

# Romans

## Πρὸς Ῥωμαίους

A verse-by-verse study guide, as taught by  
Pastor Robert L. Bolender at Austin Bible Church,  
from 2011 to 2014

# Introduction to the Book

1. Written by the Apostle Paul (Rom. 1:1), through the amanuensis Tertius (Rom. 16:22).
2. Written near the end of Paul's Third Missionary Journey, winter of 56/57AD.
3. Written while Gaius hosted Paul in Corinth (Rom. 16:23 cf. 1<sup>st</sup> Cor. 1:14. Also see Acts 19:29; 20:4). This Gaius is associated with Erastus the city treasurer (cf. 2<sup>nd</sup> Tim. 4:20).
4. Written in Paul's hope to visit for the first time (Rom. 1:10-13; 15:23; Acts 19:21) and use Rome as a base for missionary work in Spain (Rom. 15:24,28).
5. This theological epistle is addressed to "called saints" (Rom. 1:7) with a world-wide proclamation of faith (Rom. 1:8) and report of obedience (Rom. 16:19a).
  - a. Possibly formed by Jewish & Gentile proselyte believers returning from Pentecost (Acts 2:10).
  - b. Would have become predominantly Gentile after Claudius expels the Jews from Rome (Acts 18:2).
  - c. May have had trouble re-integrating Jewish believers when they returned under Nero. Prisca and Aquila have a church in their home, near enough for a greeting but apparently separate from the recipients of this epistle (Rom. 16:3-5a).
6. Followed Galatians, 1&2 Thessalonians, 1&2 Corinthians. Still to write prison and pastoral epistles.
7. Text Critical Issues.
  - a. A shorter form of Romans circulated in the 2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> centuries. This edition removed chapters 15&16.
  - b. This family of manuscripts also removed the references to Rome from chapter one (Rom. 1:7,15).
  - c. The epistle's doxology (Rom. 16:25-27) has a variety of placement traditions at the end of chapters 14,15, and/or 16.
  - d. The 16 chapter long version is undoubtedly the original, with the shortened form being used as a circular theological treatise.
8. Themes.
  - a. Righteousness & wrath revealed (Rom. 1:16-17).
  - b. Depravity and the only answer (Rom. 1:18-3:21).
    - 1) Immoral depravity (Rom. 1:18-32).
    - 2) Moral depravity (Rom. 2:1-16).
    - 3) Religious depravity (Rom. 2:17-3:20).
    - 4) The only answer: faith (Rom. 3:21-31).
  - c. Justification (Rom. 4-5).
  - d. Sanctification (Rom. 6-8).
  - e. Discourse on Israel (Rom. 9-11).
  - f. Discourse on the Church (Rom. 12-15).
  - g. Greetings and closing admonishment (Rom. 16).

# Romans 1-5 Justification

## Chapter One

- 1 Paul, a bond-servant of Christ Jesus, called *as* an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God,
  - A bond-servant of Christ Jesus is a unique introduction for Paul's epistles. The contrast between citizen and slave was powerful to the Roman mind. This will be important in the discourse on sin (Rom. 6).
  - A called apostle. κλητός klētos <sup>#2822</sup><sub>10x</sub> ἀπόστολος apostolos <sup>#652</sup><sub>79x</sub>. The called apostle is writing to called of Jesus Christ (Rom. 1:6), called saints (Rom. 1:7). This calling will be important in the discourse of Romans 8 (Rom. 8:28).
  - Set apart. Not the sanctification principle of ἀγιάζω hagiāzō <sup>#37</sup><sub>28x</sub>, but the separation of deliberate purpose: ἀφορίζω aphorizō <sup>#873</sup><sub>10x</sub> (Rom. 1:1; 2<sup>nd</sup> Cor. 6:17; Gal. 1:15; 2:12).
  - Good news of God. εὐαγγέλιον euangelion <sup>#2098</sup><sub>76x</sub> fr. εὐαγγελίζω euangelizō <sup>#2097</sup><sub>54x</sub> (Verb & noun: Rom. 1:1,9,15,16; 2:16; 10:15,16; 11:28; 15:16,19,20; 16:25).
- 2 which He promised beforehand through His prophets in the holy Scriptures,
  - God's prophets were Hebrew prophets who spoke of a coming Messiah (Rom. 9:4). They will be followed by the Apostles who will speak of the Christ who came (cf. 2<sup>nd</sup> Pet. 3:2).
  - The holy Scriptures were Hebrew texts which foretold good news to the world (Rom. 3:2). They will be followed by the Greek texts which announce good news to the world (2<sup>nd</sup> Pet. 3:16,17).
- 3 concerning His Son, who was born of a descendant of David according to the flesh,
  - The humanity of Jesus Christ will be an important theme in Romans as it details the necessity of His identification with us for substitutionary atonement (Rom. 5:6,8; 8:3).
  - The royalty of Jesus Christ will be important in Romans as it details the unfulfilled promises regarding the Davidic throne (Rom. 9-11, esp. Rom. 11:25-27).
- 4 who was declared the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead, according to the Spirit of holiness, Jesus Christ our Lord,
  - The deity of Jesus Christ is important as well, as Romans teaches what God Himself did what no man could do (Rom. 8:3).
  - The testimony of Jesus' resurrection underlies the declaration of His eternal glory (cf. Acts 13:33; 17:31).
  - The power of the resurrection and the newness of life will form the basis for the Christians holy walk (Rom. 6:4,11).
- 5 through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about *the* obedience of faith among all the Gentiles for His name's sake,
  - Still in the first sentence of this letter, Paul makes his first reference to grace. χάρις charis <sup>#5485</sup><sub>155x</sub> (Rom. 1:5,7; 3:24; 4:4,16; 5:2,15<sub>x2</sub>,17,20,21; 6:1,14,15,17; 7:25; 11:5,6<sub>x3</sub>; 12:3,6; 15:15; 16:20).
  - Apostleship references both the office and the assigned field of service which Jesus Christ assigns (Acts 1:25; Rom. 1:5; 1<sup>st</sup> Cor. 9:2; Gal. 2:8,9).
  - Obedience of faith refers to the faith response to God's free offer of eternal life as a matter of obedience to His desire (Rom. 16:26 cf. Jn. 3:36; Acts 6:7; Heb. 5:9; 1<sup>st</sup> Pet. 1:2).
- 6 among whom you also are the called of Jesus Christ;
- 7 to all who are beloved of God in Rome, called *as* saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.
  - Beloved and called matches the description of the Thessalonians (1<sup>st</sup> Thess. 1:4) and the Colossians (Col. 3:12). ἀγαπητός agapētos <sup>#27</sup><sub>61x</sub> (7x in Romans: Rom. 1:7; 11:28; 12:19; 16:5,8,9,12; 10x in 1<sup>st</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> John; 8x in 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> Peter).
  - Grace and Peace are the primary greetings by Paul in all his correspondence (Rom. 1:7; 1<sup>st</sup> Cor. 1:3; 2<sup>nd</sup> Cor. 1:2; Gal. 1:3; Eph. 1:2; Php. 1:2; Col. 1:2; 1<sup>st</sup> Th. 1:1; 2<sup>nd</sup> Th. 1:2; Tit. 1:4; Phm. 3). Grace, mercy, & peace in the Timothy epistles (1<sup>st</sup> Tim. 1:2; 2<sup>nd</sup> Tim. 1:2).
- 8 First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, because your faith is being proclaimed throughout the whole world.
  - Paul begins his letter with a thanksgiving offering to God the Father on behalf of the believers in Rome (cf. 1<sup>st</sup> Th. 1:2-4).
  - The collectively singular faith of a lampstand in Rome is being proclaimed world-wide. This principle destroys the pluralists' oft-expressed maxim that our faith should be a personal, private matter (cf. 1<sup>st</sup> Pet. 2:9).

- 9 For God, whom I serve in my spirit in the *preaching of the gospel* of His Son, is my witness *as to* how unceasingly I make mention of you,
- God must be worshipped in spirit and in truth (Jn. 4:23). He therefore bears witness to the truth of those who serve Him in their spirit (Rom. 1:9).
  - Paul describes his gospel ministry to the Gentiles as a priestly service. λατρεύω latreuō <sup>#3000</sup><sub>21x</sub> (Rom. 1:9,25; Php. 3:3; 2<sup>nd</sup> Tim. 1:3) || ἱεραουργέω hierourgeō <sup>#2418</sup><sub>Hap.</sub> & προσφορά proshphora <sup>#4376</sup><sub>9x</sub> (Rom. 15:16).
- 10 always in my prayers making request, if perhaps now at last by the will of God I may succeed in coming to you.
- Always . . . perhaps now . . . at last . . . I may succeed. This language is a four-fold testimony to unceasing prayer by a believer of finite understanding to a God of infinite wisdom (1<sup>st</sup> Thess. 5:17).
  - Previous correspondence with Corinth also contained such travel plans—left in the hands of God’s perfect plan (1<sup>st</sup> Cor. 16:5-12; 2<sup>nd</sup> Cor. 2:15-18).
- 11 For I long to see you so that I may impart some spiritual gift to you, that you may be established;
- Paul’s desire was to supply Rome with a certain spiritual gift—one that Rome was deficient in, but Paul could supply—his own giftedness as an Apostle and his Apostleship to the Gentiles.
  - Hint: Inferior congregations were those without Apostolic foundation (Acts 11:19-26; 2<sup>nd</sup> Cor. 12:12).
  - The purpose for this certain spiritual gift is to establish the believers in Rome as a planted lampstand. στηρίζω stērizō <sup>#4741</sup><sub>13x</sub> (Rom. 1:11; 16:25).
    - Thessalonica could be strengthened and encouraged by Timothy acting as Paul’s agent (1<sup>st</sup> Th. 3:2), but even with that there were deficiencies (1<sup>st</sup> Thess. 3:10). Rome required Paul’s personal presence to be established.
    - This established strength permits good works and words (2<sup>nd</sup> Th. 2:17), and offers protection from Satan (2<sup>nd</sup> Th. 3:3).
    - Such establishments undoubtedly included the appointing of elders (Acts 14:23; Tit. 1:5).
- 12 that is, that I may be encouraged together with you *while* among you, each of us by the other’s faith, both yours and mine.
- An established lampstand becomes an instrument for mutual reciprocal ministry (1<sup>st</sup> Th. 5:11; Rom. 14:19; 15:2).
  - Fellowship among the saints allows for an effective fellowship of faith (Phm. 6).
- 13 I do not want you to be unaware, brethren, that often I have planned to come to you (and have been prevented so far) so that I may obtain some fruit among you also, even as among the rest of the Gentiles.
- Our plans can be thwarted (1<sup>st</sup> Th. 2:18), so we must rest in the plan that can never be thwarted (Job 42:2).
  - Former fruitfulness fosters a fervor for further fruit-bearing in the Father’s field (Jn. 15:1-2).
  - Claiming new ground, entering new doors, and exercising greater power should always be our aim (Rev. 3:8; Rom. 15:17-25).
- 14 I am under obligation both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to the wise and to the foolish.
- 15 So, for my part, I am eager to preach the gospel to you also who are in Rome.
- When Paul identified his Apostleship to the Gentiles it generated an eagerness to serve the full spectrum of Gentile humanity (see Acts 28:2,4).
  - The larger the field, the greater the harvest (2<sup>nd</sup> Cor. 9:6).
- 16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.
- Paul’s eagerness to evangelize (Rom. 1:15) leads to a denial of gospel shame (Rom. 1:16). Such shame is unthinkable when the gospel is rightly identified as the power of God for salvation.
  - God’s power for/unto/into salvation is applied universally to everyone who places their faith in Him. Note: this verse does not allow God’s power to supply the faith. All who believe are the targets for God’s saving power.
  - Eligibility for salvation by faith is not limited to the Jews, but offered to Gentiles as well.
- 17 For in it *the* righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, “BUT THE RIGHTEOUS *man* SHALL LIVE BY FAITH.”
- Salvation (Rom. 1:16) is defined as the righteousness of God (Rom. 1:17).
  - Salvation/righteousness has always been appropriated by faith (cf. Rom. 3:22; 4:5,13-16; Gal. 3:21,22; Phil. 3:19).
  - “From faith” Old Testament looking forward “to faith” New Testament looking backward allows Habakkuk to be so often quoted (Hab. 2:4; Rom. 1:17; Gal. 3:11; Heb. 10:38).

- 18 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness,
- Faith reveals the righteousness of God, but when truth is suppressed in unrighteousness then it is wrath that is revealed (Mt. 23:13,15).
  - This revealed wrath is not fire and brimstone, but a giving over (Rom. 1:24,26,28).
  - This presently revealed and presently coming wrath should not be confused with the ultimate wrath to come (1<sup>st</sup> Thess. 1:10).
- 19 because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them.
- “That which is known about God” is the empiric reality of God-consciousness provided internally to each human being created in the image of God (Gen. 1:26-27; 9:6; Jas. 3:9).
  - Knowing about God empirically (positive/negative volition at God-consciousness) precedes the invitation to know God spiritually (positive/negative volition at gospel-hearing) (Jn. 17:3; Acts 17:22-28).
- 20 For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse.
- Natural revelation displays things about God to man (Ps. 19:1-6).
  - Special revelation unfolds greater things from God to man (1<sup>st</sup> Cor. 2:9-10; Mt. 11:25-27).
  - The incarnation of Jesus Christ reveals God as man and supplies the greatest possible testimony (Jn. 1:14,18; 14:9; Col. 1:15; 2<sup>nd</sup> Cor. 4:4,6).
- 21 For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened.
- Rejection of God as God leads to a denial of His existence and a life of corruption (Ps. 14:1-3).
  - The darkened heart requires the shining light of God’s glory to pierce that darkness (Is. 60:1-3; Jn. 1:5; 2<sup>nd</sup> Cor. 4:6).
- 22 Professing to be wise, they became fools,
- Self-professions of wisdom are worthless (Prov. 26:12; Rom. 11:25).
  - God’s wisdom and the world’s wisdom are mutually exclusive (1<sup>st</sup> Cor. 1:19-21; 3:18-20; Jas. 3:13-18).
- 23 and exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible man and of birds and four-footed animals and crawling creatures.
- Exchanging incorruptible for corruptible reverses the resurrection process (1<sup>st</sup> Cor. 15:52-54).
  - Corruptible versus incorruptible rewards are incomparable (1<sup>st</sup> Cor. 9:24-25).
  - Our spiritual birth is the procreation of incorruptible/imperishable seed (1<sup>st</sup> Pet. 1:23).
  - Anything other than perfection is less than perfect (Mt. 5:48; 1<sup>st</sup> Pet. 5:10).
- 24 Therefore God gave them over in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, so that their bodies would be dishonored among them.
- Handover #1: heart lusts that cause bodily dishonor.
  - A weakening of the conscience (1<sup>st</sup> Cor. 8:7,10,12) allows heart lusts to increase overt bodily actions (Rom. 6:12,13; 1<sup>st</sup> Cor. 6:13,18,20; 1<sup>st</sup> Th. 4:4).
- 25 For they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.
- Creature #1 for worship is oneself. Worship of me becomes the outcome for heart lusts and bodily shame.
  - Self-worship is the terrible outworking of this first handover (Rom. 16:18; Phil. 3:19; Isa. 56:11,12).
- 26 For this reason God gave them over to degrading passions; for their women exchanged the natural function for that which is unnatural,
- 27 and in the same way also the men abandoned the natural function of the woman and burned in their desire toward one another, men with men committing indecent acts and receiving in their own persons the due penalty of their error.
- Handover #2: heart lusts despite the degradation. Not only is the body dishonored, but the very passions themselves are dishonored/degraded.
  - A very common form of degradation lust is that which is manifest through lesbianism & homosexuality as well as other sexual perversions (Lev. 18:22,23). Remember, Jesus validated the entire Old Testament (Mt. 5:17-19).
  - Fundamental (to creation) appetites/affections are degraded from that which is natural to the unnatural.
- 28 And just as they did not see fit to acknowledge God any longer, God gave them over to a depraved mind, to do those things which are not proper,
- Dishonor plus degradation equals depravity.
  - Handover #3 complete depravity of thought (cf. Gen. 6:5; 1<sup>st</sup> Tim. 6:5; 2<sup>nd</sup> Tim. 3:8).

- 29 being filled with all unrighteousness, wickedness, greed, evil; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malice; *they are* gossips,
- 30 slanderers, haters of God, insolent, arrogant, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents,
- 31 without understanding, untrustworthy, unloving, unmerciful;
- Don't confuse the symptoms with the cause.
  - Complete depravity of thought is the third handover. It is a work of God as is the drawing and convicting work. Do not ever think that God is unable to save even the most vile sinner.
  - The solution for such behavior is not different & better behavior, but salvation by grace through faith (1<sup>st</sup> Cor. 6:9-11).
- 32 and although they know the ordinance of God, that those who practice such things are worthy of death, they not only do the same, but also give hearty approval to those who practice them.
- Prolonged worship of self leads to open & defiant rebellion against God.
  - Such open & defiant rebels gather to themselves similar minded “birds of a feather” (Num. 16:26; Prov. 1:10-17; Lk. 11:48).

## Chapter Two

- 1 Therefore you have no excuse, everyone of you who passes judgment, for in that which you judge another, you condemn yourself; for you who judge practice the same things.
- An abrupt switch from 3<sup>rd</sup> person narrative to 2<sup>nd</sup> person vocative specifically targets judgmental moralists.
    - Certain unbelievers might deny any guilt regarding immoral depravity.
    - They view themselves as superior, and yet they practice the same things as those they judge.
  - Men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness are without excuse (Rom. 1:18,20). The judgmental moralist is similarly without excuse (Rom. 2:1).
  - The judgmental moralist has exchanged the truth of God for a lie—exchanging the judgment of God for their own judgment of others (Rom. 1:25 cf. 2:1). No longer acknowledging God (cf. 1:28), this group is likewise given over to depravity: a moral depravity.
- 2 And we know that the judgment of God rightly falls upon those who practice such things.
- Judgment is not man's but God's. When man usurps God's role as Judge, they have done the creator/creature exchange spoken of in chapter one (Rom. 9:20; 14:4).
  - The basis for judgment is not a relative scale of morality versus immorality, but absolute Truth and Righteousness (Job 34:17-19; Jn. 7:24).
- 3 But do you suppose this, O man, when you pass judgment on those who practice such things and do the same *yourself*, that you will escape the judgment of God?
- When the morally depraved judges the immorally depraved, their logical considerations are contrary to reality (Jas. 4:11-12; Mt. 7:1-5).
  - Relative human morality cannot provide for an escape from God's judgment (Isa. 64:6; Job 40:14).
- 4 Or do you think lightly of the riches of His kindness and tolerance and patience, not knowing that the kindness of God leads you to repentance?
- The warped perspective of the morally depraved has no capacity to recognize God's kindness, tolerance, and patience (Lk. 7:47; Rom. 10:3; 2<sup>nd</sup> Pet. 3:15).
  - These are the tools God uses to draw the judgmental moralist, in contrast with the present wrath God uses to draw the non-judgmental immoralist.
- 5 But because of your stubbornness and unrepentant heart you are storing up wrath for yourself in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God,
- 6 who WILL RENDER TO EACH PERSON ACCORDING TO HIS DEEDS:
- In addition to the presently revealed wrath, this passage teaches a stored up wrath reserved for judgment day. This is a personal application within the universal fire reservation (2<sup>nd</sup> Pet. 3:7).
  - Temporal deeds are eternally recompensed (Ps. 62:12; Jer. 17:10; Matt. 16:27; Rev. 2:23; 20:12,13).
- 7 to those who by perseverance in doing good seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life;
- Perseverance in doing good must identify the only accepted good work which satisfied God the Father's standard for the provision of glory, honor & immortality (Heb. 12:1-3; Isa. 53:1; 1<sup>st</sup> Jn. 2:2).
  - No one seeks (Rom. 3:11), but all who do seek will find (Mt. 7:7). “Seeking glory, honor, and immortality” is defined in the following verse as “obeying the truth.”

- This passage cannot teach a works-based salvation in contradiction with every other passage of Scripture, but must teach a faith-based salvation in harmony with all Scripture (2<sup>nd</sup> Tim. 3:16; Tit. 1:2).
- 8 but to those who are selfishly ambitious and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, wrath and indignation.
- Obeying the truth is an expression that equals placing faith in Jesus Christ (Jn. 3:36; 2<sup>nd</sup> Thess. 1:8).
  - Eternal condemnation is not earned by wicked deeds, but the consequence of rejecting the free gift of salvation (Jn. 3:18,36).
- 9-10 *There will be* tribulation and distress for every soul of man who does evil, of the Jew first and also of the Greek, but glory and honor and peace to everyone who does good, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.
- Verses 9&10 restate the distinctions of verses 7&8 (believers versus unbelievers), reversing the order and the phrases.
  - These restatements not only teach their universality, but specifically do so in national terms. Jewish unbelievers will be the first condemned, followed by Gentile unbelievers.
  - Jewish believers will be the first eternally rewarded, followed by Gentile believers.
- 11 For there is no partiality with God.
- The Judge of all the earth must deal justly (Gen. 18:25).
  - God’s judgment is a heart judgment (1<sup>st</sup> Sam. 16:7).
  - The Impartial Judge motivates our daily reverence (1<sup>st</sup> Pet. 1:17).
- 12 For all who have sinned without the Law will also perish without the Law, and all who have sinned under the Law will be judged by the Law;
- The impartiality of God regarding Jew and Gentile (Rom. 2:11) is unfolded in this short excursus (Rom. 2:12-16). The juxtaposition of Jew and Gentile is recast as “under the Law” and “without Law.”
  - The issues of perishing and being judged, while connected in one sense, must be kept distinct in other very significant concepts.
- The parallelism of verse 12 when understood correctly maintains the distinctions between perishing and judgment according to their deeds.

#### Parallelism A

Gentile Sinners → Perish  
 Jewish Sinners → Will be Judged  
 Perishing = Being judged

#### Parallelism B

Gentile Sinners → Perish & Will be Judged  
 Jewish Sinners → Perish & Will be Judged  
 Perishing ≠ Being judged

Pastor Bob considers Parallelism B to be the best model for this verse and the principles that follow.

