

Village Lighthouse Ministries

Sabbath School Helps

Book of Romans

Contents

Introduction	2
Romans One	8
Romans Two	21
Romans Three	27
Romans Four	32
Romans Five	37
Romans Six	42
Romans Seven	46
Romans Eight	51
Romans Nine	61
Romans Ten	67
Romans Eleven	71
Romans Twelve	76
Romans Thirteen	80
Romans Fourteen	82
Romans Fifteen	85
Romans Sixteen	89

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Introduction

“For as by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.” Romans 5:19. By the disobedience of one man, Adam, we were all born with fallen natures with the inclination to sin. Even so, by the obedience of one man, Jesus Christ, we can all have new natures and “be made righteous.”

Therefore, the question becomes, “How can the righteousness of that one man, Jesus Christ, make me righteous?” This is what the gospel is all about. How can God take a sinner and not only forgive him for his past sins, but also change his life to do that which is altogether beautiful and just?

We have all struggled with sin. As Paul describes this struggle, saying, “For that which 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. But if I do the very thing I do not wish to do, I agree with the Law, confessing that it is good. So now, no longer am I the one doing it, but sin which indwells me . . . I find then the principle that evil is present in me, the one who wishes to do good. . . . Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of this death?” Romans 7:15-17, 21, 24. NASB

Who alone can save us from this terrible fallen condition? It is Jesus. As Paul wrote, “For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.” Romans 8:3, 4

For centuries men have tried to keep God’s law with their fallen natures. What was the result? It was one hundred percent failure. So what did God do? He sent His own Son in the likeness of our “sinful flesh” and He condemned sin in the flesh by living a sinless life in our sinful flesh. As a result, Jesus became our perfect sacrifice for sin. Through Him we may be forgiven for all our sins because He lived a sinless life.

But the perfect life of Jesus did more than pay the penalty for our sins. It is now possible for the “righteousness of law” to “be fulfilled in us.” Imagine that! Christ came not only to forgive us of our past sins, but He also opened the way for us to do what we know we should be doing. This is the good news of the gospel of Jesus Christ. We are more than forgiven, we are changed!

The book of Romans teaches us how to be both forgiven and transformed. In doing so, Paul will help us understand the relationship between the perfect and sinless life of Jesus and God’s perfect Ten Commandments. That’s right! Paul will explain the connection between the righteousness of Christ and His righteous law.

Before we begin that study, let us first establish a few facts about the book of Romans. When Paul wrote the book of Romans he had not as yet been to Rome. He had wanted to go to Rome years ago. As Paul wrote, “But now having no more place in these parts, and having a great desire these many years to come unto you; Whensoever I take my journey into Spain, I will come to you: for I trust to see you in my

journey, and to be brought on my way thitherward by you, if first I be somewhat filled with your company. But now I go unto Jerusalem to minister unto the saints.” Romans 15:23-25.

Though he had not been to Rome, Paul knew many of the saints in Rome. This is brought out clearly in chapter sixteen. Paul wrote, “Greet Priscilla and Aquila my helpers in Christ Jesus: Who have for my life laid down their own necks: unto whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles. Likewise greet the church that is in their house. Salute my well beloved Epaenetus, who is the firstfruits of Achaia unto Christ.” Romans 16:3-5. Paul continues on with a long list of saints that he personally knew that lived in Rome at the time. See Romans 16:5-15.

Paul likely wrote the book of Romans from Corinth around A.D. 57-58. This was something he was inspired to do before he left this region to go to Jerusalem.

The Structure of the Book

When we consider the overview of the book we first see an introduction from Romans 1:1-15. In this part, Paul introduces himself, his relationship to Jesus, and compliments the saints in Rome.

The second part, 1:16-11:36 is the doctrinal section. It begins with the doctrine of justification by faith in 1:16-5:21. The doctrine of justification by faith is the doctrine on the forgiveness of sins. Justification and forgiveness are the same thing. It continues with sanctification by faith from 6:1-8:39. Sanctification by faith is how we are to grow in Christ daily. Paul concludes this section with a focus on God’s election of Israel from 9:1-11:36.

In the third part, 12:1-15:13, Paul provides a practical application of the transformed life. Now that we are both justified and sanctified, how should we relate to one another? In this section, Paul will stress things like love and patience. For the church to move forward with men and women of varying talents, personalities, and temperaments, we need much love and patience with one another.

The fourth part is Paul’s conclusion to the book from 15:14-16:27. Here we find Paul’s great desire to go to Rome. He asks the saints to pray for his journey to Jerusalem. Then Paul finishes with his salutations to his friends and co-workers in the faith.

Many books have been written on Romans, but few have captured the true relationship between the sinless life of Jesus and the Ten Commandments. Therefore, let us begin our journey in the book of Romans and discover the relationship between the righteous and perfect life of God’s dear Son and His perfect law.

The Righteousness of Christ in Relation to the Law

When we consider the relationship between the righteousness of Christ and His perfect law, what has happened throughout history? The Jewish nation accepted the perfect moral law but rejected the perfect and sinless Messiah, Jesus Christ. Therefore, it was impossible for them to understand the perfect relationship between the righteousness of Christ and the law.

Much of the Christian world has accepted the perfect and sinless life of Jesus but has rejected God's moral law as still binding upon the believer. Therefore, it has been impossible for many of them to understand the perfect relationship between the righteousness of Christ and His perfect law. Therefore, let us begin by defining the term "righteousness."

What is "righteousness"?

The Bible says, "My tongue shall speak of thy word: for all thy commandments are righteousness." Psalm 119:172.

"Hearken unto me, ye that know righteousness, the people in whose heart is my law;" Isaiah 51:7.

"But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness." Romans 9:31.

It is clear from these verses that the law of God is the "law of righteousness," that all of God's commandments "are righteousness," that those who know God's law "know righteousness."

The apostle Paul wrote that the law of God is "holy, and just, and good. . . . For we know that the law is spiritual." Romans 7:12, 14.

The beloved John wrote, "Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law." 1 John 3:4.

Jesus had summarized the law by one's love for God and his fellowman. See Matthew 22:36-39.

Therefore, we can truly learn about righteousness from two sources. First, there is the altogether beautiful and perfect life of Jesus. Second, there is God's great moral standard of righteousness, His holy law.

What does God's righteous law direct us to do?

"Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith." Galatians 3:24.

When we look at the perfect law of righteousness it teaches us that we are sinners. As such, it points us to the need of a Savior. It points us to Jesus.

The law helps us to understand what sin truly is. The Bible says, "What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet. . . . For I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died. . . . Was then that which is good made death unto me? God forbid. But sin, that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good; that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful." Romans 7:7, 9, 13.

The law is not against us; rather, it is for us by showing us our true condition. The law reveals sin in us. It causes us to flee to Christ for forgiveness. As Paul wrote, "Moreover the law entered, that the offense might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound." Romans 5:20.

The deeper I understand God's law the more sinful my sins appear. The more my sinfulness becomes apparent, the greater grace appears. The more I realize my helplessness, the more I will depend upon Christ for mercy and strength. It is good to see my sinfulness that I might know Him who is mighty to save.

Can the law justify me? Or, can I be justified by the works of the law?

"Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin." Romans 3:20.

"Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall not flesh be justified." Galatians 2:16.

The Bible clearly teaches that we cannot erase our sinful past by keeping God's law in the present.

Why can't we be justified by the works of the law?

"For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all." James 2:10.

It is not possible to be justified by a perfect law that we have already broken. Even if we could keep God's law perfectly today and forever on our own, we would still fall short of being justified by it. Why? We have already broken God's perfect law.

So how can I stand justified before God?

We can stand innocent before God by accepting the pardoning power of Christ's death for our sins. The Bible says, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." 1 John 1:9. When I ask God to forgive me of my sins, He keeps His promise, and He forgives me of my sins. I now stand justified in God's sight.

Can I earn salvation by my good deeds or the works of the law?

"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God." Ephesians 2:8.

"And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work." Romans 11:6.

We are either saved by the grace of God or we earn salvation. It cannot be both. It is either a gift from God or we earn it.

So how can we be accounted righteous when the law already condemns us?

“But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.” 1 Corinthians 1:30.

Jesus is our righteousness, both imputed and imparted. This is why Jesus is called “THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.” Jeremiah 23:6.

We have no righteousness of our own. The law defines what is righteous, but the law cannot give us righteousness. We receive righteousness from only one source, that is, Jesus Christ.

Jesus becomes the Son of man

To save man from his sinful condition, to rescue man from the condemnation of the law, the Father sent His own Son, Jesus Christ, into our world.

“And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.” John 1:14.

“For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.” Romans 8:3, 4.

In the weakness of our fallen flesh, we are not able to keep God’s perfect law. Therefore, God sent His own Son in the likeness of our sinful flesh to live a perfect life according to His perfect law. He did this that we might now walk in obedience to His perfect law through the work of the Holy Spirit.

Paul testifies that Jesus “was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.” Hebrews 4:15.

Through a constant surrender of His will to His Father, Christ was able to say at the end of His life, “I have kept My Father’s commandments. . . . I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do.” John 15:10; 17:4.

Jesus came in our fallen flesh to live a life for us. Day by day, choice by choice, Jesus wove in His own life a robe of righteous obedience to the Ten Commandments. Why did He do all this? He did it for us. He wanted to save us from our transgression of His perfect law. He came to pay the penalty of our sins, which is death. See Romans 6:23. He wanted us to be able to live a new life of obedience in Him, that we may enjoy eternity with the Father forever.

When I look into the perfect mirror of God’s law, it condemns me as a sinner. When Jesus looks into the perfect mirror of God’s law, it declares that He is righteous. Therefore, for me to stand innocent before God’s perfect law I must have Christ’s righteousness.

I have no righteousness of my own to meet the claims of God’s righteous law. Through Christ’s perfect sacrifice for sin I am able to be forgiven of my past sins and stand innocent before God. By allowing Jesus to live in my heart by faith I am now able to live a new life in obedience to God’s Ten Commandments.

Therefore, the gospel is the good news of how Jesus kept God's law perfectly for us, that He might be our perfect Savior in the forgiveness of sin, and our perfect Savior in the deliverance from sin. The Bible says, "And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins." Matthew 1:21.

What is imputed righteousness?

Paul wrote, "Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works." Romans 4:6. The word "imputeth" is the same as the word "credit."

God will credit the perfect, sinless, and righteous life of Jesus to your account in heaven. Did you catch that! When God forgives you of your sins, you are more than forgiven of your past. He also credits to your account the thirty-three years of Christ's sinless life.

Do we deserve to have Christ's perfect life credited to us as if we lived His life? Absolutely not! But due to God's love and grace, He not only forgives us of our sinful past, but also credits to us the life of His dear Son as if we lived that life.

Now if God is willing to credit to you the sinless life of Jesus, are you willing to serve Him with your whole heart? Do you want God to do more than credit the life of His Son to you? Do you want Him to impart that life to you?

What is the imparted righteousness of Christ?

Through the work of the Holy Spirit the perfect and sinless life of Jesus may be imparted to us. Remember, God's forgiveness is more than a judicial act which sets us free from the condemnation of the law. Jesus came to deliver us from sin. Those who are forgiven are changed. This is the good news of the gospel.

The message of righteousness by faith is a most precious message that invites the people to receive the righteousness of Christ. What is the righteousness of Christ? It is perfect obedience to all the commandments of God. As Jesus said, "If you love Me, keep the commandments." John 14:15.

So how do I know if Christ dwells in me by the power of the Holy Spirit? If the love of God dwells in us, our feelings, our thoughts, our purposes, our actions, will be in harmony with the will of God as expressed in the Ten Commandments.

In summary, Christ lived a sinless life in our fallen flesh. He lived in perfect obedience to His Father's commands. Christ died for us to pay the penalty for our sins. Christ is risen and offers us His own righteousness to replace our garments stained with sin. If we accept Him as our Savior, no matter how sinful our past, for His sake we are accounted righteous. Christ will impute or credit to our account in heaven His own righteousness.

More than this, Christ changes the heart. He abides in our heart by faith. If we maintain our connection with Him, He will work in us to will and to do according to His good pleasure. So then we can say, "I am

crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me.” Galatians 2:20.

Therefore, what is the perfect relationship between the sinless life of Christ and His perfect and righteous law?

We can have all the righteousness that the law requires, but we cannot obtain this righteousness from the law itself. We cannot obtain it by simply trying harder. We receive righteousness from only one place. We receive it from Christ. He is the Righteous One. When we receive Him, we receive who He is. And who is Jesus? He is the perfect, sinless, and righteous Son of God. The more we have of Him the more righteousness we have received.

So what is the key to receiving righteousness? It is receiving Jesus every day as your life. As John wrote, “He that hath the Son hath life: and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.” 1 John 5:12. Do you want life? Do you want righteousness? Then have more of Jesus, the Righteous One.

Romans Chapter One

INTRODUCTION: ROMANS 1:1-15

“Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God,” Romans 1:1

Paul begins his epistle by telling us that he is “a servant of Jesus Christ.” The word “servant” means “slave.” Paul is a slave. He has a Master, and his name is Jesus. He belongs to Him. In what way do we belong to Jesus?

“For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.” 1 Corinthians 6:20

“Ye are bought with a price; be not ye the servants of men.” 1 Corinthians 7:23

“In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace; . . . According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:” Ephesians 1:7, 4.

God owns us in two ways, first by creation, and second by redemption. Through the shed blood of Christ, we belong to Jesus. Before He came and died for our sins, He had predestined us to be “holy and without blame.”

But we are more than servants. "Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ." Galatians 4:7. We are sons and daughters to God, adopted into the family of God. As His children, we will be heirs of the kingdom of God, if we prove faithful unto the end.

So if someone asks you, "Who are you?" What will you say? Will you tell them that you are a servant of Jesus Christ? Will you tell them that you are a son or daughter of God? Will you tell them that your inheritance is not this old world, but a new world wherein dwells righteousness?

"apostle"

The word "apostle" means "one sent." A good illustration of this concerning the life of Paul is found in these words, "Through mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God; so that from Jerusalem, and round about unto Illyricum, I have fully preached the gospel of Christ."

God had used Paul to establish many churches throughout Asia Minor. He was sent to raise up churches where none had existed before. As Paul wrote, "Yea, so have I strived to preach the gospel, not where Christ was named, lest I should build upon another man's foundation: But as it is written, To whom he was not spoken of, they shall see: and they that have not heard shall understand. For which cause also I have been much hindered from coming to you. But now having no more place in these parts, and having a great desire these many years to come unto you;" Romans 15:20-23.

Paul had desired to come to Rome, but God had sent him to other places where Christ was not named. Until this work was done in unreached territories, he was not yet allowed to go to Rome.

"separated"

The word "separated" means "to mark off from others by a boundary." In the book of Acts, we find both Barnabas and Saul set apart for the gospel work. "Now there were in the church that was at Antioch certain prophets and teachers; as Barnabas, and Simeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen, which had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away." Acts 13:1-3.

At the second coming of Christ there will be a separation between the righteous and the wicked. "When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats:" Matthew 25:31, 32.

As followers of Christ we are to be separate from the world. We are to live a holy life, not a worldly life. To each of us is given the gift of the Spirit. We all have a unique passion for ministry. So let us cooperate with God and be set apart for our special ministry in life for His name sake.

"gospel"

Before that separation can take place, we must be men and women “separated unto the gospel of God.” The word for “gospel” means “good news.” As such, the gospel should be proclaimed with much conviction and joy. After all, it is “good” news.

It is the good news of God saving man from the penalty of sin and the power of sin. By faith in God, we can be both forgiven and changed.

“(Which he had promised afore by his prophets in the holy scriptures,)” Romans 1:2

“promised afore”

When was this good news promised before? After Adam and Eve sinned, God said, “And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.” Genesis 3:15.

As soon as there was a sinner, there was the promise of a Savior. The serpent [Satan] would eventually be destroyed eternally with the bruising of his head. The Son of God would become the Son of man. He would live a sinless life and be crucified for our sins. His death would be cruel, but it would not be eternally fatal. Christ is risen and intercedes for us in the heaven sanctuary above. See Hebrews 4:14-16; 8:1, 2.

“Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh;” Romans 1:3

“made”

The word for “made” means “to be born.” Jesus was born of the “seed of David.” He put on human flesh. He took upon Himself our fallen nature. He was born of the lineage of David.

Paul also wrote, “For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh:” Romans 8:3.

Jesus came in the “likeness of sinful flesh.” He put on human nature after 4,000 years of sin. By living a sinless life in our sinful flesh, Jesus made it possible for us to live a new life in this sinful flesh.

Paul wrote, “Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham. Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted.” Hebrews 2:14-18.

Jesus was of the “seed of Abraham.” He was a partaker of our “flesh and blood.” As such, he is able to both forgive us of our sins and deliver us from the power of sin.

Jesus was “made” or born at the right time. Paul wrote, “But when the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.” Galatians 4:4, 5.

Jesus was born “when the fullness of time was come.” He came at the perfect time when there was a common language throughout the known ancient world. There was the rule of one nation. He came when the Jewish people were dispersed amongst the nations of the world. All of these elements made it possible for the gospel to be spread very quickly.

“And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead:” Romans 1:4

“the Son of God”

Before Jesus put on human flesh and was born of the “seed of Abraham” and “made of the seed of David,” He was the Son of God from eternity. God had made a promise to the fallen human race that He would send His own Son into the world. His Son would live a life of holiness and condemn sin in our flesh. His Son would sacrifice His own life for the life of guilty man. Then as Jesus was raised in newness of life by the power of the resurrection, so we may live a new life by that same power.

These three elements are all connected. There is (1) Jesus the Son of God, (2) His sinless life in our fallen flesh, and (3) the power of His resurrection. Only He who is equal to His Father, the self-existent, fully divine Son of God, could pay the penalty of our sins. This same Jesus must also live a sinless life in our fallen flesh. He must also be raised again from the dead as our Savior, Priest, and King. If Jesus was not fully divine there is no gospel. If Jesus had sinned in our flesh there is no gospel. If Jesus had not been raised, then our faith is in vain.

So in the first four verses we have both the humanity and the divinity of Christ as the focus of Paul’s introduction to the book of Romans.

“By whom we have received grace and apostleship, for obedience to the faith among all nations, for his name:” Romans 1:5

The words “by whom” mean “through whom.” It is through Christ that we have received “grace and apostleship.” Grace is the power of God to keep a man from sinning. Apostleship is the commission to go forth in both word and deed to reach precious souls with the love of Christ.

Why do we need both “grace” and “apostleship”? We need it for the “obedience to the faith among all nations, for his name.”

To be a witness for Christ we need grace or divine power to live a holy life. We also need apostleship. We need to make ourselves available for service to meet the needs of suffering humanity amongst all nations. There is no such thing as a holy life that refuses to witness for Christ. Through Christ we may have the power to live a godly life and to reach out to those around us.

