

Outline of the Book of Romans

Introduction:

During the year 57 BC the apostle Paul was in the city of Corinth. A great need had arisen in Jerusalem due to many saints living in poverty (Acts 24:17, Romans 15:25-28, I Cor. 16:1-9 and II Cor. 8-9). Paul's intentions were to take collected funds from the Gentile churches in Macedonia and Achaia back to Jerusalem and then visit the Romans on his way to Spain (cf. Rom. 15:26-28). While waiting the time of his departure from Corinth to Jerusalem, Paul penned this epistle to the Romans. The objective of the epistle appears to be fivefold. First, Paul revealed the purpose of preaching and teaching to be that of producing obedience (cf. Rom. 1:5; 16:26). Secondly, Paul explained the power of gospel message (Rom. 1:16) that tells of the saving blood of Jesus Christ (Rom. 3:24-25; 5:8-9). Thirdly, Paul answered the age-old question regarding how one becomes a Christian throughout chapters 1-10. Fourthly, the Christian's responsibilities in all aspects of life are revealed at Romans 12-15. Finally, Paul painted a clear picture of the kingdom of God in chapter 16. The kingdom of God, the Lord's church, is comprised of faithful individuals. Faithful Christians of NT days paid careful attention to who was true to God's word. Those who taught different doctrines caused harm to the body of Christ and were, therefore, to be marked (Rom. 16:17).

Wrath awaits the man or woman who rejects Christ's blood sacrifice (Rom. 2:2ff). Paul therefore preached the gospel message that individuals may obey God and be saved from His wrath (Rom. 1:5). Obedience is certainly a key factor in one's stand with God. Paul stated, "*Know ye not, that to whom ye present yourselves as servants unto obedience, his servants ye are whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?*" (Rom. 6:16). One's obedience leads to righteousness which is connected to being "*made free from sin*" (Rom. 6:18). When I am free from sin, I am justified (Rom. 4:5; 5:1), a recipient of God's grace (Rom. 5:2; Eph. 1:7), righteous, sanctified, and have a true hope of eternal life (Rom. 6:19-23). Paul examined the faithful life of Abraham to illustrate to his audience that justification comes through faithful obedience and always has. What is it that I need to obey? Paul instructed the Romans to hear and believe the gospel message (Rom. 10:17), repent of past sins (Rom. 2:4), confess with the mouth that Jesus is Lord (Rom. 10:9), be baptized for the remission of sins (Rom. 6:1-11), and live faithfully (Rom. 2:7-9; 6:16).

Faithful living takes into consideration God's laws (Rom. 12:1-2). The Christian is commanded to exercise tender loving affection toward all (Rom. 12:9ff), leave vengeance to God (Rom. 12:17ff), be subject to and respect the existing civil governing authorities (Rom. 13:1-7), leave worldly thinking behind (Rom. 13:11-14), be considerate of others opinions in matters that will not effect the eternity of the soul (Rom. 14 all), promote unity in the body of Christ (Rom. 15:5-6), and meditate on God's laws (Rom. 15:14ff).

There are people all over the world now, as there were in Paul's day, that are currently doing all they can to press into heaven through fear and obedience to the Lord. Romans 16 illustrates that such faithful people kept up with each other and welcomed each other with open arms when traveling to these various locations. Christians today ought to keep up with each other. Knowledge of the faithful and unfaithful will keep the church pure and members from being swayed away from truth by the smooth and fair speech of false teachers (Rom. 16:17-18).

Author of the epistle to the Romans:

Romans 1:1 reads, "*Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God...*" Clearly the apostle Paul wrote the Roman epistle. Tertius (Rom. 16:22) was evidently one who wrote as Paul dictated the epistle. Paul did however, write some of his own epistles (cf. I Cor. 16:21; Gal. 6:11; II Thess. 3:17 and Phm. 1:19).

Place of Writing:

There are four reasons to accept the city of Corinth as the place of Paul writing the epistle to the Romans:

1. In chapter 16:1, Paul commends Phoebe to the brethren in Rome. He reveals the fact that she is from Cenchræe. Evidently Phoebe is attending others who hand delivers this epistle to the brethren in Rome. Her hometown gives us her origin. Cenchræe is a town located only seven miles from Corinth.

2. Gaius showed hospitality to Paul (Romans 16:23). Gaius was baptized by the apostle Paul at Corinth (I Cor. 1:14). Thus Corinth was Gaius' residence.
3. Erastus is mentioned as the treasurer of the city where Paul was writing from (Rom. 16:23). Erastus is known to have his residence at Corinth as well (II Tim. 4:20).
4. Compare Acts 24:17, Romans 15:25-28, I Cor. 16:1-9 and II Cor. 8-9. This contribution is the same in all three books.

Time of Writing:

Romans 15:22-29 gives us the details as to when Paul wrote this epistle. He had intended to visit the Roman brethren on his way to Spain. Before his visit; however, he had to attend to business at hand. He determined to deliver the relief collected from the Gentile churches in Macedonia and Achaia to the needy saints in Jerusalem.

Time line:

AD 51, Nero Claudius Caesar Augustus Germanicus (Nero) banished the Jews from Rome (Acts 18:1-2). Aquila and Priscilla, a couple from Rome, traveled to Corinth because of the decree of Claudius (Acts 18:2). The Apostle Paul travels to Corinth from Athens and there meets Aquila and Priscilla (Acts 18:1ff).

AD 51-53, Paul stays in Corinth for 18 months teaching and preaching the word of God (Acts 18:11). At this time, it is most likely that he penned the epistle to the Galatians and both epistles to the Thessalonians. According to II Thessalonians 1:1, Silas and Timothy remained with Paul during his stay at Corinth. From Corinth, Paul travels to Ephesus with Priscilla and Aquila. We are not told whether Silas and Timothy made this trip with Paul. Paul leaves Priscilla and Aquila in Ephesus and travels to Caesarea of Judea then up to Antioch (Acts 18:18ff).

AD 55, apparently, Paul's visit was short. He tells the brethren of his success in Macedonia, and then travels back through southern Galatia to Ephesus on his third tour of preaching. Evidently Timothy was now in Ephesus with Paul (Acts 19:22). Whether he came there originally with Paul, Priscilla and Aquila, we are not told. We do know that Paul pinned the epistle to the Corinthian brethren from Ephesus (I Cor. 16:8-9), and that Paul sent Timothy and Erastus to Corinth from Ephesus (Acts 19:22) that they may "*put you (Corinthians) in remembrance of my ways which are in Christ, even as I teach everywhere in every church*" (I Cor. 4:17).

AD 55-57, Paul remains in Ephesus preaching and teaching for two years and three months (Acts 19:8-22). Acts 20:31 refers to his stay as three years.

AD 57-58, Paul travels to Macedonia and Greece (Acts 20:1ff). He collects the funds from the Gentile brethren. After three months in Greece (Acts 20:3), he traveled back to Jerusalem with the funds expecting to be there before Pentecost (Acts 20:16).

Evidently then, while Paul was on his third tour of preaching in Corinth, preparing to travel to Jerusalem with the collected funds, he pins the epistle to Romans. The year is **AD 57-58**. This coincides with Romans 15:22-29.

The Purpose of the epistle:

Paul had heard of the faith of the Roman brethren as well as the rest of the world (Romans 1:8). For years he had desired to see them face to face (Romans 1:11, 15:23). Often times he desired to travel to Rome yet he was hindered (Romans 15:22). It is his desire that Rome be his resting place as he journeys on to Spain (Romans 15:24, 28). Due to the heretics who abounded, it was obviously Paul's intent to set matters of justification and salvation straight in the minds of the Roman brethren. This is in keeping with his desire to have all men obey the gospel, which had power unto salvation. Many of the Jews considered the fact that since they were descendants of

Abraham they had the hope of salvation. Paul exposes the error in this line of thinking and helps them to see that they will be justified from their sins by an obedient faith in Jesus Christ alone (Rom. 5:1ff). Once justified from their sins, they must exist as living sacrifices that they may please the Lord (Rom. 12:1ff).