- 13 for *it is* not the hearers of the Law *who* are just before God, but the doers of the Law will be justified.
- Hearing without application is worthless (Ezek. 33:30-33; Matt. 7:21-27; Jas. 1:22-25).
  - The justification here is not the positional justification of chapters four & five but rather the experiential justification that Scripture also teaches (Lk. 18:14; Rom. 14:18; Jas. 2:21-25).
- 14-15 For when Gentiles who do not have the Law do instinctively the things of the Law, these, not having the Law, are a law to themselves, in that they show the work of the Law written in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness and their thoughts alternately accusing or else defending them,
- Instinct, hearts, conscience, and thoughts all relate to the inner man which exhibits a designed accuser/excuser faculty. This “inner witness” is often correlated to the “outer witness” of natural revelation (Rom. 1:16 cf. v.19).
  - The inner witness of conscience is not sufficient grounds for redemption and reconciliation (Jn. 14:6; Acts 4:12). It is, however, a sufficient law for judgment according to their deeds (Php. 2:11).
- 16 on the day when, according to my gospel, God will judge the secrets of men through Christ Jesus.
- “According to my gospel” means that the absolute contrast between eternal life and eternal perishing is not ignored by this excursus. Single-book Criterion (Rev. 20:12,15).
  - The secrets of men are exposed as heart motivations are scrutinized in the judgment according to their deeds (Ecc. 12:14; 1<sup>st</sup> Cor. 4:5; Heb. 4:13). Plural-books Criteria (Rev. 20:12,13).
- 17 But if you bear the name “Jew” and rely upon the Law and boast in God,
- Paul’s general discourse on moral depravity (Rom. 2:1-16) now focuses on the specific instance of religious depravity (Rom. 2:17-29).
  - The 2<sup>nd</sup> person vocative from verse one now names a name. You bear the name “Jew.”
    - This label is proudly worn by the person addressed, and amplified in the immediate passage.
    - Wearing a label does not merit anything (Isa. 48:1-2; Jn. 8:33,37,39).
- 18 and know *His* will and approve the things that are essential, being instructed out of the Law,
- Knowing the will of God is an amazing blessing (Acts 22:14; Eph. 5:17; Jas. 4:17).
  - Biblical discernment in proving the will of God is a great privilege (Rom. 12:2; 14:22; Php. 1:10).

- 19-20 and are confident that you yourself are a guide to the blind, a light to those who are in darkness, a corrector of the foolish, a teacher of the immature, having in the Law the embodiment of knowledge and of the truth,
- What we are we are by grace alone (Rom. 12:3; 1<sup>st</sup> Cor. 4:7; 15:10).
  - The knowledge we have must be linked to love or we're doomed (1<sup>st</sup> Cor. 8:1,2).
- 21-22 you, therefore, who teach another, do you not teach yourself? You who preach that one shall not steal, do you steal? You who say that one should not commit adultery, do you commit adultery? You who abhor idols, do you rob temples?
- Five you who's remind us how accountable teachers truly are (Jas. 3:1; Lk. 12:48; Heb. 13:17).
  - Religion is no better than pagan morality at achieving the perfection God's holiness demands (Col. 2:20-23).
- 23-24 You who boast in the Law, through your breaking the Law, do you dishonor God? For "THE NAME OF GOD IS BLASPHEMED AMONG THE GENTILES BECAUSE OF YOU," just as it is written.
- Dishonoring the name of God was the final indictment on Israel in the Old Testament (Mal. 1:6-14).
  - Our testimony among unbelievers must be maintained (1<sup>st</sup> Pet. 2:12,15; 3:16).
- 25 For indeed circumcision is of value if you practice the Law; but if you are a transgressor of the Law, your circumcision has become uncircumcision.
- Circumcision represents the positional truth of Israel under the Abrahamic Covenant (Gen. 17:10-14).
  - Profitability or value speaks to the judgment according to works, as profitability is equated with edification (1<sup>st</sup> Cor. 10:23) and rewardability (1<sup>st</sup> Cor. 3:14).
- 26 So if the uncircumcised man keeps the requirements of the Law, will not his uncircumcision be regarded as circumcision?
- Keeping the law never saved any Jew, nor can it save any Gentile (Heb. 10:1-4).
  - The profitability for law keeping and the unprofitability of law transgression will be unfolded in the judgment according to their deeds. This is a restatement of concepts demonstrated in vv.14,15.
- 27 And he who is physically uncircumcised, if he keeps the Law, will he not judge you who though having the letter *of the Law* and circumcision are a transgressor of the Law?
- Judgment day will feature surprising condemnations (Ezek. 16:48-52; Mt. 10:15; 12:41,42).
  - One with lower standing, less revelation, and inferior provision serves to judge those with higher standing, greater revelation, and superior provision. This principle applies to Gentiles in their relationship to Jews and more so to Humanity in relationship to Angels (Isa. 14:16,17; Ezek. 28:18b,19).
- 28-29 For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh. But he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that which is of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter; and his praise is not from men, but from God.
- Not all Israel is Israel, but those who accept and identify according to His promise (Rom. 9:6-8).
  - The heart attitude is ultimately what is evaluated in the judgment according to their deeds (Dt. 10:16; 30:6; 1<sup>st</sup> Sam. 16:7; 1<sup>st</sup> Cor. 4:5).

### Chapter Three

- 1 Then what advantage has the Jew? Or what is the benefit of circumcision?
- Since Jews could be considered Gentiles (Rom. 2:25), and vice versa (Rom. 2:26), what is the advantage of a Jew? (Rom. 3:1). Advantage translates a term for abundance and speaks to the abundant life Israel enjoyed over gentile nations (Deut. 4:7,8; 2<sup>nd</sup> Sam. 7:23,24; Neh. 9:13-15).
  - What is the benefit? Benefit was addressed in chapter two as accruing to those who practiced rather than transgressing Mosaic Law (Rom. 2:25). It speaks to rewardability at the judgment according to their works.
- 2 Great in every respect. First of all, that they were entrusted with the oracles of God.
- Every manner or way in which Jews can be compared to Gentiles exhibits a great advantage to the Jew.
  - The prime advantage for the Jew is that they were entrusted with God's oracles as the vested stewards in that phase of God's plan (Rom. 9:3-5). This principle is important for today's stewards (the Church) to properly embrace (1<sup>st</sup> Cor. 9:17; 2<sup>nd</sup> Cor. 5:19; 1<sup>st</sup> Tim. 6:20; 2<sup>nd</sup> Tim. 2:2).
- 3 What then? If some did not believe, their unbelief will not nullify the faithfulness of God, will it?
- The *corporate* destiny for Israel does not contradict the necessity for faith by the *individual* Jew.
  - Personal faith in God's supplied Redeemer has always been necessary for salvation (Gen. 3:15; Acts 4:12).

- 4 May it never be! Rather, let God be found true, though every man *be found* a liar, as it is written,  
 “THAT YOU MAY BE JUSTIFIED IN YOUR WORDS,  
 AND PREVAIL WHEN YOU ARE JUDGED.”
- μὴ γένοιτο *mē genoito* is a powerful exclamation that Paul is particularly fond of (Rom. 3:4,6,31; 6:2,15; 7:7,13; 9:14; 11:1,11; 1<sup>st</sup> Cor. 6:15; Gal. 2:17; 3:21; 6:14). This is a 3<sup>rd</sup> person, aorist middle optative.
  - Let God be (found) true is a 3<sup>rd</sup> person, present middle imperative. God is eternally true (Jn. 3:33; 1<sup>st</sup> Jn. 5:20), but the imperative strikes us as to our certitude as to this certainty (cf. 1<sup>st</sup> Jn. 5:10).
  - Acknowledgement of the God of Truth is fundamental to confession of sin (Rom. 3:4; Ps. 51:4).
- 5 But if our unrighteousness demonstrates the righteousness of God, what shall we say? The God who inflicts wrath is not unrighteous, is He? (I am speaking in human terms.)
- Human unrighteousness commends divine righteousness—as God renders judgment upon that unrighteousness (Isa. 5:16; Ezek. 28:22-23).
  - Human reasoning might find a perverse justification for finding this inappropriate for God to judge, but the Judge/judged relationship is based on the Creator/creature relationship (Job 9:32-33; 10:1-8; 40:2; Rom. 9:14,19,20).
- 6 May it never be! For otherwise, how will God judge the world?
- Such a supposition is unthinkable. Mature believers have God’s thinking and God’s standards for what He finds unthinkable (Gen. 18:25).
  - If the human reasoning from verse 5 were applicable, the end result would be for no valid judgment against anyone for anything. This highlights the contrast between God’s wisdom and kosmos wisdom (1<sup>st</sup> Cor. 3:18-20; Jas. 3:13-18).
- 7-8 But if through my lie the truth of God abounded to His glory, why am I also still being judged as a sinner? And why not *say* (as we are slanderously reported and as some claim that we say), “Let us do evil that good may come”? Their condemnation is just.
- A negative example by contrast to the plan of God is not the functional equivalent of a positive example by conformity to the plan of God. It is therefore ludicrous to draw a judicial equivalence between them (see Isa. 5:20,21).
  - This line of thinking will be continued in chapter six when sin and grace become the topic (Rom. 5:20-6:2).
- 9 What then? Are we better than they? Not at all; for we have already charged that both Jews and Greeks are all under sin;
- The Jewish advantage does not make them any better. It has already been charged that Jews and Greeks are equally condemned (Rom. 2:9,12).
  - Under sin communicates a positional truth of universal depravity. This universal condemnation allows for a universal offer of salvation by grace through faith (Gal. 3:22).
- 10 as it is written,  
 “THERE IS NONE RIGHTEOUS, NOT EVEN ONE;
- What Paul charged in the NT has been thoroughly and eternally documented by the OT. “It is written” is a powerful statement for the authority of Scripture (cf. Matt. 4:4,7,10).
  - Rom. 3:10-12 || Psalm 14:1-3 (& Ps. 53). There is none righteous. None equals zero, not even one, no exceptions. In response to the fool’s denial of God, God affirms there is no one like Him (righteous). Being under sin is || not having God’s righteousness.
- 11 THERE IS NONE WHO UNDERSTANDS,  
 THERE IS NONE WHO SEEKS FOR GOD;
- The positionally unrighteous, in their lost estate under sin is devoid of God’s understanding (1<sup>st</sup> Cor. 2:11-14). Only the positionally righteous, in their redeemed estate receives God’s understanding (1<sup>st</sup> Jn. 5:20).
  - The positionally unrighteous, in their lost estate under sin does not seek for a restored relationship with God until God Himself draws him (Jn. 5:40; 6:37,44). When the grace of God draws them, the imperatives to seek and come (Isa. 45:18-25; 55:1-11) may then be volitionally obeyed (Jn. 3:36; Rom. 2:8; 2<sup>nd</sup> Th. 1:8; 1<sup>st</sup> Pet. 4:17).
- 12 ALL HAVE TURNED ASIDE, TOGETHER THEY HAVE BECOME USELESS;  
 THERE IS NONE WHO DOES GOOD,  
 THERE IS NOT EVEN ONE.”
- Each and every one of us is a lost sheep (Isa. 53:6). Collectively, the positionally unrighteous, in their lost estate under sin, is of no eternal use (cf. Col. 1:16-20).
  - The eternal standard for absolute righteousness cannot be compromised (Eccles. 7:20).

- 13-14 “THEIR THROAT IS AN OPEN GRAVE,  
WITH THEIR TONGUES THEY KEEP DECEIVING,”  
“THE POISON OF ASPS IS UNDER THEIR LIPS”;  
“WHOSE MOUTH IS FULL OF CURSING AND BITTERNESS”;
- Rom. 3:13a || Ps. 5:9b. The positionally unrighteous, in their lost estate under sin, follows after the god of this age (2<sup>nd</sup> Cor. 4:4) as the liar and father of lies (Jn. 8:44b).
  - Rom. 3:13b || Ps. 140:3b. The tongue must be tamed as the untamed tongue is poisonous (Jas. 3:8).
  - Rom. 3:14 || Ps. 10:7a. The mouth pours forth that which is in the heart (Ps. 19:14; Matt. 12:34; Jas. 3:9-11).
- 15-17 “THEIR FEET ARE SWIFT TO SHED BLOOD,  
DESTRUCTION AND MISERY ARE IN THEIR PATHS,  
AND THE PATH OF PEACE THEY HAVE NOT KNOWN.”
- Rom. 3:15-17 || Isa. 59:7,8.
  - The positionally unrighteous, in their lost estate under sin, follows after the god of this age as the murderer from the beginning (Jn. 8:44a).
  - Destruction and misery are the eternal reality no matter the temporal prosperity they crave (Jas. 5:1-3).
  - Peace with God can only come as a consequence of our justification by faith (Isa. 59:8; Rom. 5:1).
  - The contrast of these two ways was highlighted during Jesus’ ministry as well (Mt. 7:13,14).
- 18 “THERE IS NO FEAR OF GOD BEFORE THEIR EYES.”
- Rom. 3:18 || Ps. 36:1b.
  - When God is not before the eyes, darkness conforms a person to this fallen world (Ps. 36:1-12; Rom. 12:1-2).
- 19 Now we know that whatever the Law says, it speaks to those who are under the Law, so that every mouth may be closed and all the world may become accountable to God;
- Mosaic Law was issued to Israel, and was not binding on any Gentile nation (Deut. 4:8; Ps. 147:19,20).
  - Every mouth is closed in accountability so that every mouth can be opened in judgment (Isa. 45:23; Rom. 14:11).
- 20 because by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified in His sight; for through the Law *comes* the knowledge of sin.
- Mosaic Law illustrates that any and all legalism approaches to justification are doomed (Gal. 2:16; Job 25:4; Ps. 130:3; 143:2).
  - Works-based approach highlights sin and how we fall short, but the grace-based approach offers Christ despite how we fall short (Eph. 2:8-9; Tit. 3:5-7).
- 21 But now apart from the Law *the* righteousness of God has been manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets,
- Our justification in God’s sight is nothing less than God’s righteousness manifest in us (cf. Rom. 1:17; 2<sup>nd</sup> Cor. 5:21).
  - Law bears witness to God’s absolute righteousness, but only grace through faith can provide it (Rom. 10:3,4).
- 22 even *the* righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe; for there is no distinction;
- God’s provision of righteousness is universal—for all those who believe (Rom. 4:5,6,11,16,22,24).
  - The universal offer, and the universal provision for all who accept the offer, is the ever-so wonder of whosoever (Jn. 1:12; 3:15,16,18,36; 6:40,47; 11:25,26; 12:44-46; 20:31; 1<sup>st</sup> Jn. 5:1,11-13).
- 23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,
- The universal offer is God’s provision for the universal human need by the descendants of Adam (see Rom. 5:15-19).
  - The standard for God’s acceptance of man is not our human goodness, but His infinite divine glory (Jn. 5:44; 1<sup>st</sup> Thess. 2:12; 2<sup>nd</sup> Thess. 2:14). It is this awareness of God’s glory which should motivate all that we do here on earth (1<sup>st</sup> Cor. 10:31).
- 24 being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus;
- Justification through faith is a gift by grace. Salvation is the gift, not the faith through which it is received (Eph. 2:8 cp. Rom. 3:24).
  - This gift is free to us, but it is not without cost. The redemption cost was paid by Jesus Christ on the cross (Isa. 53:11; 1<sup>st</sup> Pet. 1:18,19).
- 25a whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation in His blood through faith.
- The cross was God’s human and angelic display (Gal. 3:1; Col. 2:15). Satan will make his own defiant display by means of his own begotten son (2<sup>nd</sup> Th. 2:4).
  - The Father’s satisfaction (propitiation) is infinite and eternal because the blood of Christ, offered by His infinite faith fulfills the Father’s eternal purpose (Acts 2:23; Eph. 1:11; 3:11; Rev. 13:8; 1<sup>st</sup> Jn. 2:2).

- 25b *This was* to demonstrate His righteousness, because in the forbearance of God He passed over the sins previously committed;
- Old Testament saints had their sins atoned for (covered) whereby God passed over their sins. The studies of **כַּפָּר** kaphar (Lev. 16) and **פָּסַח** pacach (Ex. 12) are important here.
  - These saints awaited exaltation into heaven (Lk. 16:22,25,26; Ps. 68:18; Eph. 4:8) until such time as their sins could be removed (Jn. 1:29; 1<sup>st</sup> Jn. 3:5).
- 26 for the demonstration, *I say*, of His righteousness at the present time, so that He would be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.
- God eternally demonstrates His righteousness & justice (Ps. 22:31; 40:9).
  - God eternally demonstrates His grace (Eph. 2:7).
  - God eternally demonstrates His wisdom (Eph. 3:10).
- 27-28 Where then is boasting? It is excluded. By what kind of law? Of works? No, but by a law of faith. For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from works of the Law.
- Salvation by grace (Rom. 3:24) through faith (Rom. 3:26) excludes all human boasting (Rom. 3:27).
  - Works and faith are entirely separate and unmixable in the justification connected to our redemption (Rom. 3:24,27-28).
  - Works and faith are thoroughly combined and inseparable in the justification connected to our Christian walk (Jas. 2).
  - Since no Jew was ever saved by Mosaic Law, no Gentile was ever barred from salvation by not having the Law (Acts 13:38-39).
- 29-30 Or is God *the God* of Jews only? Is He not *the God* of Gentiles also? Yes, of Gentiles also, since indeed God who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through faith is one.
- One God, with one righteous standard, provides one salvation for all mankind (1<sup>st</sup> Tim. 2:5-6).
  - The eternal hymn of praise to Jesus Christ celebrates His universal provision of salvation (Rev. 5:9).
- 31 Do we then nullify the Law through faith? May it never be! On the contrary, we establish the Law.
- Jesus didn't come to abolish the Law, but to fulfill it (Mt. 5:17).
  - Faith doesn't nullify Law, even as Law didn't nullify Promise (Gal. 3:17-18).
  - Our life and walk of faith doesn't nullify the Law, but validates it (Rom. 8:4; 10:4).

## Chapter Four

- 1 What then shall we say that Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh, has found?
  - A rhetorical question as a follow up to chapter three begins chapter four (Rom. 4:1 cf. 3:1). The expression "what shall we say?" appears 7 times in Romans (3:5; 4:1; 6:1; 7:7; 8:31; 9:14,30).
  - Has Abraham found a way to deserve righteousness? Does the example of Abraham illustrate the doctrine from Romans 3 or does it contradict it?
- 2 For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God.
  - For the sake of argument, assume it to be true that Abraham was justified by works. That would give him something to boast about.
  - No one can boast before God (Rom. 4:2 cf. 3:24,26,27,28).
- 3 For what does the Scripture say? "Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness."
  - Gen. 15:6 makes clear that faith is the mechanism which God sovereignly stipulated for the acceptance of His gracious offer. The only other alternative to grace through faith would be some form of meritorious system of works (Rom. 3:27).
  - The emphasis in this chapter is made by the eleven uses of λογίζομαι *logizomai* <sup>#3049</sup><sub>40x</sub>. God reckons, calculates, credits His righteousness to the account of those who believe.
    - Righteousness is not earned, deserved, or produced by faith.
    - Righteousness is credited.
- 4 Now to the one who works, his wage is not credited as a favor, but as what is due.
  - Any system of works is incompatible with grace reckoning (Rom. 11:6).
  - The activity of working produces, creates and results in a reward of due payment (Lev. 19:13; Prov. 31:31; Jas. 5:4).
- 5 But to the one who does not work, but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is credited as righteousness,
  - The activity of believing is explicitly defined as something other than the activity of working (Eph. 2:8,9).
  - The activity of believing produces, creates and results in a faith possession. This is the non-meritorious mechanism by which God has stipulated for His grace to be applied.

- 6 just as David also speaks of the blessing on the man to whom God credits righteousness apart from works:
- From Abraham to David, the Old Testament illustrations are confirmed for salvation by grace through faith.
  - Blessed happiness is the state of mind designed for believers (Mt. 5:3-11).
- 7 “Blessed are those whose lawless deeds have been forgiven, And whose sins have been covered.
- 8 “Blessed is the man whose sin the Lord will not take into account.”
- The reckoning of God’s righteousness to our account is made possible because our sins are no longer reckoned against our account (Ps. 32:1,2).
  - Our sins are reckoned to the Lord’s account and eternally judged in Him (Isa. 53:4-6).
  - The blessed happiness state of mind begins with salvation, and encompasses a broad spectrum of the believer’s life (Ps. 1:1; 2:12; 32:1,2; 33:12; 34:8; 40:4; 41:1; 65:4; 84:4,5,12; 89:15; 94:12; 106:3; 112:1; 119:1,2; 127:5; 128:1,2; 137:8,9; 144:15<sub>x2</sub>; 146:5).
- 9 Is this blessing then on the circumcised, or on the uncircumcised also? For we say, “Faith was credited to Abraham as righteousness.”
- Circumcision & uncircumcision makes its third appearance in the Book of Romans here (Rom. 2:25-29; 3:30; 4:9-12).
  - Only one final circumcision reference remains (Rom. 15:8).
- 10 How then was it credited? While he was circumcised, or uncircumcised? Not while circumcised, but while uncircumcised;
- Gen. 15:6 precedes Gen. 17:23 with a significance that Paul amplifies in Romans 4.
  - Gen. 15:6 actually references a faith which Abraham exercised prior to Gen. 12:1-3 (cf. Acts 7:2-4; Heb. 11:8).
- 11 and he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had while uncircumcised, so that he might be the father of all who believe without being circumcised, that righteousness might be credited to them,
- Circumcision was one of two signs that Israel maintained indicative of their position under the unconditional Abrahamic Covenant (Gen. 17:10-14; Ex. 31:13,17; Ezek. 20:12,20).
  - God administers a variety of seals across the variety of dispensations and ages throughout His eternal plan (Jn. 6:27; Eph. 1:13; 4:30; Rev. 9:4).
- 12 and the father of circumcision to those who not only are of the circumcision, but who also follow in the steps of the faith of our father Abraham which he had while uncircumcised.
- Natural father to Jews (Gen. 22:17b; 32:12), yet see Jesus’ rebuke (Jn. 8:37-41).
  - Spiritual father to all believers (Gen. 15:5; 22:17a; Rom. 4:12,16).
- 13 For the promise to Abraham or to his descendants that he would be heir of the world was not through the Law, but through the righteousness of faith.
- The Law of Moses came 430 years after the promise (Gal. 3:17). While circumcision was the sign of the covenant, and the Law was the operating standard for the Jews to follow in sanctification, neither of these issues altered (nullified) the promise of God.
  - The seed of Abraham is singular and must be studied in the singular focus of Jesus Christ (Gal. 3:16) as well as the plural spectrum of Abraham’s many descendants (Rom. 4:16).
  - The heir of the world speaks to the Bible’s great emphasis on inheritance.
    - The OT emphasized Israel’s inheritance (Num. 26:53-62) and stipulated precise tribal allotments as subdivisions within the whole (Num. 36:9).
    - Even in Gentile contexts, inheritance remains a theme of importance (Job 42:15).
    - The NT emphasizes Jesus Christ’s inheritance as the heir of all things (Heb. 1:2). Additionally, the Church is described as fellow heirs in/with Christ (Rom. 8:17).
- 14 For if those who are of the Law are heirs, faith is made void and the promise is nullified;
- Faith is tragically voided when we reject what God’s word says in any realm of application (Rom. 10:17). This is true with respect to both our salvation and our Christian walk.
  - Those who suffer shipwreck in their faith nullify every their temporal realization of God’s promises (1<sup>st</sup> Tim. 1:19).
  - The eternal reality of God’s promises remain eternally true (2<sup>nd</sup> Tim. 2:13).
- 15 for the Law brings about wrath, but where there is no law, there also is no violation.
- The Law condemned (Rom. 3:20) and pointed to something better (Gal. 3:23-25; Heb. 7:18-19).
  - The Law provided a framework for temporal accountability (Rom. 5:13; 7:7).
  - Although the Church cannot violate Mosaic Law, we remain under the Law of Christ (Rom. 8:1-4; 1<sup>st</sup> Cor. 9:21; Gal. 6:2; Jas. 2:8).

