News, the Jews are God’s enemies for the sake of you, the Gentiles. But because of God’s choice, they are his friends for the sake of the patriarchs. ²⁹For God does not change his mind about whom he chooses and blesses. ³⁰As for you Gentiles, you disobeyed God in the past; but now you have received God’s mercy because the Jews disobeyed. ³¹In the same way, because of the mercy that you have received, the Jews now disobey God, in order that they also may now receive God’s mercy. ³²For God has made all men prisoners of disobedience, that he might show mercy to them all.

And so all Israel will be 26
saved, as it is written:

“The deliverer will come
from Zion;
he will turn godlessness
away from Jacob.
And this is my covenant 27
with them
when I take away their
sins.”

As far as the gospel is con- 28
cerned, they are enemies on
your account; but as far as
election is concerned, they
are loved on account of the
patriarchs, for God’s gifts 29
and his call are irrevocable.
Just as you who were at one 30
time disobedient to God
have not received mercy as a
result of their disobedience,
so they too, as a result of 31
God’s mercy to you, have
now become disobedient in
order that they too may now
receive mercy. For God has 32
bound all men over to diso-
bedience so that he may
have mercy on them all.

26. **And this is how.** [ΗΟΥΤΟΣ = in this way, like this, this is how.] Paul paraphrases *Isa. 59:20* which is a prophecy fulfilled by the *first coming* of Christ! It is not the “end time” which Paul looks at, but the events before the Days of Punishment (*Luke 21:20*). The gospel was preached to all the world (*Col. 1:23*), and percentage-wise, the *complete number* of Gentiles did come to God. *Josephus*, the Jewish historian, says that by the end of the first century, more than *one-third* of the Jews had become Christians! Christ did come from Zion, he did remove all wickedness (by his imputed righteousness), he did make a new covenant (*Heb. 8:7-13*), and every Jew can share in it (*verse 23*).

27. **When I take away their sins.** The central truth here is that the *sins of Jacob* will be forgiven according to Jehovah’s COVENANT - not the one at Sinai, but the promise to Abraham (*Gal. 3:17-18*).

28. **The Jews are God’s enemies.** Compare *verse 11*. **But because of God’s choice.** *MacKnight* says: “The very persons here said to be beloved [friends] in respect of the election [God’s choice], are in the preceding clause said to be enemies in respect of the gospel. Wherefore, this election cannot be of individuals to eternal life: but it is that national election, whereby the Jews were made the church and people of God. See *Rom. 9:11* note.”

29. **For God does not change his mind.** See *Gal. 3:14-18*.

30. **As for you Gentiles.** The church at Rome was mostly made up of Gentiles. **You disobeyed God in the past.** See *1 Cor. 6:9-11*. **Because the Jews disobeyed.** It is an important fact of Paul’s theology that God’s choosing of the Jews will never be revoked - that is, that the “door of mercy” will always be open for them (*verse 23*). The Gentiles *must not* think the Jews are under God’s special curse, and to prevent this, Paul shows that the disobedience of the Jews brought the *chance to be saved* to the Gentiles.

31. **In order that they also.** Some Jews disobeyed God because they saw the Gentiles coming to Christ. Paul’s point is that both Gentile and Jew will receive God’s mercy in Christ. Compare *Rom. 3:21-24*.

32. **For God.** “God has placed all men under the sentence of death for their disobedience, in order, that by admitting them into his covenant and church, he might make them aware that he gives a free gift to all.”

Praise to God

³³How great are God's riches! How deep are his wisdom and knowledge! Who can explain his decisions? Who can understand his ways? ³⁴As the scripture says,

"Who knows the mind of the Lord?
Who is able to give him advice?"

³⁵Who has ever given him anything,
so that he had to pay it back?"

³⁶For all things were created by him, and all things exist through him and for him. To God be the glory forever! Amen.

Life in God's Service

12 So then, my brothers, because of God's great mercy to us, I make this appeal to you: Offer yourselves as a living sacrifice to God, dedicated to his service and pleasing to him. This is the true worship that you should offer. ²Do not conform outwardly to the standards of this world, but let God transform you inwardly by a

Doxology

O the depth of the riches, 33
the wisdom and the
knowledge of God!

How unsearchable his
judgments, and his
paths beyond tracing
out!

"Who has known the 34
mind of the Lord? Or
who has been his
adviser?"

"Who has ever given to 35
God, that God should
repay him?"

For from him and through 36
him and to him are all
things.

To him be the glory for-
ever! Amen.

Living Sacrifices

12 Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your selves as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—which is your spiritual worship. Do not conform any 2
longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed

33-36. **How great are God's riches!** In response to *verse 32*, Paul gives a doxology of praise to God! The whole world, with its racism, violence, lust, and unbelief, may seem to be "disorganized confusion!" But when we see it as Paul sees it, God's Purpose is over all and through all! No one can obligate God by giving anything to him! Man completely depends upon God's mercy! God has acted in Christ to set men free, and salvation is a free gift to be seized! [*Verse 34* quotes *Isa. 40:13* Septuagint; *verse 35* paraphrases *Job 41:11* Septuagint.]

1. So then, my brothers. In the first eleven chapters, Paul showed us man's guilt and God's offer of salvation. Now he shows us the obligation which God places on those who reach out through faith to seize the sacrifice of Christ and make themselves part of it. See notes on *law* at the end of *chapter 3*. **Offer yourselves.** You offer yourself! This is your choice of free will. Every Christian is a priest to God (*Rev. 1:6*). **A living sacrifice.** This directly contrasts with the sacrifices of the Law (*Heb. 9:11-14*). We offer no dead animals on Jewish altars. After we have been made clean by the bloody-death of Christ, we give ourselves as a living sacrifice to God. **This is the true worship.** The *living sacrifice* is not a *sin-offering* to put us right with God. Rather, it is a *praise-offering*, and our good works are true worship to God. We do not mistreat and mutilate our bodies as some Gentiles do in honor to their "god," but we use our total being to live *Christ's life!* Compare *Matt. 25:31-40*.

2. Do not conform outwardly. This is an evil age/world (*Gal. 1:4*) and Satan is the evil god of this world (*2 Cor. 4:4*). The exact opposite of "offering yourselves as a living sacrifice," is to *let the world squeeze you into its mold. But let God transform you.* This is written to Christians who are already new in Christ (*2 Cor. 5:17; Titus 3:5*). After being put right with God, the new Christian is still by nature a part of this world (*Eph. 2:1-10*). The Christian is continually faced with the choice of living *Christ's*

complete change of your mind. Then you will be able to know the will of God—what is good, and is pleasing to him, and is perfect.

³And because of God's gracious gift to me, I say to all of you: Do not think of yourselves more highly than you should. Instead, be modest in your thinking, and each one of you judge himself according to the amount of faith that God has given him. ⁴We have many parts in the one body, and all these parts have different functions. ⁵In the same way, though we are many, we are one body in union with Christ and we are all joined to each other as different parts of one body. ⁶So we are to use our different gifts in accordance with the grace that God has given us. If our gift is to speak God's message, we must do it according to the faith that we have. ⁷If it is to serve, we must serve. If it is to teach, we

by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

For by the grace given to me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you. Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. We have different gifts, according to the grace given us. If a man's gift is prophesying, let him use it in proportion to his faith. If it is serving, let him serve; if it is teaching, let

life in this world (*Rom. 5:3-4*). By a complete change of your mind. See *Phil. 2:5*; *1 Pet. 1:16*. "Do not restrain the Holy Spirit" (*1 Thess 5:19*) implies that it is possible to do so. Then you will be able to know. Only one who has been united to Christ can know this (*1 Cor 2:14*), but it is a learning process as well (*Rom. 2:18*).