Outline of Romans

Chapter 1

I. The Apostle Paul's relation to Jesus (1:1-5):

- A. *"Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God, which he promised afore through his prophets in the holy scriptures, concerning his Son, who was born of the seed of David according to the flesh, who was declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead; even Jesus Christ our Lord,"* (1:1-4).
1. Paul recognizes his self as both servant and apostle of Jesus Christ. *"Apostle"* (*apostolos*): "delegate or messenger" (AG 99). "A messenger, ambassador [a diplomatic officer appointed by one government as a representative to others], envoy... a sacred messenger, an Apostle..." (LS 107). Paul was a messenger of Jesus Christ and had the authority to speak in his name (cf. Acts 26:18; I Cor. 14:37) (see study # 1; The Apostles).
 2. Paul was *"separated unto the gospel of God"* in that he was appointed by God to proclaim or instruct men concerning things which pertain to Christian salvation (see Gal. 1:15ff).
 3. This gospel was *"promised afore through his prophets in the Holy Scriptures"* (vs. 2). God had promised that through the seed of Abraham all nations would be blessed (Gen. 12:3). His everlasting Kingdom would be established through the seed of David (II Sam. 7:12-15 / Acts 2:29ff; 13:22ff). The fulfillment of this promise is realized in Jesus Christ (Gal. 3:16). God's gracious promise is the forgiveness of sins made known through the gospel message (Acts 2:38-39). Paul tells us that this gospel message was preached to Abraham (Gal. 3:8) (see study # 2; God's Great Promise).
 4. This gospel is about God's Son, *"who was of the seed of David according to the flesh"* (1:3).
 - a. *"Of the seed of David"* literally means *"from David's semen"* (Thayer 583).
 - b. David's physical semen is not what caused the coming of Jesus. Joseph and Mary had not even been married at the point that Mary conceived of the Holy Spirit (Matt. 1:18).
 - c. Thus we know that Paul is using the word semen or *sperma* in the figurative sense much like it is used in the OT (cf. Gen. 12:7; 15:13; II Sam. 7:12; Psa. 89:5).
 - d. Joseph is not the natural father of Jesus (Matt. 1:18-25).
 - e. Contrasting the flesh to the spiritual side, Jesus is said to have been *"declared the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection of the dead"* (1:4).
 1. The word *"declared"* (*horizo*) = "to divide or separate from, as a boundary... to pass between or through... to mark out by boundaries, mark out... to determine for one's self... take possession..." (LS 568). Jesus has been marked out and determined to be the Son of God by the power that it took to raise him and others from the dead.
 - a. Jesus raised Jairus' daughter (Mark 5:22-24).
 - b. The widow of Nain's son (her only son) (Luke 7:12-14).
 - c. Lazarus (Jn. 11:38-44). Jesus raised Lazarus by his own power because he was equal to God (Jn. 1:1; Matt. 1:23 etc.).
 - d. Jesus was resurrected (Jn. 2:19; 20:19ff) (the first fruits of all who will be eternally resurrected / I Cor. 15:20ff).
 2. The gospel of Jesus Christ then is about God's son born of the seed of David in the flesh, yet was the Son of God as proven by His resurrection and His ability to raise the dead (see study # 3; The Nature of Truth).
 3. This is the first of three *"power"* statements in Romans one (cf. 1:16, 20). Each of these statements illustrates the fact that God is truly divine.
- B. *"through whom we received grace and apostleship, unto obedience of faith among all the nations, for his name's sake;"* (1:5).

1. Paul received the grace of God (i.e., the forgiveness of his sins / cf. Eph. 1:7) and he also received his apostleship through Jesus. God appointed Paul as an apostle from the time he was in his mother's womb (cf. Gal. 1:15ff).
 2. The purpose of this appointment was, *"unto obedience of faith among all the nations, for his name's sake"* (1:5).
 - a. Faith and obedience were to be the products of Paul and all other apostle's teachings. Said statement causes us to understand that God's grace is conditioned upon one's faith and obedience (cf. study # 4; God's Grace / # 5; The Purpose of Preaching / # 6; Bible Obedience).
 - b. The faith here is a subjective faith, not objective (the truth as seen in Phil. 1:27; Jude 3).
- C. *"among whom are ye also, called to be Jesus Christ's: to all that are in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ"* (1:6-7).
1. The epistle is addressed to those who have been *"called to be Jesus Christ's"* and this class of individuals is termed *"saints"* (1:6). Saints (*hagios*) translated 'holy' by Nestle and Marshall. The word means holy, clean, and pure (cf. I Pet. 1:15-16) through the forgiveness of sins.
 2. Just as Paul was called (*kletos*) to be an apostle (vs. 1), even so the Romans had been called (*kletoi*) to be Christians. They were summoned by the gospel (II Thess. 2:13-14) and so Paul had fulfilled his commission as mentioned in verse 5 (see study # 7; How to become a Christian).
 3. The Christians in Rome (Jew and Gentile) were *"beloved of God"* (indicates a very close relationship; AG 6). They were dear and beloved of God because of their obeying the gospel call to salvation. This infers that we who obey the gospel today are beloved of God. God's love is defined in His sending His own son to pay the price of man's sins (cf. Jn. 3:16). Like an eagle that watches over her young very carefully so God cares for His own (cf. Ex. 19:4) (see study # 8; God's Love for His People).
 4. Paul desires that God's grace and peace would find itself manifest in the lives of the Romans (vs. 7b) through their obedience that is produced by their subjective faith in Jesus. God's grace is made known through his objective revelation to man (the faith; Jude 3).

II. Paul makes known his desires and duties toward those in Rome (1:8-17):

- A. *"First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is proclaimed throughout the whole world"* (1:8).
1. Christian's often communicated about the faith or lack thereof of other Christians around the world (cf. Col. 1:8etc.) (see study # 9; Church Autonomy).
 2. Note that gossip and violations of church autonomy were not committed here (II Cor. 13:1). These brethren were genuinely concerned for one another and thereby received great joy when they heard of each other's stand in truth (cf. II Jn. 4; III Jn. 4). The Roman Christians had gained a worldwide reputation that they were faithful. Notice how *"faith"* and *"obedience"* are connected. Verse five described faith as having obedience connected due to one producing the other. Here is the purpose of Paul's joy. The Christians in Rome were filled with faith which produced obedience to the teachings of Jesus Christ! (cf. II Jn. 9-11).
- B. *"For God is my witness, whom I serve in my spirit in the gospel of his Son, how unceasingly I make mention of you, always in my prayers making request, if by any means now at length I may be prospered by the will of God to come unto you"* (1:9-10).
1. Paul gives God prayerful thanks for the reputation of the Roman Christians as he often did for other saints (cf. Eph. 1:16). Paul was a man who truly loved the saints of God and experienced much *"anxiety for all the churches"* (II Cor. 11:28) (see study # 10; The Apostle Paul).
 2. Not only did Paul pray for the welfare of the saints in Rome, but he also prayed that he might have the opportunity to visit them (1:10). Paul knew that this would only happen if it were God's will (1:10b).
- C. *"For I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established;"* (1:11).
1. Paul desired to make a personal visit to Rome that the saints be *"established"* (*sterichthenai*) = "to make fast, to confirm, establish... to be firmly set or fixed" (LS 746) in God's word. Paul's purpose for making a second pass through Galatia was the same (Acts 14:21-22)

2. Two ways to establish the Roman's faith:
 - a. By imparting spiritual gifts such as tongues, prophecy, knowledge etc.
 - b. Secondly, the faith of the Romans would be established by instruction (strengthened in spiritual wisdom).
- D. *"And I would not have you ignorant, brethren, that oftentimes I purposed to come unto you (and was hindered hitherto), that I might have some fruit in you also, even as in the rest of the Gentiles"* (1:13).
 1. Paul did not want anyone to misunderstand why he had not come to Rome for the establishment of the saints.
 2. Paul does not tell us what the hindrance was; however, it has obviously passed. He is now ready to see them unless something else happens.
 3. He then sets forth his **primary reason** for wanting to see them:
 - a. *"that I might have some fruit in you also, even as in the rest of the Gentiles"* (1:13b). Paul was the apostle to the Gentiles (Acts 9:15).
 - b. The fruit Paul speaks of is the product of his teaching the gospel message to them as mentioned at Romans 1:5 (i.e., faith and obedience).