- 16 For this reason it is by faith, in order that it may be in accordance with grace, so that the promise will be guaranteed to all the descendants, not only to those who are of the Law, but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all,
- The faith-mechanism is a critical component to God's plan: it allows for the acceptance of God's promise to be entirely grace-based (Mt. 10:8; 1<sup>st</sup> Cor. 4:7; Tit. 3:5-7). No boasting or glory in any way can be legitimately claimed by any creature (Ezek. 28:12-15).
  - Grace through faith is the only means and mechanism which allows for a universal offer to have a legitimately universal guarantee. Remember the ever-so wonder of whosoever (Jn. 1:12; 3:15,16,18,36; 6:40,47; 11:25,26; 12:44-46; 20:31; 1<sup>st</sup> Jn. 5:1,11-13).
- 17 (as it is written, "A father of many nations have I made you") in the presence of Him whom he believed, even God, who gives life to the dead and calls into being that which does not exist.
- Abraham is the father of the Jewish nation (Gen. 21:1-3), many Arab nations (Gen. 17:20; 25:1ff.,21-25) and spiritually a "father" to all believers (Gal. 3:29).
  - The guarantee of the promise comes in the reality of the presence of God in our life (Gen. 17:7,8; 1<sup>st</sup> Thess. 1:3; 2<sup>nd</sup> Thess. 1:9; Heb. 4:13).
  - God is the only possible provision for the impossible conditions of death and non-existence (Jn. 1:1-5; 2<sup>nd</sup> Cor. 5:17).
- 18 In hope against hope he believed, so that he might become a father of many nations according to that which had been spoken, "So shall your descendants be."
- Faith offers substance when hope has nothing tangible (Ezek. 37:11-14; Rom. 5:1-5; Heb. 6:18,19; 11:1).
  - Faith must always be grounded "according to that which had been spoken" (Rom. 10:17; 1<sup>st</sup> Cor. 2:5; 1<sup>st</sup> Thess. 2:13).
- 19 Without becoming weak in faith he contemplated his own body, now as good as dead since he was about a hundred years old, and the deadness of Sarah's womb;
- 20 yet, with respect to the promise of God, he did not waver in unbelief but grew strong in faith, giving glory to God,
- Faith is of variable strength (Mt. 6:30; 8:26; 14:31; Mk. 9:23,24; Jn. 20:27,28; 1<sup>st</sup> Cor. 16:13; 2<sup>nd</sup> Cor. 12:10; Eph. 6:10). Connected to this is being strong in grace (2<sup>nd</sup> Tim. 2:1).
  - The spiritual gift of faith-worker is a tremendous asset to any local church (1<sup>st</sup> Cor. 12:9; 13:2).
- 21 and being fully assured that what God had promised, He was able also to perform.
- Faith is strengthened by a full assurance of God's personality, essence, character, attributes and nature (1<sup>st</sup> Cor. 1:9; 2<sup>nd</sup> Thess. 3:3; Heb. 10:23; 11:11,12).
  - God does not require assistance in achieving His good pleasure (Isa. 46:10-11; Heb. 11:17-19).
- 22 Therefore it was also credited to him as righteousness.
- Beyond the salvation-related justification, believers pursue an experiential justification.
  - This is the justification of faith through works that can be observed by others (Jas. 2).
- 23 Now not for his sake only was it written that it was credited to him,
- 24 but for our sake also, to whom it will be credited, as those who believe in Him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead,
- Abraham is the pattern in a federal headship, which we follow by faith. Noah is not the pattern in federal headship, although he does illustrate justification by faith (Heb. 11:7).
  - Faith in Christ is actually and technically faith in God the Father (Jn. 12:44,45; 17:3; 1<sup>st</sup> Pet. 1:21; 1<sup>st</sup> Jn. 5:10-12).
- 25 He who was delivered over because of our transgressions, and was raised because of our justification.
- Death & resurrection are necessary, both regarding spiritual death/life (Jn. 10:17,18) and physical death/life (Acts 2:23,24).
  - Redemption & justification are flip sides to the same coin (Rom. 3:24; Isa. 53:10-12).

## *Chapter Five*

- 1 Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,
- Salvation is a starting point for a new life (Jn. 5:24; 1<sup>st</sup> Jn. 3:14; 2<sup>nd</sup> Cor. 5:17; Phil. 1:6), including additional "salvations" (Rom. 5:9 & see below).
  - The justified life is primarily a life of peace with God (cf. Rom. 14:17).
    - This life of peace was known prior to the Law ever being given (Job 22:21-23).
    - This life of peace was celebrated in the Psalms (Ps. 85:8-10).
    - This life of peace was bequeathed to His disciples on the night of His betrayal (Jn. 14:27).

- 2 through whom also we have obtained our introduction by faith into this grace in which we stand; and we exult in hope of the glory of God.
- The justified life is a grace-standing (1<sup>st</sup> Cor. 15:1,2; 1<sup>st</sup> Pet. 5:12).
  - This grace-standing is a life of joyful boasting (exultation) (Jer. 9:23,24; 1<sup>st</sup> Cor. 1:31; 2<sup>nd</sup> Cor. 10:17).
  - Boast (Exultation) #1: our present hope of eternal glory (Rom. 3:23; 8:17,18; 2<sup>nd</sup> Cor. 4:17; Col. 3:4; 1<sup>st</sup> Thess. 2:12).
- 3 And not only this, but we also exult in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance;
- Boast (Exultation) #2: our present tribulations (Rom. 8:35-37; Matt. 5:10-12; Jas. 1:2,3,12).
  - Perseverance is the consequence of tribulations endured with Bible doctrine (Rom. 15:4; Heb. 10:36; Jas. 5:11).
- 4 and perseverance, proven character; and proven character, hope;
- Character is developed and demonstrated by those who endure their testing, not by those who flee from their testing (Phil. 2:22 cf. Jn. 10:12,13).
  - The mature hope of a believer with proven worth is a clear view of the unseen (Rom. 8:24-25; Ps. 22:4-5).
- 5 and hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us.
- A big key for any believer to experience this production chain is to remain in fellowship and partake of the Spirit's fruit (Gal. 5:22,23). Love, endurance, hope (|| faith, Heb. 11:1).
  - This love has been poured into us so we can abide in it and see it perfected (1<sup>st</sup> Jn. 4:16-18).
- 6 For while we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly.
- The helpless condition of fallen man is mentioned here, but more fully described in Ephesians 2 (Eph. 2:1-5).
  - The timing of the Cross was perfect—the Fullness of the Time (Gal. 4:4). This makes possible the Fullness of the Times (Eph. 1:10).
  - Jesus Christ died for the ungodly, that they might have a new life and a new walk in godliness (Eph. 2:10; Tit. 2:11-14).
- 7 For one will hardly die for a righteous man; though perhaps for the good man someone would dare even to die.
- 8 But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.
- God does what Man could not do, and God does what Man would not do. Man's wisdom cannot comprehend the eternal wisdom God's plan achieves (Isa. 55:6-9; 1<sup>st</sup> Cor. 2:6-9).
  - Christ accepted the unacceptable when He died in the place and on the behalf of sinners (Isa. 1:13,15; 2<sup>nd</sup> Cor. 5:21).
- 9 Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him.
- 10 For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.
- “Much more” is the logical argument Paul makes employing the *a fortiori* principle. Having accomplished the more difficult, unenjoyable work, the lesser and more enjoyable work is understood to be even more certain.
  - The wrath we are here saved from must be distinguished as a present wrath and not thought of as a future Tribulational or Eternal wrath (cf. Rom. 1:18 cf. 1<sup>st</sup> Thess. 1:10).
  - Saved by His life indicates that our walk in the newness of life is the Christian Way of Life that imitates Christ by pleasing God the Father (Rom. 6:4,11-14; Eph. 5:10; Col. 1:10).
- 11 And not only this, but we also exult in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation.
- Boasting in the Father through Christ is the privilege we have to praise the glory of the Father's grace in Christ (Eph. 1:6,12,14; Rev. 4:11; 5:9,12,13).
  - We have received our personal reconciliation as well as the ministry of reconciliation (2<sup>nd</sup> Cor. 5:17-21).
- 12 Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned—
- Adam's original sin created the sphere/estate of sin, with its condition of spiritual death (Gen. 2:16-17).
  - Every descendant of Adam experienced this death because every descendant of Adam committed this sin while “in the loins” of Adam (cf. Heb. 7:9-10).
  - Physical death was not caused by Adam's original sin (Gen. 3:4-7), but was the consequence of having physical access revoked to the tree of life (Gen. 3:21-24; 5:3-5).
  - The new earth will feature a replanted tree of life and a river of life whereby 1000 generations of sinless humanity will be procreated according to God's Adamic design (Rev. 22:1-2; Deut. 7:9).
- 13 for until the Law sin was in the world, but sin is not imputed when there is no law.
- Operational death is not the consequence of violating Mosaic Law or any principle of Mosaic Law.
  - Humanity was under condemnation for their position in Adam as sinners by nature, receiving God's temporal wrath only by their standard of conscience (Jude 14-16; Job 40:2; cf. Rom. 2:15; 4:15).

- 14 Nevertheless death reigned from Adam until Moses, even over those who had not sinned in the likeness of the offense of Adam, who is a type of Him who was to come.
- The universal condemnation of spiritual death produces a universal reign of operational death (Rom. 6:11-14).
  - Operational death is the realm in which sinners by nature operate for the commission of their personal sins (Rom. 8:6,13; 1<sup>st</sup> Tim. 5:6; Jas. 1:15).
  - Typology is a powerful realm of Bible study (Jn. 3:14; 1<sup>st</sup> Cor. 5:7 cf. Ex. 12:46, Ps. 34:20 & Jn. 19:31-36; also 1<sup>st</sup> Cor. 10:3,4,6,11; Heb. 11:19).
- 15 But the free gift is not like the transgression. For if by the transgression of the one the many died, much more did the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abound to the many.
- Adam is a type of Christ, but the transgression is not like the grace gift of salvation.
  - Six comparisons and contrasts follow the summary statement (taken from Robert Mounce, NAC).
    - Verses 15 & 17 follow the pattern, "If A, how much more B."
    - Verse 16 uses the negative form, "A is not like B."
    - Verses 18,19,21 follow the pattern, "Just as A, so also B."
  - Adam's Original Sin consequently generated the finitely inferior sphere of spiritual death.
    - Spiritual death is inferior because a mechanism exists which annuls it (Rom. 6:23; Jn. 6:47-58).
    - Spiritual death is inferior because its imposition transpires beyond the awareness of those born into it (cf. Rom. 9:11).
  - Jesus Christ's Removal of Sin provided for the infinitely superior sphere of eternal life.
    - Eternal life is superior because no mechanism exists which can annul it (Rom. 8:38-39; Jn. 10:28,29).
    - Eternal life is superior because its grace bestowment transpires within the awareness of those born into it (Rom. 5:2,11; Ps. 9:14; 13:5; 35:9; 51:12; Hab. 3:18; Lk. 1:46-47).
- 16 The gift is not like that which came through the one who sinned; for on the one hand the judgment arose from one transgression resulting in condemnation, but on the other hand the free gift arose from many transgressions resulting in justification.
- Those born into Adam's judgment live under judicial condemnation (Jn. 3:18).
  - Those born into Jesus Christ's judgment live under judicial exoneration (Rom. 8:1).
- 17 For if by the transgression of the one, death reigned through the one, much more those who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.
- The reign of operational death is finitely inferior.
    - Operational death is inferior because its production is finite and forgotten (Isa. 65:17; Eccles. 1:11; 2:16; 9:5).
    - Operational death is inferior because its reign is contrary to the image of God (Gen. 9:6; Jas. 3:9) and testimony of conscience (Rom. 2:15; 1<sup>st</sup> Tim. 4:2) still extant in the sinner.
  - The reign of the living sacrifice is infinitely superior.
    - Its production is infinite with an eternal testimony (1<sup>st</sup> Pet. 1:7; Col. 3:4).
    - Its production is in concord with the image of God and the eternal glory of Jesus Christ (Eph. 2:10; 2<sup>nd</sup> Pet. 1:9; Rev. 5:12; 19:8).
- 18 So then as through one transgression there resulted condemnation to all men, even so through one act of righteousness there resulted justification of life to all men.
- Verses 18&19 summarize and restate the conclusions drawn from verses 12-17.
  - One man eating from one tree condemned every one identified with him. This identity coincides with physical birth.
  - One Man nailed to one tree justified every one identified with him. This identity coincides with spiritual birth.
- 19 For as through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, even so through the obedience of the One the many will be made righteous.
- Disobedience to the Gospel identifies each made sinner with the first Adam's disobedience (Jn. 3:36).
  - Obedience to the Gospel identifies each made righteous one with the last Adam's obedience (Heb. 5:9). See the notes in Romans 1:5 for more on this concept.
- 20-21 The Law came in so that the transgression would increase; but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more, so that, as sin reigned in death, even so grace would reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.
- Law preceded Grace, not as a solution to sin, but as a demonstration of its exceeding sinfulness (Rom. 3:20; 4:15; 5:13,20; 7:7,13).
  - The reign of Law is an impotent reign, doing nothing to overcome the reign of sin through operation death (Rom. 8:3; Col. 2:23).

# Romans 6-8 Sanctification

## Chapter Six

- 1 What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin so that grace may increase?
  - A rhetorical question as a follow up to chapter five begins chapter six (Rom. 6:1 cf. 3:1; 4:1). The expression “what shall we say?” appears 7 times in Romans (3:5; 4:1; 6:1; 7:7; 8:31; 9:14,30).
  - Someone might justify their increased sin as an endeavor to increase grace. This twisted way of looking at it succeeds no better than it did in chapter three (Rom. 3:5,8 cf. 1<sup>st</sup> Cor. 6:12,15).
- 2 May it never be! How shall we who died to sin still live in it?
  - Paul’s powerful μὴ γένοιτο *mē genoito* exclamation makes its first reappearance since chapter three (Rom. 3:4,6,31; 6:2,15; 7:7,13; 9:14; 11:1,11; 1<sup>st</sup> Cor. 6:15; Gal. 2:17; 3:21; 6:14).
  - Paul answers the rhetorical question with another question. How can someone that has died still be living?
    - This passage is not a contrast between physical life/death and spiritual life/death (cp. Jn. 11:25,26).
    - This passage juxtaposes death to sin with living in sin. Remember, the walk of the living dead is what we were saved from (Eph. 2:1-3). How dare we return to that vomit! (2<sup>nd</sup> Pet. 2:22)
- 3 Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death?
  - Are you ignorant? The reality of our positional truth does not change, even if we are unaware of it or if we choose to ignore what we ought to know.
  - ἀγνοέω *agnoeō* <sup>#50</sup> & ἄγνοια *agnoia* <sup>#52</sup> *ignorance* is inexcusable for the believer (Rom. 2:4; 6:3; 7:1; 11:25; 1<sup>st</sup> Cor. 10:1; 12:1; 2<sup>nd</sup> Cor. 1:8; 2:11; 1<sup>st</sup> Th. 4:13), as a feature of the unbeliever’s animalistic existence (Eph. 4:18; 1<sup>st</sup> Tim. 1:13; 1<sup>st</sup> Pet. 1:14; 2<sup>nd</sup> Pet. 2:12).
  - The Baptism of the Holy Spirit identifies each Member of the Church with Christ as the head of the Body (Gal. 3:27; 1<sup>st</sup> Cor. 12:13). This identification includes the positional identification with Jesus’ death, burial, resurrection, ascension and session (Rom. 6:4-7; Eph. 1:20; 2:6).
- 4 Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.
  - The Bride of Christ’s identification with the burial of Christ must recognize the Lord’s activity during which time He remained buried (Col. 2:10-15; 1<sup>st</sup> Pet. 3:8-22).
  - Even as the glory of God raised His Son, the glory of God creates our new nature with its cleansed conscience (1<sup>st</sup> Pet. 3:15,16,21 cf. Rom. 7:4-6; 2<sup>nd</sup> Cor. 5:14-17; Eph. 4:22-24).
- 5 For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection,
  - The likeness of His death and the likeness of His resurrection are equated via the metaphor of planted seeds and the fruit bearing of new life (1<sup>st</sup> Cor. 15:36-37; Jn. 12:24-25; 15:8).
  - The likeness of His resurrection is the believer’s walk as well pleasing to God the Father (Rev. 5:6-10; 2<sup>nd</sup> Cor. 4:7-11; Rom. 12:1-2).
- 6 knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin;
- 7 for he who has died is freed from sin.
  - The likeness of His resurrection requires the simultaneous, presently ongoing, continuous action of “knowing.” It is not sufficient to have known it once, or to have known it at one time but not given it much thought for some time. This present active participle of *ginōskō* will be followed by the present active participle of *oida* in v.9.
  - Our sin natures were crucified on the cross (Gal. 2:20; 5:24; 6:14) and they only have controlling power over us when we take them down from the cross and behave as if they were never crucified in the first place.
- 8 Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him,
- 9 knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, is never to die again; death no longer is master over Him.
- 10 For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God.
  - This promise is not the future promise of living with Jesus in heaven after we die, but living with Jesus in heaven and on earth today in the outworking of our salvation (Mt. 28:20; Jn. 14:18-21; 17:24).
  - Living to God rather than living for ourselves is the believer’s purpose and calling (cf. Rom. 14:7-9; 2<sup>nd</sup> Cor. 5:15).
- 11 Even so consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus.
  - Just as vv.8-10 were a matter for our volitional consideration, so too are vv.12ff.
  - This consideration is a volitional self-imputation of the divine reality into a personal realization.
- 12 Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its lusts,

- The Christian's volitionally imputed divine reality includes a sovereignly delegated permissive will.
    - God's sovereign permissive will allows and disallows every Satanic function (Job 1:12; 2:6; 1<sup>st</sup> Kgs. 22:20-23; Lk. 22:31-32).
    - The Christian's sovereignly delegated permissive will allows and disallows every fleshly function (cf. Ps. 19:13,14; 119:11,133).
    - Other such negated 3<sup>rd</sup> person imperatives (Mt. 6:3; 19:6; Jn. 14:1,27; Eph. 4:26, 2<sup>nd</sup> Pet. 3:8).
  - Our mortal bodies are active agents having desires and lusts, and demanding our obedience (Gal. 5:16,17).
- 13 and do not go on presenting the members of your body to sin as instruments of unrighteousness; but present yourselves to God as those alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God.
- Daily presentations to God (Rom. 6:13,16,19; 12:1; 2<sup>nd</sup> Tim. 2:15) prepare us for our eternal presentation to Him (Rom. 14:10).
  - Our eternal presentation should spark a heavenly-mindedness that will help us in every sin temptation (Col. 3:1-4 & esp. v.5).
  - Preparation for sin paves the way for failure, but preparation against sin paves the way for victory (Rom. 13:14).
- 14 For sin shall not be master over you, for you are not under law but under grace.
- When sin "lords" over us, we have departed from the One Lord to Whom we owe everything (1<sup>st</sup> Cor. 8:6). This is also true when abusive spiritual leaders "lord" their authority over their flocks (2<sup>nd</sup> Cor. 1:24; 1<sup>st</sup> Pet. 5:3).
  - Remember: The reign of Law is an impotent reign, doing nothing to overcome the reign of sin through operation death (Rom. 5:20,21; 8:2,3; Col. 2:23). Grace must reign in righteousness! (cf. Rom. 5:21)
- 15 What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? May it never be!
- As in v.1, we do not have a license to sin under any circumstances or for any reason.
  - Repetition edifies (Phil. 3:1; 2<sup>nd</sup> Pet. 1:12-15).
- 16 Do you not know that when you present yourselves to someone as slaves for obedience, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin resulting in death, or of obedience resulting in righteousness?
- Involuntary versus voluntary servitude was taught in the Old Testament (Ex. 21:1-6; Deut. 15:12-17).
  - Operational death is the unnecessary condition for Church Members who are supposed to be walking in the Light (1<sup>st</sup> Jn. 1:7). Obedience to this cruel master means we may end up doing what we don't want to do (Rom. 7:14-25).
- 17 But thanks be to God that though you were slaves of sin, you became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching to which you were committed,
- To God be the glory for Church Members positive to the Word of God and actively engaged in their Christian walk (cf. 1<sup>st</sup> Cor. 15:57; 2<sup>nd</sup> Cor. 2:14; 8:16).
  - Doctrine comes in various forms, but for any form to have sin-freeing value requires heart obedience (Isa. 29:13; Ezek. 33:31,32; Eph. 6:6) and total commitment (Jude 3; Rom. 3:2; 1<sup>st</sup> Tim. 6:20; 2<sup>nd</sup> Tim. 1:14).
- 18 and having been freed from sin, you became slaves of righteousness.
- A disciple of Jesus Christ, abiding in His Word, and abiding in Him, is truly a slave of righteousness (Jn. 8:31-36).
  - Freed from the slave-market of sin, delivered into a new walk (Eph. 2:1-10).
  - Faith in Christ eternally saves us from the penalty of sin, but the Word of God temporally saves us from the power of sin (Jas. 1:21-22).
- 19-20 I am speaking in human terms because of the weakness of your flesh. For just as you presented your members as slaves to impurity and to lawlessness, resulting in further lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves to righteousness, resulting in sanctification. For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness.
- Carnality is progressive (2<sup>nd</sup> Tim. 2:16,17) and leaves the believer impaired in spiritual understanding (1<sup>st</sup> Cor. 3:1-3).
  - Spirituality is also progressive (2<sup>nd</sup> Tim. 2:22b) and leaves the believer in a position for even greater spiritual understanding (Col. 1:9-12; 2<sup>nd</sup> Pet. 1:5-8).
- 21-22 Therefore what benefit were you then deriving from the things of which you are now ashamed? For the outcome of those things is death. But now having been freed from sin and enslaved to God, you derive your benefit, resulting in sanctification, and the outcome, eternal life.
- The fruit of carnality and the shame that comes with it should prompt our repentance (Gal. 5:19-21; 2<sup>nd</sup> Cor. 4:2; Phil. 3:19).
  - The fruit of spirituality and the abundant life that comes with it should prompt its continuance (Gal. 5:22-23; Jn. 10:10 cf. Rom. 5:13-21).
- 23 For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.
- Positionally and experientially, this has already been given in Romans (Rom. 5:12,17).
  - It's repetition here demonstrates that heart-obedience and commitment to teaching makes the positional reality an experiential realization (cf. Rom. 6:17-18 & Jn. 17:13-19).

