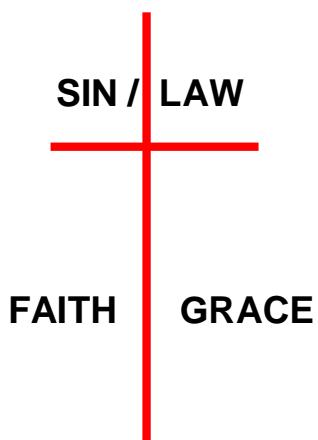


**Bowman's Notes—5-8-2004**

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# ROMANS



## RIGHTEOUSNESS

### A DISPENSATIONAL COMMENTARY

Studies in the Pauline Epistles

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# A

## TEACHER'S GUIDE

to

## PAUL'S EPISTLE

TO THE

## R O M A N S

This study was not intended for academicians but for those who have an inner voice which compels them to teach the Word. They number in the tens of thousands and faithfully meet their challenges week to week as their hungry-hearted charges scramble for truth. This study has been put together in order to suggest some practical applications centered on those Biblical principles revealed in this letter written by the Apostle Paul to believers in Rome. It is not intended to be an exhaustive study of the letter, but a practical help in identifying the Biblical principles of Grace that are so often overlooked through lack of an overall doctrinal base. It is also our intention that the reader develops new understandings based on a dispensational interpretation of the Bible. Through this study of Romans it is hoped that a fuller appreciation of the freedom afforded the Christian through God's immeasurable Grace is made possible.

The following resources are suggested as invaluable additions to your library and as companions to this study. The outline of Romans used herein is largely taken from F.W. Grant's *Numerical Bible*, published by Loizeaux Brothers. Kenneth S. Wuest's *Word Studies in Romans*, published by Eerdman's, is the source of most of the references in language definitions. William R. Newell's

*Romans, Verse by Verse*, published by Baker Publishing, is the foundation of study for the analysis of the doctrinal commentary. W.E. Vine's *Epistle to the Romans*, published in 1957 by Zondervon was really helpful as was the *Introductory Lectures, Volume 2-Paul's Epistles* by William Kelly--Lectures delivered in 1869 and reprinted by Believer's Bookshelf in 1970; *Synopsis of the Books of the Bible* by John Nelson Darby, Believer's Bookshelf 1979; *Romans* by H.C.G. Moule D.D. 1928, published by Christian Literature Crusade 1975; *An Outline of the Epistle to the Romans*, by C.A. Coates, reprinted in 1979 by Kingston Bible Trust, and *The Annotated Bible*, by Arno C. Gaebelein, published in 1970 by Louizeaux Brothers..

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## DOCTRINAL OUTLINE OF ROMANS

Most major doctrines of Biblical Christianity are addressed in this letter to Roman believers by the Apostle Paul. The brief outline included here will assist you in identifying those issues as Paul presents them. His letter addresses each of these areas of doctrine, but always under the overall theme of the Righteousness of God. He begins with the total failure of man to meet God's standard of obedience and his subsequent need of absolute Righteousness. Then, he progresses through the provision of Righteousness to man by God and finally, deals with man as he individually receives or rejects that provision.

The parts of the letter that deal with our practice, the *application of righteousness* to our experience, clearly reveal our being set apart in Christ and thereby declared righteous before the Father. At the same time, the expectation of *righteousness yet to be experienced* (for we know that there are always higher levels of experience awaiting us) anticipates all that we will receive when we are with the Father dwelling eternally in *absolute righteousness*. Righteousness as a standard is vindicated as the Holy Spirit seals each believer to God now, in time, but effective for all eternity. The final topic is the effect of living each moment today, *in righteousness*, as our inheritance and as our present condition.

### **CONDEMNATION**

Our Need of Righteousness (1:18-3:20)

### **JUSTIFICATION**

Provision of Righteousness (3:21-5:11)

### **SANCTIFICATION**

Practice of Righteousness (5:12-8:17)

### **GLORIFICATION**

Expectation of Righteousness (8:18-30)

### **POSITIONAL TRUTH**

Vindicated Righteousness (9:1-11:34)

### **LIVING IN CHRIST**

Righteousness Applied (12:1-15:13)

# ROMANS

## Introduction

The Apostle Paul wrote this letter from Corinth (Acts 20:3) to believers in Rome. He was staying in the home of Gaius when he wrote it (Romans 16:23), and Tersius identifies himself as the one who actually penned the letter (Romans 16:22). It wasn't the first of Paul's epistles, for First Thessalonians was written in 52 C.E., Second Thessalonians about six months later, and this Epistle to the Romans about six years after that, approximately 58 C. E. In Rome, the Church was made up mostly of Gentiles converted from agnosticism or various forms of idolatry, to Christianity. This letter is as complete a statement of the fundamentals of the Christian Faith and Christian doctrine as ever compiled. Faith and obedience are constant companions and central to the message of this epistle. The Church, the Body of Christ, is presented and often positioned next to Israel, so that we might see the contrasts. Believers are drawn into the light of center stage and shown standing entirely in Grace, free from the Law to which Israel was obligated. That truth is so obscured today, that the message of this letter is as needed and practical for us as it was to believers of the day in which it was written. What was accomplished by the resurrected, ascended Christ and revealed by the unique ministry of the Apostle Paul remains true until He comes to claim His Bride, the Church.

Remember that the Chapters and verses in the Bible are not the natural divisions of the letter, but were added to provide points of reference for those who study Scripture. In general . . .

Chapter 1	All men are without excuse because they have the testimony of creation.
Chapter 2	All men are without excuse because they have knowledge of good and evil.
Chapter 3	Israelites are without excuse because they have the oracles of God, which declare the righteousness of God.
Chapter 4	The righteousness of faith is revealed and found by men.
Chapter 5	Men are justified only on the principle of faith.
Chapter 6	Joined to Christ in his death, we died to sin and should no longer walk according to its dictates.
Chapter 7	The relationship of the believer to the Law.
Chapter 8	In Jesus Christ we are outside the bounds of condemnation and on the ground of peace with God.
Chapter 9	Israel, God's earthly people, is vastly different from Spiritual Israel, the company of redeemed separated unto God in Christ.
Chapter 10	Christ is the total source of our life.
Chapter 11	God is not through with Israel and will return to dealing with them, ultimately to his glory.
Chapter 12	Believers as one body, the Body of Christ.
Chapter 13	The Believer's relationship to the world's authority and institutions.
Chapter 14	Christian liberty, mercy and grace toward the members of the Body of Christ.
Chapter 15	Unity of the Spirit to the glory of God.
Chapter 16	Commendations to the Saints.

## The Theme of the Epistle to the Romans

The “great theme” of this letter to the Roman believers is “the Gospel of God;” so said Dr. Arno C. Gaebelein. That would be the *good news* about the way in which God has provided for sinners to be saved and all that salvation includes. Dr. Gaebelein goes on to point out several views of this epistle, which he thinks are inadequate—

1. “Some have called Romans a religious treatise written by a man with a wonderful, logical mind, in which he explains his views concerning salvation.”
2. “Others state that the letter is ‘the foundation document of the Pauline system of teaching,’ or they call it “the explanation of the Pauline theology.”
3. “Still others have suggested that the Epistle to the Romans is ‘the personal mental history of the Apostle, in which, after his conversion, he worked his way from the old Jewish standpoint to his standpoint under the Gospel.”

Gaebelein brings us to Galatians, where Paul presents a defense of the Gospel and where he tells us of the origin of the Gospel, which he called so peculiarly, “My Gospel.”—“But I certify you brethren, that the Gospel, which was preached of me, is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ” (Galatians 1:11-18). There you have it! The Gospel that is so brilliantly unfolded for us in the letter to the Romans is not the product of a mind finely tuned and used to logically form these doctrines of the grace of God; but a channel through which the Spirit of God let flow the mind of God and His intentions for the Church.

## The Two Great Divisions of the Epistle to the Romans

W. E. Vine tells us that Epistle to the Romans broadly falls into two parts. In the first, the Apostle sets forth the great truths of the Gospel. The latter half is devoted to a practical application of these doctrines to the lives of Believers. The division between the two parts is made at the end of chapter 11 (W. E. Vine, *Outline Notes on the Epistle to the Romans*, Hulbert Publishing Company 1929).

His broad outline is as follows—

1. *The Introduction* (1:1-17).
2. *The universal guilt of mankind* (1:18-3:20).
3. *Justification and its effects* (3:21-5, end).
4. *The new life in Christ* (chapters 6-8)
5. *The righteousness of God’s dealings with Jews and Gentiles* (chapters 9-11).
6. *Practical Christian life* (12:1-15:13).
7. *Conclusion* (15:14-16:27).

**Paul's Epistle to the  
R O M A N S**  
**DIVISION ONE-Chapter 1-5:11**  
**The Righteousness of God in Christ over All Creation**

Introduction to Division One:

Every facet of this letter and every thought contained in it are focused on the person and work of Jesus Christ. Like a perfect diamond, it may be turned first one-way and then another, but it always shines with the same inner light, the life of the Lord Jesus Christ. The total message is the Biblical foundation for Christian living--lifestyle management! In his letter, the Apostle Paul presents . . .

1. The universal condition of man,
2. The presentation by God of Himself through the created universe.
3. The specific position that the Church of this age is called to occupy.

Of supreme importance to us today, Paul's letter is a complete revelation of *Biblical Principles unique to the Church*. These are repeatedly compared with the principles of law to which mankind in general, and Israel specifically, had been held accountable until the death and resurrection of Christ.

But, there is more still. It is not simply the Law of Israel, which is under review and scrutiny in this letter, but the very practice of using law *as a rule of life for believers* in this age of Grace. Here are several general questions for the reader to consider prior to beginning your personal study of Paul's Epistle to the Romans:

- \* Do you know of any reason why Christians should be held accountable to the Ten Commandments or the rest of the Old Testament Law imposed by God on Israel?
- \* What do you believe is the content of the Gospel to unbelievers today?
- \* If your rule of life is not Old Testament law, then what is it?

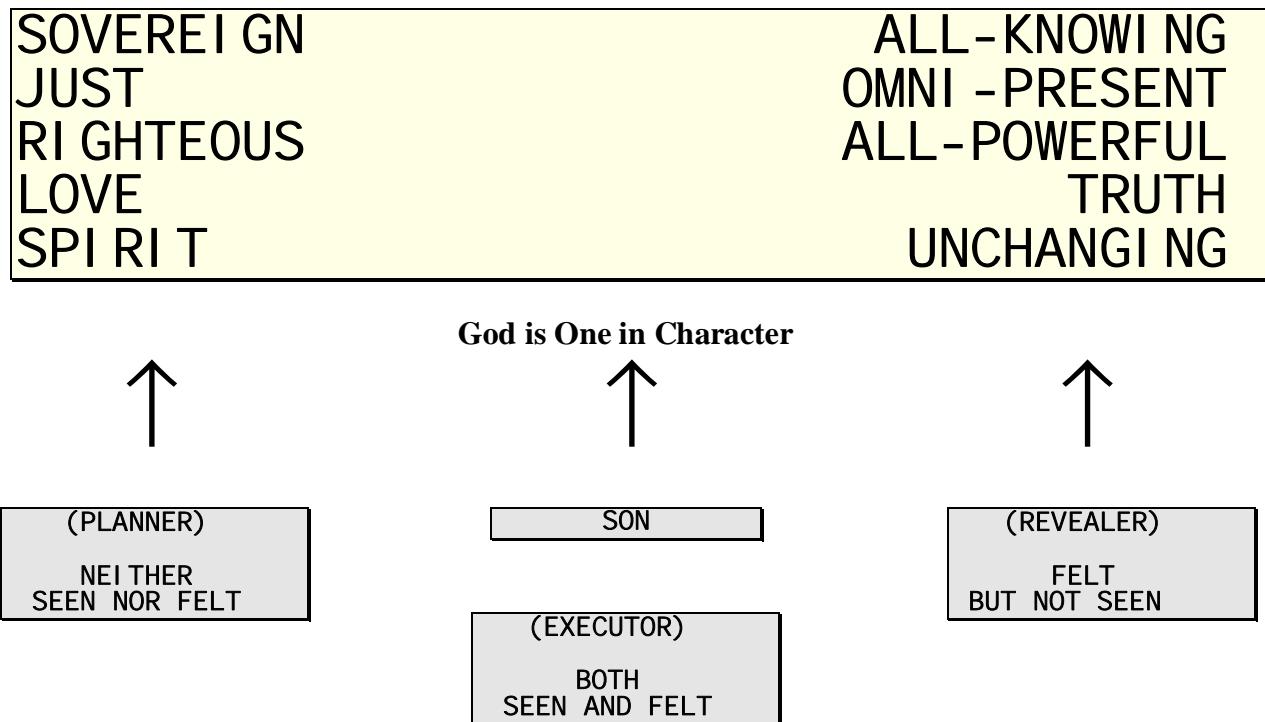
Each of these issues has a place in the message of the Apostle to those in Rome and to us today. Discuss them with others and write down your answers. You might be surprised to find differences in the answers you give by the time you complete your study of this letter, an essential source of Church Doctrine.

Division One centers on the unity of the plan of salvation, the single source of which is Jesus Christ. In this first division, the path of faith/grace from eternity past through the incarnation of Christ is explained. Division One positions the reward of the believer and the punishment of the unjust as part of that whole revelation of God and His character. That pathway, including the reward of the believer and the punishment of unbelievers, encompasses all the elements within “**the Gospel of God**,” that Gospel which is from the Father.

**SUBDIVISION ONE-Chapter 1:1-17**  
**The Gospel of Salvation is Completely of God the Father**

Introduction to Subdivision One of Division One:

Paul begins by telling us that God is constant in His eternal attributes and in His purposes for man. Salvation is entirely of Him. The central subject of this wonderful epistle is the Gospel. The great idea that Paul supposes in this correspondence is his desire to visit Rome in order that he might be a spiritual blessing to them and preach forth this Gospel. After the greeting, he begins to lay out the foundation of the Gospel—The Father is the originator of the plan, the Ultimate Planner. The Son is that One who executed the plan and it is solely through Him that we have access to salvation. The Holy Spirit is the Person of the Godhead who reveals the work of the Son to man. There is no hint of human merit anywhere in the system. From Genesis to Revelation there is not even a suggestion, not a single hint, that man can perform a work of merit good enough to exchange for his own salvation.



Background information:

In order to more fully understand this message from Paul to the believers in Rome, some knowledge of biblical history and prior revelation from God to man is helpful. The five following categories are essential elements in laying an adequate foundation for study.

### 1. Man's Historical Failure

We can begin with one man, Adam. As the first man, indeed as the whole of all mankind at the time, Adam was granted two things by God, freedom to act according to the dictates of his will and accountability for his actions. Those two elements of his being separated man from all the rest of creation. They made him really unique within all that was created. Made in the image of God,<sup>1</sup> man was provided with three important qualities--

1. Adam was morally determinate,
2. spiritual in being
3. clothed in light.

**Morally determinate**--means that Adam could exercise his volition, his free will, with regards to God's instructions. He was not coerced into obedience nor hindered in his tasks of rule over all of the world placed in his care.

**Spiritual in being**--means that he could and did have a capacity for fellowship in an intimate relationship with God. This was God's provision for His creature to enter into a personal relationship with Him as He is.

**Clothed in light**--Try to imagine this--a creature of such utter, spectacular brilliance that it blinds your eyes--This is Man, the crown of God's creation. Radiance was his outer covering and only physical appearance in Eden. As God's visible image is light,<sup>2</sup> so too did Adam display that same luminous presence. His singular accountability centered on the one test he had to submit to--*not to eat the fruit of one designated tree in the garden*. The record shows that he failed in the single test of will that challenged him when he ate the forbidden fruit. Let your mind toy, for a moment, with the immediate consequences of sin entering this perfect world. Quickly the pure-white light emanating from this creature begins to fade. The truth dawns that he no longer mirrors the perfect image of his creator. The light of God's own all-shadowing presence was no longer reflected from Adam. For the first time, his earthly body became visible.<sup>3</sup> Genesis Chapter Three (v.7), “**... and they knew that they were naked**” records the surprised awareness of Adam and Eve that they no longer were covered by the reflected light of God's own glory. God's question (v.11), “**Who told you that you were naked?**” marks the assignment of

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<sup>1</sup> Gen 1: 26

<sup>2</sup> Psal m 104: 2

<sup>3</sup> Gen 2: 25

their guilt by God and of responsibility for their actions. They were responsible for the results of their disobedience on the basis of their personal knowledge of His instructions and rejection of them. They saw that they were no longer covered by the light of His presence and knew that their diminished condition was based upon their own freedom to exercise free will regarding obedience to God's command. Man was ultimately delivered from the results of Adam's failure by God's gracious provision of a redeemer, one who could make restitution beyond Adam's ability to do so. But that did not happen for thousands of years. In the meantime . . .

## 2. Payment for Visible Sins Requires a Sacrifice

The immediate visible remedy for Adam's sin was that an animal skin had to be substituted for the divine provision of the light of God's own character as their outer covering. Adam and Eve were now openly bearing the results (nakedness) of their sinfulness and they had an additional problem. They had nothing of sufficient value to offer in atonement (full payment) for their disobedience. So God covered the evidence of their disobedience, their nakedness, with clothing provided by the sacrifice of an innocent animal.<sup>4</sup> This has to bring your thoughts to our own sinfulness, willful acts of disobedience, and the payment extracted from Christ, the Innocent One, in our place. Our sins then demand a righteous sacrifice, one that will satisfy an infinitely perfect God.

## 3. Freedom From the Presence of Sin Requires a Sacrifice

Learning of God's provision for dealing with our personal acts of sinfulness is a welcome revelation of His grace, bringing comfort and peace to us. Also, of equally great importance for us to know, is the origination of the presence in man of Sin, the sin nature. We understand that far less than we should. It is that old nature of disobedience, which was inherited from Adam and passed to each child through his or her father. In Adam's willful disobedience, man (Adam being representative of all mankind) failed. The penalty for failure, death, had to be paid in order to satisfy a totally righteous Father. All men (Adam) were now flawed by the inward presence of Sin, the old nature of disobedience. Therefore, they were not capable of making any satisfactory sacrifice--they were no longer qualified to die in payment of the debt they owed God. So God, based solely on His grace, provided a solution for man. He did it because He loved man. He promised to come Himself as perfect humanity and pay the price that Adam could not. When Christ came as a man, He fulfilled that promise made to Adam and Eve in the beginning. He died as a man to make payment for Adam and all of his descendants including you and me. That sacrifice provides us with freedom from the sin nature, which is present in us.

## 4. The Law of Israel Demanded a Sacrifice

Throughout the history of Israel, they were given rituals that constantly presented truth before them. A meal was prepared on each Day of Atonement. It was a very special meal and with great significance. A lamb had been previously separated from the flock and thoroughly examined for spots or blemishes for a period of three days. It was slain without breaking a bone,

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<sup>4</sup> Gen 3: 21

roasted over fire, and then totally consumed on the Day of Atonement. That lamb became the center of focus for the faithful who were depending on God to “cover” their sins. It was an annual offering, because sin was always remerging, never resolved. Over and over again, the Israelite was taken through these kinds of ceremonies that brought them to the High Priest with their sacrifices, that their sin might be “covered.” They were steeped in images of the sacrifice, which could “cover” their sins and make them acceptable to God.

Then, the Gospel of John records, when John the Baptist identified Jesus, it was with an announcement that swept the entire length of human history, “**Behold the lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world**”<sup>5</sup> In that statement, Christ . . .

- (1) Identified with the total requirements of law
- (2) Fulfilled completely the Law of Israel
- (3) Became the perfect, permanent provision for all the results of man's sin, beginning with the sin sacrifice for Adam.

#### 5. The Cross Was the Cruel Reality of Sacrifice

On the cross, the payment was complete. No sin was left out of the price exacted from Him. Those annual animal sacrifices had to be made over and over, but the sacrifice of Christ, made once and for all, was sufficient to remove sin's penalty. He then gave each person the freedom to accept or reject that payment, allowing man to stand individually in that position of accountability to which he was created. To accept that is to know that Christ took us personally to Himself in his death as the perfect sacrifice. There on the cross we were personally identified with, and individually joined to, Him and the problem of that inner presence of Sin was resolved. When He died *for* Sin, He also died *to* Sin. One death and the debt was wiped clean. As He died to Sin, because we were joined to him in His death, we also died to Sin. Sin is not dead, but we are dead to Sin.

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<sup>5</sup> John 1: 29

## **Paul, Servant, Apostle, Messenger 1:1-7**

There are three aspects to Paul's relationship to God given in these verses. They are defined by three different terms of assignment.

“**Servant**” describes his *relationship* to Christ. His will is not his own, but Christ's.

“**Apostle**” describes his *mission*. He is one sent in the authority of his Master.

“**Messenger**” describes his *duty*. He has nothing to speak but what the Father has given him to say.

**(1:1,2)** In the opening of the letter, Paul identifies himself as “**a servant of Christ Jesus.**” It is as a “servant” that he claims validity for his message, even though he was “**called to be an apostle and set apart for the Gospel of God--.**” The message is not true simply because he, as God's Apostle, says it is true; it is true based upon its merits and on God's revelation to men. This is not an arrogant Paul, so-called by some of his critics, but one willingly and totally bent in service to a beloved master. The word used here is *doulos*, the term used by Greeks to denote a slave. The relationship was one commonly broken only by death. In this affiliation, the slave's will is completely taken over by the will of his Lord and Master, Jesus Christ. His Gospel is given directly from the Father.

As Christ's slave, he receives appointment to an office from which he will serve his Master. He is an apostle. *kletos apostolos*, a “**called apostle.**” It means, “one sent on a commission.” The office does not alter the fact of his indentured relationship. His service is intended to be without thought of his own interests, but only to benefit his Lord and he fulfills that role magnificently. Paul's apostleship is by direct appointment of Jesus Christ.<sup>6</sup> He has been “**set apart**,” not from anything, but “**for the gospel of God.**”

“**Gospel**” is *euaggelion*, “good news.” As a slave, he had no life but by the will of his Master. As an apostle, he had no authority but the name and power of the Lord. His message was not his own, but good news from our Heavenly Father. We see the teacher's heart at work, for his emphasis is not on himself, nor on the means by which he was called, but on the fact that this is “**the gospel He (God) promised beforehand through His prophets in the Holy Scriptures.**”

### **The Gospel Declared**

**(1:3)** This gospel is “**regarding His Son, who as to his human nature came to be a descendant of David.**” In case there is any question about the humanity of Jesus, Paul refers to

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<sup>6</sup> Acts 9: 4, 5

His lineage, His descending from David. This is detailed in Matthew's Gospel,<sup>7</sup> proving that this same Jesus was the promised eternal King of Israel. Paul will return to the Lord's lineage in one of his last letters to Timothy, **“Remember that Jesus Christ, of the seed of David, is risen from the dead.”**<sup>8</sup>

**(1:4)** Additionally, it was this same Jesus of Nazareth, who **“through the Spirit of holiness”** the Holy Spirit, **“was declared [was designated or defined as] with power to be the Son of God . . .”** Note that it was the man Jesus on whom the Holy Spirit worked in power. Jesus Christ was perfect in His humanity in every respect. Even so, He did not depend on His own strength, or on the strength of His resolve to follow the Father's will, but rested on the Father's provision by means of the Holy Spirit. Having been thoroughly beaten, tried, convicted, and then crucified, this same man **rose from the dead by the power of the Father**, declaring victory over death **“by His resurrection from the dead”**: H.C.G. Moule comments, “It was no flickering life, crucified but not quite killed, creeping back in a convalescence miscalled resurrection; it was the rising of the sun.”<sup>9</sup> By that, He fulfilled all expectations and demands of the Father and is alone worthy of our allegiance and honor.

### The Source of Grace and Ministry

**(1:5)** Paul is quick to point out that it is only **“Through Him and for His name's sake”** that he (Paul) has **“received grace . . .”** He is one of the elect, “chosen” by God. He did not do the choosing. It was pure Grace, which provided his salvation from the condemnation of the Law of Israel and brought security in the hands of Christ. That same saving Grace was also operative in his appointment to the specific task of calling **“people from among all the Gentiles . . .”** There is also divine purpose to our having been saved by Christ. According to Paul's own testimony his specific charter was to take the Gospel to **“all the Gentiles.”**<sup>10</sup> His apostolic ministry was not to Israel. This is very significant when we read repeatedly that his usual course in entering any city was to go straight to the synagogue and contend with his Jewish brethren over the Gospel.<sup>11</sup> Even after acknowledging his mission from God, Paul continued to pursue Israel with the Gospel.<sup>12</sup> Perhaps he was painfully aware of this

**The believer is not one who has need of forgiveness, but one who stands on the ground of having been forgiven. It is an accomplished fact, not a promise of something to come.**

<sup>7</sup> Matthew, Chapter 1

<sup>8</sup> 2 Timothy 2: 8

<sup>9</sup> H. C. G. Moule commentary on Romans, p. 17

<sup>10</sup> Acts 13: 47

<sup>11</sup> Acts 13: 5, 14-43

<sup>12</sup> Acts 14: 1, 17: 2

inconsistency when he declared himself to be the “chief among sinners.”<sup>13</sup> It is also possible that this restriction on his ministry was the “thorn in the flesh”<sup>14</sup> over which he wrestled with God three times, never gaining relief. If so, it underscores the humanity of Paul and makes the purity of his message even more a miracle of God’s intervening power throughout his life.

**(1:6)** These believers in Rome are numbered “**among those who are called to belong to Jesus Christ.**” Doesn’t this bring to mind the sheep that know the voice of the Shepherd,<sup>15</sup> and follow Him wherever He leads? As Paul said in the previous verse, it is “**the obedience that comes from faith.**” It should not surprise us that where faith is, obedience will surely follow. It is the natural response of anyone in a loving relationship.

### The Church At-Large in Rome

To whom is this letter to believers in Rome addressed? There is no local body specified, but “**To all in Rome who are loved by God and called**” (here is election again) “**to be saints.**” The word for “**saints**” *hagios* is the same word translated “Holy, sanctify, hallow, sanctification” or “set apart” in other passages. It is the sense of being separated unto someone or something. “**Called**” refers to the effectual work of God in the minds of His own while they are yet outside the ground of grace and lost in sin. It is the elective sovereignty of God at work among lost men to bring those who will believe into the Body of Christ. Therefore, these believers are a single *assembly*, joined by the commonality of two issues--their calling by God and their separation unto His service.

First, their calling is an offer to them of God's “**Grace.**” That provision is rooted in His love for His own and wrapped in mercy. Second, is the person to whom they have been commonly joined, God in Christ.

Judicially, the word for mercy *Leos* is “**forgiveness.**” Love is the motivating force, mercy is His attitude (one of loving pity for our condition), and forgiven is the ground on which we stand before Him. “Forgiven” is the glue that binds us together in one body. Having been forgiven, we are no longer accountable for our Sin, which has been taken away, and now are the recipients of his free grace *charis* and the gift of salvation.

The Holy Spirit is the agent of regeneration who binds us together and joins us to Christ, together with all who have ever accepted Him as the *resurrected, risen, ascended Lord.* Mark that distinction well. Do not include any of God's faithful from other historical periods in this unique company. They were called to specific purposes different from union with God and oneness within the Body of Christ. That union with God is the particular calling of the Church of this age. God has called several assemblies out of mankind throughout biblical history and each has its

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<sup>13</sup> 1 Timothy 1:15

<sup>14</sup> 2 Corinthians 12:7

<sup>15</sup> John 10:4, 14

distinct mission and destiny. One of those is identified as the “assembly” (Church) and is the universal body of all believers in this age. That body began with the 120 in the upper room<sup>16</sup> and continues until the last elect person is called prior to the coming of Christ for His Bride. Every individual in that grand company is at “Peace” with God<sup>17</sup> and with one another. The foundation of that peace is ownership of one all-encompassing blessing by “**God the Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ.**” Paul’s letter to Rome was to **all believers**, those “at peace” who might be found in that general location and who were associated in fellowship and worship of Christ, the risen Savior, at that particular time. It was written to the company of those residing in Rome on the ground of “peace” with God and themselves. Additionally, through them the message was to all, whether Jew, Samaritan, or Gentile, who might have occasion to receive these words by any means.

Paul’s letter was a gift from God to those in need of instruction. It is no less a gift from God to us in need of instruction today.

## **Section Two** **Paul’s Introductory Comments--**

Where Section One of the introduction in the letter emphasized the one plan, Section Two focuses on Father and Son. The two are working out the single plan in perfect concert. Note how often in this letter Paul addresses the Father, honors the Father, and makes sure that we understand that his relationship with the Godhead is directed to God the Father. This does not diminish honor due the Son, or subtract in any way from our love for the Lord Jesus Christ. But, it is Paul’s reminder that we must be careful to honor God the Father, as did Christ Jesus His Son.

### **Paul’s Focus is on God the Father Chapter 1:8-17**

**(1:8) “First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ . . .”** clearly identifies the Father as the object of Paul’s prayers. The phrase, “. . . my God,” is used in the New Testament only by Paul, with the exception of Christ on the Cross. It is evidence of the most intimate and reverent ownership of a relationship between the Saint and his heavenly Father. When you pray “my God” your words acknowledge Christ as Mediator and Brother. The content of Paul’s prayer is gratitude for the faith of the believers in Rome **“because your faith is being reported all over the world.”**

**(1:9)** Then the Father is again identified as the source of Paul’s authority and the author of his service. It is the **“gospel of His Son,”** but it is **“God, (the Father) whom I serve with my whole heart.”** This should receive the closest attention from believers today. Paul is telling us that the Father is personally responsive to the life of the individual Christian and that it is the Father who **“is my witness”** to faithful prayers by believers.

**(1:10-12)** His desire is to visit face to face with those in Rome for the purpose of giving them

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<sup>16</sup> Acts Chapter 1

<sup>17</sup> Romans 5: 1; 1 Corinthians 7: 15; Galatians 5: 22; Ephesians 2: 14

testimony. They serve a common Father and his own experiences in faith will give them strength. This is a good example for us to follow when we meet as a local body. Sharing prayers answered, thanksgiving and reports of God's personal work in individual lives are exercises in strengthening one another. Too often, our meetings are simply times for listing needs and requests for relief from current trials. No wonder the church is so weak in trusting for answers. It is constantly focused on the problem and not on the One who is the answer or on His constant provision. The next time you meet with a group of local Christians for prayer, make it a point to center your prayer on things that you have personally trusted God for, sharing the answers which He gave. Lace it all together with thanksgiving for His grace and adoration of your heavenly Father. Stand in the Lord Jesus Christ and address your prayer to the Father. What a difference it will make in communicating to others your personal relationship to God.

## Knowing the Will of The Father

**(1:13)** As Christians we often feel as though we should know the will of God in every challenge prior to considering whether or not to do it. Paul bursts that bubble here as he tells us that he “**planned many times to come**” to Rome, but was “**prevented from doing so until now.**” Even his desire to “**have a harvest among you**” was not a guarantee of knowing what the mind of God was in this case. There is no pretense of access to divine omniscience by this servant of God. He made many plans, which were never carried out. His response to this inner urging was to make plans and take steps to go to Rome. But, he was also prepared to accept the interruption of those plans and continue ministering **where he was** until God allowed otherwise. It was through accepting the interruption while continuing to make plans to come that Paul came to know the mind of God. Patience! What a magnificent tool in the hands of a loving God, to shape the life and thoughts of His own.

Are YOU willing to accept this alternative when it is pressed upon you? You might sincerely commit to God a certain talent, gift, or willingness to serve in a particular field. Then, if not afforded the opportunity to perform in that distant area or place, would you ever withhold that same service from those around you now? That is inconsistent with the process for discovering God’s will that we see here in Paul’s letter. Here are some action plan guidelines for you to follow--

- (1) Minister where you are with the gifts of service with which God has blessed you.
- (2) Plan to follow His inner urging wherever it impresses on you to go.
- (3) Continue your service right where you are until God empowers the change.

Patient endurance and service are the means through which God moves His own to where He wants them to be and in that service which He wishes performed.

## Understanding Your Mission Assignment by the Father

**(1:14,15)** Paul’s ministry and calling was to the Gentiles, those outside the nation Israel. Therefore, he states his obligation “**both to Greeks and non-Greeks, both to the wise and the foolish.**” There is no mention of his Jewish brethren here. The other twelve were called<sup>18</sup> and appointed by Christ personally to take the Gospel to the house of Israel. Their Gospel was the “Gospel of the Kingdom.”<sup>19</sup> The promised Kingdom of Heaven was there before them. The apostle Paul was appointed specifically to take the Gospel to the Gentiles and the content of his Gospel was not the same. This is a very important difference that sheds light on their specific instructions to believers who were under their individual care and on the different principles they were teaching. The twelve were approaching Old Testament Jews with New Testament choices. To fail to make that distinction might place the instructions of James and Peter, who wrote to

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<sup>18</sup> Luke chapter 6  
Luke chapter 9

<sup>19</sup> Luke 9: 2

Jewish converts to Christianity, in the wrong context for believers today. Those two apostles ministered the Gospel to a unique group of people--Jews who had lived under the obligations of the Law of Israel and (1) who were now the redeemed of Christ and members of His Body; or (2) were now faced with making that very choice. They were no longer of Israel as men, but *new creations* of a heavenly order (or potentially so). Obligated to the Law right up to the very moment when the resurrected Lord Jesus was presented to them. At that point, their obligation to the Law ended and their destiny depended upon their acceptance of the One who had become the Curse of the Law. Whether they accepted or not, their relationship to the Law was over! One the other hand, Paul's charge was to Gentiles who never knew the Law or any obligation to it.