III. The 'I am(s)' of Paul (1:14-17) (see study # 10):

- A. *"I am debtor both to Greeks and to Barbarians, both to the wise and to the foolish"* (1:14).
 1. The word *"debtor"* (*opheiletes*) = "to be debtor to another... to bound, to be obliged to do a thing..." (LS 580). Paul was obligated, bound by duty to the Gentiles (cf. Acts 9:15ff).
 2. Obviously there were two classes of Gentiles (this clause is a continuation of vs. 13b cf. E3a above).
 - a. *"Greeks"* (*hellesin*) "of Gentiles, opp. to Jews... to speak Greek... to be made Greeks in language by another..." (LS 251).
 - b. *"Barbarians"* (*barbarois*) "not Greek, foreign... all that were not Greeks, specially the Medes and Persians: so the Hebrews called the rest of mankind Gentiles. From the Augustan age however the name was given by the Romans to all tribes which had no Greek or Roman accomplishments" (LS 146).
 3. Paul was obliged to preach to the Greek and non-Greek speaking Gentiles in Rome. Their earthly language and accomplishments had no bearing on the soul. Likewise the Christian today is duty bound to teach the unsearchable riches of Christ to a lost and dying world (II Tim. 2:1-2) (see study # 11; Personal Work).
- B. *"So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you also that are in Rome"* (1:15).
 1. Paul was ready, willing, and eager to preach the gospel message to the Gentiles in Rome.
 2. Whether the Gentiles are Christians (in which case he would strengthen them as is indicated in vs. 11) or non-Christians (in which case he would attempt to convert them).
- C. *"For I am not ashamed of the gospel: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek"* (1:16).
 1. Verse 16 gives the purpose for Paul being *"ready."* Paul was ready to preach because he was not ashamed of the gospel that had the great power to save souls.
 2. Paul was not ashamed or embarrassed to preach the gospel message even though men of the world considered the gospel message foolishness (I Cor. 1:18, 23). The Corinthian brethren had charged Paul with preaching his own ideas (cf. II Cor. 3:1; 4:5; 5:12; 10:12; 13:3), being deranged (II Cor. 5:13), and even referred to him as an idiot (II Cor. 11:7-9; 12:11) yet Paul preached because he knew the power of God's promises revealed in truth.
 3. The reason there was no hesitation due to embarrassment: *"for it (the gospel) is the power of God unto salvation."*
 - a. The gospel had the potential to deliver a man's soul from the consequences of sin! A power that is unparalleled.
 - b. Deliverance from sin gives one salvation (eternal life).
 - c. Notice; however, that the power of the gospel is a potential power. In other words, it is conditioned upon learning (Jn. 6:44-45) and *"belief"* (*pisteuonti*) = "to trust, trust to or in, put faith in, rely on, believe in a person or thing... to believe that, feel sure or confident that a

thing is, will be, has been..." (LS 641). One illustrates a true belief, trust, confidence in, or faith by their obedience (cf. Rom. 6:16; Heb. 11:1ff).

- d. Thus the power of the gospel is not realized in simple belief, but belief which has as its product obedience (Jn. 3:16, 36) (cf. prior comments on vs. 6). One who would say that Paul speaks of justification by 'faith only' has not given careful exegesis of these early passages much less the latter ones (cf. Rom. 5:1ff; 6:16; James 2:18-20). The gospel is the truth (Eph. 1:13) a truth which demands an obedient faith, not faith only (cf. I Jn. 2:4-5).
4. This power is realized to "*the Jew first and also to the Greek*" (1:16c).
 - a. God is not a respecter of persons and the gospel message is an attestation to this fact (Gen. 12:1-4; Gal. 3:26-29; Rom. 2:11).
 - b. Paul refers to the power offered to the "*Jew first*" in that it was first preached to the Jews then to the Gentiles (Luke 24:47; Acts 1:8).
- D. "*For therein is revealed a righteousness of God from faith unto faith: as it is written, But the righteous shall live by faith*" (1:17).
 1. Verse 17 brings us back to the gospel. The gospel is the "*righteousness of God revealed from faith unto faith.*" "*Righteousness*" (*dikaion*) "regular, exact, rigid, right, lawful, just... real, genuine, true" (LS 202). The gospel exposes the rigid, exact, right, and lawful ways of God for man to live. One is considered righteous (right and lawful) when receiving the forgiveness of sins through knowledge and repentance through hearing, learning, and doing. "Living" by faith indicates obedience (see study # 6). It is the blood of Jesus that makes one clean and right (II Cor. 7:1; Col. 1:20ff; Heb. 9:22ff; I Jn. 1:9).
 2. The gospel message tells of the conditions to achieve this clean state "*from faith unto faith.*"
 - a. The gospel message reveals (makes known) the conditions for one to be clean and thereby have a heavenly home 'by means of' "*faith unto faith.*" This simply says that one LEARNS from the gospel that faith (in Jesus as the author of eternal salvation) is what brings about a state of righteousness. Thus from faith unto faith (cf. I Jn. 5:1).
 - b. The gospel message is a learned message, else it has no power (cf. Jn. 6:44-45; Eph. 4:20-21). Only those who exercise obedient faith are acceptable to God ("*just*") (1:17b).

IV. Paul begins his argument for Salvation or Justification by faith (Rom. 1:18), which goes through Rom. 11:36. He begins first with the Gentiles:

- A. "*For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hinder the truth in unrighteousness;*" (1:18).
 1. God's wrath is *revealed* (present tense verb that indicates an ongoing process) "*from heaven*" (God's indignation is continuously being seen in even casual observance against those who would live ungodly).
 2. God's wrath is expressed toward the following (1:18):
 - a. *The ungodly* (*asebeian*) "impiety, ungodliness; improbity, wickedness" (Moulton 55).
 - b. *The unrighteous* (*adikian*) "wrong doing, injustice" (LS 13).
 - c. Those who "*hinder the truth in unrighteousness*" are due God's wrath. To "*hinder*" (*katechonton*) = "to hinder (to obstruct or delay the progress of), restrain, hold down" (Moulton 224). That which is "*hindered*" is "*the truth*" (the revealed word of God). The ungodly obstruct the progress of the truth with their error (both teaching and practice). Note that "*ungodliness*" and "*unrighteousness*" is in contrast to living righteously by faith in verse 17.
- B. "*because that which is known of God is manifest in them; for God manifested it to them*" (1:19).
 1. The ungodly that obstruct truth's objective of forgiving men of their sins are due God's wrath because God's truths have been made "*manifest*" to them by God.
 2. Paul goes on to explain how truth has been made manifest and why the ungodly are rightly due God's wrath.
- C. "*For the invisible things of him since the creation of the world are clearly seen, being perceived through the things that are made, even his everlasting power and divinity; that they may be without excuse*" (1:20).