“Among whom are ye also the called of Jesus Christ:” Romans 1:6

We are “the called of Jesus Christ.” We are called to receive grace. We are called to receive apostleship as a functioning part of the body of Christ. We are called for obedience to the faith.

The question is not whether we are called or not, but are we listening? Are we listening to the call of living a victorious Christian life each day? Are we listening for the call of witnessing? Are we choosing to be obedient each day?

We are the called of “Jesus Christ.” We are called specifically to follow Jesus. We are called to have a close and intimate devotional life with Him each day. We are called to walk in the presence of Christ. We are at all times to call upon Him for help and guidance.

“To all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.” Romans 1:7

When Paul writes, “to all that be in Rome,” he is referring to all “Christians” that are in Rome.

“beloved of God”

Paul now turns his attention to the hearer of the book of Romans. He first reminds his fellow believers that they are loved of God. In the book of Ephesians, Paul wrote, “But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)” Ephesians 2:4, 5. God not only loves us, but He has a “great love” for us.

The Bible’s most familiar text tells us that God loved us so much that He gave His only Son to die for our sins. As the apostle John wrote, “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” John 3:16.

We are told that nothing can separate us from the love of Christ. “For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” Romans 8:38, 39.

“called to be saints”

The words “called to be saints” means “called to be holy ones.” He who loves us with an everlasting love has also called us to be holy.

The term “holy” carries with it the understanding of separation for a holy use. We are called to be separate from a sinful world to be holy unto the Lord for a holy use. In like manner, the seventh-day Sabbath is separate from the other six days of the weeks. It is separated for a holy use.

“grace and peace”

Grace is the power of God to keep a man from sinning. When we live by the same power that raised Jesus from the grave, we have peace. Grace and peace go together. Consider these words of Paul, "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:" Romans 5:1.

Have your every thought about how peaceful is this heavenly peace? Can envy exist in such a peaceful heart? I think not. How about hatred, does it exist in this heavenly peace? I think not.

Peace is just that. We are not miserable. We are not hateful. We are not envious. Rather, peace subdues strife and fills the soul with love.

"First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world." Romans 1:8

Paul first thanks God for all the saints in Rome. After all, without God there would be no saints in Rome. Paul is thankful for how God has worked so wonderfully in the lives of so many. Their growing faith in Christ had become known around the world.

"For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son, that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers;" Romans 1:9

"I serve with my spirit in the gospel"

Paul saw his service in the gospel as a spiritual calling. This was not some career path or nine to five job. As such, he prayed for them daily.

We too are more likely to pray for others when we take our calling seriously. Too often we simply accept the role placed upon us by the nominating committee and the church, but fall short in serving with our "spirit in the gospel of His Son."

Daily we should dedicate all of who we are and all of what we have to the Lord. We should daily ask God to anoint our abilities that we may serve Him with our whole heart, mind, and soul.

"Making request, if by any means now at length I might have a prosperous journey by the will of God to come unto you." Romans 1:10

"prosperous journey"

Coming to Rome was not a vacation for Paul. It was all part of his service to God. As such, he prayed that his journey to Rome would help further the gospel of Jesus Christ.

"For I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established;" Romans 1:11

"impart unto you some spiritual gift"

Paul wanted to come to Rome and impart some spiritual gift that their faith might more firmly be established. Imparting spiritual gifts might come in the form of encouragement, knowledge, or training. There are many gifts of the Spirit as described in 1 Corinthians 12, Romans 12, and Ephesians 4.

The purpose of each gift of the Spirit is for the purpose of blessing others. By exercising these gifts we are imparting a spiritual blessing.

Every time you preach a sermon you want to impart some spiritual gift. Every time you give a Bible study, visit someone in the hospital, or share some truth-filled literature, your desire is to impart some blessing to them. Consider all that you do for the Lord as a spiritual calling. Ask God to anoint your talents for His service. With every effort, pray that some spiritual blessing comes to others.

“That is, that I may be comforted together with you by the mutual faith both of you and me.” Romans 1:12

“comforted together”

Paul looked forward to his fellowship with the believers in Rome. Due to their mutual faith in Christ, his prayer was that they may comfort one another.

Too many churches are a social club where there is very little faith and very little growth. But when we meet together everyone should be encouraged by our time together. If we all came with the intention of imparting some spiritual blessing, then certainly we would all be blessed together.

It is not enough to simply be nice to one another when we are at church. We need to learn to pray together at our midweek prayer meetings. We need to learn to work together in reaching out to precious souls. If we study together, pray together, and work together, we will grow together.

“Now I would not have you ignorant, brethren, that oftentimes I purposed to come unto you, (but was let hitherto,) that I might have some fruit among you also, even as among other Gentiles.” Romans 1:13

“I purposed to come unto you”

Since Paul had not as yet been to Rome, some began to question whether he truly wanted to come to Rome. We learn later in the epistle that Paul had a work to do before he came to Rome. When that work was finished then he was free to visit the believers there.

“some fruit among you also”

Paul’s work in other places had been fruitful. He had established many churches in Asia Minor. He now desired to come to Rome and see some fruit.

He wasn’t interested in simply preaching some sermons. He wanted to see fruit. He wanted to see maturity in the members and new converts.

Sometimes we can fall into the trap of sowing seeds with little expectation in seeing any fruit. We need to be more prayerful about the harvest and learn to help people make decisions for Christ.

“I am debtor both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians; both to the wise, and to the unwise.” Romans 1:14

“I am debtor”

When you see yourself as a debtor, you think more as a servant. You have an attitude of service. You pay with your loving acts. Too often people want to be served. They view life as what they can receive from others.

“So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also.” Romans 1:15

Paul is ready to go to Rome, but he must first go to Jerusalem. See Romans 15:23-25.

“I am ready to preach the gospel”

Paul’s main thought in going to Rome was to preach the gospel. As we study the book of Romans, Paul explains the various parts of the gospel. For him, the gospel begins with the forgiveness of sin. It continues with the overcoming of sin. When the gospel works in the church, it is to produce the beautiful fruit of unity.

DOCTRINAL SECTION: ROMANS 1:16-11:36

“For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.” Romans 1:16

“For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ”

What a wonderful way to begin the doctrinal section of the book by saying “I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ.” Paul was not ashamed to be a Christian. How about us? Are we ashamed to study our Bibles in front of others? Are we ashamed of being a creationist?

In the days of Paul, it was considered scandalous among the Jews to believe in a Messiah that was crucified. It was considered foolishness among the Greeks to believe in a god that would die upon a cross. As Paul wrote, “But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness;” 1 Corinthians 1:23. But we believe in Christ because He died upon the cross and rose again. More than that, we glory in the cross of Christ. As Paul wrote, “But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.” Galatians 6:14

Christians were looked upon by many as filth upon the earth. As Paul wrote, “Being defamed, we entreat: we are made as the filth of the world, and are the offscouring of all things unto this day.” 1 Corinthians 4:13.

“it is the power of God”

In the gospel of Christ and Him crucified, there is power. It is so powerful that anyone who believes will be saved, whether you are a Jew or a Greek.

In the gospel of Christ there is the power of love and self-sacrifice. There is the power of humility and meekness. There is the power of gentleness and kindness. There is the power of temperance and goodness.

“to the Jew first”

The Jews were the first to receive the gospel as a nation. It was the perfect place to start. They had the Bible. They had the sanctuary services. They had a long history of God’s miraculous works. They had so much. They had so many advantages over other nations. So the gospel first went to the Jews in hopes that they would accept Jesus as the Messiah. As we know, some among the Jewish nation accepted Christ. But as a nation they rejected Him.

“For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.” Romans 1:17

We have no righteousness of our own. God’s righteousness is to be revealed through us.

“revealed from faith to faith.”

David spoke about going “from strength to strength.” Psalm 84:7. Paul elsewhere spoke about being changed into the image of Christ “from glory to glory.” 2 Corinthians 3:18. Now Paul talks about revealing God’s righteousness “from faith to faith.” There are two correct ways of understanding this phrase.

First, “from faith to faith” means that we are to live by faith alone. At no time are we to have faith in our own strength. Christ is to be all in all. He is our strength and salvation and there is no other.

Second, “from faith to faith” means we are to have a growing faith. As we add to our faith each day, we are manifesting God’s righteousness more and more.

“As it is written”

The following phrase, “The just shall live by faith,” was recorded previously in Habakkuk 2:4.

“The just shall live by faith”

You have faith that God has forgiven you. Now live by that same faith that He is able to make you holy in Him. Do not begin with faith for the forgiveness of sins and then turn to sanctification by works. It is all of faith. We are to be justified by faith and sanctified by faith. Faith in what God can do in us.

“For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness;” Romans 1:18

“ungodliness”

The term “ungodliness” means a lack of reverence for God. When people have no reverence for God, then they have no fear of God. When there is no fear of God, people do not much care what God has to say. They simply follow the impulse of their own devising.

“unrighteousness”

The term “unrighteousness” refers to a lack of right conduct. It refers to a life of wrong conduct and behavior. When people have no reverence for God, it leads to a life of unrighteousness.

“against all”

If you are living a life of wrong conduct, you will face the wrath of God. Your religious affiliation will not save you.

“hold the truth in unrighteousness”

We can have a knowledge of God and yet not choose to obey God. In this way, we suppress a true knowledge of God to ourselves and others.

**“Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath showed it unto them.”
Romans 1:19**

“is manifest in them”

We were all created in the image of God. As such, all have a knowledge of God. In addition, we all have a sense of right and wrong. Before I became a Christian at the age of twenty, I knew that stealing, taking drugs, and such, were wrong.

“God hath shewed”

There is also an external knowledge of God. Through the things that God has made there is a knowledge of God.

So there are several ways in which man can know God. First, there is that internal revelation as the result of being created in the image of God. As such, we have a sense of right and wrong. Due to our reasoning abilities and conscience we are without excuse in knowing God.

Second, there is that external revelation through God’s creation. Nature speaks of the love of God and shows forth that there is a wonderful Intelligent Designer behind it all.

Third, there are special revelations. The most important of these is the life and teachings of Jesus. Then there is the Word of God. And lastly, there is the church. As Jesus said, "Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid." Matthew 5:14. And also, "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." John 13:35

Paul had written, "Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ: To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, according to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord:" Ephesians 3:8-11

Paul was called to "make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery." God wants to manifest His "wisdom" through "the church."

"For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse:"
Romans 1:20

"without excuse"

God's creation reveals His wisdom and character. Nature clearly points to an Intelligent Designer. With the combination of conscience (internal revelation) and creation (external revelation) men have enough light to know God. There is additional light through the life of Christ and the Bible. With more light comes more accountability.

"Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened." Romans 1:21

"they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful"

Even though men knew God, they were unwilling to glorify God. They were unwilling to become like Him. Nor were they thankful. There was no gratitude toward God. As such, they became vain in their imaginations, meaning that their minds were empty of anything meaningful. Their hearts were darkened, meaning they became less capable of discerning truth.

In our materialistic world, men have become intelligent concerning the latest gadget. But they have little discernment about the times in which we live and the preparation necessary to meet God face-to-face.

On the other hand, if I chose to glorify God by choosing to become like Jesus, then I will have a better understanding of spiritual things. If I chose to be thankful each and every day, then my head will not be empty with vain imaginations.

“Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools,” Romans 1:22

God did not make these men fools, they became fools (1) by becoming skeptics of the true God and His Word, (2) by worshiping the creature instead of the Creator, and (3) by living a life according to their sinful nature.

“And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things.” Romans 1:23

“And changed”

Instead of worshiping the true God, they changed it to worship themselves. Instead of seeing the Hand that made all these things, they worshiped the things. They would even bow down and worship birds, fourfooted beasts, and creeping things.

“Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves:” Romans 1:24

The phrase “God also gave them up” does not mean that God gave up on them. He allowed them to make their own decisions and choices. Our loving God has given us the freedom to choose. He will try to win us over to the truth, but He will not force the will. It is written in the Psalms, “So I gave them up unto their own hearts' lust: and they walked in their own counsels.” Psalm 81:12

“Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.” Romans 1:25

“changed the truth”

They believed there was a God. They had the opportunity to know the true God. But they changed the truth about God and believed a lie. This reminds me of the little horn power in Daniel chapter seven.

“And he shall speak great words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time.” Daniel 7:25

This power thought “to change times and laws.” They believed in having Ten Commandments, but they changed them. They thought to change the seventh-day Sabbath to another day. They thought to get rid of the second commandment forbidding the worship of any graven image. They thought to change these things, but they were wrong. They changed something truthful into a lie.

Jesus said that He came not to destroy the law or the prophets. He said that not one jot or tittle shall pass from the law. And if anyone would break the least of the commandments and teach men so, would be called least in the kingdom of God. See Matthew 5:17-20.

“For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the

woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompense of their error which was meet.” Romans 1:26, 27

When man worships himself and even the creatures, it leads him to do those things that are unnatural. When there is no reverence for God, there is no fear of God. There is no desire to know the true God. Man is now left to his own unsanctified will and the tendencies of his fallen nature. With some this leads to the unnatural participation in homosexuality and other forms of immorality.

“And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient;” Romans 1:28

The phrase “they did not like to retain God in their knowledge,” seems to point to the intention to compromise. If they had to choose between right and wrong, they would choose the wrong. It seems that there was a determination to forget God. Many are living such a life today. If there is a reference to God or spiritual things, they do not want to hear it. They do not want to “retain God in their knowledge.”

The term “reprobate mind” means a “disapproved” mind. It is a mind that God cannot approve of. Prior to the flood the minds of men became evil continually. The Bible says, “And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.” Genesis 6:5

God could not approve the minds of men prior to the flood. Because they chose not to retain a knowledge of the true God, the thoughts of their hearts were “only evil continually.”

“Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, without understanding, covenantbreakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful:” Romans 1:29-31

These are the consequences of forgetting the true God. These are examples of unrighteous behavior.

“Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.” Romans 1:32

“knowing the judgment of God”

Scarcely do men think of a future judgment, but they are nonetheless of the opinion that a day of judgment is coming. But for now they would rather give in to the desires of the flesh.

“commit such things”

The word “commit” carries the meaning of repetition. Men are willing to keep repeating these sins even though a day of judgment is coming.

“worthy of death”

Those committing these sins know that they are doing wrong. They even know that they will be judged and found guilty.

“have pleasure in them”

The phrase “have pleasure in them” carries the meaning of actively giving into these sinful desires. There does not seem to be any hesitation in practicing these forms of unrighteousness.

Romans Chapter Two

“Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest: for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest doest the same things.” Romans 2:1

“Therefore”

In chapter one, we saw that men are without excuse even if they do not have the law. They have a conscience that gives them a sense of right and wrong, and they have the book of nature that points to the Creator. If God judges men who have not the law, will He not also judge those who have the law if they commit the same sins?

When the Jews would condemn the Gentiles for not keeping the law, they were also condemning themselves by practicing the same sins.

Why do we often find people of religion so quick to condemn others? They see themselves as better people because they have more knowledge. They assume that with this knowledge they have more favor with God. The Jews had the law, the Sabbath, health laws, prophecies, proverbs, and much more. As a result, they saw themselves as better than the Gentiles and believed that God would not judge them as severely.

“But we are sure that the judgment of God is according to truth against them which commit such things.” Romans 2:2

Paul is writing to those who know that “the judgment of God is according to truth.” But it is not enough that a man knows the truth, he must also live according to the truth. We will be judged according to our words, deeds, and every secret thing.

“against them which commit such things.”

The key word here is “commit” such things. A man is best defined by his actions. As Jesus taught, you shall know them by their fruits.

“And thinkest thou this, O man, that judgest them which do such things, and doest the same, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God?” Romans 2:3

Do you think because you are a Jew that you will not be judged? Many Jews felt that if they simply kept the ceremonial rites and feast days that they would be saved.

John the Baptist said to the Pharisees and Sadducees, “But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance: And think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham.” Matthew 3:7-9

The Jews believed that the righteousness of Abraham made them more righteous than other people. This was a common thought among the Jewish people.

Jesus clearly taught that salvation is not based upon genetics. “Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. They answered him, We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free? Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin.” John 8:31-34

If we continue to sin then we are the servants of sin no matter our religious affiliation. Sin is sin no matter who commits it.

“Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?” Romans 2:4

“His goodness and forbearance and longsuffering”

When we sin and God's punishments are delayed, we may become guilty of despising the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering. Our hearts can become hardened when we are not held accountable for our wrong doing. Some make the mistake of continuing in sin because of God's longsuffering.

But God delays His punishments not to give us more time to sin, but to make things right with Him and our fellow man. We should always be thankful for God's mercy and longsuffering.

“not knowing”

We can know the goodness of God, but many choose not to. They would rather remain in their sins and be ignorant of the love and longsuffering of God. If they could, they would scarcely think of God to avoid feeling guilty of their sinful practices.

“But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God;” Romans 2:5

Every day God knocks at the door of our hearts. Our persistent refusal to let Him in only hardens our heart. We continue in sin and build up more sins against us in the day of judgment. Every opportunity spurned brings a corresponding responsibility.

“Who will render to every man according to his deeds:” Romans 2:6

We are not saved according to knowledge. Neither are we saved by our works. We are saved by grace through faith. See Ephesians 2:8. However, we are judged by our works. Our works show whether we truly loved God and had faith in Him.

What is man? It is what he does. Jesus said, “Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.” Matthew 7:16-2.

“To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life:” Romans 2:7

Many choose to continue to sin. But for those who “by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honor and immortality,” they shall receive eternal life.

It is not enough to desire eternal salvation. We must seek for it. It is not enough to do good occasionally, but continually.

“But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile;” Romans 2:8, 9

“do not obey the truth”

In verse 7, we have those who chose to obey the truth continually. In verses 8 and 9, we have those who chose not to obey the truth. It is their choice.

Paul wrote, “And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved.” 2 Thessalonians 2:10

It is one thing to know the truth, it is another thing to love the truth. If we love the truth we will be earnest seekers of truth. Those who love not the truth seem satisfied with an outward show of religion.

“indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish”

These words clearly show that there is a day of reckoning. For all that choose to remain in sin there is a day of judgment.

“But glory, honour, and peace, to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile:” Romans 2:10

There are two kinds of works. Paul wrote, “For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship,

created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.”
Ephesians 2:8-10

There are man’s works which avail nothing. Then there are the “good works” that we walk in by the power of God. Many are trying to save themselves by their own works. But we cannot earn salvation.

We are to have a life filled with good works. As we cooperate with God and become His workmanship, we will have a fruitful life.

“For there is no respect of persons with God.” Romans 2:11

God loves us all equally. He will judge us all equally with His perfect standard, the Ten Commandments. As Solomon wrote, “Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.” Ecclesiastes 12:13, 14

“For as many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law: and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law;” Romans 2:12

The Jews had the law and the ceremonies and the Gentiles did not. But all will be judged. Everyone has had enough light to make right decisions.