After that generation died, no other people have ever been born under obligation to the Law of Israel. Not Jew! Not Samaritan! Not Gentile! The Gospel message to that transitional generation was necessarily different from the Gospel message to anyone born subsequently. They were asked to come out from under the Law as a practical standard of life. We are asked to reject law as an alternative to the life of Christ and the freedom of living under the direction of the Spirit of God on the ground of grace.

On the basis of his Jewish heritage, Paul states that he is "**not ashamed of the gospel.**" This is important testimony from one who has renounced all that he was as a man. Prior to the point where Jesus appeared to him on the road to Damascus, Paul was a man of reputation and position, respected by his peers. All of that was renounced in his pursuit of serving the Gospel of God.

The Gospel came first to the Jew in fulfillment of Old Testament promises of Messiah. Because of that promise, the disciples also were sent first to Israel by Christ. Then in quick succession, the sacrifice was made, the lamb slain and the payment for sin rejected by national Israel. But, there was a remnant that accepted redemption, and shedding their Jewish claims to blessing, received "**all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies in Christ**" (**Ephesians 1:3**) as members of the Body of Christ.

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

The content of the Gospel is revealed righteousness. Before, there had only been the revelation of Sin through the Law. Now, after the Law has been completely satisfied, God is more fully revealed in Christ, for it is the Son who "**has perfectly revealed Him**" (**John 1:18**).

"... **revealed**," is literally "declared or unveiled." It brings to mind the ripped veil in the temple. When that tear occurred, the Holy of Holies was opened to the light of the Sun.<sup>20</sup> That symbolism spoke of the reality of what was happening. The Ark of the Covenant was placed in the Holy of Holies (see Temple Plan on following page) where it contained three items<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>20</sup>Matt. 27: 51 The veil of the temple was torn "in two from top to bottom.

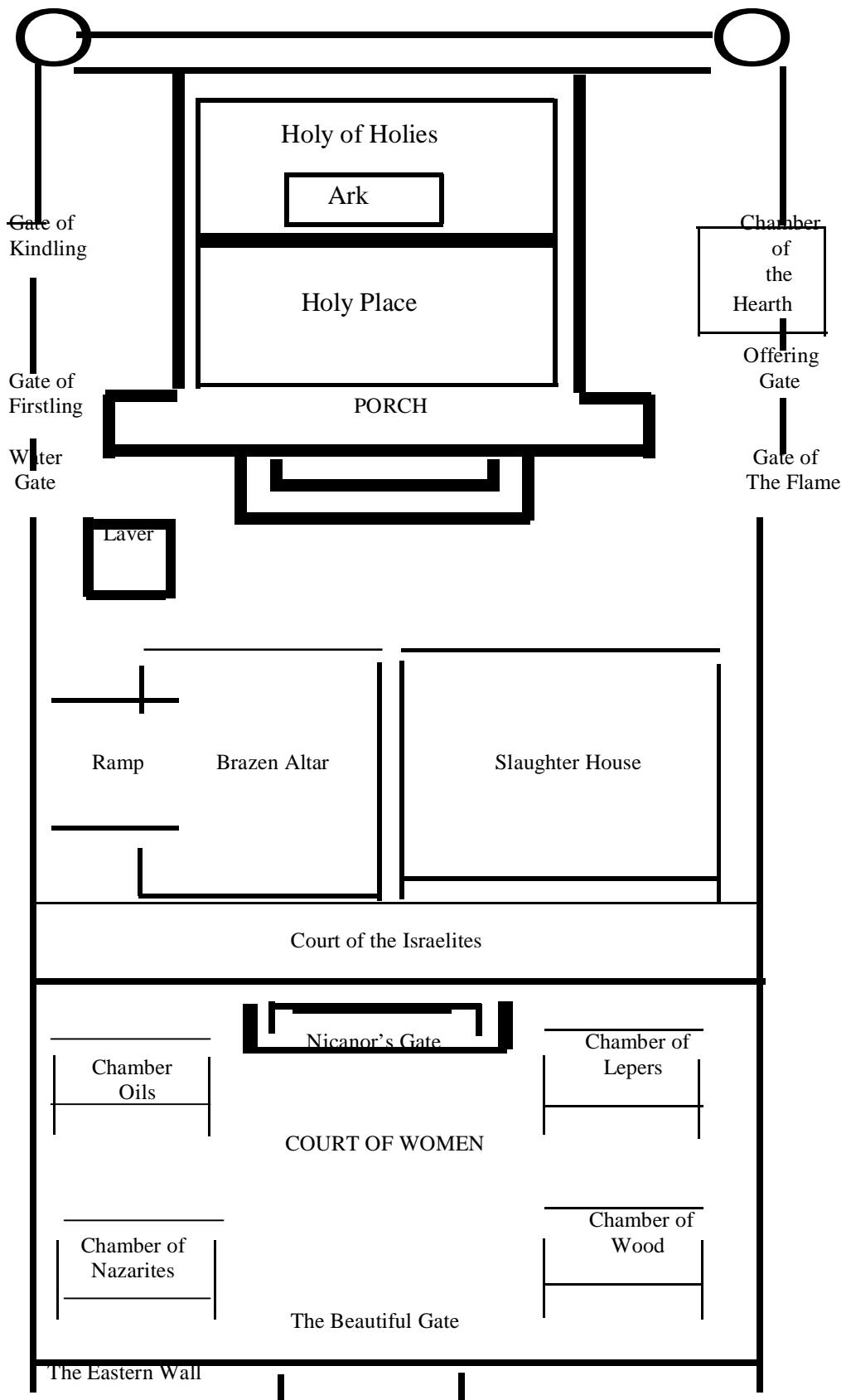
<sup>21</sup>Heb. 9: 4 "Wherein was the golden pot of manna, Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant."

representing Israel's sin. On the Day of Atonement, the high priest of Israel sprinkled the blood of the sacrifice on the cover of the Ark, that raised portion called the Mercy Seat. The Mercy Seat brought before the High Priest of Israel a precise picture of the Cross on the hill of Golgotha. The Mercy Seat was the designated place where God was satisfied that sufficient sacrifice<sup>22</sup> had been made for the sin of all Israel for the period of one year. The Cross on Golgotha became that place where God was satisfied that sufficient sacrifice had been made for the sin of all mankind *forever*. There, Christ sprinkled His own blood in perfect atonement. Several comparisons can be made that will add to our understanding of the magnitude of Christ's work on the Cross. Where the high priest of Israel acted alone before God, the Lord Jesus acted alone before all creation. The darkness of the inner chamber was then made one with the light of the sun, picturing the passing of the shadow form of truth given in the Law and introducing the fullness of truth as found in the Son. Access to that previously segregated holy ground was assured for every person who would approach God "**by faith.**" Trust and acceptance became the separation rather than that great cloth wall. This "**faith**" is not a mysterious, mystical, transcendental quality of man, but simple human trust in and acceptance of Him, who is alone Trustworthy.

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

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<sup>22</sup> This is the doctrine of Propitiation, the acceptance of a substitutionary sacrifice on behalf of the sinner.



**SUBDIVISION TWO-Chapter 1:18-3:20**  
**Both Creation and Law Condemn Gentile and Jew**

Introduction to Subdivision Two:

In this Subdivision, man's need of righteousness is made clear. As the second subdivision of the letter, it is interesting to note that principles are usually presented in pairs, either with positive or negative connotations. Sometimes the coupling is to convey unity and reinforcement. In other uses, the coupling conveys division, contrast and conflict.

In Subdivision One, we see God as one over all mankind. He is the author of the only Gospel that the Apostle delivers, whether to Jew or Greek (Gentile). Christ is presented **“the Son of God,”** without equal or peer. There is one **“righteousness from God”** and one means of access, **“faith.”**

In Subdivision Two we will cover principles that are two-fold in their revelation to man and in application to man's experience.

- \* Creation and Law both condemn man for rejection of God.
- \* Gentile and Jew are joined in their condemnation before a righteous God.
- \* God's attributes of righteousness and perfect justice are in perfect concert, joined in opposition to man's godlessness and wickedness.
- \* The result is that man is dually dead. He is spiritually dead and physical death is imminent.
- \* Righteousness and justice constitute God's holiness.

God's nature, His Essence, is perfection in each of His attributes. This means that His Righteousness is absolute. So too, is His Justice. These two attributes constitute holiness, that quality of being which sets God apart from all other spiritual or physical beings. It is this very nature, which pours out from Him towards any disobedience as His **“wrath”**, an attitude of complete abhorrence of sin. It is not that God just doesn't like sin. He cannot, not for even one instance, tolerate sin because of Who and What He is. The sum of all of His nature directed at sin is **wrath**. It is directed against **“godlessness and wickedness”**.<sup>23</sup> These two qualities are opposites of the two attributes that make up His holiness. As God is found to work out of His nature, so man is found to work out of his nature. It is that same nature, the old Adamic nature, which is the source of “godlessness and wickedness” which controls the inner character of such men who will “suppress the truth”, whether Jew or Gentile. Their inner character directs their action, labeled here as “suppression of the truth”. In Proverbs it is put this way--”as a man thinketh in his heart [mind],<sup>24</sup> so he is”. (Proverbs 23:7) Remember, John said

<b>Attributes of God</b>	
Sovereign	Omniscient
Just	Omnipresent
Righteous	Omnipotent
Love	Truth
Eternal	Unchanging

<sup>23</sup> Colossians 3:6 This same wrath of God is directed at the children of disobedience, those who reject the Gospel.

<sup>24</sup> In the biblical text, there are words used by the translators of the

that Christ came as a man “**full of grace and truth.**” He is the embodiment of truth. When men suppress the truth, they are suppressing the Son of God, the object of the Father's love.

There are always forces attempting to put the believer back into the bondage of legality. One of them, which that old inner nature of rebellion repeatedly resorts to, is to attempt to put the veil of the Holy of Holies back in place--to cause the child of God to view a separation between him/her and the Father. If allowed, the old nature will shroud the standard of sin in darkness again by describing man's rebellion against God's standards in one of the following ways:

**“Everyone must follow the dictates of his/her own conscience.”** It is said as if God has not revealed any standards at all for man to measure his actions against. Our standard is the life of the Lord Jesus flowing from His Spirit through our spirit outward to others.

**“Christians were meant to be successful in their endeavors and happy in their circumstances.”** The weight of history shows that Believers will be successful in their sharing of the Gospel and filled with the joy of the Lord, even while their lives are being taken from them. God did not promise us happy circumstances, but joy in all of our sufferings in proportion to our faith.

**“Whenever a difficult situation comes, we must get the pastor or elders of the Church to pray that God would send relief and restore our (health, wealth, comfort, family, etc.).”** This is a denial of God's personal relationship to every believer. We no longer depend on a human intercessor other than the risen Son of Man.

These are ways that life under the influence and control of the old nature is isolated from the light of the life of the Son. Error can be shielded from the corrective power of the dynamics of the life of Christ in us by the work of the Holy Spirit. It is not incapacity on the part of the Spirit, but an honoring by God of our responsibility as men to accept or reject His life as our personal choice. If these methods of Satan are successful, then men and women will spend their lives in slavery to the letter of the Law, not in service to the life of the Lord Jesus in the power of the Holy Spirit of God.

This offers grand graphics for the teacher. Picture the spiritual leader of Israel who would have the faithful crouched in the darkness of the inner chamber, focused on the Ark. That golden box held the tablets of Law, a golden bowl of manna, and Aaron's rod that budded. These three

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King James Version, the Revised Version, the Authorized Version, the New American Standard, etc. to convey the intention of the original authors. These terms have their own meaning in the time in which the translation was completed. We must be careful not to infuse into our reading of scriptural text meanings for words that are in common usage today, but were assigned a somewhat different meaning in the day of the translator or in the day when the text was originally recorded. The word “**heart**” is a very good example. In addition to identifying the organ in each of us, “heart” is used to describe a person's courage. Today, “heart” carries the sense of emotional involvement, the core of a person's being that is other than physical. What is very important to us is to know what the word translated “heart” meant in the day of the originator of the passage. Historically, the word for “**heart**” indicated the center of the upper organs of the body. That was believed to be the origin of a man's thought processes. Today, we use the word “**MIND**” to convey that concept.

objects were the representations of gross disobedience and sin, the history of the failures of Israel. Right outside the temple and the camp of Israel, there on the bloody Cross, the Father brought darkness across the face of the Earth, and at the same time, through the torn veil, light to those in bondage prescribed by Law. **“He who knew no sin was made to be sin for us, in order that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.”** (2 Corinthians 5:21) Any preacher or spiritual leader today who would hold his followers to the standards by which Israel measured sinfulness is standing on the same ground as those leaders who had not yet seen the living, now risen, Christ. In contrast, we have seen...

1. The veil ripped apart.
2. The Holy of Holies opened to all who would enter.
3. The condemnation prescribed by the Law exacted from the innocent Christ.
4. The promise of Messiah fulfilled and rejected.
5. The resurrection victory of Christ over death.
6. The dispersion of Israel and end of the Aaronic Priesthood.
7. The completion of the canon of Scripture and the verity of the Gospel to the Gentiles through the Apostle Paul.

## Section One-Chapter 1:18-2:16

### The Gentile in Lawless Independence

Introduction to Section One:

The grand subject from 1:18 through 3:20, is *the universal guilt of mankind*. First, attention is given to the condition of the Gentile. “Gentile” was a term used of man in general other than Israelites. While Israel was a nation presumably led directly by God's intervention in their national governance, Gentiles were those peoples governed solely by their own wit and genius. As regards their awareness of God's interventions, Gentiles were never under the imposition of the Law as an instructional tool, nor did they have access to the Scriptures given to Israel through the Prophets, even though those writings spoke authoritatively about Gentile history. But, they were exposed to the *testimony of creation*, which was designed by God to bring them to a point of personally acknowledging Him as supreme in rule and creator of the world.

These Gentile people were not crude, or mean men, nor were they mean-spirited towards God. They were people in very many ways just like us. They were men and women who had learned to depend on their own intelligent capacities to reach conclusions about life. Life's opportunities and rewards were allocated by deities of their own definition or through their own efforts to come to grips with the laws inherent to the natural system of life, which surrounded them.

Consider the forces affecting the development of man's concepts and awareness of God in A.D. 58-100. The technology of the era provided some men with advantage over others and brought them power. Advancements in metallurgy were producing finer weapons and their machines of war were as terrifying to them as our Patriot missile is to us today. Philosophically, they thought of themselves as being at the center of the grand scheme of the cosmos. This process of growth and development naturally led most to concentrate on human capabilities, for power, management, and definition of their position relative to other men. From that profile of political leadership, there develops in the average person a consuming concern with self and the circumstances that affect daily life. Today, as the average citizen becomes more aware of the greed and self-serving avarice that characterizes our elected officials and their bureaucracy, the national attitude is, “Let's get ours before someone else gets it,” and the Grand Grab is on. There is a correlation here between corrupt leadership and the brutalizing of society.

This mindset effectively eliminates active debate of intervention or action by an independent and omnipotent God in the created order of things, even though some physical evidence suggests that it might be a reasonable possibility. The challenge in Paul's time was the same as to men at-large today; to investigate and come to a personal conclusion about the *written* record of the history of God come as a man, the Bible.

Man, it seems, must choose between two distinct pathways. One path allows nothing that cannot be comprehended, duplicated, modeled, or managed by man. That has been generally labeled as the pathway of “science”. The other pathway accepts that God is

**“All men are accountable to God, and they are inexcusable, but God is revealing His righteousness at the present time, not in fastening the guilt of men's sins upon them, but in clearing them of every charge.”--C.A. Coates**

outside the bounds of natural law and may intervene, create out of nothing, set aside natural law and provide another place totally separate from this cosmos and is labeled “religious” or “supernatural.”

In the first instance, God, if acknowledged at all, will never be larger than man and is rightfully labeled a construction of man's imagination. This is not the God of Biblical revelation but a “force” to which man could (or can) make his appeal for strengths he does not have, but needs temporarily. Debate between the proponents of the two pathways comes down to beliefs and attitudes about the *written record*, the Christian Bible. The fulcrum of the discussion is not proof that God does or does not exist. It is the view each holds about the Bible itself. If anyone accepts that specific compilation of ancient writings as both (1) inspired by and (2) preserved by God, then their whole view of the created world rests on the verity of every detail of the Biblical narrative. If one takes a diminished view of the Bible, i.e. that it is not inerrant in its text, then they are left to their own assessment of its value and become, of necessity, their only dependable critic of its content.

In the second pathway the foundation rests on the assertion that the Biblical record was dictated by God, preserved by Him for man, and is a true and accurate document in all areas that it addresses. From that beginning, one can assume that man is completely dependent on God for revelation of Himself and He is not silent, speaking to us all in the pages of His Word. The Bible's internal assertion is that God did exactly that; He spoke His mind fully to man in the person of Christ.

The Bible is the history of two men--the “first Adam,” the responsible, or created man; and the “last Adam,” the man of God’s purpose and counsel. The responsible man’s history closed in the Cross. The “second Man”—the “last Adam”—came in, and, in blessed and holy love, willingly took the cup of wrath, and died, that God might be free, in righteousness, to let out the floodgates of His love. —F.G. Patterson  
*Lectures on the Church*, Sept. 1870

## Having Knowledge of God, They Chose to Reject It 1:18-32

These Gentiles, having seen the witness of creation, chose to ignore that evidence and construct other theories for nature and other rules for governing their very existence.<sup>25</sup> Like them, a doubter's suppression of the truth is not something that must be done outwardly, contending with others for their beliefs. It is an inner decision, that moment within the privacy of one's own mind, when the choice is made to take a course away from God's testimony and in favor of a system of belief that centers on man's intellectual ability. Regardless of the label attached to the alternative, Hindu, Muslim, Hare Krishna, Scientology, Unity--all must be measured against the witness of the Bible's integrity. The authority and accuracy with which it speaks, the completeness of its prophecies and it's textual integration with history set the Bible apart as *the unique record of all ages*.

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

The example of the Gentile in this passage speaks plainly to the tendency of all men/women to manipulate their perceived position before God. It is not that they are ignorant of the truth, (the Jews had direct responsibility for administering the Law of God and look at their contradictory actions) but that knowing the truth, as “**made plain to them;**” they willfully seek to subvert it with other alternatives from the realm of human genius. Usually, those alternatives are belief systems that provide the originator some personal advantage. Scripture is clear that the evidence for God and His supremacy was then, and is today, sufficient for both Jew and Gentile. What evidence of God's intervention and management of the affairs of men the Jew had in the Law, the Gentile had in all of creation.

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

If it has always been clear that God is Ruler of the Universe, then is God holding man accountable? Are we allowed to process information in the human realm and come to conclusions within the confines of our human intellect without divine coercion? Does God give man the latitude to make decisions and stand His judgment in light of those decisions? Absolutely! This is the precise quality that separates man from all others of God's animal creation. Moral and intellectual accountability is the “humanness” of man. Animals are not held accountable throughout eternity for decisions they make in time. Only man has that capacity and privilege. Man, therefore needs no other excuse for his actions than that he is indeed Man. He is qualified by that fact to choose to propose to God his own claim for eternal life on the basis of his own work and efforts rather than on the

**“Man's freedom to choose and to make decisions as an act of his will is what defines his humanity.”**

<sup>25</sup> One very good example of that approach is **ORIGINS**, by Richard Leakey, published by E. P. Dutton in 1977. Like many authors, he picks the weakest points in opposition to his own views and then builds a case for the credibility of his own conclusions regarding the age and progression of life on Earth. A second example is **CONNECTIONS** by James Burke, published by Little, Brown and Company in 1978.

basis of the work of Christ on his behalf. He is free to define his own plan of salvation. But, he finds himself limited by the fact that he is not capable of producing anything that survives death.

Having stated his claims to eternal life, he then must submit to assessment by a completely righteous God who does survive death and who judges by His own character.

The major problem for most men/women seems to be this--*Man does not trust God!* Men would more readily accept entering an eternity of their own definition rather than a place prepared by God. Their lack of trust is no excuse for not accepting their Creator as Lord.

**“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.” Romans 1:20**

It does not stop with simple rejection. Man inevitably pushes further and will attempt to reduce God to something, which he can manage. Once you have taken the position that man is the highest order of life, and that there is nothing outside the realm of man's experience that can be considered as valid--Then, “reasonableness” becomes the test of every concept. But, it is a qualified exercise that prejudges on the basis of theory acceptable to “science”, Uniformitarianism, Evolution, the Eternal Universe and Homocentricity.

One of the most common means of explaining away deity is to make God the product of man's own work, the assignment of “power” to a fetish or idol. Or to define God as a projection conjured up from man's

**“The heart (mind of man) is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked: who can know it?” Jeremiah 17:9**

imagination, the response to an inner need to define the unexplainable. This is, in fact, the very definition of God offered by the atheist or humanist today from the field of human behavioral science. The history of man is punctuated with periods in which God is reviled, reduced to humanly engineered images, or captured by the mind of man in images taken from the natural world. These images are reduced to dolls, altars, holy places or natural formations that represent deities or forces over which man can have some degree of control and/or dominance.<sup>26</sup> Systems of idolatry are not limited to the savage, ignorant or base among humanity. And they are never based on the outpouring of grateful hearts, but are rooted in fear of some harm, which might come from an angry and vengeful god or a search for power over other men or life's events.

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<sup>26</sup> From the Houston Chronicle, Sunday, Sept. 15, 1991--"Forest rangers fight New-Agers over rearranged rocks." Natural rock formations on a plain about 100 miles north of Phoenix have been repeatedly rearranged into patterns of interlocking circles. New-Agers call the circles a "vortex" and say it helps focus spiritual energy. "Psychics, channelers, and healers all felt the acceleration (of energy)", so said Ron Babin, Director of Sedon's Center for the New Age of experiences during the 1987 Harmonic Convergence.

This view of God as one who can be coerced is certainly not limited to the undeveloped peoples of the world. It cuts across the whole culture of the Western, Euro centric world of intellectual humanity. The savage shaman has his constituents appeasing an angry volcanic god with offerings or sacrifice. The Eastern mystic, appeals to his ancestors to intercede with deity on his behalf. The follower of Gurgich conjures up his “allies” for protection and mayhem among enemies. What is the principle established here? It is that God as conceived by man is a jealous, vengeful being with power that man does not ordinarily have, and that it is possible to appease him with self-sacrifice and turn his power to your own use. Across Christendom that very same idea, if openly stated, would be vehemently denied. But, is that principle any different from the sense in which penance for wrongs committed is performed by Catholics to appease the wrath of God? Or, among some Protestants, is giving 10% of your income, because if you don't then God will forcibly take it from you, any different in principle? For some evangelicals is it doing Christian service in order to gain either God's favor or relief from a particular problem faced? Often, a Christian might catch himself offering God hours in service, not for something that they need, but for the benefit of someone else that they care about. In short, it is all simply spiritual extortion, whether practiced around ancient campfires or in today's boardrooms, and our churches are universally full of it. It treats God as the Genie of the Lamp, and the result is an inability to understand the principles of Grace revealed in the Word of God--the heart is “darkened.”

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

Regarding the use of *cardia*, here translated “**heart**”; we should be reminded that in that period, *cardia* referred to all of the upper organs, the center of a person's thought process. If a Greek wanted to indicate the center of an individual's emotional/physical response patterns, he would use the term translated “bowels”. Our best word then for *cardia* is **mind**. Their foolish “**minds**” were darkened. They had a diminished ability to think clearly with regard to issues about God. In other words, where there is clear and willful rejection of information about God and His person, there is no further information given about His specific work in Christ on that person's behalf. Man can become eternally lost by his rejection of God at that very point-in-time of God-consciousness without ever hearing the specifics of the historical Christ. Before you react with a charge that God is being unfair, consider the testimony of creation to His power and person that

### My Robot

I have a little robot  
that goes around with me.  
I tell it what I'm thinking  
I tell it what I see.

I tell my little robot  
all my hopes and fears.  
It listens and remembers  
all my joys and tears.

At first my little robot  
followed my command.  
But, after years of  
training,  
it's gotten out of hand!

It doesn't care what's right or wrong or  
what is false or true.  
No matter what I try now,  
It tells me what to do!!

From the *Psychology of Winning*  
Seminar by Dennis Waitley

is rejected by the people who choose their own gods. That man loses the right to hear more details of the historical Christ is not inconsistent with the concepts of grace that define the required right relationship between every man and God. Man may opt for his own wisdom or accept the wisdom of God contained in the records of His Prophets and (for us) Apostles.

**“Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles.” Romans 1:22,23**

This reference to “...images made to look like mortal man, etc” calls their attention to the idolatry which had infiltrated every culture since the time of Nimrod and the spread of man from the Fertile Crescent of the Mid East. In order to better understand the depth of the reference, a summary of idolatrous practices from about 4500 B.C. is given here. The subject is worthy of a much more in depth study.

## Ancient Idolatry

The idolatry spoken of here in verses 22-23 was borrowed first from the Egyptians, and before them, the Babylonians. From Egypt, the worship of animal gods carried into the very temple of God in Jerusalem. As you will see, it is an ancient religion that has endured through the ages since its origination in the mind of man and is still quite evident today.

In this passage the reference is to the animal and reptile gods of the Fertile Crescent that date from the time of Nimrod and the Tower of Babel.<sup>27</sup> Ancient Babylon covered the area of modern Iraq and Iran and formed the Northeastern leg of the crescent. The locations of modern Israel and Jordan formed the apex of the curve and the Southerly leg followed the Nile valley through Egypt and into Ethiopia.

### The Roman Church's Ties to Babylon--

Babylon was the place where such worship of idols began under Nimrod, the defiant one. Israel had been specifically warned by God through the prophets and Scripture against such idolatry, but even they succumbed to the enticement of power and riches, which marked the empires that overran them repeatedly during the 2500 years prior to Christ. When Rome became the ruling empire, they also embraced the ancient mystical orders of Nimrod and incorporated Babylonian gods and rites of worship directly into their temple culture. From Rome today, there still emanates evidence of the satanic alternative to worship of Jehovah, the worship of Semiramis the mother goddess of Babylon, which practice was the foundation of Marian adoration.<sup>28</sup>

**Nimrod became “a mighty hunter before (in defiance of) God”. Since hunting of all things was permitted, the only possible way for Nimrod to hunt “in defiance of God” was to hunt the prohibited prey, man!--Genesis 10:9**

### The Danger of “Black Studies” Curricula--

It will be interesting to watch the development of Black Studies curricula that are becoming more popular in most inner city schools. Segments of both public and private educational systems that are managed by either black or black sensitized administrators, are reaching into the past of African nations, including Ethiopia, Egypt and the rest of the Fertile Crescent countries. They are doing so in pursuit of some system that will build support for Black Americans' cultural identity and individual as well as corporate self-esteem. This dangerous course will take them ever farther away from the Euro-centric culture that has been the primary base of the American experiment. It is questionable whether or not black Americans can orient themselves to the ancient cultural base of the Fertile Crescent they are claiming as their heritage without giving up a rich adopted American culture. It may be impossible to maintain their more recently developed historical and traditional ties to Western Evangelical Christianity while concentrating so hard on Mid-Eastern and/or African roots. The most troubling question is, will the idolatry of the Mideastern mindset be as easily adopted, as have been the social mores? Will the ancient

<sup>27</sup> Circa 4500 b. c.

<sup>28</sup> See Babylonianism as it is practiced in Christian Churches Today, by C. Bowman

religion of Babylon become contemporary experience and practice, as it seems to have so easily done culturally? Is it possible to incorporate elements of the culture that was born out of a belief married to idolatry without accepting the idolatry that spawned the cultural practices?

We can interpret this adoption of Afro-culture to mean that the black student's need being served is both a personal and a racial/national self-esteem (or even a higher view--worth of self). It follows that their focus in higher education must necessarily be man-centered rather than God-centered for it is culture based. That fact alone suggests that forces are already at work, which will attack the Biblical concept of God in favor of a definition that accommodates ancient beliefs from the cradle of humanity. Because of existing animosities between Jew and Arab, Black studies will almost certainly lead to anti-Semitic sentiments and extend hostility towards any friends of Israel, the United States' political leadership in particular. Of more importance, this will mean a growing hostility towards the God of Israel, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Since most revelation of Him came through the prophets and kings of Israel, those who cannot bring themselves to accord to Israel any beneficial thought or honor will reject this record. It is very understandable that blacks in America are embracing Islam as an affirmation of their heritage. However, in doing so, they are increasingly rejecting all that is associated with a Judeo-Christian origin and this brings them directly into a conflict with the God of Scripture.

## Sexual Deviance

The presence of sin, the Sin Nature common to all, seems to routinely reveal itself through man's physical/sexual practices. Ample examples can be drawn from literature that implies recognition of this tendency by behaviorists. Abraham Maslow identifies sex with food and water as three foundational factors that motivate us to make decisions and act on them. Together, these three are called the Physiological Needs category of motivators, a demand that must be satisfied before any other needs are normally considered. Regardless of our station in life, these needs are present and demand satisfaction. When you think about it, sex is the first differentiating mark of a person. One is either male or female.

God has obviously designed us to be physically compatible with one of the opposite sex. Less obvious is the design for spiritual compatibility built into the human race. In fact, we are not complete, not whole as human beings, until united with one of the opposite sex, in mind, spirit, and body.

Eve was "in Adam" until his rib was removed and she was taken out of him and placed in the body prepared for her. Marriage is a restorative bond, a reunion of those two separated halves of the original unit. When a man and woman come together in marriage; that which was whole is recreated out of the two halves. It pictures the union of Christ and His Bride, the Church. Once, while children, we were "in Him" in innocence. Then, we grew and reached an age and stage of development of will that allowed us to consider our own alternatives to His plan for eternity. That was the age where we became "accountable" for our decisions to accept Him or reject Him in favor of our own ideas. It could have been at age five, twenty-five or fifty-five. But, at that point, our choice of truths meant that we were "cut off" from Him--we died spiritually by our own choice. When we come again to accept Him as our personal sin-debt payer, we are reunited to Him as a bride to her intended.

Anything that disrupts that fundamental relationship between men and women attacks the relationship between Christ and the Church, and between God and Man. It should not surprise us then that a primary target of the Archenemy of God is to confuse the role of the sexes in God's economy. Destroy the distinction between the sexes and the most common illustration of God's relationship to man is distorted.

We may infer from history that when man rejects God as God it is attended by an increase in the practice of homosexuality. One possible answer may be that focusing on self, accompanied by rejection of God, truncates that need of spiritual intimacy for which we were brought into being. Lacking personal communication with God, man will go to extremes to find another intercourse that satisfies in ways that are different from the obvious.

It would be interesting to explore ways in which the arts are used to provide a degree of satisfaction for this very human urge. The arts offer avenues for both artists and devotees through which one might attempt to satisfy that need by communicating at some unique and personal level with the world at-large. Whether creating art, or simply gathering around objects of art, the flow of "artistic" interpretations seems to be repeated attempts to discriminate among people at-large by rendering an idea or opinion open to public critique.

However, sex remains the universal norm for intimate communication between people at the most rudimentary level precisely because it requires vulnerability in body, soul and spirit. It can be noted though, that without the exchange of ideas, feelings, and beliefs that make sex a bonding rather than a coupling, the occasion of sex is an event rather than an expression of relationship. Finding out that essential total satisfaction is lacking in the course of casual sexual relationships, experimentation often leads to the perverse and bizarre. Since we are created with obvious heterosexual definition, it almost follows that pursuit of the unusual and bizarre would lead to homosexual exploration. At some point, God gives those who do follow this course over to their pathway and they are confirmed in their chosen direction and abandoned to it.

The sin of rejection of God, carried out in acceptance of images and idols modeled after the natural world, now begins to reveal itself within the individual. Preoccupation with the world in which we live, as opposed to recognition that this is but a passageway to God's presence, leads to a preoccupation with self. This focus on one's human existence ("I think, therefore I am") is an open door to preoccupation with one's physical self. That in turn is an invitation to sexual exploration and deviance. It is attacking the very fabric of our western culture right now; first, through weakening the concept of family, thereby stimulating infidelity, then through perversion.