1. The wrath of God is due the ungodly because they hinder truth through false teaching and ungodly practices. Furthermore, they make it manifest that they have clearly ignored the obvious signs of God's "*invisible things*" (i.e., "*His power and divinity*"). Though invisible, God's power and divinity are made manifests by "*the things that are made.*"
 2. The Gentile who rejected God's laws for his own religious practices is without excuse because the material universe proves that God is (see Ps. 19:1ff) (see study # 12; Evidences of the Reality of God).
 3. God has manifested (made known to man) His attributes by His creation. When one so accepts God through creation then said individual will fear God and thereby seek Him and His laws out. Solomon said, "*The fear of Jehovah is the beginning of knowledge; but the foolish despise wisdom and instruction*" (Prov. 1:7).
 4. Man has the ability to reason and should have concluded that God exists based upon the creation itself. Said faith would have caused them to move to revelation and gain a greater incite into God. So it is that creation (Ps. 19:1ff; Rom. 1:20) and revelation (I Cor. 2:6-13; Gal. 1:11-12) reveal the "*power and divinity*" of Jehovah God (see study # 12). For man to lay his eyes on the orderly universe and proclaim "*there is no God*" is to truly be foolish (Psalms 14:1).
- D. "*because that, knowing God, they glorified him not as God, neither gave thanks; but became vain in their reasonings, and their senseless heart was darkened*" (1:21).
1. Note that Paul first exclaims that the Gentiles had knowledge of God made manifest to them through the creation yet they rejected Him and so are due His wrath (Rom. 1:19ff). Again, Paul tells us that the unbelieving Gentile who practices and teaches error in relation to spiritual matters is without excuse because they did not glorify God as the one true God. They could have brought God glory by bearing fruits of righteousness revealed in His revelation; however, they chose rebellion (cf. Jn. 15:8ff; Gal. 5:22ff).
 2. Neither would they give God thanks ("to return thanks" {AG 328}). It is an act of rebellion to not acknowledge the blessings of this life and give God glory for them (cf. Acts 14:15-17). Paul's prayer for the Colossians was that they would be thankful for the good blessings (the forgiveness of sins) that come through Jesus Christ (Col. 1:12) (see study # 13; Give God Thanks).
 3. Instead of acknowledging God, giving him glory, and thanks the Gentiles, "*became vain in their reasonings, and their senseless heart was darkened*" (1:21b).
 - a. The Gentile's thoughts and reasoning were "*vain.*" The word "*vain*" simply means useless and worthless. The inference is obvious, they had sought after dumb lifeless idols to offer their worship to (cf. I Cor. 3:20).
 - b. One great example of this very thought is found in Jeremiah. The prophet states, "*And I will utter my judgments against them touching all their wickedness, in that they have forsaken me, and have burned incense unto other gods, and worshipped the works of their own hands*" (Jeremiah 1:16). Again, the prophet states, "*Thus saith Jehovah, What unrighteousness have your fathers found in me, that they are gone far from me, and have walked after vanity, and are become vain?*" (Jeremiah 2:5).
 - c. The vanity or worthlessness was revealed in their "*reasoning*" = "thought, opinion, reasoning, design (AG 185). They took the unseen (God's power and divinity) and assigned meanings dreamed up in their own minds rather than taking His divine revelation. God warned the Hebrews about doing this at Exodus 20:4-6; Deut. 4:15ff. Creation and revelation must be taken together. The Gentiles; however, took the creation, believed in a god, and worshipped things made with hands. This typology of thought was prophesied by Isaiah and again by Jesus (Matt. 13:10-15). Paul commended divine revelation to the Corinthians as opposed to "*fleshly*" reason (II Cor. 1:12; 2:17). All who do the same today must realize that the source of any religious practice must be from God's authoritative revelation (see study # 14; Bible Authority).
 - d. Next, Paul says their "*senseless hearts were darkened*" (1:21c). "*Senseless*" (*asunetos*) = "void of understanding, stupid, not to be understood, unintelligible" (LS 127). The disobedient Gentiles' minds were stupid and in the "*dark.*" The word "*darkness*" is defined at Acts 26:18 as the "*power of Satan*" (see study # 15; The Work of Satan). Again, these Gentiles had not

used their mind as God intended it to be used. His creation should have produced an acknowledgement of God and a thirst for divine revelation.

- E. *“Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools”* (1:22).
1. Here again we see a contrast between how the Gentiles viewed themselves and what they truly were (see Jer. 2:35; 8:8; 16:10) (see study # 16; Self Delusion). They considered themselves to be wise (educated). Paul uses the same terminology in I Cor. 1:19-25. Through their proclamation of their intelligence they actually pronounced their true ignorance in relation to true wisdom. They were deluded by the devices of craft and deceit of Satan (II Cor. 2:11; 4:2).
 2. Their assessment of their own self was ridiculously in error.
- F. *“and changed the glory of the incorruptible God for the likeness of an image of corruptible man, and of birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things”* (1:23).
1. The glory of Jehovah God is His divinity and everlasting power (cf. Rom. 1:20). The Gentile traded Jehovah’s revelation for his own fleshly wisdom in effect handed over all power and divinity to a piece of wood or stone carved in the fashion of a man, beast, or fish.
 2. Jeremiah said of the idolaters of his day, *“My people have changed their glory for that which doth not profit”* (Jeremiah 2:11b) (see study # 14).

V. **Due to the Gentile’s continual faulty reasoning, God gave them up (1:24-32):**

- A. *“Wherefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts unto uncleanness, that their bodies should be dishonored among themselves:”* (1:24).
1. The phrase *“God gave them up”* is used three times from vs. 24-28. God permitted these Gentiles to proceed in their sin with no interference (see study # 17; God Gives man the freedom to Choose His Ways). We must see that this is a part of God’s judicial judgment. God allowed them to do as they pleased and travel deeper into the depths of sin.
 2. To what did God give them up to? The phrase *“Lust of their hearts”* is causal in relation to all which proceeds. The desire of the Gentile was to do his own will as opposed to God’s. Practices that are unlawful, in respect to God’s divine revelation, are termed *“uncleanness”* (*akatharsia*) = *“impurity”* (LS 25). *“Unclean, lewdness; impurity of motive”* (Moulton 11). By their unclean acts they dishonored their bodies. That is, they used their bodies in a shameful fashion. The body is designed to bring God glory, however the Gentiles brought shame and dishonor to God by their actions (cf. I Cor. 6:19-20; Jn. 15:7-14).
- B. *“for that they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshipped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen”* (1:25).
1. The Gentiles *“exchanged”* the true God for false gods (idols). Any god that is not God, is false, a lie. They have no life, intelligence or creative abilities (Isa. 45:20). The Gentiles deliberately worshipped these *pseudo* gods. They rejected the authority of God and accepted the doctrine of craft and deceit of the devil. Interestingly, these Gentiles saw the need for worship through the creation; however, they failed to join God’s revelation to His creation. Said failure led them to create their own practices and teachings.
 2. At this point, Paul gives the first of many doxologies to come (*doxa* / glory honor // *logos*, speech; thus a statement of honor). At the mention of God the Father, he extols him by saying He is *“blessed for ever, Amen”* (see study # 18; Bible Doxologies).
- C. *“For this cause God gave them up unto vile passions: for their women changed 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 unseemliness, and receiving in themselves that recompense of their error which was due”* (1:26-27).
1. Again, Paul reminds his readers that God permitted the Gentiles to participate in *“vile passions”* (things of disgrace AG 608) due to their rejection of His revelation.
 2. God’s judicial punishment against the ungodly was to let them go unpunished for the time being and participate in homosexuality (i.e., exchanging the natural uses of men and women) (see study # 19; The Sin of Homosexuality).
- D. *“And even as they refused to have God in their knowledge, God gave them up unto a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not fitting”* (1:28).