Some have had more light than others. Consider these words of Jesus, “And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell: for if the mighty works, which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. But I say unto you, That it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for thee.” Matthew 11:23, 24.
Capernaum stands more guilty before God because she rejected greater light.

Jesus also said, “The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: because they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and, behold, a greater than Jonas is here. The queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: for she came from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and, behold, a greater than Solomon is here.” Matthew 12:41, 42. Those in Nineveh will be better off in the judgment than the generation of Jews that rejected Jesus as the Messiah.

**“(For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified.”
Romans 2:13.**

We may have seeds in our hand, but that is not an orchard. Those seeds must be planted in the ground and watered before it will bear fruit. So it is with us. We may have seeds of truth, but that is not a holy life. Those seeds must be planted in our hearts and minds to bear the fruit of a Christlike life.

In this verse, Paul is referring to the Ten Commandments. When God’s moral law is planted in the life we will live the most beautiful life by the grace of God.

“For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves: Which show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another;)” Romans 2:14, 15

Many of the Gentiles had no knowledge of the Ten Commandments written on two tables of stone. However, they were familiar with the principles contained in God’s moral code. By obeying these principles, they showed that the law was truly written upon their hearts.

“In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel.” Romans 2:16

There is a day when God will judge the world. When that day comes, He will look into the heart of each man. God is able to determine whether there is still rebellion in the heart. He knows whether that individual is safe to save or not.

“Behold, thou art called a Jew, and retest in the law, and makest thy boast of God,” Romans 2:17

The Jew thought he was closer to God because he had the law.

“And knowest his will, and approvest the things that are more excellent, being instructed out of the law;” Romans 2:18

Because the Jew had the law, he did know more than other men. He had a keener sense of right and wrong. But mere approval of what is right is not righteousness.

“instructed”

The word “instructed” is like the word “catechism.” The Jews were diligent students of God’s law. They had a zeal for knowledge.

“And art confident that thou thyself art a guide of the blind, a light of them which are in darkness,” Romans 2:19

With this greater knowledge, the Jews were confident in guiding other men to the truth.

“An instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes, which hast the form of knowledge and of the truth in the law.” Romans 2:20

The Jews had knowledge, but according to Paul they only had a “form of knowledge.” Paul wrote that some have a “form of godliness.” He instructs us not to follow such men. See 2 Timothy 3:5.

“Thou therefore which teachest another, teachest thou not thyself? thou that preachest a man should not steal, dost thou steal?” Romans 2:21

Paul was very familiar with the hypocrisy of his own nation. They would teach people not to steal, yet they themselves would steal. How about us? We tell people about the Sabbath, but do we keep it holy? We teach people about healthful living, but do we practice it ourselves?

“Thou that sayest a man should not commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery? thou that abhorrest idols, dost thou commit sacrilege?” Romans 2:22

We tell people that adultery is wrong, but do we watch immorality on television? Do we read suggestive literature? If so, we are as guilty before God, if not more so, than the man who has not the law.

We tell people that statues of the saints and the worship of figurines is wrong, but do we make idols out of sport figures, and other celebrities? Do we idolize our own opinions? Do we make idols of our children or even our local church? There is only One who is worthy of our worship, and that is God.

“Thou that makest thy boast of the law, through breaking the law dishonourest thou God?” Romans 2:23.

If we boast that we have a greater knowledge of God because we have the law, and we do not keep the law, then we dishonor God.

“For the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you, as it is written.” Romans 2:24

“as it is written”

These words were written earlier in Isaiah 52:5 and Ezekiel 36:21-24.

The Jews were careful not to use God’s name in vain. But when they disobeyed the law in full view of the Gentile world, they were in fact blaspheming the name of God.

“For circumcision verily profiteth, if thou keep the law: but if thou be a breaker of the law, thy circumcision is made uncircumcision.” Romans 2:25

Circumcision was an outward sign of an inward experience. In the same way, baptism is an outward sign of a change of heart. But the rite does not save us. If the heart is not circumcised, then the outward circumcision means nothing.

“Therefore if the uncircumcision keep the righteousness of the law, shall not his uncircumcision be counted for circumcision?” Romans 2:26

The Gentile was not circumcised outwardly. However, if he kept the Ten Commandments, it showed that he had the true circumcision which is of the heart.

“And shall not uncircumcision which is by nature, if it fulfil the law, judge thee, who by the letter and circumcision dost transgress the law?” Romans 2:27

If a person is born a Gentile and keeps the law by the grace of God, he is saved. The converted Gentile by his obedience shall judge the unconverted Jew of his disobedience.

“For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh:” Romans 2:28

Being a true Jew is a matter of the heart. Whoever keeps the law of God by the grace of God shows that he is part of spiritual Israel.

“But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God.” Romans 2:29

A spiritual Jew has a renewed heart. With that renewed heart he will keep the law of God. But an unconverted Jew is one who tries to keep the law in his own strength and not by the Spirit. Due to his fallen nature he could never keep the law by himself. The true Jew has faith in God both for forgiveness and sanctification.

Romans Chapter Three

“What advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit is there of circumcision?” Romans 3:1

Was there an advantage in being a Jew and having the law?

“Much every way: chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God.” Romans 3:2

“much every way”

The Jew had many advantages. The greatest advantage was his access to the oracles or Word of God. They had the truth. They had knowledge of the Ten Commandments, the plan of salvation, the sanctuary service, the health laws, and much more.

A false religion is certainly not an advantage. Wrong associations are not an advantage. Ignorance of the truth is not an advantage. Clearly the Jew had an advantage over other men.

“For what if some did not believe? shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect?” Romans 3:3

If many of the Jews failed in following God, does that mean God’s promises have failed? If I fail to live the life of a Christian, does that mean that the teachings of Jesus are at fault? Absolutely not!

“God forbid: yea, let God be true, but every man a liar; as it is written, That thou mightest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou art judged.” Romans 3:4

God is always true. If we fail in our spiritual journey it is our own fault. In the end, God’s way will be declared just and true. See Revelation 15:2-4

“But if our unrighteousness commend the righteousness of God, what shall we say? Is God unrighteous who taketh vengeance? (I speak as a man).” Romans 3:5

“I speak as a man”

Paul is not personally suggesting that our unrighteousness commends the righteousness of God. Therefore he states, “I speak as a man.” Some have argued the following, “If a man’s sins prove God to be right, then why would God punish the man for his sins?” This is how many thought.

“God forbid: for then how shall God judge the world?” Romans 3:6

It makes no sense to sin more to prove that God is more righteous. Evil does not promote good. God is not unjust in punishing man for his unrepentant sins.

“For if the truth of God hath more abounded through my lie unto his glory; why yet am I also judged as a sinner?” Romans 3:7

Here again Paul presents the argument made by foolish men. Some were teaching, “If my disbelief in God’s promises proves Him to be right, then why would He punish me for my sins?”

“And not rather, (as we be slanderously reported, and as some affirm that we say,) Let us do evil, that good may come? whose damnation is just.” Romans 3:8

Paul was accused of such reasoning. Paul did teach that where sin abounds grace much more abounds. But that in no way is that the same as saying, “Let us do evil, that good may come.”

Paul never taught that evil promotes good, nor did he teach that a man is justified by sinning.

“What then? are we better than they? No, in no wise: for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin;” Romans 3:9

What then? Is the Jew better? No. Is he more privileged? Yes. The Jew had many advantages over the Gentile. However, whether you are a Jew or Gentile, whether you have a knowledge of the law or not, all have sinned, and are under the condemnation of the law.

“under sin”

The phrase “under sin” means “under the power of sin.” We are under sin when we are slaves to sin. As Paul wrote, “For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin. For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I.” Romans 7:14, 15

“As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one:” Romans 3:10

All have sinned and stand guilty before God.

“There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God.” Romans 3:11

If we have a love for God it is because He loved us first. If we seek after God it is because He found us first. Left to our sinful nature, none could understand God, nor care to seek after Him.

“They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one.” Romans 3:12

Apart from God, it is not possible for us to live a holy life. Our lives are completely unprofitable without divine help.

“Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips:” Romans 3:13

Our throat becomes the grave. Corrupt words and false speech dig the graves for unprofitable lives.

“Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness:” Romans 3:14

“full”

We can begin with one percent rebellion, but by our continued false speech and cursing we come to one hundred percent rebellion. The Jewish nation eventually came to the “full of cursing and bitterness.” The bitterness of the religious leaders towards Jesus knew no bounds.

“Their feet are swift to shed blood:” Romans 3:15

False speech generally leads to false ways. Hateful words can lead to murder itself.

“Destruction and misery are in their ways:” Romans 3:16

Bitterness has a negative influence. It destroys happiness and causes dissension.

“And the way of peace have they not known:” Romans 3:17

Only those who seek forgiveness for their false speech and corrupting words will have peace with God.

“There is no fear of God before their eyes.” Romans 3:18

The phrase “no fear of God” means “no reverence for God.” Where there is no regard for God, no honor of God, no recognition of His authority, there is no restraint from evil.

“Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.” Romans 3:19

“under the law”

Those who place themselves “under the law” instead of “under grace,” find that they cannot keep the law in their own strength. They stand guilty before God by their continued disobedience.

Paul uses the expression “under the law” in several places.

“For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace. What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid.” Romans 6:14, 15

“But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed. Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster.” Galatians 3:23-25

“But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law.” Galatians 5:18

Let us turn our attention to Romans 6:1-3. In these first three verses, Paul asks three questions:

1. “What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?
2. God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?
3. Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?”

Now notice in verse 4 that Paul is speaking to converted men who have been “buried with Him by baptism.” He encourages these converts by saying, . . .

(verse 6) “Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.”

(verse 11) “Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.”

(verse 12) “Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof.”

(verse 14) “For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.”

As Christians, are we no longer “under the law” because it has been abolished? Certainly not! We are no longer “under the law” because we are living a victorious Christian life. If we are no longer breaking God’s law, then we are no longer “under the law.” If we are living victorious Christian lives it is because we are living “under grace.”

Consider these words of Paul, “This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would. But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law.” Galatians 5:16-18

In this passage, who is “under the law”? Those who are living according to the “lusts of the flesh.” Who is not “under the law”? Those that are led of the Spirit, and those only. If the law were abolished, then nobody would be “under the law,” whether they lived in the flesh or the Spirit.

“Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin.” Romans 3:20

While we are to keep the law, we cannot be justified by the works of the law. We cannot be justified by a law that we have already broken. The law has no power to justify. The law exposes sin. It is Jesus that forgives sin and empowers us to overcome sin.

“But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets;” Romans 3:21

“But now”

Jesus manifested the righteousness of God by obeying all of the Ten Commandments. Because He never sinned, He was never “under the law” or “under sin.” No one had ever done that before. “But now” Christ has manifested such a life.

This life is also being manifested by His followers who are no longer under the law, but under grace. Only when we are empowered by the grace of God can we manifest the righteousness of God.

“Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference:” Romans 3:22

The righteousness of God may be manifested in all of us if we live by faith.

“For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;” Romans 3:23

All have sinned and fall short of God’s idea for us. All are in need of forgiveness. All are in need of divine help to live a godly life.

“Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:” Romans 3:24

Justification and forgiveness are one and the same. We are justified or forgiven “freely by His grace.” When we accept the shed blood of Christ as the payment for our sin, then we stand justified before God.

“Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God;” Romans 3:25

We have forgiveness for our past sins through Christ’s sacrifice for our sins. As it is written, “Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. . . In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;” Romans 5:9; Ephesians 1:7

“To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.” Romans 3:26

Satan argues that God cannot save us. He argues, "If they have sinned, and the penalty for sin is death, then they must die." But God argues, "My Son died in their place, and if they receive Him and now live by grace, then they shall receive eternal life."

"Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith." Romans 3:27

If we are living by grace, then we cannot boast in ourselves. Rather, we can boast of God's great love and sacrifice for us. We are not saved by the works of the law, but we live by grace through faith. We have faith that the righteousness of the law can be fulfilled in us by God's grace.

"Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law." Romans 3:28

If none are righteous, no not one, then we must conclude that none can save themselves by works. All have sinned and are in need of a Savior. We must have faith in His sacrifice for us. We must have faith in His power to deliver us from sin.

"Is he the God of the Jews only? is he not also of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also:" Romans 3:29

God created our little world and would logically be the God of us all. He created Adam and Eve, who are the parents of us all. God the Father sent His own Son into the world to die for all. Whosoever believes in Him shall be saved.

Seeing it is one God, which shall justify the circumcision by faith, and uncircumcision through faith." Romans 3:30

Since there is the one and only true God and all have sinned, we must conclude that all must be saved by faith, whether he is circumcised or uncircumcised.

"Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law." Romans 3:31

Because we are saved by faith, do we now make the law void? Does faith in Christ free us from obedience to God's moral law? Absolutely not!

The only way to keep the Ten Commandments is by faith. We are to live by faith. We are to have as much faith in His ability to deliver us from sin as we had faith in His willingness to forgive of our sins.

Romans Chapter Four

"What shall we say then that Abraham our father, as pertaining to the flesh, hath found?" Romans 4:1

The Jewish people saw Abraham as their father. They believed that he merited favor with God by his works. This would lead them to believe that they too must merit God's favor through the works of the

law. But remember Paul's previous argument. He argued that all have sinned. He argued that none are justified by the works of the law. He argued that there is no distinction between Jews and Gentiles.

"For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory; but not before God." Romans 4:2

If Abraham was justified by his good works, then he would have something to boast about. However, he was not justified by his works, but by faith in God.

"For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness." Romans 4:3

What does the Bible say? Abraham's belief in God, not in himself, is what accounted him as righteous before God.

"Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt." Romans 4:4

If Abraham was saved by works, then he would have earned salvation. This would make God a debtor to Abraham.

"But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness." Romans 4:5

When a man sees himself as ungodly, he is on the right path toward forgiveness. When that ungodly man confesses His sins and asks God for forgiveness, then he stands justified and is accounted righteous.

"Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works," Romans 4:6

The word "imputeth" is the same as the word "credit." When a man seeks forgiveness for his sins, God will not only forgive him of his past sins, but He will also credit to his account in heaven His own righteousness. Imagine that! God not only forgives but also credits to us His own righteousness as if we lived His life. What should be our response to such a loving God? We should say, "Father, I praise you for your forgiveness of my past sins. I am so thankful that beside each sin is the word 'forgiven.' I want to also praise you for crediting to my account in heaven the righteous and sinless life of Jesus. I do not deserve to have His life credited to my account. I have not lived such a life. But Father, I would ask that your Son's life would be imparted to me. May His life not only be credited to me, but also manifested in me. I pray this for the glory of Your name. For You are worthy of worship, praise, and honor. Amen."

"Saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered." Romans 4:7

We are blessed that God imputes or credits the righteousness of Christ to our account in heaven. We are blessed that our "iniquities are forgiven" and our "sins are covered."

“Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin.” Romans 4:8

The phrase “the Lord will not impute sin” means that God will not charge sin against us. Our sins are forgiven. His righteousness has been credited to us. Because of this great love we should have confidence that He will also impart that righteousness to us.

“Cometh this blessedness then upon the circumcision only, or upon the uncircumcision also? for we say that faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness.” Romans 4:9

If Abraham was saved by faith and not by works, it would seem evident that he was not saved by the rite of circumcision. If those that are circumcised are saved by faith, can those who are uncircumcised also be saved by faith?

“How was it then reckoned? when he was in circumcision, or in uncircumcision? Not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision.” Romans 4:10

When was Abraham accounted righteous? Was he accounted righteous before or after he was circumcised? In Genesis chapter fifteen we find Abraham accounted righteous. The Bible says, “And he believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness.” Genesis 15:6. It was not until Genesis chapter seventeen that we find Abraham receiving circumcision. The Bible says, “And Abraham was ninety years old and nine, when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin.” Genesis 17:24.

“And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised: that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised; that righteousness might be imputed unto them also.” Romans 4:11

Abraham was accounted righteous before he was circumcised. As such, he is the father of those who believe though they are not circumcised. This fact shows that uncircumcised Gentiles can be accounted righteous as well as the circumcised Jew. According to Paul, Abraham is the father of all who believe, whether they are Jews or Gentiles.

“And the father of circumcision to them who are not of the circumcision only, but who also walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham, which he had being yet uncircumcised.” Romans 4:12

Abraham is the spiritual father of all those who walk by faith.

“For the promise, that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith.” Romans 4:13

The fulfillment of God’s promise to Abraham was not based on the works of the law. Abraham could not earn the promise of a better country. He could not earn the promise of many descendants. He could not earn the promise of a new life, a new heart, and a renewed mind. All these things must be received through faith in God’s righteousness. The inheritance of children, a new land, and a new life could not be by the works of the law, because God gave it to Abraham by promise.

God has promised to create a new heaven and a new earth for the redeemed. No amount of good works on our part will cause God to create the New Earth. He will do it simply because He has already promised.

**“For if they which are of the law be heirs, faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect:”
Romans 4:14**

If the promise was filled by legal obedience on our part, then faith in God means nothing. Our faith would be in ourselves. If the promise is based upon us keeping the law, then the promise means nothing, because we have all sinned and broken God’s Ten Commandments. Since none are righteous, the promise would be void if it were based upon our behavior.

“Because the law worketh wrath: for where no law is, there is no transgression.” Romans 4:15

Some teach that if there is no law at all, then there is nothing to condemn the man of sin. But this is unlikely Paul’s argument. In chapter one, Paul argued that a man without the law is still held accountable for his sins. These men have a conscience that can discern between right and wrong. There are the lessons from nature that tell of God’s will. Whether men have a knowledge of the law or not, they are without excuse.

We must remember that the law cannot give us righteousness. It can only condemn. If a man is living in obedience to the law, then there is no law that condemns him. There is “no transgression” because he is not breaking any known laws. He is not “under the law” but “under grace,” which is perfect obedience to the Ten Commandments.

“Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham; who is the father of us all,” Romans 4:16

Since all have sinned, none can be saved by the works of the law. Because all have sinned, all must be saved by faith.

The promise of a new heart, a life of righteousness, eternal life, and a New Earth must be received by faith. Think about it, how could we possibly earn these things? How many good works would you have to perform to receive a new heart, a life of righteousness, an incorruptible body, or to live on the Earth made new? All these things must be received by faith in God’s forgiveness and righteousness. If all these things are received by faith, then it all must be by grace and not by works.

“(As it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations,) before him whom he believed, even God, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were.” Romans 4:17

Abraham and Sarah were not able to have children, but God had made a promise. Abraham believed in God’s ability to keep that promise. Therefore, he received the promise of a son by faith, and not by works.