3. And because of God's gracious gift to me. His authority as an apostle. Do not think of yourselves more highly. Spiritual gifts were likely as much of a problem (or would be a problem) as at Corinth. Rank has no place in the messianic community (compare *John 13:1-17*). Everything you have has been given to you (*1 Cor. 4:7*). Each of us is only doing our job, nothing more (*1 Cor. 3:5*). To the amount of faith. In one sense, faith is a gift from God (*James 2:19*; *Acts 11:18*), but here it means supernatural faith (gifts) from the Spirit. We are to think of our talents as gifts from God as well.

4. We have many parts. Our human bodies are made up of many different parts, each fulfilling its separate function for the good of the whole.

5. In the same way. Christians form one body or messianic community under the rule of Christ who is the head. We are all joined to each other. Just as the parts of our natural body are joined together. Each Christian is "Spirit-filled" (*Acts 5:32*), and the Spirit welds us together into one body (*1 Cor. 12:12-13*), but individual Christians are not the whole body by themselves (*1 Cor. 12:17*).

6. So we are to use our different gifts. Each one in the messianic community has his duties, just as the hand or foot or eye of the body. Compare *1 Cor. 12:4-7*. In accordance with the grace. Compare *verse 3*. Seven gifts are now mentioned. The first four are "official," and some are supernatural. To speak God's message. Since the New Testament was not yet written down, some were given the supernatural ability to speak God's message by inspiration. [These were called prophets. They were sometimes, but not always, comparable to preachers.]

7. Or if it is to serve. *Acts 6:2-3*. If it is to teach. A church leader/elder was supposed to be a teacher.

must teach. ⁸If it is to encourage others, we must do so. Whoever shares with others what he has, must do it generously; whoever has authority, must work hard; whoever shows kindness to others, must do it cheerfully.

⁹Love must be completely sincere. Hate what is evil, hold on to what is good. ¹⁰Love one another warmly as brothers in Christ, and be eager to show respect for one another. ¹¹Work hard, and do not be lazy. Serve the Lord with a heart full of devotion. ¹²Let your hope keep you joyful, be patient in your troubles, and pray at all times. ¹³Share your belongings with your needy brothers, and open your homes to strangers.

¹⁴Ask God to bless those who persecute you; yes, ask him to bless, not to curse. ¹⁵Be happy with those who are happy, weep with those who weep. ¹⁶Have the same concern for all alike. Do not be proud, but accept humble duties. Do not think of yourselves as wise.

him teach; if it is encouraging, let him encourage; if it is contributing to the needs of others, let him give generously; if it is leadership, let him govern diligently, if it is showing mercy, let him do it cheerfully. 8

Love

Love must be sincere. 9
Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honor one another above yourselves. Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord. Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. Share with God's people who are in need. Practice hospitality. 12

Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. Rejoice with those who rejoice, mourn with those who mourn. Live in harmony with one another. Don't be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Don't be conceited. 14

8. If it is to encourage others. *Acts 4:36; 9:26-27. Whoever shares. 2 Cor. 9:11-13. Authority. 1 Pet. 5:1-4. Kindness. 2 Cor. 9:7; Gal. 6:1-2.*

9. Love must be completely sincere. Compare *1 Cor. 13. Hate what is evil.* A Christian cannot love evil and love God at the same time. Hold on to what is good. We are to seize good and make ourselves part of it.

10. Love one another. Being "one in Christ" is not *make-believe!* A real love and kindness welds us together and makes us honor each other. *John 13:35.*

11. Work hard. A Christian may "burn out," but never "rust out!" Serve the Lord. The "spiritual temperature" is to be *high* in the messianic community!!!

12. Let your hope keep you joyful. The evidence of the Holy Spirit living in the Christian is: faith, hope, and love. From heaven's view, they are the supreme miracles of divine grace. Be patient in your troubles. *Rom. 5:3-5. Pray at all times. Luke 18:1.* We see this in the life of Jesus.

13. Share your belongings. *Gal. 6:10; Acts 2:44-45; 6:1-7. Open your homes to strangers.* The things in this verse were especially important in the first century, when persecution often forced Christians to "run for their lives." Christianity is a faith with an open hand, an open heart, and an open door! See *1 John 3:17.*

14. Ask God to bless. If you can do this, you are a transformed person! See note on *Matt. 5:44.* Christ did this as he hung on the cross!!!

15. Be happy. A Christian will share the joys and sorrows of others, especially other Christians.

16. Have the same concern for all alike. Treat your fellow Christian as you would want him to treat you. Compare *James 2:1-4. Do not be proud.* "Don't be afraid to get your hands dirty." Jesus made himself the servant of others. Do not think of yourselves as wise. Compare *Luke 18:9-14.*

¹⁷If someone does evil to you, do not pay him back with evil. Try to do what all men consider to be good. ¹⁸Do everything possible, on your part, to live at peace with all men. ¹⁹Never take revenge, my friends, but instead let God's wrath do it. For the scripture says, "I will take revenge, I will pay back, says the Lord." ²⁰Instead, as the scripture says: "If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him a drink; for by doing this you will heap burning coals on his head." ²¹Do not let evil defeat you; instead, conquer evil with good.

Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the sight of everybody. If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge, I will repay," says the Lord. On the contrary: "If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head." Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

Duties toward the State Authorities

13 Everyone must obey the state authorities, because no authority exists without God's permission, and the existing authorities have

Submission to the Authorities

13 Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by

17. **Do not pay him back with evil.** Our human nature wants revenge! It may be hard to return good for evil, *but it is required*, and the rewards are great. See *John 13:35* and note. **Try to do.** See *Matt. 5:16; 1 Pet. 2:12*.

18. **Do everything possible.** Sometimes it is impossible, but it must never be the Christian who is at fault. Compare *Matt. 5:9*.

19. **Never take revenge.** If someone does you wrong, *you harm yourself* by taking revenge. Some condition in the church at Rome must have been the reason for this strong statement from Paul. Not the one who thinks he has been wronged, but rather God, is the moral judge of all. Paul quotes *Deut. 32:35* to prove this. Compare *1 Thess. 2:16*.

20. **Instead, as the scripture says.** Paul quotes *Prov. 25:21-22* Septuagint. Compare *2 Kings 6:22; Matt. 5:44; Luke 6:27-28*. A Christian is not passively non-resistive, but *actively repays* hostility with love!!! The purpose of Christ is not to destroy, but to save!!! This must be our purpose as well.

21. **Do not let evil defeat you.** If the Christian takes revenge and returns evil for evil, he has been defeated. This is Paul's point here. **Conquer evil with good.** This is the only answer. Good is stronger than evil, even though this may not seem true at the time. Taking revenge does not change your enemy, but kindness can make him your friend. This is God's way.

1. **Everyone must obey the state authorities.** Paul is telling Christians to obey the Roman government that would soon be persecuting them. This is a paradox. The Christian is to obey whatever government rules the country where he lives. The Gentile Christians would be expected to pick up many Jewish ideas from the Jewish Christians. The Jews believed no Gentile had the right to rule over them, basing this on *Deut. 17:15*. As believers in the Messiah, "another king, by the name of Jesus" (*Acts 17:7*), even Gentile Christians might feel they had no loyalty to any human government. Paul's teaching here is the same as what Jesus said in *Mark 12:14-17*. The point is that human governments are necessary to preserve moral order. All human governments have been put there by God. [The Book of Revelation shows us that EVERY government serves both God and Satan at exactly the same time.]

been put there by God. ²Whoever opposes the existing authority opposes what God has ordered; and anyone who does so will bring judgment on himself. ³For rulers are not to be feared by those who do good but by those who do evil. Would you like to be unafraid of the man in authority? Then do what is good, and he will praise you. ⁴For he is God's servant working for your own good. But if you do evil, be afraid of him, because his power to punish is real. He is God's servant and carries out God's wrath on those who do evil. ⁵For this reason you must obey the authorities—not just because of God's wrath, but also as a matter of conscience.

⁶This is also the reason that you pay taxes, because the authorities are working for God when they fulfill their duties. ⁷Pay, then, what you owe them; pay them your personal and property taxes, and show respect and honor for them all.