## Chapter Seven

- 1 Or do you not know, brethren (for I am speaking to those who know the law), that the law has jurisdiction over a person as long as he lives?
  - See notes from 6:3 on ἀγνοέω agnoeō <sup>#50</sup> & ἄγνοια agnoia <sup>#52</sup> *ignorance*.
  - Even if the majority of believers Paul's writing to are Gentiles, they know the law from their previous association with Jewish believers (Rom. 16:3-5).
  - Governance and jurisdiction are features of Biblical revelation which greatly help us to rightly divide the Word of Truth (Rom. 6:14; 7:6; 2<sup>nd</sup> Tim. 2:15). Additional jurisdiction matters center in the local church (1<sup>st</sup> Cor. 5:12-13; 6:1-6).
- 2 For the married woman is bound by law to her husband while he is living; but if her husband dies, she is released from the law concerning the husband.
- 3 So then, if while her husband is living she is joined to another man, she shall be called an adulteress; but if her husband dies, she is free from the law, so that she is not an adulteress though she is joined to another man.
  - If the imagery of slavery doesn't have impact, perhaps the imagery of marriage will communicate (1<sup>st</sup> Cor. 7:4,39).
  - Fornication is a serious offense with bodily consequences (1<sup>st</sup> Cor. 6:15-20), but adultery compounds the discipline as an attack against God's design for marriage (Heb. 13:4).
  - The widow is perfectly free to remarry (1<sup>st</sup> Cor. 7:8-9; 1<sup>st</sup> Tim. 5:11-14).
- 4 Therefore, my brethren, you also were made to die to the Law through the body of Christ, so that you might be joined to another, to Him who was raised from the dead, in order that we might bear fruit for God.
  - Our death to the law frees us to "remarry" and "be joined to" the resurrected and ascended Lord Jesus Christ (1<sup>st</sup> Cor. 6:17). This imagery was also found in the Old Testament (Dt. 10:20; 11:22; 2<sup>nd</sup> Kgs. 18:6; Isa. 56:3; Jer. 13:11) as the sex act in marriage (Gen. 2:24) is equated with the soul intimacy believers ought to have with the Lord.
  - It was not His death on the cross which effected our death to the Law, but His life of sinless perfection (Rom. 8:3,4). Note: this principle holds true both for Jews under the Law of Moses and Gentiles under the Law of Conscience (Rom. 2:12-16).
- 5 For while we were in the flesh, the sinful passions, which were aroused by the Law, were at work in the members of our body to bear fruit for death.
  - The phrase "in the flesh" will be expanded in chapter eight (Rom. 8:5-9).
  - Sinful passions energetically work in bodily members when they are "aroused" by the Law.
    - The Greek text has no such word for "aroused." It is understood in context (cf. Jas. 1:14-15; Job 15:34-35).
    - The same context and construction ought then to be applied to the body of Christ in v.4. Passions themselves are not sinful, when they are directed to the appropriate object and reserved for the proper time (1<sup>st</sup> Cor. 7:2-5,9; Song. 2:7; 3:5; 8:4).
- 6 But now we have been released from the Law, having died to that by which we were bound, so that we serve in newness of the Spirit and not in oldness of the letter.
  - Letters engraved on stones has given way to the leading of the Holy Spirit (Rom. 8:14; Gal. 5:18; 2<sup>nd</sup> Cor. 3:3,7,8).
  - For Israel, their promised Kingdom will feature a Kingdom Law written upon their hearts (Jer. 31:33; Ezek. 36:25-27).
- 7 What shall we say then? Is the Law sin? May it never be! On the contrary, I would not have come to know sin except through the Law; for I would not have known about coveting if the Law had not said, "You shall not covet."
  - Although the Law often arouses our sinful passions (Rom. 7:5), the Law itself is not sin. It is holy, righteous and good (Rom. 7:12).
  - The benefit to knowledge of sin outweighs the associated arousal to sin, because the knowledge of sin also increases our knowledge of God (Rom. 7:13; Eph. 6:10; Phil. 1:9-11).
- 8 But sin, taking opportunity through the commandment, produced in me coveting of every kind; for apart from the Law sin is dead.
  - Opportunities for sin must be identified and guarded against (Lk. 4:13; Gal. 5:13; 2<sup>nd</sup> Cor. 11:12).
  - Any way that we find to neuter sin is entirely to our benefit (Rom. 8:12,13; 13:14; Gal. 5:16).
- 9 I was once alive apart from the Law; but when the commandment came, sin became alive and I died;
  - Childhood is a time of simple conscience (not innocence) and ought to be redeemed for God's purpose (Isa. 7:15,16; 8:4; 1<sup>st</sup> Sam. 2:18-20,26; Lk. 2:40,52; 2<sup>nd</sup> Tim. 3:15).
  - Maximum saturation in doctrine benefits the child when he reaches the age for sin arousal to come alive (Deut. 6:6,7; Ps. 71:5,6,17,18; 119:99,100; Prov. 22:6; Isa. 28:9; Eph. 6:4).

- 10 and this commandment, which was to result in life, proved to result in death for me;
- Doctrine ought to be a source of life (Deut. 4:1,2; Ezek. 20:11,13,21; Ps. 119:17,25,37,40,88,93,107,149,154,156,159).
  - Church doctrine in Christ provides for abundant life (Jn. 10:10; 2<sup>nd</sup> Pet. 1:5-11).
- 11 for sin, taking an opportunity through the commandment, deceived me and through it killed me.
- The opportunistic, predatory nature of sin was introduced to mankind from the earliest generations (Gen. 4:7).
  - Deceit and death, lying and murder are the stock trades of our Adversary (Jn. 8:44).
- 12 So then, the Law is holy, and the commandment is holy and righteous and good.
- Verses 12&13 summarize verses 7-11. Is the Law sin? No, it is the holy law of the Holy God (Lev. 10:3; 11:44-45; 19:2; 20:7,26).
  - Holy and righteous and good (Rom. 7:12) will be contrasted with good and acceptable and perfect (Rom. 12:2).
- 13 Therefore did that which is good become a cause of death for me? May it never be! Rather it was sin, in order that it might be shown to be sin by effecting my death through that which is good, so that through the commandment sin would become utterly sinful.
- Law was not causative but rather demonstrative (Gal. 3:24). Once Law demonstrates all it can, the manifold wisdom of God in grace will be demonstrated for all eternity (Eph. 2:7; 3:10-11; 1<sup>st</sup> Pet. 1:12).
  - Law's demonstration allows angels and men to apprehend the hyper-ballistic sinfulness of sin. Not even the Flood provided such a demonstration (Gen. 6:5-8).
- 14 For we know that the Law is spiritual, but I am of flesh, sold into bondage to sin.
- Often times, Church Age believers forget that the Law is spiritual (1<sup>st</sup> Cor. 10:3,4) because we identify with its lawful use for the lawless (1<sup>st</sup> Tim. 1:8-11) and its impotence for the righteous (Rom. 8:3; Col. 2:23).
  - The dynamic between spirit and flesh is one that should concern every believer (Mt. 26:41; Mk. 14:38). Remember, sin has been condemned but we can still let it reign in our flesh (Rom. 6:11-14).
- 15 For what I am doing, I do not understand; for I am not practicing what I would like to do, but I am doing the very thing I hate.
- When the believer "sells out" for sinful practices he doesn't even know what he is accomplishing. No slave does (Jn. 15:15).
  - Positive volition to do good and hate evil (cf. Rom. 12:9) is enslaved to the flesh (Rom. 6:19) which exercises its own will and feeds its own lust (Gal. 5:17).
- 16 But if I do the very thing I do not want to do, I agree with the Law, confessing that the Law is good.
- We can act contrary to the will of God when we submit to the flesh, or we can act contrary to the flesh when we submit to the will of God (Mt. 26:39,42).
  - When we act in a manner contrary to our new nature we become an example for why the Law is good (cf. Rom. 3:5-8).
- 17 So now, no longer am I the one doing it, but sin which dwells in me.
- The new you is born of God and cannot sin (1<sup>st</sup> Jn. 3:9; 5:18).
  - The old you is born in Adam and cannot do good (Rom. 3:10-12).
  - Unfortunately, we don't always lay aside the old self to put on the new self (Eph. 4:22-24).
- 18 For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh; for the willing is present in me, but the doing of the good is not.
- No good thing lives in the flesh (Rom. 7:18). The Holy Spirit, however, does live in the believer's body (Rom. 8:9; 1<sup>st</sup> Cor. 3:16; 6:19; 2<sup>nd</sup> Cor. 6:16). This importantly distinguishes between **σάρξ** sarx #4561 and **σῶμα** sōma #4983. The body is not evil but a no good thing living in the flesh impels us to sin and evil.
  - Human willpower is not sufficient for the achievement of good (Rom. 7:15,18,19,25; 8:13). [Warren Wiersbe](#) has a good comment regarding the willpower and the won't power that can only come through the Holy Spirit.
- 19 For the good that I want, I do not do, but I practice the very evil that I do not want.
- The self-contradictory existence may be frustrating in time (1<sup>st</sup> Jn. 1:6,8; Jas. 3:2), but it will no longer be extant in eternity (cf. Rom. 7:24).
  - Even in carnality there remains a buried conscience, as the Holy Spirit testifies with our human spirit (Rom. 8:5-16) and God the Father works in the new nature (Phil. 2:13 cf. 1<sup>st</sup> Jn. 3:9).
- 20 But if I am doing the very thing I do not want, I am no longer the one doing it, but sin which dwells in me.
- No excuse, as we are commanded to not let sin reign (Rom. 6:12-13).
  - Sin (singular) along with flesh and "old man" are expressions that refer to the no good thing that dwells in each one of us.

- 21 I find then the principle that evil is present in me, the one who wants to do good.
- Just as human conscience forms a “law” (Rom. 2:14,15), so too does the presence of the no-good thing.
  - The sin nature not only sparks personal sins, but presides over a law of personal evil.
    - Adam & Eve ate from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.
    - The Adamic nature produces an internal warfare between good and evil.
- 22 For I joyfully concur with the law of God in the inner man,
- 23 but I see a different law in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin which is in my members.
- The Law of God in the inner man = The Law of a renewed mind (Rom. 7:22,23,25; 12:2).
  - Concurrence is a function of mind with an pleasure facet (συνῆδομαι <sup>#4913</sup> sunēdomai <sup>Hap.</sup>).
  - Satan doesn’t need to take us prisoner (2<sup>nd</sup> Tim. 2:26) when our sin nature does it internally (Isa. 61:1; Jn. 8:34,36).
- 24 Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of this death?
- The mind set on God has a joyful concurrence, but the mind set on the flesh is wretched condition (Ps. 32:3-5 cf. Rom. 8:5-8).
  - Soul freedom foreshadows and guarantees eternal bodily freedom (Rom. 8:10,11,23 cf. Phil. 3:19-21).
- 25 Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, on the one hand I myself with my mind am serving the law of God, but on the other, with my flesh the law of sin.
- The struggle itself is worthy of thanksgiving (1<sup>st</sup> Cor. 15:57; 2<sup>nd</sup> Cor. 12:9,10).
  - The fight is a good fight (1<sup>st</sup> Tim. 1:18; 6:12; 2<sup>nd</sup> Tim. 4:7).

## Chapter Eight

- 1 Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.
- Israel’s stewardship in the OT was a Ministry of Death & Condemnation, but our present stewardship in the Church is a Ministry of the Spirit and Righteousness (2<sup>nd</sup> Cor. 3:1-9).
  - The good fight may see terrible defeats in time, but only an ultimate victory in eternity (Jn. 3:18; 5:24).
- 2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death.
- Two competing laws within each believer (Rom. 7:22-23) are not co-equal. One of them will always trump the other (Gal. 5:16,18) if it is not quenched (1<sup>st</sup> Thess. 5:19).
  - Temporal freedom is our present experience of the abundant life in Christ (Jn. 10:10), the Melchizedek priesthood of the Church (Heb. 6:9,18,19; 7:16,18,19,25-28; 9:12,14; 10:1,14).
- 3 For what the Law could not do, weak as it was through the flesh, God *did*: sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and *as an offering* for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh,
- No human being in the flesh (in Adam) could keep Mosaic Law with 100% perfection (Job 15:14-16; Ecc. 7:20; Jas. 2:10).
  - Jesus Christ came in the flesh (not in Adam, but in his likeness—yet sinless) and defeated sin (Rom. 6:10-11; 1<sup>st</sup> Pet. 2:21-25).
- 4 so that the requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.
- The Church is not subject to the Law, and does not observe the Law (Rom. 7:4,6; Gal. 3:24,25).
  - The Church does not fulfill the requirements of the Mosaic Law; rather the requirements of the Law are fulfilled in the Church Members who walk according to the Holy Spirit (Mt. 5:17; Gal. 2:19-21).
- 5 For those who are according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who are according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit.
- Carnality and spirituality are states of being. οἱ κατὰ σάρκα/πνεῦμα ὄντες. The consistent walk (v.4) becomes the characteristic existence (v.5) as a total mind-set (vv.5-8).
  - The NT holds us accountable for the way we think. φρονέω *phroneō* <sup>#5426</sup> <sub>26x</sub>: to have an opinion, *think, hold an opinion*; to give careful consideration, *set one’s mind on, be intent on*, to develop an attitude based on careful thought, *be minded, disposed; think* (Mt. 16:23 || Mk. 8:33; Acts 28:22; Rom. 8:5; 11:20; 12:3<sub>x2</sub>,16<sub>x2</sub>; 14:6<sub>x2</sub>; 15:5; 1<sup>st</sup> Cor. 13:11; 2<sup>nd</sup> Cor. 13:11; Gal. 5:10; Phil. 1:7; 2:2<sub>x2</sub>,5; 3:15<sub>x2</sub>,19; 4:2,10<sub>x2</sub>; Col. 3:2).
- 6 For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace,
- The mindset is a mind “of flesh” or a mind “of spirit.”
  - Although no longer a child of wrath by nature, operational death is a mindset that mimics the believer’s prior life as an unbeliever (Eph. 2:1-3).

- The mindset of life and peace is the experiential awareness of the positional reconciliation (Rom. 5:1,10). This mindset equips us to place our liberty and love in appropriate proportions (Rom. 14:17).
- 7 because the mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God; for it does not subject itself to the law of God, for it is not even able *to do so*,
- The carnal mind reverts back to an adversarial hostility (Jas. 4:4) which no believer has positionally (Eph. 2:15,16).
  - The carnal mind is incapable of tapping into God's empowering freedom even as it is incapable of digesting the meat of Bible Doctrine (1<sup>st</sup> Cor. 3:1-3).
- 8 and those who are in the flesh cannot please God.
- The flesh is flesh, but God is spirit (Jn. 3:5-7; 4:24; 1<sup>st</sup> Cor. 15:50).
  - That which is not yielded to God's provision is not pleasing in God's sight (Ezek. 18:23,32; 33:11). (Redemption provision, abundant life provision).
  - Our highest purpose in the Church is to grow in ways that are pleasing to God (Mt. 3:17; Col. 1:9-12; 1<sup>st</sup> Thess. 4:1; Heb. 11:5,6; 13:21).
- 9 However, you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him.
- The indwelling of the Holy Spirit is a distinguishing characteristic of the Church Dispensation (1<sup>st</sup> Cor. 3:16; 6:19). It is not an experience subsequent to salvation but coinciding with it (2<sup>nd</sup> Cor. 6:16-18).
  - The Spirit of Christ is God the Holy Spirit functioning to spotlight God the Son (1<sup>st</sup> Pet. 1:11).
- 10 If Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, yet the spirit is alive because of righteousness.
- Christ in you is another absolute positional truth (Jn. 14:23). Every believer exists in this reality (Eph. 3:17; Col. 1:27).
  - Church Members have physically dying bodies but living human spirits (Jn. 4:14; 6:54; 11:25,26; Heb. 12:23).
- 11 But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.
- God the Father also has an indwelling reality in the Church (Jn. 14:23; 1<sup>st</sup> Jn. 4:15,16).
  - God the Father actively works in and through us (2<sup>nd</sup> Cor. 5:18,19; Phil. 1:6; 2:13 cf. 1<sup>st</sup> Cor. 12:6).
- 12 So then, brethren, we are under obligation, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh—
- 13 for if you are living according to the flesh, you must die; but if by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live.
- We have an obligation, not to earn or deserve salvation, but in gracious response to what we could never earn or deserve (Rom. 15:1; 1<sup>st</sup> Jn. 2:6; 3:16; 4:11; 3<sup>rd</sup> Jn. 8). Our walk must be in a manner worthy (Eph. 4:1; Col. 1:10; 1<sup>st</sup> Thess. 2:12).
  - Mortification is our conscious death-dealing (Mt. 5:29,30; 1<sup>st</sup> Cor. 9:26,27; Col. 3:5) of what Jesus Christ killed on the cross (Rom. 6:6,11; Gal. 5:24).
- 14 For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.
- 15 For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, "Abba! Father!"
- The Spirit of Adoption should leave us fearless (2<sup>nd</sup> Tim. 1:7; Heb. 12:18-24).
  - Ἀββᾶ ὁ Πατήρ Abba ho Pater becomes our battle-cry—even greater than Our Father which art in heaven, or even Hosanna (Mk. 14:36; Gal. 4:6).
- 16 The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God,
- 17 and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with *Him* so that we may also be glorified with *Him*.
- The inner witness of the Holy Spirit with our human spirit is not meant to be an apologetic external witness to unbelievers, but a powerful internal assurance for every believer (Gal. 4:6; 1<sup>st</sup> Jn. 5:10).
  - Our co-inheritance with Christ is infinite (Eph. 1:11-14; 1<sup>st</sup> Pet. 1:4; Heb. 1:2).
  - Suffering and glory will be eternally celebrated (2<sup>nd</sup> Tim. 2:12; 1<sup>st</sup> Pet. 1:6-9), and ought to be temporally celebrated as well (Acts 5:41; 1<sup>st</sup> Pet. 4:12-16).
- 18 For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us.
- Suffering and glory are inseparable (Lk. 24:26; Heb. 2:10).
  - They are also incomparable (2<sup>nd</sup> Cor. 4:17,18).
- 19 For the anxious longing of the creation waits eagerly for the revealing of the sons of God.
- An anxious longing is better thought of as an earnest expectation and hope (Phil. 1:20).
  - The creation is waiting eagerly for the same thing we're looking for: new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells (2<sup>nd</sup> Pet. 3:13). The sinless sons of God will then at that time be revealed (Rev. 21:7; Isa. 9:6).

- 20 For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it, in hope
- 21 that the creation itself also will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God.
- Adam's rebellion resulted in a curse upon the earth (Gen. 3:17-19; Isa. 24:5,6; 2<sup>nd</sup> Pet. 3:7).
  - The last Adam became a curse as the solution first to the curse of the Law (Gal. 3:13 cf. Deut. 21:23), the curse of Noah (Isa. 65:20-25), and then ultimately to the curse of the fallen earth (Rom. 8:21; Rev. 22:3).
- 22 For we know that the whole creation groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now.
- 23 And not only this, but also we ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for *our* adoption as sons, the redemption of our body.
- Creation's groaning is seen in how it wears out like a garment (Ps. 102:25,26).
  - Humanity's groaning is seen in how it wears out like a garment (2<sup>nd</sup> Cor. 5:2).
- 24 For in hope we have been saved, but hope that is seen is not hope; for who hopes for what he *already* sees?
- 25 But if we hope for what we do not see, with perseverance we wait eagerly for it.
- Our walk is by faith and not by sight (2<sup>nd</sup> Cor. 5:7).
  - Our salvation is a living hope (1<sup>st</sup> Pet. 1:3).
  - Our eagerness for the new heavens and new earth requires the linking of perseverance and hope (Rom. 5:3,4; 8:25; 15:4,5).
- 26 In the same way the Spirit also helps our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for *us* with groanings too deep for words;
- "In the same way" highlights the connection between the Holy Spirit and our human spirit. That link provides us a taste of eternity and sparks our groaning (v.23). That link provides the Holy Spirit a taste of humanity and sparks His groaning (v.26).
  - Our finite understanding is provided an infinite assistance (cf. Lk. 10:40). The Holy Spirit does not take over our rational prayers (Eph. 6:18 cf. 1<sup>st</sup> Cor. 14:15), but adds to them with His ineffable intercessions (Rom. 8:26,27; 1<sup>st</sup> Cor. 2:10-13). In many respects, this is the "language" of heaven (2<sup>nd</sup> Cor. 12:4).
- 27 and He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He intercedes for the saints according to *the will of God*.
- God the Father's omniscience knows every thought and intention (1<sup>st</sup> Sam. 16:7; 1<sup>st</sup> Kgs. 8:39; Jer. 17:10), and every need before it is spoken (Mt. 6:8).
  - The Spirit and the Father commune mind to mind without the medium of words. This is very helpful when words fail us (cf. Ps. 77:1-6). Consider how this pattern applies in our growth in the mind of Christ (1<sup>st</sup> Cor. 2:16).
- 28 And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to *His* purpose.
- Loving God = being known by God (1<sup>st</sup> Cor. 8:3). See also Gal. 4:9 & 2<sup>nd</sup> Tim. 2:19
  - Loving God = Being a called one according to God's eternal purpose (Eph. 1:9,11; 3:11).
- 29 For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined *to become* conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren;
- God's foreknowledge is the criteria for our predestination (1<sup>st</sup> Pet. 1:1-2). It is not the same thing as predestination (this is perhaps the most fatal logical fallacy that causes Calvinism to crumble).
  - Our predestination is to be conformed to the image of His Son (1<sup>st</sup> Cor. 15:49; 2<sup>nd</sup> Cor. 3:18; 1<sup>st</sup> Jn. 3:2).
- 30 and these whom He predestined, He also called; and these whom He called, He also justified; and these whom He justified, He also glorified.
- Many are called, but few are chosen (Mt. 22:14). These foreknown & predestined are called in such a way, with a drawing by God the Father, that they come by faith to Jesus Christ (Jn. 6:37,44).
  - Justification and glorification are powerful doctrines of positional truth that also have experiential applications which must not be overlooked (Jas. 2:24; Rom. 15:6).
- 31 What then shall we say to these things? If God *is* for us, who *is* against us?
- Positional truth realities must have experiential realizations.
  - God's providence on our behalf places every adversary into a diminished perspective (2<sup>nd</sup> Kgs. 6:16; 1<sup>st</sup> Jn. 4:4). From time to time we need to ask ourselves who's who? Who's for us? Who's against us? Who cares?
- 32 He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him over for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things?
- What God did to His Son for us shapes what He can do now with His Son on our behalf.
  - This a fortiori principle is a big feature of Romans theology (Rom. 5:8-10).

- 33 Who will bring a charge against God's elect? God is the one who justifies;
- 34 who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus is He who died, yes, rather who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us.
- More who's who questions. Who brings charges? The Accuser (Ps. 109:6; Rev. 12:10).
  - Who clears us of all charges? The Justifier (Isa. 50:8-9) based on the testimony of The Defender (Zech. 3:1-4; 1<sup>st</sup> Jn. 2:1).
- 35 Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?
- No Condemnation, No Separation (Marcus Rainsford). The absolute glories of positional truth are meaningless if they are not eternal. Predestination, justification and glorification are tragic mockeries if we can lose them at any time (Ps. 136 twenty-six times).
  - Seven enemies greater and stronger than you are doomed to defeat (Deut. 7:1-2 in contrast to Rom. 8:35). We overwhelmingly conquer! (Rom. 8:37)
- 36 Just as it is written, "For Your sake we are being put to death all day long; We were considered as sheep to be slaughtered."
- 37 But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us.
- Israel had a national application for such confidence (Ps. 44:19,22), but Members of the Church have personal applications for an even greater confidence (2<sup>nd</sup> Cor. 4:7-12).
  - We are God the Father's triumph in Christ (2<sup>nd</sup> Cor. 2:14; Jn. 16:33; 1<sup>st</sup> Jn. 5:4).
- 38 For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers,
- 39 nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.
- Eternal Security is a doctrine that every believer ought to be 100% convinced of (2<sup>nd</sup> Tim. 1:12).
  - The previous list of seven becomes a list of ten as Eternal Security is reaffirmed. No created thing can separate us (Rom. 8:38,39), and neither can the Creator Himself (Jn. 6:37-40; 10:28,29).