In the same way, you and I are dead in sins and we cannot stop sinning. But by faith in God's power we can stop sinning. So how can we stop sinning? Is it by our own works, or is it by faith in God's ability to keep us from sinning?

"Who against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations, according to that which was spoken, So shall thy seed be." Romans 4:18

Against his hopeless circumstances, Abraham put his faith in God and not in himself. In the same way, we are sinful. We live in a sinful world. We are tempted to sin from within and from without. Our circumstances are hopeless. But we have hope in Christ who is mighty to save. He can both forgive and deliver from sin.

"And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sarah's womb:" Romans 4:19

Abraham did not look to himself to fulfill the promise of a son. He looked to God to fulfill that promise. He did not have to worry about his own weakness and the barren womb of Sarah. He just needed to depend upon God's ability to fulfill His own promise. There is this beautiful promise, "Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong." 2 Corinthians 12:10

"He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God;" Romans 4:20

Abraham was so confident in God's willingness and ability to fulfill the promise that he glorified God before the birth of his son.

"And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform." Romans 4:21

The life of faith is a life "fully persuaded" in God's love and power. It is a life in full assurance of God's promises. To doubt God's promises is to question His character. By questioning His character we dishonor God. When we doubt God's love and power, we begin to put more faith in the arm of flesh.

"And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness." Romans 4:22

Abraham was accounted righteous because he lived by faith. He was fully persuaded that God was able to do all that He promised. What has God promised? "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." 1 John 1:9

"Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him;" Romans 4:23

This Biblical account was written for us. If God did all this for Abraham, He will do it for us as well. Tragically, many believe that God loves others, but that He doesn't love them. But God loves us all. His promises are for all who believe.

“But for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead;” Romans 4:24

Many believe in the historical event of Christ’s resurrection. However, they do not believe that the power of Christ’s resurrection is available for them to live a new life by faith. The resurrection of Christ is our assurance that the new life is possible. As Christ was raised from the dead, we who are dead to sin may be raised to newness of life.

“Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.” Romans 4:25

Christ came because we were lost in our sins. He came and paid for those sins that we may be accounted righteous. But our justification is not only based upon the death of Christ, but also upon His resurrection. Why is this? The gospel is more than the forgiveness of sins. It is about being raised up to live a new life. By faith in Him, we may live a new life in perfect obedience to God’s Ten Commandments. The same power that raised Jesus from the grave is the same power that will enable us to do all that God commands.

On the cross, Christ gave Himself for us. Through the resurrection and the work of the Holy Spirit, Christ gives Himself to us.

Romans Chapter Five

“Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:” Romans 5:1

The phrase “therefore being justified” means “having been justified.” Once a person is justified he has peace with God. So Paul is saying, “Therefore since we have been justified by faith, let us continue to enjoy the peace we already have with God.”

Peace is often found with being spiritual minded, righteous, and sanctified. Consider the following:

“For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.” Romans 8:6

“For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.” Romans 14:17

“And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.” 1 Thessalonians 5:23

“Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is wellpleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.” Hebrews 13:20, 21

“And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever.” Isaiah 32:17

Before we had peace with God, we were at enmity with God. Paul wrote, “Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.” Romans 8:7

But the “God of peace” (Romans 15:33) came to rescue us from our sins that we might become the “peacemakers” and “the children of God” (Matthew 5:9).

When we have peace with God we are more than legally accounted righteous. Justification and peace together indicate that we have been changed. We now have peace with God. We have a relationship with God. We are also at peace with our fellowman. Hatred has ceased. We now seek to lead all men to the God of peace.

“By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.” Romans 5:2

By faith in Christ’s shed blood for us we are justified. By faith in the power of Christ’s resurrection we receive grace to stand for what is right. Because we are being changed by the grace of God, we rejoice in the hope of becoming like Him and in the hope of the soon return of Christ and the creation of a new heaven and a new earth.

“And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience;” Romans 5:3

We gladly receive tribulations because we know that we can become better, not bitter. In each tribulation we can gain patience.

We have been told that we will have tribulations. Jesus said, “These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.” John 16:33

Tribulations are necessary for our preparation for heaven. The Bible says, “Confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God.” Acts 14:22

We rejoice that we are counted worthy to suffer for His name sake. The Bible says, “And they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name.” Acts 5:41

We can rejoice that we are counted worthy to share in His sufferings. The Bible says, “Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy.” 1 Peter 4:12, 13

“And patience, experience; and experience, hope:” Romans 5:4

“And patience, experience”

When we endure tribulations patiently, it shows that we have an experience in walking with Christ. It testifies that we believe all things work together for good for those who love the Lord. See Romans 8:28

“experience, hope”

When we endure tribulations patiently by the grace of God, we develop hope. Our experience in walking with God creates hope that I can go through the next trial as well. I have hope that I can, by God’s grace, go through the testing and proving of the last days. Hence, hope and faith in God grow together.

“And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.” Romans 5:5

We know that our hope will not be disappointed, because we so strongly believe in God’s love for us. Knowing that He loves me so much, gives me hope that I will never be disappointed.

If we are daily receiving the Holy Spirit, it is because we have exercised our faith to receive more of Christ. The more I have of Him the more I love Him. The more I love Him the more I trust Him.

We receive the Holy Spirit based upon our desire to become like Jesus and our willingness to be used in His service. If I dedicate myself each day to be used in God’s service, then I am going to receive a fresh supply of grace.

As I behold the change in me and my fellow man, I am more and more convinced of the love of God. When I realize that God is touching the hearts of men and women all around the world, I know that my hope in Him and in the world to come will not be disappointed.

“For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.” Romans 5:6

We can base our hope and faith in God on this, that when we were yet sinners, enemies of God, Jesus came and died for our sins.

“in due time”

When man was the most sinful, Christ came. When man proved that he could not save himself through endless rites and ceremonies, Christ came. When men began to yearn for something better, when the world was under one government, when men spoke a common language, and when the Jews were dispersed throughout the world, Christ came “in due time.” He came at the perfect time.

“For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die.” Romans 5:7

Scarcely had anyone thought of dying for a good man. Perhaps even for a good man some would be willing to die. But nobody had really thought about dying for a wicked man.

“But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.”

Romans 5:8

The Bible says, “Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.” 1 John 4:10

God hates sin, not sinners. Therefore, He is utilizing all the resources of heaven to separate us from sin. Sin must be destroyed. But God wants all to be saved.

“Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.”

Romans 5:9

“justified by his blood”

We are not justified by the works of the law. We are “justified by His blood.”

“Much more then”

If He died for me when I was a sinner, then He will certainly sanctify me now that I am justified.

“For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.” Romans 5:10

Paul emphasizes this point, that if Christ died for me when I was His enemy, much more, being reconciled, then He will sanctify me and save me by His life.

“And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement.” Romans 5:11

Not only are we saved, but we have joy in the Lord. We rejoice that He became our atonement. Our joy does not come from what we have done, rather, it is based upon what He has done. In fact, there is no joy apart from the self-sacrificing love of Christ.

“Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:” Romans 5:12

Because Adam sinned we all have fallen natures. With our fallen natures we are inclined to sin. All have given into the inclination to sin. The wages of sin is death. Hence, death has passed upon all men because all have sinned.

“(For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law.” Romans 5:13

From Adam to Moses sin was in the world, even though Moses received the Ten Commandments on Mount Sinai. This shows that something was in man that led him to sin. Paul wrote, “For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. I find then a law, that, when

I would do good, evil is present with me. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.” Romans 7:18-23

“Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come.” Romans 5:14

Death reigned from Adam to Moses because all had sinned. They may have committed different sins than Adam, but they sinned nonetheless.

Adam's sin was different in that he sinned having had an unfallen nature. He also had a greater knowledge of God than we do. But even though Adam was physically, mentally, and spiritually stronger than we are, we are still without excuse. No matter how weak we may be, through faith in God we may overcome every cultivated and hereditary trait to sin.

The first Adam was the head of the human race. The first Adam failed. Christ has come as the second Adam to rescue man from his fallen condition.

“But not as the offence, so also is the free gift. For if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many.” Romans 5:15

If Adam's sin lead us all to be born with fallen natures, then the righteousness of Christ can lead us all to have new natures. We did not choose to have fallen natures, but we can choose to have a new nature in Christ. This can happen because the power of grace is mightier than the power of sin. It can also happen because the grace of God is offered to us as a gift from God through Jesus Christ.

“And not as it was by one that sinned, so is the gift: for the judgment was by one to condemnation, but the free gift is of many offences unto justification.” Romans 5:16

Adam's one sin was followed by a countless number of sins. Imagine that! That one sin led to innumerable sins. But each offense is an opportunity to show the power of God to save. God's free gift of grace can justify any and all sinners.

“For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.)” Romans 5:17

Here we have a contrast between death and life, and between Adam's sin and Christ's righteousness. Death would have reigned forever in our little world, if Christ had not come. But all that had been lost by Adam's sin is restored by the righteousness of Christ. Wherever sin had reigned, righteousness can reign because (1) righteousness is offered to all as a free gift, and (2) because Christ's righteousness is mightier than sin.

“Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life.” Romans 5:18

One sin by one man led to the condemnation of all. By the righteousness of One, Jesus Christ, justification is now offered to all.

“For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.” Romans 5:19

The results of Adam's sin are that all have sinned and many have remained in their sins. By the obedience of Christ, many, not all, were made righteous, and many of them have remained righteous.

“Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound:” Romans 5:20

The law is God's standard of righteousness. The more we understand the law the more sinful our sins appear. The more sinful we appear, the greater grace appears. Through the law is the knowledge of sin, which directs us to our need of a Savior.

“That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.” Romans 5:21

Sin has brought death to our world. Even so, the grace of God has brought the promise of eternal life. As sin has reigned over each of us, even so we should allow righteousness to reign over us. We should become as familiar with righteousness as we were familiar with sin. Through the righteousness of Jesus Christ, this is all possible.

Romans Chapter Six

“What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?” Romans 6:1

Should we keep on sinning to receive more grace? Should we persist in sinning?

“God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?” Romans 6:2

Absolutely not! How can we that gave our life to Jesus choose to live in sin? The evidence that we are justified by His grace is that we delight to obey God's will.

“Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?” Romans 6:3

When you were baptized into Christ, it was a sign that you were baptized into His death. You publicly expressed your desire to be dead to sin.

“Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.” Romans 6:4

As Christ was raised from the dead with power, so you are to be raised to a new life by that same power.

“For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection:” Romans 6:5

This is God’s promise. If we die to sin in this life, then we will experience the power of His resurrection to live a new life in this present world.

“Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.” Romans 6:6

Our physical bodies are not destroyed by our acceptance of Christ, but those sinful tendencies to sin are overcome by the power of His resurrection. We were once the slaves to sin. Why would we choose to go back to the slavery of sin? We are to be free in Christ. Not free from obedience to His law. But we are to be free from the old life that continually broke God’s law.

“For he that is dead is freed from sin.” Romans 6:7

If you are dead to the old man, the old life of sin, then you are free from sin and alive unto righteousness. You are free from the mastery of sin, and now serve your new Master, Jesus Christ. In serving Him, you will live a righteous life that is free from the life of sin.

“Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him:” Romans 6:8

Now if we die to the old man, Christ will give us that new life. We do not simply die, we live. But to be alive unto righteousness, we must first die to sin.

“Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him.” Romans 6:9

Christ died and rose again, but He did not die again. Death has no more dominion over Christ. In the same way, sin has no more dominion over us if we abide in Christ.

It is Christ that holds the keys over hell and death. See Revelation 1:18. It is through Christ that we have power over sin and death.

“For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God.” Romans 6:10

Christ took upon our sins and died for our sins. Through His perfect sacrifice for sin, He only had to die once. When He lived here, He lived in perfect obedience to His Father’s will. Now Jesus lives in heaven with His Father.

So it is with us. If we live unto God here, we shall live with Him in heaven. We will only die once.

“Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.” Romans 6:11

We have two lives. We can go back to the old life of sin. Or we can continue in the new life by faith in Christ. So let us follow in the steps of Christ and choose to live unto God.

“Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof.” Romans 6:12

Therefore, let us not go on sinning. Sin is still a power to be reckoned with. If we allow it, the old life will come back and sin will once again have dominion over us. Therefore, we must be born again every day. With a fresh supply of grace each day, we may overcome every temptation to sin.

“mortal body”

Paul elsewhere talks about the “body of sin,” the “motions of sin,” and “sinful flesh.” Romans 6:6; 7:5; 8:3. We clearly have fallen flesh. In the beginning, we were never created to fall apart. We were created to live forever. When Christ returns we will receive immortal bodies. See 1 Corinthians 15:53

“Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.” Romans 6:13

The word “yield” means to make a choice. This makes sin a choice. Otherwise, how could Paul say, “Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin.”

We can choose to yield ourselves as instruments of righteousness. It is our part to yield. It is God’s part to give the power. We choose. He enables. The choice is ours. The power is His.

“your members”

The words “your members” refers to your various parts, such as your organs and mental faculties.

“For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.” Romans 6:14

Sin does not need to have dominion over us. If we are “under the law” sin will rule. If we are “under grace” then we will overcome sin. Paul wrote, “This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would. But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law.” Galatians 5:16-18.

We are “under grace” when we are led of the Spirit. We are “under the law” when we are not led of the Spirit. When we try to overcome by the weakness of our flesh, we fail. But when we walk in the power of the Spirit, we overcome.

“What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid.” Romans 6:15

Some teach that we do not need to keep the Ten Commandments because we are “under grace.” They are wrong. God’s grace is not a license to sin. God’s grace is the power of God to keep a man from sinning. To go on sinning is to deny grace.

“Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?” Romans 6:16

You have a choice. You can yield to sin and face eternal death. Or, you can yield to Christ and live a life of obedience, and receive the righteousness of Christ.

Jesus taught that no man can serve two masters. You must make a choice. Jesus said, “No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.” Matthew 6:24

If you chose to yield to sin, then you are the servant of sin. As Jesus said, “Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin.” John 8:34

“But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you.” Romans 6:17

We first need to thank God for a life “of obedience unto righteousness.” Without Him such a life is not possible. Our part is to choose to obey “from the heart.” Having once been the “servants of sin” we can be so thankful that we can now be obedient children of God. When we obey “from the heart” it is evidence that we both love and trust God.

“Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness.” Romans 6:18

There is only one way to stop sinning, we need to become the servants of righteousness. To be free from sinning is to be free to do what is right.

“I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh: for as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness.” Romans 6:19

As you served sin and were so familiar with sin, even so, now yield yourself to become a servant of righteousness. If you die daily to the old life and choose to walk in the Spirit, then you will grow in holiness.

“For when ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness.” Romans 6:20

A good tree cannot produce bad fruit, and a bad tree cannot produce good fruit. Once we were bad trees and were void of righteousness. We were the servants of sin. Everything we did stemmed from our selfish desires.

“What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things is death.” Romans 6:21

What kind of fruit were we producing while living in the life of sin? We committed sins that we are now ashamed of. We can see now that those sins only led to death.

“But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.” Romans 6:22

When we became servants of God, we were freed from sin. We are not free from temptation, but our life now yields the sweet fruit of holiness. We now know that such a life is an everlasting life.

“For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.” Romans 6:23

The wages of sin is death, not life. Eternal life is a gift from God. We receive it by receiving the righteousness of Christ. This precious gift was forfeited by Adam, but it has been restored by Jesus.

Romans Chapter Seven

“Know ye not, brethren, (for I speak to them that know the law,) how that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth?” Romans 7:1

Paul had previously argued that we were under the dominion of sin. To be “under the law” was to be under sin because the law cannot save you. As long as the old man is alive, you will keep on breaking God’s law.

“For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband. So then if, while her husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man. Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God.” Romans 7:2-4

In this illustration we have the woman, the husband, and the law. Let us call the woman Mrs. Jones. The husband would then be Mr. Jones. The law permits Mrs. Jones to remarry if her husband dies. But if Mr. Jones is still alive, then she is not, according to the law, free to marry another man.

Is Mrs. Jones permitted to marry another man because the law has died? No. She can only remarry if her husband dies. What then is represented by these two husbands? The first husband represents our unconverted state. This is the state that we are born with. You might say we are married to it from birth.

The second husband represents Jesus. We can be married to Jesus if our old nature dies. This passage actually encourages us to be married to another, namely, we are to be married to Christ. Paul encourages us to die to the old man. Let us die to that first husband, our unconverted state. However, we cannot be married to Christ if the old man is still alive. As long as we choose to sin we are married to the old man.

“For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death.” Romans 7:5

The phrase “in the flesh” refers to being “married to the old man.” When we are “in the flesh” we are living according to the impulses of the flesh. We are living according to the impulses of our lower nature of appetite, passions, and desires. If it tastes good, we eat it. If it feels good, we do it. If we want it, we get it.

The “motions of sin” are our passions for sin. By giving in to the impulses of our fallen flesh, we have developed certain passions for sin.

“which were by the law”

The law does not permit sin. What the law does is that it reveals sin. By looking to the law our sinful tendencies are revealed.

“But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter.” Romans 7:6

But now we are delivered from the old man. We are no longer serving sin. We are no longer trying to earn salvation by the works of the law. The law revealed to us the need of a new husband. We now know that we need Christ as our husband. The old man must die. Now we are living according to the Spirit that gives us the power to live a new life. No longer are we trying to live by the letter of the law in our own strength.

“What shall we say then? is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet.” Romans 7:7

When we look into a mirror it reveals our appearance. If we do not like our appearance it is not the fault of the mirror. In the same way, the law reveals sin. The law is not evil, man is evil. The law reveals the evil in man. God is not the Author of sin because His law exposes sin.

Paul began to realize how sinful he really was when he had a deeper spiritual understanding of the tenth commandment, “Thou shalt not covet.” He began to see that everything he did was self-centered.

“But sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence. For without the law sin was dead.” Romans 7:8

When you say to an unregenerated man, “You cannot have this,” sometimes the forbidden object makes him want it all the more. For example, the law that forbids alcohol until you reach a certain age does

something to the unregenerated heart. Such a law can tempt the teen to want to drink all the more. This doesn't make the law evil, but it reveals our sinful natures.

A sinner may seem at peace, but when the law is presented to him, he can become enraged against it. He spurns its authority and is determined to show his independence and he sins all the more.

Saul of Tarsus [Paul] was convicted that Stephen was a just man. To overcome his guilt from the stoning of Stephen he persecuted the church all the more.

“without the law”

On the other hand, when a man is not under the conviction of the law, the unregenerated man does not knowingly live in fierce opposition to God. This man continues to live in sin without a thought about God.

**“For I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died.”
Romans 7:9**

“I was alive”

There was a time when Paul, while yet unconverted, depended upon his own righteousness. As far as he could see, he was right with God.