God. Consequently, he who ² rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves. For rulers hold no terror for ³ those who do right, but for those who do wrong. Do you want to be free from fear of the one in authority? Then do what is right and he will commend you. For he is ⁴ God's servant to do you good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword for nothing. He is God's servant, an agent of justice to bring punishment on the wrongdoer. Therefore, it is necessary to submit to the authorities, not only because of possible punishment but also because of conscience. ⁵

This is also why you pay ⁶ taxes, for the authorities are God's servants, who give their full time to governing. Give everyone what you owe ⁷ him: If you owe taxes, pay taxes; if revenue, then revenue; if respect, then respect; if honor, then honor.

2. Whoever opposes. This is a strong statement! We must obey the civil laws just as we must obey God's laws. Of course, this does not mean we are to obey wicked rulers when they order us to disobey God (*compare Acts 4:19*).

3. By those who do good. In general, rulers work for the good of their people [to stay in power], which includes punishing those who do evil. Some rulers are an exception to this, and probably all rulers are at sometime an exception.

4. For he is God's servant. The ruler is to guard order and preserve peace. In this he is God's servant. **But if you do evil.** In just a few years, Jewish armed terrorists rebelled against the Roman government, and it all ended in the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D.

5. But also as a matter of conscience. There are two reasons we should obey civil government: (1) to avoid God's wrath (*verse 4*); (2) because of conscience (it is God's will that we obey).

6. That you pay taxes. Since the civil ruler is God's servant, Christians are obligated to pay taxes to him. See *Matt. 22:21*.

7. Pay, then, what you owe them. Pay to them whatever they have a right to claim from you. **And show respect and honor.** [Fear = respect, reverence.] The Christian respects and honors those whose right it is to be respected and honored, and pays his just taxes. He cannot do less, and be true to God.

Duties toward One Another

⁸Be in debt to no one—the only debt you should have is to love one another. Whoever loves his fellow-man has obeyed the Law. ⁹The commandments, “Do not commit adultery; do not murder; do not steal; do not covet”—all these, and any others besides, are summed up in the one command, “Love your fellow-man as yourself.” ¹⁰Whoever loves his fellow-man will never do him wrong. To love, then, is to obey the whole Law.

¹¹You must do this, because you know what hour it is: the time has come for you to wake up from your sleep. For the moment when we will be saved is closer now than it was when we first believed. ¹²The night is nearly over, day is almost here. Let us stop doing the things that belong to the dark, and take up the weapons for fighting in

Love, for the Day Is Near

Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another, for he who loves his fellow man has fulfilled the law. The commandments, “Do not commit adultery,” “Do not murder,” “Do not steal,” “Do not covet,” and whatever other commandment there may be, are summed up in this one rule? “Love your neighbor as yourself.” Love does no harm to its neighbor. Therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.

And do this, understanding the present time. The hour has come for you to wake up from your slumber, because our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed. The night is nearly over; the day is almost here. So let us put aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of

8. **Be in debt to no one.** Some think this means a Christian should not use credit or borrow money. But most see it continuing the thought of *verse 7*, and understand it to mean: “Pay every just claim, not only to government, but to everyone. The debt of love, though fully paid, is still always owed!” **Has obeyed the Law.** “Has obeyed” implies that obedience is already completed in the simple act of love.

9. **Are summed up in the one command.** Law describes moral standards. The law of Christ is a rule of life for believers. Paul names four commandments which have to do with human relationships. These and any others are summed up in LOVE. [“Do not give false testimony” is omitted in most of the manuscripts.]

10. **To love, then, is to obey the whole Law.** Compare *Gal. 5:13-15. The Expositor's Greek Testament* says: “It is apparent once more that NOMOS is the Mosaic Law, and not law in general . . .”

11. **You must do this.** “Love your fellow-man as yourself.” **You know what hour it is.** They lived at a crucial point in history! See notes on *Matt. 24:29-31; Rom. 11:25-26.* **For you to wake up.** Christians must have a sense of *urgency*, like the farmer who *races* to finish his work before sundown!!! **When we will be saved.** Even though Paul knew (by inspiration) that the Lord would not come in his lifetime (*2 Thess. 2:3*), yet he always had a strong sense of the nearness of that Day when Christ would Come! **Saved here** is used in the sense of our being *set completely free* - body, soul, spirit - in Eternity. Compare *1 John 3:1-3; 1 Cor. 15:51-52; 1 Thess. 4:15-18; Rom. 8:23.*

12. **The night is nearly over.** The “night” of spiritual darkness [ignorance and evil]. **Day is almost here.** When the Truth of Christ sets people free from sin and death. [Johnson sees this night as the period leading up to the “will be saved” of *verse 11.* But *verse 13* points this symbolism to the present time.] **Things that belong to the dark.** Sin, evil, and everything that cannot *survive* the *light* of Truth. **Take up the weapons.** These *weapons of light* are the exact opposite of the “things that belong to the dark.” See *Rom. 6:13; Eph. 6:10-18; 1 Thess. 5:8.*

the light. ¹³Let us conduct ourselves properly, as people who live in the light of day; no orgies or drunkenness, no immorality or indecency, no fighting or jealousy. ¹⁴But take up the weapons of the Lord Jesus Christ, and stop giving attention to your sinful nature, to satisfy its desires.

Do Not Judge Your Brother

14 Accept among you the man who is weak in the faith, but do not argue with him about his personal opinions. ²One man's faith allows him to eat anything, but the man who is weak in the faith eats only vegetables. ³The man who will eat anything is not to despise the man who doesn't; while the one who eats only vegetables is not to pass judgment on the one who eats

light. Let us behave decently, as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and debauchery, not in dissension and jealousy. Rather, clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of your sinful nature.

The Weak and The Strong

14 Accept him whose faith is weak, without passing judgment on disputable matters. One man's faith allows him to eat everything, but another man, whose faith is weak, eats only vegetables. The man who eats everything must not look down on him who does not, and the man who does not eat everything must not condemn the man who does, for God has accepted

13. **Let us conduct ourselves properly.** Christians are "walking advertisements" for the Faith. **Orgies.** See note on *Rev. 2:20*. **Immorality.** The technical word is *fornication*. See notes on *Matt. 19:9*; *Heb. 13:4*. **Indecency.** Sensuality, things that degrade human character. **Fighting.** See *James 4:1-5*. **Jealousy.** See *Gal. 5:19-21*; *1 Cor. 3:3*.

14. **But take up the weapons.** Compare note on *verse 12*. We make ourselves part of Christ in baptism (*Gal. 3:27*). Here the thought is that we ourselves are to take the weapons (principles?) of Christ and make them part of our fighting-gear. The new birth (*John 3:5*) is only the beginning of our new life in Christ, and we learn and apply the teaching of Christ to the totality of all we do. This means we can no longer be a slave to our sinful nature.

1. **Accept among you.** Take into your circle of fellowship. **Who is weak in the faith.** The messianic community contains those who are "spiritual babies" as well as "spiritual adults." It takes time to *get over* the doubts and scruples of the past. Compare notes on *Col. 2:20-23*; *1 Cor. 8:7-12*. **But do not argue with him.** "Accept the *spiritual baby* in kindness and hospitality and let him share in the life of the church. But don't argue about his personal opinions and don't give him a place of authority until he has matured (*Heb. 5:12*)." Arguing personal opinions does not create love nor build the church. Compare *1 Tim. 6:3-5*.

2. **To eat anything.** Food was a "live issue" at Rome. One man understands he is free in Christ, and ignores all dietary restrictions (except those of *Acts 15:20*). See what Paul says in *Col. 2:16*. **Eats only vegetables.** This man was "weak in the faith," and ate no meat because of religious scruples.

3. **Is not to despise.** The one who is fully aware of his freedom in Christ is not to feel contempt for the ignorance and immaturity of his brother in Christ. **Is not to pass judgment.** The man whose religious opinions force him to be a vegetarian is not to accuse his more mature brother of sinning because he eats everything.

anything, because God has accepted him. ⁴Who are you to judge the servant of someone else? It is his own Master who will decide whether he succeeds or fails. And he will succeed, because the Lord is able to make him succeed.