# Romans 9-11 Discourse on Israel

## Chapter Nine

- 1 I am telling the truth in Christ, I am not lying, my conscience testifies with me in the Holy Spirit,
- 2 that I have great sorrow and unceasing grief in my heart.
  - Paul's great conviction as to the Church's eternal state (Rom. 8:38-39) is matched by a great sorrow for Israel's present state (Rom. 9:1-2).
  - The transition is abrupt, but not out of place. If separation from God's love is impossible, what should be said about Israel? Has God not rejected them when He called the Church? (Rom. 9-11).
- 3 For I could wish that I myself were accursed, separated from Christ for the sake of my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh,
  - If such a separation was possible, Paul would wish for it (Rom. 9:3 cf. Lk. 16:26).
  - Natural, human relations form powerful affections that are often at odds with our spiritual, divine relationship (Mic. 7:6; Mt. 10:21,34-37).
- 4 who are Israelites, to whom belongs the adoption as sons, and the glory and the covenants and the giving of the Law and the temple service and the promises,
- 5 whose are the fathers, and from whom is the Christ according to the flesh, who is over all, God blessed forever. Amen.
  - A synopsis of Israel's great advantages completes the unfinished discourse from chapter three (Rom. 3:1-2).
  - Israel's national adoption provides them with unique existence before God (Deut. 10:12-16).
  - The Patriarchs and their calling by YHWH are unique in human history. He is the Elohim of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (Ex. 3:6,16; 4:5). He is the Elohim of Israel (Ex. 5:1).
  - Israel is the earthly nation selected to produce the kinsman redeemer. Gentiles have a Christ because Israel has a Messiah.
  - Ultimately, the Plan of God the Father is to exalt God the Son and bless Him forever (Col. 1:16-20).
- 6 But it is not as though the word of God has failed. For they are not all Israel who are descended from Israel;
  - God's Word never fails (Isa. 55:11; Jn. 10:35; Heb. 4:2,12). The failures of man to trust the promises never invalidates the promises (Rom. 3:3).
  - Ultimate corporate destiny must be rightly divided from particular individual application (Jn. 1:47; Rom. 2:28,29).
- 7 nor are they all children because they are Abraham's descendants, but: "THROUGH ISAAC YOUR DESCENDANTS WILL BE NAMED."
  - Progressive revelation creates greater precision, without invalidating any one thing previously promised (Gal. 3:15,17; Rom. 4:13,14).
  - Particular individual application is delineated as a contrast between works and faith (Rom. 4:12-16).
- 8 That is, it is not the children of the flesh who are children of God, but the children of the promise are regarded as descendants.
  - Particular individual application is delineated as a spiritual birth: children of God (Jn. 1:12,13; 3:3-8).
  - Racial heritage for the Jews is a great advantage but does not eliminate the requirement of being born again (Jn. 8:37-59).
- 9 For this is the word of promise: "AT THIS TIME I WILL COME, AND SARAH SHALL HAVE A SON."
  - The promise sparked Abraham's laughter in belief (Gen. 15:2-6; 17:17; Rom. 4:18-22).
  - The promise sparked Sarah's laughter in unbelief (Gen. 18:12), her rebuke by the Lord (Gen. 18:15), and then acceptance by faith (Gen. 21:1-7; Heb. 11:11). Eventual faith is still faith! (Mt. 21:28-32)
- 10 And not only this, but there was Rebekah also, when she had conceived twins by one man, our father Isaac;
  - The Sarah/Hagar contrast (Gal. 4:21-31) must also be understood in light of the Rebekah application.
    - Isaac and Ishmael were both sons of Abraham, but through different mothers.
    - Esau and Jacob were both sons of Isaac, through the same mother at the same time.
  - Ultimate corporate destiny is a matter for God's sovereign choice and reflects His eternal purpose (Eph. 1:11).
  - God's eternal purpose must be understood as that which brings Him pleasure (Eph. 1:5-6).
- 11 for though the twins were not yet born and had not done anything good or bad, so that God's purpose according to His choice would stand, not because of works but because of Him who calls,
  - God's purpose, God's choice, God's call all precede time (Mt. 25:34; 1<sup>st</sup> Pet. 1:20; Eph. 1:4; Rev. 13:8).
  - Man's choices good and bad transpire within time only within the parameters God allows (Mt. 11:20-24).
  - Man's choices are not causative for God's choices. His choices are the result of His nature as the One who calls (Mt. 11:25-28).

- 12 it was said to her, “THE OLDER WILL SERVE THE YOUNGER.”
- 13 Just as it is written, “JACOB I LOVED, BUT ESAU I HATED.”
- God’s promise (choice) was issued ahead of time (Gen.25:13).
  - Man’s actions (choices) unfolded in time (Mal.1:2).
- 14 What shall we say then? There is no injustice with God, is there? May it never be!
- It has been said before, and it will be said again, there is no injustice with God (Rom. 3:5 cp. Gen. 18:25; Dt. 32:4).
  - This is the 8<sup>th</sup> out of 10 μή γένοιτο *mē genoito* exclamations in Romans (Rom. 3:4,6,31; 6:2,15; 7:7,13; 9:14; 11:1,11; see also 1<sup>st</sup> Cor. 6:15; Gal. 2:17; 3:21; 6:14).
- 15 For He says to Moses, “I WILL HAVE MERCY ON WHOM I HAVE MERCY, AND I WILL HAVE COMPASSION ON WHOM I HAVE COMPASSION.”
- God’s choice to manifest mercy and compassion is not arbitrary, and it is not unfair (Rom. 9:14). His absolute justice applies to His creation because His absolute justice applies to Himself (2<sup>nd</sup> Tim. 2:13; Ex. 3:14).
  - God’s choice to manifest mercy and compassion is a choice born of His own glory and name (Ex. 33:19a).
- 16 So then it does not depend on the man who wills or the man who runs, but on God who has mercy.
- God’s choice to manifest mercy and compassion is not for man’s sake, but for God’s sake (Ps. 23:3; 25:11; 31:3; 79:9; 143:11; Isa. 48:9; Jer. 14:7; Ezek. 36:21,22).
  - God’s choice is entirely made in accordance with His eternal purpose (Eph. 1:11) to the praise of His glory (Eph. 1:6,12,14).
- 17 For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, “FOR THIS VERY PURPOSE I RAISED YOU UP, TO DEMONSTRATE MY POWER IN YOU, AND THAT MY NAME MIGHT BE PROCLAIMED THROUGHOUT THE WHOLE EARTH.”
- Positive volition proclaims the Lord’s name, and negative volition proclaims the Lord’s name (Ps. 76:10; Phil. 2:10-11).
  - The humble will be exalted at the proper time outside of time (1<sup>st</sup> Pet. 5:6), and the wicked are exalted in their hour within time (Jer. 12:1,2; Hab. 1:13; Lk. 22:53; Jn. 7:6).
- 18 So then He has mercy on whom He desires, and He hardens whom He desires.
- God’s choices regarding mercy and hardening are in accordance with His good pleasure (Isa. 46:10; 53:10; Phil. 2:13; Col. 1:19).
  - God desires that none should perish (2<sup>nd</sup> Pet. 3:9). He desires for all to be saved and come to a knowledge of the Truth (1<sup>st</sup> Tim. 2:3-6). These desires must not be realized unfairly—God must remain faithful to His own character (Rom. 2:4; Rev. 2:21).
- 19 You will say to me then, “Why does He still find fault? For who resists His will?”
- Man is a faultfinder (Job 40:2), but God is a righteous Judge (Ps. 7:11).
  - Those who resist God’s directive will (Acts 7:51) or assert their personal will in its place (Isa. 14:13-14; 65:2) do so within His permissive will (Acts 14:6), entirely within the scope of His eternal will (Eph. 3:11) to create us with capacity for independent will (Deut. 30:19; Josh. 24:15).
- 20 On the contrary, who are you, O man, who answers back to God? The thing molded will not say to the molder, “Why did you make me like this,” will it?
- 21 Or does not the potter have a right over the clay, to make from the same lump one vessel for honorable use and another for common use?
- The Creator/creature perspective cannot be disregarded (Isa. 55:8-9; Job 40:6-14).
  - The tool receives no credit (Isa. 10:15). The tool is the work of God’s hands (Job 14:15; 34:19).
- 22 What if God, although willing to demonstrate His wrath and to make His power known, endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction?
- 23 And He did so to make known the riches of His glory upon vessels of mercy, which He prepared beforehand for glory,
- God takes no pleasure in the death of the wicked (Ezek. 18:23,32; 33:11).
  - He patiently endures so as to achieve the greater pleasure (Rom. 2:4; 2<sup>nd</sup> Pet. 3:8,9,15).
  - The longsuffering of God is perhaps the most repeated descriptor in all the Bible (Ex. 34:6; Num. 14:18; Neh. 9:17; Ps. 86:15; 103:8; 145:8; Joel 2:13; Jon. 4:2; Mic. 7:18; Nah. 1:3).
- 24 even us, whom He also called, not from among Jews only, but also from among Gentiles.
- Vessels of wrath and vessels of mercy are called, but only vessels of mercy are chosen (Mt. 22:14).
  - The Church is “also called” demonstrating a calling related to yet distinct from Old Testament callings (2<sup>nd</sup> Cor. 5:17; Gal. 6:14).

- 25 As He says also in Hosea,  
 “I WILL CALL THOSE WHO WERE NOT MY PEOPLE, ‘MY PEOPLE,’  
 AND HER WHO WAS NOT BELOVED, ‘BELOVED.’ ”
- 26 “AND IT SHALL BE THAT IN THE PLACE WHERE IT WAS SAID TO THEM, ‘YOU ARE NOT MY PEOPLE,’  
 THERE THEY SHALL BE CALLED SONS OF THE LIVING GOD.”
- “As He says” does not mean the Church is the fulfillment of Hosea’s prophecy. Promises are kept for the ones to whom the promise is given (Hos. 2:23; 1:10).
  - Differences between the Church and Israel do not allow them to be identified as one and the same, however similarities between the Church and Israel do allow for Old Testament passages to be cited in a Church context for illustration (cp. 1<sup>st</sup> Pet. 2:10).
- 27 Isaiah cries out concerning Israel, “THOUGH THE NUMBER OF THE SONS OF ISRAEL BE LIKE THE SAND OF THE SEA, IT IS THE REMNANT THAT WILL BE SAVED;  
 28 FOR THE LORD WILL EXECUTE HIS WORD ON THE EARTH, THOROUGHLY AND QUICKLY.”
- 29 And just as Isaiah foretold,  
 “UNLESS THE LORD OF SABAOOTH HAD LEFT TO US A POSTERITY,  
 WE WOULD HAVE BECOME LIKE SODOM, AND WOULD HAVE RESEMBLED GOMORRAH.”
- As with the Hosea citations the Isaiah citations are out of order snippets (Isa. 10:22,23; 1:9).
  - Israel remains a unique earthly nation, with unique eternal promises (Deut. 4:5-8; 32-40; 2<sup>nd</sup> Sam. 7:18-29).
- 30 What shall we say then? That Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, attained righteousness, even the righteousness which is by faith;  
 31 but Israel, pursuing a law of righteousness, did not arrive at that law.
- Gentiles in the Church were brought to a place they were not called to be in the Old Testament.
  - Jews in the Church were also brought to a place they were not called to be in the Old Testament. Note: Israel will finally arrive to the place they were called to be in the Old Testament, but that will be the Millennial Kingdom of Jesus Christ and not the Church.
- 32 Why? Because they did not pursue it by faith, but as though it were by works. They stumbled over the stumbling stone,
- A response to God’s promises by grace through faith allows for an “arrival,” the reception of the promise (Heb. 6:15; 9:15; 10:36; 11:13,39).
  - A response to God’s promises by law through works never “arrives.” There always remains more to do (Mt. 19:20-21).
- 33 just as it is written,  
 “BEHOLD, I LAY IN ZION A STONE OF STUMBLING AND A ROCK OF OFFENSE,  
 AND HE WHO BELIEVES IN HIM WILL NOT BE DISAPPOINTED.”
- More separate snippets (Isa. 8:14 & 28:16) are rightly compiled through the mystery revelation to the Church (cp. 1<sup>st</sup> Pet. 2:6,8 & Ps. 118:22).
  - Jesus Christ is the Cornerstone—either a stumbling block or a rock of salvation (1<sup>st</sup> Cor. 1:23,24).

## *Chapter Ten*

- 1 Brethren, my heart’s desire and my prayer to God for them is for their salvation.
- Heart’s desires should be prayed for (2<sup>nd</sup> Thess. 1:11-12), so long as our hearts desire what God’s heart desires (1<sup>st</sup> Tim. 2:4; Jas. 4:3; 1<sup>st</sup> Jn. 5:15).
  - Conflicting desires must be factored in to the manner and means by which God answers our prayers (Lk. 13:34; 2<sup>nd</sup> Pet. 3:9; Rev. 2:21).
- 2 For I testify about them that they have a zeal for God, but not in accordance with knowledge.
- Zeal for God is a positive trait (Ps. 69:9; 119:139; Jn. 2:17).
  - Zeal minus knowledge of God’s will leads to tragic results (Jn. 16:2,3; Acts 22:3-5; 26:9-11; Gal. 1:14; Phil. 3:5-6).
- 3 For not knowing about God’s righteousness and seeking to establish their own, they did not subject themselves to the righteousness of God.
- Ignorance of God’s plan and provision sparks unacceptable alternatives (Deut. 12:8; Prov. 21:2; Mt. 7:21-23).
  - Receiving God’s righteousness is a free gift accepted by faith, at the same time it is also a volitional subjection received in obedience (Jn. 3:36). This is how God’s righteousness is both imputed and subjected to.

- 4 For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.
  - This is certainly true after His finished work, when the requirements of the Law are fulfilled in Him (Rom. 8:3,4).
  - This was also true prior to His finished work, when believers identified the Law's impotence (Ps. 51:14-17).
- 5 For Moses writes that the man who practices the righteousness which is based on law shall live by that righteousness.
  - Moses writes (present tense) in Lev. 18:5.
  - Paul also makes this point in Gal. 3:12 and rightly demonstrates mankind's universal inability to do so (Gal. 3:19-20).
- 6 But the righteousness based on faith speaks as follows: "Do not say in your heart, 'Who will ascend into heaven?' (that is, to bring Christ down),
  - Romans 10 adapts an eschatological passage from Deuteronomy 30. Israel will have a zeal in accordance with knowledge and a righteousness on the basis of faith when Jesus Christ re-gathers them from the ends of the earth (Deut. 30:1-10).
  - Having a life in right relationship with God is not too difficult (Dt. 30:11). God did not design it to be achieved by an unachievable quest. We are not Hercules earning godhood by our Herculean efforts.
  - Ascending to heaven was impossible for Satan and it is impossible for all of us without God's free gift (Dt. 30:12; Isa. 14:13; Prov. 30:1-4; Jn. 3:13).
- 7 or 'Who will descend into the abyss?' (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead)."<sup>1</sup>
  - If crossing the sea is a great feat, how much greater is plunging to the depths of the abyss?
  - The descending, descending, ascending and ascending of Jesus is a study to amaze (Eph. 4:8-10).
- 8 But what does it say? "The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart"—that is, the word of faith which we are preaching,
  - The nearness of God is designed for our finding Him (Acts 17:27; Jas. 4:8; Ps. 145:18; Isa. 55:6).
  - Nearness is emphasized twice: in your mouth and in your heart.
    - Nothing is nearer to your physical body than that which you have swallowed.
    - Nothing is nearer to your soul than that which you have planted in your heart.
  - Israel has a great eschatological tasting and nearness to look forward to (Ps. 34:8; Jer. 31:33-34; Joel 2:28-29; Zech. 8:20-23). This eschatological promise includes the name of the Lord as The Lord Our Righteousness (Jer. 23:6; 33:16).
- 9 that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved;
  - Mouth and heart is a continuation of Romans' adaptation from Deuteronomy (Deut. 30:14).
  - It is not intended to add confession to the sole requirement of faith for eternal life. See L.S. Chafer, [Grace, p.16](#) for his famous footnote.
- 10 for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation.
  - Righteousness = salvation (in the context and sense for penalty-of-sin salvation<sup>1</sup>) so this cannot be a step-process being spelled out for the gift of eternal life (Rom. 3:22).
  - A public confession is the privilege of those who identify what they have been called and chosen to do (1<sup>st</sup> Tim. 6:12,13; 2<sup>nd</sup> Cor. 9:13).
- 11 For the Scripture says, "Whoever believes in Him will not be disappointed."
  - The summary statement does not repeat the confess-believe two-step, but returns back to the simple faith alone in Christ alone.
  - As with Deuteronomy 30, Isaiah 28:16 is adapted for its place in a New Testament context. The original context is eschatological for Israel. The new context still applies to Israel's future, but does so with a significance and reality that the Church can also relate to.
- 12 For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord is Lord of all, abounding in riches for all who call on Him;
  - Should there be a distinction between passages with (the word) distinction and passages without (the word)?
    - As a matter of grace through faith, there is no distinction between Jew & Gentile for coming to God (Acts 15:9; Rom. 3:22). God is the God of all (Rom. 3:29). He is the Lord of All (Rom. 10:12).
    - In the Church it is often said there is "no distinction between" Jew and Gentile. It is actually better to say there is no Jew and Gentile (Gal. 3:28; Col. 3:11).
  - God's riches abound to His children who call upon Him as their Father (Rom. 10:12,13,14; 1<sup>st</sup> Cor. 1:2; 2<sup>nd</sup> Tim. 2:22; 1<sup>st</sup> Pet. 1:17).

---

<sup>1</sup> Penalty-of-sin salvation (positional) must be contrasted with power-of-sin salvation (experiential), presence-of-sin salvation (ultimate), and deliverance-from-danger salvation (temporal rescue).

- 13 for “Whoever will call on the name of the Lord will be saved.”
- As with Deuteronomy 30 and Isaiah 28, Joel 2:32 is adapted for its placement in a New Testament context. The original context is eschatological for Israel. The new context still applies to Israel’s future, but does so with a significance and reality that the Church can also relate to.
  - Yet again (as always) we must decide which sense is meant by the term “saved.” Is this penalty-of-sin salvation? Power-of-sin salvation? Presence-of-sin salvation? Deliverance-from-danger salvation?
- 14 How then will they call on Him in whom they have not believed? How will they believe in Him whom they have not heard? And how will they hear without a preacher?
- A chain of prerequisites is established for calling on the Lord. Belief in Christ is the prerequisite.
  - Every believer in the crucified, risen, ascended savior is authorized to call upon Him (1<sup>st</sup> Pet. 1:17-25). The present reality for the Church will become the reality for Israel after the Rapture (Mt. 23:39 cf. Ps. 118).
  - Belief requires hearing. Hearing requires a preacher. The Church presently sparks Jewish jealousy (Rom. 10:19; 11:11,14), and after the Church’s departure Israel will return to their stewardship duties as preachers to the Gentiles (Isa. 60; Zech. 8:20-23).
- 15 How will they preach unless they are sent? Just as it is written, “How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news of good things!”
- Israel will soon resume their role as Preachers and Sent Ones (Rom. 10:15; Rev. 7:1-17; 14:1-5).
  - Isaiah’s prophecy will be fulfilled when Israel resumes their duties as good news messengers (Isa. 52:7-10).
- 16 However, they did not all heed the good news; for Isaiah says, “Lord, who has believed our report?”
- Only a remnant of Jews believed in Jesus during His first advent (Jn. 12:36-43). Those who did were generally scorned by the political and religious leaders (Jn. 7:45-49).
  - This negative volition resulted in a partial hardening (Rom. 11:25) as predicted by Isaiah (Isa. 6:8-10; 29:13-14) until such time as He restores their witness (Isa. 43:8-13).
- 17 So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.
- Faith is a trust response, grounded in an object based upon what one has heard and been persuaded by.
  - The Rhema Christou is the spoken gospel, carried by good news heralds to the ends of the earth.
- 18 But I say, surely they have never heard, have they? Indeed they have;  
“Their voice has gone out into all the earth,  
And their words to the ends of the world.”
- Even granting the incredible, natural revelation is sufficient to remove all excuse (Ps. 19:1-6; Rom. 1:18-20).
  - For the Jewish people to claim they never heard the good news of the birth of Christ, incredulity is stretched to the uttermost. They were the people to whom He came! (Mt. 15:24; Jn. 1:11; Acts 3:11-26)
- 19 But I say, surely Israel did not know, did they? First Moses says,  
“I will make you jealous by that which is not a nation,  
By a nation without understanding will I anger you.”
- Israel knew but didn’t want to know (Acts 2:22 cp. 3:15,17).
  - Israel provoked the Lord to jealousy so He provokes them to jealousy (Deut. 32:21).
- 20 And Isaiah is very bold and says,  
“I was found by those who did not seek Me,  
I became manifest to those who did not ask for Me.”
- 21 But as for Israel He says, “All the day long I have stretched out My hands to a disobedient and obstinate people.”
- Isa. 65:1-7 is a passage rebuking Israel while promising a remnant would see new heavens and a new earth (Isa. 65:17-25).
  - Rom. 10:20-21 Demonstrates how Isaiah can be understood in a different way, with the hindsight of mystery (Church) revelation. The additional way to look at Isaiah does not invalidate the primary way Isaiah must be received. Israel has a future! (cf. Rom. 11:1ff.).