1. The Gentiles “*refused*” (“they thought not fit” [NM 605]) (*edokimasan*) to search out the creator of the universe and seek His guiding revelation. God gave the Gentiles the choice as to whether they would seek Him out or run their own course and they chose their own ways. They concluded that God is; however, chose their own ways and imaginations to conclude who and how to worship him.
 2. Due to their choice, God permitted them to exercise a “*reprobate*” mind. The word “*reprobate*” literally means, “that which does not meet the test applied. In the NT, not standing the test, unqualified, worthless” (AG 18). Said test are authorized in the scriptures (II Cor. 2:9; II Jn. 4:1, 6). The thinking of the Gentile was opposed to the revelation of God. To have a reprobate mind is to reason against God’s standard truths. Jesus said that there are two sources of authority; i.e., human and divine (Matt. 21:23ff). The apostle Paul delineates the two as “*fleshly wisdom*” and “*sincerity of God*” (II Cor. 1:13); “*corruption and sincerity*” (II Cor. 2:17) (see study # 14).
- E. “*being filled with all unrighteousness, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malignity; whisperers, backbiters, hateful to God, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, without understanding, covenant-breakers, without natural affection, unmerciful.*” (1:29-31).
1. To be “*filled with all unrighteousness*” (*adikian*) = “wrong doing, injustice” (LS 13).
 2. “*Wickedness*” (*poneria*) = “a bad state or condition, badness... in moral sense, wickedness, vice, knavery... baseness, cowardice” (LS 661).
 3. “*Covetousness*” (*pleonexia*) = “the character and conduct of greed, grasping, assumption, arrogance... gain advantage, with a view to one’s own advantage... larger share of a thing...” (LS 645).
 4. “*Maliciousness*” (*kakia*) = “badness in quality... defects... cowardice, sloth... moral badness, wickeness, vice” (LS 393).
 5. “*Full of envy*” (*phthonos*) = “ill will, envy, jealousy... to feel envy or jealousy... to incur envy or dislike” (LS 861).
 6. “*Murder*” (*phonos*) = “murder, homicide, slaughter, blood shed in murder” (LS 869).
 7. “*Strife*” (*eris*) = “strife, quarrel, debate, contention... political or domestic strife, discord, quarrel, wrangling, disputation” (LS 314).
 8. “*Deceit*” (*dolos*) = “a bait for fish: then, any cunning contrivance for deceiving or catching, as the Trojan horse, the robe of Penelope... any trick or stratagem... guile, craft, cunning, treachery” (LS 208) (cf. II Cor. 2:11; 4:2).
 9. “*Malignity*” (*kakoetheia*) = “badness of disposition, malignity... bad manners or habits” (LS 393).
 10. “*Whisperers*” (*psithuristes*) = “a whisperer, slanderer” (LS 902).
 11. “*Backbiters*” (*katalalos*) = “slandorous; a detractor, calumniator” (Moulton 217).
 12. “*Hateful to God*” (*theostuges*) = “a hater and contemner of God” (Moulton 193).
 13. “*Insolent*” (*hubristes*) = “an overbearing, wantonly violent person” (Moulton 412).
 14. “*Haughty*” (*huperephanos*) = “arrogant, haughty... to bear oneself haughtily” (LS 836).
 15. “*Boastful*” (*alazon*) = “a false pretender, impostor, quack, of sophists... swaggering, boastful, braggart” (LS 32).
 16. “*Inventors (epheuretes) of evil things*” = “an inventor, contriver (plan or scheme)” (LS 38).
 17. “*Disobedient (apeithes) to parents*” = “disobedient... less obedient to them” (LS 90).
 18. “*Without understanding*” (*asunetos*) = “void of understanding, stupid... not to be understood, unintelligible” (LS 127).
 19. “*Covenant breakers*” (*asunthetos*) = “regardless of covenants, perfidious” (Moulton 57).
 20. “*Without natural affection*” (*astorgos*) = “devoid of natural or instinctive affection, without affection to kindred” (Moulton 57).
 21. “*Unmerciful*” (*aneleemon*) = “unmerciful, uncompassionate, cruel” (Moulton 28).
- F. “*Who, knowing the ordinance of God, that they that practices such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but also consent with them that practice them*” (1:32).
1. Thus the Gentile is without excuse. They are dependant upon human reasoning rather than divine revelation. Their observation of the universe should have moved them to fear and a knowledge of God; however, they rejected the Lord.

2. The Jew is now introduced. The Jew saw the Gentile as a lost soul worthy of death. Paul reveals here that those who condemn one race for their sinful acts have actually condemned their self because they practice the same sinful things.

Synopsis of Chapter 1

The purpose of gospel preaching is to produce faith and obedience (Rom. 1:5). Paul reveals three reasons one should acknowledge God in faith through obedience. The common denominator of these three facts is the “*power*” of God. First, one should conclude by faith that God is because of past resurrections (the most important being that of Jesus) (Rom. 1:4). Secondly, one should conclude that God is because divine revelation (the gospel) reveals this to be (Rom. 1:16). Thirdly, one should conclude that God is divine because the creation reveals Him to be filled with “*everlasting power and divinity*” (Rom. 1:20). The Gentiles apparently believed in a divine being because they “*exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshipped and served the creature rather than the Creator...*” (Rom. 1:25). The word “*exchange*” is important to this study (see study # 3). The Gentiles traded divine revelation for their own vain “*reasoning*” when it came to worshipping the creator of the universe (cf. Rom. 1:21). Paul tells the Thessalonians that such is a spirit of the “*son of perdition*” who “*sets himself forth as God*” in that he worships, teaches, and practices religious duties by his own standards as opposed to the Lord’s. Throughout the word of God we find that truth alone saves and any man who changes, adds, perverts, or takes away from that truth will suffer the wrath of God (cf. Rev. 22:18-19).

Chapter 2

I. Condemnation to all who disobey God’s Word (2:1-11):

- A. “*Wherefore thou art without excuse, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest: for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest dost practice the same things*” (2:1).
 1. Paul uses the conjunction “*wherefore*” (*dio*) to connect chapters one and two. The connection; however, has been the subject of much controversy. It appears that Paul is speaking to a second class of people in chapter 2. We take note that Paul is addressing a class of people termed “*O man*” and then at verse seventeen identifies this group of people as “*Jews*.” The Jew; therefore, is under consideration in chapter 2. Chapter one proved the guilt of the Gentile and chapter 2 indicates the guilt of the Jew. Both are in need of God’s mercy and grace.
 2. Paul is not condemning all judging of individuals in these verses. Jesus said, “*Judge not according to appearance, but judge righteous judgment*” (Jn. 7:24). If man were altogether forbidden to make judgments of others then how would the church ever install elders and deacons? How would the church exercise discipline (I Cor. 5:1ff)? How would we know to mark and avoid sinful brethren (Rom. 16:17ff)? How could we be wary of false prophets (teachers) who come to us in sheep clothing (Matt. 7:15ff)? The fact of the matter is that the Christian must make judgments to fulfill the word of God. Problems occur when I judge others yet conveniently forget to apply the same standard to my own life (cf. Matt. 7:1-5). Apparently the Jew was in the business of judging the Gentiles for their wicked works yet refuse to apply the same judgments to their own lives (see study # 20; Judging Others).
- B. “*And we know that the judgment of God is according to truth against them that practice such things*” (2:2).
 1. God’s judgments are according to truth; i.e., the word judges man’s life to be right or wrong (cf. Jn. 5:48; 7:24).
 2. Those who practice sin violate God’s laws (i.e., truth) (cf. I Jn. 3:4). Only a deluded fool participates in sin, condemns all others for such living, and somehow believes he is ok with God (see study # 21; Calvinism: Once Saved always Saved). The Jews were guilty of “*practicing such things*” yet judged the Gentiles wrong and their own as right.
- C. “*And reckonest thou this, O man, who judgest them that practise such things, and doest the same, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God*” (2:3).