⁵One man thinks that a certain day is more important than the others, while another man thinks that all days are the same. Each one should have his own mind firmly made up. ⁶Whoever thinks highly of a certain day does it in honor of the Lord; whoever eats anything does it in honor of the Lord, because he gives thanks to God for the food. Whoever refuses to eat certain things does so in honor of the Lord, and he gives thanks to God. ⁷None of us lives for himself only, none of us dies for himself only; ⁸if we live, it is for the Lord that we live, and if we die, it is for the Lord that we die. Whether we live or die, then, we belong to the Lord. ⁹For Christ died and rose to life in order to be the

him. Who are you to judge ⁴
someone else's servant? To
his own master he stands or
falls. And he will stand, for
the Lord is able to make him
stand.

One man considers one ⁵
day more sacred than an-
other; another man con-
siders every day alike. Each
one should be fully con-
vinced in his own mind. He ⁶
who regards one day as
special, does so to the Lord.
He who eats meat, eats to
the Lord, for he gives thanks
to God; and he who ab-
stains, does so to the Lord,
and gives thanks to God. ⁷
For none of us lives to him-
self alone and none of us
dies to himself alone. If we ⁸
live, we live to the Lord; and
if we die, we die to the Lord.
So, whether we live or die,
we belong to the Lord.

For this very reason, ⁹
Christ died and returned to
life so that he might be the
Lord of both the dead and

4. Who are you? "You are not his master, and you have no authority over him." **And he will succeed.** While very aware of the dangers, Paul still sees Christian freedom as a moral victory. [The Pharisees are an example which shows it is very easy to be too conservative and reactionary.]

5. That a certain day. Both Jews and Gentiles found it difficult to give up traditions and superstitions. Compare *Acts 21:20*; *Col. 2:16*; *Gal. 4:10*. [We honor Sunday as the Lord's Day, because He raised from death on that day. Yet Sunday is not the "Christian Sabbath." Christians have no Sabbath Day on this earth. It comes in Eternity (*Psalms 23:6*; *Heb. 4:8-10*).] **Should have his own mind.** Each one should act as he thinks right. Compare *verse 23*. If he wants to honor a certain day, let him do as his conscience requires. There is no intrinsic value to the day itself, only the honor which the Christian gives it.

6. Whoever. In each case, the Christian is *doing or not doing* because of his love and respect for God. Compare *1 Cor. 6:12*; *8:8*.

7. For himself only. Christians belong to God (*1 Cor. 6:19-20*). Whether in life or in death, we are his. [Some also see in this the thought that what we do affects others.]

8. We belong to the Lord. The totality of our earthly existence, our life and even our death, is a service for our God. See notes on *Rom. 12:1*.

9. In order to be the Lord. This points back to God's act in Christ to set men free. In dying and rising to life, Christ became Lord of all (*Phil. 2:8-11*). Christians are *sealed* by Christ's death and share his new life (*Rom. 6:4*).

Lord of the living and of the dead. ¹⁰You, then—why do you pass judgment on your brother? And you—why do you despise your brother? All of us will stand before God, to be judged by him.

¹¹For the scripture says,

“As I live, says the Lord,
everyone will kneel before me,
and everyone will confess that I am
God.”

¹²Every one of us, then, will have to give an account of himself to God.

Do Not Make Your Brother Fall

¹³So then, let us stop judging one another. Instead, this is what you should decide: not to do anything that would make your brother stumble, or fall into sin. ¹⁴My union with the Lord Jesus makes me know for certain that nothing is unclean of itself; but if a man believes that something is unclean, then it becomes unclean for him. ¹⁵If you hurt your brother because of something you eat, then you are no longer acting from love. Do not let the food that you eat ruin

the living. You, then, why ¹⁰do you judge your brother? Or why do you look down on your brother? For we will all stand before God's judgment seat. It is written: ¹¹

“‘As I live,’ says the Lord,
‘Every knee will bow before me;
every tongue will confess
to God.’”

So then, each of us will give ¹²an account of himself to God.

Therefore, let us stop ¹³passing judgment on one another. Instead, make up your mind not to put any stumbling block or obstacle in your brother's way. As ¹⁴one who is in the Lord Jesus, I am fully convinced that no food is unclean in itself. But if anyone regards something as unclean, then for him it is unclean. If your brother is ¹⁵distressed because of what you eat, you are no longer acting in love. Do not by your eating destroy your brother for whom Christ

10. You, then. Christ is the one Lord and Judge. What right do you have to pass judgment on your brother? **Why do you despise?** The hypercritical pharasaic attitude is always sin. **All of us will stand.** When we *judge* our brother, we put ourself in God's place. But we are not judges, and all of us will stand before the Judge of all. As we remember this fact, we will avoid passing judgment on our brother and despising him. Compare *Matt. 7:1-2* and notes.

11. For the scripture says. A paraphrase of *Isa. 45:23*. Paul adds “As I live” to Isaiah's text to give it strong emphasis. The teachers of the Law said this spoke of Messiah's Kingdom. Compare *Acts 15:16-18*. But here Paul applies it to the “end of the world.”

12. Will have to give an account. “This is the reason you should not judge each other.” Only God has the authority to call us to account for our lives.

13. So then. If a Christian does what God tells him to do, he will have no time to do wrong. We must not waste time arguing personal opinions! **Not to do anything.** We are not to abuse our freedom in such a way that we destroy a weak brother. A Christian is responsible for the influence of his conduct. Paul seems to have in mind, the special case of eating meat which had been sacrificed to idols (which was sold at reduced prices).

14. Nothing is unclean of itself. The religious laws about food had been repealed. As a Christian, Paul has no scruples about food or drink or days. **But it becomes unclean for him.** Because his conscience is untrained, he has scruples, but he must be respected. Compare *verse 23*.

15. If you hurt your brother. “Your freedom of action is not worth the price of hurting your brother in Christ. Love doesn't act this way!” **Ruin** is a strong word. Christian freedom must not be used in such a way that it might destroy the work of the gospel. [This is dealing with matters of opinion. In matters of faith, other factors must be considered.]

the man for whom Christ died! ¹⁶Do not let what you regard as good acquire a bad name. ¹⁷For God's Kingdom is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace, and joy that the Holy Spirit gives. ¹⁸And whoever serves Christ in this way wins God's pleasure and man's approval.

¹⁹So then, we must always aim at those things that bring peace, and that help strengthen one another. ²⁰Do not, because of food, destroy what God has done. All foods may be eaten, but it is wrong to eat anything that will cause someone else to fall into sin. ²¹The right thing to do is to keep from eating meat, drinking wine, or doing anything else that will make your brother fall. ²²Keep what you believe about this matter, then, between yourself and God. Happy is the man who does not feel himself condemned

died. Do not allow what you ¹⁶ consider good to be spoken of as evil. For the kingdom ¹⁷ of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit, because ¹⁸ anyone who serves Christ in this way is pleasing to God and approved by men.

Let us therefore make ¹⁹ every effort to do what leads to peace and to mutual edification. Do not destroy the ²⁰ work of God for the sake of food. All food is clean, but it is wrong for a man to eat anything that causes someone else to stumble. It is better ²¹ not to eat meat or drink wine or to do anything else that will cause your brother to fall.

So whatever you believe ²² about these things keep between yourself and God. Blessed is the man who does not condemn himself by

16. **Do not let.** "Do not let your freedom in Christ become so repulsive to your weak brother that it seems to be blasphemy to him." Compare *1 Cor. 9:19-22; 10:28-33*.

17. **For God's Kingdom.** Eating and drinking are trivial matters, when compared with the great themes of righteousness, peace, and joy! **That the holy Spirit gives.** Compare *Gal. 5:22-23; John 7:38-39*.