## Chapter Eleven

- 1 I say then, God has not rejected His people, has He? May it never be! For I too am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin.
  - Paul's final "But I say" (cf. 10:18,19) serves to recap this entire section of Romans. Has God rejected His people? (Ps. 94:14).
  - May it never be! The 9<sup>th</sup> & 10<sup>th</sup> μή γένοιτο exclamations in Romans appear in this chapter (Rom. 11:1,11).
  - Paul's salvation and ministry to the Gentiles is offered as proof that God has not rejected the Jews.
- 2 God has not rejected His people whom He foreknew. Or do you not know what the Scripture says in *the passage about* Elijah, how he pleads with God against Israel?
  - Rejection based on failure assumes that failure to be unknown beforehand. God's foreknowledge makes such rejection impossible.
  - Elijah serves to illustrate how even the filthiest idolatry cannot alter God's unconditional covenant with Israel (1<sup>st</sup> Kgs. 18:22; 19:10,13).
- 3 "Lord, THEY HAVE KILLED YOUR PROPHETS, THEY HAVE TORN DOWN YOUR ALTARS, AND I ALONE AM LEFT, AND THEY ARE SEEKING MY LIFE."
  - Elijah actually uttered this complaint twice (1<sup>st</sup> Kgs. 19:10,13) pleading with God against Israel.
  - Elijah is completely carnal, fearing for his life (1<sup>st</sup> Kgs. 19:3) and wanting to die (1<sup>st</sup> Kgs. 19:4). His prayers to God assume that God either doesn't know or doesn't care how wicked Israel is. Romans makes clear that Elijah is pleading against Israel.
- 4 But what is the divine response to him? "I HAVE KEPT for Myself SEVEN THOUSAND MEN WHO HAVE NOT BOWED THE KNEE TO BAAL."
  - The divine response came as part of a sequence of events in which Elijah had his final work assignment spelled out (1<sup>st</sup> Kgs. 19:15-18).
  - Not many will escape the Hazeel, Jehu, Elisha gauntlet, but the remnant that does is part of God's people whom He foreknew (cf. 2<sup>nd</sup> Pet. 2:9).
- 5 In the same way then, there has also come to be at the present time a remnant according to *God's* gracious choice.
  - "In the same way" as Israel's decimation, at the present time a remnant of Israel is foreknown.
  - Elijah never sees the remnant he is promised. They would be manifest to Elijah's successor after Elijah was taken up without dying (2<sup>nd</sup> Kgs. 2:11).
  - The remnant Paul references in Romans 11 isn't yet on earth during the Church's stewardship, but will be manifest to the Church's successor after the Church is taken up without dying.
  - Those who did not bend the knee to Baal foreshadow those who will not take the mark of the beast (Rev. 20:4).
- 6 But if it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works, otherwise grace is no longer grace.
  - Israel (the remnant) will once again take up their stewardship after the Rapture of the Church (Rom. 11:25).
  - Israel's stewardship in the Age of Tribulation will forsake works and display total grace.
  - This will be the first Age for Israel where stewardship is not grounded in the promised Messiah, but rather grounded in the crucified and risen Christ.
- 7 What then? What Israel is seeking, it has not obtained, but those who were chosen obtained it, and the rest were hardened;
  - Although the nation of Israel as a whole has not obtained Righteousness, individual chosen ones within Israel did so by grace through faith (cf. Rom. 10:1-4).
  - God's hardening of "the rest" recognizes that they have not been chosen (Rom. 11:7), but this is not a denial of grace (Rom. 11:6). God's choice is a gracious choice (Rom. 11:5) according to foreknowledge (1<sup>st</sup> Pet. 1:1-2) on the basis of faith, not works (Rom. 4:5; 9:31-32; 11:6).
- 8 just as it is written,  
"GOD GAVE THEM A SPIRIT OF STUPOR,  
EYES TO SEE NOT AND EARS TO HEAR NOT,  
DOWN TO THIS VERY DAY."
  - A blend of Deuteronomy (29:4) and Isaiah (29:10) demonstrates the prophesied hardness of Israel.
  - Despite seeing the hardness of Pharaoh and the greatness of God, Israel as a nation did not see, hear or know God's righteousness (Deut. 29:2-5).
  - Israel's partial hardening came about as a consequence to their national lip service (Isa. 29:9-14).

- 9 And David says,  
 “LET THEIR TABLE BECOME A SNARE AND A TRAP,  
 AND A STUMBLING BLOCK AND A RETRIBUTION TO THEM.
- 10 “LET THEIR EYES BE DARKENED TO SEE NOT,  
 AND BEND THEIR BACKS FOREVER.”
- Paul cited Moses & Isaiah to show a spectrum of Israel’s hardness. Paul goes on to cite David to show the specific hardening in connection with the Messiah’s rejection.
  - The foreshadowing of Jesus in Psalm 69 is nearly as incredible as Psalm 22 (and combines well with it for a prophetic view of Jesus’ crucifixion).
- 11 I say then, they did not stumble so as to fall, did they? May it never be! But by their transgression salvation *has come* to the Gentiles, to make them jealous.
- The verse 1 “I say then” and “May it never be!” are restated in v.11.
  - A temporal stumble is not an eternal fall (Rom. 11:11; Jas. 2:10; 3:2<sub>x2</sub>; 2<sup>nd</sup> Pet. 1:10; Jd. 24). Even a fall does not hurl us headlong (Ps. 37:23-24).
  - The present stewardship of the Church is a jealousy provocation to Israel, the consequence for Israel’s provoking the Lord to Jealousy (Deut. 32:21).
- 12 Now if their transgression is riches for the world and their failure is riches for the Gentiles, how much more will their fulfillment be!
- Our finite transgressions and failures do not thwart God’s eternal fulfillment of His plan (Job 23:13; 42:2; Isa. 46:10).
  - The kosmos and the gentiles will be enriched when God’s plan for Israel is fulfilled (Mic. 4:1-5; Jer. 3:15-18).
- 13 But I am speaking to you who are Gentiles. Inasmuch then as I am an apostle of Gentiles, I magnify my ministry,
- 14 if somehow I might move to jealousy my fellow countrymen and save some of them.
- The Apostle to the Gentiles was broken-hearted for the Jews (Rom. 9:1-3). His patriotism incited him to exercise his apostleship in reverse order (Acts 9:15 cf. 13:46-48).
  - Paul considers that the most effective method for Jewish evangelism is Gentile evangelism for maximum jealousy provocation. This is perhaps an adjustment from his earlier evangelism philosophy (1<sup>st</sup> Cor. 9:19-23).
- 15 For if their rejection is the reconciliation of the world, what will *their* acceptance be but life from the dead?
- The present reconciliation ministry entrusted to the Church (2<sup>nd</sup> Cor. 5:16-21).
  - The future reconciliation ministry will feature resurrected ministers (Mt. 8:11; Dan. 12:13; Ezek. 37:25).
- 16 If the first piece *of dough* is holy, the lump is also; and if the root is holy, the branches are too.
- The first dough serves as the offering of the threshing floor (Num. 15:17-21). As new lumps (1<sup>st</sup> Cor. 5:7), the Church ought to be thankful for our forerunners from whom we learn (1<sup>st</sup> Cor. 10:1-13).
  - Root and branch serves to illustrate this as well. Branches owe their existence to the root. The Church is not Israel, but the Church owes a debt to Israel as the foundation of our heritage (Rom. 9:4,5).
- 17 But if some of the branches were broken off, and you, being a wild olive, were grafted in among them and became partaker with them of the rich root of the olive tree,
- “Some branches” broken off represent unbelieving Jews removed from their stewardship capacity.
  - Some branches not broken off represent believing Jews who retain their stewardship capacity despite the changeover from Israel to the Church.
  - Wild branches grafted in represent believing Gentiles grafted in to the olive tree of stewardship capacity.
  - Stewards are partakers of the fatness of the root. Advantage #2 never mentioned in Romans 3 (cf. Ps. 36:7-9; 63:1-5; Isa. 55:1-4; Jer. 31:12-14).
- 18 do not be arrogant toward the branches; but if you are arrogant, *remember that* it is not you who supports the root, but the root *supports* you.
- Former non-stewards are in no position to judge former-stewards.
  - If arrogance is a problem, the grace of God’s provision ought to modify our perspective (1<sup>st</sup> Cor. 4:7).
- 19 You will say then, “Branches were broken off so that I might be grafted in.”
- Breaking and grafting are not representative of salvation. No Jew ever lost their eternal life so a Gentile could receive eternal life.
  - Unbelieving Jews were divested of their stewardship capacity when God invested the Body of Christ as managers of His household on earth (Eph. 2:11-19; 3:4-10).
- 20 Quite right, they were broken off for their unbelief, but you stand by your faith. Do not be conceited, but fear;
- Israel’s unbelief stands as our warning (1<sup>st</sup> Cor. 10:1-12; Heb. 3:10-19).
  - Failures of our fellow believers should spark our renewed fear (Gal. 6:1; Jas. 5:19-20; 1<sup>st</sup> Pet. 1:17; 3:15).

- 21 for if God did not spare the natural branches, He will not spare you, either.
- When God doesn't spare something, there is a significance attached to that.
    - Not sparing of Christ (Rom. 8:32-34).
    - Not sparing Jerusalem (Jer. 25:29).
    - Not sparing angels and the antediluvian world (2<sup>nd</sup> Pet. 2:4-5).
  - Remember: grace accountability is severer than law accountability (Heb. 10:28-29).
- 22 Behold then the kindness and severity of God; to those who fell, severity, but to you, God's kindness, if you continue in His kindness; otherwise you also will be cut off.
- Kindness & severity forms the double-edged sword which we have to do (Heb. 4:12-13; 12:28-29).
  - Our cutting off is not loss of salvation, but the end of our stewardship capacity via loss of ministry opportunities (Rev. 2:5) and ultimately the sin unto death (Heb. 10:26-27; 1<sup>st</sup> Jn. 5:16,17).
- 23 And they also, if they do not continue in their unbelief, will be grafted in, for God is able to graft them in again.
- 24 For if you were cut off from what is by nature a wild olive tree, and were grafted contrary to nature into a cultivated olive tree, how much more will these who are the natural *branches* be grafted into their own olive tree?
- The normal agricultural process calls for cultivated branches to be grafted onto wild trees.
  - The unique position that Jewish unbelievers have in their prior cultivation by God renders them suited for future cultivation by God. They possess every advantage from Rom. 9:4-5 and none of the disadvantages from Eph. 2:12.
- 25 For I do not want you, brethren, to be uninformed of this mystery—so that you will not be wise in your own estimation—that a partial hardening has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in;
- Mystery as a term in Paul's epistles pertains to the stewardship of the Church (Rom. 11:25; 16:25; 1<sup>st</sup> Cor. 2:7; 4:1; 13:2; 14:2; 15:51; Eph. 1:9; 3:3,4,9; 5:32; 6:19; Col. 1:26,27; 2:2; 4:3; 2<sup>nd</sup> Thess. 2:7; 1<sup>st</sup> Tim. 3:9,16).
  - Israel is under a partial & temporary hardening. The fullness of the Gentiles references Gentile blessings in the Church (10x in Rom. 15) and should not be identified with the Times of the Gentiles (Lk. 21:24) or the Dispensation of the Gentiles (Gen. 1-11; Job).
- 26 and so all Israel will be saved; just as it is written,  
 "THE DELIVERER WILL COME FROM ZION,  
 HE WILL REMOVE UNGODLINESS FROM JACOB."
- 27 "THIS IS MY COVENANT WITH THEM,  
 WHEN I TAKE AWAY THEIR SINS."
- All Israel will be saved, but the emphasis needs to be placed on the "and so." The manner and means through which Israel will be saved demands a dispensational understanding.
  - OT Prophecies restated in the NT (Rom. 11:26; Isa. 59:20) must not be divorced from their original contexts (Isa. 59:15b-20 or even Isa. 59:1-20).
  - The covenant with Moses covered Israel's sins as they looked forward to a Redeemer. The covenant ratified by the Blood of Christ removes Israel's sin and blesses them eternally (Rom. 11:27 cf. Isa. 59:21; Jer. 31:31-34; Lk. 22:20; Heb. 8:7-13; 10:1-4).
- 28 From the standpoint of the gospel they are enemies for your sake, but from the standpoint of *God's* choice they are beloved for the sake of the fathers;
- Israel must be viewed from two standpoints.
  - The present perspective of the Church is a reality that must be contrasted with the eternal perspective of God.
- 29 for the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable.
- The primary application of this verse relates to Israel as God's earthly covenant nation.
  - A secondary application of this verse relates to the Church's spiritual giftedness (Rom. 12:6) and heavenly calling in Christ (1<sup>st</sup> Cor. 1:26; 7:20; Eph. 1:18; 4:1,4; Phil. 3:14; 2<sup>nd</sup> Thess. 1:11; 2<sup>nd</sup> Tim. 1:9; Heb. 3:1).
- 30 For just as you once were disobedient to God, but now have been shown mercy because of their disobedience,
- 31 so these also now have been disobedient, that because of the mercy shown to you they also may now be shown mercy.
- 32 For God has shut up all in disobedience so that He may show mercy to all.
- The symmetry of the Plan of God is a beautiful thing to apprehend (Isa. 41:4; 43:8-13; 44:6-8; Rev. 1:8,17; 22:13).
  - Verse 32 primarily applies to national disobedience and mercy but we can certainly understand a secondary application pertaining to total depravity and unlimited atonement (Gal. 3:22).
- 33 Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways!
- Paul's discourse on Israel's future concludes with a doxology to the praise of God the Father's eternal plan.
  - God is unsearchable and unfathomable (Job 11:7-9; Isa. 40:28; Dan. 4:35).
  - Yet, we search (Deut. 4:29; Jer. 29:13) and fathom (Prov. 2:4-5; Eph. 3:8-10).

34 For WHO HAS KNOWN THE MIND OF THE LORD, OR WHO BECAME HIS COUNSELOR?

35 Or WHO HAS FIRST GIVEN TO HIM THAT IT MIGHT BE PAID BACK TO HIM AGAIN?

- This doxology spotlights the future comfort for Israel in the light of Jesus Christ (Isa. 40:13).
- This doxology spotlights the Creator/creature perspective of Job in the context of Leviathan (Job 35:7; 41:11).

36 For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him *be* the glory forever. Amen.

- From, through, and to/for applies to God the Father (Heb. 2:10).
- From, through, and to/for applies to Jesus Christ (Col. 1:16).
- From, through, and to/for applies to God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ (1<sup>st</sup> Cor. 8:6).
- The oneness of the Father and Son (John 1:1-2; 10:30) makes the Church's fellowship all the more amazing (Jn. 17:11,21-23; 1<sup>st</sup> Jn. 1:2-3).

# Romans 12-15 Discourse on the Church

## Chapter Twelve

- 1 Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship.
  - Paul ends his excursus on Israel (Rom. 9-11) and returns to a context for Church application by launching from “To God be the glory” (Rom. 11:35) to “Therefore” (Rom. 12:1).
  - This exhortation invokes God’s mercies (Rom. 12:1). Failure to live up to this exhortation is to voluntarily waive the mercies of God. See also Rom. 15:30; 1<sup>st</sup> Cor. 1:10; 2<sup>nd</sup> Cor. 10:1 for similar syntax.
  - Daily presentations (Rom. 6:13,16,19; 12:1; 2<sup>nd</sup> Tim. 2:15) prepare us for our eternal presentation (Rom. 14:10).
  - Daily presentations for His service amounts to our thoughtful worship service (cf. Rom. 9:4; Heb. 9:1,6).  
Λογικός λατρεία Logikos latreia.
- 2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.
  - Conformity to this age hinders our living sacrifice (Rom. 12:2; 1<sup>st</sup> Pet. 1:14). This age is the age of the kosmos (Eph. 2:2), this present evil age (Gal. 1:4).
  - Transformation by the Word of God enables our living sacrifice (Rom. 12:2; Eph. 4:23).
  - Our sacrifice is directed to God, but this serves to demonstrate His good, acceptable, and perfect will to the world. Our sweet smelling aroma may be quite a stink to those who hate God (cf. 2<sup>nd</sup> Cor. 2:16).
- 3 For through the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think; but to think so as to have sound judgment, as God has allotted to each a measure of faith.
  - Priority #1 for the renewed mind is sound judgment in regarding ourselves and one another (see also vv.10,16).
  - Such perspective results from appropriate grace orientation (1<sup>st</sup> Cor. 4:6-7) and imitates Christ (Phil. 2:3-8).
- 4 For just as we have many members in one body and all the members do not have the same function,
- 5 so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.
  - The human body illustrates the corporate unity we have in the Body of Christ (Eph. 1:22-23; 4:25; 5:23,30; Col. 1:24; 2:19).
  - Every member is connected to the Body in a mystical yet very literal way (1<sup>st</sup> Cor. 12:12-27).
- 6 Since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, each of us is to exercise them accordingly: if prophecy, according to the proportion of his faith;
  - Spiritual gifts have different functions yet the same design (1<sup>st</sup> Cor. 12:4-7; 1<sup>st</sup> Pet. 4:10).
  - The gift of prophecy was one of the in-part gifts that were done away when the perfect came (1<sup>st</sup> Cor. 13:8-10). The seven gifts surveyed here must be understood within the greater development of First Corinthians (1<sup>st</sup> Cor. 12-14).
- 7 if service, in his serving; or he who teaches, in his teaching;
  - Service and speaking are the main divisions Peter outlines in his development (1<sup>st</sup> Pet. 4:10-11).
  - The proportion of faith or the analogy of faith is the idiom which controls every gift which follows.
    - Serving and teaching are both done by faith, according to the proportion of God’s provided faith (cf. Rom. 10:17).
    - Increased faith portion comes as a believer becomes Mighty in the Scriptures (Acts 18:24).
- 8 or he who exhorts, in his exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness.
  - Exhortation is the along-side communication giftedness that encourages, comforts and impels other believers to excel in the Christian Way of Life (Heb. 10:25).
  - Giving is to the Lord before other believers, and personal before financial (2<sup>nd</sup> Cor. 8:1-5).
  - Leadership is the stand in front giftedness that provides a two-edged point of focus (1<sup>st</sup> Thess. 5:12-13).
  - Mercy Showing is the along-side service giftedness that sustains other believers to not lose heart in the Christian Way of Life (2<sup>nd</sup> Cor. 4:1).

- 9 Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil; cling to what is good.
- Genuineness is the Biblical standard for agape (Rom. 12:9; 2<sup>nd</sup> Cor. 6:6) and philadelphia love (1<sup>st</sup> Pet. 1:22), as well as faith (1<sup>st</sup> Tim. 1:5; 2<sup>nd</sup> Tim. 1:5) and wisdom (Jas. 3:17).
  - Biblical abhorrence (hate) is not an absence of love. It is one-half of agape love's polarity towards good & evil. The Lord abhors evil (Lev. 20:23). Sadly, the Abhorred One is a title for Jesus (Isa. 49:7).
  - Clinging is the other half of agape love's polarity towards good & evil. This clinging is often expressive of marital intimacy (Mt. 19:5; 1<sup>st</sup> Cor. 6:16,17). Distinguishing between good & evil is a necessary function of the Body of Christ (Heb. 5:14).
- 10 Be devoted to one another in brotherly love; give preference to one another in honor;
- HCSB "Show family affection" is better than the NASB "be devoted" or the KJV/NKJV "kindly affectionate ." This heartfelt love sets Christians apart from the world we live in ([Dg. 1](#) cf. Jn. 13:34-35).
  - Out-doing one another in honor becomes a win-win for reciprocal humility (Rom. 12:10,16; 1<sup>st</sup> Pet. 5:5) in the imitation of Christ (Phil. 2:3 cf. Lk. 14:10).
- 11 not lagging behind in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord;
- Lagging behind references the sluggard from Proverbs (Prov. 6:6,9; 20:4; 21:25; 22:13; 26:13,14,15,16).
  - "Fervency" is often misapplied as a synonym for spirituality. Biblically, the power of the Holy Spirit in service to the Lord Jesus Christ provides for the believer's Biblical diligence (cf. 2<sup>nd</sup> Cor. 7:11,12; 8:7,8,16,17,22; also Eph. 4:3; 2<sup>nd</sup> Tim. 2:15; Heb. 4:11; 6:11; 2<sup>nd</sup> Pet. 3:12,14).
- 12 rejoicing in hope, persevering in tribulation, devoted to prayer,
- The previous positional truths with their individual emphasis (Rom. 5:2-5) is now restated in the collective context of a local church (Rom. 12:12-16).
  - This verse is a great explanatory parallel to 1<sup>st</sup> Thess. 5:16-18.
  - The concept of devotion is illustrated by Cornelius' personal attendants (Acts 10:7). Prayer is not the only object for our devotion, but it is the most commonly mentioned object (Acts 1:14; 2:42,46; 6:4; Rom. 12:12; Col. 4:2).
- 13 contributing to the needs of the saints, practicing hospitality.
- Sharing is the verbal activity of fellowship (Rom. 12:13; 15:27; Gal. 6:6; Phil. 4:15).
  - Hospitality is a love of strangers (Rom. 12:13; 1<sup>st</sup> Tim. 3:2; 5:10; Tit. 1:8; Heb. 13:2; 1<sup>st</sup> Pet. 4:9 cf. 3<sup>rd</sup> Jn. 5).
- 14 Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse.
- This was the Lord's exhortation (Lk. 6:28) and example (Lk. 23:34; 1<sup>st</sup> Pet. 2:21-23; 3:9).
  - This was also Paul's example and should be considered normative for those believers who desire to pursue ministry (1<sup>st</sup> Cor. 4:12,13).
- 15 Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep.
- Shared rejoicing is a great blessing for the Body of Christ (Phil. 2:17-18; 4:4).
  - Shared rejoicing ought not come without shared weeping (Job 2:11; 30:25; Jn. 11:19,33-36; 1<sup>st</sup> Cor. 3:21-23).
- 16 Be of the same mind toward one another; do not be haughty in mind, but associate with the lowly. Do not be wise in your own estimation.
- The same mind toward one another is the mind of Christ (1<sup>st</sup> Cor. 2:16), which seeks to glorify God the Father (Rom. 15:5-7).
  - Haughtiness in mind deigns to disassociate with those deemed unworthy (Mt. 9:10-13; 11:19). Christ-mindedness is carried away (see Gal. 2:13; 2<sup>nd</sup> Pet. 3:17) by lowly humility (Mt. 20:25-28; Jn. 13:14-17).
  - Self-estimated wisdom is worthless (1<sup>st</sup> Cor. 4:6-7). It hinders the fear of the Lord (Prov. 3:7), and places the crafty one under a woe pronouncement (Isa. 5:21).
- 17 Never pay back evil for evil to anyone. Respect what is right in the sight of all men.
- Our response to evil is at odds with the world's wisdom (Prov. 24:29; Mt. 5:39; 1<sup>st</sup> Th. 5:15; 1<sup>st</sup> Pet. 3:9).
  - The sight of all men demands careful forethought (2<sup>nd</sup> Cor. 8:21; 1<sup>st</sup> Tim. 5:8).
  - When we occupy with Christ we find favor with God and men (Prov. 3:3-4; 2<sup>nd</sup> Cor. 4:2).
- 18 If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men.
- Possibilities are guaranteed for the believer in Christ (Mk. 9:23), even if the volition of others makes some things not possible (Mk. 14:35,26).
  - Since we have volitional control of our attitudes (Rom. 6:11; Phil. 2:5; 4:11-13), we should always maintain the attitude of peace towards others (Mt. 5:9; Rom. 14:19; Heb. 12:14; Jas. 3:18).

- 19 Never take your own revenge, beloved, but leave room for the wrath of God, for it is written, “Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,” says the Lord.
- Leaving room for God’s wrath does not mean an eagerness for it, but rather a like-mindedness with God in His longsuffering mercy (Prov. 24:17,18; Ezek. 18:32; Lk. 9:55).
  - Only God has the capacity for Righteous Vengeance (Deut. 32:35; Isa. 59:17-18; Nah. 1:2,3).
- 20 “But if your enemy is hungry, feed him, and if he is thirsty, give him a drink; for in so doing you will heap burning coals on his head.”
- Providing something at odds with what is earned or deserved allows us to be living portrayals of grace (Mt. 10:8; Lk. 7:47).
  - The Proverbs life of wisdom is still applicable in the Church Dispensation (Prov. 25:21,22; Mt. 5:44).
- 21 Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.
- Good and evil are not merely alternatives. They are defeaters of each other (1<sup>st</sup> Sam. 24:17,18).
  - Overcomers should not be overcome, but do the overcoming (Jn. 6:33; Rom. 8:37; 1<sup>st</sup> Cor. 15:57).