1. Whether Jew or Gentile, God's wrath will be revealed against unlawfulness. The Jew was guilty of the same crimes of unrighteousness that the Gentiles were. In their judging the Gentiles for their unrighteous acts, they were in effect judging themselves (vs. 1). The condemnation of God rest upon any who commit iniquity (vs. 2). We note early on that God is no respecter of persons. Those who sin are due his wrath whether that sinner be Jew or Gentile.
 2. Paul thereby poses a rhetorical question (paraphrase): "If the Jew condemns the Gentiles for specific sins yet commits the same sins, do you really think you Jews will escape the condemnation of God?" The answer to this question is emphatically NO! However, the Jew really believed he would escape the condemnation of God since he was, by heritage, a descendant of Abraham's. Paul's point is that this is faulty reasoning (see study # 16)!
 3. The word "*reckon*" (*logizomai*) = "to count, reckon, calculate, compute... without reference to numbers = to take into account, calculate, consider, deem, consider tat... to reckon or account so and so... to conclude by reasoning, infer that a thing is" (LS 476).
 4. Note that it is not one's personal conclusions (reasoning) that determines right or wrong it is God's word (Jn. 12:48) (see study # 3).
- D. "*Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?*" (2:4)
1. If the Jew answered yes to the first rhetorical question regarding thinking that he will somehow escape the judicial condemnation of God for his unrighteous acts, then he has indeed "*despised the riches, goodness, forbearance and longsuffering of God.*"
 2. To "*despise*" (*kataphroneo*) something is to "look down on, treat with contempt or to think lightly of...to entertain wrong ideas about God's goodness" (AG 421).
 3. Three terms applied to God which indicate his riches (see study # 22; God's Character Traits):
 - a. "*God is good.*" That is, God is "kind and generous" (AG 894).
 - b. "*God is forbearing*" (*anochē*) = "a holding back, stopping, esp. of hostilities... forbearance" (LS 74). The idea of the term is that God is holding back his wrath on the sinner that he may have time to repent. All should view this quality of God as kind and generous rather than to despise it.
 - c. "*God is longsuffering*" (*makrothumia*) = "longsuffering" (LS 485); "patience; patient enduring of evil, fortitude... slowness of avenging injuries, long-suffering, forbearance, clemency" (Moulton 256). This same kind spirit is to be a part of every Christian when dealing with those in error (cf. I Thess. 5:14).
 4. God's rich, good, and kind attributes of being patient with the sinner is designed to give the man or woman time to come to their senses and "*repent*" (*metanoia*) = "a change in mode of thought and feeling, repentance... reversal of the past" (Moulton 266). The change in thought is to move one from doing sinful things to doing lawful things. That which changes the mind from doing one unlawful thing to doing lawful things is the word of God (cf. II Cor. 7:8-10) (see study # 23; Bible Repentance).
- E. "*but after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up for thyself wrath in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God*" (2:5).
1. The goodness and forbearance of God should have led to the Jew's repentance; however, in some it led to their impenitent and hardness of heart (i.e., no immediate punishment led to their thinking that they were ok).
 2. The "*hardness*" (*sklerotes*) of heart = "hardness of heart, obduracy, obstinacy, perverseness" (Moulton 369). The Jew's stubborn heart was "*impenitent*" (*ametanoetos*) = "impenitent (unrepentant), obdurate (hardened in wrongdoing or wickedness... hardened against feeling)" (Moulton 18). The Bible reveals the hard heart to be one that rejects God's commands and does what the flesh desires (see study # 24; Hard Hearts).
 3. To all the mercy and kindness God showed the Jews, many responded with callous hearts of stubbornness. Thus the Jews were treasuring or storing up for themselves God's wrath on the day in which He has appointed to condemn them.
 4. The day of wrath (see study # 25; The Day of Judgment):

- a. That Day of Judgment will be a day of God pouring out his wrath on the impenitent and obstinate people (Acts 17:30-31).
 - b. The judgment will be fair because God has been more than fair with sinful man. It is termed a time of “*revelation*” because all of man’s secrets will be uncovered!
- F. “*Who will render to every man according to his works: to them that by patience in well-doing seek for glory and honor and incorruption, eternal life: but unto them that are factious, and obey not the truth, but obey unrighteousness, shall be wrath and indignation*” (2:6-8).
1. The “*righteous judgment*” of Romans 2:5 will be conducted according to one’s deeds or works (Rom. 2:6). The heart of man is revealed in his deeds, thus he shall be judged accordingly (see study # 24). The deeds of man while in the flesh will be laid aside the laws in which God has given man to govern his life. The man who faithfully obeys the commands of God and gives God glory by his continual seeking of that glory will receive eternal life with God (Jn. 15:7-14; Rom. 2:7). This reward is eternal!
 2. The other class of individuals who do not seek the glory and honor of God are the factious, those who do not obey the truth (1:8). These shall inherit their just reward, the outpouring of God’s wrath!
 - a. “*Factious*” (*eritheia*) = “to serve for hire, to serve a party, the service of a party, party spirit; feud, faction” (Moulton 166). This word is found at Philippians 2:3 where Paul states, “*doing nothing through faction or through vainglory, but in lowliness of mind each counting other better than himself.*” The factious have cares that are made manifest in their desiring to have a following. Factious people are filled with themselves and want others to see how wonderful they are. These individuals gain followings as they murmur and complain about the elders, preacher, deacons, and any other member that opposes their error. Though some brethren cannot see through their self imposed goals the word of God clearly exposes them.
 - b. “*Those who do not obey the truth.*” The gospel is the truth (cf. Eph. 1:13). God had revealed himself not only in creation but in the written revelation as well. The Jew, who obeyed not the truth, was without excuse and subject to God’s wrath.
 - c. “*They obey unrighteousness.*” Rather than living according to God’s truths they lived according to their own self imposed religious ideas. All three of these conducts exhibit a faulty reasoning on the part of the Jew.
- G. “*tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that works evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Greek*” (2:9).
1. There are four consequences revealed that shall rest upon the man or woman who works evil (see study # 26; Hell):
 - a. “*Wrath*” (*orge*) = “passion, anger, wrath... anger against a person or at a thing” (LS 566). God’s wrath will be appease against unrepentant sinners after He throws them into the lake of fire to experience torment for ever (cf. Rev. 20:15).
 - b. “*Indignation*” (*thumos*) = “the seat of anger... hence, anger, wrath” (LS 371).
 - c. “*Tribulation*” (*thlipsis*) = “to press, squeeze, pinch... of a person heavy-laden... metaph. To oppress, afflict, distress” (LS 367).
 - d. “*Anguish*” (*stenochoria*) = “narrowness of space: want of room, metaph. The difficulty of passing the river” (LS 744). Those who have issues with Closter phobia, pain, and distress (which includes all of us) will not want to be in hell. Paul is speaking about the results of a godly life (i.e., eternal life / 2:7) and the ungodly life (i.e., eternal punishment).
 - e. Note that the trait of God depicted at verse 4 is kindness and goodness (an over all restraining of punishing the wicked). Clearly, the time of God’s patience and kindness exercised toward the unlawful one day end (see study # 22). Secondly, note the terms used for God’s judgments; i.e., wrath, indignation, tribulation, and anguish. These are terms that indicate how serious God hates sin (cf. Prov. 8:13). Truly God HATES the way of evil.
 2. The “*every soul*” indicates that God is the creator of all flesh (cf. Jer. 32:26). No Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist, or Australian Aborigine will escape the judgment of God.
- H. “*but glory and honor and peace to every man that works good, to the Jew first, and also to the Greek: for there is no respect of persons with God*” (2:10-11).