18. **And whoever serves Christ.** No one can serve Christ if he cares nothing for the righteousness, peace, and joy that the Holy Spirit gives! An unselfish attitude pleases both God and man!

19. **We must always aim.** "In those matters that are *morally indifferent* [that make no difference, one way or the other] I must ask how my action or lack of action will affect the peace and growth of the church."

20. **Do not.** In some cases it is right for one man to restrict his action on the basis of another man's conscience. **All foods may be eaten**, even those which have been sacrificed to idols (*1 Cor. 10:27-29*). **But it is wrong.** It is a sin to cause someone to violate their conscience over trivial matters.

21. **The right thing to do.** Paul would not have written this chapter at all, if there had not been problems in the church at Rome over the use of meats and wine. Some had serious scruples about this, based on tradition and superstition. The strong brother must respect the conscience of the weak brother in such trivial matters of opinion. But the weak brother also has the duty to grow (*Heb. 5:11-14*).

22. **Keep what you believe.** Freedom must be balanced by a sense of responsibility. We may hold many opinions, but we may not force them on others. **Happy is the man.** "Happy is the man with a clear conscience, who does not allow himself to do those things which he secretly believes to be wrong."

when he does what he approves of! ²³But if he has doubts about what he eats, God condemns him when he eats it, because his action is not based on faith. And anything that is not based on faith is sin.

Please Others, Not Yourselfes

15 We who are strong in the faith ought to help the weak to carry their burdens. We should not please ourselves. ²Instead, each of us should please his brother for his own good, in order to build him up in the faith. ³For Christ did not please himself. Instead, as the scripture says, "The insults spoken by those who insulted you have fallen on me." ⁴Everything written in the Scriptures was written to teach us, in order that we might have hope through the patience and encouragement the Scriptures give us. ⁵And may God, the source of patience and encouragement, enable you to have the same point of view among yourselves by following the example of

what he approves. But the **23** man who has doubts is condemned if he eats, because his eating is not from faith; and everything that does not come from faith is sin.

15 We who are strong ought to bear with the failings of the weak, and not to please ourselves. Each of us should please his neighbor for his good, to build him up. For even Christ did not please himself but, as it is written: "The insults of those who insult you have fallen on me." For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through endurance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.

May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you a spirit of unity among yourselves as

23. But if he has doubts. The last half of *verse 22* begins this thought. The man who does allow himself to do those things which he secretly believes to be wrong, sins, and God condemns him. **Not based on faith is sin.** The context shows that Paul is saying that whenever a Christian does things he believes to be wrong (even though they are not contrary to God's law), they are sin for him. See *verse 14*. However, thinking a thing to be right does not make it right. Our faith must be based on God's Word!!! See *Heb. 5:14*.

1. We who are strong. Paul contrasts the strong and the weak in *chapter 14*. The strong are no longer slaves to tradition and superstition. The weak still are troubled by their scruples. A chain may only be as strong as its weakest link, but a congregation is as strong as its most spiritual member.

2. Each of us should please his brother. The pleasing of the brother is *for his own good, to build him up in the faith*. This does not mean we are to compromise Christian principles just to keep our brother happy. Compare *Col. 1:10; Gal. 1:10; 5:11-12*.

3. For Christ. He set the example for us by his action. **Instead.** Paul quotes *Psalms 69:9* Septuagint to prove this. The pain, torture, and shame Christ experienced in the process of fulfilling God's will, show he was not proud and selfish. [Compare *John 15:23-24*.]

4. Everything written in the Scriptures. The things in the Old Testament were written to teach us. **In order that.** In the Bible, hope is something you expect to happen! The patience and encouragement the Scriptures give us teach us to hope, even when we suffer for Christ. Compare *Rom. 5:2-5; James 1:2-4; 2 Tim. 3:15-17*.

5. To have the same point of view. If all share the *point of view* which Christ had (*verse 3*), we will work together for the common goal. **The example of Christ Jesus.** As a living sacrifice (*Rom. 12:1*), we live Christ's life (*Gal. 2:19-20*).

Christ Jesus, ⁶so that all of you together, with one voice, may praise the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The Gospel to the Gentiles

⁷Accept one another, then, for the glory of God, as Christ has accepted you. ⁸Because I tell you that Christ became a servant of the Jews to show that God is faithful, to make God's promises to the patriarchs come true, ⁹and also to enable the Gentiles to praise God for his mercy. As the scripture says,

"And so I will give thanks to you among the Gentiles,

I will sing praises to your name."

¹⁰Again it says,

"Rejoice, Gentiles, with God's chosen people!"

you follow Christ Jesus, so that with one heart and mouth you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. 6

Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God. For I tell you that Christ has become a servant of the Jews on behalf of God's truth, to confirm the promises made to the patriarchs so that the Gentiles may glorify God for his mercy, as it is written: 7 8 9

"For this reason I will praise you among the Gentiles; I will sing hymns to your name."

Again, it says, 10
"Rejoice, Gentiles, with his people."

6. **With one voice.** When the messianic community praises God *with one voice*, they will avoid the problems of *chapter 14*. Compare *John 17:21-23*.

7. **Accept one another.** *Verses 7-13* expand the idea in *verse 6*. We are to *keep on accepting* one another in spite of the differences of spiritual development (*John 6:37; Rom. 14:1*). We tend to think of the first century church in terms of small "house-churches," but the congregation at Jerusalem was probably 100,000 members, just before it was scattered. In one congregation you might find: Jews, Gentiles, slaves, slave-owners, free men, women who hate men, men who hate women, vegetarians, meat eaters, celibates, married couples, etc. *Christ had accepted each of them!* Therefore, they *MUST* accept each other!

8. **Because I tell you.** The promise of the Messiah was addressed to the Jew. Jesus, in his human existence, had the same relationship to the Law as any other Jew at that time (*Gal. 4:4-5; Matt. 15:24*). Paul shows us that Jesus made God's promises to the patriarchs come true! The truth of God, who made the promises, was shown to be true by Christ's service; for in him all the promises came true (*2 Cor. 1:20*).

9. **And also to enable the Gentiles.** It was never God's plan to limit his love to one nation or ethnic group. Paul quotes a series of excerpts from the Old Testament (Septuagint) to show the gospel was meant for everyone in the entire world!!! Not only did Jesus make God's promises to the patriarchs come true, he also enabled the Gentiles to praise God as well! **As the scripture says.** *Psalms 18:49 LXX*. Christ gives thanks to God among the Gentiles when the Gentiles give thanks to God through Christ (*compare Heb. 2:12*).

10. **Rejoice, Gentiles!** *Deut. 32:43 LXX*. This is a direct command to join Israel in praise of Israel's God! *Psalms 117:1* is similar.

¹¹And again,
 "Praise the Lord, all Gentiles;
 praise him, all peoples!"
¹²And again, Isaiah says,
 "A descendant of Jesse will come;
 he will be raised to rule the Gentiles,
 and they will put their hope in him."
¹³May God, the source of hope, fill you with all
 joy and peace by means of your faith in him, so
 that your hope will continue to grow by the power
 of the Holy Spirit.

Paul's Reason for Writing So Boldly

¹⁴My brothers: I myself feel sure that you are
 full of goodness, that you are filled with all know-
 ledge and are able to teach one another.
¹⁵But in this letter I have been quite bold about
 certain subjects of which I have reminded you. I
 have been bold because of the privilege God has
 given me ¹⁶of being a servant of Christ Jesus to
 work for the Gentiles. I serve like a priest in
 preaching the Good News from God, in order
 that the Gentiles may be an offering acceptable
 to God, dedicated to him by the Holy Spirit.

And again, 11
 "Praise the Lord, all you
 Gentiles,
 and sing praises to him,
 all you peoples,"
 And again, Isaiah says, 12
 "The root of Jesse will
 spring up,
 one who will arise to rule
 over the nations;
 the Gentiles will hope in
 him."
 May the God of hope fill 13
 you with great joy and peace
 as you trust in him, so that
 you may overflow with hope
 by the power of the Holy
 Spirit.