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

Note that the first step is error in *thinking*; "...**sinful desires of their minds (hearts)**." Each act is preceded by a mental construction of the situation. That brings the conceiver into a direct opportunity to willfully turn away. Modern behavioral schools of thought conclude that man does not have that choice, being so conditioned by his environment that he is driven to action by circumstance, thus having little or no control over his responses. To accept that is to reduce man's "humanness" and make him simply a more complex animal. This is a central point in the struggle that has continued between evolutionists and creationists for many years. If we take from man his fundamental accountability in time for his actions and make him simply the product of all that he has experienced in life, then we take from him his essential humanity, which is his will and freedom to act in spite of his experience and history. Man is free to deny his own experience and act in direct contradiction to it. This fact is the basis on which an individual will endanger his/her own life in order to protect another. It is the basis on which one born into the ghetto, or into the mansion, rejects the influences around them and embraces principles of truth and honesty. It is the basis of our expectation that any man or woman should act within the confines of common law and not out of their own sense of need, rewards, or definition of fairness.

For the man or woman in a position of power, whether political, military, or socio-economic, viewing man simply as a higher animal form provides justification for the exercise of control and authority over others. It means complete freedom to manipulate people, as he/she or government deems appropriate at the moment. This belief forms a foundation for the horrific kinds of experimentation that marked out the Nazi regime of the thirties and forties and explains the most oppressive rulers that Eastern Europe has labored under for the past century.

Our Western cultures have not emerged from this debate without consequences and moral scars. Law and government, social planners and pulpits, university chairs and elementary school

teachers, all are adopting the view of man that is lower than that described in the letters of the Apostles and authors of the Old Testament writings. Civil judges in this country may justify jailing or institutionalizing social non-conformists as “mental incompetents.” Courts routinely violate traditional family roles and rules, removing children from parents on the testimony of social “experts” who are often themselves life-long patients in their own system and preventing any discipline for disobedient and rebellious members of society. Most often, the experiences of growing up within that family are blamed for any behavioral problems, and any freedom to choose to act differently on the part of the minor or adult is denied. It is popular to assume that the parents, the extended family, even the village, are at fault.

Abortionists consistently justify taking the life of “unwanted” babies, an act of pure convenience for the post-natal population, on the basis that there is no more than animal value, fetal tissue, existent in the womb. And, now society is being repeatedly faced with the incidence of “mercy killing” in order to relieve (1) the suffering of the victim and (2) the suffering of the remaining family members. It will be too short a period of time until the sufferings of the victim are second in consideration to the sufferings of those challenged by living. That position will be a scant step in reason from euthanasia for the benefit of the family who must bear the cost, an act of convenience wrapped in the guise of preservation of the “pursuit of happiness.” After all, isn’t that a constitutional guarantee? And, if the government is actually bearing the cost of medical maintenance of the patient through some universal health plan, is it not appropriate that they, through actions of the judiciary, make the decisions as to when a person should be left to die or assisted in death by some humane method? We do this now for animals abandoned, sick, or injured. If man is no more than animal at a higher state of evolution, then this becomes a very reasonable approach to the problem of scarcity of medical resources and emotional strain on the living.

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

Along the ladder of descent into baser behaviors that seem to be common to man, there is a plateau reached where God abandons man to his course. If we take this quite literally, and there is no apparent reason to the contrary, then the deepest quagmire into which man might descend is that cesspool of sexual deviance. To consider the reasons why this is so, is to review the blackest periods of human history. It is not simply promiscuity, but deviance in sexual practices that brings the person down. Perhaps this is because the results are of epidemic proportions. Murders are individual acts, but the physiological and psychological results of sexual diseases and abuses multiply in geometric terms and go on and on and on. Gonorrhea, syphilis and other venereal diseases have decimated whole populations of people historically.

Today, AIDS has taken center stage in this perpetual battle. While many would have us accept the proposition that AIDS is a disease unrelated to homosexuality, and it is readily acknowledged that heterosexuals are being infected at a growing rate, the raw truth is that the seed pool from which the Western civilizations have been attacked by this virus is the homosexual community. Initial and continuing denial of those relationships as deviant, sinful and highly risky, and insistence by gays on moral approval of their practices as an “alternative lifestyle” by the general population, enabled the virus pool to grow at an alarming rate until the very numbers of gay men being stricken could not be ignored, either within or outside of the gay community. At that

point, the close proximity of drug use to the gay milieu pushed the virus swiftly and irreversibly into heterosexual circles. The bridging influence of the bisexual population and the common public trend to casual sex generated viral fires of epidemic proportions.

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

This is a clear and unmistakable biblical condemnation of homosexual behavior by either men or women. A lot of the attention being given in the media focuses on the infection of innocents; hemophiliacs, infants born to drug users, monogamous partners of unfaithful lovers, or healthcare workers inadvertently infected through needle-stick injury or exposure on the job. However, the fact remains that the growth of AIDS is directly related to the incidence of casual sex, promiscuity, and infidelity in general. Carelessness within medical practices when treating persons in high-risk groups is an industry problem that always exists.

The vivid truth is that fidelity and maintenance of stable relationships would stop the spread of infectious pathogens transmitted through body contact, and actually reverse the trend immediately. In a single generation, such diseases could exist only within the segment of the general population requiring exposure to selected blood components (hemophiliacs, medical professionals, etc.) and those infants born to AIDS mothers.

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

AIDS, Hepatitis, Herpes and other similar conditions are not curses sent from God to punish man. These are simply the natural results of man living his life in an undisciplined manner. It is incidental that such a life also does not reflect the character of his Creator. The epidemic spread of these afflictions is “...the **due penalty**” of society’s declaring such practices “normal” behavior. Sociologists may call it anything they choose, the results are a man-made plague on those who would follow that course of behavior. Paul goes on to state that this behavioral bent of mankind is such that God will abandon the individual to that mind-set, allowing them to pursue their course of sexual deviancy without His restraint. That should give us some indication of why such activities are running rampant across all national boundaries, but especially in the United States where there are few social restrictions placed on the movements of individuals. It is my opinion that it is possible for a nation to follow this line of behavior and become abandoned by God to their collective mind.

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

#### The Mind of Man Without Restraint

Of further importance, if God does not choose to put His own constraints on such behavior, why should Christians devote themselves to great efforts to accomplish legal restrictions on others?

Should we not be following closely the mind of God in Christ in our own endeavors within the world system? How much energy is spent, or opportunity to witness to the saving power of Christ missed, by distractions with high-visibility protests against social practices. Ours is not a charter to change the outward behavior of society, but to bring to the center of all that we do **the light of all mankind, the Son of God.**

Here is a list of behaviors common to men who are not motivated by the indwelling Holy Spirit. Can you see some of all of these characteristics in believers? Absolutely! When believers exhibit those same qualities, then what the world sees is a total lie, because Christians perpetually walk **in light**. How is this possible? Hold this thought fast and at the core of every decision--Having been irrevocably joined to Him who **is light**, there is never a moment when we do not walk within His divine presence—not simply in His view, but we stand where He stands. In order to do that, we have been regenerated **in union with Christ**. If any man chooses to behave as if this is not the case, then we have the sad situation where men who are fundamentally changed and are now “new creatures” appear to be the same as the unregenerate. What a tragedy! The world, which should see the beauty of Christ, is treated to a sight not different from their own view of self. The believer has become salt without savor.

**“They have become filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, greed and depravity. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit and malice. They are gossips, slanderers, God-haters, insolent, arrogant and boastful; they invent ways of doing evil; they disobey their parents; they are senseless, faithless, heartless, ruthless.” Romans 1:29-31**

No wonder then that seeing such behavior within the church, those without God glibly continue their practices and readily entice the weak and spiritually immature from the ranks of Christendom. The Apostle's

observations of men in general are not meant to imply that every man is openly rebellious and thoroughly immoral. But, he finds himself surrounded by such behavior and does not have to look far for examples of dedication to a lifestyle in complete opposition to Godly principles. There are those who are the “habitual doers, ‘**those who practice**’” and those who “occasionally participate, ‘**continue to do**’,” then stand and applaud their approval. Both are deserving of death (spiritual condemnation).

**“...Underlying all the corruption into which man has fallen is the terrible fact that he has given up God... and he can only be put right by being recovered to the knowledge of God...”**  
--C.A. Coates

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

How easy it is to look closely at the life of unbelievers lived without the constraints placed by the Holy Spirit on the actions of believers, and become critical and judgmental. What a small step of pride to assume the attitude **“God, I thank You that I am not as other men are”** (Luke 18:11). But, there is a closer self-examination called for by the Spirit and through the Apostle.

## **Human Guilt is Universal. An Appeal to the Conscience 2:1-16**

Paul delivers this scathing pronouncement of guilt to believers in general, as they are expected to be the recipients and readers of this letter. However, the universal guilt of those who judge obviously applies to all sinners, whether Jew or Gentile. More specifically, this is a message regarding the unbelieving Jew in Rome. Because all men have a conscience on which the testimony of creation has impinged, all are equally guilty. But the Jew displaying a harsh judgmental attitude towards others, and at the same time attempting to hold to principles of the Law, is due specific comment....

**“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.” Romans 2:1**

Now watch the next statement of the apostle develop. (1) The Father's judgment of those who practice unrighteousness is based on **“truth.”** (2) We know, on the basis of John's Gospel account that Jesus declared Himself to be **TRUTH**<sup>29</sup> as He presented Himself to Israel as their Messiah. (3) We can conclude with assurance that the standard against which Gentile and Jew alike will be judged is the life and character of the Son of God, Jesus Christ. Therefore--By using the term **“mere man,”** any hint of superiority before God is erased for these self-righteous ones.

**“I am the way, the TRUTH, and the life. No man comes to the Father except by me.”**  
John 14:6

**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? Romans 2:2,3**

It is a cardinal mistake of Christians to think of **“kindness”** only in terms of gentleness and patient enduring. Those are human expressions that conform to our expectations. Kindness must of necessity always work to the good of its object, otherwise it is a cruel ruse and inconsistent with truth. God's kindness towards us must sometimes come in the form of discipline, even the stern reprimand of a father. It is action He takes to preclude our doing greater harm to ourselves and/or the Body of Christ than we would without some form of constraint. His **“kindness”** then, is designed to work **“repentance”** in us. His hand may be heavy, but always loving; always with **“patience.”**

Here is yet another aspect in the equation of God's judgment on mankind--His wrath and judgment are pointed at those persons whose lives are based on anything other than truth. As fact, we all deserve His judgment. But, in His **“kindness”** He elects some to salvation from His wrath. Whoever is not joined to His Son is by that very fact an object of His judgment and wrath. Whatever you may choose to call yourself is beside the point. Wear the label of Jew, Hindu, Christian, Buddhist, Taoist, Atheist or any denomination known to man and it makes not the slightest difference. The only determining factor is truth. It was Jesus Christ who said, “I am the way, the **truth** and the life. No man comes to the Father except by Me.” To be saved is to

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<sup>29</sup> John 14: 6

accept His “kind” claim on your life, soul and spirit.

To **live as one redeemed** is to emulate Christ in His own relationship to the Father and have His resurrected life lived through you. It is not to imitate His life on Earth, but His life in Heaven. In contrast, if you exhibit in your life the things associated with men known to be antagonistic to Christ, who is the **truth**, and in opposition to the things of God revealed by Christ during His life on earth, then you must conclude that you are identified with them and not with the Father. Lip service notwithstanding, the evidence of your lifestyle and individual choices indicates that you are one of those under the judgment of God. There is no sanctuary in belonging to an earthly church organization--There is no refuge from His corrective temporal judgment in sincerity of purpose--There is no respite from being pursued by the Hound of Heaven to be found in acts of human kindness and philanthropy. If you reject God's revelation and choose the means of man's genius as the basis of your daily living, then you reject repentance and He will abandon you to your own personally elected paths. This was the course the spiritual leadership of Israel in Jerusalem and Rome had taken. This is also a very favored course for intellectual men and women to follow today.

**Or do you show contempt for the riches of his kindness, tolerance and patience, not realizing that God's kindness leads you toward repentance?**

**Romans 2:4**

The warning is clear. “...because of” *kata*, is “according to, along side, true to”; “**True to your stubbornness and unrepentant heart, you are hoarding for yourself a wrath...**” If you reject the Gospel, there is a time appointed for discrimination by God according to perfect righteousness and the standard of absolute truth. It will not matter that you did what you “thought<sup>30</sup> was the best thing at the time”. It will only matter that what you did was consistent with the life of Christ. God's “**righteous judgment**” will be meted out to each person “according to” *kata* true to his actions. It is the message from the flip side of the Gospel to agnostics and others today who are depending on their human goodness for securing a standing with God and this message constitutes both a warning and an appeal. The Gospel is an appeal to man directly from the Father through His delegates, the apostles and now the Church. The message to those who reject the Gospel is a clear warning of judgment.

For the believer, there is special meaning in the promise to “**...give to each person according to what he has done**”, for the believer claims no work but the work of another, the Lord Jesus. So there is no place for the believer in this scene. For the work of the Lord Jesus, the believer is rewarded at the Bema Seat, the place of honor and acceptance before the Father. Quite a different scene than the Great White Throne of Judgment for all who are not “in Christ.”

**But because of your stubbornness and your unrepentant heart, you are storing up wrath against yourself for the day of God's wrath, when his righteous judgment will be revealed. God “will give to each person according to what he has done.”**

**Romans 2:5,6**

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rather than feelings.

## Heaven, the Place of Rewards

For people who reject the biblical Creator and choose their own plan of how the universe will operate, the problem remains one of trust. **Man does not trust God for rewards of his work!** “Leave it to God” they say “and you will end up with a place that's no fun at all.” Not knowing God or His character, they cannot get real comfortable with letting Him design the place they are supposed to occupy forever. So they opt for a place of their own design. Heaven often becomes an extension of the grand existence of “the force” which can continue to intervene in the affairs of the universe. Men hate to think that they must lose their power among men. Belief in reincarnation is one manifestation of this. Altered states-of-being is another New-Age approach to the same tired old position. The odd concept of the Saints as angelic interventionists is altogether embraced by many sincerely religious people. “Heaven” to this crowd, should always include enough of this world's characteristics that it should not be so strange a place, but it must be relieved of the hurtful elements encountered here now. Whatever makes a person happy as a man or woman today would be in abundance, while all testing, difficulty, pain or suffering would be removed. “Things” that make “life” pleasant must surely be available. What is this but moving earth into a heavenly position with a little cleaning and modification?

God obviously has something else, something completely different, in mind. Heaven is the eternal abode of man with God. It is of God's own unique design and while constructed to accommodate man in his redeemed state, it operates on rules quite different from earthly laws. First, God's domain is ruled according to His standard of absolute righteousness and His judgment is applied based upon His Omnipotence. Nothing that is not completely free of sin, self, or that, which is not spiritual in nature, is eliminated. Man as man is precluded--man as Christ is freely admitted. It is only by being joined to Christ that we are acceptable to the Father and admitted to Heaven. Second, time has been eliminated. It is eternally the present with God. Third, space loses its constraints. Since we are light, as God is light, the dimensional aspects of space are dramatically altered.

## The Way to Earn Heaven or Condemnation

Here is what the Apostle says a man must do in order to *earn* eternal life; he must “**seek glory, honor and immortality**” and “**persist**” throughout his life in “**doing good.**” If this is done, then eternal life is his reward. But to those who seek their own personal gain, “**who reject the truth, who follow evil**”—for them there will be only the anger of God and His wrath. This is the response of a righteous God to anything that is unrighteous. It is not anger pouring out of a vengeful attitude, but rejection of evil that comes out of His very character. The inescapable conclusion is that there will be great trouble and distress imposed by God on everyone who is engaged in evil practices because He totally rejects evil, whether present in Jew or Gentile.

For the first time in this passage, Paul has implicated the Jew at whom this message is aimed. The historical position of the Jew is recognized, (1) as the source through which redemption had come and (2) as the human line through which the Son of God would come in the flesh. Theirs is a very special and permanent place before God, though with many restrictions and demands.

The faithful Jew who exhibited “**persistence**” in his/her search for glory would be drawn to the Cross and Christ. He would see the presentation of Messiah, understand the rejection, and accept the resurrected Lord. The unfaithful would turn, at some point, to their “**self-seeking**” way and “**reject the truth**”, as had most of Israel. Caught up in the beautiful, but empty, ceremonies of the Temple, Israelites clung to the traditions of their religious leaders rather than the substance of the Scriptures entrusted to them. Because they had knowledge, theirs was the greater responsibility to preserve the truth and take it into themselves when found. “**Wrath and anger**” are universally reserved for those who do “**evil**”, who reject the Gospel.

**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; Romans 2:7-9**

“**Doing good**” is not a summary statement regarding the quality of any man's actions. It is directed at the quality of the act before God, not the act compared with the act of any other men. There is only one good act before God--Christ performed it and we are privileged to participate in it by accepting it as an action taken on our personal behalf. That one definitive, unique, and singular act of selfless giving of Himself for all others stands as the only act of man that remains within the vision of a righteous God. All other acts of man that do not measure up to the purity of this one act are removed and forgotten. Therefore, to be one “**who does good**” is to be an individual who is sealed to Christ and thus identified with His act.

**but glory, honor and peace for everyone who does good: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile. For God does not show favoritism. Romans 2:10,11**

#### Sin and Judgment and Law

It is possible to breach God's nature and requirement other than in the actions spelled out in the Law. That is the subject of Chapter one. God testified to his eternal power and Godhead through the organization of visible creation. Should a man reject Him in light of what he sees in the world around him, then he is judged on the basis of that rejection and his decision to stand apart from God is validated.

**“WITH KNOWLEDGE, COMES RESPONSIBILITY”**

Under the Law, however, the breach of God's requirement is spelled out in detail. One who knows that Law and its dictates (the Jew) will be judged by that standard. The principle here is, *with knowledge comes responsibility*. This axiom is certainly pertinent to the believer today. Where God gives information and reveals Himself, we are responsible for our response. It is the sense in which we are to apply the instructions to confess our sins.<sup>31</sup> As we deal with “**confess**” those sins of which we are aware, we must keep in mind that He has removed all penalty and judgment. Our responsibility is to leave at the Cross those things which the Spirit in

<sup>31</sup> 1 John 1:9 “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and cleanse us from all unrighteousness”

residence brings before us. As the light of His life shines on those things inconsistent with His character, we are to come to fresh appreciation for the sweep of His grace in providing us the highest possible standard of life through union with Him.

**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. Romans 2:12**

“**Those who hear the law**” included all of Israel plus all others who saw or participated in their celebrations or observances. However, it did not make one righteous to simply gain exposure to God’s Law. It was not enough to “hear” the law taught; obedience was the required response. What was true for Israel, to whom the Law was given, is certainly truer today for mankind in general and Christendom specifically. Living diligently according to the dictates of one’s own conscience or “Going to church” will by no means confer righteousness and/or a right standing before God any more than attempts to “**obey the law**” would bring righteousness to the Jew. What the Law demanded was perfect execution of all of its statutes. It is especially important for Christians today to realize that participating in the celebrations, services, rites and/or ministry of any group will not gain individual acceptance or standing before a righteous God. It did not for Israel at any point in their history as God’s “Most Favored Nation”. It will not for the Believer today. If you entertain the notion that the way to God’s favor is through observance of any rule or rite, then you have recreated the law whose purpose was to condemn and reveal sin. *Perfect obedience of a perfect standard* is required to satisfy God and gain His approval if it is to be done on the basis of your work and effort. Consider carefully that Jesus Christ is the only human to ever live who was qualified by *His life* to satisfy those lofty demands. He was the one who obeyed and was declared righteous by the Father and “in Him” we find freedom from condemnation.

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

For example, Paul says, the Gentiles **do not have the law** imposed on them. Yet, when they **do [by nature] those things required by the law**, that inner motivation becomes the standard to which they hold themselves accountable. Their first judge is from within, their own consciences. With their own consciences they make determinations as to what is right or wrong according to the Law as they understand it. At that point another principle of God’s judgment then applies—*Whatsoever is not of faith, is sin*. If there is doubt, then do not do it! This is an axiom that has been adopted by all men, in business or in personal circumstances.

**“WHATSOEVER IS NOT OF FAITH IS SIN!”**  
**Romans 14:23**

**(Indeed, when Gentiles, who do not have the law, do by nature things required by the law, they are a law for themselves, even though they do not have the law, since they show that the requirements of the law are written on their hearts, their consciences also bearing witness, and their thoughts now accusing, now even defending them.)**

**Romans 2:14,15**

Now, here is an interesting look into man and his motivations. First, he adopts a standard, a law of behavior. This is ok to do, or this is not ok. Then, he carries that standard into his daily activity and when he is met with a challenge, he applies that standard. Watch him consistently. It will not be very long until he meets the challenge one day, looks at the reward for breaking his rule and says; “I know it is the wrong thing to do, but I am going ahead anyway”. He becomes his own primary judge.

Here is another way of saying “**whatsoever is not of faith is sin**”...When any Person took to himself the law of Israel, or any other rule common among man, as his standard of behavior, then he was inwardly judged in accordance with that even though God did not impose it on him. That does not mean that man may choose his own standard of righteousness, for righteousness is an absolute attribute of God. But, it is apparently the nature and practice of man to exercise choices that are consistently defiant of the desires of God. Doing that, God's ultimate judgment is inevitable.

Here is another observation of man and his standards. Given free choice, man will construct a rule of life that involves only material and temporal elements. It may even be in conflict with the physical evidence that he/she sees in the world. No place is provided for spiritual values or intervention in the scheme of life. This personal set of principles sooner or later fails to satisfy spiritual needs that are intrinsic to man. This usually means that one whole dimension is lacking in his/her relationship with others, including God. At some point in his/her experience the adopted standard will usually collapse in the face of testing.

Look at the struggles of professional men and women around you, those who are functioning as successful members of society, as they come to grips with the world as it is. Each discipline attempts to derive meaning from life by applying their experience in a search for purpose and nobility in man. No one would claim to be happy defining humanity in terms that describe the violent, hostile, gluttonous and power hungry among us. President Bush calls our attention to the “kinder, gentler” elements among us. Pastors call for us to be more “forgiving”. Newspaper editorials beg us to be more “accepting” of our differences. Charities ask us to be more “giving”. It is disturbing to find that in most of us there are base tendencies under the surface of our social facades. God's assessment is that “**There is none righteousness, no not one**” or, “**The heart [mind] is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked, who can know it**”. It takes Biblical Christianity to identify man as he really is and to describe man as he could be.

As regards man's intentions, we might make these observations:

- \* The ecologist lives to do no harm to nature, but his world is in trouble, deteriorating before his eyes.
- \* The humanist lives to cause no physical or mental hurt to man. But, like Dr. Benjamin Spock, the most avidly followed doctrines of passivism are yielding the least disciplined and most self-indulgent generation.
- \* The economist lives to see world systems operate more efficiently. Yet world banking and business is literally imploding as immoral managers loot and plunder their institutions and the public.

- \* The moralist lives to do the “right” thing according to his own conscience. But society finds that more and more constraints are necessarily placed on the majority to prevent their following personal courses at the expense of minorities.
- \* The socialist strives to see the majority served at the expense of no one. But the work ethic of populations in socialist states strikes down productivity and shoddy products barely trickle into unsatisfied, starving markets.
- \* The communist used to believe that everyone could be managed by the state to the benefit of all. They have found instead, that no one cares without personal reward for initiative, even about supplying basics.
- \* The capitalist believes that self-interest will motivate people to act in accordance with their highest ideals and production capacity, only to find that jealousy whipped by political opportunists causes work-stopping interruptions as everyone pushes for advantage over their peers.

By choosing any of these as a rule of life, it is possible under the economy of grace for any person to take on a standard of law. What a disappointment is in store when you find that you are judged and found guilty by that very chosen yardstick, because the standard itself must be held to an absolute criteria of measurement. God will take the standard you freely choose as an alternative to grace, define it in absolute terms, and then measure your life alongside that definition. Take telling the truth, for example-- We tend to measure the seriousness of the lie by the results that are obtained. The “white” lie is not as vicious as the deliberate slander. With God there is no such variation. Did you take a small amount of money? Well, that is a misdemeanor. A large amount? Well, that is a felony. With God, it is all theft!

It will be immeasurably disappointing to many to find that God does not grade on a curve. Try as we might, it is not possible to develop a system of rules based on a situational ethic so simple that it can be satisfied in terms of absolute truth. The only way out of judgment for any person is to rest solely on the price for forgiveness having been paid by Jesus Christ. Whatever the rule you have chosen, if it is expressed in absolute terms the sum total is **TRUTH!** The definition therefore is the life of the Lord Jesus who is **TRUTH!**

There is a specific time appointed when God will judge the secrets of all men according to the life of Jesus Christ. For the believer, it is at the Bema Seat of Christ that point in God's plan when He rewards believers for righteous acts during their lifetime. It is my personal belief that there will not be a single act of which a believer is aware that will survive the test of selflessness and complete abandonment to the Grace of God. It is inconceivable to me that one knowing of such an act would not find his/her mind stirred in self-admiration of such a deed. Any possible merit would be buried in the wave of pride that rolls across the inner man like a towering breaker on Hawaii's north shore. However, we will be utterly amazed at the instances where Christ in us was displayed before a lost and dying world and He brought others to Himself through our lives. These things are worthy of reward--His acts on behalf of His Father, performed in us, for which we receive rewards. I can think of no other expression so solely based on His Grace and absent any hint of endeavor or merit on the part of man.

**This will take place on the day when God will judge men's secrets through Jesus Christ, as my gospel declares.**

**Romans 2:16**

**Section Two-Chapter 2:17-3:20**  
**The Condition of the Jew--Accused by the Law**

Introduction to Section Two:

In this section, the Jew is brought face-to-face with the Law and measured by its true content. That Law did not bring righteousness, but judgment. If it were possible for one to meet all of its demands, then that one would earn a place with God. But, such was not possible. Therefore, the Law brought failure and the need for a redeemer. The Redeemer's qualifications were carefully spelled out in that Law and the sum of them all equaled perfection. Perfection was demanded in satisfying each and every small principle that made up a part of the whole Law. It was the Law itself that became the accuser of the Israelite, not God.

The experience of Israel with God provided them with enough information about His willingness to forgive them and bless them. They had full knowledge of His mercy and love for His elect nation. Instead of that bringing humility, it brought arrogance, self-sufficiency and bitterness.

## The Jews Knowledge of God and Guilt 2:17-24

Remember that Paul is writing to Christians in Rome. These are people who should be identifying themselves as being “of Christ” in all of His fullness. But, some even here in Rome are still identifying themselves as Jews--Redeemed perhaps, but Jews in every respect. “**If**” is the fulfilled condition “**assuming.**” “**Called**” is “**to be named.**” “**Jew**” is the title denoting nationality. To them he says...

To call yourself a Jew is to assume the following:

1. That you name yourself a Jew, not a Christian.
2. That you rest, lean, or depend on the Law of Israel as a guide to behavior and worship.
3. That you are proud of your relationship to God.
4. That you understand things that differ and approve of the will of God as expressed in the Law.
5. That you take the position of leader and teacher in spiritual matters and issues of knowledge and truth as revealed in the Law.

“**Convinced**” is “**to persuade yourself**”--You have come to the settled conclusion that you are a guide for the blind and nothing can change your self-view. This speaks of conceit and arrogance.

**Now you, if you call yourself a Jew; if you rely on the law and brag about your relationship to God; if you know his will and approve of what is superior because you are instructed by the law; if you are convinced that you are a guide for the blind, a light for those who 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-- Romans 2:17-20**

To those who use the Law as a standard of life, Paul asks a series of questions. These questions are to draw their attention to the fact that they continually and repeatedly break that Law. The Law practiced by the Jew of that day included those variances defined by the Rabbis and Pharisees from the Talmud and other writings. These were perversions of the Law given by God to Moses on Sinai. Even so, it was the contemporary standard accepted by the Jew that was addressed by Paul in light of the Gospel. They could not offer a victorious life to others around them and live in defeat by the same standard. That dishonors the God that they purport to serve.

Today, as then, to live according to the Law rightly applied is to live in anticipation of the prescribed sacrifice of the Law being offered. That is simply not going to happen. No one today teaches that there must be a material animal sacrifice for Sin. Yet, that is precisely what the Law required from Exodus through the Gospels. If we are to accept the sacrifice of Christ as the fulfillment of the requirements of the Law, then we must move onto the ground of forgiveness, the ground of Grace. That is our challenge and that was the challenge to the Jew then. After the Cross of Christ, there is no other sacrifice that could be made for Sin. There is only the reckoning of self to be already dead to Sin and therefore “**alive unto God.**”

**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.”<sup>32</sup> Romans 2:21-24**

Paul asserts that being a Jew (of “circumcision”) has value before a righteous God only to the extent that the Law is kept. Since the Jew was obligated to keep the Law, its demands identified the people chosen of God as His elect nation. Those, circumcised in obedience that kept the Law, were recognized as being of that elect nation. Those uncircumcised who kept the law were recognized as being identified with the God and precepts of Israel. Those who did not keep that Law were outside the nation and apart from the promises God made to Israel. The issue, says Paul, is obedience, not merely the trappings of identification associated with the traditions and ceremonial practices.

**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 though you have the written code and circumcision, are a lawbreaker. A man is not a Jew if he is only one outwardly, nor is circumcision merely outward and physical. Romans 2:25-28**

For those of us born after the ascension of Christ, and therefore never obligated to the Law of Israel, there is no value or merit to participating in the observance of Jewish celebrations and rites. Circumcision, a mark of separation unto God, is now an act of the Spirit performed on the inward mind of the individual. “**Let this mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus**”<sup>33</sup> was the admonition to the believers in Philippi. To the believers in Corinth, Paul reminds them that, “**we have the mind of Christ.**”<sup>34</sup> The written code of law, requiring actual circumcision of the foreskin, is now surpassed by the circumcision of the heart by the Spirit. Keep in mind that the word for heart [*kardia*] refers to the center of a man's thought processes and is more accurately translated “mind.” Our “**mind**” is to be brought under the control of the Spirit of God, having been “cut off” from the Old Sin Nature. That Old Nature is not dead, but we are dead to it--circumcised, as it were, from its power and influence.

**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. Romans 2:29**

First, a very human question is asked rhetorically by Paul--

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<sup>32</sup> Ezekiel 36: 20

<sup>33</sup> Philippians 2: 5

<sup>34</sup> 1 Corinthians 2: 16

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

It was for the benefit of the Jewish Christians in Rome that the question was asked. They need to come to grips with their new position in the Body of Christ and the changes that have been made in their earthly relationships to national Israel and to the promises made to Israel.

In reply, it is first recognized that to the Jew first came the Word of God. The disciples of Jesus were men of Israel. The 120 in the upper room were all Galileans. Yet, each of them had been faced with the requirement of personal faith in order to appropriate to themselves the Lamb of God. That some did not and turned away from the gospel of grace does not cancel out the faithfulness of the offer on God's part. Through Israel came the Lamb according to the written and verbal promises of God, and to Israel He was first presented.

**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 when you speak and prevail when you judge."**

**Romans 3:2-4**

A series of 4 rhetorical questions is offered here by Paul, in answer to the supposed arguments of the humanists among us.

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**Suggestion:** When dealing with children, it is good to demonstrate that God does not treat all men the same, but that He gives out of his storehouse according to his own sovereignty. His "fairness" dictates different things for different people. Avoid the tendency to always treat your children the same. Allow them to experience their sibling's special times and gifts, knowing that their own special times and gifts are unique. In attempting to "level out our love", we teach a principle contrary to the nature of God, and make it difficult for growing young people to understand why God gives some an easy road and some a very difficult one. It often is as simple as not giving them all a quarter all of the time. Or, not giving one a present on the other's birthday so he/she will not feel "left out". "Left out" of today's pleasure but not "out of your love" is a lesson that should be inculcated at the youngest possible age. It stabilizes the emotions and makes for healthy relationships that can enjoy the freedom to be unique.

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1. "But WAIT!" one says. "If my sinful condition is the means of magnifying God's righteousness, then isn't God being unfair in bringing his wrath upon us?"<sup>35</sup> The basic

<sup>35</sup> The "If, Then. . ." statement is so much better understood today as a computer programming step than it has been as a phrase in prose. It is recognized as the entrance into a logic phase. "If" a certain condition is observed or noted, "Then" a certain action should follow. The "If" acknowledges an existing uncertainty as to what is actually going to be found and is the foundation on which the step in reason is based. "Then" sets the boundaries and defines the action that will follow. The difficulty in applying this logic to God's assessment of anything is that it begins with an uncertainty, a starting point for all human reason. God's determinations, on the other hand, begin

error here is trying to measure fairness between God and man (un-equals) as one would measure fairness between men (equals). God judges on the basis of His absolute righteousness, man judges on the basis of his goodness relative to other men.

**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.) Romans 3:5**

2. "Hold on!" another says. "Doesn't our lie simply magnify his truthfulness by comparison and increase his glory?" The salesman understands this technique--Introduce related benefits (increase in God's Glory) in order to minimize the objection (judgment of our lies). Again, the error is a failure to comprehend the nature of God. God **is truth**. That can neither be diminished by our fidelity nor increased by our infidelity. Absolute truth is its own perfect standard and is unaffected by anything that happens in time, space and eternity. Our lie shows our utter sinfulness in greater light, rather than magnifying God's glory.
3. "Just a minute!" the argument continues. "If we are the means of His increased glory, then why are we condemned as sinners?" There is no understanding of the inherent Sin nature acquired as sons of Adam. These questions are proposed by one who still thinks that Sin is encased in the sins, which we commit. While the former (Sin) is the basis for judgment all to itself, the latter (sins) are subject to relative comparison with other men or women.