1. In Juxtaposition to the wicked, is the man whose deeds are good: He shall be rewarded with (see study # 27; Heaven):
 - a. *“Glory” (doxa)* = “the opinion which others have of one, estimation, reputation, credit, honor, glory... the estimate popularly formed of a thing... of external appearance, glory, splendor, effulgence” (LS 209). The man that *“works good”* will be like Jesus in the resurrection (cf. I Jn. 3:1). The Christian’s glory will be the splendor of an immortal body with no pain, agony, anguish, and tribulation (cf. Rev. 21:4).
 - b. *“Honor” (time)* = “that which is paid in token of worth or value: ... honor, dignity, lordship... a reward, present... of things, worth, value, or price” (LS 807). The Christian’s honor is the reward given by God of those that *“work good.”*
 - c. *“Peace” (eirene)* = “time of peace, peace (the absence of war and hostility)” (LS 230).
2. Whether Jew or Gentile, *“for there is no respect of persons with God.”* God sent his son Jesus, to die for all mankind (Jn. 3:16). Everything that heaven will be hell will not be!

II. Deeds shall condemn or commend man (2:12-16):

- A. *“For as many as have sinned without the law shall also perish without the law: and as many as have sinned under the law shall be judged by the law;”* (2:12).
 1. The Gentile was not given the law, as was the Jew. The Jew’s law defined sin and lawful living whereas the Gentile had no such written law. Paul asserts; however, that both Jew and Gentile shall perish if they commit sin. The question may arise as follows: How could the Gentile sin if he had no written law to tell him what sin was?
 2. Paul is speaking by revelation and thereby we conclude that the Gentile was under law even though no written law was delivered to them as was given to the Jews at Mount Sinai. The standard that the Gentiles would be judged by is identified in Romans 1:18-2:11; the Gentile had the ability to reason given to him by God so that there was no excuse for him not having faith in the creator. The Gentile could look upon creation and see that an intelligent God made these things and thus he should have given glory to God instead of making idols of rocks and wood that has no power of reason. Thus the Gentiles violated an unwritten law found in the existence of creation and revealed to Jews through revelation. If they had not violated some type of law then sin would not have been committed by them (cf. Rom. 4:15; I Jn. 3:4). Therefore, it would not be the Law of Moses that judged them but rather the non-written law mentioned in 1:18ff. Again, this proves that the Gentiles are not without law and neither shall they escape judgment. God’s judicial judgment on this class of people will be based on what they had available to them.
 3. This illustration proves that the individual who goes through life in ignorance of the law of Christ will also stand without excuse. Sin is sin no matter the circumstances behind it. God’s creation operates on such a law. The “sincere, honest, and ignorant” individual who either acts or teaches in error stands without excuse (see study # 28; False Teachers) (see study # 22; The Nature of God).
- B. *“for not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified”* (2:13).
 1. Paul will later state, *“faith comes of hearing and hearing by the word of God”* (Rom. 10:17). The beginning of any man’s obedience to a law is that he hears and believes in that law. Likewise, Paul equates the observation of the authoritative creation of God with law. The Jews heard the law of Moses all their lives yet it did not profit many of them because there was no faithful obedience to it. A Gentile that did not have the luxury of God’s written law yet concluded that God is from his observation of creation and worshipped the one true God was justified before the unfaithful Jew. Note that James states, *“For as the body apart from the spirit is dead, even so faith apart from works is dead”* (James 2:26).
 2. The obedient are those who will be *“justified” (dikaios)* = “to deem righteous... to think fit” (LS 202). God views those who are obedient to law as right or fit for His rewards (see study # 21).
- C. *“(for when Gentiles that have not the law do by nature the things of the law, these, not having the law, are the law unto themselves; in that they show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness therewith, and their thoughts one with another accusing or else excusing them;)”* (2:14-15).

1. The Gentiles' unwritten law may be termed the law of observable creation. Though no revelation existed law nonetheless did. The observation of creation and the conclusion that God exists is termed doing something by "*nature*" (*phusis*) = "the nature, natural qualities, powers, constitution, condition, of a person or thing, of the mind, one's nature, natural bent, powers, character... nature, i.e., the order or law of nature, to be made so by nature, naturally..." (LS 876). Paul used the word "*phusis*" at I Corinthians 11:14 in relationship to the length of a man and woman's hair. The idea is that **nature** itself explains the right and wrong of these issues. Man can look upon the creation and determine that long hair distinguishes a woman from a man. At Galatians 4:8 the apostle Paul explains to the Galatian brethren that **nature** itself illustrates that gods made of wood, stone, or metal is really no god at all. Again, at Ephesians 2:3 **nature** distinguishes between those who are wicked and those who are not. Man knows, without anyone telling him, that stealing and cheating is wrong. The neighbor who goes into another's wife is likely to be beat to a pulp or shot by the woman's husband not because they read that adultery is sinful in the Bible but because there is a universal law of **nature** that says this is wrong and not to be tolerated (see study # 29; Bible Conscience / Nature).
 2. The conscience of the Gentile (trained by natural observance and reason) convicted their mind of sin. They were by nature observing some of the Mosaic Law yet not all of it due to the fact that they had not the details, as did the Jews. Sin thereby came to the Gentile when he or she violated their natural "*conscience*" (*suneidesis*) = "persisting notion, impression of reality... as an inward moral impression of one's actions and principles... as the inward faculty of moral judgment" (Moulton 391). While the Gentile's conscience was trained by nature the Jews had the law. When the Gentile violated their conscience they sinned because by nature they knew right from wrong.
 3. Here is an interesting thought. The word of God should thereby have been very appealing to the Gentile because it confirmed by revelation all that they had known through nature to be right and good (see study # 3). They both (The Gentile's conscience of right and wrong produced in them by nature and the Word of God) agree! Thus man is "*drawn*" to God's divine revelation by "*hearing and learning*" (Jn. 6:44). When we preach to the lost of the world they hear the truth that only confirms what they already know to be right. Truth, therefore, should be very attractive to those who's hearts are set on doing what is right (see study # 3).
- D. "*in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men, according to my gospel, by Jesus Christ*" (2:16).
1. Therefore both Jew and Gentile will be judged based on their deeds in relation to the law they are under. All things shall be revealed (including the secrets of men) (cf. "*revelation*" 2:5).
 2. Let us keep before us at this point that the issue is, **God is just in condemning man** (both Jew and Gentile) due to their guilt of violating their respective laws. Thus vs. 5 and 6 are thematic.

III. **The Jews were condemned by the law they sought justification in due to their Lawless Deeds (2:17-29):**

- A. "*But if thou bearest the name of a Jew, and rests upon the law, and glory in God, and knowest his will, and approve the things that are excellent, being instructed out of the law, and art confident that thou thyself art a guide of the blind, a light of them that are in darkness, a corrector of the foolish, a teacher of babes, having in the law the form of knowledge and of the truth; thou therefore that teachest another, teachest thou not thyself? Thou that preaches a man should not steal, dost thou steal? Thou that sayest a man should not commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery? Thou that abhorrest idols, dost thou rob temples? Thou who glory in the law, through thy transgression of the law dishonorest thou God?*" (2:17-23).
1. The passage now plainly speaks of the Jews as those under consideration. The Jews had an advantage over the Gentile in that they had that revelation from God that appealed to their mind. This revelation should have produced obedience; however, it was rejected by the Jews to the point that their sin caused the name of God to be blasphemed among the Gentiles (2:24).
 2. Paul makes sure the Jews know their condemnation:
 - a. **They were Jews**: The Jews prided themselves in their heritage from Abraham.
 - b. The Jews "**rest upon the law**": They trusted in the Law of Moses yet they did not follow the law. They were prideful of their possession of the law rather than their keeping the law.
 - c. The Jews "**glory in God**": They were boastful regarding their relationship to God.