Paul the Minister to the Gentiles

I myself am convinced, 14
 my brothers, that you your-
 selves are full of goodness,
 complete in knowledge and
 competent to instruct one
 another. I have written you 15
 quite boldly on some points,
 as if to remind you of them
 again, because of the grace
 God gave me to be a min- 16
 ister of Christ Jesus to the
 Gentiles with the priestly
 duty of proclaiming the gos-
 pel of God, so that the Gen-

11. **Praise the Lord, all Gentiles!** *Psalm 117:1 LXX*. The teachers of the Law understood this to point to the time of the Messiah. *Psalm 97:1* is similar.

12. **Isaiah says.** *Isa. 11:10 LXX*. This proves Christ was intended to be the Savior of the Gentiles! [If the Messiah has not come, Israel has a problem, since all the family records were lost in the siege of Jerusalem (70 A.D.), and none can claim to be descendants of David. (Jesse was David's father, but the teachers of the Law say David also had a son named Jesse.)]

13. **May God.** With these words of benediction, Paul closes his teaching message. The balance of the book of Romans is an epilogue. **Joy and peace** which come through being put right with God and becoming his friend. **The Holy Spirit.** Compare *John 7:38-39; Acts 2:38; Rom. 8:26-28; Gal 5:22-26*.

14. **My brothers.** Paul has scolded them, especially in *chapter 14*. This might be taken to imply he thought them ignorant of God's Truth, lacking in love, or both. But he didn't mean it that way, and gives reasons why he speaks so boldly to them. *My brothers* has a friendly sound to it. **Full of goodness.** "You are already full of goodness without any help from me." **Are able to teach.** "You already know the message of Christ and can teach it to others."

15. **But in this letter.** Paul had scolded them in certain things (such as *6:12-21; 11:17-20; 12:3; 14*). He did this to remind them of things they knew already but were overlooking. **Because of the privilege.** His authority as an apostle. Compare *Rom. 1:5; 12:3*.

16. **To work for the Gentiles.** Compare *Acts 26:17-18*. **I serve like a priest.** Paul preached the Good News of Christ to bring Gentiles as Christians to God. **Dedicated to him.** See *Titus 3:5; Rom. 8:1-2*.

¹⁷In union with Christ Jesus, then, I can be proud of my service for God. ¹⁸I will be bold and speak only of what Christ has done through me to lead the Gentiles to obey God, by means of words and deed, ¹⁹by the power of signs and miracles, and by the power of the Spirit. And so, in traveling all the way from Jerusalem to Illyricum, I have proclaimed fully the Good News about Christ. ²⁰My ambition has always been to proclaim the Good News in places where Christ has not been heard of, so as not to build on the foundation laid by someone else. ²¹As the scripture says, "Those who were not told about him will see, and those who have not heard will understand."

Paul's Plan to Visit Rome

²²For this reason I have been prevented many times from coming to you. ²³But now that I have finished my work in these regions, and since I have been wanting for so many years to come to

tiles might become an offering acceptable to God, sanctified by the Holy Spirit.

Therefore, I glory in Christ ¹⁷ Jesus in my service to God. I will not venture to speak ¹⁸ of anything except what Christ has accomplished through me in leading the Gentiles to obey God by what I have said and done— ¹⁹ by the power of signs and miracles, through the power of the Spirit. So from Jerusalem all the way around to Illyricum, I have fully proclaimed the gospel of Christ. It has always been my ambition ²⁰ to preach the gospel where Christ was not known, so that I would not be building on someone else's foundation. Rather, as ²¹ it is written:

"Those who were not told about him will see, and those who have not heard will understand."

This is why I have often been ²² hindered from coming to you.

Paul's Plan to Visit Rome

But now that there is no ²³ more place for me to work in these regions, and since I have been longing for many

17. **In union with Christ Jesus.** See *Phil.* 3:3-14. I can be proud. Paul did an amazing job of missions for Christ. Yet only his union with Christ made it possible for him to be proud (*1 Cor.* 15:31).

18. **What Christ has done through me.** Two things are here: (1) Paul speaks only of what Christ has done through him to reach the Gentiles; (2) Paul is the *tool*, and it is Christ who uses him and directs him, including this letter to the Roman Christians.

19. **By the power.** This was both proof of his apostleship (*2 Cor.* 12:12) and supernatural help for his work of missions (*1 Thess.* 1:5). **And so, in traveling.** He emphasizes the area he covered on his tours of mission. **I have proclaimed fully.** See *Acts* 20:20-21. Paul had fulfilled his mission as an apostle, to preach the Good News of God's act in Christ to set men free and to plant the church in the population-centers of the world!

20. **My ambition.** Paul had made it a point to begin new works in places where Christ was unknown. This was his special mission as an apostle. Yet there is a place and a need for a different kind of ministry (*1 Cor.* 3:5-9).

21. **As the scripture says.** *Isa.* 52:15 LXX. As an inspired apostle, Paul uses this quotation to show he has God's authority for the work he has done.

22. **For this reason.** He points back to *verse* 20. See also *Acts* 19:21; 23:11; 28:16-24.

23. **But now.** Paul had completed his mission in the area around Corinth and was ready to come to Rome. He wrote this letter in the spring of 57 A.D., but did not get to Rome until March of 60 A.D.

see you, ²⁴I hope to do so now. I would like to see you on my way to Spain, and be helped by you to go there, after I have enjoyed visiting you for a while. ²⁵Right now, however, I am going to Jerusalem in the service of God's people there. ²⁶For the churches in Macedonia and Greece have freely decided to give an offering to help the poor among God's people in Jerusalem. ²⁷They themselves decided to do it. But, as a matter of fact, they have an obligation to help those poor; the Jews shared their spiritual blessings with the Gentiles, and so the Gentiles ought to serve the Jews with their material blessings. ²⁸When I have finished this task, and have turned over to them the full amount of money that has been raised for them, I shall leave for Spain and visit you on my way there. ²⁹When I come to you, I know that I shall come with a full measure of the blessing of Christ.

³⁰I urge you, brothers, by our Lord Jesus Christ and by the love that the Spirit gives: join me in

years to see you, I plan to do ²⁴so when I go to Spain. I hope to visit you while passing through and to have you assist me on my journey there, after I have enjoyed your company for a while. Now, however, I am on my ²⁵way to Jerusalem in the service of the saints there. For Macedonia and Achaia were ²⁶pleased to make a contribution for the poor among the saints in Jerusalem. They ²⁷were pleased to do it, and indeed they owe it to them. For if the Gentiles have ²⁸shared in the Jews' spiritual blessings, they owe it to the Jews to share with them their material blessings. So ²⁸after I have completed this task and have made sure that they have received this fruit, I will go to Spain and ²⁹visit you on the way. I know ²⁹that when I come to you, I will come in the full measure of the blessing of Christ.

I urge you, brothers, by ³⁰our Lord Jesus Christ and by the love of the Spirit, to join me in my struggle by pray-

24. **On my way to Spain.** He wanted to visit the messianic community at Rome, but his sense of mission would not allow him to stay there. His plans were to begin a new work in Spain. But God changed his plans! See notes on *Acts 21:13-14; 28:16*.

25. **Right now, however.** See *Acts 24:17*. He was taking money to the poor in the church at Jerusalem.

26. **For the churches in Macedonia and Greece.** See *1 Cor. 16:2-1; 2 Cor. 8:1; 9:2-15*.

27. **They themselves decided to do it.** It was their free will to do this, not an *official assessment*. *Why this need at Jerusalem???* (1) Many of the poor became Christians (*Gal. 2:10; Acts 6:1-6*); (2) persecution caused many to lose all they had, including their job. *Have you paid your debt to the Jews???*

28. **When I have finished this task.** Paul seems to think this contribution from the Gentile churches will help solve the schism which threatens the church at this time. Compare notes on *Acts 21:13-14*. **I shall leave for Spain.** He was not able to do this. However traditional history says that after Paul was released from his imprisonment at Rome in 62 A.D. (*Ramsay*), he did go to Spain, and also to parts of the East, before his second imprisonment and death in 67 A.D. (*Ramsay*).