**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?" Romans 3:6**

4. "Why shouldn't we actually pursue those things that we know to be evil in order that God's goodness might be better made known?"

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

Among all men, Jew and Gentile included, can there be found a man, even one, who can claim eternal life on the basis of his diligent pursuit of righteousness? Is there a man to be found who searches for sanctified, holy solutions to the dilemmas of his own life and the circumstances of others? Is there even one person who has not turned to his own devices and genius to find satisfaction out of life? The Apostle Paul has already made the point that all men are under the curse of sin and confirm that fact by their own selfish actions with others.

**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: "There is no one righteous, not even one; there is no one who understands, no one who seeks**

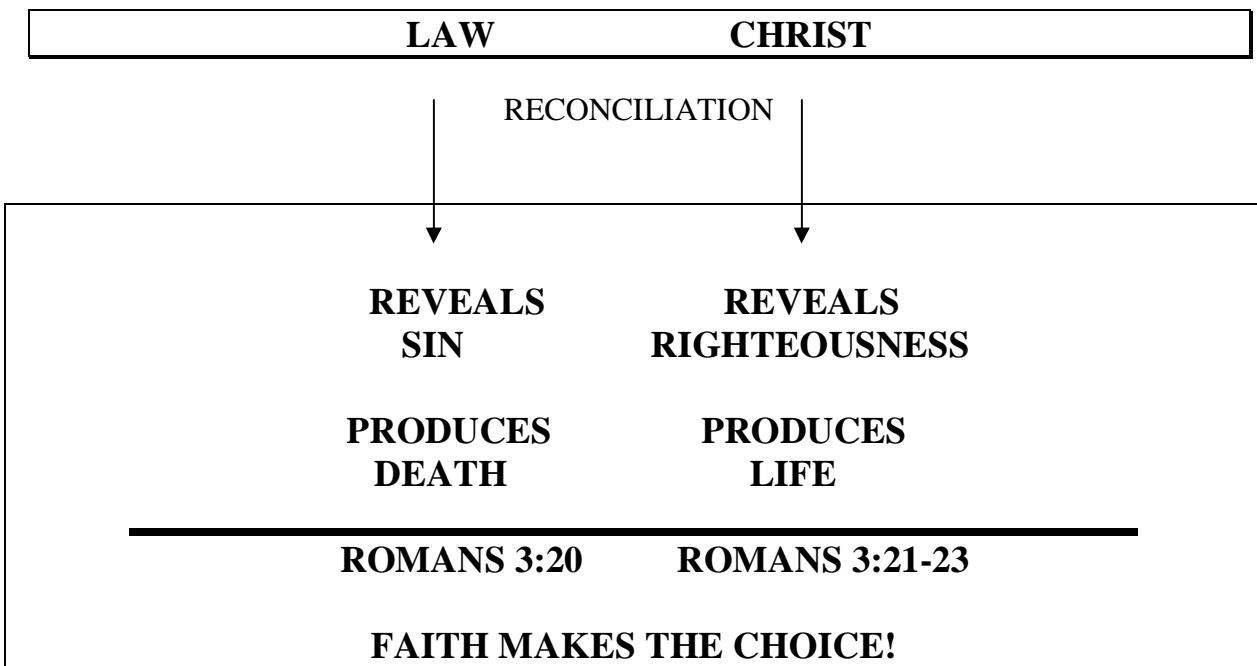
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with absolutes, the very essence of His character.

God. All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one.” “Their throats are open graves; their tongues practice deceit.” “The poison of vipers is on their lips.” “Their mouths are full of cursing and bitterness.” “Their feet are swift to shed blood; ruin and misery mark their ways, and the way of peace they do not know.” “There is no fear of God before their eyes.” Romans 3:9-18

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## Law and Grace, The Grand Difference

A most important challenge to believers today is to understand the true nature and purpose of the Mosaic Law and how it differs totally from the biblical principles of grace. If these two sets of principles are confused or mixed, then moral law suffers loss of its towering presentation of God's holiness and grace no longer offers all of its liberty. One essential difference is that law defines what man ought to be, while grace unveils what man is.

In the law, God defined what a man ought to be, and pronounced a curse upon him if he did not meet that standard. But, when any man would examine himself candidly in light of the demands of the law, he could see that very thing which the law condemned. What was true for the Jew under the Law would still be true for any man today who would dare to measure his life by that standard and walk according to its demands. There was no life provided in the law, there was only condemnation. Life and righteousness were the rewards of keeping it. But at the same time, spiritual life and God's righteousness were also the only means of keeping it. There the followers of the Law were, dead in trespasses and sins, without the means of keeping the law. Dead in sins, they could have no life; therefore it was not possible to do what the law required. Without righteousness, no man could be what the law demanded.

It is imperative that we see that **“the law entered that the offense might abound” (Romans 5:20)**. Its standards could not possibly be lowered, lest sin become less sinful or God's judgment and holiness less pure. This same principle is seen at work in today's judicial system. As the penalty for crime becomes less a certainty and less severe, the criminal's aspirations to hold himself to a higher level of social conduct is abandoned. In fact, the conscience of society as a whole is failing to motivate to a higher ethical standard.

### The Law Only Speaks to Those Under Its Rule

The Apostle is clear--law is only in effect over those who live under its rule. The Law of Israel was only applied to Israel in the flesh. Others might to put themselves under its dictates, and by so doing obligate themselves completely to its restrictions, rewards and punishments. But, it was imposed by God only on Israel, his earthly people. To the Galatians Paul warned, **“As many as are of the works of the law are under the curse.”**<sup>36</sup>

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

### The Law Identifies Sin

A most difficult concept for believers to grasp, in light of wide-spread teaching to the contrary in Christendom

**CHRIST = RIGHTEOUSNESS**  
**THE LAW = SIN & DEATH**

<sup>36</sup> Galatians 3: 10

today, is that the Law of Israel, specifically the 10 commandments, were not meant to measure a man's righteousness but his sinfulness. Natural man does not possess the capability of satisfying the demands of that law and thus was destined to failure. The Law, therefore, became the standard by which he was judged and condemned before a righteous God. The end of the Law was Sin revealed and judgment on that Sin, death.

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

Many would agree that the believer cannot get life from the law, but at the same time, they insist that the law is our rule of life. This is obviously a contradiction. If, as Paul told the Galatians, those who stand on the ground of the law are under the curse, then what is the basis of the regenerated man's claim to life? Is it possible to be regenerate and still under the curse? It cannot be!

The one who is regenerate, a new creation before God, is therefore no longer under the curse and released from the law. His choice is illustrated in the chart on page 35. By faith, the believer chooses step-by-step in his/her life to rest in peace with the Father on the ground of Grace rather than under any obligation of law. This choice of expressing our spiritual life is the natural result of regeneration.

The law does not address regeneration at all. It poses one simple question to man--Are you what you ought to be? Indeed, are you what you must be in order to enter a relationship with a righteous, holy God? It is impossible for the law to lower its requirements and will not accept one whit short of complete perfection by its disciple.

**SUBDIVISION THREE**  
**Chapter 3:21-5:11**  
**God Revealed in the Risen Christ**

Introduction to Subdivision Three:

This Subdivision devotes itself to *Justification and its effects*. In this third Subdivision we see that God reveals through the risen and ascended Christ all that He intends to show of Himself to man. It is not through Christ as God, the Second Person of the Trinity, that we see the Father, but through Jesus the perfect man in complete union with the Father. Through the incarnation, Christ brought into the world of man a complete declaration of who God is and of all the elements of His character. Through this, we can understand and deal with the decisions that we each face which are based on the demands of His character. Without Christ, we are left with seemingly cruel and harsh demands of righteousness, since there is no other representative of that standard within our cosmos. With the life of the Lord before us, we realize that it is possible to meet those demands, though it takes the power of God Himself to do it!

Now, it is not so unreasonable to consider those demands on our own lives when we can perceive our spiritual assets and depend on the Christ-life to flow from within, powered by the Holy Spirit in residence.

## **Section One-Chapter 3:21-31 Propitiation, One Way of Divine Acceptance**

Introduction to Section One:

In order to accomplish that melding of our limited capacities as humanity with His unlimited, altogether spiritual capacities, Christ came as the complete, perfect man, unencumbered by the old Adamic Nature and in perfect union with the Holy Spirit. By doing so, He was able, **as a man**, to satisfy all of the Father's demands made of Him **as man**. He was our substitute, our stand-in, and our corporate representative who faced the Law of God, met all of its requirements perfectly and then, in a final victorious act, gave Himself as the single satisfying sacrifice for sin forever on our behalf. He was our propitiation, the place where God was satisfied. Coming to Him is the distinctive requirement of man if he would enter into a relationship with the Father.

God being satisfied, He could now confer upon us the righteousness of His Son. The means of doing that was to take us in the world where we were found, and in the condition in which He found us, and place us into the Son, in union with Christ and with Himself.

## All Believers are the Same, Old Testament and New 3:21-26

In this great need for cleansing, all men who have ever lived are the same. In terms of salvation from the judgment that rightly falls on every man, all who have come to God have come into their right relationship with Him through the same means, *faith*. The only one who escaped from this world on the basis of His work was the Lord Jesus Christ. All others must come through His work, appropriated by faith.

### The Results of Faith

There is a difference, however, between believers in the age of Grace and those in other ages. The difference is in the results following their faith in God's redemption. For Israel, it meant personal and national deliverance from their oppressors, the presence of God in the Temple, Divine leadership in their lives and occupation of the Land promised to them. For the Church, it means personal union with the resurrected Lord and membership in the Godhead through marriage to (union with) the Son of God. The Church is the bride of Christ. Israel is the earthly company of God's people forever, based on faith. The Church is the heavenly people of God forever, based on faith.

### Righteousness Comes Through Christ Apart From the Law

First, we must recognize that Righteousness is disclosed apart from law—note carefully, that is not speaking of “the Law” as given to Moses, but *law* as a principle. That righteousness, which is the character of God, permeates creation—the tree of knowledge of good and evil, set apart from all others as fruit for mankind, spoke of a standard of being to which man could not attain on his own merit. Later, the gate and flaming sword guarding the way back into the Garden of Eden, spoke of separation from perfection, the very nature of righteousness. On the mount, Moses was told to take off his sandals, for the ground on which he approached the burning bush was “holy ground,” set apart before “the Law” was given.

When the Law was then given, it established in clear and unmistakable terms, that the righteousness of God demanded separation between Him and man—and, that it was for man's own protection that the separation was maintained, for unrighteous man would perish in the presence of God's perfect character. What the Law provided was a basis for guilt and condemnation, but no means of attaining righteousness, accessing mercy, or appropriating forgiveness, all prerequisites to any personal relationship with God. What it offered was symbols, types, of how this would be accomplished; but it remained for Paul's pointed references to the finished work of Christ to clearly define the means by which the righteousness of God is imputed to man on the basis of the accomplished plan of redemption on the Cross. This is what the “Law and the Prophets” did testify to in symbol and type throughout the Old Testament.

While the Law could not confer righteousness, there is a source from which righteousness recognized by and acceptable to God comes directly to man. It is a “**righteousness**” conferred upon man by God Himself that the Law never even addressed. There are a number of elements involved in our having been given the mantle and shield of righteousness. Some of them are listed here--

- \* The source of our righteousness is the Father.
- \* The deliverer of righteousness is the Lord Jesus.
- \* The basis of the gift of righteousness is God's elective love.
- \* The means by which righteousness is appropriated is faith.
- \* The conduit through which righteousness comes is grace.
- \* The result of our receiving righteousness is justification.
- \* The evidence of our acceptance as righteous by God is redemption.
- \* Our present status is reconciliation to a righteous God.
- \* Our present condition is sanctified unto God.

We are reminded here that this righteousness, which comes “**from God**” the Father to man through Christ, has not come unannounced. The Law (which thoroughly condemned by showing man his utter sinfulness) and the Prophets (who continually predicted the total failure of all mankind to meet even their *own* standards of piety, much less God's standard of holiness) both pointed the way to God's future solution (future to them, present to us) to their dilemma.

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

Though there has been a blessed nation of people since Israel was first identified with God, the Gospel that Paul declares makes clear that there is no longer any difference between people. The separating factor is not family or tribal membership, but “**faith in Jesus Christ**”. And righteousness is conferred “**to all who believe**”. Israel failed under the Law. The Gentile nations failed without the Law; but there is a body being revealed, who “**through faith in Jesus Christ**” have finally attained the righteousness of God and a personal relationship to Him.

**This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, Romans 3:22, 23**

Because we are now righteousness before the Father (being infused totally in the righteousness of the Lord Jesus) we are seen as “just,” we are “**justified**.” It is not that the old, sinful self that we were is simply covered with a veneer of righteousness. It is *union* with the Divine Person of Christ. We have been substantively changed as we moved from the earthly ground of condemnation onto the heavenly ground of grace and peace. The very substance of our being is now different. The evidence of that new standing which we enjoy with the Father is the scarred body of the Lord Jesus which was the price paid for our “**redemption**.” When Jesus the man went to the cross, His very body was presented by God the Father, on the altar of the Earth, as “**a sacrifice of atonement**.” There was a price to be paid for sin in order to break its hold of bondage on mankind. The payment fully satisfied the demands of the Law and of the Father's character.

**and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. God presented him as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in his blood. He did this to demonstrate his justice, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished-- Romans 3:24,25**

What was a mystery in the past is now clearly demonstrated for the benefit of all--The just nature of the Father has been satisfied and those who have faith in the efficacy of the payment, the sacrifice of Christ, are now in right standing with God.

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

## **Justification of All by Faith, Not Law 3:27-31**

There is a general understanding among Christians that justification has always been solely on the basis of faith and absent any work, excepting the Catholic Church's positions. The issue does get clouded when or if the Law is held as a rule of life for the believer today. Where it was the rule of life for the faithful of Israel, it did not justify, but condemned. Coming to the Law, the faithful found that keeping it was impossible. Some breach was always present, leading to the prescribed penalties. The solution was faith that God would accept the substitute, the sacrifice. The offering of the sacrifice was evidence of the faith of the faithful.

Is there any meritorious act on the part of man in all of this? None whatsoever. Man did not win a position before God on the part of his observance of any principle, nor on the basis of keeping the Law. The means of appropriation is "**faith**," simply trusting Christ to have made full payment and then accepting the free gift of God.

**Where, then, is boasting? 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. Romans 3:27,28**

### **One God Over All**

The matter is laid to rest--there is only one access to the one God, faith! Faith is the means for Jew and Gentile alike to come to God. There, the faith of the Lord Jesus is applied to us in order that we might be justified before the Father. What the Law could never do, the Son now has done. It is left to man to accept that or reject it.

**Is God the God of Jews only? Is he not the God of Gentiles too? Yes, of Gentiles too, since there is only one God, who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through that same faith. Romans 3:29,30**

To nullify is to declare that the law was never rightly imposed. This is not the case. From its inception until its required payment was fully made by the death of Christ, the Law rightfully ruled over the progress of man towards a righteous God. It was the vehicle which kept Israel, and through Israel all men, centered on the truths of God's character and man's failure to meet the standards of divine nature. It established boundaries for behavior that told men when they had strayed from truth and into sin. Until something replaced it, the Law was man's guide and teacher.

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

**Section Two-Chapter 4:1-12**  
**Witness of the Old Testament to Justification by Faith**

Introduction to Section Two:

Chapter Four deals with the righteousness of faith. It is that righteousness which becomes the property of the believer as a gift from God. There is no pattern of this in the law, but prior to the Law in Abraham. So Paul goes back to that patriarch to frame his next rhetorical question. What about father Abraham? Was he not justified by works?

## **Abraham Justified by Faith 4:1-5**

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

The answer is crisp and to the point; If Abraham was justified by works, then he would have something to be proud of. But, he did not. The basis of Abraham's justification and reception of the gift of righteousness was **FAITH!**--Abraham **believed** God, and righteousness was conferred upon him. "**Credited**" is an accounting term--Righteousness was added to his account on the books of heaven.

**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." Romans 4:2,3**

The free gift is contrasted here with one who works for wages. His wages are paid as an obligation of his employer. The view of the believer is of one who does not work for an employer, but lives trusting God for provision and direction. That faith that centers a person in the Lord Jesus garners righteousness, not out of obligation but out of the love and mercy of God.

**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. Romans 4:4,5**

## **David Justified by Faith 4:6-8**

Another Old Testament example of righteousness given apart from works on the part of man is David's account.

**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 transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man whose sin the Lord will never count against him." Romans 4:6-8**

## **Circumcision, the Sign of the Covenant 4:9-12**

Abraham is an Old Testament pattern of the believer in many respects. First, he received blessing from God on the basis of his faith alone. That blessing, the righteousness of God, was given to him prior to the mark of separation unto God. In the same manner, the believer is declared righteous before the Father and is justified. The mark of circumcision is the seal of God's acceptance for Abraham. This corresponds to the indwelling Holy Spirit in the believer. In Abraham, all who exercise faith in the word of God can be seen as recipients of grace.

**Is this blessedness only for the circumcised, or also for the uncircumcised?  
We have been saying that Abraham's faith was credited to him as  
righteousness. Under what circumstances was it credited? Was it after he  
was circumcised, or before? It was not after, but before! And he received the  
sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness that he had by faith while he  
was still uncircumcised. So then, he is the father of all who believe but have  
not been circumcised, in order that righteousness might be credited to them.  
And he is also the father of the circumcised who not only are circumcised but  
who also walk in the footsteps of the faith that our father Abraham had  
before he was circumcised.**

**Romans 4:9-12**

### Section Three-Chapter 4:13-25

#### The Resurrected Lord, the Object of Faith

#### Introduction to Section Three

In this section we see the humanity of Christ as Abraham's descendant, the fulfillment of God's promise. It is important for us to understand that it is the man Jesus, this man who is Abraham's heir, who is now at the right hand of the Father. It was the man, Jesus of Nazareth, who, bled, died, and is not alive, being brought through death, in order to satisfy the righteous demands of His Father. It is that man, Jesus, who accomplished for us what we cannot accomplish, in order that we might be made one-with (reconciled to) God the Father. It diminishes our sense of awe and human appreciation of the work of the Son, whenever we relegate his work and sacrifice to His divine person. It brings Him near in our experience with life and our reach for faith to reconsider Him anew as man. It might be a small thing for God, all-powerful, all-knowing, and ever-present, to stoop to condescend to man and provide a safe haven. It is quite another to consider that Jesus, a man like we are men, subject to cold, heat, hunger, fatigue, pain, sorrow, profound sadness, joy, extreme disappointment, and boundless love, that this man would lay down his life, endure the pain of crucifixion, make himself a reviled man among men and become sin--not just do something sinful, but become everything that sin is--in order that we might be rendered acceptable to the Father.

Now--Lets talk about just what it is that we are going to give up in order to impress God with our sincerity and gain His favor. Every thing is measured by the standard of righteousness, His Son. Gave money did you? Well, how much is enough to pay for the suffering of Christ as He hung there between heaven and hell for you. Dedicated your Sundays to God, you say. The entire life of the Lord Jesus was a Sabbath. Every minute dedicated to your personal redemption. Adopted a baby who had been abandoned? Did He not take us all to Himself without merit or qualification on our part? You see it is not the events of our life that He wants. **It is our life!** All of it. Just like it comes. Then, once He has it He exchanges it for His own and fills your experience with His relationship to the Father.

## God's Promise, by Grace, Through Faith, to the Seed 4:13-17

Abraham's offspring include all those who live by faith and receive righteousness in return. In this heir-ship, believers identify with the Lord Jesus, who in turn identified with Abraham as that one's perfect seed. It is, after all, the faith of Jesus in his Father's promise that is the wellspring of our life. It is the faith of Christ that is the very first gift of God to the elect in the package of salvation. The value of faith is that it comes from the very mind of Christ. It is not something that originates in the mind of man, but that, which comes from the mind and will of the second Adam. We are not called on to duplicate Christ's work in satisfying the Law, but to receive his faith in the Father's promise.

**It was not through law that Abraham and his offspring received the promise that he would be heir of the world, but through the righteousness that comes by faith. For if those who live by law are heirs, faith has no value and the promise is worthless,**  
**Romans 4:13,14**

It is easy to see what the Law did to Christ. That perfect One became the sinless sacrifice that finally and completely satisfied the demands of Law. Those demands were harsh and unyielding, displaying the Father's attitude, his wrath towards the sin of any transgression of his standards.

**because law brings wrath. And where there is no law there is no transgression.**  
**Romans 4:15**

If the law brings only wrath and not promise, on what grounds is the promise given? By faith. It is only when the promise of God can be given free of obligation that grace enters. So Abraham received the promise of God out of grace and on the basis of faith, not keeping of law, which had not yet been given of God. Because the promise is of faith, it is guaranteed to all who are children of faith, Abraham's spiritual offspring.

**Therefore, the promise comes by faith, so that it may be by grace and may be guaranteed to all Abraham's offspring--not only to those who are of the law but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham. He is the father of us all. As it is written: "I have made you a father of many nations." He is our father in the sight of God, in whom he believed--the God who gives life to the dead and calls things that are not as though they were. Romans 4:16,17**

## Faith, Where There is No Hope 4:18-22

Abraham had no human reason to believe that he would produce a son. His body was beyond any reasonable hope that it could happen, much less with Sarah, now approaching 100 years old. Sarah had apparently stopped menstruating some time before all this. **“Yet he did not waver through unbelief regarding the promise of God.”**

If you want a hero to follow in your Christian life, choose Abraham. Abraham was **“fully persuaded that God had power to do what he promised.”** Because of that persuasion and faith, Abraham had **“righteousness”** credited to his account with God.

**Against all hope, Abraham in hope believed and so became the father of many nations, just as it had been said to him, “So shall your offspring be.” Without weakening in his faith, he faced the fact that his body was as good as dead--since he was about a hundred years old--and that Sarah's womb was also dead. Yet he did not waver through unbelief regarding the promise of God, but was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God, being fully persuaded that God had power to do what he had promised. This is why “it was credited to him as righteousness.” Romans 4:18-22**

## **The Principle of Faith in the Father for Believers 4:23-25**

What happened to Abraham is very important to us. After the pattern of his faith, we who believe in God the Father, who raised Jesus, our Lord from the grave and death, we too have righteousness credited to our account. He took our sin upon himself, becoming sin, in order that we might receive his righteousness and stand as just before the Father. For us to stand before the Father, it was necessary for Jesus to break the bonds of death and stand in resurrected life before God. In Him we share his new life. Without his having risen, we would have no life in which to stand. Therefore, we are justified through his life and are freed from sin through his death.

**"He who knew no sin, was made to be sin for us, in order that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him."**  
**2 Corinthians 5:21**

**The words "it was credited to him" were written not for him alone, but also for us, to whom God will credit righteousness--for us who believe in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead. He was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification. Romans 4:23-25**

## **Section Four-Chapter 5:1-11**

### **The Believer's Experience**

Introduction to Section Four:

This being the fourth section, our attention is drawn to earth, for four is the number associated with earthly things. Though we are talking about heavenly assets, it refers to that category of heavenly things utilized and true of the believer who is still on earth, things that are interwoven into the believer's experience with God in this cosmos.

## **Peace With God on the Ground of Grace 5:1, 2**

Of primary interest is our relationship with our heavenly Father during our life here on Earth. As man, we can see the devastating effects that sin has had among us. There is evidence of destruction of material things, physical things, and spiritual things. Korea, Vietnam, Lebanon, Somalia, Saudi Arabia, Bosnia, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and now Iraq, have all taken a horrendous toll in material destruction and loss of lives. AIDS, cardiovascular disease, tuberculosis, herpes, hepatitis; (anecdotal evidence to the contrary), are all primary results of indiscriminate life styles.

There are also clear statements of God's dealing with that out of His perfect judgment and wrath. What are the residual effects, if any, that the believer should expect to encounter? The first item in our list of assets given to us by God, is that we hold a position of peace with the Father. Standing on Grace, there is no animosity from the Father directed at those of us who are "in Christ." We can experience the normal negative results associated with a common human dilemma. Christians are not promised a "free ride" with protection from the results of disobedience to God's standards of righteousness.

### **At Peace With The Father**

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**"When anyone, through grace, receives the Saviour, in the Divine efficacy of His accomplished work on the Cross, he is introduced into a position in which the Father can address him as to his conduct. He becomes the subject of loving parental care and child training. But, then he must be careful not to confound the question of his walk with the ground of his perfect, profound peace in the presence of his Father. The more we realize the truth that everything has been accomplished on the Cross, for the perfect establishment of our peace in connection with the holiness of God, the more we shall see how futile is every thought about ourselves. A question as to the believer's peace is, in reality, a question as to the accomplished work of the Lord Jesus Christ. If you touch one, you touch the other, for "Christ is our peace." Our Father's estimate of Him and of us in Him is the same--"Ye are complete in Him, who is the head of all principality and power." "As He is, so are we in this world." C. H. Mackintosh**

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**Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus 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. Romans 5:1,2**

## We Were Loved of God Prior to Our Salvation 5:3-9

The second item involves both (1) a strengthening addition to our life and (2) conflict. We who were antagonistic towards God and in conflict with His righteous standards have been made whole through His love for us, even while we were yet His enemies. The means of our peace were secured by the Lord Jesus, "before the foundation of the World." The ground of Grace was made available to us from the moment faith was operative towards the Father. The strength of addition comes in through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit after the pattern shown in the upper room on Pentecost.

Many believers cannot distinguish between issues of peace with God and fellowship in the power of the Spirit within us. Looking at difficulties faced, they begin to question their relationship to the Father, to doubt the very ground of peace on which they stand. This is done at the expense of the glory of the Lord Jesus, which should be the object of our daily living. If we live in doubt, where is faith? As with Abraham, we are going to be asked to trust Him to perform that which is impossible to us, in order to draw from us the faith that can only come from the Spirit's inner ministry.

**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. Romans 5:3-5**

Scripture is clear, Christ died for *all* the ungodly. That includes every person who has ever been infused with life. Man is not condemned because he bears the guilt of inherited sin from Adam, not even because of things, which he has committed during his life. Man is condemned because he rejects the payment on his behalf made by the only sinless, perfect man, Jesus Christ. Rejecting Christ, man is left to face a holy, righteous God with only that which he can gather to exchange for condemnation. At a time when we were powerless to do anything about our lost condition, Christ gave himself for each of us personally.

**You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. Romans 5:6**

Consider the magnitude of that sacrifice by Christ. Would you willingly die for a righteous man? Rarely! Would you willingly suffer death for a man who is basically a good person? Doubtfully! It is inconceivable that we would give our life for one who is thoroughly our enemy. That is not even offered for consideration when we think of resolving our conflicts as men.

'Tis everlasting peace,  
sure as Jehovah's name;  
'Tis stable as His steadfast throne  
Forevermore the same.

My love is oft times low,  
My joy still ebbs and flows,  
But peace with Him remains the same  
No change Jehovah knows.

I change: He changes not,  
My Christ can never die:  
This blood-sealed friendship changes not,  
His truth, not mine, the tie.

In contrast, Christ died for us “**while we were still sinners**,” not just being bad, but totally in opposition to Him.

**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. Romans 5:7, 8**

It does not give us comfort to be told that we who love God and are called His people have no sin in us. We have only to look at our daily walk to see our struggle with sin and the flesh. But, isn’t it an immense joy to know that the Father does not see our sin? By His grace, He wipes our sin out with the blood of His Son and we are at peace with Him. Justified by Christ’s death, we are delivered from the Father’s wrath by the Son’s life and death.

**Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him! Romans 5:9**

## Reconciliation and Joy 5:10, 11

Having removed every element of separation between God and mankind by His death, Christ made possible our reconciliation with the Father. Through the cross, He brought us into a state superior to that of the first Adam, peace. Our sense of personal peace with God is the door through which we enter into the resurrection life of the Son on a daily basis.

The comments of C. H. Mackintosh ring as true today as in the time they were penned by him (the latter 1800's)—“If ever there was a moment in which it was important to set forth the great foundation truths of Christianity, it is now. The enemy is seeking by every means in his power to loosen the foundations of our faith—to weaken the authority of Holy Scripture over the heart and conscience—to introduce, in the most specious and fascinating forms, deadly error to draw away the soul from Christ and His Word” *Short Papers*.

This passage (Romans 5:6-10) is one of the fullest and most comprehensive statements of a foundational doctrine that can be found in the Word of God. In this single set of verses, the Apostle Paul identifies four conditions of the unconverted man—he is (1) “without strength,” powerless, totally incapable of doing anything about his own deliverance from sin and death. He is (2) “ungodly,” without one link, either moral or spiritual, with the true and living God. Mackintosh notes that you can “examine the un-renewed heart from its center to its circumference, and you will not find so much as one true thought about God or one right affection toward God.” Man in his natural state may be amiable, even attractive in form and manner; possessing a generous and lovely morality with social virtues and graciousness—all of which displays, in spite of his ruined and condemned condition, traces of the master hand that formed him. But, note well that none of these elements of character can bring redemption, reconciliation, or salvation. Why is this important to know? If we speak of man and his need for redemption only in terms of the one among us who is socially offensive, crude of speech, or lacking gentleness and social grace, then what is the affable man or woman who is socially adept and charming to think of their own soul’s condition? How easily we slip into the comfort of our achievements as a sanctuary from which we invite God to join us as contributors to His cause. How difficult it remains in our day to view ourselves as in need of His redemption and mercy; for, after all, shouldn’t God be proud to have our adoration, our worship, our contributions to the really needy! We see those, shipwrecked by circumstances of life, but do not see the spiritual wreckage of our own lives, because we are insulated from any discomfort by our *stuff*.

**For if, when we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life! Romans 5:10**

The result is, or should be, an overwhelming joy. It is the intention of the Father that we should move through life with our eyes and minds firmly fixed on the Son and all that He has brought to each of us. There is no room for any feeling of being neglected or inconvenienced in this life, but a genuine appreciation of the testing that is afforded us for our growth and training. Difficulties, even pain or rejection, are all brought or allowed into our lives for one purpose; that we might demonstrate to a lost and dying world of men our confidence in the God to whom we have been joined. Our *peace* is not in any way dependent on our earthly condition. *Peace is not synonymous with comfort.*

**Not only is this so, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation. Romans 5:11**

**DIVISION TWO-Chapter 5:12-8:39**  
**In Christ,**  
**We are dead to sin and death**

Introduction to Division Two:

Deliverance for the believer is freedom from sin and death. That is the condemnation from which we have been delivered. Joined to Christ, we are united with Him in His death in inviolable union. It is an act of God that stems from His sovereign nature, not from any work or merit on our part. The result is that we too are eternally dead to sin and to eternal death. In Him, we have life, His life.

The number “Two” speaks to us of perfect union and of strength through being joined together. It reinforces the idea of our victory over sin and death by being joined to Christ in His death.

**Section One-Chapter 5:12-21**  
**As His new creation, Christ is our Head**

Introduction to Section One:

The contrast is between the ruin brought in by the first Adam and the victory brought in by the second, Jesus Christ. All that fell to man as his lot in time, with eternal consequences, must be remedied by a man acceptable to the Father. Paul now presents the evidence that Jesus of Nazareth was that Man. Further, that Jesus satisfied all of the righteous demands of the Father as displayed through the Law and through the testimony of the created world in which we live.

**Grace is the sweetest sound  
That ever reached our ears;  
When conscience charged and justice frowned,  
"Twas grace removed our fears.**

**Grace is a mine of wealth,  
Laid open to the poor,  
Grace is the sov'reign spring of health,  
"Tis life for evermore.**

**Of grace then, let us sing,  
A joyful wondrous theme;  
Who grace has brought shall glory bring,  
And we shall reign with Him."**

## **Sin enters by one 5:12-14**

It was through the disobedience of one that sin entered into the world and into man. That one was the “first Adam” in the garden. As sin entered, so too did the penalty for sin, death. By being born in Adam, as his seed, we inherit the sin and death, which was imposed on him. It was through Adam, representative man, that spiritual death became the overriding barrier between man and God. This was brought constantly before Adam’s descendants through God’s intervention and eventually by the Law given to Moses.

**Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned-- Romans 5:12**

But wait! One might say that he/she was never born under the Law, thus there was no standard of acceptable behavior before a righteous God.

The answer says Paul, is that the Law did not create sin, nor did it bring sin into our experience. From Adam to Moses, sin “**was in the world.**” The Law came in so that man might recognize his extreme sinfulness--how far short of God’s perfect standard he really was. The Law then became a measure of *sinfulness*, not righteousness.