## Chapter Thirteen

- 1 Every person is to be in subjection to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those which exist are established by God.
- Operating Biblically towards one another in a local church (Rom. 12:3-21) equips us to operate Biblically toward governmental authority (Rom. 13:1-10). Both require us to function as living sacrifices (Rom. 12:1-2; 13:11-14).
  - The Word of God commands our submission to governmental authority (Rom. 13:1; Tit. 3:1; 1<sup>st</sup> Pet. 2:13).
    - No extant authority exists apart from God’s agency (Dan. 2:21; 4:17,25,32).
    - Every extant authority operates within God’s warrant (Gen. 10:5,20,31; 11:7-9; Deut. 32:8; Job 12:23-25; Acts 17:26-27).
  - Subjection is not mindless obedience, as obedience to God (Mt. 22:21) may require disobedience to man (Acts 4:19; 5:29). Even in such cases, such disobedience remains in subjection to the authority (Acts 4:19; 5:40-42).
- 2 Therefore whoever resists authority has opposed the ordinance of God; and they who have opposed will receive condemnation upon themselves.
- We hupotassō because God tassō’d and we better not antitassō His diatagē.
  - Opposing Divine Institutions for temporal-life results in self-imposed judgment. Individuality, Marriage, Family, & Government all carry judgment consequences for standing opposed to God’s design.
- 3 For rulers are not a cause of fear for good behavior, but for evil. Do you want to have no fear of authority? Do what is good and you will have praise from the same;
- As a general rule, under normal circumstances, law abiding citizens do not fear their government (Dt. 25:1; Prov. 14:35).
  - Exceptions to the general rule are to be lamented (Prov. 28:12,28; 29:2; Ecc. 10:4-7), but remain God’s prerogative to alter (Gen. 15:16; Lev. 18:24-28).
- 4 for it is a minister of God to you for good. But if you do what is evil, be afraid; for it does not bear the sword for nothing; for it is a minister of God, an avenger who brings wrath on the one who practices evil.
- As a general rule, under normal circumstances, criminals ought to fear God’s deacon-avengers.
  - While self-defense is proper for Individuality, Marriage, Family & Government, the sword as an avenger is subject to the divine institution of Government (Gen. 9:5,6; Ex. 21:23-25; Num. 35:6-34; Deut. 19:1-13). Note: even when immediate family serves as the blood avenger, they only do so upon the execution order of the government.
- 5 Therefore it is necessary to be in subjection, not only because of wrath, but also for conscience’ sake.
- Fear of punishment is a motivation for subjection to government, but what credit is there for that? Do not even the unbelievers do the same? (cf. Mt. 5:46,47)
  - A healthy conscience is a better motivation for subjection to government (1<sup>st</sup> Sam. 24:5,6; 2<sup>nd</sup> Cor. 1:12; 1<sup>st</sup> Pet. 2:13-20).
- 6 For because of this you also pay taxes, for *rulers* are servants of God, devoting themselves to this very thing.
- 7 Render to all what is due them: tax to whom tax *is due*; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honor to whom honor.
- Taxes to support the State (1<sup>st</sup> Sam. 8:15-17) are like offerings to support the Temple (Ex. 30:11-16). Both venues are God’s instruments, and ought to be supported.
  - Render is an imperative because what is due is God’s sovereign design (Mt. 22:21). Tax, custom, fear, & honor speak of properly distinguished objects for appropriate respect.

- 8 Owe nothing to anyone except to love one another; for he who loves his neighbor has fulfilled *the* law.
  - Tax, custom, fear, and honor represent the totality of our societal obligations (Rom. 13:7). Believers and unbelievers alike can operate within these parameters.
  - The Body of Christ has a prime directive, above and beyond every other social obligation: the spiritual “debt” to love one another. This is our spiritual obligation (Jn. 13:34; 15:12,17; 1<sup>st</sup> Jn. 3:11,23; 4:7,11,12; 2<sup>nd</sup> Jn. 5) with a social application (Rom. 13:8).
- 9 For this, “YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT ADULTERY, YOU SHALL NOT MURDER, YOU SHALL NOT STEAL, YOU SHALL NOT COVET,” and if there is any other commandment, it is summed up in this saying, “YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.”
  - Paul rattles off Ten Commandments #7, #6, #8 & #10 in this exhortation (Ex. 20:14,13,15,17).
  - The God-ward (Deut. 6:5) and Man-ward (Lev. 19:18) commandments have their summarizations (Mt. 22:36-40).
- 10 Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfillment of *the* law.
  - Ultimately, Jesus is He who “loves his neighbor” and “has fulfilled the law.” Because He did, so do we (Lk. 10:25-37).
  - Jesus called us into His freedom, which is an opportunity for reciprocal love slavery (Gal. 5:13-15).
  - Love does no wrong and doesn’t reckon a wrong suffered (1<sup>st</sup> Cor. 13:4-7).
- 11 *Do* this, knowing the time, that it is already the hour for you to awaken from sleep; for now salvation is nearer to us than when we believed.
  - Knowing the Kairos is powerful motivation for believers (Mt. 16:3; Eph. 5:16; 1<sup>st</sup> Thess. 5:1-11).
  - The transition from time to eternity is a true awakening (Ps. 17:5; Isa. 26:19; Eph. 5:14).
  - Salvation from the presence of sin is near (Rom. 8:23; Jas. 5:8; 1<sup>st</sup> Pet. 1:5; 1<sup>st</sup> Jn. 2:18; Rev. 22:10).
- 12 The night is almost gone, and the day is near. Therefore let us lay aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light.
  - Imminent accountability sparks godliness (Rom. 14:10,12; 2<sup>nd</sup> Cor. 5:9-10; 2<sup>nd</sup> Pet. 3:11-12).
  - The clothes we take off and the clothes we put on are conscious choices we make day by day (Eph. 4:20-24).
- 13 Let us behave properly as in the day, not in carousing and drunkenness, not in sexual promiscuity and sensuality, not in strife and jealousy.
- 14 But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh in regard to *its* lusts.
  - Proper behavior should be a reflection of our position baptized in Christ (Gal. 3:27), in the experiential sanctification of the new man (Col. 3:8-13).
  - The choices we make to wear Christ have either prophylactic value or providential value to the lusts of our sin natures (Gal. 5:16,17,24; 1<sup>st</sup> Pet. 2:11).

## Chapter Fourteen

- 1 Now accept the one who is weak in faith, *but* not for *the purpose of* passing judgment on his opinions.
  - Acceptance is a great blessing for the Body of Christ, made possible because of Jesus Christ’s acceptance of us (Rom. 14:1,3; 15:7; Philem. 17).
  - Faith weakness and strength are occasions for mutual benefit (Rom. 14:19-20; 15:1-2; 1<sup>st</sup> Cor. 9:22; Gal. 5:13; 6:10).
  - Opinions (doubtful disputations/things/issues) are matters of personal conviction (Rom. 14:22,23) rather than matters of absolute righteousness (Isa. 5:20).
- 2 One person has faith that he may eat all things, but he who is weak eats vegetables *only*.
  - Illustration #1 for the Romans 14 Principle is the difference of opinion regarding appropriate diet (Rom. 14:2 cf. vv.5,14,20). The adjustment for observant Jews to the stewardship of grace was not an easy one (Acts 10:9-17; Gal. 2:12).
  - The vegetarian position is the weak-faith position, but is not necessarily a “wrong” position as an absolute matter of righteousness (Rom. 14:6,14,20; 1<sup>st</sup> Cor. 8:8).
- 3 The one who eats is not to regard with contempt the one who does not eat, and the one who does not eat is not to judge the one who eats, for God has accepted him.
  - Two believers with opposite personal faith convictions have responsibilities towards one another (Rom. 4:3,13; 1<sup>st</sup> Cor. 13:4,5).
  - Contempt is entirely out of line as a reflection of self-righteousness (Rom. 14:3,10; Lk. 18:9; 1<sup>st</sup> Cor. 1:28).
  - Judging is also inappropriate because of the inherent double-standard of that process (Rom. 14:3,10,13; Mt. 7:1,2).

- 4 Who are you to judge the servant of another? To his own master he stands or falls; and he will stand, for the Lord is able to make him stand.
  - Who you are and who you are not are two important principles (Rom. 9:20; Acts 11:17; Jas. 4:12; Job 38:2).
  - The Judgment Seat of Christ is a judgment for approval (2<sup>nd</sup> Cor. 4:14; Col. 1:22; Jude 24).
- 5 One person regards one day above another, another regards every day *alike*. Each person must be fully convinced in his own mind.
  - Illustration #2 for the Romans 14 Principle is the difference of opinion regarding observation of days (Gal. 4:10; Col. 2:16).
  - Know what you know and allow the Word of God to convince you (Rom. 4:21; 14:5,14; 15:14; Phil. 1:25; Col. 4:12; 2<sup>nd</sup> Tim. 1:12; 3:14; Heb. 6:9).
- 6 He who observes the day, observes it for the Lord, and he who eats, does so for the Lord, for he gives thanks to God; and he who eats not, for the Lord he does not eat, and gives thanks to God.
  - Our service is on behalf of Jesus Christ as a contrast to self-serving selfishness (Ex. 12:42; Zech. 7:5,6).
  - Our service is a thankful response to the grace of God (1<sup>st</sup> Cor. 10:30-31; 1<sup>st</sup> Tim. 4:3-5).
- 7 For not one of us lives for himself, and not one dies for himself;
- 8 for if we live, we live for the Lord, or if we die, we die for the Lord; therefore whether we live or die, we are the Lord's.
  - Self-serving selfishness is the life of the dead (2<sup>nd</sup> Cor. 5:15; 1<sup>st</sup> Pet. 4:2).
  - The life we now live is no longer even ours to live, but Christ living in us (Gal. 2:20).
    - This reality has a corresponding heavenly focus (2<sup>nd</sup> Cor. 5:16,17).
    - This reality is fitting for the plan of God the Father to exalt Jesus Christ for all eternity (1<sup>st</sup> Cor. 3:21-23; Col. 1:18-20).
  - When we finish our course we will have served the purpose of God in our own generation (Acts 13:36; 20:24).
- 9 For to this end Christ died and lived again, that He might be Lord both of the dead and of the living.
  - Lord of the Dead means that Jesus Christ will accept the required confession of the vanquished (Jn. 5:29b; Phil. 2:9-11).
  - Lord of the Living means that Jesus Christ will accept the joyous song of the redeemed (Jn. 5:29a; Rev. 5:9; 7:9-12).
- 10 But you, why do you judge your brother? Or you again, why do you regard your brother with contempt? For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God.
  - “Why” is rhetorical, with no good answers. Both the strong and weak in faith are violating the imperatives from verse 3.
  - One great big reason “why not” is our universal accountability at the Bēma of God (Rom. 14:10; 2<sup>nd</sup> Cor. 5:10 cf. 1<sup>st</sup> Cor. 3:13-15; 4:5).
- 11 For it is written,
 

“AS I LIVE, SAYS THE LORD, EVERY KNEE SHALL BOW TO ME,  
AND EVERY TONGUE SHALL GIVE PRAISE TO GOD.”

  - Paul begins his citation of Isa. 45:23 with an introductory phrase from Isa. 49:18. “As I live” is a powerful invocation by the eternal I AM (Num. 14:21,28; Deut. 32:40; Isa. 49:18; Jer. 22:24; 46:18; Zeph. 2:9 & [16x in Ezekiel](#)), found only here in the NT.
  - Every knee and every tongue includes all of angelity and humanity, both the reconciled and unreconciled (Col. 1:20).
- 12 So then each one of us will give an account of himself to God.
  - God opens the books and reviews our accounts (Job 34:11; Ps. 62:12; Prov. 24:12; Mt. 16:27; Rev. 20:12,13).
  - We also have a verbal component to this event (Rom. 14:12; Mt. 12:36-37; Heb. 13:15; 1<sup>st</sup> Pet. 4:5).
- 13 Therefore let us not judge one another anymore, but rather determine this—not to put an obstacle or a stumbling block in a brother's way.
  - Don't judge, but judge this.
  - Obstacles and stumbling blocks are used rather interchangeably in the NT (Mt. 13:41; 16:23; 18:7<sub>x3</sub>; Rom. 9:32,33; 11:9; 14:13,20; 16:17; 1<sup>st</sup> Cor. 1:23; 8:9; Gal. 5:11; 1<sup>st</sup> Pet. 2:8; 1<sup>st</sup> Jn. 2:10; Rev. 2:14).
- 14 I know and am convinced in the Lord Jesus that nothing is unclean in itself; but to him who thinks anything to be unclean, to him it is unclean.
  - Paul knows and is convinced “in the Lord Jesus.” Remember comments from v.5. In Lord Jesus (Rom. 14:14; Phil. 2:19; 1<sup>st</sup> Thess. 4:1; 2<sup>nd</sup> Thess. 3:12).
  - Other people, who do not know and are not convinced, wind up thinking any number of unreal realities in their self-inflicted sins (Rom. 14:14,23; Tit. 1:15).

- 15 For if because of food your brother is hurt, you are no longer walking according to **love**. Do not destroy with your food him for whom Christ died.
- The weak in faith may have a knowledge deficiency (or not) but the strong in faith has no excuse for his love deficiency (1<sup>st</sup> Cor. 8:1,11).
  - Hurt (sorrow) is sometimes necessary in the will of God (2<sup>nd</sup> Cor. 2:2-11; 7:8-11; Heb. 12:11), but its purpose is never destruction (1<sup>st</sup> Cor. 5:5). Such destruction is diametrically opposed to why God sent His Son (Jn. 3:16; 10:28; 17:12; Rom. 9:22,23).
- 16 Therefore do not let what is for you a good thing be spoken of as evil;
- “Do not let” indicates a passive imperative, obeyed by not doing something (Jn. 14:1,27; Rom. 13:1; 14:5,16; Eph. 5:3).
  - The public testimony regarding how we treat one another is a prime concern for the Body of Christ (Eph. 5:3; 1<sup>st</sup> Tim. 6:1; Tit. 2:5).
- 17 for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.
- When eating and drinking become control issues, the mindset is clearly Satanic rather than Christ-like (Mt. 11:18,19; Col. 2:15-23).
  - The Kingdom of God presently and eschatologically is a spiritual kingdom.
    - In the Church Stewardship, the kingdom is spiritual and coming (Mt. 6:10,25-34; Jn. 18:36).
    - In the Millennium, the kingdom will be spiritual and having come (Ps. 118:19-29).
- 18 For he who in this *way* serves Christ is acceptable to God and approved by men.
- Serving one another equals serving Christ (Rom. 12:11; 16:17,18; 2<sup>nd</sup> Cor. 8:5; Col. 3:23,24).
  - Serving Christ is the only motivation for fruit that is acceptable to God (Rom. 12:1,2; 2<sup>nd</sup> Cor. 8:12; 1<sup>st</sup> Pet. 2:4,5).
  - A by-product of being well-pleasing to God is favor in the eyes of men (Prov. 16:7; Lk. 2:52; 2<sup>nd</sup> Cor. 5:11).
- 19 So then we pursue the things which make for peace and the building up of one another.
- The Lord Jesus Christ bequeaths it (Jn. 14:27; Col. 3:15), the Holy Spirit provides it (Gal. 5:22; Eph. 4:3), but our mandate is to pursue peace (Ps. 34:14; Matt. 5:9; 2<sup>nd</sup> Cor. 13:11; 2<sup>nd</sup> Tim. 2:22; Heb. 12:14; 1<sup>st</sup> Pet. 3:11).
  - Pursue edification, as the only criteria for eternal profitability (Rom. 15:2; 1<sup>st</sup> Cor. 10:23,24; 12:12,26; 1<sup>st</sup> Thess. 5:11).
- 20 Do not tear down the work of God for the sake of food. All things indeed are clean, but they are evil for the man who eats and gives offense.
- 21 It is good not to eat meat or to drink wine, or *to do anything* by which your brother stumbles.
- Tearing down what God is building up places ourselves in an adversarial position against God (2<sup>nd</sup> Chr. 13:12; Acts 5:39; 1<sup>st</sup> Cor. 3:9,10).
  - Clean is unclean if done in the wrong way or for the wrong reason (Eph. 5:15-16; Jas. 4:3).
  - Concern for the good makes our building endeavors a reflection of God’s building endeavors (Gen. 1:4,10,12,18,21,25,31; Ps. 145:9,10).
- 22 The faith which you have, have as your own conviction before God. Happy is he who does not condemn himself in what he approves.
- Personal conviction is before God (Lk. 16:15; Acts 4:19; 2<sup>nd</sup> Cor. 4:2; 1<sup>st</sup> Pet. 3:4; Rev. 3:2).
  - Approval ends second-guessing and guilt (Phil. 3:13-16; 1<sup>st</sup> Jn. 3:21-22).
- 23 But he who doubts is condemned if he eats, because *his eating* is not from faith; and whatever is not from faith is sin.
- Doubt is the enemy of persuasion and faith (Mt. 21:21; Jas. 1:6).
  - A greater perspective on faith leads to an improved perspective on sin (Tit. 1:15; Heb. 11:6).

## Chapter Fifteen

- 1 Now we who are strong ought to bear the weaknesses of those without strength and not *just* please ourselves.
- The principles of chapter fourteen produce an “ought to” in chapter fifteen. The “ought to’s” of the Church come by virtue of our relationship to Jesus Christ (Jn. 13:14; Rom. 13:8; 15:1,27; 1<sup>st</sup> Jn. 2:6; 3:16; 4:11; 3<sup>rd</sup> Jn. 8).
  - Bearing one another’s burdens is called the Law of Christ (Gal. 6:1-2), the Royal Law (Jas. 2:8), the agape love fulfillment of Mosaic Law (Rom. 13:9-10).
  - Self-pleasure defies and destroys agape love (1<sup>st</sup> Cor. 13:5).
- 2 Each of us is to please his neighbor for his good, to his edification.
- Jesus taught love of neighbor (Lk. 10:27-37), presenting a powerful illustration of Old Testament doctrine (Lev. 19:18).
  - Jesus commanded Church love (Jn. 13:34; Eph. 5:2; 1<sup>st</sup> Jn. 4:7-21) and demonstrated the greatest love of all (Jn. 15:13; 1<sup>st</sup> Jn. 3:11,14,16-18).

- 3 For even Christ did not please Himself; but as it is written, “THE REPROACHES OF THOSE WHO REPROACHED YOU FELL ON ME.”
- The Apostle and High Priest of our confession (Heb. 3:1) exemplified selfless humility (Jn. 4:34; Phil. 2:5,8).
  - The Davidic psalm presents a beautiful Gospel narrative (See the [David A. Jones work](#) on Ps. 69).
- 4 For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction, so that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.
- Paul and the first generation of the Church had the Old Testament for their earlier times Scriptures (Rom. 15:4; 1<sup>st</sup> Cor. 10:11).
  - Believers today obviously have Old and New Testaments (2<sup>nd</sup> Tim. 3:16-17) and no excuses whatsoever for losing heart (2<sup>nd</sup> Pet. 1:3-4).
- 5 Now may the God who gives perseverance and encouragement grant you to be of the same mind with one another according to Christ Jesus,
- God is the God of Perseverance and Encouragement, but channels that provision through the Scriptures (Rom. 15:4-5 cf. the role of the HS in Rom. 5:3-5).
  - Single-mindedness is conformity to the mind of Christ (1<sup>st</sup> Cor. 2:16; Col. 2:8).
- 6 so that with one accord you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.
- Single-mindedness allows a unified testimony (Acts 1:14; 4:32-33; Eph. 4:4-6).
  - The eternal unified testimony is an eternal glorification of God the Father (Jn. 13:31,32; Rom. 6:4; Phil. 2:11; 1<sup>st</sup> Pet. 4:11).
- 7 Therefore, accept one another, just as Christ also accepted us to the glory of God.
- Christ accepted us for the glory of God the Father (Rom. 14:7; Jn. 17:4-12).
  - We accept one another as imitators of Christ, to the glory of God the Father (Rom. 12:10; Mt. 10:40; Philem. 17).
- 8 For I say that Christ has become a servant to the circumcision on behalf of the truth of God to confirm the promises *given* to the fathers,
- During His First Advent incarnation, Jesus Christ ministered to the Jews (Mt. 15:24).
  - During His Ascension and Session, Jesus Christ is a servant to the nation that rejected Him (Rom. 15:8 & 2<sup>nd</sup> Cor. 3:6). His servant role (and ours) towards Israel is the present provocation to anger and jealousy (Deut. 32:21; Rom. 10:19-21; 11:11,14).
- 9 and for the Gentiles to glorify God for His mercy; as it is written,  
“THEREFORE I WILL GIVE PRAISE TO YOU AMONG THE GENTILES,  
AND I WILL SING TO YOUR NAME.”
- The [H. David Philipps work](#) on Romans 15 is helpful here.
  - The present Session of Jesus Christ is His occasion to unite both Jew and Gentile into one new man (Eph. 2:11-22).
  - The Millennial conquest of Jesus Christ is His occasion to praise God the Father in the midst of the conquered Gentiles (Ps. 18:30-50).
- 10 Again he says,  
“REJOICE, O GENTILES, WITH HIS PEOPLE.”
- 11 And again,  
“PRAISE THE LORD ALL YOU GENTILES,  
AND LET ALL THE PEOPLES PRAISE HIM.”
- 12 Again Isaiah says,  
“THERE SHALL COME THE ROOT OF JESSE,  
AND HE WHO ARISES TO RULE OVER THE GENTILES,  
IN HIM SHALL THE GENTILES HOPE.”
- The Law, the Writings and the Prophets all testify to the Lord’s provision for the Gentiles through the promises given to the Jews (Deut. 32:43; Ps. 18:49; 117:1; Isa. 11).
  - The eschatological promise is yet to be fulfilled, but has a foreshadowing in the Jew & Gentile blessings of the Body of Christ (Eph. 2:11-22).
- 13 Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you will abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.
- Past salvation by faith should be followed by the present walk by faith (Eph. 2:8-10; 2<sup>nd</sup> Cor. 5:7).
  - Our living hope empowers us to abound in hope (Rom. 5:1-5; 8:24,25; 1<sup>st</sup> Pet. 1:3,13).