“without the law once”

During this time, he seemed to be outwardly keeping God's law. Speaking of his previous experience as a Pharisee, Paul wrote, “Though I might also have confidence in the flesh. If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more: Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee; Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless.” Philippians 3:4-6. But when the true meaning of the law appeared, sin appeared.

Many individuals of the Jewish faith felt they were obedient to the law. For example, “The young man saith unto him, All these things have I kept from my youth up: what lack I yet?” Matthew 19:20

In another example, we read, “The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess.” Luke 18:11, 12

“I died”

With this new and deeper understanding of God's law, his true sinful condition appeared. The law now condemned him as a transgressor worthy of death.

“And the commandment, which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death.” Romans 7:10

Paul “found” that the law condemned his covetousness and that the law could not save him, nor could he save himself by the works of the law. But the law does point the way to a better life. In fact, the law was “ordained” to reveal that life. A life that does not steal or bear false witness is a beautiful life. But we cannot obtain that life from the law. The law will condemn every act that is not in agreement with its precepts. Therefore, while God’s moral law describes the perfect life, it will condemn us when we are living in sin.

“For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew me.” Romans 7:11

Sin is deceptive. For example, Satan used the divine prohibition “Thou shalt not eat thereof” as a way of tempting Eve to eat of the forbidden fruit. Satan presented the forbidden fruit as something desirable. He knew that if he could get Eve to see it as desirable, then she would begin to think that it was good for her. However, when she obtained the forbidden fruit, it later proved to be death.

“Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good.” Romans 7:12

Since God is holy His law is holy. All His commandments are holy, just, and good. So the problem is not with the law, but with our fallen natures inclined to do evil.

“Was then that which is good made death unto me? God forbid. But sin, that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good; that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful.” Romans 7:13

The law, which is good, did not bring death to me. Sin brought death to me. The law neither causes us to sin, nor does it bring death. The law reveals sin, and sin works death. The greater my spiritual understanding of God’s law the greater my sins will appear. The greater my sins appear, the more I realize that it is my sins that bring death and destruction.

“For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin.” Romans 7:14

I am carnal. I have a fallen nature. With that nature I am under the power of sin. In this carnal nature I struggle with the tendencies to sin. It is like I am sold under sin.

“For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I.” Romans 7:15

Having lived as a Pharisee for so many years trying to keep the law in his own strength, Paul now realizes how miserably he truly failed. He is now aware of the deeper meaning behind each commandment. He is under conviction of how spiritual the law truly is, and how selfish his life had been. He now realizes that in his carnal nature he could not possibly do what the law truly says. He knows that he would always do what he should not do.

Let us consider the deeper meaning of the ninth commandment, “Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.”

Every attempt to deceive is included in the ninth commandment. Every exaggerated impression, all intentional overstatements, and the purposeful misuse of the facts, constitutes falsehood.

We can as readily give a false impression by our countenance as we can by our words. By a simple glance of the eye we can give a false impression. Every hint or suggestion that ruins our neighbor's reputation is here included. Evil surmising, slander, and talebearing are forbidden of God. We can even break this law by the purposeful suppression of truth. When I know that someone is being misrepresented and I say nothing, I am a violator of the ninth commandment.

Have you ever given a false impression? Have you ever made an intentional overstatement? Have you ever given an exaggerated impression? We all have. But imagine a life whereby you would never give a false impression in any form or fashion. Now that is a beautiful life!

Paul realized that in his best Pharisee days he never really kept the ninth commandment. He realized that in his carnal nature he could never ever keep this commandment even if he wanted to. His only hope would be to die to the old nature and be raised up into newness of life by the power of the Holy Spirit.

“If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good.” Romans 7:16

What an important spiritual lesson to realize that the law is good and that we are sinful. He is no longer in fierce opposition to the law. He is no longer self-righteous. He now sees himself as he truly is, namely, a sinner in need of a Savior.

“Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.” Romans 7:17

Paul is not suggesting that he is not accountable for his sins. He knows that the wages of sin brings death. He knows that God will judge all sinners, whether Jew or Gentile. But he recognizes that something inside him compels him to do wrong. He knows that his flesh is weak.

“For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not.” Romans 7:18

He wants to do what is right. But he does not know how to do what is right. He realizes that his fallen nature is working against him.

“For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do.” Romans 7:19

He has acknowledged that the law is good. He admits that he has failed to do that which is good. He knows that he is committing sins that he should not be doing. He wants to do what is right. He even wills it. But how do you effectively exercise your will to do the will of God? That is the question.

“Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.” Romans 7:20

If I commit sins that I do not want to do, then there is something in me that compels me to sin. It is the power of my sinful tendencies, both cultivated and inherited.

“I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me.” Romans 7:21

I find that it is not enough to desire to do good. I am in a war against my sinful nature. This sinful nature is with me everywhere I go.

“For I delight in the law of God after the inward man:” Romans 7:22

I rejoice that the law is good. I truly want to live that beautiful life in accordance with God’s law.

“But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.” Romans 7:23

However, I see something else working inside of me. It wars against my desire to obey God’s law. It tempts me to break God’s law.

“O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?” Romans 7:24

Paul realizes that he cannot save himself. After all, he cannot do what he wants to do, and he does what he knows he should not. But now he is in that very important place of admitting his helplessness. He needs divine help.

“I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.” Romans 7:25

Even though my mind wants to serve God, my body wants to sin. But I thank God that He is more powerful than my sinful tendencies. The evil that is within me can defeat me, but it cannot defeat God. Through Christ I can keep the law of God perfectly. I can do all that God asks. I can refrain from all evil, if I am dead to the old man and married to Christ.

Romans Chapter Eight

“There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.” Romans 8:1

If we are in Christ and walk after the Spirit we are no longer under condemnation of the law. We are now keeping the law by the power of God.

The law is holy, just, and good and it will always condemn sin no matter who commits it. Christ came not to condemn us, but to free us from sin. He came to pay the penalty for our sins, which is death. In Him we have life, even life eternal.

“For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.” Romans 8:2

On one side we have sin and death. On the other side we have the Spirit and life. To be free from the “law of sin and death,” we must abide by rule of the “law of the Spirit of life in Christ.”

The law of the Spirit of life is the life-giving power of the Holy Spirit. A “law” is a rule. We allow the Holy Spirit to rule over us, that we may be free from the “law of sin and death.” This freedom from sin is possible because it is the law of the Spirit of life “in Christ.” When we allow the Holy Spirit to rule, we are allowing the life of Christ to rule. The impartation of the Holy Spirit is the impartation of the life of Christ. We are set free from sin by receiving the sinless life of Christ. His righteousness becomes our own.

“hath made me free”

We were slaves to sin. Sin ruled in our life. But the Holy Spirit is able to destroy sin in our life and set us free. But we must both desire the life of Jesus and exercise our faith to receive it. Our freedom from sin is based upon our reception of the righteousness of Christ.

“For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh:” Romans 8:3

Paul has already argued that the law is spiritual, holy, just, and good. It reveals sin. It describes a life of righteousness. However, the law cannot give us righteousness. The law cannot justify us. The law cannot free us from sin. The problem is the weakness of our flesh.

So God the Father sent His own Son to condemn sin in the flesh. Jesus condemned sin as a way of living in our flesh. He did this by living a life of sinlessness. He kept His Father’s commandments perfectly. He never sinned, not even by a thought.

Christ lived this sinless life in our sinful flesh. He became one of us. After four thousand years of sin, Christ came in our fallen nature. But He never participated in our sins. He was the sinless Son of God.

“sinful flesh”

Elsewhere Paul spoke about Jesus becoming a partaker of our flesh and blood. Jesus was of the seed of Abraham. “Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham. Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted.” Hebrews 2:14-18

Because Jesus became one of us, we find that He was tempted in all points as we are, yet without sin. “Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly

unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.” Hebrews 4:14-16

“That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.” Romans 8:4

God did not give us His Son to abolish the law. He did not give us His Son to release us from obedience to His law. God gave His Son so that the law could be fulfilled in our lives perfectly.

The law is an expression of God’s own moral character. Since God cannot change, His law cannot change. An unsanctified man cannot keep this law. But a man who is justified by the blood of Christ and sanctified through the Holy Spirit can.

We are now to “walk. . . after the Spirit.” The word “walk” refers to habits and conduct. With our new natures in Christ we are learning new habits. We are conducting our lives in a new way. We are no longer walking “after the flesh.” We are no longer living according to our sinful tendencies.

Through the work of the Holy Spirit we are receiving the life of Jesus. Who is Jesus? He is the sinless One. He is the One who kept the commandments perfectly. When we receive Him we are receiving His sinless, perfect, and righteous life. This is how the law is fulfilled in us.

“For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit.” Romans 8:5

If we live in the flesh, then we will “mind” the things of the flesh. We will think, live, and walk according to our selfish desires and impulses. Our only hope is to walk in the Spirit.

“For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.” Romans 8:6

“carnally minded”

To be carnally minded is to mind the things of the flesh. For example, the stomach says, “I want to eat that.” Your mind tells you that it is unhealthy, but the mind gives into the flesh and you eat that unhealthy food to your physical detriment.

From this example we can see that to be “carnally minded” can bring an early “death.” But to think only of gratifying the flesh is spiritual death as well. The one who lives for selfish pleasure doesn’t really know what life is about. Eternal life is about service, love, giving, kindness, patience, meekness, and more. A life of selfishness brings death because you miss out on life.

Selfishness, hatred, envy, malice, and such, are not life. They are death. Not only do they cast a dark shadow on all around, but such a life will never receive eternal life.

But to be spiritually minded is life and peace. When we think upon that which is good, we not only become a blessing here in this present world, but we are preparing ourselves for the world to come.

What is life? “And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.” 1 John 5:11, 12.

To be spiritually minded is to have the Holy Spirit. To have the Holy Spirit is to have the life of Christ. To have the life of Christ is to have life. What kind of life is this? It is a life in perfect obedience to God’s commands. It is eternal life.

“Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.” Romans 8:7

The carnal mind is dedicated to a life of self-indulgence and selfishness. Such a life will be in conflict with God’s law of selflessness. In fact, a carnal mind cannot be subject to the law of God. Such a mind would never take orders from God, it is too self-centered.

“So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.” Romans 8:8

The carnal mind fulfills the desires of the flesh. As such, we cannot please God if we are living according to the flesh.

“But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.” Romans 8:9

How would I know if I am in the Spirit? I would be minding the things of the Spirit. What are the things of the Spirit? Paul wrote, “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.” Galatians 5:22, 23. If I have the fruit of the Spirit, then the Spirit of God must be dwelling within me.

“dwell”

The word “dwell” refers to a continuous walking in the Spirit. We are now living the new life day after day. We see our life now bearing the fruit of the Spirit. Enemies we once hated, we have been able to love. Impatience has now turned into patience. Doubt has turned to an abiding trust in Him.

“none of His”

Love is the key to whether we truly belong to Christ. “Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another. No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us. Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit.” 1 John 4:10-13

We would do well to read and reread 1 Corinthians 13:4-8, and study the various ingredients of love. If we walk in the Spirit, then we will become more loving every day.

Doctrines are important. They protect us from error. But doctrines are not the final word on whether we are connected to Christ or not. In the end, what determines if we are connected to Christ is whether we have the life of Christ dwelling in us.

“if so be that”

This phrase seems to call us to self-examination. As we look at our life, do we see evidence that the Spirit rules? Do we love to spend time with Christ? Do we take the time to study His altogether beautiful life? Do we dedicate all of who we are and all of what we have to Him? Where do you stand? Are you connected to Christ? Do you belong to Him?

“And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.” Romans 8:10

When we accept Christ we receive a new heart, not a new body. As we walk in the Spirit we will become more and more like Jesus in thoughts and feelings. However, our bodies will continue to age and we will grow old and die. But because we belong to Him we will receive life eternal if we remain faithful until the end.

“But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.” Romans 8:11

If the Spirit that raised up Jesus from the dead be in us, then we will be raised by the same Spirit in the first resurrection. For where the Spirit is, there is life.

“Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh.” Romans 8:12

None of us chose to be born with a fallen nature, and we owe nothing to our sinful flesh to obey the lusts thereof. But we do owe everything to God. God has given us life. He promises us eternal life through His Son. The Son of God chose to die for our sins. The Holy Spirit works to guide us and empower us. The angels go to and fro from heaven to earth just to help us. We owe everything to God and nothing to the flesh.

“For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.” Romans 8:13

Something must die. Either we die to sin and live forever, or we live in sin and die an eternal death. If we want to live forever we must “mortify the deeds of the body.”

The word “mortify” means to put to death. Paul teaches that we must die daily to the old man. Therefore mortifying the deeds of the body is a continuous process of putting to death our sinful practices. This can only be accomplished “through the Spirit.” We cannot overcome our sinful tendencies and impulses by ourselves. We need divine help.

“For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.” Romans 8:14

The Holy Spirit does not force us to become the sons of God, He leads us. To be a son of God we must be continuously led by the Spirit. This means that we practice the presence of Jesus throughout the day.

“For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.” Romans 8:15

Paul began his epistle calling himself a “servant” of Jesus Christ. When we are a slave to Jesus we are free from the bondage of sin. As sons and daughters of God we are free from the bondage of fear. When we receive sonship we have love and trust in God. Adoption brings a sense of belonging, affection, and confidence. Adoption would be an action on the part of God. He really wants us. Because of His great love toward us, we cry out, “Abba, Father.” The word “cry” refers to a loud cry where our affection for God is given with deep emotions.

“The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:” Romans 8:16

God has a special way of affirming us for walking in the Spirit. We can sense His love and approval. We see His hand leading us in the right direction. In a myriad of ways God speaks to us of His love and protection.

“And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.” Romans 8:17

We are servants of God, children of God, and heirs of God. More than heirs, we are joint-heirs with Christ. Let us consider several passages concerning our inheritance in heaven:

“Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:” Matthew 25:34

“To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.” 1 Peter 1:4, 5

Let us consider some passages as joint-heirs with Christ:

“Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world.” John 17:24

“To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.” Revelation 3:21

We will become joint-heirs with Christ, if we suffer with Him.

““It is a faithful saying: For if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him: If we suffer, we shall also reign with him: if we deny him, he also will deny us:” 2 Timothy 2:11, 12

Tribulations play an important role in the perfection of character. As Paul wrote, “For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.” Hebrews 2:10

We are to even praise God for our trials. Paul wrote, “And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience;” Romans 5:3

James wrote, “My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience.” James 1:2, 3

Tribulations can lead us closer to God. Luxury and ease can cause us to forget God. But it is not simply the willingness to suffer that sanctifies our sufferings. Rather, it is our fellowship with Christ that sanctifies and ennobles our trials.

“For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.” Romans 8:18

We can only contrast the joy of future glory with present sufferings. Trials may seem great, but they are light in view of eternity. They are for a moment. Trials will all soon fade away. The time will soon come when there will be no more crying, no more pain, and no more death. See Revelation 21:4

“For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God.” Romans 8:19

“earnest expectation”

Imagine looking to the horizon. You cannot wait for your loved one to come home. Your eyes are fixed to that exact spot that they will appear. You are on your toes, head outstretched, trying to see as far as you can. You are so eager to see him/her.

We know that Jesus is coming. We are waiting eagerly for Him. We look for Him longingly. But this verse seems to speak of something more than the return of Jesus. It points to the manifestation of the character of Christ in His saints. We know that Jesus showed us the Father. However, “the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God.” Before the Second Coming there will be a manifestation of the character of Christ in the 144,000. John the Revelator wrote, “These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb. And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God.” Revelation 14:4, 5

The 144,000 will reflect the image of Jesus perfectly. When this number is made up, Jesus will return the second time. Each one of us should strive to be amongst them.

“For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope,” Romans 8:20

Adam was a perfect being living in a perfect world. He could have always made the right choice. But tragically he made a wrong choice and everything changed in our little world. As such, we are subject to vanity, not willingly. It is not our fault that we have a fallen nature or that we were born in a fallen world. But we do have a choice. The choice is simple. What will we do with Jesus?

“subject to vanity”

This phrase “subject to vanity” means that we are subject to an aimless future, a life of frustration. It was Adam’s sin that brought vanity, aimlessness, and frustration. But there is hope. Our subjection to the bondage of sin will not frustrate God’s plan for man. God still wants to create us in His image. Through Christ the image of God can be restored in man. This is our great aim in life, namely, to become more and more like our Creator. God intends for us to enjoy the Garden of Eden. This too will be restored.

“Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.” Romans 8:21

Before we were set free to serve God, we were in bondage to sin. Now that we are set free we have confidence that we will also be free from this world of sin. Because we have been emancipated from the bondage to sin, we believe that we will be emancipated from living in a fallen world. The New Earth is yet future, but our preparation for living there is now.

“For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now.” Romans 8:22

The whole creation longs for something better. Nobody likes pain, not even the animals. These pains remind us of our fallen world, our fallen natures, and our many trials. But for the Christian each pain should remind us of a hopeful future where there is no more pain.

There are many stories where bondage is followed by deliverance. The history of the Hebrews in Egypt is but one example. Their four hundred years of bondage led to a glorious deliverance. But they must have longed for deliverance from the first day of their captivity. In the same way, ever since the entrance of sin, the whole creation has longed to get back to its original perfection.

“And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.” Romans 8:23

If the whole of creation longs for the original perfection, imagine how those who have tasted of the Holy Spirit must feel. Those who have tasted “the firstfruits of the Spirit” by their connection to Christ must long for heaven even more. They have experienced justification, the sweet forgiveness of sins. They have already begun the work of sanctification. They are moving towards perfection and desire complete restoration, even the redemption of their body.

We are to comfort one another with the soon return of Jesus. Paul wrote, “For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the

dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words." 1 Thessalonians 4:16-18

"For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for?" Romans 8:24

"saved by hope"

We are saved by grace through faith, so why does Paul say we are "saved by hope"? It is our hope in seeing our Savior face-to-face that motivates our faith to be a living and active faith. Faith, hope, and love all work together.

We have only tasted of the world to come. We believe in our inheritance of a new body and the New Earth. We hope for it and long to see Jesus face-to-face. Hope has a way of encouraging us to move forward even in the face of opposition, because the prize is so great. If we had nothing great to strive for and hope for, then would we have a living faith?

"But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it." Romans 8:25

Hope develops patience. We are patiently enduring tribulations as we wait eagerly for the blessed hope of our Lord's return. So do not lose hope, for you will begin to lose faith, which leads to a loss of love.

"Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered." Romans 8:26

We groan and long to see Jesus. We desire to live in the earth made new. We groan for the great controversy to come to an end. The Holy Spirit understands our desires, our infirmities, and our limitations. The Holy Spirit will not remove our infirmities, but He gives us strength to face them. The Holy Spirit moves us to prayer, teaches us how to pray, and helps us to pray. We may not always know what to pray for, but we know that the Holy Spirit intercedes for us.