**for before the law was given, sin was in the world. But sin is not taken into account when there is no law. Nevertheless, death reigned from the time of Adam to the time of Moses, even over those who did not sin by breaking a command, as did Adam, who was a pattern of the one to come. Romans 5:13,14**

From the time of Adam until Moses, men died. This is the direct result of Adam's disobedience of the command of God to not eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Adam, made sinless by the Creator, became sinful and the penalty passed to him and all his descendants. He was the pattern of Christ, who would be “**made to be sin for us, in order that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him**” (2 Corinthians 5:21).

## Grace, the Counterpart of Sin 5:15-17

This is the “**much more**” passage of the letter. All that sin did to ruin us, grace worked to make new, and more. All that sin brought in to condemn us through one man, Adam; grace brings in give life through one man, Jesus Christ. But, it is more than simply annulling the claims of sin and death. Grace abounds

where sin merely comes in. Grace super-abounds where sin has its strongholds. Grace pours out in an ever-increasing stream from the unsearchable riches of God in Christ, where sin has taken away only that which we enjoyed as men. This is not to minimize the results of sin, but to emphasize that God has more in store for us than sin took away.

Grace is God acting freely, according to His own nature as *Love*; with no promises or obligations to fulfill; and acting, of course, righteously--in view of the Cross.

Wm. R. Newell, *Romans*, verse by verse

**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.**      *Romans 5:15-17*

## The Reality of Grace 5:18-21

Here is the reason I do not believe in limited atonement. Seeing that God works to *exceed* the bounds of sin in every case by his grace, it is inconceivable that the results of sin's entrance into the life of **every** man would not be **overwhelmed for every man** by his contravening grace. Sin having caused the fall of every man is answered by the grace of God in Christ **for every man**. If all sin were not removed as an issue between God and Man, then the work of sin would stand as regards the lost. Having all thoroughly removed leaves salvation solely to the election of God and man's belief.

**Consequently, just as the result of one trespass was condemnation for all men, so also the result of one act of righteousness was justification that brings life for all men. 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. Romans 5:18,19**

**"Now the object of the law was to bring out the sinner's true condition of soul; not at all to bring him into blessing, but to bring out the fearful ruin into which man had got by sin. This was not meant to be the rule of life; indeed, it is rather the rule of death. If a man had no such thing as sin, it might be the rule of life; but he being a sinner, it is an absurd misnomer to call it the rule of life."** --Wm. Kelly

**The law was added so that the trespass might increase. But where sin increased, grace increased all the more, Romans 5:20**

Before the Law was given to Israel, they all were corrupted with sin. After the law came, they were additionally *transgressors*. To underscore their rebellion, Israel became actual violators of His law.

In contrast, the righteousness that comes through the Cross to the believer is given by the grace of the Father. The Son, to whom we are joined, holds eternal life in trust for us until He comes to take us to be with Him. Where we once were the subjects ruled by death and sin, now we are joined to Him who is life.

**so that, just as sin reigned in death, so also grace might reign through righteousness to bring eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. Romans 5:21**

## **Section Two-Chapter 6**

### **In Christ, Dead to Sin and Free From Its Bondage**

#### **Introduction to Section Two**

In this division, from chapter 6 through chapter 8, the subject is; *the new life in Christ*. In this section we shall see what we gain through being united to Christ in his death. It is popular to preach of newness of life, of freedom from bondage to sins, of victory over the elements of this world that oppress and bring hurt and of the blessings that God intends for his children. But, it is really necessary for us to see that everything is firmly rooted in our union with the Lord Jesus on the Cross. Without that union, we have nothing! In Him we have rest and peace.

If we are not joined to Him at that terrible point in his experience, then the blood has not effectually covered us before the throne of the Father. Though it was spilt and did make adequate payment for the sins of every man and Sin in mankind, personal appropriation occurs on the Cross.

## Newness of Life 6:1-4

The question believers might ask is, “Do my sins enlarge grace?” The answer is clearly no! His grace made adequate and full payment for all. Sin does not enlarge grace. But, it does perpetuate the lie that the payment was either not complete or not effective.

### **What shall we say, then?...Romans 6:1a**

The question originates in 5:20 where the purpose of the law in magnifying sin is fulfilled and overcome by the overwhelming application of grace. The rhetorical question here by Paul puts the issue of sin and responsibility for its effects on center stage. It is not “sins,” acts of sin the believer commits, which are in view here, but the sin nature that would rule and reign in your life. We will certainly encounter that sin nature as long as we live. But, we are empowered to live apart from it and not give it place and influence in our lives as men. “**Continue**” is [meno] and means, “to abide or remain.” Ultimately, we shall be taken out of this world, given a new body that is free from the presence of sin and will encounter it no more. In the meantime . . .

### **Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? Romans 6:3**

Look past the confusion created in the minds of many believers that this refers to the rite of water baptism. This confusion grows out of the practice of reciting this passage during the ceremony as conducted in many evangelical churches. Baptism into death is the moment in which the redeemed individual is *placed into union with Christ at the point of his death on the Cross*. It is a *spiritual union* which results in the believer becoming *one with Christ and acceptable to God*. The “**new life**” of the believer is the life of the “**new creation**” (See Galatians 6:15, 16).

### **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. Romans 6:4**

## The Old Man is Crucified 6:5-7

“**If**” (1st class, “and we have”) is better rendered “**Since**.” It is a fact that we have been united with Christ in his death. An equal certainty is that we are also united with him in his resurrection. This is not a future promise, but a temporal provision that prepares us for a daily walk in Him. It would be a mistake to look forward to our own physical resurrection and not see that this is a provision for our living today.

### **If we have been united with him like this in his death, we will certainly also be united with him in his resurrection. Romans 6:5**

Now, watch carefully--That which we were in Adam (“**our old self**”) died (“**was crucified**”) within the death of Christ--as He died to sin, we died to sin (the nature). The purpose for that happening is “**that we should no longer be slaves to sin.**” Sin (the nature) no longer has hold on us. We are free from its claims, which claims were defined by the law. It is still there, but

powerless in respect of claims collectable from the individual, because that individual has died and a new person was born free of indictment.

**For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin--because anyone who has died has been freed from sin. Romans 6:6,7**

It is the same with any principle of law that we know about. Any penalty exacted from a person may only be claimed during his/her life. Murder convictions are moot, speeding tickets are pointless, trials for civil disobedience are suspended, all is pointless when the accused dies. The human nature in the body, which was subject to the law of sin and death died! In its place the human spirit was born (reborn) which is in union with Christ. It is through this human spirit that the Holy Spirit of God infuses us with the life of Christ and that life is not subject to the law of sin and death. He is free because He already paid the full price. As long as we were alive only in the Adamic flesh, we were accused, accursed and held accountable by sin. That accountability was detailed in the Law. Now that we have died with Christ, all accounts are settled and there is no longer any bill of indictment against us.

## **Alive to God in the Risen Christ 6:8-11**

Here is what this all means to us who are in Christ. It is not simply that we are freed from sin's grasp and claims, but that we also **"live with him."** The Christ to whom we are joined is a risen, ascended lord. He is not again subject to death, nor are we in Him. **"If we died"** is 1st class, **"and we did."** **"Live with him"** is **"live by means of him."** As He is eternal in his nature, so are we everlasting in ours. As He has ruled from eternity past, so we have been appointed from the moment of God's elective decree with redeeming consequences that have no end. He is omnipresent; we are eternally secure in Christ. The focus of the verse is on our present assets and opportunities.

**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 him. Romans 6:8, 9**

There is a contrast in verse 10 that is very important for us to recognize. When Christ died on the Cross it was for the sin of every person who ever lived. His atoning sacrifice was unlimited and covered the sin nature inherited from Adam as well as the sins of each individual. Man is never eternally condemned by any acts of personal sin, however horrible they may be, since they have all been paid for. The price paid in death was all-inclusive.

In contrast, the life that Christ now lives is solely lived for and before the Father. Only those of the redeemed, who have accepted the payment personally and in faith, can enter that same life. Alive within the Body of Christ, we are dead to sin. Now it is the privilege of the believer to **"reckon"** ("declare the truth of") ourselves as being dead to sin. When sin, which still exists in the world and in the body of flesh, which we temporarily occupy, begins to demonstrate its constant desire to control our life, we are to declare the freedom, which is ours in order to break its effects on our walk. It is inconceivable that Christ would not oppose sin when confronted with it. That makes it obligatory on the part of every believer who lives within Him. Anything else would be to lie regarding what is actually true.

**The death he died, he died to sin once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God. In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus.**  
**Romans 6:10,11**

## **The Believer's Walk Under Grace 6:12-14**

Because we have the option under grace to “reckon” ourselves to be dead to sin, we have the means to dethrone sin from its control, even over the fleshly body that we currently occupy. “**Its**” refers to the body, not the sin nature. Therefore, we should not yield ourselves in the body to sinful practices, but rather offer this very body to God as a tool to be used by Him to reach others and to further instruct us in His holiness.

Therefore, exercise control over your physical body. Let the Spirit of God in you direct your activities according to the instructions you have from his Word. (Remember, at that time this was written, believers did not have the canon of the New Testament that we have. They were dependent upon the instructions coming to them from the Apostles and apostolic appointees). This letter was the instruction from God on which they were to frame their daily lives.

**Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires. Do not offer the parts of your body to sin, as instruments of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God, as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer the parts of your body to him as instruments of righteousness.**

**Romans 6:12, 13**

The reason is clear--sin is not our master. The explanation is that we are *not under law, but under grace*. In other words, being under the law is being enslaved to sin. Being free from sin is to be free from law. A new obligation of the believer is assumed under grace. It is the obligation of the believer to offer his/her own body to God to be used in service to Him. You are captured by that which you love. You were captured by the One who loved you. Being enslaved to another in love, you have new responsibilities.

Now, a word of caution—You must be careful not to let love, the human emotion, become confused with love *agape*, that act of will that endows the object of its affection with worth. “Love.” as used in common parlance is an emotional response to another. “Love” (*agape*), as used in the Bible is an act of the will. It does not require response from either party, but is given without restraint.

**For sin shall not be your master, because you are not under law, but under grace.**

**Romans 6:14**

## **Responsibility of the Redeemed 6:15-23**

Freedom from sin does not mean that there are no responsibilities for the believer. The question asked is, “**Shall we sin**” now because there is no penalty as prescribed by law? Absolutely not! Where before, under the law, we avoided sin because of the penalty; now, under grace, we avoid sin because of our love of pleasing our redeemer. The obligation is of love and a willing limiting of our freedom. This is precisely the action of Christ on the Cross. He was obligated only out of obedience to the will of his Father to offer Himself on our behalf. The law demanded that *we satisfy* its dictates, not Him. (That we were not qualified is beside the point). That He satisfied the demands of the law was completely an act of willing self-sacrifice that was not required of Him by law. **He met the demands of law fully. Thus, was not required to die by law.**

**What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? By no means! Don't you know that when you offer yourselves to someone to obey him as slaves, you are slaves to the one whom you obey--whether you are slaves to sin, which leads to death, or to obedience, which leads to righteousness?**

**Romans 6:15, 16**

Now Paul places the slavery to sin, which was true of these believers in the past, alongside the structure of the teaching to which they were now entrusted. That he intended them to be viewed as opposites is his clear meaning. In the past, they were “**slaves<sup>37</sup> to sin**” as defined by the law. Now, they are the “**slaves**” of grace, in willing obedience to the demands of freedom.

**But thanks be to God that, though you used to be slaves to sin, you wholeheartedly obeyed the form of teaching to which you were entrusted. You have been set free from sin and have become slaves to righteousness. Romans 6:17, 18**

Lest they become too strongly focused on their part in their current position, Paul reminds them that their contribution to righteousness is an offering just like the one they made while in slavery to sin. There is no merit in their choices. Actions are but responses to having been indentured, first to sin and now to righteousness and grace. Reflect on those things you did prior to salvation of which you are now even ashamed. Whatever benefit was gained in doing them, and they were all so very temporary, the end result was death! The law condemned failure and required the death of the sacrifice. That picture was all too clear before Israel and was the prior experience of all who lived under the Law of Israel, or law as a principle.

Now, being set apart, the benefit to those who live on the ground of grace is to be led into holiness<sup>38</sup> and given eternal life.

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<sup>37</sup> [doulos] “Slave” is one bound to another until death. It also means one who serves another to the disregard of his own interests. Where before they had been driven by sin as slaves serving Satan, now they are to be driven through life as slaves to righteousness.

<sup>38</sup> “Holiness” is from the same root word as “saint.” It means to be set apart, or ‘one set apart.’ The application is that now their standing on the ground of grace has by definition “set them apart” unto righteousness. They have been declared to be righteous in the court of God’s justice. The result is that they are now prepared for eternal life in the Son.

<sup>39</sup> “holiness” is from the same root word as “saint.” It means to be set

**I put this in human terms because you are weak in your natural selves. Just as you used to offer the parts of your body in slavery to impurity and to ever-increasing wickedness, so now offer them in slavery to righteousness leading to holiness. When you were slaves to sin, you were free from the control of righteousness. What benefit did you reap at that time from the things you are now ashamed of? Those things result in death! But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves to God, the benefit you reap leads to holiness, and the result is eternal life. For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. Romans 6:19-22**

“Wages” means a “just recompense”, a match between cause and effect. For a given action, there is a right payment or reward. “Death” is the right payment for sin. “But” introduces contrast--Where death is the just and demanded payment for sin, “eternal life” is the just and demanded reward for being “**in Christ Jesus our Lord.**” Notice, it is not for anything we have done or may do that the payment is made and/or the reward given, *it is for what He has already done.* Eternal life is the Father’s gift to the Son and we share incidentally in that gift by being in Him and on the ground of grace and freedom. We have been *justified* by being identified in the eyes of the Father with Christ, His Son.

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apart, or 'one set apart'. The application is that now their standing on the ground of grace has by definition "set them apart" unto righteousness. They have been declared to be righteous in the court of God's justice. The result is that they are now prepared for eternal life in the Son.

### Section Three-Chapter 7:1-8:4

#### United With Christ by the Spirit, Deliverance from Sin is Experienced

Introduction to Section Three:

In this section the reality of all that we gain through our walk in union with Christ comes to light. In Christ, joined to Him in his death, the Holy Spirit delivers us from the bondage to Sin that corrupts the fleshly mind of man so totally. It is then that the life of the Lord Jesus is revealed in each of our experiences and God is glorified. This, *the life of the Lord Jesus*, is the expression of grace within the world that we were designed by God to exhibit. In Chapter one, the created world speaks of the Godhead to all men. The illustration continues...As the moon is the reflection of the light of the sun, so too are we to be the reflections of the glory of the Son. Think about this for a moment; reflection of light is not simply a representation of light, it is rather a continuance of real light to the extent that the reflector is perfect. A perfectly prepared mirror reflects the purest and most complete passage of real light. It bounces the rays off its surface and sends them off in a new direction, absorbing little of their brilliance. Imperfections can only diminish the amount of light that may continue. Light, you see, is real, and a representation of light would be shadow. When the believer is told to “**walk in light, as He is in light,**” the command is to live, move and exist bathed in that substance “**light**” which is the very presence and essence of God who IS<sup>40</sup> “**light.**” When we do that, we are the perfect reflectors that He has designed us to be.

“And this is the message we have heard from Him and announce to you, that God is light, and in Him there is no darkness at all.

“If we say that we have fellowship with Him and walk in the darkness, we lie and do not the truth;

“But if we walk in the light as He Himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin.

“If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us.

“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

1 John 1:5-9

<sup>40</sup> 1 John 1:5 “God is light and in Him is no darkness at all.” “Light” is *phos* and calls attention to the character of God, His very essence. Kenneth W. Wuest states: “The rule of Greek grammar is that the absence of the definite article shows quality, nature, or essence. What the inspired apostle said was, ‘God as a Person has a character or nature that partakes of light.’ ”

### **Law Dominates Only the Living 7:1-3**

There is no such thing as a law governing the dead. Once dead, there are no longer any demands which can be made by any law. Even the law governing estates takes or gives only to the living heirs. Those who have died are no longer within reach of any law's jurisdiction. What they leave behind is, but they are not.

In most societies, marriage is a matter of law, if one of the parties dies the other is no longer legally bound. He/she is free from the law regarding marriage.

If we as men (and we are) lived under law in the past (and we did), then we are bound to the demands of law until we die (and we are). It requires death to break the bonds of right law, and the law was holy and right.

**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.**

**Romans 7:1-3**

## **Our Death With Christ Cancels the Claim of Law 7:4**

When we were joined to Christ on the cross, we were united with Him in his death to Sin<sup>41</sup> and to the standard which identified Sin, the Law. “...**you also died** , (*thanatoo*)” is more accurately “you were made dead, put to death” according to Alford. It is a term of violence that results in death, recalling the Cross. The purpose of that union was so that we might belong to Christ. He paid the price for our release from slavery to Sin and now becomes our redeemer on behalf of his Father whose we are.

The Father's intention is that we might bear fruit that also belongs to Him. Since we no longer belong to Sin, whose shackles are defined by law, Sin has no claim on us. There is nothing that it requires that has not already been paid by Christ.

**So, my brothers, you also were made dead to the law through the body of Christ, that you might belong to another, to him who was raised from the dead, in order that we might bear fruit to God. Romans 7:4**

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<sup>41</sup> Romans 6: 10

## **Fruit and Service in the Spirit 7:5,6**

In the past, prior to their rebirth, they were victims of the sinful nature within which is constantly at war with God for control of their lives. Without the constraining power of the Holy Spirit who now indwells, they had no power to fend off the attractions that appealed to their Adamic nature.

The law, in defining those things unacceptable to God, also defined the pathway of behaviors preferred by that old nature. It was a path leading to rebellious acts in defiance of God and death.

**For when we were controlled by the sinful nature, the sinful passions aroused by the law were at work in our bodies, so that we bore fruit for death. Romans 7:5**

“But” introduces contrast. In contrast to being under the control of that Adamic nature so stimulated by the prohibitions of the law, now we are dead to that law. We died, and the law can no longer penalize us. We are now on the ground of the Spirit, not the ground of the written code (the Law of Israel). The “we” in this context is a very personal one, since Paul was himself a Jew who was obligated to observe all provisions of the Law. The apostle is speaking from his own very rich experience with the Law of Israel; his life lived within its restrictions prior to His salvation there on the road to Damascus. He had encountered the risen, living, Lord Jesus and could never return to the shadow, which was the Law.

**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. Romans 7:6**

## **The Purpose of an Experience Under Law 7:7-11**

The law is not sin, but defines that which is sin and sinful. The law draws a line and anything on one side is righteous; anything on the other side is sinful. The example is coveting. There was no line drawn with regards to the property of others, until the law was given. Then, the issue is clear--"Do not covet." From that moment, to desire that which was another's was clearly sinful.

**What shall we say, then? Is the law sin? Certainly not! Indeed I would not have known what sin was except through the law. For I would not have known what coveting really was if the law had not said, "Do not covet." Romans 7:7**

Paul makes a confession that describes his life as a Jew under the Law. It does not refer to his walk as a believer, but to that life which he zealously pursued prior to his Damascus road experience with Christ. "Now, sin (the Adamic nature within) used the law to stir up my very basic humanity to desire all that I saw. Sin was given life by the law."

**But sin, seizing the opportunity afforded by the commandment, produced in me every kind of covetous desire. For apart from law, sin is dead. Romans 7:8**

The apostle, as a young boy, did not know the commandments of God. In that state, he was alive to God in innocence. (There is no way to determine when that period ends for any given individual). Once the law of God became known to him in the commandments that define sin, the law became the standard for his condemnation and he died. Spiritually, he who was covered by the corporate sacrifice of Israel and so declared acceptable to God, now died, having breached law of which he was aware. He willfully acted in contradiction to the law he knew would impose its penalty. Now dead, he is forced to offer the death of another in his stead, the sacrifices of Israel. All was designed to bring him into a fuller understanding of the magnitude of the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus.

**With Knowledge,  
Comes  
RESPONSIBILITY**

**Once I was alive apart from law; but when the commandment came, sin sprang to life and I died. I found that the very commandment that was intended to bring life actually brought death. Romans 7:9,10**

The sin nature within him used the commandment of law to cause the defeat of Paul. Working its evil intent, causing the soon-to-be apostle of Christ to desire that very thing which was forbidden and making it so attractive that the choice was made. In the instance of the choice, (and we have no idea what that regarded) Saul of Tarsus died to God. In that state of death he resided until he was joined to Christ who had also died in sin ("He who knew no sin became sin for us, in order that we might become the righteousness of God in Him"). There on the Damascus road, Saul died and was joined to Christ in His death. When Christ rose from the grave, so did Saul of Tarsus, now Paul the Apostle.

**For sin, seizing the opportunity afforded by the commandment, deceived me, and**

**through the commandment put me to death. Romans 7:11**

## **The Believer's Evaluation of the Law 7:12-20**

There are three issues dealt with in evaluating the believer's relationship to law. All are undertaken with the solid knowledge that the believer is standing on the ground of grace and forgiveness. That position is occupied by every individual who is trusting in the blood of Christ poured out on his/her account. Beginning at that point, there are three conclusions, which are reached...

### **1. The divine purpose of Law 7:12,13**

There was a divine purpose for which the law was given. First, it was "**in order that sin might be recognized as sin.**" The law entered that man might have a measuring rod by which to identify sin. The nature of that measure was "**holy, righteous and good,**" but, the result was identification of that which was sinful. So, whenever the law was used as a standard, it became the origin of death for the one being judged by virtue of its demands. Since every man failed before the law, the law equaled death.

**So then, the law is holy, and the commandment is holy, righteous and good. Did that which is good, then, become death to me? By no means! But in order that sin might be recognized as sin, it produced death in me through what was good, so that through the commandment sin might become utterly sinful. Romans 7:12,13**

### **2. It is not I who sin, but Sin in me 7:14-17**

We come now to that distinction between the man who lives in the flesh, and the new creation within that lives by the Spirit of God. We know that "**the law is spiritual,**" that it governed whether an individual entered into eternity condemned by its demands or redeemed from its demands and free from the effects of sin as God's elect. It is also obvious, as it was to Paul, that we are not righteous people intrinsically. Rebellion and evil are present within us, ready to reveal themselves in our walk as men.

**We know that the law is spiritual; but I am unspiritual, sold as a slave to sin.  
Romans 7:14**

Further, observation reveals that we do not even understand those things that pour forth from within us. An honest appraisal tells us that the very things we desire to do, as that which is "right," are repeatedly abandoned in favor of those things, which we know to be dishonorable but pleasurable. When we see this in our life, we are acknowledging that there is a standard apart from our own conscience. It is not enough that we merely need to do something in order to be happy. Our happiness is not a gauge of that which is "right." There is an external law by which to judge. The law then is good, and that which it measures as falling short of its standard is sin.

**I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do. And if I do what I do not want to do, I agree that the law is good. Romans 7:15,16**

The driving force in rebellion is not the "new creation," but it is sin still resident in the flesh. As

long as we are alive in the body on earth we are subject to dealing with sin in the body, influencing our experience to the greatest extent possible. Since there is no possibility of claiming that one for

eternity, sin works to pollute the message of God. Through the physical walk of the believer, sin can entice with claims of success in time, ease of life, relief from testing and position among men, all through adherence to principles of law, which deny the freedoms of grace. It is sin at work in the life of the child of God working to discredit the Son of God.

**As it is, it is no longer I myself who do it, but it is sin living in me. Romans 7:17**

3. The flesh is revealed 7:18-20

We might conclude with Paul that in our humanity there is nothing that could be declared righteous by God and according to His standard of righteousness. The evidence is the desire to do good, but the inability to act accordingly. In fact, the apostle says, it is more than simply not having the will power to do those things that I know are good things. I keep on doing those evil things that in my inner mind I do not want to do.

We must be careful not to romanticize the concept of “inner mind” that is presented here, as so often happens with the word “heart.” It is simply the end product of a person processing all the information that they have as a human being. That process is a cerebral one--it involves all of the senses of man and the storehouse of all that we have experienced, the brain. It is not a remote or undefinable core within us that is apart from our physical selves, but the total of who and what we are as man, the crown of God's creation, made in His image.

**I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. For what I do is not the good I want to do; no, the evil I do not want to do--this I keep on doing. Now if I do what I do not want to do, it is no longer I who do it, but it is sin living in me that does it.**

**Romans 7:18-20**

### **Fettered By a Law of Sin 7:21-23**

Paul acknowledges the separation between physical and spiritual within each individual. His “**want to do good**” is an expression of his physical self. The origin of his standards for that expression is the “new creation” “**inner being**” that finds “**delight in God's law**” which is his spiritual, new-birth identity. At the same time, he sees another law at work that is limited to affecting the “**members of (his) body**.” That is the inner presence of sin, his old nature inherited from Adam. It did not die, but he was reborn apart from it spiritually. Now, resident in the body of flesh, that old nature works to control the physical appetites of the body in contradiction to the intentions of God.

So I find this law at work: When I want to do good, evil is right there with me. For in my inner being I delight in God's law; but I see another law at work in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within my members.

It is important that we see what Paul has said here. It is with the mind that we evaluate and catalog the things that we have learned of God. It is the mind of man that allows him to move, work and act contrary to the dictates of his animal instincts and drives. It is the mind of man that allows him, perhaps compels him, to act according to his moral dictates, even when it might result in his physical harm or disadvantage. It is this very capacity to act on the basis of moral determinations that separates man from all other animals. It is this same capacity of the mind which is used by man to exercise faith in God's promises in the face of an otherwise hopeless situation. The idea that man thinks with his “heart” and not with his mind is a myth. Scripture supports no such nonsense.

## **Deliverance Made Our Experience 7:24-8:4**

There are four issues to be examined regarding our deliverance becoming our experience. These are the means by which peace reigns in our lives. It happens when we realize that the chains of sin have been broken and we are free as *new creations* to live in Christ.

1. Deliverance is of God the Father and in Christ.

**What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death?  
Thanks be to God--through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, I myself in my  
mind am a slave to God's law, but in the sinful nature a slave to the law of  
sin. Romans 7:24,25**

2. Deliverance from the power and the claims of sin on your life is the way out of bondage in your Christian walk.

**Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus,  
Romans 8:1**

3. Deliverance from the power and claims of sin becomes our experience by means of the Spirit of God imparting to us the life of the Lord Jesus.

**because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the  
law of sin and death.  
Romans 8:2**

4. Deliverance will mean that you can no longer find practical results possible following principles of law in your life as a believer.

**For what the law was powerless to do in that it was weakened by the sinful  
nature, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful man to be a  
sin offering. And so he condemned sin in sinful man, in order that the  
righteous requirements of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live  
according to the sinful nature but according to the Spirit. Romans 8:3,4**

## **Section Four-Chapter 8:5-27** **The Believer's Walk in the Spirit**

### Introduction to Section Four

We learn how to live as reasonable human beings from our parents. They diligently teach their children social graces;

Don't speak with food in your mouth  
Don't put your elbows on the table  
Stand when a lady approaches or leaves the table or the room  
Do not interrupt adults when they are speaking  
Never splash water from the tub so that it runs into the hall (for male children)  
Do not jump on the bed; it ruins the mattress  
Do not sit on the bed when it is made up  
Wear clean under-shorts, you may be in a wreck  
Never correct an adult in public  
Do not smack when you chew  
Keep your finger out of your nose  
Address all adults with "Sir" or "Ma'm" (for Southern offspring)  
When a guest, make your bed  
Accompany your departing guests to the property line (for Texans)

It is important to know that our Heavenly Father has done precisely the same thing for us as His own dear children. We walk in both the physical world and in the spiritual world of eternity. In our eternal walk, there are rules for our behavior that, if observed, will display the qualities of our Father's character.

Never take food without offering thanksgiving (Romans 14:6)  
Do not take meals or God's provision for granted (Ecclesiastes 11:6)  
Be aware of your interface with others  
Listen to what others say and respond with knowledge (Ecclesiastes 9:17)  
Control your play so that you are aware of results  
Be a good steward of what you have  
God is the author of order, not disorder  
Consider contingencies and plan for difficulties  
Respect your elders  
Do not call undue attention to yourself (1 Thessalonians 4:11).  
Give none offense  
Honor those of age or in positions of authority  
Carry your own weight and be a burden to no one (Galatians 6).  
Be hospitable and generous

Each of these qualities is an element of the character of God and should be displayed in our life moment by moment. Through the presence of God the Holy Spirit within us, this is possible.

But, it is not even remotely possible through any effort of our own in our human strength.

### **The Governing Power 8:5**

If human strength cannot enable us to live a life pleasing to God, then what must be the source of our motivation, power and strength?

Life in this world can be lived on the basis of two sources of power, the old nature from Adam or the Spirit of God within us. The method of expression for both is to capture the output of the mind of the believer. Now, the believer has a choice--he/she may focus, through personal discipline, on information and/or activity that centers on instructions from our natural urges; or that centers one the revelation of Christ by the indwelling Spirit of God. Take in information that originates in the world's media centers and you have a foundation for a humanistic orientation that is thoroughly compatible with the old Adamic nature. Take in information that originates in the person of Christ and you have a foundation for an orientation to God's character that is thoroughly compatible with the *New Creation* within.

**Those who live according to the sinful nature have their minds set on what that nature desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires. Romans 8:5**

## The Spirit Contrasted With the Flesh 8:6-8

The verse that provides the foundation for this passage is; “**As a man thinks in his mind (“heart” KJV), so he is**” (**Proverbs 23:7**). A man who is sinful in nature is a spiritually dead man. He has no life before God. His mind is a mind occupied with dead things. Though they might seem worthwhile in man's estimation, they are only things that are temporal. They have no eternal value.

“**But,**” introduces contrast. The mind of a man controlled by the Holy Spirit is a mind filled with eternally alive things. It is filled with the life and mind of Christ and is at peace with the Father. *That mind derives its entire sustenance from the things of God.*

There is no such thing as a mind that is simply apathetic towards God. There are those who would claim to be intellectual atheists or agnostics, without feelings towards God one-way or the other. I have never met such a person who did not turn out to be hostile towards God when pressed by life.

**The mind of sinful man is death, but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace; the sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so. Romans 8:6,7**

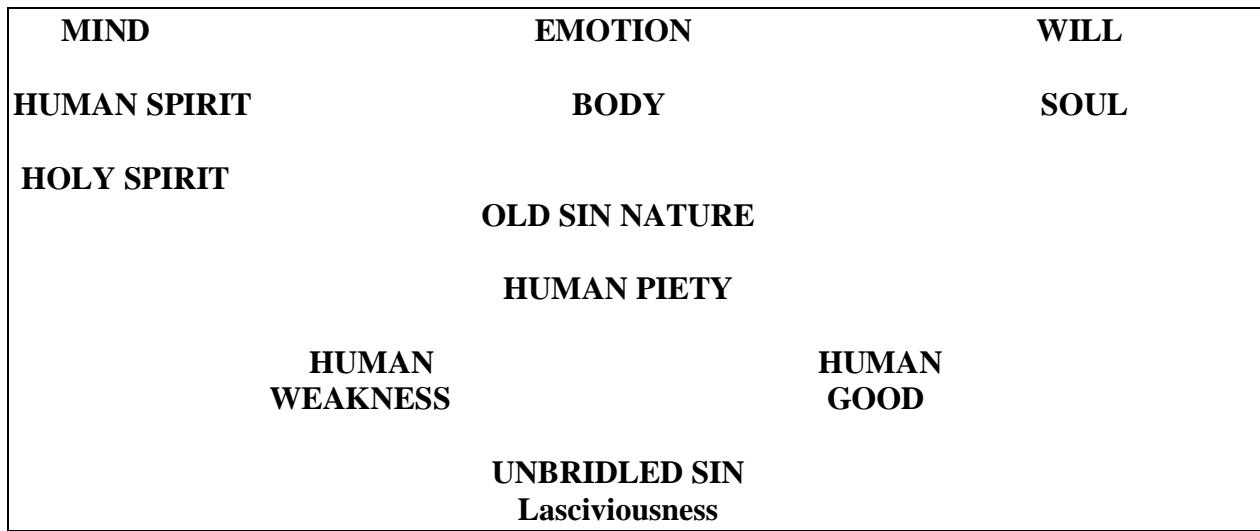
The admonition of Paul here is to settle the question in clear terms. Lest anyone think that God can be appeased with acts of human good--When the Adamic nature<sup>42</sup> is in control, and until rebirth as a Christian that is all a man/woman has inside, *nothing that it produces is pleasing to God.* A perfect God is only pleased by perfect acts. That was the quality of the work of Christ in his life and in his death.

We see two centers of control from within a man; the Holy Spirit, acting through the mind of man, and the “**sinful nature**”, acting through the emotions of man. Consider this--

MAN

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<sup>42</sup> The Adamic Nature has four distinct categories of production--(1) Human Good; those acts of philanthropy, kindness, charity or even heroism. But, the motivation is rooted in Maslow's hierarchy of motivational factors, not love for or obedience to God. (2) Human Weakness; Those acts that are unfair to others or criminal in nature. The motivation is personal gain, advantage over others or greed. Thievery, fraud, drug abuse and lies are examples of human weakness. (3) Asceticism; Those acts of religious self-sacrifice that are intended to win God's favor. It is any behavior that treats God like the genie of the lamp and attempts to bargain with Him for relief, position or advantage. (4) Licentiousness; those acts that serve the physical passions of the body. Voyeurism, sexual perversion, drug abuse, violence and power over others are examples of production from this area of the Adamic nature.