- 14 And concerning you, my brethren, I myself also am convinced that you yourselves are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge and able also to admonish one another.
- Despite their non-established status, the believers in Rome were surprisingly full, filled, and able (Rom. 1:8-15 cf. 15:14).
  - A healthy assembly is one that fulfills all the one-another admonishments of the New Testament epistles (Rom. 12:10,16; 13:8; 14:13,19; 15:5,7,14; 16:16; 1<sup>st</sup> Cor. 11:33; 12:25; 16:20; 2<sup>nd</sup> Cor. 13:12; Gal. 5:13; 6:2; Eph. 4:2,32; 5:21; Phil. 2:3; Col. 3:9,13; 1<sup>st</sup> Thess. 3:12; 4:9,18; 5:11,15; 2<sup>nd</sup> Thess. 1:3; Heb. 10:24; Jas. 4:11; 5:9,16; 1<sup>st</sup> Pet. 1:22; 4:9; 5:5,14; 1<sup>st</sup> Jn. 1:7; 3:11,23; 4:7,11,12; 2<sup>nd</sup> Jn. 5).
- 15 But I have written very boldly to you on some points so as to remind you again, because of the grace that was given me from God,
- Paul expects that much of Romans will be a reminder of previous teaching (Rom. 15:15), but doctrinal reminders are always beneficial (2<sup>nd</sup> Pet. 1:12,13).
  - Paul is never reluctant to repeat things (Phil. 3:1), and is always eager to testify to the grace of God in his life (1<sup>st</sup> Cor. 15:10).
- 16 to be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles, ministering as a priest the gospel of God, so that *my* offering of the Gentiles may become acceptable, sanctified by the Holy Spirit.
- Paul's calling was primarily for Gentile service (Acts 9:15-16; Gal. 1:15-16; 2:7-9).
  - When we exercise our gifts, ministries and effects we are functioning as priests within our confession (Heb. 3:1; 13:16; 1<sup>st</sup> Pet. 2:5).
- 17 Therefore in Christ Jesus I have found reason for **boasting** in things pertaining to God.
- 18 For I will not presume to speak of anything except what Christ has accomplished through me, resulting in the obedience of the Gentiles by word and deed,
- Boasting in self is a denial of the grace of God (1<sup>st</sup> Cor. 4:7).
  - Boasting in the Lord is a confession of the grace of God (Jer. 9:24; 1<sup>st</sup> Cor. 1:31; 2<sup>nd</sup> Cor. 10:17; Gal. 6:14).
- 19 in the power of signs and wonders, in the power of the Spirit; so that from Jerusalem and round about as far as Illyricum I have fully preached the gospel of Christ.
- Signs and wonders are the credentials for Apostolic ministry (Rom. 15:19; 2<sup>nd</sup> Cor. 12:12).
  - The extent of Paul's ministry (Illyricum) goes beyond what the Book of Acts details (Acts 20:2).
- 20 And thus I aspired to preach the gospel, not where Christ was *already* named, so that I would not build on another man's foundation;
- Paul's aspirations were to function in a trail-blazing capacity (2<sup>nd</sup> Cor. 10:15,16).
  - Others would be assigned by the Lord to build on Paul's foundations (1<sup>st</sup> Cor. 3:10). This pattern is quite appropriate given the foundational purpose of the apostolic office (Eph. 2:20).
- 21 but as it is written,
- “THEY WHO HAD NO NEWS OF HIM SHALL SEE,  
AND THEY WHO HAVE NOT HEARD SHALL UNDERSTAND.”
- The Jews received the report (Isa. 53:1).
  - All humanity will honor the Lord Jesus Christ (Isa. 52:13-15).
- 22 For this reason I have often been prevented from coming to you;
- Hindrances to ministry are an indication of success in ministry (Rom. 1:13; 15:22; 1<sup>st</sup> Cor. 16:9; 1<sup>st</sup> Thess. 2:18).
  - Sometimes it is God Himself who “blocks” our progress (Acts 16:6-8).
- 23 but now, with no further place for me in these regions, and since I have had for many years a longing to come to you
- Jesus Christ closes doors when the mission is accomplished (Rev. 3:7). Knowing our place and opportunity helps to limit the Devil's opportunity (Eph. 4:27; Lk. 4:13).
  - Long-time desires are in the Lord's hands to provide in His perfect timing (Rom. 15:23,32; 1<sup>st</sup> Thess. 3:6-11).
- 24 whenever I go to Spain—for I hope to see you in passing, and to be helped on my way there by you, when I have first enjoyed your company for a while—
- Open-ended planning is the essence of humble reliance on divine guidance in the will of God (1<sup>st</sup> Cor. 16:5-12).
  - A great venue for fellowship is when your fellows ship out to the mission field (Acts 15:3; 21:5; 2<sup>nd</sup> Cor. 1:16; 3<sup>rd</sup> Jn. 6).
- 25 but now, I am going to Jerusalem serving the saints.
- 26 For Macedonia and Achaia have been pleased to make a contribution for the poor among the saints in Jerusalem.
- The best and worst of Paul's European ministries cooperated on a famine relief endeavor (2<sup>nd</sup> Cor. 8:1-9:15).
  - Paul's personal involvement was not certain for much of the planning process (1<sup>st</sup> Cor. 16:1-4).

- 27 Yes, they were pleased *to do so*, and they are indebted to them. For if the Gentiles have shared in their spiritual things, they are indebted to minister to them also in material things.
- A grace oriented believer responding to God's provision will view participation in His work as a privilege (Acts 16:15; 2<sup>nd</sup> Cor. 8:4).
  - Earthly and spiritual contrasts place financial considerations in perspective (1<sup>st</sup> Cor. 9:7-14; Gal. 6:6,7).
- 28 Therefore, when I have finished this, and have put my seal on this fruit of theirs, I will go on by way of you to Spain.
- 29 I know that when I come to you, I will come in the fullness of the blessing of Christ.
- Fruit-bearing is both an individual (Jn. 15:2,4,5) and corporate (Jn. 4:36; 12:24; 15:8,16,17) endeavor.
  - Fullness is a concept with applications for Christ (Lk. 24:44; Jn. 1:14; Eph. 1:10; 4:10,13; Col. 1:19; 2:9) and His Body (Jn. 1:16; 15:11; 16:24; 17:13; Rom. 15:13,14,29; Eph. 1:23; 3:19; Col. 2:10).
- 30 Now I urge you, brethren, by our Lord Jesus Christ and by the *love* of the Spirit, to strive together with me in your prayers to God for me,
- This exhortation invokes the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of the Spirit. Failure to live up to this exhortation is to voluntarily waive these invocation witnesses and forsake the hope that does not disappoint (Rom. 5:5). See also Rom. 12:1; 1<sup>st</sup> Cor. 1:10; 2<sup>nd</sup> Cor. 10:1 for similar syntax.
  - The Romans were exhorted to join every ministry of Paul's where multiplied prayer agonies produced multiplied praise (2<sup>nd</sup> Cor. 1:8-11; Eph. 6:18-20; Col. 4:12-13).
- 31 that I may be rescued from those who are disobedient in Judea, and *that* my service for Jerusalem may prove acceptable to the saints;
- Evangelism missions often require divine rescue (1<sup>st</sup> Thess. 2:14-16; 2<sup>nd</sup> Thess. 3:1-3).
  - Serving the saints entails the enduring of hostility (1<sup>st</sup> Cor. 16:9; 2<sup>nd</sup> Tim. 3:10-12).
- 32 so that I may come to you in joy by the will of God and find *refreshing* rest in your company.
- "In joy by the will of God" teaches us the fundamental principle of personal Christian happiness (2<sup>nd</sup> Cor. 1:24; Phil. 1:25; 1<sup>st</sup> Thess. 5:16-18).
  - This refreshing rest is found in the LXX for leopards and goats laying down together (Isa. 11:6). This millennial promise has metaphoric application for the church age.
- 33 Now the God of peace be with you all. Amen.
- Paul blesses the Roman believers with a benediction for their fellowship with the God of Peace (Rom. 16:20; 1<sup>st</sup> Cor. 14:33; 2<sup>nd</sup> Cor. 13:11; Phil. 4:9; 1<sup>st</sup> Thess. 5:23; Heb. 13:20).
  - "Amen" invites the Roman believers to join in Paul's prayer request (Rom. 1:25; 9:5; 11:36; 15:33; 16:27).

# Romans 16 Greetings and Closing Admonishment

## Chapter Sixteen

- 1 I commend to you our sister Phoebe, who is a servant of the church which is at Cenchrea;
  - Phoebe is a deaconess. Fem.sing.acc. pres.act.participle, with fem.sing.acc. noun. A female deacon (deaconess) is consistent with the women referenced in 1<sup>st</sup> Tim. 3:11.
  - Cenchrea is the [eastern port for Corinth](#) (Acts 18:18). This church isn't mentioned in Acts, but undoubtedly was planted by Corinthian church members. Great article in the [Baker NT Commentary](#).
- 2 that you receive her in the Lord in a manner worthy of the saints, and that you help her in whatever matter she may have need of you; for she herself has also been a helper of many, and of myself as well.
  - Unconditional receiving (in a manner worthy of the saints) (Phil. 2:29).
  - Conditional helping in whatever she may need (her history of helping others). Help in this context is to stand with (2<sup>nd</sup> Tim. 4:17). In Romans this verb is particularly vivid (Rom. 6:13<sub>x2</sub>, 16, 19<sub>x2</sub>; 12:1; 14:10; 16:2).
- 3-5a Greet Prisca and Aquila, my fellow workers in Christ Jesus, who for my life risked their own necks, to whom not only do I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles; also *greet* the church that is in their house.
  - Prisca (Rom. 16:3; 1<sup>st</sup> Cor. 16:19; 2<sup>nd</sup> Tim. 4:19) is also called Priscilla (Acts 18:2,18,26). Never appears without her husband Aquila, and is usually listed first.
  - Tent-makers and neck-riskers (Acts 18:3; Rom. 16:4). This danger isn't mentioned in Acts, but possibly relates to their return to Rome.
  - Exhorters when necessary (Acts 18:26), hospitable wherever they are (Acts 18:3; Rom. 16:5; 1<sup>st</sup> Cor. 16:9). The church in their home is one of five Roman churches mentioned in this passage.
- 5b Greet Epaphroditus, my beloved, who is the first convert to Christ from Asia.
  - Epaphroditus is the first of four "beloved" in this chapter (vv.5,8,9,12).
  - The time and place of our salvation is remarkable, especially in connection with others' salvation (cf. Rom. 16:7; 1<sup>st</sup> Cor. 16:15).
- 6 Greet Mary, who has worked hard for you.
  - Mary is the first of four "exhausted workers" in this chapter (vv.6,12). All four are women.
  - Is this Roman Mary a Jewish name? Miriam? Latin Maria? (fem. of Marius)
- 7 Greet Andronicus and Junias, my kinsmen and my fellow prisoners, who are outstanding among the apostles, who also were in Christ before me.
  - Andronicus & Junia (husband & wife?) are the first two of three kinsmen greeted by Paul (vv.7,11), but three other kinsmen join Paul in his greetings to the believers in Rome (v.21).
    - This kinship is likely more than a shared Jewish heritage (Rom. 9:3).
    - Andronicus & Junia are not necessarily Apostles. Their reputation is excellent among the Apostles.
  - Fellow prisoners in one of Paul's various imprisonments (Col. 4:10; Philem. 23 cf. 2<sup>nd</sup> Cor. 11:23).
- 8 Greet Ampliatus, my beloved in the Lord.
- 9 Greet Urbanus, our fellow worker in Christ, and Stachys my beloved.
  - Ampliatus (shortened to Amplias) is a common slave names.
  - Urbanus was more likely freeborn.
  - Stachys "head of grain" was by legend one of the 70 Disciples of Christ, and the first Bishop of Byzantium.
- 10 Greet Apelles, the approved in Christ. Greet those who are of the *household* of Aristobulus.
- 11 Greet Herodion, my kinsman. Greet those of the *household* of Narcissus, who are in the Lord.
  - Apelles is a common Greek/Jewish name, often confused with Apollos. "Approved" is a marvelous appellation (Jas. 1:12; 2<sup>nd</sup> Tim. 2:15).
  - "Those who are of" the households of Aristobulus/Narcissus include their household slaves bequeathed to the service of Caesar and public service for Rome. See Lightfoot's Commentary on Philippians, [pp.174-175](#). See also Phil. 4:22 in connection with Rom. 16:10,11.
- 12 Greet Tryphaena and Tryphosa, workers in the Lord. Greet Persis the beloved, who has worked hard in the Lord.
  - "Luxurious" and "Luxuriating" are likely biological sisters. Cf. "luxury" in Lk. 7:25.
  - Persis (fem. slave name, *Persian*). Like Maria (v.6), these three women are exhausted workers in the Lord.
- 13 Greet Rufus, a choice man in the Lord, also his mother and mine.
  - Paul considered Rufus' mother to be a mother to him as well.
  - The only other Rufus in the Bible is a son of Simon of Cyrene (Mk. 15:21, not mentioned in Mt. 27:32 or Lk. 23:26).

- 14 Greet Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermes, Patrobas, Hermas and the brethren with them.
- 15 Greet Philologus and Julia, Nereus and his sister, and Olympas, and all the saints who are with them.
- Five names + “brethren” identifies a separate lampstand in Rome.
  - Five names + “saints” likewise.
- 16 Greet one another with a holy kiss. All the churches of Christ greet you.
- The holy kiss (φίλημα philēma<sup>#5370</sup>) of the NT (Rom. 16:16; 1<sup>st</sup> Cor. 16:20; 2<sup>nd</sup> Cor. 13:12; 1<sup>st</sup> Thess. 5:26; 1<sup>st</sup> Pet. 5:14) and the early Church fathers (Athenagoras [32,3](#); Just.Apol.1,[65](#)) is the regular opportunity to express honor, affection, and genuine interest of well-being towards one another.
  - Jesus Christ walks in the midst of the golden lampstands and holds each star in His right hand. Every true local church, therefore, is a Church of Christ (Rev. 1:12-20; 2:1).
- 17 Now I urge you, brethren, keep your eye on those who cause dissensions and hindrances contrary to the teaching which you learned, and turn away from them.
- Keep an eye on certain people, then take action when necessary (2<sup>nd</sup> Thess. 3:14,15; Tit. 3:10). Keeping an eye on the right examples will assist in keeping an eye on the wrong examples (Phil. 3:17-19).
  - Previously accepted teaching spotlights contrary teaching (Gal. 1:8,9; 1<sup>st</sup> Tim. 6:3) as all Scripture must agree with all Scripture (Isa. 8:19,20; Acts 17:11; 2<sup>nd</sup> Pet. 1:20,21).
- 18 For such men are slaves, not of our Lord Christ but of their own appetites; and by their smooth and flattering speech they deceive the hearts of the unsuspecting.
- Appetite slaves are the earthly-minded enemies of the Cross of Jesus Christ (Phil. 3:18-19).
  - These appetite slaves are smooth talkers in spreading their influence (2<sup>nd</sup> Tim. 3:2-7; 2<sup>nd</sup> Pet. 2:1-3,18-19; Jude 15-16).
- 19 For the report of your obedience has reached to all; therefore I am rejoicing over you, but I want you to be wise in what is good and innocent in what is evil.
- Good congregational reputations are a blessing to the entire Body of Christ (Rom. 1:8; 1<sup>st</sup> Thess. 1:8-10).
  - Shrewd and harmless must be placed in the proper categories (Mt. 10:16; 1<sup>st</sup> Cor. 14:20) as misplaced categories lead to judgment (Jer. 4:22).
- 20 The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet.  
The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you.
- Soon is by God’s time-table (2<sup>nd</sup> Pet. 3:8-9).
  - Grace is always a Church benediction (Rom. 16:20; 1<sup>st</sup> Cor. 16:23; 2<sup>nd</sup> Cor. 13:14; Gal. 6:18; Phil. 4:23; 1<sup>st</sup> Thess. 5:28; 2<sup>nd</sup> Thess. 3:18; 2<sup>nd</sup> Tim. 4:22; Philem. 25; Rev. 22:21).
- 21 Timothy my fellow worker greets you, and *so do* Lucius and Jason and Sosipater, my kinsmen.
- Timothy heads the list of eight Pauline companions who send their greetings to the saints in Rome. Co-author of six NT epistles (2<sup>nd</sup> Cor.; Phil.; Col.; 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> Thess.; Philem.) and personal recipient of two more (1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> Tim.). Well known by the author and recipients of the Book of Hebrews (Heb. 13:23).
  - Lucius is the first of three kinsmen greeting the saints in Rome. Not likely to be Lucius of Cyrene (Acts 13:1). Neither likely Luke the beloved physician (Col. 4:14; 2<sup>nd</sup> Tim. 4:11; Philem. 24).
  - Jason is quite likely Paul and Timothy’s host from Thessalonica (Acts 17:1-9).
  - Sosipater is also likely a Thessalonican, spelled Sopater in Acts (Acts 20:4).
- 22 I, Tertius, who write this letter, greet you in the Lord.
- Tertius is unmentioned anywhere else in the Bible. Common Latin name, meaning “third.”
  - Paul regularly employed an amanuensis for each of his epistles, personally appending his signature to each one (1<sup>st</sup> Cor. 16:21; Gal. 6:11; Col. 4:18; 2<sup>nd</sup> Thess. 3:17; Philem. 19).
- 23 Gaius, host to me and to the whole church, greets you. Erastus, the city treasurer greets you, and Quartus, the brother.
- Gaius of Corinth is most likely Gaius Titius Justus (Acts 18:7; 1<sup>st</sup> Cor. 1:14). He should be distinguished from the Macedonian Gaius (Acts 19:29; 20:4), and the recipient of 3<sup>rd</sup> John (v.1).
  - Erastus the city treasurer illustrates the great blessing when Christians serve their community in public office.
  - Quartus the brother is otherwise unknown, but seems to be the little brother of Tertius.
- 24 [The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.]
- Text critical exercise to compare mss. and translations.
  - Repeated fr. v.20 and sometimes located after v.27.
  - The real puzzle is not the repeated verse, but the existence of the final two chapters (Rom. 15-16) and the placement of the glorious benediction (Rom. 16:25-27). Excellent summary by [Robert Mounce](#).
- 25 Now to Him who is able to establish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery which has been kept secret for long ages past,

- 26 but now is manifested, and by the Scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the eternal God, has been made known to all the nations, *leading* to obedience of faith;
- 27 to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, be the glory forever. Amen.
- Paul concludes his greatest theological treatise with his greatest epistolary benediction. This formal conclusion is very similar to that which ends Hebrews (Heb. 13:20-21) and Jude (Jd. 24-25).
  - God is able to establish us (Rom. 16:25), build us up (Acts 20:32), give us the inheritance (Acts 20:32), do far more abundantly (Eph. 3:20), keep us from stumbling (Jude 24) and cause us to stand in the presence of His glory blameless with great joy (Jude 24).
  - Rom. 16:25-26 outlines a systematic approach to the whole counsel of God's Word for Church Members.
    - A personalized Gospel.
    - The preaching of Jesus Christ—his discourses in the canonical gospels, especially the Upper Room Discourse.
    - The manifested mystery doctrine of the NT epistles.
    - The Hebrew Canon via the whole counsel perspective (Acts 20:27; 2<sup>nd</sup> Tim. 2:15).
  - To the Only Wise God echoes an earlier benediction (Rom. 11:33-36).

# Romans in Review

## ***Romans 1-5 Justification***

1. Romans 1 contains two revelations. Vv.16,17 is the righteousness of God that is revealed. Vv.18,19 is the wrath of God that is revealed.
2. Rejection of God-consciousness (Rom. 1:21) results in a three-fold giving-over (Rom. 1:24,26,28).
3. Moral depravity is no better than immoral depravity (Rom. 2:3).
4. Religious depravity is no better than pagan moral depravity (Rom. 2:17,28-29).
5. Stewardship advantage comes primarily as custodians of the Word of God (Rom. 3:1-2).
6. All humanity falls short, but the grace of God provides redemption in Christ (Rom. 3:21-28).
7. Works produce due wages but faith is credited by righteousness (Rom. 4:4-5).
8. Weakness and strength of faith is coordinated by our consideration of God's faithfulness (Rom. 4:19-21).
9. Grace is an operational sphere in which we stand (Rom. 5:1-5).
10. Spiritual death is the heritage of Adam, but eternal life is the gift of Jesus Christ (Rom. 5:12,15-21).

## ***Romans 6-8 Sanctification***

1. We are to walk in the newness of life (Rom. 6:4).
2. Do not let sin reign (Rom. 6:8-13).
3. We are dead to sin, and also dead to the Law (Rom. 7:4-6).
4. The no-good-thing still dwells within our flesh (Rom. 7:18-24).
5. There is no condemnation for those who are in Christ (Rom. 8:1,34).
6. There is no separation from the love of Christ (Rom. 8:35-39).

## ***Romans 9-11 Discourse on Israel***

1. Israel enjoyed tremendous advantages in the exercise of their stewardship responsibilities (Rom. 3:1-2; 9:4-5).
2. God patiently endures within the boundaries of time so as to achieve a greater pleasure for all eternity (Rom. 2:4; 9:22,23; 2<sup>nd</sup> Pet. 3:8,9,15). The longsuffering of God is perhaps the most repeated descriptor in all the Bible (Ex. 34:6; Num. 14:18; Neh. 9:17; Ps. 86:15; 103:8; 145:8; Joel 2:13; Jon. 4:2; Mic. 7:18; Nah. 1:3).
3. Ignorant zeal leads to tragic results (Rom. 10:2; Jn. 16:1-2; Acts 26:9-11; Phil. 3:5-6).
4. The Word of God is a living and powerful faith-producing persuader (Rom. 10:14-17; Heb. 4:12). If your feet do the walking, His living Word will do the talking (Rom. 10:15; Isa. 52:7; Eph. 6:15).
5. God has not rejected His people! (Rom. 11:1; Ps. 89:30-37; 94:14).
6. God will restore His earthly people and bring them under the bond of the covenant (Rom. 11:25-27; Isa. 59:15b-21; Ezek. 20:33-38).

## **Romans 12-15 Discourse on the Church**

### **Romans 16 Greetings and Closing Admonishment**

1. The Church is called to be daily presented as living sacrifices, worshiping God with renewed minds (Rom. 12:1-2). Daily presentations (Rom. 6:13,16,19; 12:1; 2<sup>nd</sup> Tim. 2:15) prepare us for our eternal presentation (Rom. 14:10).
2. We must exercise our giftedness toward one another in genuine no-hypocrisy love (Rom. 12:6,9-21; 2<sup>nd</sup> Cor. 6:6; 1<sup>st</sup> Pet. 1:22). This commanded love will become our greatest witness to the world (Jn. 13:34-35).
3. Love governs our duty to Church (Rom. 12), while subjection governs our duty to State (Rom. 13:1-7; Tit. 3:1; 1<sup>st</sup> Pet. 2:13).
4. Subjection is not mindless obedience, as obedience to God (Mt. 22:21) may require disobedience to man (Acts 4:19; 5:29). Even in such cases, such disobedience remains in subjection to the authority (Acts 4:19; 5:40-42).
5. Opinions (doubtful disputations/things/issues) are matters of personal conviction (Rom. 14:5,22,23) rather than matters of absolute righteousness (Isa. 5:20).
6. Acceptance is a great blessing for the Body of Christ, made possible because of Jesus Christ's acceptance of us (Rom. 14:1,3; 15:7; Philem. 17).
7. Bearing one another's burdens (Rom. 15:1-2) is called the Law of Christ (Gal. 6:1-2), the Royal Law (Jas. 2:8), the agape love fulfillment of Mosaic Law (Rom. 13:9-10).
8. A healthy assembly is one that fulfills all the one-another admonishments of the New Testament epistles (Rom. 12:10,16; 13:8; 14:13,19; 15:5,7,14; 16:16; 1<sup>st</sup> Cor. 11:33; 12:25; 16:20; 2<sup>nd</sup> Cor. 13:12; Gal. 5:13; 6:2; Eph. 4:2,32; 5:21; Phil. 2:3; Col. 3:9,13; 1<sup>st</sup> Thess. 3:12; 4:9,18; 5:11,15; 2<sup>nd</sup> Thess. 1:3; Heb. 10:24; Jas. 4:11; 5:9,16; 1<sup>st</sup> Pet. 1:22; 4:9; 5:5,14; 1<sup>st</sup> Jn. 1:7; 3:11,23; 4:7,11,12; 2<sup>nd</sup> Jn. 5).
9. Keep an eye out for the trouble-making appetite slaves (Rom. 16:17-20a; Phil. 3:18-19).
10. The unfolding plan of God, revealed in stages, is our present advantage to the eternal glory of God the Father through Jesus Christ (Rom. 16:25-27 cf. 11:33-36; Heb. 1:1-4; John 13:31,32).