"with groanings which cannot be uttered"

We have the gift of language, but it cannot always adequately express our deep love and gratitude toward God. How can we put in words the love of Christ for us? How can we adequately praise God with mere words? We cannot. So we sing. We also enjoy His presence in simple and sacred silence.

"And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God." Romans 8:27

God knows the work of the Holy Spirit perfectly. He knows how the Holy Spirit leads us and inspires us. God does not need to have our deep affections expressed in words to know how we feel. But it is important for us to express them. Expression gives impression. As we express our love to God, an impression is left upon us.

God understands the anxious longings of our heart. After all, the Spirit maketh intercession for us. He can do so perfectly, because He knows us and He knows the Father, perfectly.

“And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.” Romans 8:28

For us to gain strength from every trial, we must believe that all things work together for good to them that love God. We are persuaded that He can turn bad into good.

Our trials and disappointments can make us long for heaven. Trials can teach us to lean upon Christ. We can learn patience and forgiveness through persecutions.

God has called us to have fellowship with Him. His original purpose was to create us in His image. So we must believe that no matter what happens to us, if God permits it, then it must be for our eternal good. Somehow God will use it to draw us closer to Him.

“For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.” Romans 8:29

God knows all things. He knew us before we were born. He predestined or determined beforehand that we would be conformed to the image of His Son. God desires that none would perish. See 2 Peter 3:9. He takes no pleasure in the death of the wicked. See Ezekiel 33:11. He wants all to be saved. See 1Timothy 2:4.

If we all become like Jesus in character, then He would be the “firstborn among many brethren.” Jesus would be our Elder Brother. See Hebrews 2:11

It is the work of the Holy Spirit to conform us into the image of Christ. Our part is to cooperate with the work of the Holy Spirit and not resist Him.

“Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.” Romans 8:30

The process of being conformed to the image of Christ is that we are first called or wooed by the Holy Spirit. Conversion begins with justification or the forgiveness of sins. We are then sanctified and lastly glorified.

“What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?” Romans 8:31

If God is for us, the devil cannot stop us. The only person who can stop us is ourselves. We do this by our refusal to surrender all to Christ. It is when we refuse to continue in the faith.

“He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?” Romans 8:32

If God gave us His Son, He will certainly give us all things that pertain unto salvation and holiness. When God gave “His own Son” it was His own Son to give. Jesus is the eternal Son of God.

“Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth.” Romans 8:33

Satan is the great accuser of the brethren. See Revelation 12:10. But God declares that His people are righteous. They are His “elect.” They have responded to His love and accepted Christ’s sacrifice for their sins. They now are His chosen ones or the ones that have been picked out. The elect have nothing to fear, for it is God who has pronounced them justified.

“Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.” Romans 8:34

Satan can accuse all he wants, but Christ has already died for our sins. He has already risen from the dead. Even now He sits at the right hand of the Father, and intercedes for us. What then have we to fear?

“Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?” Romans 8:35

Who can “separate us” or put a space between us and the love of Christ? Nobody!

“As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.” Romans 8:36

These words were written aforetime in Psalm 44:22. Ever since the entrance of sin, the wicked have always hated the righteous. Many are the martyrs of the true faith.

“Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.” Romans 8:37

As followers of Christ, we are more than conquerors. Because of His love for us we keep on conquering gloriously. We surpass in conquering. No matter the trial, we conquer. No matter the temptation, we conquer in His name.

“For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come,” Romans 8:38

“I am persuaded,” I am convinced that nothing can separate us from the love of Christ. It is true, that we can fall away by our own choice, but He will never stop loving us and drawing us to Himself.

“Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” Romans 8:39

Paul concludes his argue on justification and sanctification by faith with this emphasis on love. If it were not for God’s great love, would there even be a plan of salvation? Because He loves us so much, He will do everything to save us.

Romans Chapter Nine

The Election of Israel: Romans 9:1-11:36

“I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost,” Romans 9:1

Paul’s previous argument on justification and sanctification has now prepared us for a new section focused on the election of the Jews as Israel. The basic question must be asked, “If the gospel brings salvation by first justifying the sinner and then sanctifying him, then why are there so few Jews amongst the believers in Christ? How is it that there are more Gentiles accepting the gospel than Jews?”

Paul had worked chiefly among the Gentiles, but like all the other apostles, he began with the Jews and taught in the synagogues. Now some may have questioned Paul’s burden for the Jews, which seems to be the reason for his opening statement, namely, “I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost.”

“That I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart.” Romans 9:2

Paul has great sorrow continually over the lost condition of so many Jews.

“For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh” Romans 9:3

Like Moses, Paul was willing to give up his own salvation to save his Jewish kinsmen. See Exodus 32:32, 33.

“Who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises;” Romans 9:4

The Jews were indeed rich toward God. He had adopted them as His people. His Shekinah glory was in the Most Holy Place. There were many other wonderful manifestations of God’s presence, such as the pillar of cloud by day and the fire by night. There was also the fiery blaze on Mount Sinai. They had the covenants, the law, the sanctuary service, and all those precious promises. How could they fail with such advantages and blessings?

“Whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen.” Romans 9:5

They had the fathers, namely, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Even the Messiah Himself was born a Jew.

“Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect. For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel:” Romans 9:6

Because so many Jews failed to accept Jesus as the Messiah, does this mean God's promises have failed? Absolutely not! Not everyone that is a physical descendant of Abraham is of true Israel.

“Neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children: but, In Isaac shall thy seed be called.” Romans 9:7

Genetics does not make a person the spiritual seed of Abraham. Take Isaac for example, he was not the first born, yet he was the son of promise. Ishmael was the first born and by physical birth he should have received the promises. So we see the promises are not based upon a person's physical birth. But then some might argue, “Isaac was the son of promise because Ishmael's mother was Hagar.”

“That is, They which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed.” Romans 9:8

Spiritual blessings are not inherited by physical descent, as was the case with Ishmael and Isaac.

“For this is the word of promise, At this time will I come, and Sarah shall have a son.” Romans 9:9

But let us consider Isaac's birth. If there was no divine promise, Isaac would not have been born. Abraham and Sarah were too old to have children. Isaac's birth through Sarah depended upon God's promise. This son of promise received the promises, not Ishmael the firstborn of Abraham.

“And not only this; but when Rebecca also had conceived by one, even by our father Isaac;” Romans 9:10

Paul now refers to Isaac and Rebekah. In this case we have the same father and mother, unlike the situation with Sarah bearing Isaac and Hagar bearing Ishmael.

“(For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth;)” Romans 9:11

Before Jacob and Esau were born, before any works could be performed, Jacob was chosen over Esau even though Esau was the firstborn.

“It was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger.” Romans 9:12

Again we see that the promise is not according to physical birth, for the older shall serve the younger. Therefore we can conclude that God is not obligated to bless someone because of his physical birth. As we will see, the promises are for those who chose to live by faith no matter their physical descent.

“As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated.” Romans 9:13

Did God hate Esau? Consider these words of Jesus, “If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.” Luke 14:26. Jesus is not teaching us to hate our parents or children. In fact, we will love them more by putting God first in our affections. This verse, Romans 9:13, is simply saying that God has the right to give the blessing to whoever He pleases.

“What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid.” Romans 9:14

Is God unrighteous for not fulfilling His promises to the unbelieving Jews? Is He forced to give them His blessings because they are the physical descendants of Abraham? Absolutely not!

“For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.” Romans 9:15

God is God, and He can choose who will receive His blessings. In 1 Corinthians 12, we find that the Holy Spirit gives gifts according to His will. One may receive the gift of teaching, while another receives the gift of healing. God wants to bless all of His children. But how He chooses to bless is His decision.

“So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy.” Romans 9:16

God’s blessings are not based upon the will of man, or the works of man, but upon His own perfect will. Yet we can always trust that God will do all things according to our best eternal interests. His ways are perfect.

“For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might show my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth.” Romans 9:17

Did God raise up Pharaoh to fail? No. Through Moses, God told Pharaoh, “Let My people go!” If Pharaoh would have obeyed God, then there would have been no plagues. But Pharaoh chose to disobey. Because Pharaoh disobeyed God’s command, the first plague fell. God would show His power against the worldly position of Pharaoh.

Pharaoh could have obeyed after the first plague, but chose not to. So God sent another plague. With each stubborn resistance of Pharaoh against God, the greater God’s power appeared. After ten plagues, the whole world would hear of the God of the Hebrews.

“Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth.” Romans 9:18

Pharaoh hardened his own heart by resisting God. So God allowed Pharaoh to harden his own heart.

“Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth he yet find fault? For who hath resisted his will?” Romans 9:19

If God hardens a man’s heart, how then could God punish him or find fault with him? It is clear from these verses that Pharaoh hardened his own heart. The Bible says, “For now I will stretch out my hand, that I may smite thee and thy people with pestilence; and thou shalt be cut off from the earth. And in very deed for this cause have I raised thee up, for to show in thee my power; and that my name may be declared throughout all the earth. As yet exaltest thou thyself against my people, that thou wilt not let them go?” Exodus 9:15-17

“Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus?” Romans 9:20

How can the creature question the Creator?

“Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour?” Romans 9:21

God does not create worthless things. There are different angels, some have more authority than others. After all, not all the angels are archangels. So it is with the gifts of the Spirit. Some gifts receive more honor than others, but all the gifts are important. Consider these words of Paul, “But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honour, and some to dishonour.” 2 Timothy 2:20. Gold has more honor than wood, but the wood is an important part of the great house.

“What if God, willing to show his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction:” Romans 9:22

When we consider the example of Pharaoh’s stubbornness and resistance, we can see that God was longsuffering with him. The judgment will show that God has been patient with all of us.

“And that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory,” Romans 9:23

We had seen earlier that God had predestined us all to be conformed to the image of His Son, not excluding Pharaoh or anyone else. God had created us for “glory.” We were created to be like Him. We have become His “vessels of mercy.” Upon us all God has been merciful. After all, have we not read that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us?

“Even us, whom he hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles?” Romans 9:24

“Even us” has reference to the Christian church. God has called us all to glory, whether Jew or Gentile.

“As he saith also in Osee, I will call them my people, which were not my people; and her beloved, which was not beloved.” Romans 9:25

We find these words recorded in Hosea 2:23. It had been prophesied during Old Testament times that the Gentiles would be part of God’s people and not just the Jews.

“And it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people; there shall they be called the children of the living God.” Romans 9:26

This was recorded previously in Hosea 1:10. Again, it had been prophesied centuries before the birth of Christ that the Gentiles would become “the children of the living God.” So the Jews should not have been surprised to see the Gentiles so widely accept Christ as the Messiah and show that the law is truly written in their hearts.

“Esaias also crieth concerning Israel, Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, a remnant shall be saved:” Romans 9:27

Throughout the history of the church, millions have professed to be followers of the true God. While many are called, few are chosen. But there has always been a remnant. These are truly the “children of Israel.”

In the remnant story of the Flood, we see the end of one age and the beginning of another. There is but a small faithful few as the remnant. In the story of Abraham and Lot, we find the righteous remnant, Abraham, interceding for a perishing city. In the remnant story of Jacob and Esau, we learn how important it is to repent of every sin, persevere in prayer, and never giving up. Today there are over one billion that claim to know Christ, but how many are part of the remnant?

“For he will finish the work, and cut it short in righteousness: because a short work will the Lord make upon the earth.” Romans 9:28

God knows exactly when to cut His work short. During the time of the Dark Ages, the Papacy ruled for 1,260 years, from 538 to 1798. God did not allow the Papacy to persecute the true church for the entire time, He cut it short. In the same way, God will cut the work short in the end of time. He knows exactly when to take the work into His own hands.

“And as Esaias said before, Except the Lord of Sabaoth had left us a seed, we had been as Sodoma, and been made like unto Gomorrha.” Romans 9:29

These words were previously recorded in Isaiah 1:9. If there had not been a remnant in Israel, then they would have been completely destroyed like Sodom.

“What shall we say then? That the Gentiles, which followed not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith.” Romans 9:30

The Gentiles were not striving after righteousness and found it. The Jew strived after righteousness and could not attain it. Why was this? The Jew sought it the wrong way. Righteousness must be attained by faith, not by works. We are all called to holiness. The question is, “How do we receive the righteousness of Christ?”

“But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness.” Romans 9:31

A righteousness based upon the law requires perfect obedience. By the works of the law the Jew could not attain it. He could not in his own strength keep the law perfectly.

“Wherefore? Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumblingstone;” Romans 9:32

Why did they fail? They sought it not by faith. Then they stumbled over Christ, who was to become their righteousness.

“As it is written, Behold, I lay in Sion a stumblingstone and rock of offence: and whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.” Romans 9:33

This was written before in Isaiah 28:16; 8:14. Christ became a stumblingblock for those who sought for righteousness by their own works. He became the Cornerstone for those who sought for righteousness by faith.

Romans Chapter Ten

“Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved.” Romans 10:1

Paul's desire and prayer is that more individuals amongst the Jewish nation will be saved. The probation for the Jews as a nation had already passed. But there is always hope for the individual.

“For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge.” Romans 10:2

Paul, who was a Hebrew of Hebrews, knew that the Jews had a zeal for God. It was a religious zeal that focused more on the law and the Temple.

There is something commendable about the zeal of the Jews. But tragically they had a greater zeal for the law than the Lawgiver. They had a greater zeal for the sanctuary services than for the Lamb of God.

“knowledge”

They had knowledge but did they have a full knowledge? They had many pieces to the puzzle, but there were pieces that they overlooked or misinterpreted. For example, they had prophecies concerning the Messiah, but they rejected Him. They in part rejected Him because of their misinterpretation of the prophecies.

Truth is so important. It protects us against error. Error is so misleading. We could easily lose our way with false theories and doctrines.

“For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.” Romans 10:3

There is only one righteousness, that is God's righteousness. Therefore, when we are seeking our own righteousness, we are seeking for an impossibility. It was not a lack of effort or striving on the part of the unbelieving Jew. It is that he strove for something that was not possible.

The words “to establish” mean “to set up.” It suggests an element of pride. So in their zeal for God the Jew was really working for self. They thought their works made them better than other men. “The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess.” Luke 18:11, 12

The Jews “submitted themselves” to the law of God, but not to the God of the law. They were to have all the righteousness that the law demands, but they could not get it from the law itself. That righteousness must come from God Himself. So the great obstacle for the Jews was their striving for self-righteousness.

“For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.” Romans 10:4

Is Christ the termination of the law? Absolutely not! He is the goal of the law. See Galatians 3:24. He is the fulfillment of the law. See Matthew 5:17

To those who live by faith, they receive the righteousness of the law through Christ. This would imply that Christ is willing to share His righteousness with us. So the “end” or goal of the law is that we all receive the righteousness of Christ, which is perfect obedience to the will of God.

“For Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, That the man which doeth those things shall live by them.” Romans 10:5

The righteousness which is of the law is a sanctified life. As Ezekiel wrote, “And I gave them my statutes, and showed them my judgments, which if a man do, he shall even live in them. Moreover also I gave them my sabbaths, to be a sign between me and them, that they might know that I am the LORD that sanctify them. But the house of Israel rebelled against me in the wilderness: they walked not in my statutes, and they despised my judgments, which if a man do, he shall even live in them; and my sabbaths they greatly polluted: then I said, I would pour out my fury upon them in the wilderness, to consume them.” Ezekiel 20:11-13

In the passage above, we had people who lived by God’s statutes and those who did not. Those that lived by God’s statutes were being sanctified.

“But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise, Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down from above:)” Romans 10:6

We find this passage in Deuteronomy 30:11-14, “For this commandment which I command thee this day, it is not hidden from thee, neither is it far off. It is not in heaven, that thou shouldest say, Who shall go up for us to heaven, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it? Neither is it beyond the sea, that thou shouldest say, Who shall go over the sea for us, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it? But the word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it.”

According to this passage, Israel could not say, “What law?” They had the law. They just needed to know how to keep the law. Moses wrote, “And the LORD thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live.” Deuteronomy 30:6. What Israel needed was a circumcised heart.

So in the first century, they could not say, “When will the Messiah come and teach us righteousness?” He has already come. Jesus is the Messiah.

“Or, Who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead.)” Romans 10:7

Do not say, “When will the Messiah come and die for our sins and be raised again?” He has already paid the price and has already risen to heaven from the dead.

“But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach;” Romans 10:8

I tell you, righteousness is available right now. Jesus the Son of God has already come and made righteousness possible. I am now preaching that very word to you. We preach the message of righteousness by faith.

“the word of faith”

There is the Word. Then there is the “word of faith.” Faith is that key ingredient in living by the Word.

“That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.” Romans 10:9

We should confess that all have sinned, and that I have sinned. Confess that I cannot make myself righteous. Confess that Jesus lived for me and died for me. Confess that He is risen from the grave. And confess that the same power that raised up Jesus is that same power that will empower me to live a righteous life.

“For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.” Romans 10:10

The willingness to confess Jesus by your words and life has always been a test of true discipleship. When we believe from the heart it shows that an inward change has taken place.

“For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.” Romans 10:11

The phrase “whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed,” goes against the doctrine of predestination. God does not predestine some to be saved and some to be lost. He desires all to be saved.

“not be ashamed”

God takes care of His own. If you are in trouble, God will take care of you. He will never leave you. Therefore, you will never be ashamed to be a follower of Christ.

“For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him.” Romans 10:12

“rich unto all”

There is no limit to the Lord's resources. They are abundant. And the greatest treasure is the Lord Himself.

"call upon Him"

Those who "call upon Him" are those that worship Him in the Spirit and in truth.

"For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." Romans 10:13

Whether you are a Jew or Gentile, if you call upon the name of the Lord, He will embrace you no matter your past.

"How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?" Romans 10:14

How can they call on the Lord unless they believe in Him? They cannot. How can they believe if they have not heard?

Let us ask another question, namely, "Have the preachers been sent?" The answer is "Yes." The preachers of righteousness have been sent. Prior to the coming of Christ, the Jewish people had many preachers speaking to their hearts. There was the Bible, the Law of God, the parting of the Red Sea, the victory at Jericho, the pillar of cloud by day and the fire by night, the miracle of manna from heaven, the prophets, and much more. The Jewish people had so many preachers to prepare them for the first advent of Christ.

"And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!" Romans 10:15

The preachers were sent. Jesus, the Son of God, was sent. He sent forth the twelve disciples. Missionaries have been sent. God calls upon all believers to be a witness of His love and justice. It is a beautiful thing to see young and old dedicating their lives to spread the glad tidings of good things.

"But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report?" Romans 10:16

The preachers have been sent. Many have heard, but not many have obeyed. What hinders them from believing?

"So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." Romans 10:17

Faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes by the Word of God. Every day we must listen to God's Word. Be teachable. Be available. Be serious about your study in God's Word.

"But I say, Have they not heard? Yes verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world." Romans 10:18

So have they heard? Yes, without question they have heard. Did they listen? Tragically, they did not.