The Old Sin Nature within each person has the capacity for production of four categories of activities in life--One, ascetic practices through religion that attempt to garner God's favor. I am so faithful; surely God will bless me. Too many activities at the church are fueled by this motivation. Two, acts of human good, philanthropy and service to man. Too much giving is motivated by the Old Sin Nature's expression of *Human Good*. Three, acts out of our human tendencies to weakness or undesirable traits of character, such as theft, cruelty or untruthfulness.

Tax time brings out the worst in the best of us. Four, pursuit of our lusts, or as one friend of mine put it, "anything that makes you breath hard." For one, it may be blondes or a "six-pack" mid-section. For another, it may be a red Corvette. For still another, it may be power. For someone else, it may be knowledge.

It is important to remember, however, that the sum total production of the Old Sin Nature is not pleasing to God. If what is coming out of your life is not there by direct action of the indwelling Holy Spirit, then it is not the life of the Lord Jesus.

**Those controlled by the sinful nature cannot please God. Romans 8:8**

## **The Body is Death, but the Spirit is Life 8:9-11**

It is very important to note that the Adamic Nature works through the senses of the human body. While its implications are spiritual death, the sin nature within does not have control over the spirit of man. For the believer, the human spirit (now alive through the rebirth) is in communication with the Holy Spirit not resident within. It is the Holy Spirit who constrains the Adamic nature and infuses us with the mind of Christ.

**You, however, are controlled not by the sinful nature but by the Spirit, if the Spirit of God lives in you. Romans 8:9a**

The last half of this verse presents a phrase that occurs no other place in Scripture, (*pneuma christou*), “**the Spirit of Christ.**” Note that there is no article “the” before either “**Spirit**” or “**Christ.**” “**Pneuma Christou**” then is, literally, “**Christ-spirit**” and refers to the “new creation,” which the believer is as a result of the regenerative work of the Holy Spirit.<sup>43</sup>

**And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ.**  
**Romans 8:9**

Make sure you understand; the Adamic Nature is not dead. It is there as long as there is animal life in the body. Therefore, this body is called dead, because it stands judged as unrighteous, while the “**pneuma Christou**” human spirit of Christ within us has life not subject to physical death and is righteous before God. Satan, using the physical body, stimulates the Adamic Nature to produce acts from its four categories of human behavior. In contrast, the Holy Spirit stimulates the “**pneuma Christou**” (Christ spirit) to act in the mind of Christ to produce acts consistent with the character of God. The battle is fought in the mind of man. If the believer uses only the human mind, trained by the body, he will lose. If the believer uses the mind of Christ, fueled by the Christ-spirit and trained by the Holy Spirit through application of biblical principles, he will see the life of the Lord Jesus supplant his own in his/her personal experiences.

This is the reality of our being infused with the life of the ascended Jesus Christ. It is the very essence of resurrection-life, that life which is formed in us by the Holy Spirit, the hope of glory for every believer.

**But if Christ is in you, your 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 Spirit, who lives in you. Romans 8:10,11**

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<sup>43</sup> 2 Corinthians 5: 17

## **A Spiritual Test for the Sons of God 8:12-14**

Now enter the realm of obedience. There is a benefit in time by relying on the Holy Spirit to direct your life and constrain the effects of the Adamic Nature. First, there is physical life. One of the first consequences of sin is a more rapid deterioration of the physical body and an early death. Each lack of discipline has its specific result--Alcohol abuse produces dead brain cells and a fatty liver. Drug abuse kills neurons and nerve transmitter sites. Obesity strains the heart and lines the vascular system with deposits. Excessive anger raises the blood pressure and increases the incidence of stroke. Constant worry increases acid production and increases coronary deposits. Laziness decreases muscle tone and causes the venous valves to weaken and fail.

There are biblical, spiritual alternatives to these all-too-common conditions:

**“Who has woe? Who has sorrow?  
Who has contentions? Who has complaining?  
Who has wounds without cause?  
Who has redness of eyes?  
Those who linger long over wine.**  
**Proverbs 23:29,30**

Isn't it amazing that the human solutions to sorrow, woe, difficulty, disappointment, and problems of a million varieties are often the source of continuing hard times and personal sadness. Scripture says to give wine to those who are terminally ill, approaching death in pain. But, those of us who still have our mental faculties; we should stay away from long pulls on the jug. We should, rather, focus our lives on living in the Spirit, in *the mind of Christ*.

**“And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the spirit.”**

**Ephesians 5:18**

Stop being envious of those who allow themselves to be numbed to their circumstances by dosing with drink that dulls the senses. In that state we cannot hear the inner voice of the Spirit as He opens to us the mind of the Lord Jesus. Solomon did not have that advantage. His was not the ground of union on which each believer now stands. So he invoked “the fear of the Lord” in order to gain the attention of Israel. As with them, we too should remember that there is a future, and that not without hope of a loving heavenly Father's care and provision.

Since we have this unbreakable union with God, any lesser alternative to our dilemma would be foolish indeed.

**“Do not let your heart envy sinners,  
But live in the fear of the Lord always.  
Surely there is a future,  
And your hope will not be cut off.  
Listen, my son, and be wise,  
and direct your heart in the way.  
Do not be with heavy drinkers of wine.**

**Or with gluttonous eaters of meat.  
For the heavy drinker and the glutton  
will come to poverty, and drowsiness  
will clothe a man with rags.”**

**Proverbs 23:17-21**

The answer is clear and concise:

**Therefore, brothers, we have an obligation--but it is not to the sinful nature, to live according to it. For if you live according to the sinful nature, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live, because those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.**

**Romans 8:12-14**

## One With God and the Believer's Reward 8:15-17

The reward of the believer is to share the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ. We are not to become the recipients of glory as a personal endowment, but partakers of His glory. Neither do we inherit power to rule independently, but we are in union with Him as He rules over all. Because of that union between us, we do not have cause to fear anything that might happen to us or challenge us. We have access to the Father in the most intimate relationship possible. **“Abba”** is the familiar term for Father used by a child. This is just the manner in which our Heavenly Father would have us relate to Him, as His dear and loved child. Even then, He has made special provision for our communication. The Holy Spirit within enables us to address the Father in this manner by instructing our human spirit. Where we were once spiritually dead, lost in our sinful condition, now we are spiritually alive.

Our human spirit has been restored and we now have a capacity for receiving information about God from the indwelling Holy Spirit. It is through this Spirit-to-spirit communication that we grow in knowledge of the true nature and character of God and of His expectations of us. This is not a relationship designed to engender fear, but love, warmth and a sense of security in His love.

**“Blessed assurance  
Jesus is mine,  
Oh what a foretaste  
of glory divine.  
Heir of salvation,  
purchase of God,  
Born of His Spirit,  
washed in His Blood.**

**For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, “Abba, Father.” 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.**

**Romans 8:15-17**

A litmus test of our heir-ship to Christ is given. If we are called upon to suffer, as did Christ, then it is evidence to us that we will share in his victory and glory in eternity. This gives us hope and the courage to endure our temporal difficulties.

## Purpose To Our Present Sufferings 8:18-15

As for these present difficulties, nothing can compare with what the Father has in store for us when He takes us to be where He is. There, we are to be the special objects through which his glory (shining) is revealed to all creation. The created universe, every heavenly body, and all the orders of angelic creation are eager to see just who constitutes the Church, the Bride of Christ. They are very curious to see all the Father's provision for Her. Knowing that, the Apostle reminds those believers in Rome that our present trials should not cause us to think of loss or pain or discomfort for very long. It is more

**“He giveth more grace when  
the burdens grow greater.  
He giveth more strength when  
the labors increase.  
To added affliction He addeth His mercy,  
To multiplied trials, His multiplied peace.  
His love knows no limits-  
His grace knows no measure-  
His power, no boundary known unto man.  
For, out of His infinite riches in Jesus—  
He giveth, and giveth, and giveth again.”**

reasonable to have our minds set on that which the Father has in store as our blessings.

**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 God to be revealed. Romans 8:18,19**

The “**bondage to decay**” that holds the universe in its grip was brought on by the disobedience of one man, Adam. God, who decreed that the penalty of sin was death (and that immediately imposed on all creation), has by his own will chosen the Church of this age as the vessel through which He introduces freedom to creation. This neither is now, nor was it then, the role or place of Israel. Neither was it the role or place of those faithful followers of God from Adam to Jacob. Freedom under grace is exclusively reserved to the Church of Jesus Christ as its unique portion in time. The ultimate irony is; that this is of the most intense interest to the balance of creation, though not to most of mankind, to whom it is offered today.

**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. Romans 8:20-22**

There are those who would have us believe that we should expect God to deliver all of His promises to us on a daily basis. That we should claim all that He has in store for the Kingdom right now--Freedom from sickness, relief from all difficulties, release from those situations that are common to all men. This is a failure to appreciate what Paul is saying here to believers in Rome. If we have delivered to us all that God has in store for eternity, then what place has faith and hope? He expects us to live in faith and hope on the basis of his Word, not on the basis of things that He is doing for us today. If the Christian life consists of success, ease, and abundance within the world, then Christ, the Apostles, the Martyrs, the reformation leaders, and every believer who faces physical or mental deterioration is an abject failure. In none of these circumstances is faith and hope eliminated or annulled. We are expected to groan internally, but with hope and in faith, faith in His coming again and faith that we will be delivered moment by moment from our own inadequacy.

**THE BELIEVER WALKS BY FAITH, NOT BY SIGHT!**

**Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. 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.**

So patience is called for while we wait and work at sharing the Gospel with those brought into our lives. If He has given you a circumstance where there are but meager provisions, then you should be thankful for what He has given. That does not mean that you should not apply yourself to gain or to improving your situation. It does mean that you should not become either bitter because you do not have more, not envious of others who are apparently being blessed

with more ease. Unfortunately, we live in the United States under a culture of envy. There is a widely held belief that those who have much should be compelled to give to others who have less or little. This is a pernicious seed for covetousness and can destroy spiritual vitality. Those who have little are not given a special pass by God for envy or coveting.

## **Provision While We Wait 8:26, 27**

Lest our weakness hinder the ministry of the Gospel to others, there is provision made for our strengthening. Because we do not know the mind of God, He has given us the indwelling Holy Spirit who translates our needs to the Father. What would be simply groans of frustration and lack of under-standing on our part, the Spirit communicates (“**intercedes**”) in that totally heavenly interchange for which we do not even have words.

**In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express. Romans 8:26**

The Father (“**he who searches our hearts**”) hears the pleading of the Spirit on our behalf because it is always in perfect accord with his, the Father's, will. What grace! Every need that you or I have in life is laid before the Father by the Spirit in such a manner that it is perfectly integrated into the will of the Father for our lives. If we are living in dependence upon the Spirit of God to direct our activities each and every day, then those things will always be before the Father.

**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. Romans 8:27**

What is our obligation, whether rich or poor? Every believer is to be a vehicle for spreading the Gospel to the world. Those who have wealth, or a surplus of the world's goods, can find themselves occupied with tending their stores of goods to the detriment of sharing the Gospel with others. I do not mean that as applying to everyone who has successfully gained status and wealth in this world, but as a general condition of maintaining wealth. It takes time, attention, and careful planning to maintain a decent portfolio. That's called stewardship, and is honored by God. In contrast, stewardship can be replaced by preoccupation, which draws one's attention more to gain than to sharing the Gospel.

It is the mind of Christ<sup>44</sup> provided by the Holy Spirit in residence within the believer, Who guides each of us, both wealthy and poor, to the will of the Father for our individual life. In this manner, we are led to share the Gospel irrespective of our means and disproportional to our status or reputation in life. We are not hindered by our lack, nor propelled to any higher level of service by our means.

The Psalmist said<sup>45</sup> that God “owns the gold in every mine and the cattle on a thousand hills.” If our need, therefore, is material, does it seem improbable or impossible that a loving heavenly Father would send one of His mines or a couple of steers your way?

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<sup>44</sup> Philippians 2:5

<sup>45</sup> Psalm 50:10

## **Section 5-Chapter 8:28-39 Weakness and Strength**

### **Introduction to Section Five**

Here in Section 5 we will see a repeating theme--our strength, humanity, limits as man and God's addition of His power, His Spiritual nature, and His omnipresence. It is not to our purposes that we serve, but to His plan and will. Human limitations are but temporary obstacles to His works becoming known to all mankind. The stars in the heavens speak of the Gospel of God come as Man to deliver mankind. The theme is our weaknesses being overcome by the addition of His strengths.

If we as believers could simply learn to rest in that simplicity, where would our fears come to rest? What would happen to our anxieties and concern over trials and tests that are here for only a while?

Could we trust one another more? Perhaps. Would we be a more open people with higher expectations of others? Maybe. Could we then see others through His eyes instead of our own? I think so.

## Purpose in the Believer's Call 8:28-30

Please note, not all things are good, but God works to bring all things together for our good. This is true of every believer who has been called to the universal purpose of pleasing God. When those harsh winds blow into your life, know that the Father has some purpose in mind for *bringing out his best in you*. The periods of testing are there to skim the dross off our thinking, and bring our minds more into focus on Him. Our affluence in the world easily leads to trivializing this concept. Too often, we mistake inconvenience for testing. When this happens, we discredit those believers worldwide who are sorely pressed for righteousness' sake. Giving out of an abundance is one thing, giving necessities away in dependence on his supply is quite another.

**“Too often, we mistake inconvenience for testing”**

**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. Romans 8:28**

For what purpose were we called? **“To be conformed to the likeness of his Son.”** Before the foundation of the world,<sup>46</sup> we were chosen in Christ to be made like Him by the Father. There is to be a succession of believers, brothers of the Lord Jesus Christ, in terms of their individual relationship to the Father. We are brothers because we have been so conformed to His likeness; it is a matter of shared family traits. We love as He loves; we strive to please our common Father; we access the same pool of divines assets and resources; we are in union with the same Spirit.

**For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. Romans 8:29**

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<sup>46</sup> This is one of the most difficult concepts for believers to grasp--the fact that God is not limited in time, but is omnipresent. He is now right where we are in time and at the same moment, He is at the very initial point of creation. Thus, He can say *now* that "Whosoever will may come" and then declare their choice of salvation to have been so since "before the foundation of the world." His ways are indeed not our ways.

## **Victory Over Obstacles 8:31-39**

Having marked us out corporately from eternity past,<sup>47</sup> the Father issues his call to us individually. Knowing our rebellious nature (because He knew the First Adam intimately), he justified us<sup>48</sup> in Christ's death and made it possible to glorify *us* together with his Son. He always knew that we would not, (could not really), deserve that on our own efforts. The Son's destiny is eternal glory with the Father; and in the Son, that is also our eternal destiny. Can you imagine that? The Father loves the Son with an infinite love. When the Father directs it towards us, that love is undiminished, and without any qualification, because we are "in" the Son.

**And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified. Romans 8:30**

Look at the depth of the Father's love for us and his provision for us in time. Every charge laid against us has been paid by the Son. It is impossible to know the anguish of the Father and the love He has for the Son. But, we can know that He loves us with the same intensity and views us with the same graciousness that He views the Son.

**How great the Father's love for us,  
How vast beyond all measure;  
That He should give His only Son  
And make a wretch His treasure.**

**Stuart Townend--1995**

**What, then, shall we say in response to this? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all--how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. Romans 8:31-33**

In addition to the Spirit who voices our needs from within (8:26), there is Christ at the right hand of God interceding for us on the basis of His death. Think of it! Two members of the Divine Godhead are pleading our cause with the Father every second of our lives. How can we not be in absolute awe of the grace of God's plan for us as his children? Do you face derision or condemnation from your detractors, even from those who call you 'friend?' Remember that within you resides the same Spirit that filled the Lord Jesus, even as He went to the cross and died—but, more importantly, remember that He who died to bring joy and satisfaction to the Father, "**was raised to life**" and now "**is at the right hand**" of the Father who loves Him and loves us enough to give His Only Begotten Son's life for us.

**Who is he that condemns? Christ Jesus, who died--more than that, who was raised to life--is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us.**  
**Romans 8:34**

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<sup>47</sup> Ephesians 1:4 "Just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world. . . ."

<sup>48</sup> Ephesians 2:4-6 "But God, because He loved us, made us alive together with Christ and raised us up with Him."

Now comes this tremendous passage where Paul lays before us the omnipresent love of the Lord Jesus Christ. It was not out of duty that He died for us, but out of love. Here is a list of challenges that are given in what is an apparently worsening order of developing conditions:

Trouble: Those things that disturb the flow of our lives and cause us anxiety.

Hardship: Those things that cause us to rearrange our time schedules and force us to work harder to provide for our selves and our families.

Persecution: Those circumstances where we are called on to suffer for the sake of our testimony or sense of morality.

Famine: Times when the necessities of life must be pursued to the exclusion of all else. Leisure is out of the question and physical labor is required.

Nakedness: Times when all of your physical assets are taken away--when even the basic requirements to sustain life with dignity are not possible.

Danger: Those times when even life is threatened, by others or by sickness.

Sword: An active, direct, assault on your life.

**Who 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 written: “For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered.” No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. Romans 8:34-36**

After his list, Paul gives us his mind and personal testimony on the subject of the presence of the love of the Father towards us. The previous list is of circumstances. The following list is of entities both spiritual and physical--

“Death nor life” Says that whether we are living men or spiritual creatures beyond life as we know it, the love of God is present with us.

“Angels” Those special messengers of God who honor, worship and serve Him in his dealings with man.

“Demons” Those of the angelic order who chose to rebel against God and follow Satan in opposing God within the world of mankind.

“Things present”	Includes everything that exists in our physical universe.
“Things to come”	Includes everything that is to exist in eternity ahead.
“Powers”	Those fallen angels who have power to intervene in the affairs of this world. <sup>49</sup>
“Height”	Refers to things that extend from the first through the third heaven.
“Depth”	Refers to all realms of the earth, grave and holds of those angelic beings in chains. <sup>50</sup>
“All creation”	Covers anything that might not be listed in the above.

**For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord. Romans 8:37, 38**

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<sup>49</sup> Ephesians 3:10 “Principalities and powers” are angelic in nature and those who intervene in the affairs of man.

<sup>50</sup> Jude 6 Angels kept in chains of darkness until judgment are those who involved themselves in Genesis prior to the flood.

## **DIVISION THREE-Chapter 9:1-11:36**

### **Israel's Special Promises and Their Fulfillment**

Introduction to Division Three:

Now we come to the subject of the righteousness of God's dealings with Jews and Gentiles (chapters 9—11). It is of the utmost importance that we see the special nature of those people to whom so much of the New Testament writings were addressed, the Jews. In that first generation following the death of Christ and the beginning of the Church, His Body, there was a group of people unique in all of history. They were those Jews who had lived under the Law of Israel as an obligation imposed on them by God. They were born into the elect nation, and because of that, they had no choice but to submit to the Law of God and live in light of His special provisions for them in time and for eternity. It was not a matter of their choice, but of His election.

Now, these same people find that they are faced with a choice never before offered to their forefathers. This special generation had the opportunity to choose in faith, the crucified, resurrected Son of God as their Lord. To do so, meant leaving all that they had learned to follow throughout their lives and through all of their heritage and tradition regarding their *possession* of Torah, since that was the mark of their Covenant membership (N. T. Wright). The essence of their belief as Sons of Israel was incorporated into the Christ, their Messiah. But, in this role He was rejected and for those claims He was crucified by their national leaders. To accept Him, was to reject all that Israel purported to be in that day. It was not possible for them to simply remain Israelites in practice, observing the traditions, honoring the demands of the Law and following its tenets as a rule of life. To go to the temple and offer sacrifice for sins would be a denial of their acceptance of Christ's sacrifice. As one of them, you could not say, "I believe in that work on my behalf," and then turn and offer another work in order to appease the righteous wrath of God.

When that generation died, when the last Jew born prior to the death of Christ had been faced with the Gospel of the Savior, then there were no longer any living human beings born under obligation to the Law. Christ's death and sacrifice has satisfied that requirement totally. Law's demands have been met and its claims fully paid. Hebrews chapter 7 details the Israelite who has been living according to the Law of Israel coming into the light of the Gospel. Having once heard of the freedom that comes through Christ, that one cannot go back to the practices of Israel under the Law and work the works that brought him to repentance in the past. Now, he is left to consideration of that One who filled the Law full and either acceptance or rejection of Him.

## **Section One-Chapter 9**

### **Introduction to Section One**

Section One speaks of the identification of Israel under the Law and the identification of the continuing seed of Abraham, the Church of the New Testament.

First, we will see the Children of Promise, Israel, clearly separated from the “True Seed” of Abraham, the Church. Does this mean that the “Church” began with Abraham? Certainly not. The Church began with the resurrected Jesus and His ascension. At that time, He left in residence, the Holy Spirit. It was the Holy Spirit who, as the down-payment, the “earnest” if you will, became the distinctive that separated every believer today from every believer prior to the Cross.

At no time was the Old Testament believer indwelled by the Holy Spirit, the third person of the Divine Trinity. Yet, this is the standard condition of the least believer today. God the Holy Spirit is “in residence”, literally within every person who claims the name of Jesus and personally accepts His sacrifice as full payment for sin and sins today.

Second, we shall see God's election at work among men. Israel did not choose God. God chose Israel (Jacob). Is God just in His choices and the imposition of obedience on some men and not others? Absolutely. For, He also exercises His sovereignty in dispensing blessing. It is never out of obligation, but out of His amazing love and grace.

## **The Children of Promise and the True Seed 9:1-13**

This section is most important in understanding the difference between the Church and Israel. It is a distinction that is lost on most of Christendom today. Lest any be confused that the believer has been made part of Israel and heir to those promises made to that elect nation, Paul makes clear that there are clear separations. It is with great emotion that he addresses this issue, as an apostle, as a Jew, and as one redeemed from bondage to the Law. First, he asserts that this is from Christ, the Holy Spirit being witness to its truth.

**I speak the truth in Christ--I am not lying, my conscience confirms it in the Holy Spirit-- I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart.  
Romans 9:1,2**

His love for his Jewish brothers is so deep that he considers the idea of self-sacrifice for them, though he knows that is not possible.

**For I could wish that I myself were cursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my brothers, those of my own race, the people of Israel. Theirs is the adoption as sons; theirs the divine glory, the covenants, the receiving of the law, the temple worship and the promises. Romans 9:3,4**

Look at all that had been given to Israel--

**“Adoption as sons”**—As chosen people, Israel held the position of the elect of God, the family chosen by God through which He would bless all the earth.

**“The divine glory”**—Moving before Israel was the pillar of fire by night and the pillar of smoke by day. It was before Israel that God appeared on fire on Mount Sinai, shrouded by smoke. It was before the prophets of Israel that fire rained from heaven and consumed the altar sacrifices before the worshipers of Baal.

**“The covenants”**—The Mosaic Covenant secured by the Law and the Land. The Davidic Covenant secured by the throne and rule over the Land.

**“The Law”**--That perfect body of instructions governing every aspect of the life of the Israelite, leading him face-to-face with his inability to satisfy the demands of a righteous God. The moral law, the commandments, condemned him inwardly. The social law demanded fidelity and justice in all of his dealings with others. The ceremonial law defined the separation between God and man and established the ground on which the two might come together.

**“Temple Worship”**--Temple worship proved (1) that only the office of High Priest was qualified to offer sacrifice that would satisfy a righteous God. (2) that only a perfect sacrifice was acceptable. (3) That God has a special ground on which He will meet with man. That was the Holy of Holies in the Temple, representing the cross to the Church.

**“The Promises”**--The Israelite lived on the basis of God's promises to them attended by demonstrations of his faithfulness. They walked before God in light of the visible presence of

God in their midst, showing Himself according to his promises to them.

**“The Patriarchs”—The** lineage of Jesus is traced by Matthew to make certain that the promises of Messiah to Israel's fathers are seen by that nation as coming true in Him.

**Theirs are the patriarchs, and from them is traced the human ancestry of Christ, who is God over all, forever praised! Amen. Romans 9:5**

But, there is a broader truth unfolding here that Paul calls to their attention. Nothing of God's word has failed regarding Israel and his promises to them. There is a national Israel and a spiritual Israel. The first is made up of all who are born into the lineage of Jacob. The second is made up of all who are born of faith into the company of those who worship and honor God. All in the first are not included in the second.

**It is not as though God's word had failed. For not all who are descended from Israel are Israel. Romans 9:6**

A second example of the principle is now given. Abraham has descendants, but they are not all his children (*tekna*), ‘entitled to inheritance,’ under the promise of God. Ishmael was certainly the son of Abraham, but it is “**through Isaac**” that the *seed* of Abraham promised by God would come. What we hold in common with believing Israel and the children of promise through Isaac is *election* by God.

**Nor because they are his descendants are they all Abraham's children. On the contrary, “It is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned.” In other words, it is not the natural children who are God's children, but it is the children of the promise who are regarded as Abraham's offspring.**

**Romans 9:7,8**

(9:9-13) In Abraham, God made three choices; He chose (1) the man, (2) the woman, and (3) the time for fulfillment of the promise. Both Sarah and Abraham are beyond the years of child bearing. They are totally outside the possibility of human fulfillment of the commitment. So, it is obvious that God acted in order to demonstrate his power and position to his elect. Why should it surprise us when trials and difficulties are brought into our lives? Is this not exactly the manner in which God has chosen to act in the past? Does He not faithfully bring us into circumstances in which the only option open to us is to collapse into His care? This is precisely what He did with Abraham and Sarah. “**At the appointed time**” is *kata ton kairon touton*, ‘according to this season.’ When Vincent explains, “The reference is to Genesis 18:14, where the Hebrew is *when the season is renewed or revives*,” or, “next year at this time.” It implies that the “season” is one that revives periodically—In the context of this passage in Genesis it is a season in which God is going to bring out His best in man through extraordinary means or events. That is precisely the point that Paul is making to the Romans—God is at work calling out the Church through extraordinary means and with demonstrations of power.

In the next generation, Isaac had twins and God chose Jacob over Esau, in contradiction to the traditions of man. Esau, the firstborn would naturally inherit the birthright of rule. Jacob was chosen by God and would take prominence over his elder brother. But, it would not be on the

basis of his character, his strength or his dedication to God's purposes. The choice was made prior to their birth, all in order to demonstrate that God is free to elect who He wills. In one case, God's election was the children of one woman over the child of the other; then the election of one of the children, Jacob, over the other, Esau, in contradiction of the laws of inheritance. Vincent's comment; "Though of one father, a different destiny was divinely appointed for each of the twins. Only the divine disposal constitutes the true and valid succession, and not the bodily descent." This was very important for the early church to realize, for the distinctions of the Body of Christ included a destiny quite different from that of Israel, God's earthly people.

**For this was how the promise was stated: "At the appointed time I will return, and Sarah will have a son." Not only that, but Rebekah's children had one and the same father, our father Isaac. Yet, before the twins were born or had done anything good or bad--in order that God's purpose in election might stand: not by works but by him who calls--she was told, "The older will serve the younger." Just as it is written: "Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated." Romans 9:9-13**

Abraham was sovereignly chosen by God. Sarah was sovereignly chosen by God. Isaac was sovereignly chosen by God. Jacob was sovereignly chosen by God. It was the sovereignty of God, which sent the Son to the Cross. It was the sovereignty of God, which selected the twelve to carry the Gospel to believing Israel. It was the sovereignty of God, which elected the Apostle Paul to carry the Gospel to the Gentiles. It was the sovereign choice of God that reached down among all mankind and took you by the heart and head and brought you to Himself. Could you for one instance imagine that He does not have a clear and determined purpose for having done all that?

## **God's Sovereignty and Election 9:14-18**

**“Is God unjust?”** The ways of man and the ways of God are revealed in these brief statements. Man's view is focused on the rewards given to the elect. Should not all men have been given the same or equal rewards? God's view is focused on the fact that all are deserving of condemnation and He is free to forgive where and what He wills. By way of example to Moses, God said that He would have mercy on some and compassion on others. There is no contrasting wrath seen here as a consequence of his choice, only mercy and compassion. If someone said to you, “would you like to be the recipient of God's mercy?” the answer would undoubtedly be, “of course.” And if they said to you, “would you like to be the recipient of God's compassion?” the answer would be the same. It would be sheer foolishness to choose between mercy and compassion as the better gift from God. Neither act could be categorized as unjust, because the recipient in both cases is unworthy.

There is another aspect that is interesting to consider. Every relationship between God and man is evident in the relationship between Christ (as every man) and the Father. God's judgment of man was confined to Christ on the cross, satisfying the Father's demands for payment for sin. The Father now is freed from asking of any man additional penance for sin, the Son (as everyman) making full restitution removed any further consideration of action on our part. God's mercy and compassion are without strings attached, given freely and without condition.

**What then shall we say? Is God unjust? Not at all! For he says to Moses, “I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion.” It does not, therefore, depend on man's desire or effort, but on God's mercy. Romans 9:14-16**

By the same rule, that man who would reject the mercy and compassion of God in favor of his own human strength and genius places himself outside the light of God's presence in the Son. Those who choose to walk in darkness in defiance of a loving, merciful God and who deny his provision of access in worship, God is free to confirm (“harden”) in their decision. Pharaoh was such a person. God gave him power and position (“I raised you up”), then used him to proclaim truth and his (God's) name to all the earth.

**For the Scripture says to Pharaoh: “I raised you up for this very purpose, that I might display my power in you and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth.” Therefore God has mercy on whom he wants to have mercy, and he hardens whom he wants to harden. Romans 9:17,18**

## God Reveals Himself Through All 9:19-26

The rhetorical question is; “if you cannot resist the will of God, then why does He still blame us?” It is a question asked by one who believes that man has free will of one who believes in God’s predestination. It is what a Baptist might ask of a Presbyterian. Isn’t it amazing that these distinctions were already being made in Paul’s day?

**One of you will say to me: “Then why does God still blame us? For who resists his will?” Romans 9:19**

The answer is not to choose who is right, but to consider who has the right to even ask the question. We are formed by God just as the bowl is formed by the potter. All power is in the hand of the potter, not in the bowl. So the potter decides the use to which the bowl will be put, and may choose to design it just for that specific purpose. The words of that familiar hymn beg to be heard at this point—

“Have thine own way Lord, have thine own way.  
Thou art the potter; I am the clay.  
Mold me and make me, after Thy will;  
while I am waiting, yielded and still.”

**But who are you, O man, to talk back to God? “Shall what is formed say to him who formed it, ‘Why did you make me like this?’“ Does 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? Romans 9:20,21**

Carefully note that the “**objects of his wrath**” were not created so, but were “**prepared for destruction**.” His attitude towards those so destined is one of compassion, attested to by “**great patience**.” In contrast, “**the objects of his mercy**” are said to be “**prepared in advance for glory**.” This was true of both Jew and Gentile called ones. Recall that the examples of God’s choosing already recounted include; Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Christ.

**What if God, choosing to show his wrath and make his power known, bore with great patience the objects of his wrath--prepared for destruction? What if he did this to make the riches of his glory known to the objects of his mercy, whom he prepared in advance for glory--even us, whom he also called, not only from the Jews but also from the Gentiles? Romans 9:22-24**

In Hosea, God foretold calling out a people other than Israel. The reference to “**my loved one**” is a term used of a bride. Israel was referred to several times as a Bride, the loved one of God, in the Old Testament. God says that He will call another “**my loved one**,” speaking of the Church, the Bride of Christ, for whom he returns at the end of this age. It is important to note that these two figures are different. They are not fused into one body, but remain two distinct bridal figures. The latter replaces the former as the object of God’s love, but in a different period of time. In the “**very place**” where Israel was abandoned in time, “**they**” of the new body (the Church) are “**called ‘sons of the living God.’**“ This is the language used in both Acts and the Epistles to refer to the institution of the Church.

As he says in Hosea: “I will call them ‘my people’ who are not my people; and I will call her ‘my loved one’ who is not my loved one,” and, “It will happen that in the very place where it was said to them, ‘You are not my people,’ they will be called ‘sons of the living God.’” Romans 9:25, 26

## **Among Men, There is a Remnant 9:27-29**

Paul is concerned that some might be shocked or dismayed by this harshness on God's part. "Why would a God of love and patience cast off his chosen nation?" This is not a new accusation or dilemma. The apostle takes us back to Isaiah, to hear that prophet's answer to the same queries--God's judgments are swift and complete. Isaiah knew that there were none deserving of mercy and compassion, but all were condemned by the very Law they said they revered and obeyed. If not for God's intervening election of descendants, all Israel would have been destroyed by the fires of judgment, just like Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed. So God acts to preserve a remnant to Himself.