29. **With a full measure of the blessing of Christ.** He certainly did not expect to reach Rome as a prisoner (see note on *Acts 28:16*). Yet his coming was with this blessing (*Rom. 1:11; Acts 28:30-31*).

30. **I urge you, brothers.** Paul was very much aware of the danger he would face at Jerusalem (*Acts 20:22-24*). **In praying fervently to God for me.** This shows the value Paul placed on prayer! Compare *James 5:16*.

praying fervently to God for me. ³¹Pray that I may be kept safe from the unbelievers in Judea, and that my service in Jerusalem may be acceptable to God's people there. ³²And so I will come to you full of joy, if it is God's will, and enjoy a refreshing visit with you. ³³May God, our source of peace, be with all of you. Amen.

Personal Greetings

16 I recommend to you our sister Phoebe, who serves the church at Cenchreae. ²Receive her in the Lord's name, as God's people should, and give her any help she may need from you; for she herself has been a good friend to many people and also to me.

³I send greetings to Priscilla and Aquila, my fellow workers in the service of Christ Jesus,

ing to God for me. Pray that **31**
I may be rescued from the
unbelievers in Judea and
that my service in Jerusalem
may be acceptable to the
saints there. Then by God's **32**
will I can come to you with
joy and together with you be
refreshed. The God of peace **33**
be with all of you. Amen.

Personal Greetings

16 I commend to you our
sister Phoebe, a ser-
vant of the church in Cen-
chreae. I ask you to receive **2**
her in the Lord in a way
worthy of the saints and to
give her any help she may
need from you, for she has
been a great help to many
people, including me.

Greet Priscilla and Aquila, **3**
my fellow workers in

31-32. **Pray that I may be kept safe.** He knew the hostility of the unbelieving Jews! **And that my service.** Paul saw a real danger that even the Christian Jews would be hostile toward him. Some thought he was a traitor to the Law, and distorted versions of his teaching had been circulated (*Acts 21:21*). He was afraid they might think the money was a *bribe*. He asks their prayer for: (1) his personal safety; (2) that his service would be accepted by the Jerusalem Christians; (3) that he may go to Spain, with a stop-over in Rome.

33. **May God.** Since he asks their prayers, it is only natural that he prays for them. Compare *1 Thess. 1:2-3*. How amazing it is to be able to come to the God of the Universe and speak to Him as "Father! my Father!" (*Rom. 8:15*).

1. **I recommend to you.** This is Paul's official statement certifying that she is a member in good standing. She was probably a business woman (such as Lydia, *Acts 16:14*). Paul's language implies she was on her way to Rome on business, and that they could help her. We think she took this letter to the Roman church. **Our sister Phoebe.** We are brothers and sisters in Christ! **Who serves the church.** **DIAKONOS** - the exact same word translated "church helper" [deacon] in *1 Tim. 3:8*. Conditions of ancient society required the feminine version of *church helpers* to take care of the needs of certain women. Some of them were likely the wives of men who served as *church helpers* (see *1 Tim. 3:11*), and there may have been the feminine version of *church leaders* who taught the younger women under conditions and in situations where it would have been impossible for a man to do so (see *1 Tim. 5:9-10*). Jewish women had much more freedom than Gentile women (see *1 Cor. 11:1-10*). **Cenchreae.** This was the seaport of Corinth, on the Asian side.

2. **As God's people should.** Their Christian life was to be open for her to share in it. **Give her any help.** The Greek word is a legal term, which implies her business was a legal matter. **For she herself has been a good friend.** Perhaps in her role as a *church helper*. One of those which she had helped was Paul himself. *Gifford* thinks Paul's vow in Cenchreae (*Acts 18:18*) implies sickness, and that Phoebe helped him at that time.

3. **To Priscilla and Aquila.** They had left Rome when Emperor Claudius expelled the Jews (*Acts 18:2*), had gone to Ephesus (*Acts 18:19*), and now were back in Rome. Priscilla is mentioned first, implying she was the more dominant one of the couple.

⁴who risked their lives for me. I am grateful to them—not only I, but all the Gentile churches as well. ⁵Greetings also to the church that meets in their house.

Greetings to my dear friend Epænetus, who was the first man in the province of Asia to believe in Christ. ⁶Greetings to Mary, who has worked so hard for you. ⁷Greetings to Andronicus and Junias, fellow Jews who were in prison with me; they are well known among the apostles, and they became Christians before I did.

⁸My greetings to Ampliatus, my dear friend in the fellowship of the Lord. ⁹Greetings to Urbanus, our fellow worker in Christ's service, and to Stachys, my dear friend. ¹⁰Greetings to Apelles, whose loyalty to Christ has been proved. Greetings to those who belong to the family of

Christ Jesus. They risked their lives for me. Not only I but all the churches of the Gentiles are grateful to them. 4

Greet also the church that meets at their house. 5

Greet my dear friend Epænetus, who was the first convert to Christ in the province of Asia.

Greet Mary, who worked very hard for you. 6

Greet Andronicus and Junias, my relatives who have been in prison with me. They are outstanding among the apostles, and they were in Christ before I was. 7

Greet Ampliatus, whom I love in the Lord. 8

Greet Urbanus, our fellow worker in Christ, and my dear friend Stachys. 9

Greet Apelles, tested and approved in Christ. 10

Greet those who belong to the household of Aristobulus.

4. **Who risked their lives for me.** We know nothing at all about this. But much of Paul's experiences are not told to us (see *2 Cor. 11:23-27*). **Not only I.** The incident where they had risked their lives had happened long enough in the past to be well known among all the Gentile churches, but recent enough to be fresh in Paul's mind.

5. **Greetings also.** See note on *Col. 4:15*. **Epænetus.** Most of these whom Paul sends greetings, are unknown to us today. **In the province of Asia.** *Achaia* is an incorrect reading. Asia is the Roman province of that name. *Sanday and Headlam* mention the discovery of an Ephesian Epænetus on a Roman inscription.

6. **Greetings to Mary.** Most of these were personal friends of Paul; some had done him special favors; and many had been led to Christ by him.

7. **Andronicus and Junias.** Paul is writing to a church mostly made up of Gentiles. It is only natural that he mentions these two as "fellow Jews," and also that they had been in prison with him. When, we do not know. **They became Christians before I did.** This would help explain why they were so well known by the apostles. Compare *Acts 21:16*.

8. **Ampliatus.** A common Roman slave name. A person of this name was well known in the earliest Roman church.

9. **Urbanus.** Another common slave name. **Stachys.** We know only that he was a dear friend to Paul. These three men are connected with the Imperial household by inscriptions which have been found.

10. **Apelles.** A common Jewish name. **Family of Aristobulus.** *Lightfoot* makes Aristobulus the grandson of Herod the Great. "Family" here refers to those Christians who belong to his household. He may have died, in which case his slaves and servants would have been transferred to the palace of Claudius. However, they may have been part of his family, as we use the word (compare *Luke 8:3*).

Aristobulus. ¹¹Greetings to Herodion, a fellow Jew, and to the Christian brothers in the family of Narcissus.

¹²My greetings to Tryphaena and Tryphosa, who work in the Lord's service, and to my dear friend Persis, who has done so much work for the Lord. ¹³I send greetings to Rufus, that outstanding worker in the Lord's service, and to his mother, who has always treated me like a son.

¹⁴My greetings to Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermes, Patrobas, Hermas, and all the other Christian brothers with them. ¹⁵Greetings to Philologus and Julia, to Nereus and his sister, to Olympas and to all of God's people who are with them.

¹⁶Greet one another with a brotherly kiss. All the churches of Christ send you their greetings.