“But I say, Did not Israel know? First Moses saith, I will provoke you to jealousy by them that are no people, and by a foolish nation I will anger you.” Romans 10:19

A prediction had been made during the time of Moses, which read, “Of the Rock that begat thee thou art unmindful, and hast forgotten God that formed thee. And when the LORD saw it, he abhorred them, because of the provoking of his sons, and of his daughters. And he said, I will hide my face from them, I will see what their end shall be: for they are a very froward generation, children in whom is no faith. They have moved me to jealousy with that which is not God; they have provoked me to anger with their vanities: and I will move them to jealousy with those which are not a people; I will provoke them to anger with a foolish nation.” Deuteronomy 32:18-21.

In this passage, we see that God will use the conversion of the Gentiles to provoke the Jews to jealousy, in hopes of converting them as well. By showing that the Gentile could walk in the light of God’s law, it was hoped that the Jews would then turn to God and live by faith, and not by works.

“But Esaias is very bold, and saith, I was found of them that sought me not; I was made manifest unto them that asked not after me.” Romans 10:20

The Gentiles were not waiting for a Messiah to come, but they found Him. The Gentiles had not even asked for a Messiah, but found Jesus to be their Redeemer and Friend. This unexpected faith of the Gentiles should have been on the one hand a rebuke to the privileged Jew. On the other hand, it should have become a wonderful opportunity to see the hand of God working upon precious souls.

“But to Israel he saith, All day long I have stretched forth my hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people.” Romans 10:21

But Israel as a nation rejected Christ. It is true that the early church began primarily with those of Hebrew descent. Yet, so many of them rejected Him.

Romans Chapter Eleven

“I say then, Hath God cast away his people? God forbid. For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin.” Romans 11:1

Has God cast away the Hebrew people? Absolutely not! Paul was a Hebrew of Hebrews and he is saved. He was of the seed of Abraham, and from the tribe of Benjamin. Any individual can be saved.

“God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew. Wot ye not what the scripture saith of Elias? how he maketh intercession to God against Israel, saying, Lord, they have killed thy prophets, and digged down thine altars; and I am left alone, and they seek my life. But what saith the answer of God unto him? I have reserved to myself seven thousand men, who have not bowed the knee to the image of Baal.” Romans 11:2-4

These things were said in 1 Kings 19:10, 14. Here we find that Elijah thought all of Israel had apostatized. But God tells him that there are yet seven thousand that have not bowed the knee. In other words, I have a remnant. God has always had a remnant. In fact, it says that God has “reserved to” Himself seven thousand men. This doesn’t mean that their faith was forced upon them, but that God has always had friends.

“Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace.” Romans 11:5

Paul would now argue that there is a remnant “even” now. This remnant is made up of faithful Jews who have accepted Jesus as the Messiah. As Noah and his family were the remnant to start a new world after the flood, even so a faithful remnant of Jews began the church.

The “election of grace” is just that, it is of grace. They were not chosen because they merited anything by good works. They are part of the remnant by accepting Jesus.

“And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work.” Romans 11:6

If salvation is by grace, then it is not based upon what a man has done. No one will go to heaven and say, “I am here because of my works.” If the remnant deserved to be elected, then it is no more of grace.

“What then? Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded” Romans 11:7

Unbelieving Jews were still looking for righteousness. But the elect have already received the righteousness of Christ. Why are they blinded? Is it because God cast them away? Absolutely not! It is because they are still seeking their own righteousness.

“(According as it is written, God hath given them the spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear;) unto this day.” Romans 11:8

These words were recorded earlier in Isaiah 6:9, 10; 29:10; Deuteronomy 29:4. In our fallen natures we have the “spirit of slumber.” Our spiritual eyesight is very poor. When God shows us spiritual things, we should be excited. But if we act uninterested or resist light from above, we show that we are not awake unto spiritual things.

When we come out of a deep sleep, our eyes do not work well right away. But God is trying to help us to come out of our slumber. He will not force His will upon us. We would see better if we accepted His grace. But if we reject His grace then we forfeit the ability to see. God is not at fault for our stubborn resistance to grace. God gives us light. But if we reject that light, how can we blame God?

“And David saith, Let their table be made a snare, and a trap, and a stumblingblock, and a recompense unto them:” Romans 11:9

This passage is from Psalm 69:22, 23. The sacrifices pointed to Christ, but the Jews used the sacrificial system as a means of salvation. Therefore, the very thing that would have given them spiritual eyesight proved to be a stumblingblock.

“Let their eyes be darkened that they may not see, and bow down their back alway.” Romans 11:10

They had clear revelations from God, but they misinterpreted them. By seeking their own righteousness, they continued to add one legalistic requirement after another. It became so heavy that they were spiritually bowing down their backs.

“I say then, Have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid: but rather through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy.” Romans 11:11

Did God give the law to Israel so that they would stumble? No. Did He give them the sacrificial system to stumble over? No. Did God intend for Israel to fail? No. He knows all things and knew that they would fail as a nation. However, He also knew that there would be a faithful remnant to begin the church.

Was it bad that the nation of Israel rejected Jesus as the Messiah? Of course it was bad. But God can take the bad and turn it into good. He took the failure of the Jews to bring salvation to the Gentiles, with the hope of also reaching more unbelieving Jews.

“Now if the fall of them be the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles; how much more their fulness?” Romans 11:12

The Jews failed to reach out to the world. But with their fall, the gospel went to the Gentiles. The diminishing of Israel opened the door for the Gentiles. With the remnant of believing Jews and the conversion of the Gentiles, the gospel went to the whole known world in one generation. So God has taken the failure of the Jews and blessed the whole world, including the unbelieving Jew.

“For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office: If by any means I may provoke to emulation them which are my flesh, and might save some of them.” Romans 11:13, 14

Paul’s desire to save his fellow countrymen, makes him all the more zealous to reach the Gentiles and thus “magnify” or enlarge his “office” or ministry.

“For if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead?” Romans 11:15

The casting away of the Jews as a nation, not as individuals, has led to the gospel going to the world. As a result, many Jews who had been spiritually dead will be converted and join in the preaching of the gospel.

“For if the firstfruit be holy, the lump is also holy: and if the root be holy, so are the branches.” Romans 11:16

The “firstfruits” are that remnant of believing Jews. The “root” is true Israel. And the “branches” are the believers.

“And if some of the branches be broken off, and thou, being a wild olive tree, wert grafted in among them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive tree;” Romans 11:17

The branches that were broken off are the unbelieving Jews. The “wild olive tree” represents the Gentiles. To be “grafted in” means to be connected to Christ.

“Boast not against the branches. But if thou boast, thou bearest not the root, but the root thee.” Romans 11:18

The believing Gentiles should not boast against the unbelieving Jews.

“Thou wilt say then, The branches were broken off, that I might be grafted in.” Romans 11:19

You were not saved because someone else was lost. Gentiles are not grafted in because the Jews failed. But God used their failure to bring the gospel to the Gentiles. God desires all to be saved.

“Well; because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith. Be not highminded, but fear:” Romans 11:20

The unbelieving Jew was broken off because of his unbelief. You are grafted in because of your faith in Christ. So “be not highminded” or do not be conceited. The Gentile Christian has no more merit of his own than had the Jew. Faith cannot exist in a man that is highminded. Rather, have “fear,” lest you do the same as the unbelieving Jew, then you will likewise be cut off.

“For if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee.” Romans 11:21

If God spared not the natural branches, the unbelieving Jews, then you will be cut off too.

“Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off.” Romans 11:22

The goodness of God is His mercy. The severity of God is His justice. God cannot change His law. He cannot change the plan of salvation. This may seem severe, but it is His perfect law and His perfect plan to save man from his sinful condition and to maintain the universe in perfect harmony, peace, and holiness.

So severity has come to the unbelieving Jews because they refused to change. Mercy has come to you Gentiles because you were willing to be changed into the image of Christ. But you must continue to live by faith in the grace of God or you will also be cut off.

“And they also, if they abide not still in unbelief, shall be grafted in: for God is able to graft them in again.” Romans 11:23

If the unbelieving Jew, who was cut off, now believes, then he shall be grafted in.

“For if thou wert cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature, and wert grafted contrary to nature into a good olive tree: how much more shall these, which be the natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree?” Romans 11:24

If God can graft in wild branches, the Gentiles, then He can graft back in the natural branches, the Jews.

“For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in.” Romans 11:25

Blindness has come to part of Israel, but not all. The church began with believing Jews. The “fulness of the Gentiles” has reference to the successful conversion of the Gentiles in the first century, and to all that will be saved in the kingdom of God.

“And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob:” Romans 11:26

This passage was from Isaiah 59:20, 21; 27:9. Because of the Deliverer, all of spiritual Israel will be saved. Isaiah hoped that a revival would take place in Israel and that she would fulfill her divine calling in spreading the everlasting gospel around the world. Paul now shows how the prophecy met its fulfillment with (1) Jesus as the Deliverer, and (2) the believing Jews and converted Gentiles receiving Christ’s righteousness.

“For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins.” Romans 11:27

God had covenanted to send to this fallen world His only Son as the Redeemer. He covenanted to both forgive us and deliver us from sin.

“As concerning the gospel, they are enemies for your sakes: but as touching the election, they are beloved for the fathers' sakes.” Romans 11:28

The unbelieving Jews became enemies of the gospel with their rejection and hostility toward Christ. However, God used this tragedy for good with the conversion of the Gentiles.

“For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance.” Romans 11:29

God is not repentant that He chose Israel. His plan to recreate us into His image has not changed. His promises are sure.

“For as ye in times past have not believed God, yet have now obtained mercy through their unbelief:” Romans 11:30

Not too many Gentiles were converted in Old Testament times. They mostly acted as enemies of the Jews. Then again, the Jews were terrible at world evangelism. But now with the first advent of Christ and the work of the church, many of the Gentiles have found salvation in Christ.

**“Even so have these also now not believed, that through your mercy they also may obtain mercy.”
Romans 11:31**

There are now so many unbelieving Jews, just like there were so many unbelieving Gentiles throughout the centuries. But by God showing His mercy to the Gentiles, we pray that many unbelieving Jews will become believers.

“For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all.” Romans 11:32

All have sinned and all are in need of mercy.

“O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!” Romans 11:33

O how wonderful are the ways of God. He can take the failure of the Jews as a nation, and reach the whole known world with the remnant (believing Jews) and converted Gentiles.

When referring to the wisdom of God, Paul uses words like “depth” and “riches.” The word “depth” would denote a knowledge that is immeasurable or inexhaustible. The word “riches” directs us to God’s ability to bring good out of bad.

“For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor?” Romans 11:34

Who could possibly advise God on any subject?

“Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again?” Romans 11:35

We have earned nothing. God is the great Giver. We are the recipients.

“For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen.” Romans 11:36

You cannot make God a debtor, because all things are made by Him, all things are sustained by Him, and all these things are for His pleasure.

Romans Chapter Twelve

Romans 12:1-15:13: The Practical Application of Righteousness by Faith

“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.” Romans 12:1

Because we have been justified and sanctified, we should present our bodies a living sacrifice. Paul now begins the practical section of his epistle and starts with the area of health. Paul is familiar with how much the physical affects the spiritual.

Earlier Paul had spoken about the flesh, referring to it as our sinful flesh and the motions of the flesh. So in our practical application, (1) do not become the slaves of flesh, (2) do not give in to your sinful tendencies, and (3) do not allow self-gratification to rule your life.

Rather, present your bodies a living sacrifice without blemish. Present it as a holy sacrifice that is set apart to honor God. Present it as an acceptable sacrifice that is pleasing to God. Present it as a reasonable sacrifice that is logical and not fanatical. Present it as a way of worshiping God.

“And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.” Romans 12:2

Now Paul refers to the mind. Do not be conformed to this world by beholding the world and the things of the world. Rather, have a renewed mind by thinking about the same things Christ would think about.

So we are to have a healthy body and a renewed way of thinking that we may be able to “prove” or discern the perfect will of God.

“For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.” Romans 12:3

One of the first evidences of a renewed mind is a humble spirit. Christ’s first words in His Sermon on the Mount were “Blessed are the poor in spirit.”

We cannot even boast about having a great faith, for to each man God had given a “measure of faith.” With the spirit of humility and pride subdued, we will better discern God’s perfect will.

“For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office.” Romans 12:4

We need humility and discernment to work together as one body with varying talents, gifts, and personalities.

“So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.” Romans 12:5

Because we are one body there is mutual dependence upon one another.

“Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith;” Romans 12:6

The various gifts and talents distributed to the members of the church are guided by God’s grace. Often we see these talents as merely natural talents. But God has set in order the various parts of the body. All of these gifts or talents need to be anointed by the Holy Spirit for the work of the gospel.

If I have the gift of writing, should I use that talent for writing unsanctified material? Absolutely not! It is to be used to spread the truth. All the various gifts are to be used as such. Consider the gift of prophecy. It refers to special utterances from God, or when a person, like Moses, becomes a spokesperson for God. Then there is the gift of faith. Such a gift does not fret over obstacles, but encourages God's people to move forward because God has thus directed. They know that God will supply all that they need to do the task He has said should be done.

"Or ministry, let us wait on our ministering: or he that teacheth, on teaching;" Romans 12:7

The gift of ministry refers to the care of the poor. The gift of teaching may include the ability to put together material, but it is mostly focused on the ability to present God's Word.

"Or he that exhorteth, on exhortation: he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that showeth mercy, with cheerfulness." Romans 12:8

The gift of exhortation is the ability to encourage and console others. Such a gift is used effectively in motivating the saints to action and comforting those in affliction.

The gift of giving is seen when one gives with singleness of heart, without mixed motives, and uses God's resources wisely. There are many other gifts of the Spirit. You can find them in 1 Corinthians 12 and Ephesians 4:11, 12.

"Let love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good." Romans 12:9

Let your love be genuine. Loathe evil. Sincere love cannot condone evil. Eli loved his rebellious sons, but if it were a perfect love, he would have corrected them. Cleave to that which is good. Join yourself to that which is spiritually excellent.

"Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another;" Romans 12:10

Regard each other affectionately, preferring the other as greater than yourself. Seek not your own honor. Be willing to give honor to others.

"Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord;" Romans 12:11

Do not be careless or lazy when it comes to work. Be fervent for Jesus wherever you go. Be on fire for Jesus. Hasten to do good and have the mind of a servant and look for ways to serve others.

"Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer;" Romans 12:12

Be able to look beyond the darkness, be patient when trials come, and be persistent in your prayer life. Seek His will and desire His presence.

“Distributing to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality.” Romans 12:13

Share in the needs of the church and have a love for strangers.

“Bless them which persecute you: bless, and curse not.” Romans 12:14

Do good to those that hate you. Plan to perform a kindness to someone every day, and stop thinking about getting back at people.

“Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep.” Romans 12:15

Rejoice in the success of others. Do not become jealous. Comfort those who weep.

“Be of the same mind one toward another. Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceits.” Romans 12:16

If Christ condescended to the earth, certainly we can condescend to our fellow man. Be teachable and do not act like you know everything. Learn to work with others and find common purposes and hopes.

“Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men.” Romans 12:17

Break the practice of returning evil for evil. Return good for evil and give people hope that there is a better life. Be honest in all your business dealings. A good name is better than many riches.

“If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.” Romans 12:18

We live in a very contentious world, therefore, make a difference and be a peacemaker.

“Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.” Romans 12:19

Leave matters with God. When we allow anger to rule, we generally say things that should never be said, and we may even perform unkind acts that should never even be entertained. Trust that God knows how best to deal with situations.

“Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head.” Romans 12:20

Kind acts have a way of softening the heart of even our enemies. So return good for evil. In this way, you give your enemy an opportunity to be converted.

“Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.” Romans 12:21

Vengeance is not a sign of strength, but weakness. If you return good for evil you have won a precious victory. You have gained a victory over your own evil temper. You have also gained a victory over evil. If you had returned evil for evil, then the world would have become more evil. But when you returned good for evil, you made the world a little better. You made it harder for Satan to gain control of this world

Romans Chapter Thirteen

“Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God.” Romans 13:1

God has ordained order, so be respectful to authority. This doesn't mean that God approves the conduct of civil authorities. If we had to choose between obeying God or man, we must obey God. See Acts 5:29

“Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation.” Romans 13:2

If you resist civil authority, you bring upon yourself God's displeasure, and you may be facing judgments from the civil government.

“For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same:” Romans 13:3

It is to our advantage to be law-abiding citizens. If we do good, we earn people's respect. But if you do wrong, then you face punishments for your actions.

“For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil.” Romans 13:4

Civil laws are enforced to protect citizens from incivility. Those in law enforcement are there to find and punish criminals.

“Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake.” Romans 13:5

Do that which is good because it is the right thing to do, not just to avoid wrath.

“For this cause pay ye tribute also: for they are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing.” Romans 13:6

Paying your taxes or tribute is a way of showing your obedience to civil law.

“Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour.” Romans 13:7

While the Jews hated tax-collectors, Christians were known to pay their taxes. It is important to be courteous, respectful, and law-abiding.

“Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law.” Romans 13:8

Pay your bills and avoid debt like the plague. But there is one debt you can never fully pay, that is the debt of love. Even our obedience to God's law must be based upon love and not simply out of a sense of duty.

"For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." Romans 13:9

Paul is clearly referring to the Ten Commandments. Some teach that the Ten Commandments are no longer binding upon the Christian. They are wrong. How can we love our neighbor as ourselves, if we break the commandments concerning our neighbor?

"Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law." Romans 13:10

Love is not inactive, love is active, it "worketh." And it works no ill towards our neighbor. Rather, we perform kindnesses to our neighbors.

"And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed." Romans 13:11

What did Paul believe about the Second Coming of Christ? He believed in the certainty of Christ's return. He longed for His return. He knew that it would come suddenly and unexpectedly. He knew that the gospel must be proclaimed throughout the world before Christ would come.

Paul was also aware that the antichrist power must come first. He knew that the antichrist power would follow the pagan Roman Empire. So he knew that Christ was not coming next week or even next year. But he hoped and prayed that it would be soon. See 2 Thessalonians 2:1-8.

"The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light." Romans 13:12

Let us cast away the works of darkness. We are wasting our time by continuing in sin. We must put on the armor of light to hasten the Lord's coming.

"Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying." Romans 13:13

We should speak and act as if the whole world were watching us. So do not live the dark life of licentiousness and drunkenness.

"But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof." Romans 13:14

So put off the old man and put on the new man. Do not tempt yourself and make it easier for yourself to sin. Do those things that encourage you to do the right. But above all, spend time with Christ each day and receive His righteousness.

Romans Chapter Fourteen

“Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations.” Romans 14:1

Instead of arguing over your opinions, help your brother in Christ.