**Isaiah cries out concerning Israel: "Though the number of the Israelites be like the sand by the sea, only the remnant will be saved. For the Lord will carry out his sentence on earth with speed and finality." It is just as Isaiah said previously: "Unless the Lord Almighty had left us descendants, we would have become like Sodom, we would have been like Gomorrah."**

**Romans 9:27-29**

The prophet Isaiah says that but for God saving a scrap of the nation, all of Israel would have been destroyed because of their disobedience and rejection of the God of Heaven. At the time of the incarnation of Jesus Christ, Israel stands on the Law, albeit perverted beyond imagination into a cacophony of rules and regulations by which to piously judge one another. The Law had devolved into a system of absurd definitions that inundated anyone attempting to find truth there. Refusing to be condemned by its original and God defined rigidity; the Scribes and Pharisees reduce it to activities that can be demonstrated publicly in proud displays. What a lesson for today's busy Christian centers and church organizations. Christianity does not consist of any set of behaviors, but of a specific relationship between God and man.

## Israel Failed by Standing on the Law and Rejecting Christ 9:30-33

If the Israelite had allowed himself to be judged by the Law, he would have been dying of thirst for truth. What a difference that would have made in his readiness to accept Christ as Messiah and Lord. On the day of that great temple ceremony, the High Priest of Israel ascended the ramp to the Brazen Altar taking with him the pitcher of water from Siloam. At the side of the altar, he poured out the pitcher of water mixed with the blood of the sacrifice, both of which ran into the ground around the altar, signifying the atonement (in the blood) and healing (in the water). At that precise moment, a voice rose like cannon thunder across the courtyard—**“If any man thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, ‘from his innermost being shall flow rivers of living water.”**<sup>51</sup> Their choice could not have been clearer, the pageantry of the ceremony or the Lord of Heaven.

**“By Moses came the law, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ”**  
**John 1:18**

What follows in John's Gospel is as relevant as today's news. The religious leaders got into a discussion of whether or not any among them had been **“led astray”** by Christ's presentation of Himself. Their position was that the crowd was not sufficiently trained in the Law to protect themselves or render any opinion or judgment on the matter. In other words, they were rejecting truth in the person of Jesus Christ in favor of their own edition of God's Law rendered socially correct and societally acceptable by their personal genius. The issue is not whether God has spoken clearly on an issue, rather, how will it play in Dallas, Silver Springs, the Bronx or New Orleans.

It's July 18, 1991, the Episcopal Bishops fill the news with their ruminations over how to accept the growing number of homosexual clergy through ordination. Should they simply restrict their genital sexual contact activities, or just require their celibacy? At stake is what the community at-large will think of them. Not one mention is made of an attempt to search scripture for a biblical answer. Social acceptance is the driving force.

Look at this--Two thousand years of history and we still see truth standing across the courtyard calling to thirsty souls and an astounded clergy gaping at the clarity of the call. Some will follow Him outside the walls, and there find their answers. From that moment on, they lose their racial identity. No longer Jews or Gentiles, they will soon be known as Christians.

So we come to the Gentiles. They were not historically charged with the responsibility of maintaining righteousness as defined by God in his Law. But, now they have obtained that very position within the Church by means of personal faith. Israel, on the other hand, who sought righteousness on the basis of law, though not of God, rather of their own definition, did not attain it. That is a failure of human effort, of works.

**What then shall we say? That the Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, have obtained it, a righteousness that is by faith; but Israel, who pursued a law of righteousness, has not attained it. Why not? Because**

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<sup>51</sup> John 7: 37, 38

**they pursued it not by faith but as if it were by works. They stumbled over the “stumbling stone.” As it is written: “See, I lay in Zion a stone that causes men to stumble and a rock that makes them fall, and the one who trusts in him will never be put to shame.” Romans 9:30-33**

## **Section Two-Chapter 10** **Law Contrasted With the Faith of the Gospel**

Introduction to Section Two:

A loving Father has made all of his character available to man. It comes through an eternal relationship, which begins for each person, individually, at the cross of Christ. We approach the cross through the channel of faith. From God's side of the cross, he lets flow His infinite, endless love. The channel through which He brings everything to the cross is Grace. Grace is like a great conduit, through which all the love of the Father flows to the Son, who represents every man. When man comes to the cross, individually and personally by Faith, there he is joined to Christ in his death as a man. At that moment, the individual, now a Believer, is placed into union with God the Father. This is accomplished by being joined to his Son, who is one with the Father. That faith on the part of man is contrasted in this chapter with law. Where faith now appropriates righteousness, the Law brought man to a realization of his total failure before God.

Faith and grace bring lost man into direct contact and a relationship with God the Father. Obedience to the Law brought man into the knowledge of his total lack of righteousness.

## **Self-righteousness is Chosen Over God's Righteousness 10:1-4**

Looking at Israel under the tutorage of the Law, Paul's cry is that they be would be saved by accepting God's Son. His inner desire and most fervent prayers were always offered up for his Jewish brothers. Though sent by God to minister the Gospel specifically to the Gentiles, his affection for his brothers kept him involved with them until his death.

**SINCERITY IS NEVER A SUBSTITUTE FOR TRUTH**

**Brothers, my heart's desire and prayer to God for the Israelites is that they may be saved. Romans 10:1**

Will a sincere heart save a person? No! Nor is it to be supposed that the Israelite pursued salvation through keeping the Law. He assumed salvation as one of the Chosen People based on the mercy and election of God. Today, the argument constantly heard from the humanist is that "a person who is really sincere in his search for God will surely not be rejected by a god who is fair." Paul says that the sincerity of the Jews in pursuit of pleasing God was not ever questionable, nor was it an issue of salvation, but of keeping the blessings of the Covenant. But, it was not based on knowledge of the truth. Their acts of righteousness were based on assumptions that were not true. Simply put, sincerity is not enough to gain God's favor! Truth must be the foundation of your belief and actions.

**For I can testify about them that they are zealous for God, but their zeal is not based on knowledge. Since they did not know the righteousness that comes from God and sought to establish their own, they did not submit to God's righteousness. Romans 10:2-3**

The Law, which established God's righteous character *for* them did not reveal the righteousness of God that was available *to* them in Christ. Failing to see that, they designed their own standard of righteousness and looked to the priesthood to administer it. They had taken the absolute principles in the Law and rendered them weak and ineffective through interpretations that expressed their own relative righteousness, and then used them as standards of piety! Again, they did not doubt their salvation by God, for that was inherent in their Covenant relationship to Him. But, the blessings that attended that relationship were entirely dependent on their performance! Remember, the satisfaction of the requirements of the Law for all of Israel was tied to the sacrifice, which it demanded. Each year, on the Day of Atonement, a perfect sacrifice was made by the high priest on behalf of the entire nation. That pictured the coming of Messiah and His offering of Himself, *once and for all*, as the *single act* of contrition for all men. Once that was done, the Law was completely satisfied and its demands met, forever! There was no more accountability to the Law on any man's part. The payment had been made. The issue now is not meeting the demands of the Law, but accepting the price that was paid and living in light of that freedom.

**Christ is the end of the law so that there may be righteousness for everyone who believes. Romans 10:4**

## Faith is the Means to Christ for Salvation 10:5-13

Moses said that any righteousness available to man by the law was appropriated only by doing the things in the Law. What is not said is that not one person could ever satisfy the demands of the Law and by doing so attain righteousness. Christ alone accomplished that and fulfilled those requirements once for all. He did what no one else could do, and on that basis, obtained resurrection life.

**Moses describes in this way the righteousness that is by the law: “The man who does these things will live by them.” Romans 10:5**

“But” introduces a contrast--in contrast to having to attempt to do the things in the Law, “faith says” to believe and confess. These two verbs deal with two essential truths in the Gospel to these early Christians. It is of particular importance that we understand what this said to them. What you are to “believe in your heart” is that Christ is ascended into heaven, for “God raised him from the dead.” This is acknowledgement that the same Jesus that announced himself as the Son of God, rose from the dead and lives at the right hand of the Father. What you are to “confess with your mouth” is that “Jesus is lord.” That is a personal denial of any other object of worship, a turning away from idols revered in the past. For the Jewish believer, it meant denouncing any further relationship to the Law, or to Israel. For the Gentile, it was a clear denouncement of all other gods then common in Rome.

Doing so meant that they properly centered their faith on the ascended Lord Jesus, not the man Jesus who was the carpenter's son. None should entertain the idea that what was done could have been done by any other than the true Son of God.

It is the same two-fold realization that must be embraced by any who begin with the premise that Jesus is a prophet of God in the same manner as Moses, Mohammed, Sri Darwin Gross, Gandhi or Buddha. First, they must deal with the Christ who conquered death and now is ascended to the Father. Second, they must acknowledge Him, and Him alone, as Lord, the Master of all Creation.

**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 are proclaiming: That if you confess with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. Romans 10:6-9**

What happens next is the Gospel becoming real to the individual and expressed as a life-style. This is not a prescription of methods for becoming a believer. Rather, it is a look at some of the changes that take place when one of His own comes to Him.

First, there is the inner conviction that becomes belief as one learns who and what Jesus Christ did on the Cross. Second is the recognition of personal need; that what He did was essential and that you or I could not, in any manner, have done anything on our own behalf to substitute for

His work. That is the content of “**confess**.” It is not the act of confessing, nor the statement of confession that is essential, but the content of your inner thought in words that have meaning to you personally. “**With your mouth**” has more to say about acknowledgement to yourself that these things that Christ did are essential, than to suggest that speaking words is the basis for salvation. It is sheer folly to conclude that oral recitation is the requirement for salvation. On that basis the speechless are damned by God's decree. The mouth makes words, not just sounds, and the words have content, and the content must express your acknowledgement of Jesus as deliverer and Lord. That is true whether you have the capacity for uttering sound or not.

**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 Scripture says, “Anyone who trusts in him will never 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 “Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”**  
**Romans 10:10-13**

## **The Gospel is Proclaimed and Faith is the Response 10:14-17**

Let's turn our attention now to the method by which the Gospel is spread to mankind. We have examined the content of the Gospel and the individual's response to its call. We see that it is spread mainly through proclamation and by appointed messengers. These are men and women chosen as messengers and prepared by God for their specific tasks. This was true of the first disciples who were charged with taking the Gospel of Messiah's having come to Israel. It was certainly true of the Apostles who took the Gospel of the ascended Lord Jesus to the Church. It was true of the prophets of the Old Testament as they took the **“Good News”** of God's deliverance to Israel in bondage. The word is preached, one hears and believes and then calls to God for mercy and salvation.

**How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? And how can they preach unless they are sent? As it is written, “How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!” But not all the Israelites accepted the good news. For Isaiah says, “Lord, who has believed our message?” Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ.**

**Romans 10:14-17**

## **Israel Rejected the Gospel Message 10:18-21**

There is an evangel, according to Paul, who has proclaimed the Gospel message to the ends of the earth. Is this possible? If so, what implications does this have regarding world-wide evangelistic efforts? Some answers will be attempted here. Others must be treated at length in other works.

Who are the preachers who take the Gospel to the ends of the Earth, and who did so to assure that all Israel heard the message? The text of verse 18 is taken from Psalm 19:4. There, David, the Psalmist tells us exactly who these preachers are--The stars. Specifically, the constellations splayed across the pathway of the sun and know widely as the “signs of the Zodiac”.

Stop! Just a moment; before you race ahead and embrace the popular topic of astrology, the horoscope from the daily paper and prediction of your personal future, you need to examine the divine order of the heavens in the day they were created. All was for a particular purpose.

If this message in the heavens is a clear statement of the Gospel, then all mankind has been exposed to the Gospel and is rightly condemned on the basis of their rejection of it--if that is the case.

**“The heavens declare the glory of God,  
and the firmament shows His  
handiwork. Day unto day, utter speech!  
Night unto night reveals knowledge!  
There is no speech nor language where  
their voice is not heard!” Psalm 19:4**

**But I ask: Did they not hear? Of course they did: “Their voice has gone out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world.” Romans 10:18**

Condemned on the basis of the universal revelation of the Gospel, Israel compounds their rejection. Moses told them that their rejection of God would result in his (God's) working through another people. Isaiah prophesied that others not seeking God, nor even asking for his appearance, would find Him. All the while, Israel was a “**disobedient and obstinate people.**” Their rejection was at lease three-fold.

**Again I ask: Did Israel not understand? First, Moses says, “I will make you envious by those who are not a nation; I will make you angry by a nation that has no understanding.” And Isaiah boldly says, “I was found by those who did not seek me; I revealed myself to those who did not ask for me.” But concerning Israel he says, “All day long I have held out my hands to a disobedient and obstinate people.” Romans 10:19-21**

### **Section Three-Chapter 11 God's Promises to Israel Will be Fulfilled**

Introduction to Section Three:

Faithfulness is in view in this Section; not ours, but God's. There were promises made by God to corporate Israel. They were unilateral commitments by a heavenly God to His Earthly people. These will be fulfilled during the Tribulation period (after the Church is taken) and during the

millennium. The nation Israel was and is a constant testimony to God's patience, mercy and longsuffering love for all men and every individual man. Even after such total rejection of Him as Israel has displayed over the centuries of her history, God still draws them personally to Himself.

First, we will see His unchanging purpose in election of those people called into a personal relationship with Him.

Second, we will see the people of Israel in their preoccupation with self, confirmed in their hardness of heart towards God's call.

Third, we will see the results of their fall and their final restoration by God. This is not universal salvation for the Jew, but that God, who is faithful, will eventually complete His offer of salvation to those of Israel remaining alive in time to hear it and receive their Messiah.

Fourth, we will see that God's dealing with Israel, His Earthly People, is an example of His constancy before the Church across the centuries. It also has specific application to the Body of Christ there in Rome, a lesson by way of example for the Church in Rome's young believers.

## **God's Present Election in Grace Reveals His Unchanging Purpose 11:1-6**

Paul's presentation is based on sure knowledge, because he is a Jew by heritage and birth. He is a Christian by direct revelation<sup>52</sup> and rebirth. While spreading the Gospel throughout the Gentile world, and expanding the Church through addition of Gentile people, his sensitivity and love for his Jewish brethren lead him to make clear that God's provision for that nation is not over. From the Old Testament Scripture, he recounts Elijah's appeal to God to apply discipline and bring His people under control.

**I ask then: Did God reject his people? By no means! I am an Israelite myself, a descendant of Abraham, from the tribe of Benjamin. God did not reject his people, whom he foreknew. Don't you know what the Scripture says in the passage about Elijah--how he appealed to God against Israel: "Lord, they have killed your prophets and torn down your altars; I am the only one left, and they are trying to kill me?" Romans 11:1-3**

Just as God had preserved a remnant in Elijah's time, so He has preserved a remnant out of Israel according to grace in Paul's time. The “**remnant**” refers to those out of Israel who accepted the Gospel and are now within the Church, the Body of Christ. They have lost their national identification, but are the seed of Abraham together with believing Gentiles. The middle wall of partition has been broken down and all are in one company. Having left the Law behind, they now subsist together on the ground of Grace and not the works of the Law. Where there were requirements made of them in the past with regards to worship, social interaction and their moral life as individuals before Him, now those rules have been lifted and their standard is the life of the Lord Jesus flowing from the wellspring of the Holy Spirit within each one.

**And 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. Romans 11:4-6**

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<sup>52</sup> This refers to the Damascus Road appearance of Christ to Paul to reveal Himself to his apostle to the Gentiles.

## **The Elect See, the Rest Are Hardened 11:7-10**

The example of Pharaoh's having been hardened in his rejection has already been given (9:17). Now rejecting Israel is brought under that same light. Those within the nation who did choose to deny the leadership and headship of God were confirmed (hardened) in their decision. God then turned away from them and took His dealings with man to the *elect remnant*. That was true under Moses, when those who were self-willed had Aaron make the golden calf for them to worship. It was true under Elijah, who saw the priesthood of Israel completely embrace the religion of Babylon and Egypt. And now, in the early church, the Apostle Paul says that the same defection is probable. The elect, the sheep who know the voice of the Shepherd, have responded and are led into the full light of Grace and salvation within the Body of Christ. Many of those who are called and to whom the Gospel is presented do not make the same response in faith. Rejecting the convicting ministry of the Holy Spirit, and the promise of His coming in fullness to lead them into truth, they became the recipients of another quality of human spirit, that of blindness, stupor. Losing their desire for more enlightenment, they lose the capacity to receive the truth even where it is evident to them. Their "**backs (were) bent forever**," casting their eyes downward to the world of man and away from the heavenly home of God. It is the same as saying "they had their faces turned from God."

**What then? What Israel sought so earnestly it did not obtain, but the elect did. The others were hardened, as it is written: "God gave them a spirit of stupor, eyes so that they could not see and ears so that they could not hear, to this very day." And David says: "May their table become a snare and a trap, a stumbling block and a retribution for them. May their eyes be darkened so they cannot see, and their backs be bent forever." Romans 11:7-10**

## **The Result of Their Fall and Their Restoration 11:11-15**

Now, lest the Gentiles fall into the habit of condemning and castigating the Jew, Paul turns their attention to the fact that salvation reached the Gentiles through the history and legacy of the nation of Israel. It was through their rejection that the Gospel was offered to the Gentile nations.<sup>53</sup>

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

Paul knows that the Jew is spiritually dead. They have only the Law through which to attain righteousness, and that has now been left behind. The Holy of Holies is empty of the glory; the veil is rent, the priesthood a shambles of obvious self-interest. There is none qualified to offer the required sacrifice for atonement that Christ so finally brought to culmination. Yet, his hope is that some may come to Christ as risen from the dead.

**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? Romans 11:13-15**

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It is pointless to consider whether the Gospel would not have been offered to the Gentiles in the event that Israel had accepted Christ as Messiah. That rejection was known from before the foundation of the world, in that time when all was subjected to the plan and decrees of God. While difficult for man to comprehend, God took into account every individual and his/her personal confrontation with the Gospel, whether through creation, the evidence of the heavens, the promises, the Law, the person of Christ, or the witness of the Church and secured that person's position in the Book of Life and at the Bema Seat of Christ.

## **God's Dealing With Israel is An Example of Testing For Believers 11:16-21**

Here is consideration of all of the elect of God. It is not a discussion of how they might differ, but of what they share in common of God's provision.

For all their differences, both Israel and the Church obtain sustenance from the Lord Jesus. As his earthly people, Israel was set apart unto God. As his heavenly people, Believers are set apart unto God. Two examples are given of this relationship to God--That part of the dough, which is offered to God as a firstfruits offering, is holy. It follows that the whole batch from which it is taken is likewise holy (set apart). Second, if the root of the tree is set apart, it follows that the branches which take life from the root are equally set apart (holy).

**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. Romans 11:16**

Now, “**the branches (which) have been broken off**” represent Israel cut off from God by their rejection of Messiah. The “**wild olive shoot**” represents believers gaining life from the root. This cannot be pressed further to imply that the Church is a continuance of the company of Israel. That carries the illustration beyond the point being made here. The point being the source of life for those set apart unto God.

**If some of the branches have been broken off, and you, though a wild olive shoot, have been grafted in among the others and now share in the nourishing sap from the olive root, Romans 11:17**

Is there any room for boasting as to your position? None! Both are totally supported by the root. There was no merit involved in the election of either. This brings a certain fearful truth--God who judged Israel and set them aside for their unbelief, is the same who will judge the faith of those who profess to believe within Christendom. Corporate identity with Israel did not save the Israelite, but faithful obedience to the Law. Corporate identity with the Church of Jesus Christ will not save the professing Christian, but a genuine, personal trust (faith) in the substitutionary death of Jesus Christ.

**do not boast over those branches. If you do, consider this: You do not support the root, but the root supports you. You will say then, “Branches were broken off so that I could be grafted in.” Granted. But they were broken off because of unbelief, and you stand by faith. Do not be arrogant, but be afraid. For if God did not spare the natural branches, he will not spare you either. Romans 11:18-21**

## God's Way of Governing 11:22-29

**“Those who fell”** refers to unbelieving Israel, they who rejected Christ and are now outside the camp and lost. There are two categories of Jews in this present condition:

First, are those who were faithful Jews under the Law who have lived to hear of the resurrected Jesus and have rejected Him as the promised Messiah. These were redeemed within Israel, availing themselves of the provisions of the sacrificial system, which pointed them to Christ. Having rejected Him, they are now lost.

Second, are those who were unfaithful Jews under the Law and who have lived to hear of the resurrected Jesus and have rejected Him as the promised Messiah. These were condemned by the Law and rejecting the provisions of the sacrificial system, were lost and remain so.

Hebrews Chapter Six\*\*\*\*\*

This is precisely the position of the Jew in Paul's letter to the Hebrews. There, the Jew, whether a convert or one newly exposed to the Gospel of the resurrected Christ, is enjoined; **“leave the principles of the doctrine of Christ.”** Kenneth Wuest translates this, **“Therefore having abandoned once for all the principles of the doctrine of the Christ.”** This Jew has already left behind the introduction of Christ as Messiah. That much of God's presentation of the Son has been heard and acknowledged as he accepts **“the Christ”** as Messiah. It doesn't stop there, however, as the author of the letter continues—**“let us go on unto perfection (maturity).”** What is required for that step to take place is now given. **“Not laying again the foundation of...,”** marks a point of departure. Here are the foundation blocks off from which the Jew is to step into his full maturity of acceptance by God and as a teacher of the doctrines of God.

**“Repentance from dead works,”** was necessary because the Jew was bound to the sacrificial system of the Levitical offerings. These were only temporary and necessarily repeated often in the experience of the faithful. **“Faith towards God”** refers to the faith in God's promise that obedience of His Law would provide deliverance and peace in the land. **“The doctrine of baptisms”** recalls all of the Levitical washings that were required in order to qualify the sacrificial offerings of the Jew. **“Of laying on of hands”** takes us back to Leviticus 1:4 where the hands of the sinner were laid on the sacrifice prior to its being offered by the priest. It speaks of conferring sin to the sacrifice. **“Of resurrection of the dead”** brings to mind the offering of Isaac by Abraham. In that case, Abraham fully expected to slay his son and that God would resurrect him. It also has a national implication in that Israel is repeatedly raised as bones from the grave and given flesh and life as a nation.

**“Of eternal judgment,”** is because the Jew was thoroughly instructed in the condemnation associated with disobedience from Adam to Christ.

All of these having been left behind, the Jew is faced with the Gospel of the resurrected, ascended Jesus. There are no **“dead works”** from which to repent, only the **“work”** of the Lord Jesus on the cross to accept. The **“faith”** that was exercised **“towards God”** is now the gift of faith given by the Spirit that rests in the Son of God. The **“baptisms”** of the Old Testament are

but a shadow of the baptism of the believer into Christ. “**Laying on of hands**” is the actual acceptance of the sufficiency of the sacrifice of Christ on one's personal behalf. It is the diamond pivot of salvation. “**Resurrection**” is the blessed hope of the believer that looks to the coming again of the Groom for His Bride. “**Eternal judgment**” brings to mind that the believer is no longer under any condemnation since all has been paid by Christ.

### With Knowledge, Comes Responsibility

Once one is “**enlightened**” regarding the provision of God in Christ through the ministry (“**were made partakers**) of the **Holy Ghost**”, then “**it is impossible to renew (return to) those (old practices) again unto (and effect) repentance**. In other words, having been faced with the Gospel of the ascended Christ, the Jew, who had been faithful under the Law, could no longer continue under those practices, which in the past were effective in bringing in repentance, the requirement for forgiveness. Such a man, saved under the Law, would now be lost on the basis of his rejection of Jesus Christ for the Law's purpose was only to bring him to the Cross. It made no provision for his life after the cross except condemnation and death.

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Compared to them are “**you**” Gentiles. Gentiles, having never been under the Law of Israel, find themselves the recipients of God's “**kindness**.” If it were possible for us to separate ourselves from God by our own action, we would be in danger of not continuing “**in his kindness**.” In that case, we should surely be cut off from the sustenance of the root (the previously illustration is continued). By the same rule, “**if they (unbelieving Israelites) do not persist in unbelief**.” then they may be joined to him and saved.

**Consider therefore the kindness and sternness of God: sternness to those who fell, but kindness to you, provided that you continue in his kindness. Otherwise, you also will be cut off. And if they do not persist in unbelief, they will be grafted in, for God is able to graft them in again. After all, if you were cut out of an olive tree that is wild by nature, and contrary to nature were grafted into a cultivated olive tree, how much more readily will these, the natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree!** Romans 11:22-24

The “**hardening in part**” of Israel is reference to those individuals who are not receptive to the Gospel of grace. It is not a casting aside of each member of that nation, but a dealing with them as individuals. That condition will remain until the full number has come into the Church and Christ comes to claim the final generation that makes up his Bride. The “**mystery**” includes; (1) the time of the rapture of the Church, (2) the number of individuals in the Church, (3) the personal ministry of the Holy Spirit to those elect within Israel, which enlightens whatever remnant is chosen of God to be drawn into the Church.

**I do not want you to be ignorant of this mystery, brothers, so that you may not be conceited: Israel has experienced a hardening in part until the full number of the Gentiles has come in. Romans 11:25**

The phrase, “**all Israel will be saved**” does not mean that every person in Israel will be saved,

but that national Israel will once again become the object of God's dealings with man, and that the promises made to them corporately will be delivered. Out of Zion, He will come. The armies of the Antichrist will be destroyed and national Israel, relieved of the burden of their sins, will be established for one thousand years as the center of a world-wide theocracy over which Christ reigns.

**And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written: “The deliverer will come from Zion; he will turn godlessness away from Jacob. And this is my covenant with them when I take away their sins.” As far as the gospel is concerned, they are enemies on your account; but as far as election is concerned, they are loved on account of the patriarchs, for God's gifts and his call are irrevocable. Romans 11:26-29**

## God Defeats Sin On Its Own Terms 11:30-36

We gentiles, once “**disobedient to God,**” are now the recipients of the Gospel and mercy of God. That gift of mercy came to us “**as a result of their (Israel's) disobedience.**” Now, their disobedience prepares them to receive his Mercy and know that it is without merit on their part, but of grace, because they have been able to observe His dealings with the Gentiles. The Church is the example of that principle for Israel.

**Just as you who were at one time disobedient to God have now received mercy as a result of their disobedience, so they too have now become disobedient in order that they too may now receive mercy as a result of God's mercy to you. For God has bound all men over to disobedience so that he may have mercy on them all. Romans 11:30-32**

There is a depth to the wisdom and knowledge of God that is beyond anything that the mind of man can comprehend. His ways, paths and mind move into arenas where man cannot follow. This is the ground on which our faith develops, not out of choice, but of necessity. The only option left to man through which to address and follow God is faith. Is it possible to obligate God by giving to Him? No! Is it possible to counsel God on any matter? No! Then, on what basis are our prayers so directive? Do we presume to know better than God what the outcome of any circumstance should be? Pray rather that we be given enlightenment as to His purposes.

**Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable his judgments, and his paths beyond tracing out! “Who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has been his counselor?” “Who has ever given to God, that God should repay him?” For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be the glory forever! Amen.**

**Romans 11:33-36**

What a great tragedy it would be if God were to bind Himself to the choices we offer Him in our prayers. Limiting Him to solutions conceived by human minds without the perspective of His omniscience would rob us of His elective and sovereign actions that bring out His best in us. The older I get, the less directive my prayers. I find myself praying more for courage and strength to endure and less for relief. Why should I want that taken away which He has seen fit to bring in for a purpose that is beyond my comprehension at the moment? Either I trust my heavenly Father to act in my best interest, and His, or I do not. It does remain inconceivable to me that my ideas regarding any situation I might face, would be in any manner superior to His.

## **DIVISION FOUR- Chapter 12:1-16:27**

### **Living in Accordance With God's Mercy**

Introduction to Division Four: The number **Four** brings our attention to earth, the dwelling place of man. Four, as in the “four corners of the earth”, always speaks to us of the sphere in which man lives. In this Fourth Division we will see the message of God to the believers in Rome regarding how they are to live and work together in anticipation of the Lord Jesus' return.

This next division of the epistle, which stretches from 12:1 through 15:13, deals with *the Practical Christian Life*. Here, we shall see how to access the mercy of God in circumstances common to men and circumstances peculiar to one who would live as a child of God.

One, is the achievement of peace among ourselves through obedience to God's principles and the example of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Two, is how to live life among men who are antagonistic towards God. More importantly, how to live among them, but separated from them and unto God.

Three, is how to deal with that inner voice, the conscience of man, which expresses our norms and standards, now in tune with the dictates of the Holy Spirit.

## **Subdivision One Chapter 12** **Spiritual Harmony Through Obedience**

Introduction to Subdivision One of Division Four:

**One of Four** tells us that there is a possible place of unity (1) within the sphere of life as a man (4). Unity is in the fact that God expects us, as individual people, to come to Him and commit our daily walk to Him. The first thing which we will see in this sub-division is that our physical body, the very life that we live, should be surrendered to God for His use.

There is an order to our self-imposed limitations that renders them pleasing to God. This is not an endorsement of self-denial in order to buy or bargain for some position of advantage with God. Such acts are drawn from the rankest of pagan rituals. However, it is an acknowledgement that God appreciates those acts of voluntary offerings by His own, performed in order to bring oneself closer to the living example of the Lord Jesus.

It is extremely important that there be no sense in which a person thinks to obligate God for any response--Our Heavenly Father is not the genie of the lamp.

## **A New Creation Principle--The Body a Living Sacrifice to God 12:1-3**

As Israel made their sacrifices to God on the altar of the temple, the believer, at the altar of the heart, is urged to offer his very physical being as a sacrifice to God. In this, God becomes the owner of the body and its keeper.

It is the act of setting apart all of our experiences to God, but, is a spiritual service. As a result, we should be transformed in our experiences by having our mind infused with the mind of Christ. It is the method by which believers may display in their very thought and action the character of the Lord Jesus Christ.

### **THE BELIEVER**

The Body.....	The Temple
The Heart.....	The Brazen Altar
The Character of Christ.....	The Law
The Holy Spirit.....	The Ummin and Thummin
Access to God.....	The Aaronic Priesthood
Every Blessing, in the Heavenlies.....	The Promises
Joined to Christ as His Bride.....	Ruled by Christ Their King

### **THE ISRAELITE**

**Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God--this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is--his good, pleasing and perfect will. Romans 12:1, 2**

The caution is given lest we begin to think that there is any merit whatsoever in our response or value to God. Even the faith with which we trust for salvation is a gift of God. Man does have free will, and has exercised it in opposition to God on every occasion. This is consistent with all testimony of Scripture and underscores our total need of grace.

**For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you.**  
**Romans 12:3**

## **Serve, as God Has Given You Faith to Do So 12:4-8**

Though there is no merit on our part that incited God to save us, there is a place of service prepared for each of us, and the enablement of the Holy Spirit within. The gifts by which we serve provide areas of opportunity for us that are unique to our capabilities and our personalities.

The members of the Church of Christ are not stamped out with some theocratic, iconic, anthropomorphic cookie cutter. Far from it; we are unique, new creations of God, placed just so within the world, as citizens of heaven on temporary duty status, with specific functions to perform for the benefit of the whole Body.

**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. Romans 12:4, 5**

Now, look carefully at the instructions attending this first listed gift of service, “**prophesying**.” This gift, as a pattern for all gifts that follow, is not to be used outside the boundary of his faith. Think about that for a moment. This gift is not to be used to strengthen the prophets faith, but within the faith that he already has. If he does not have the assurance, active trust, that God is absolutely in control of his circumstance and the situation of which he is to speak, then he had best shut up!

**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. Romans 12:6**

If you serve, teach or encourage others, then do it! If your gift is giving to the needs of others (and that is not limited to money, but includes time, counsel, a sympathetic ear or an open home) the qualification is generosity, “**give generously**.”

The gift of “**leadership**” is to be welded with “**diligence**.” True leadership is not a part-time job. It involves the display of your lifestyle as a example to those who are led. Neither does it consist of the acquired skills of management or an understanding of the behavioral sciences. Certainly, they are valuable assets and can enhance the manner in which leadership is used. But, common sense and a thorough understanding of biblical principles are the only tools required to begin. The gift of leadership is the ability to bring others into a better understanding of their relationship to Christ and to the members of the Body of Christ.

“**Showing mercy**” is to be done “**cheerfully**.” Did you ever know anyone, who under the guise of “**showing mercy**” took it upon themselves to correct things that the other person was doing that bothered them? Such “**mercy**” is almost always delivered with gravity and with the most ardently expressed concern for the other person's well being, to save them from embarrassment, for instance. If mercy cannot be administered with a smile on your face, then its not the gift listed here, its something else altogether. Mercy should not have its genesis in pity, but in your joy from knowing your Heavenly Father and your comfort in His provision. These are the elements from which your own resources flow.

**If it is serving, let him serve; if it is teaching, let 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. Romans 12:7,8**

### **The Fruit of the Separated Life In Christ 12:9-21**

What follows, from verse 9 through verse 21, are the marching orders for the Christian. Elements of living life “in Christ” are given here so that we might know how to live as Christ intends. These are the General Orders for God’s Army on Earth, the Church.