Final Instructions

¹⁷I urge you, my brothers: watch out for those who cause divisions and upset people's faith, who go against the teaching which you have received;

Greet Herodion, my relative. ¹¹
Greet those in the household of Narcissus who are in the Lord.

Greet Tryphaena and Tryphosa, those women who work hard in the Lord.

Greet my dear friend Persis, another woman who has worked very hard in the Lord.

Greet Rufus, chosen in the Lord, and his mother, who has been a mother to me, too.

Greet Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermes, Patrobas, Hermas and the brothers with them.

Greet Philologus, Julia, Nereus and his sister, and Olympas and all the saints with them.

Greet one another with a holy kiss.

All the churches of Christ send greetings.

I urge you, brothers, to watch out for those who cause divisions and put obstacles in your way, contrary to the teaching you have learned. Keep away from

11. **Herodion.** He may have been a part of the "family of Aristobulus." **Family of Narcissus.** This is probably the Narcissus who had been killed by Nero two or three years before Paul wrote this letter. His slaves and servants were made part of the Imperial palace.

12. **Tryphaena and Tryphosa.** These two women were probably sisters. They were very active in the Lord's work. **Persis.** Another woman, who was especially loved for her work in the past. *Johnson* thinks all three were *deaconesses* [church helpers].

13. **Rufus.** This may be the Rufus of *Mark 15:21*.

14. **My greetings.** The Christians mentioned in this verse may have formed a "house church." **Hermas** is sometimes identified as the author of "The Shepherd of Hermas," an early Christian writing, but the Canon of Muratori says this is not so.

15. **Philologus and Julia.** Probably husband and wife. Both are common slave names. **Nereus and his sister.** *Lightfoot* thinks the sister's name was Nereis, and that both were part of the palace staff. These, together with Olympas and the others, may have formed a "house church."

16. **With a brotherly kiss.** *Denny* says: "The custom of combining greeting and kiss was oriental, and especially Jewish, and in this way became Christian." Our equivalent would be a *warm handshake*. **All the churches of Christ.** *Sanday and Headlam* say: "This phrase is unique in the New Testament." Compare *Matt. 16:18*.

17. **Watch out for those who cause divisions.** **SKOPEIN** = watch out for, keep one's attention on. Paul is warning them against a danger which he has seen in other places. he may be thinking about: (1) the circumcision party; (2) the immorality of false teachers; (3) the antinomian reactionaries. See *Acts 15:5*; *Phil. 3:18-19*; *1 Tim. 6:3-5*. **Keep away from them.** As you would quarantine a disease-carrier.

keep away from them. ¹⁸For those who do such things are not serving Christ our Lord, but their own appetites. By their fine words and flattering speech they deceive the minds of innocent people. ¹⁹Everyone has heard of your loyalty to the gospel, and for this reason I am happy about you. I want you to be wise about what is good, but innocent in what is evil. ²⁰And God, our source of peace, will soon crush Satan under your feet.

The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you.

²¹Timothy, my fellow worker, sends you his greetings; and so do Lucius, Jason, and Sosipater, fellow Jews.

²²I, Tertius, the writer of this letter, send you Christian greetings.

²³My host Gaius, in whose house the church meets, sends you his greetings; Erastus, the city treasurer, and our brother Quartus, send you their greetings.

[²⁴The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.]

them. For such people are **18** not serving our Lord Christ, but their own appetites. By smooth talk and flattery they deceive the minds of naive people. Everyone has **19** heard about your obedience, so I am full of joy over you; but I want you to be wise about what is good, and innocent about what is evil.

The God of peace will **20** soon crush Satan under your feet.

The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you.

Timothy, my fellow work- **21** er, sends his greeting to you, as do Lucius, Jason and Sosipater, my relatives.

I, Tertius, who wrote down **22** this letter, greet you in the Lord.

Gaius, whose hospitality I **23** and the whole church here enjoy, sends you his greetings.

Erastus, who is the city's director of public works, and our brother Quartus send you their greetings.*

18. Are not serving Christ our Lord. Paul speaks bitterly of their *character*, rather than the doctrines they teach. This contrasts sharply with the character of those who serve Christ. **Innocent people.** Compare *2 Tim. 3:5-6*.

19. Everyone has heard of your loyalty. "You are such loyal Christians that you should not be fooled by such as these false teachers!" **But innocent.** Compare *Phil. 2:15-16*.

20. Will soon crush Satan. "False teachers may come and cause division, but God who is our source of peace will give you the victory over Satan!!" **The Grace.** This benediction makes some think *verses 1-20* were originally a short letter that Paul had intended to send the Roman church.

21. Timothy. He was one of Paul's associates. He was with Paul (*Acts 20:4-5*) when he began his trip to Jerusalem (*mentioned in Rom. 15:25*). The other three cannot be identified. [The *names* are found in *Acts 13:1; 17:5; 20:4*, but these cannot be positively connected.]

22. Tertius. He did the writing as Paul dictated it. Some think Paul had eye trouble (*see Gal. 6:11*). He often wrote the benediction himself (*see 1 Cor. 16:21; 2 Thess. 3:17*).

23. Gaius. Since Paul is in Corinth as he writes this, Gaius is probably the one mentioned in *1 Cor. 1:14*. **Erastus** might be the one mentioned in *Acts 19:22; 2 Tim. 4:20*. **Quartus** must have had some special connection with Rome.

24. The grace. *Verses 21-24* are personal greetings from Paul's companions. This is the benediction.

* Some MSS add verse 24: *May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with all of you. Amen.*

Concluding Prayer of Praise

²⁵Let us give glory to God! He is able to make you stand firm in your faith, according to the Good News I preach, the message about Jesus Christ, and according to the revelation of the secret truth which was hidden for long ages in the past. ²⁶Now, however, that truth has been brought out into the open through the writings of the prophets; and by the command of the eternal God it is made known to all nations, so that all may believe and obey.

²⁷To the only God, who alone is all-wise, be the glory through Jesus Christ forever! Amen.

Now to him who is able to establish you by my gospel and the proclamation of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery hidden for long ages past, but now revealed and made known through the prophetic writings by the command of the eternal God, so that all nations might believe and obey him—to the only wise God be glory forever through Jesus Christ! Amen.

25. **Let us give glory to God!** With these words Paul begins his doxology, which is a brief statement of all the important principles explained in this letter. **He is able.** Paul may be speaking about God the Holy Spirit. Compare *Rom. 1:11; 14:4; John 16:7-14; Eph. 3:20. According to the Good News.* Compare *Rom. 1:16-17. The secret truth.* Compare *Rom. 11:25-26; 1 Cor. 2:7-10.*

26. **Now, however.** Compare *Luke 24:27, 44-47.* That *Truth* is God's salvation centered in One Person - Jesus Christ. See *Acts 4:12; 1 John 5:11; Col. 2:9; 1 John 1:1-4. And by the command.* Salvation in Christ is by the command of the eternal God!!! This is the eternal Plan!!! See *Eph. 1:4; 1 Pet. 1:19-20; Rev. 13:8.* God acted in Christ to set us free. We reach out through faith to seize Christ's sacrifice and make ourselves part of it!!! Paul and the others gave their very lives to make known to all nations this Good News of salvation in Christ.

27. **To the only God.** Paul is a "Mono-Theistic Trinitarian." To believe in three gods is paganism. Yet it is a PARADOX in human terms that the One God exists in three persons: The Father, The Son, The Holy Spirit. The emphasis here is on *the God*, who alone is all-wise, who is the SOURCE of the gospel which Paul preaches!!! **Through Jesus Christ forever!** The eternal Plan of salvation has been worked out in Jesus Christ. God acted in history! Our salvation is based upon what God ALREADY has done in Jesus Christ! We cannot be saved by our own merit, and praise God, we don't have to be!!! We can reach to seize the MERIT of Christ's *life and death and resurrection, AND MAKE OURSELVES PART OF IT!*