“For one believeth that he may eat all things: another, who is weak, eateth herbs.” Romans 14:2

One thinks he can conscientiously eat all clean foods, even if they are sacrificed to idols. Another is a strict vegetarian and is offended when someone eats meat offered to idols. The main point of Paul’s argument in this section is not over certain foods. We can be assured that Paul is not against being a vegetarian. His focus is on having patience with one another. Paul makes this same argument in 1 Corinthians 8:4-9.

“Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not; and let not him which eateth not judge him that eateth: for God hath received him.” Romans 14:3

If God has accepted your brother, then why are you throwing him away because of his diet? The act of judging your brother shows an element of spiritual pride.

“Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be holden up: for God is able to make him stand.” Romans 14:4

Who are you to judge Christ’s servant? The Master will judge whether he stands or falls. Furthermore, Christ is able to make your brother stand in the truth.

“One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind.” Romans 14:5

Everyone should be fully persuaded in his own mind whether to keep certain holy days or not. Do not rob someone else’s freedom to make up his mind.

“He that regardeth the day, regardeth it unto the Lord; and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it. He that eateth, eateth to the Lord, for he giveth God thanks; and he that eateth not, to the Lord he eateth not, and giveth God thanks.” Romans 14:6

He that observes certain holy days does so to the glory of God, his brother who does not keep these certain holy days, has also given his life to the Lord. He that eateth clean foods sacrificed to idols is thankful for his sustenance. The brother who does not eat foods sacrificed to idols also gives thanks for God’s blessings.

“For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself.” Romans 14:7

Our life is given as a trust from the Lord, and we should live for the Lord. Whether we eat or drink certain foods should be to honor God. Whether we keep certain holy days should be based on giving

God to glory. In a secondary sense, your life influences all of those around you. But always put God first in your decision-making.

“For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's.” Romans 14:8

We belong to the Lord. Our job is not to judge our brother, but to make sure we are doing all that the Lord is asking of us.

“For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living.” Romans 14:9

We belong to God by creation, but we also belong to Him due to the death and resurrection of Christ. Jesus is Lord of those who died in the faith, and also of the living saints.

“But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ.” Romans 14:10

In the end, God will judge him that eats clean foods sacrificed to idols and him that does not. So if God is judge of all, why are you judging one another?

“For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God.” Romans 14:11

This quotation is from Isaiah 45:23. In the final judgment, every knee will bow to God. Every tongue confesses to God, not man.

“So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God.” Romans 14:12

Therefore, everyone is individually responsible before God.

“Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in his brother's way.” Romans 14:13

Why should we avoid judging one another? First of all, each man is accountable to God alone. Secondly, you must be sure that you are not a stumblingblock to your brother. Instead of being judgmental, be considerate to your brother and be careful not to offend him.

“I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that there is nothing unclean of itself: but to him that esteemeth any thing to be unclean, to him it is unclean.” Romans 14:14

Paul personally believed that there is nothing wrong with eating foods sacrificed to idols. These so-called idols are just stone and wood. They do not really exist. So how could these foods be unclean? However, he is very aware that many of his brothers in the faith are convinced that eating foods sacrificed to idols is a grievous sin.

“But if thy brother be grieved with thy meat, now walkest thou not charitably. Destroy not him with thy meat, for whom Christ died.” Romans 14:15

When the one who eats herbs sees his brother eating these foods sacrificed to idols, he is grieved. Nay more than that, he is so troubled by this that he might even give up his faith.

Therefore, do not allow an indulgence that you consider perfectly proper, to be the cause of destroying your brother’s faith. It is better to just eat other things.

“Let not then your good be evil spoken of:” Romans 14:16

You know that it is okay to eat foods sacrificed to idols. But consider this, what if those who disagree with you begin to speak evil of you, is it worth it? It happens. You could be doing something completely lawful, yet others may go around and criticize you. Of course, you cannot allow critical people to control your life, but be very prayerful about the situation.

“For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.” Romans 14:17

After all, the kingdom of God is more than food. There are bigger issues. So prayerfully consider sacrificing some of your freedoms for the good of the whole church. It really isn’t that terrible to give up eating foods sacrificed to idols. There are so many other foods to eat that will not trouble your brother. As the stronger brother, think about promoting righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit.

“For he that in these things serveth Christ is acceptable to God, and approved of men.” Romans 14:18

Aim high, live peaceably with your brother, in so doing, you will stand the test with God and win the approval of your brother.

“Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another.” Romans 14:19

So think prayerful about peace among brethren and doing those things that help build one another up in the faith.

“For meat destroy not the work of God. All things indeed are pure; but it is evil for that man who eateth with offence.” Romans 14:20

Let us not destroy the church by what we eat. It may be right to eat such foods, but it is wrong to needlessly offend your brother.

“It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor any thing whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak.” Romans 14:21

When it comes to eating we have essentially two questions to ask. First, is this food lawful before God? Second, will the eating of this food cause my brother to stumble? Certain foods may be lawful, but they

could be a stumblingblock for your brother. In this case, it would be better to eat something else that is lawful before God.

“Hast thou faith? have it to thyself before God. Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth.” Romans 14:22

Do you have a clear conscience to eat these foods before God? If so, let that be between you and God. Blessed is the man that will not parade his freedom in such a way that grievously offends his brother.

“And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith: for whatsoever is not of faith is sin.” Romans 14:23

The man who eats certain foods against his conscience is condemned. So if you think eating foods sacrificed to idols is wrong, then do not eat them. Don't eat them because everyone else is eating them. Study the matter out, and live by faith.

Romans Chapter Fifteen

“We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves.” Romans 15:1

Within the church we have members that are strong in faith and those that are weak in faith. We should help those that are weak. Do not just think about your own desires and rights. Think often about your weaker brother, and do what you can to help him.

“Let every one of us please his neighbour for his good to edification.” Romans 15:2

We do not help the weak by agreeing with their opinions and practices. We help them through the work of edification. This means you will do what is in their best spiritual interest.

“For even Christ pleased not himself; but, as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me.” Romans 15:3

Christ was willing to give up life itself for our salvation. We should also live a life of service that practices self-sacrifice and self-denial.

“For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.” Romans 15:4

There are wonderful lessons for us in God's Word. By a careful study of Scripture we learn about the value of patience and comforting others. When we practice these things contained in God's Word it instills hope in His promises.

“Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be likeminded one toward another according to Christ Jesus:” Romans 15:5

God Himself is patient and comforting to us. He wants us to be just like Him toward one another.

“That ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.” Romans 15:6

When we live by the Word, we are in agreement with God. With one mind and one mouth we glorify God.

“Wherefore receive ye one another, as Christ also received us to the glory of God.” Romans 15:7

Christ received us and we should receive one another. The purpose of our connection to Christ is to glorify God.

“Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers:” Romans 15:8

Christ came first to reach the Jewish nation. He confirmed the promises made to Israel that He might reach the Jews. But He also came to fulfill all things to reach the Gentile as well.

“And that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy; as it is written, For this cause I will confess to thee among the Gentiles, and sing unto thy name.” Romans 15:9

Christ came for all. God kept His promise to send His own Son into the world. Christ pledged to die for our sins. The Holy Spirit is committed to woo all to Christ. Angels go to and fro from heaven to earth to minister to fallen humanity. Heaven is very active in the salvation of all men.

“And again he saith, Rejoice, ye Gentiles, with his people.” Romans 15:10

Rejoice, ye Gentiles, that you are part of God’s family as well.

“And again, Praise the Lord, all ye Gentiles; and laud him, all ye people.” Romans 15:11

This is a quotation from Psalm 117:1. Hence, it had long been known that the Gentiles would become part of spiritual Israel.

“And again, Esaias saith, There shall be a root of Jesse, and he that shall rise to reign over the Gentiles; in him shall the Gentiles trust.” Romans 15:12

So the coming of the Messiah was not for the Jews alone, but for all peoples. Paul clearly shows this from passages in the Old Testament. This quotation was from Isaiah 11:10.

“Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost.” Romans 15:13

This passage reads like a prayer. Paul covets the joy of the Gentile in experiencing the joy of walking in the Spirit. As such, the new believer will have joy, peace, and hope.

Romans 15:14-16:27: The Conclusion

“And I myself also am persuaded of you, my brethren, that ye also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another.” Romans 15:14

I am convinced that you have both knowledge and goodness. I believe that you will use these strengths to admonish one another.

“Nevertheless, brethren, I have written the more boldly unto you in some sort, as putting you in mind, because of the grace that is given to me of God,” Romans 15:15

The Lord had appointed Paul as an apostle. It was important to cover the subject of righteousness by faith, even if he had to do so more boldly.

“That I should be the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God, that the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Ghost.” Romans 15:16

Paul is an apostle to the Gentiles. He is even like a ministering priest, who is seriously working to offer the Gentiles as a holy and blameless church to God, with the Gentiles being sanctified by the Holy Spirit.

“I have therefore whereof I may glory through Jesus Christ in those things which pertain to God.” Romans 15:17

Paul is thankful to God for the success of his ministry among the Gentiles. He does not take the credit for himself, but gives the glory to God.

“For I will not dare to speak of any of those things which Christ hath not wrought by me, to make the Gentiles obedient, by word and deed,” Romans 15:18

Paul recognized that others had successfully worked among the Gentiles. He takes no credit for the work others have done. But he thanks God for his ministry done in both word and deed. God gave him the power to speak, to perform miracles, and to live the Christian life.

“Through mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God; so that from Jerusalem, and round about unto Illyricum, I have fully preached the gospel of Christ.” Romans 15:19.

It seems that God blessed Paul with mighty miracles to confirm the spiritual truths he was preaching. Paul ministered from Jerusalem to Illyricum, which is a Roman province north of Macedonia.

“Yea, so have I strived to preach the gospel, not where Christ was named, lest I should build upon another man's foundation:” Romans 15:20

Paul eagerly went to start churches where no churches existed. Paul was a true pioneer.

“But as it is written, To whom he was not spoken of, they shall see: and they that have not heard shall understand.” Romans 15:21

This quotation is from Isaiah 52:15. He went to places where Christ’s name was unknown.

“For which cause also I have been much hindered from coming to you.” Romans 15:22

Paul took his mission work seriously. While he desired to go to Rome long before this, he was not going to leave his work undone in another place.

“But now having no more place in these parts, and having a great desire these many years to come unto you;” Romans 15:23

But now that my work is done in these parts, I can now make plans on coming to Rome.

“Whensoever I take my journey into Spain, I will come to you: for I trust to see you in my journey, and to be brought on my way thitherward by you, if first I be somewhat filled with your company.” Romans 15:24

Paul had hoped to go to Spain. There is no evidence that he ever made it to Spain. But his tentative plan was to visit the saints in Rome on his way to Spain.

“But now I go unto Jerusalem to minister unto the saints.” Romans 15:25

But I first must go to Jerusalem. There are important issues to take care of.

“For it hath pleased them of Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor saints which are at Jerusalem.” Romans 15:26

The churches in Macedonia and Achaia took up a contribution to help the poor saints in Jerusalem.

“It hath pleased them verily; and their debtors they are. For if the Gentiles have been made partakers of their spiritual things, their duty is also to minister unto them in carnal things.” Romans 15:27

The church began in Jerusalem by dedicated believers living under great persecution. The churches all around the world have a certain debt to the saints in Jerusalem. The Gentiles in Macedonia saw themselves as great recipients of spiritual things from the saints in Jerusalem, and desired to help them with carnal things or physical things, such as, means for food and clothing.

“When therefore I have performed this, and have sealed to them this fruit, I will come by you into Spain.” Romans 15:28

Paul’s plan was to perform this duty in Jerusalem, then go to Rome, and finally to Spain.

“And I am sure that, when I come unto you, I shall come in the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ.” Romans 15:29

Paul did not intend to go to Rome as a prisoner, but he did. Nonetheless, it could be said that he came in the “fullness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ.” His intentions had always been to share the gospel with God’s people everywhere he went.

“Now I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, and for the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with me in your prayers to God for me;” Romans 15:30

I would like for you to agonize with me in prayer for the sake of the work of Christ, and that the love of the Spirit may continue to bind us together.

“That I may be delivered from them that do not believe in Judaea; and that my service which I have for Jerusalem may be accepted of the saints;” Romans 15:31

There are men in Judea amongst the unbelieving Jews that hate me. My fellow countrymen see me as a traitor to the Jewish faith. I even have some people that do not trust me in the church in Jerusalem. This would be the Judaizers. I really need your prayers.

“That I may come unto you with joy by the will of God, and may with you be refreshed.” Romans 15:32

I pray that things will go well in Jerusalem that I may still come to you with “joy by the will of God.” I know that our time together will be refreshing and a real blessing to me and the work.

“Now the God of peace be with you all. Amen.” Romans 15:33

May the God of peace breathe upon you His own peace. Amen.

Romans Chapter Sixteen

“I commend unto you Phebe our sister, which is a servant of the church which is at Cenchrea:” Romans 16:1

The word for “servant” in this text means deaconess. It is the only occurrence of this word in the feminine. It would seem that the role of a deaconess had already been established in the early church. Cenchrea is about seven miles from Corinth. We do not know any more about Phebe other than what is recorded here, but she played some important role in the work in Rome.

“That ye receive her in the Lord, as becometh saints, and that ye assist her in whatsoever business she hath need of you: for she hath been a succourer of many, and of myself also.” Romans 16:2

Even though Paul had never been to Rome when he wrote this epistle, he certainly knew people in Rome that could receive Phebe and assist her.

That Phebe was a “succourer of many” would tell us that she herself was not in poverty. The word “business” refers to things of a legal matter. So Phebe may have been a woman of influence that could have helped the church financially and politically.

“Greet Priscilla and Aquila my helpers in Christ Jesus.” Romans 16:3

We have met Priscilla and Aquila in the Book of Acts. They were converted under Paul’s ministry in Corinth. Acts 18:1-3. Later they had moved to Ephesus. See Acts 18:18, 19, 26. When Paul was writing this epistle it is evident that they were then in Rome. They had been a great help to Paul in his work of the gospel. They would later return to Ephesus. See 2 Timothy 4:19

“Who have for my life laid down their own necks: unto whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles.” Romans 16:4

There were attacks against Christians in Corinth and Ephesus. Priscilla and Aquila had risked their own lives in their work with Paul.

“Likewise greet the church that is in their house. Salute my wellbeloved Epaphroditus, who is the firstfruits of Achaia unto Christ. Greet Mary, who bestowed much labour on us. Salute Andronicus and Junia, my kinsmen, and my fellowprisoners, who are of note among the apostles, who also were in Christ before me. Greet Amplias my beloved in the Lord. Salute Urbane, our helper in Christ, and Stachys my beloved. Salute Apelles approved in Christ. Salute them which are of Aristobulus' household. Salute Herodion my kinsman. Greet them that be of the household of Narcissus, which are in the Lord. Salute Tryphena and Tryphosa, who labour in the Lord. Salute the beloved Persis, which laboured much in the Lord. Salute Rufus chosen in the Lord, and his mother and mine. Salute Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermas, Patrobas, Hermes, and the brethren which are with them. Salute Philologus, and Julia, Nereus, and his sister, and Olympas, and all the saints which are with them.”
Romans 16:5-15

These verses contain a list of people that Paul knew in Rome before he ever visited Rome. It tells us that the influence of Paul’s work was far and wide. He likely worked with many of these individuals in other places.

In verse five, Paul says, “greet the church that is in their house.” The early Christians had no church buildings, they met in homes. These acts of hospitality likely drew the early church members closer to one another. We find also “Epaphroditus” who was one of Paul’s first converts.

In verse seven, Paul salutes Andronicus and Junia, his fellow kinsmen that had also been imprisoned for their faith. They were “among the apostles.” They were either well known by the apostles, or they played a very significant role like an apostle in the church. In 1 Corinthians 12:28, we have the spiritual gift of an apostle as the first gift.

In verse thirteen, Paul writes, “Salute Rufus chosen in the Lord, and his mother and mine.” Rufus’ mother was not also Paul’s mother, but she must have been like a mother to him.

“Salute one another with an holy kiss. The churches of Christ salute you.” Romans 16:16

It was customary to salute one another with an holy kiss.

“Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them.” Romans 16:17

Now Paul warns the church in Rome against those that would cause divisions among them. Evidently some were teaching erroneous doctrines and causing other problems. Paul says, “avoid them.”

“For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple.” Romans 16:18

These false teachers are not serving Christ, but themselves. They have a gift to teach. What they say may seem innocent. The danger is that they will draw away the “hearts of the simple.”

“For your obedience is come abroad unto all men. I am glad therefore on your behalf: but yet I would have you wise unto that which is good, and simple concerning evil.” Romans 16:19

These false teachers have not been too successful in drawing members from the church. The church in Rome has thus far done well in guarding itself against these false teachings. But Paul wants them to remain vigilant.

“And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen.” Romans 16:20

Satan seeks to destroy peace, but it is the God of peace that will destroy Satan. It is the “grace of our Lord Jesus Christ” that makes us victorious in combating false teachers and in overcoming sin.

“Timotheus my workfellow, and Lucius, and Jason, and Sosipater, my kinsmen, salute you.” Romans 16:21

Timothy was a close companion to Paul. Paul mentions Timothy often in his epistles. See 2 Corinthians 1:1; Philippians 1:1; Colossians 1:1; 1 Thessalonians 1:1, 2; 2 Thessalonians 1:1; Philemon 1.

“I Tertius, who wrote this epistle, salute you in the Lord.” Romans 16:22

Imagine being Paul’s secretary. Paul is dictating this epistle to you. You are writing down every word. You grasp Paul’s logic as he is inspired by the Holy Spirit. At the end, he gives you the permission to say, “I Tertius, who wrote this epistle, salute you in the Lord.” What a privilege!

“Gaius mine host, and of the whole church, saluteth you. Erastus the chamberlain of the city saluteth you, and Quartus a brother.” Romans 16:23

This may be the same Gaius mentioned in Acts 19:29; 20:4; 1 Corinthians 1:14; 3 John 1. He may have been called the “host” because the church met in his home.

“The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.” Romans 16:24

Grace is the key to the Christian life. This life-changing grace comes from Christ.

“Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began,” Romans 16:25

Now to Jesus who is able to strengthen you according to God’s plan to save man from his sinful condition, which is revealed in our fellowship with God, by Christ sharing His own righteousness with us through the work of the Holy Spirit.

“But now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith:” Romans 16:26

Since the coming of Jesus, His righteousness has been revealed in His followers keeping the commandments of God. Men and women, Jews and Gentiles, have experienced God’s saving power and have become obedient to the faith in Christ Jesus our Lord. The work of transforming sinners into saints has already started.

“To God only wise, be glory through Jesus Christ for ever. Amen.” Romans 16:27

This is happening because we serve an all-wise God. Praise and glory be to Him and to His Son, Jesus Christ, forever. Amen.