“**Love**” is agape. It is love that comes from the will. You do not “feel” like you agape, you will to agape. It is the declaration of worth on the object of your love [agape]. Your declaration of love [agape] must be sincere (without hypocrisy). “**Hate**” is the same root as apostasy (falling away). We are to “fall away” from evil. It means to shun, to turn away from as having never arrived.

- #1. **Love must be sincere.**
- #2. **Hate what is evil;**
- #3. **Cling to what is good.**

**Romans 12:9**

“**Brotherly love**” is *philadelphia*. It is affection (love), which is based on things shared. In the case of relationships between two or more believers, that which is shared is the Gospel and our common salvation. “**Honor**” means to give preference to another. We should not be seeking our “rights,” but the others good. “**One another**” refers to the Church, to other believers.

- #4. **Be devoted to one another in brotherly love.**
- #5. **Honor one another above yourselves.**

**Romans 12:10**

“**Lacking**” is slothful, lazy or inattentive. “**Zeal**” is something that must be generated. It means that we should not neglect being the initiator of action and speaks of active participation and joy of service to God. Our “**joy in hope**” comes from our anticipation of His return and the end of our present trials. This means that we can be “**patient in affliction**” and “**faithful in prayer**.” Think about it--whenever we lose sight of the fact of His love and provision for us, we sink into self-pity over the mess we happen to be in at the moment and the first thing that goes out the window is our prayer of thanksgiving and dependence on Him.

- #6. **Never be lacking in zeal, but**
- #7. **keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord.**
- #8. **Be joyful in hope,**
- #9. **patient in affliction,**
- #10. **faithful in prayer.**

**Romans 12:11, 12**

“**Practice**” is *pursue*. We are to pursue hospitality. That means that extending ourselves to

others is not something that is imposed upon us, but something we look for opportunity to do.

**#11. Share with God's people who are in need.**

**#12. Practice hospitality.**

**Romans 12:13**

It is interesting that there is no qualifier here on persecution for 'righteousness sake'. In today's litigious society, this advice might seem particularly burdensome. There is no room for "getting even" with someone who has wronged you. Even further, we are enjoined to bless those who take advantage of us. Now, your therapist would tell you that you have a real problem. What are you going to do with all that displaced anger? The object is gone and you are asked to generate a spirit of forgiveness. This is contrary to the entire human equation of fairness. On the one hand, we attempt to teach our children to be fair with one another, only to have our adult psychologists tell us that the world isn't fair and that the only way out is to be a forgiving person. No wonder we are a neurotic society. We are asking for responses on the human level that are only achievable on the spiritual. Only the believer has the cross as the place where all is disposed of. Only by retreating into the life of the Lord Jesus can true forgiveness of those who persecute you be reproduced in you by the Holy Spirit.

**#13. Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse.**

**Romans 12:14**

**#14. Rejoice with those who rejoice;**

**#15. mourn with those who mourn.**

**Romans 12:15**

We are not to be proud when comparing ourselves to others, nor are we to be conceited with regard to our own abilities. The reason should be obvious--what we are and what we have are provided by the grace and mercy of God. Our attention should be on sharing both with others, that they might come to know Him personally.

**#16. Live in harmony with one another.**

**#17. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position.**

**#18. Do not be conceited.**

**Romans 12:16**

**"Evil for evil"** cautions us not to get drawn into the value systems of the world. The Old Testament Law limited reparations to an **"eye for an eye."** Here, the believer is told not to even consider meeting evil deeds with equal deeds. Human instinct says that when one hurts you, hurt him back. When someone slanders you, the knee-jerk reaction is to respond with "well he certainly has no room to talk..." and then recount his own failings. There is usually a pathway open that is recognized as honorable by everyone.

**#19. Do not repay anyone evil for evil.**

**#20. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everybody.**

**Romans 12:17**

In his letter to the Thessalonians, Paul puts the issue in these terms, “**Make it your ambition to lead a quiet life, to mind your own business and to work with your hands, just as we told you, so that your daily life may win the respect of outsiders and so that you will not be dependent on anybody.**” 1 Thess 4:11, 12

#21. **If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.**  
**Romans 12:18**

This removes the “eye for eye” authority of the Law. Believers were not to adopt any of the means used by Israel or by Roman law to gain parity with anyone with whom they had business or dealings. Their appeal was to be solely on the basis of grace and trust that God is working His will among men. Not only are we to “**not take revenge**” for this is God's prerogative, we are to serve our enemies needs for food and water. We can treat success and this world's resources as disposable. We can be used up in His service with no thought towards our lack of this world's goods.

#22. **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.**  
**Romans 12:19**

**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.”**

**Romans 12:20**

#23. **Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.**  
**Romans 12:21**

## **SUBDIVISION TWO-Chapter 13 Strangers and Pilgrims**

### **Obedience to Authorities 13:1-7**

Having our general orders, now look at how we relate within the society in which we live. First, there is the matter of who is running things, the government. Paul says that there is no such thing as a government that is not established by God's will. Be it his directive will or by his permissive will, it is in power in accordance with his purposes.

“Wait a minute!” we might say. What about those leaders who were avowed atheists, or who worship gods who are definitely not Christian? There are no exceptions given here by God's appointed messenger. People in power who immediately come to mind include; Hitler, Trotsky, Stalin, Constantine, Mao Tse Tung, Saddam Hussien, Caesar, Khomeini, Ghandi, DeKlerk, Reagan, Hirohito, Jefferson, Clinton, the list is endless of those whom we both admire and despise. Yet, who can say that any of these were able to frustrate the will and plan of God to issue an effective call to each of the elect? History and personal experience tells us that it is through the times of difficulty, even persecution, that God's people are drawn closer to Him and into their walk in the light of Christ.

The current emergence of Christianity in China, the explosion of belief in the Eastern Bloc countries, both are testimonies to the effectual work of the Spirit during duress. The spiritual weakness and doctrinal ambivalence of Christian churches in the United States present the other side of the coin--that affluence and ease weakens the Church and does not represent Christ to the world. That does not mean that we should seek a mean existence, but that we should live in appreciation for ease and focus on the ministry of the Gospel, letting God manage the authorities over us. The only political message given the Church is, Jesus is Lord! Whenever believers become political managers it is the Gospel that suffers.

**Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God. Consequently, he who rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves. Romans 13:1, 2**

To “**do right**” is to stay centered on the ministry of the Gospel as you tend to your personal business. It does not require the so-called “full-time service” activities that we have come to recognize as “ministry.” Quite the contrary; the only true ministry of the Gospel comes from believers operating within the Body of Christ (who's only biblical organization is local administration under the headship of Christ) pursuing the gifts of the Spirit within the boundary of their personal faith. Mass evangelism is an apparition of this century that has steamrolled personal faith and sharing of Christ. It remains to be seen, whether people are being saved through mass media, or in spite of it. Of one thing we can be sure--His sheep know the voice of the Shepherd when He calls and it is his plan to reach every one of his own.

Christians so oriented to biblical truths will not be terrorized by rulers of any ilk, from the despots and tyrants to the pseudo-religious humanists. While the world and Christendom are quick to condemn the former, they too readily embrace the latter. God stands in opposition to both.

**For rulers hold no terror for those who do right, but for those who do wrong.  
Do you want to be free from fear of the one in authority? Then do what is  
right and he will commend you. Romans 13:3**

In verse 4, “servant” [*diakonos*] is the word for “minister.” Whatever human character traits might be displayed, the ruler is God's minister of justice. He is there to “do you (the) good.” It is not “good” what he might do, but it is “*the good*” to you.

Whatever punishment or pain he might inflict on you is within the context of “*the good*” and in accordance with God's will. Remember that God is dealing with you on the basis of your actions, but more importantly on the basis of your intentions, your conscience. Only you can know what it takes to root out of your life and mind those thoughts that keep you from being in the image of the Lord Jesus and allowing his life to flow from you. God knows exactly what it takes, and is working to make that happen in you. One of the tools He uses is authority vested in men.

**For he is God's servant to do you good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword for nothing. He is God's servant, an agent of wrath to bring punishment on the wrongdoer. Therefore, it is necessary to submit to the authorities, not only because of possible punishment but also because of conscience. This is also why you pay taxes, for the authorities are God's servants, who give their full time to governing. Romans 13:4-6**

#### Christian Stewardship

Christians should pay their debts. But, debts are not limited to financial matters alone. There are titles that command respect. Ollie North may have had the best of intentions in what he did, but Congress is due the respect of obedience. There is no moral justification for false testimony to those in authority. The principle of covert activities is a problem of world-wide scope, as nations put organizations into operation that are not accountable to their public. Once unaccountable operations are acceptable, escalation of their power and its corrupting influence inevitably follow. Denial of wrong doing as service to a higher good is the common and natural defense of covert operatives.

**Give everyone what you owe him: If you owe taxes, pay taxes; if revenue,  
then revenue; if respect, then respect; if honor, then honor. Romans 13:7**

### **The Believer's Debt to All Men 13:8-10**

**“Let no debt remain outstanding”** is not a simply blanket condemnation of the credit system. It does say that we should not exceed our ability to pay, whether cash or on terms. **“Love”** is agape, that act of will toward another, and as such, continues as long as there is life and in **“loving”** [agape] has fulfilled all requirements of the law.

**Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another, for he who is loving the other 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. Romans 13:8-10**

## Walk in Light 13:11-14

In verse 11, “**And this**” is emphatic and calls all attention to the very next statement, “**knowing** (not from experience, but factually) **the present time**”. Every believer should possess this knowledge within by the ministry of the Spirit--“**our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed.**” “**Slumber**” refers to our walk in darkness. The metaphor continues, “**the night is nearly over,**” speaking of the battle in this physical world with the old sin nature which attacks us through the desires of the body. “**The day**” which is “**almost here**” means that the coming of Christ and the brilliance of his presence is near. Today, we are to “**put on the armor of light,**” which is his character and life. We should walk today as we will walk then “**in the daytime**” of his presence.

That “**armor of light**” is the reflected glory of God with which Adam was clothed at creation. It is the garment of God<sup>54</sup> and the visible evidence of his presence in the world. It recalls the fire from heaven that consumed the sacrifice offered by Elijah<sup>55</sup>, the burning bush seen by Moses,<sup>56</sup> the fire on Mount Sinai when the Law was given,<sup>57</sup> the brilliance of Christ's face at the transfiguration<sup>58</sup> and the throne of heaven<sup>59</sup> that John saw on Patmos.

**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 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 the sinful nature. Romans 13:11-14**

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<sup>54</sup> Psalm 104: 2

<sup>55</sup> 1 Kings 18: 38

<sup>56</sup> Exodus 3: 2

<sup>57</sup> Exodus 19: 16

<sup>58</sup> Luke 9: 29

<sup>59</sup> Revelation 4: 5

## **Subdivision Three-Chapter 14-15:7 The Conscience of the Individual Before God**

### **God is in Authority Over All Chapter 14:1-12**

It is necessary that all believers keep in mind that God is the authority over each of us. It does not matter whether one is mature and doctrinally astute or a novice in faith and biblical principles; the Father is equally our authority. That being the case, there is no position of superiority, which may rightly be assumed by one believer over another on the basis of years, experience or education in the faith.

#### **How to treat the one who is weak in faith**

There are many matters of behavior over which believers might argue. The one strong in faith is to tolerate the uninstructed or weak believer in every case. When a new convert comes into your circle of influence, he/she might easily come with much baggage brought from their former ideology. Be longsuffering towards them while they learn of God and grace.

#### **Accept him whose faith is weak, without passing judgment on disputable matters. Romans 14:1**

For instance, one man eats all foods, but another avoids meats, possibly because meat is often used in sacrifice to idols, so he **“eats only vegetables.”** The one who understands that God has allowed all things as food<sup>60</sup> should not judge the one who does not have that understanding. God accepts ones freedom as an offering of trust. He also accepts one man's self-imposed restriction as an offering of trust. Both men acknowledge God as their master and life to please Him.

#### **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 him. Romans 14:2,3**

To assume the position of judge over someone else is to establish a hierarchy that is not biblical. In Christ, we are all servants of God and of the Body of Christ. In order to judge another, we first have to become something other than his servant--we must become his superior. This is contrary to the whole concept of the Church. We all have the same and sole master, God, who is the judge of each of us.

#### **Who are you to judge someone else's servant? To his own master he stands or falls. And he will stand, for the Lord is able to make him stand. Romans 14:4**

Another application of this principle, says Paul, is the observance of special days set aside to

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<sup>60</sup> Genesi s 9: 3

worship. Some identify specific days as reserved to God; others treat every day as reserved to God. Whether they do or not is beside the point! What he/she is convinced of is of great importance. Their master will judge their actions in these matters based upon their conviction. Why? Because, with knowledge comes responsibility! As you are impressed that something should be done, or not, your acts of faith must be consistent with what you believe to be true. Otherwise, you are acting not of faith, but of doubt, and that is sin.

**One man considers one day more sacred than another; another man considers every day alike. Each one should be fully convinced in his own mind. He who regards one day as special, does so to the Lord. He who eats meat, eats to the Lord, for he gives thanks to God; and he who abstains, does so to the Lord and gives thanks to God.**

**Romans 14:5,6**

There are two categories of people discussed here, the living and the dead. Those who are reborn are the living and those who are still lost in their sin are dead. Now, the living (believers) cannot separate themselves from the Lord. He has taken us into Himself and will not deny us. Because of that, we can never be alone in life or in death. Alive or dead “**we belong to the Lord.**”

Another way to look at it is this; when we were dead in our sin, Christ died for us. While we were yet spiritually dead, He began a work of faith in us and on the evidence of that faith the Holy Spirit joined us to Christ in his death. When He rose from the dead, we rose in Him! His life is now our life. He died in order to become as we are, and rose that we might become like He is! By that means, He became “**Lord of both the dead and the living.**”

**For none of us lives to himself alone and none of us dies to himself alone. If we live, we live to the Lord; and if we die, we die to the Lord. So, whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord. For this very reason, Christ died and returned to life so that he might be the Lord of both the dead and the living.**

**Romans 14:7-9**

How could we then judge a “**brother**”? Since Christ died for me and my brother, and rose, taking us both with Him in His resurrection, is there any basis for my judging his standing before God. Our accounting to God will be for our own walk, not that of another.

**You, then, why do you judge your brother? Or why do you look down on your brother? For we will all stand before God's judgment seat. It is written: "As surely 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 an account of himself to God. Romans 14:10-12**

## **Love of Our Brother as a Motive for Our Actions Chapter 14:13-23**

“...but,” indicates contrast. Rather than criticizing, your duty towards a brother should be your intention to avoid any act on your part that would cause him to stumble. What is to follow is illustration of this principle in the simplest, least serious of matters, what we eat, or choose not to eat.

**Therefore let us stop passing judgment on one another. But, judge this rather, not to put any stumbling block or obstacle in your brother's way.**  
**Romans 14:13**

### **The Christian Law of Supreme Sacrifice**

The issue is food. Paul understands that everything has been declared by God to be good for food.<sup>61</sup> Yet, there are some believers who have idolatry in their background. These cannot eat meat that has been previously offered to idols<sup>62</sup> and then sold to the public in the marketplace. Others, converts from Judaism, still consider pork, goat or other foods unacceptable to God and cannot eat them with a clear conscience. Remember that the rule is **“whatsoever is not of faith, it is sin.”** Since they believe it to be 'unclean', to eat would be a breach of their faith and that is sin.

**As one who is in the Lord Jesus, I am fully convinced that no food is unclean in itself. But if anyone regards something as unclean, then for him it is unclean. Romans 14:14**

### **Christian Liberty and The Believer's Slavery to Christ**

Your actions must be governed by your brother's level of understanding. While it is perfectly alright for you to eat whatever you choose, you have the liberty not to eat in deference to your brother's belief. This is the Law of Supreme Sacrifice in application. It is when you have a legitimate right before God to do something, but forego the privilege, because a brother who does not have the same degree of information or faith would be offended or led into an area of weakness by your actions. This is motivation by love for your brother conditioned by your own slavery to Christ. We often approach this passage within the context of Christian liberty. It is more appropriate to teach it on the basis of our bond-slave relationship to Christ. We are not “giving up” a privilege, but allowing the life of the Lord Jesus to show before our brother.

**“Therefore, If food causes my brother to stumble, I will never eat meat again, that I might not cause my brother to stumble.” 1 Corinthians 8:13**

**If your brother is distressed because of what you eat, you are no longer acting in love. Do not by your eating destroy your brother for whom Christ died. Do not allow what you consider good to be spoken of as evil. For the kingdom of God is not**

<sup>61</sup> Genesi s 9: 3

<sup>62</sup> 1 Corinthi ans 8: 7

**a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit, because anyone who serves Christ in this way is pleasing to God and approved by men. Romans 14:15-18**

Our goal is peace and mutual advancement in the faith, the Christ Life from within. “**...edification**” is to “build up.” It is the sense in which both you and your brother are under construction, a building designed for occupancy by God, and this is an opportunity for a new addition. “**All food is clean**” takes us back to the pronouncement to Noah in Genesis 9 following the flood, that all things now were given as food just as the green herbs were given in Genesis 1:29.<sup>63</sup>

**Let us therefore make every effort to do what leads to peace and to mutual edification. Do not destroy the work of God for the sake of food. All food is clean, but it is wrong for a man to eat anything that causes someone else to stumble. It is better not to eat meat or drink wine or to do anything else that will cause your brother to fall. Romans 14:19-21**

Acting according to the dictates of your own faith and conscience in these matters is the governing standard. Your sense of personal confidence in your actions depends on your doing those things, which you know to be pleasing to God and avoiding those things, which you believe to be offensive to Him. (Remember that all of these things are not acts declared to be sinful in and of themselves. It is in this area of doubtful behavior that the level of maturity and knowledge attained by the believer governs right and wrong. If an individual believes that it is wrong to eat food that has been offered to idols, then for that one it is wrong to do it, because he cannot eat in faith that God approves.

**So whether you have faith or not about these things let that govern between yourself and God. Happy is the man who does not condemn himself by what he approves. But the man who has doubts is condemned if he eats, because his eating is not from faith; and everything that does not come from faith is sin. Romans 14:22,23**

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<sup>63</sup> It is clear from Genesis 1:29-31 that all living things were vegetarian until after the flood. That would have included those animals now known as carnivores as well as man. Their antediluvian food chain would have vegetation with a markedly different protein makeup than what we have today. There was a canopy of water/cloud vapor over the earth that shielded the surface from direct sunlight, producing quite different grains, nuts and natural herbs.

## The Glory of God is a Motive for Our Actions Chapter 15:1-7

There is another principle here that bears on our reasoning. We are not here for any great accomplishment on our part, but for God's glory. This is true individually and corporately. Therefore, the “**strong**” must “**bear with [accommodate] the failings of the weak.**” It is not proper for one who is knowledgeable in matters of faith to impose behavior on one who is ignorant of God's instructions. That would simply be self-satisfying for the stronger, and our example is the Lord who “**did not please himself.**”

**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.” Romans 15:1-3**

“...the **Scriptures**” refers to the Old Testament writings that are continually valuable to us in unfolding the character and constancy of God in his dealings with man. There is not one word written that is not for the benefit of believers today. Not all of Scripture was written *to us*, nor was it written *about us*. But, it was written *for our instruction*.

**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. Romans 15:4**

We should be unified in our encouragement and our strength to endure that comes to each one from God the Father. It is the sameness of Christianity that we all find ourselves in before a righteous Father. None have reason to boast or feel proud.

Therefore, with a single voice and with one “**heart**” [*mind*] the Church glorifies God the Father. The only way to attain this is to serve in the mind of the Lord Jesus as Paul instructed the Philippians.<sup>64</sup>

**May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you a spirit of unity among yourselves as you follow Christ Jesus, so that with one heart and mouth you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God. Romans 15:5-7**

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<sup>64</sup> Philippians 1:27, 2:2-5

### **Subdivision Four-Chapter 15:8-33**

#### **The Appeal of the Gospel to Jew and Gentile Alike**

Introduction to Subdivision Four:

As pointed out by F. W. Grant,<sup>65</sup> this is a mixed assembly in Rome of Jews and Gentiles. They are now reminded that Christ is minister to both, having brought in the promises made to the fathers of Israel, and through the ministry of the Apostle Paul, established the Gospel to the Gentiles. Note carefully, that though He was minister to both, He ministered a different Gospel to each. To that Jew who knew life under the Law, the Gospel was freedom from that condemnation and life in Christ. To the Gentile, never under the Law of Israel, the Gospel through Paul was redemption and freedom from the power of Sin attending life in Christ.

**Four** is an earth number. It may be divided, signifying weakness through separation. This calls to mind the division of men into Jew and Gentile. It also reminds us that the realm of God, as signified by “three” (3) is different than the realm of man (1) who is unified in its common lost condition.

The Fourth Subdivision will speak to us of Christ's work on behalf of **all men**. Further, we will see the Apostle Paul describe his presentation of the Gospel to both Jew and Gentile--from Jerusalem to the Empire of Rome.

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<sup>65</sup> The Numerical Bible

### **Christ's ministry was to the whole world-Chapter 15:8-13**

First, Christ came to bring God's truth to man.<sup>66</sup> He came to Israel because of the promises God made to their fathers. Every requirement God made of that nation through the Law was satisfied by the perfect second Adam. Having fulfilled those demands, He accepted the rejection of Israel in order to demonstrate the extent of his mercy through the Gentiles. It is through the Church established among Gentiles that God has provided a sanctuary for those who make up the remnant of Israel.

The Church made available to those first generation Jews who wished to come to Christ as Lord, a city of refuge, a provision of peace and protection from judgment. When the Jew came into the assembly, he left behind all that he hoped for through the promises to Israel. Only then did he realize the blessings that had been provided the Church, the Bride of Christ. While Israel waited for *earthly blessings* to come on the heels of their deliverance by Messiah, the believing Jew stepped onto the ground of grace as a Christian and became the recipient of *heavenly blessings* without measure.

**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: "Therefore I will praise you among the Gentiles; I will sing hymns to your name." Again, it says, "Rejoice, O Gentiles, with his people." And again, "Praise the Lord, all you Gentiles, and sing praises to him, all you peoples." And again, Isaiah says, "The Root of Jesse will spring up, one who will arise to rule over the nations; the Gentiles will hope in him." Romans 15:8-12**

“...joy and peace” are inner foundation stones not outward conditions. Those provide the structure on which the Holy Spirit within the believer builds the vessel of hope. The Christian life is not always pleasant, easy, fun or without pain. But, it is always lived on the ground of peace. There is no animosity between God and his own. There should be no animosity between any of his own.

**May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. Romans 15:13**

Paul's own ministry

Paul's commendation suggests that he knew believers within this assembly to be mature and learned in the Scriptures. He also declares them competent to teach one another the principles of Grace that are so important to the function of the Body. The intentions are not in question here. He would have them more fully aware of God's purposes in Israel and how that differs from the Church.

**I myself am convinced, my brothers, that you yourselves are full of goodness,**

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<sup>66</sup> John 1: 18

**complete in knowledge and competent to instruct one another. Romans 15:14**

Paul is clear that his understanding of his calling is that God appointed him to the ministry of the Gospel to the Gentiles. He spells out the expected result, that the Gentiles would be set apart (“sanctified”) unto God in Christ.

**I have written you quite boldly on some points, as if to remind you of them again, because of the grace God gave me to be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles with the priestly duty of proclaiming the gospel of God, so that the Gentiles might become an offering acceptable to God, sanctified by the Holy Spirit. Therefore I glory in Christ Jesus in my service to God. Romans 15:15-17**

Paul's intention to avoid “**building on someone else's foundation**” might seem self serving except for one primary fact: the Gospel that he preached was different from the Gospel announced to Israel by the other Apostles. It was through Paul that the full face of Grace was revealed to the Church. Any other's foundation would therefore be faulty, from the standpoint of grace. This statement is recognition of the uniqueness of his Gospel message.

**I will not venture to speak of anything except what Christ has accomplished through me in leading the Gentiles to obey God by what I have said and done--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 to preach the gospel where Christ was not known, so that I would not be building on someone else's foundation. Romans 15:18-20**

He is confident of the election of God. Where he could not go, there were still the elect who “**will see, and those who, though they have not heard, will understand anyway.**” While it should never dull our desire to evangelize, we must not ever make the mistake of believing that our human failure could cause the loss of one of the Father's sheep.

**Rather, as 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 hindered from coming to you. Romans 15:21,22**

Two things in view in this next statement-- One, he is willing to take the practical step of following a desire that has been with him for a long time (“**many years**”). It is a lesson that we need to learn over and over again-- The Spirit can be trusted to be the author of the desires of our heart (see 19). It is the believer living in vital union with His Lord who understands that God does not give us everything that we desire in life, but Who

**It must be remembered the Spirit does not author all desires; some have their source in the Old Sin Nature of Man. It is patient waiting on the Spirit of God that shows one the difference. One test is that the Spirit never moves in a manner that contradicts principles common to true Biblical Christianity.**

gives us the desires themselves that are consistent with His will for us. Two, he is ready to take the very pragmatic option of leaving now that there is no more physical space for him where he is. When God closes off a work in one area, take the next logical, practical position and move out. Don't waste a lot of time worrying and speculating about what might have been. Do not expend a lot of energy on attempting to hold on to the status quo. Learn from the situation what there is to learn of God and His expectations of His children, then embrace the next opportunity with positive anticipation.

**But now that there is no more place for me to work in these regions, and since I have been longing for many years to see you, I plan to do so when I go to Spain. I hope to visit you while passing through and to have you assist me on my journey there, after I have enjoyed your company for a while.**

**Romans 15:23,24**

Knowing of the difficulty in Jerusalem, believers in Macedonia and Achaia have sent “**a contribution**” for their relief. It pleases Paul to be able to use this as an excuse to return to Jerusalem and minister to his brethren there. Because of the special position that Israel held until Christ's coming, he feels a debt is owed to those Jewish converts who have renounced their heritage in order to share in the Church with Gentiles. It is a debt of appreciation that continues today, but not to the inhabitants of modern Israel, rather to the historical fathers of that nation and the remnant. In no way should the Church feel obligation to political Israel other than that obligation to Christ to proclaim the Gospel of the ascended Christ. There is no promise of special advantage with God, or special blessing from God that may be obtained through sharing materially with the Jew today simply because he is Jewish. God has no program for national Israel that is operative today. He does have an agenda for that nation that is effective immediately at the call of the Bride, the Church, the Body of Christ of this Age of Grace. At that time, He will recognize three distinct divisions among men; National Israel, the Remnant of believing Israel, and Gentiles. Out of those will be drawn a fourth company, the faithful of the time of Jacob's Trouble or the Great Tribulation. That fourth company alone will enter the millennial Kingdom.

**Now, however, I am on my way to Jerusalem in the service of the saints there. For Macedonia and Achaia were pleased to make a contribution for the poor among the saints in Jerusalem. They were pleased to do it, and indeed they owe it to them. For if the Gentiles have shared in the Jews' spiritual blessings, they owe it to the Jews to share with them their material blessings. Romans 15:25-27**

We see several concerns regarding his trip to Jerusalem. He is aware that there is at some risk in Judea from unbelievers who would cut his ministry short. Too, he has a strong desire that the Jewish believers there understand his Gospel as preached among the Gentiles and that it will “**be acceptable**” to them. The Gentile Gospel is not the same “good news” as the Gospel to those of Israel who had to relinquish their obligation to the Law. The Gentile believers had never been under such obligations. Their deliverance was freedom from the panoply of gods revered in their temples of worship and centers of personal influence. Anticipating those burdens being realized as lifted, he looks forward to coming to them in Rome “**in the full measure of the blessing of Christ.**” That is in the full freedom provided by Christ from all influences in their lives. Remember that Satan is the greater counterfeiter. He does not build edifices which appear as citadels of opposition to God. He builds temples, centers of worship, ministries to human needs and churches. His alternatives have everything but the blood of the Lord Jesus, which alone cleanses from Sin and sins.

**So after I have completed this task and have made sure that they have received this fruit, I will go to Spain and visit you on the way. I know that when I come to you, I will come in the full measure of the blessing of Christ. I**

urge you, brothers, by our Lord Jesus Christ and by the love of the Spirit, to join me in my struggle by praying to God for me. Pray that I may be rescued from the unbelievers in Judea and that my service in Jerusalem may be acceptable to the saints there, so that by God's will I may come to you with joy and together with you be refreshed. The God of peace be with you all. Amen. Romans 15:28-33

### Subdivision Five-Chapter 16 Commendations and Warnings

**Priscilla and Aquila** were tent-makers, so Paul had yet another bond with these two dedicated Christians.

**Epenetus** means “laudable, worthy of praise.”

**I commend to you our sister Phoebe, a servant of the church in Cenchrea. I ask you to receive 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, my fellow workers in Christ Jesus. They risked their lives for me. Not only I but all the churches of the Gentiles are grateful to them. Greet also the church that meets at their house. Greet my dear friend Epenetus, who was the first convert to Christ in the province of Asia. Greet Mary, who worked very hard for you. 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. Greet Ampliatus, whom I love in the Lord. Greet Urbanus, our fellow worker in Christ, and my dear friend Stachys. Greet Apelles, tested and approved in Christ. Greet those who belong to the household of Aristobulus. Greet Herodion, my relative. Greet those in the household of Narcissus who are in the Lord. Greet Tryphena 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. Romans 16:1-16**

Here in verse 17 is good practical advice. Avoid trouble makers “**those who cause divisions**” and contention “**obstacles**.” Of special note to those who would teach others--It is not necessary to correct every erroneous teaching that you encounter. Our job is not to convict the world of its error, for that is the province of the Spirit. Our duty is to watch for hungry hearts and willingly share the Gospel with them. That does include the message of freedom in Christ; freedom from law, freedom from The Law, freedom from the power of Sin, freedom from the penalty for sins, freedom from condemnation of any kind. Add to that; freedom from the standards of men that declare you successful, freedom to disregard our own interests in pursuit of His interests,

freedom to forgive others, and freedom to stand totally in His grace. In his second letter to the Thessalonian believers, Paul said it this way; “**...make it your ambition to lead a quiet life and attend to your own business and work with your hands, just as we commanded you”**(4:11).

It is most difficult, isn't it, to wait for the Spirit to convict? Especially when the problem person is constantly in our hair; it's much more satisfying to load up and give them a shot.

**I urge you, brothers, to watch out for those who cause divisions and put obstacles in your way that are contrary to the teaching you have learned. Keep away from them. For such people are not serving our Lord Christ, but their own appetites. By smooth talk and flattery they deceive the minds of naive people. Everyone has 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. Romans 16:17-19**

#### The Power of God Over Satan

In this day it is very important to acknowledge the principle of verse 20--It is “**the God of peace**” who will crush Satan! That is not the position or responsibility of the believer. It is absolute foolishness to teach believers that they should confront Satan in their strength as Christians. We are to “**flee temptation,”**<sup>67</sup> “**flee youthful lusts,**”<sup>68</sup> and resist the Devil by resting in the person of Christ. It is He who will deal with the adversary.

#### The Power of Satan Over the Minds of Men

There are too many media preachers who have believers going through the charade of “taking power” over Satan. It has led to a trite and casual attitude by men and women towards that created being who has power to deceive and destroy man. Pity the person who has adopted the slogan seen on T-shirts that we should “Kick Satan's Butt”. This identifies an individual who has reduced the spiritual to human levels and who has lost any sense of understanding of the power of that evil one. It is the same one who will be able to make an inanimate object, an idol, appear to have life and give to that iconic image real power of life and death over men.<sup>69</sup> It is a dangerous and misleading practice to trivialize the enemy of God; one that leads many today to failure in their Christian life and others to misstate the Gospel of God. It is not we who will “**crush Satan**” under our feet, but God who will personally do so.

**The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet. The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you. Romans 16:20**

**Timothy, my fellow worker, sends his greetings to you, as do Lucius, Jason and Sosipater, my relatives. I, Tertius, who wrote down this letter, greet you in the Lord. Gaius, whose hospitality I and the whole church here enjoy,**

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<sup>67</sup> 1 Timothy 6: 9-11

<sup>68</sup> 2 Timothy 2: 22

<sup>69</sup> Revelation 13: 15

**sends you his greetings. Erastus, who is the city's director of public works, and our brother Quartus send you their greetings. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all, amen! Romans 16:21-24**

There is a connection here between “**my gospel**” and “**the revelation of the mystery**”. Paul closes his letter by drawing their attention to the now clear fact that his ministry was to deliver the Gospel in terms that had never before been heard. Further, that this Gospel is something that was committed to him personally by God through specific and divine revelation. It is “**now revealed and made known**,” not even revealed directly by the ministry of Christ, but is a Gospel peculiar to the ministry of Paul. “**The prophetic writings**” refer to those passages of the Old Testament already in circulation, which foretold of the rejection of Messiah and God's election of another people as his own. That other body is the Church of the New Testament, the Body of Christ on Earth.

**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. Romans 16:25-27**

It is God the Father alone who is wise and who will be caused to shine forever by and through His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. It is in Christ that we have our place before the Father and are found for all eternity at one with Him. Immeasurable grace.

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