- d. The Jews “[know the will of God](#)”: They were acquainted with it. However their knowledge of it was not an applied knowledge.
 - e. The Jews “[approved of excellent things](#)”: the Jews viewed the contents of God’s laws as excellent and gave their approval.
 - f. The Jew was “[instructed out of the law](#)”: The Mosaic Law was read on a regular basis from the synagogues. The Jew was one informed and knowledgeable of the Laws of God.
 - g. The Jew was “[confident that he was a guide of the blind and a light of them that are in darkness](#)” (2:19): Since the Jew had God’s revelation made known to him, he felt that he was indeed a shining light to the darkened Gentile. This indeed is truth; however, the Jew often lived just as dark as the Gentiles.
 - h. The Jew was “[A corrector of the foolish](#)” (2:20): One who taught those who had no knowledge of God’s revelation.
 - i. The Jew was “[a teacher of babes](#)”: Those who are immature in the revelation of God.
 - j. The Jew had “[in the law the form of knowledge and of the truth.](#)” In other words, the Jew possessed revelation through their knowledge.
3. Paul poses a series of rhetorical questions to expose the Jew’s true character and guilt:
- a. “*Thou therefore that teachest another, teachest thou not thyself?*” The Jew laid claims to being a teacher of the ignorant; however, they were not teaching themselves God’s precepts as is evident by their lives. They admired divine revelation; however, rejected it in their lives (see study # 16).
 - b. “*Thou that preachest a man should not steal, dost thou steal?*”
 - c. “*Thou that sayest a man should not commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery?*”
 - d. “*Thou that abhorrest idols, dost thou rob temples?*” Robbing temples of idols was common practice (Acts 19:37). Though the law stated that the Jew was to abhor idols and never bring them within their house (Deut. 7:25-26), the Jew was evidently guilty of violating this law.
 - e. “*Thou who glorest in the law, through thy transgression of the law dishonorest thou God?*” To transgress God’s law is to dishonor him. Likewise to keep God’s law is to give God glory.
- B. “*For the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you, even as it is written*” (2:24).
- 1. While the Gentiles had no written law they were familiar with the Jews claims of being of the one true God. When the Gentiles witnessed the Jews doing those things that were against both the laws of nature and divine revelation they were caused to “*blaspheme*” the name of the Jew’s God. The word “*blaspheme*” (*blasphemeo*) = “to drop evil or profane words, speak lightly or amiss of sacred things... to utter ominous words... to speak ill or to the prejudice of one, to speak slander” (LS 151). Note that the Jews actions were the cause of the Gentile’s sins so that both were condemned in said case (see study # 30; Dishonoring God).
 - 2. Paul quotes from Isaiah 52:5b to show this to be true.
- C. “*For circumcision indeed profiteth, if thou be a doer of the law: but if thou be a transgressor of the law, thy circumcision is become uncircumcision*” (2:25).
- 1. The devout Jew was careful in the area of circumcising their children on the eighth day (Lev. 12:1-3). However, the moment they became a lawbreaker, their circumcision meant nothing. God required them to keep the whole law, not just parts of it (Lev. 18:1-5; Gal. 3:10).
 - 2. The “*un-circumcision*” represents the Gentile. If the Gentile keeps the law he is bound to (the law of nature), then his un-circumcision is counted as circumcision. In other words, God accepts him.
- D. “*If therefore the uncircumcision keep the ordinances of the law, shall not his uncircumcision be reckoned for circumcision?*” (2:26).
- 1. When the Gentile kept the law of nature he found himself acceptable to God. Such a one would not wound his conscience of right and wrong and thereby lived a life of conviction and discipline.
 - 2. God “*reckoned*” such a one acceptable. The word “*reckoned*” (*logizomai*) is defined at 2:3 as the power of reason and conclusion (account that a thing is or is not).
- E. “*and shall not the uncircumcision which is by nature, if it fulfill the law, judge thee, who with the letter and circumcision art a transgressor of the law?*” (2:27).
- 1. The Gentile’s (those uncircumcised) good conduct condemns or puts to shame the Jew (the circumcised) when they do not the things God has commanded them.

2. The circumcision and uncircumcision's works are "*judged*" by the standard they are accountable (i.e., the letter of the law and those things known by nature).
- F. "*For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh: but he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit not in the letter; whose praise is not from men, but of God*" (2:28-29).
1. The Jew who diligently circumcised his child at the eighth day of life was keeping the law; however, that same Jew who left off following other laws of God was condemned (his circumcision became useless).
 2. The fact of the matter is that God desires His people to circumcise their hearts (i.e., cut away the propensity to sin in all areas of life). Circumcision of the heart had always been a requirement of God's people (cf. Lev. 26:41; Deut. 10:16; Jer. 4:4; 9:26; Ez. 44:7; Col. 2:11).

Synopsis of Chapter 2

Chapter one exposed the sin of the Gentile who "*refused to have God in their knowledge*" (Rom. 1:28). Many Gentiles "*became vain in their reasonings, and their senseless heart was darkened*" when it came to identifying and worshiping the one true God (Rom. 1:21). God justly condemned them because they had the same opportunities as the Jews to know God by nature. Chapter two exposes the Jew to be of the same mental fabric as many of the condemned Gentiles. Like the Gentiles who "*professed themselves to be wise*" (Rom. 1:22) even so many Jews had "*reckoned*" (figured by reason) that they would "*escape the judgment of God*" (Rom. 2:3). Paul exposes the delusion of the Jew in that they "*despised*" (entertained wrong ideas and thought lightly of spiritual things) God's forbearance and longsuffering (Rom. 2:4). The Jews problem did not rest in their ignorance of God's laws but rather in making personal application (cf. Rom. 2:17-24). Rather than having their conscience "*accuse*" (bother them) when they sinned against God's laws, it actually "*excused*" them (Rom. 2:15) (see study # 24). These Jews had become "*hardened and impenitent in heart*" (Rom. 2:5). The line of thought on behalf of the Jew was that he or she was of the circumcision and thereby saved from God's wrath no matter how they lived (cf. Rom. 2:25ff). The thrust of Paul's argument against the Gentile in chapter one and two is that even though there was never a written law for them to follow they were nonetheless under the unwritten law of "*nature*" (cf. Rom. 2:14). When the Gentile violated this law, and he did, there was no true forgiveness for his sins. Likewise, the Jew was under the written Law of Moses. Violation of this law found one condemned (Rom. 2:25) for the Law demanded perfection (Gal. 3:10). At this point, we find both Jew and Gentile equally condemned in that they violated the law they were under. God is not a respecter of persons (Rom. 2:11). Likewise, if the Jew can be forgiven of sins so can the Gentile. Paul concludes these thoughts then by stating that there is neither Jew or Greek in the eyes of God but rather one people who have a mind to seek God and His glorious offer of salvation. Said people are those who circumcised the heart in relation to sin (Rom. 2:28-29). There had to be a change in both Jew and Gentile's thinking and reasoning process if they expected to be saved from the consequences of their sins. The chapter illustrates that one's heritage is dropped and all mankind becomes unified as one when either glorifying God with obedience or dishonoring Him with disobedience (cf. Rom. 3:21-22).

Chapter 3

- I. **If the Jew is no different than anyone else, what advantage do they have (3:1-4)?**
- A. "*What advantage then hath the Jew? Or what is the profit of circumcision?*" (3:1)
1. The Jew would naturally reply to Paul's argument in relation to all being under sin and condemned before God, "*what advantage then hath the Jew?*" If the Jew is no different than the Gentile in relation to the condition of their soul, then what advantage is it to be a Jew?
 - a. The Jew knew of their peculiar relationship with God. Deuteronomy 14:2 states, "*For thou art a holy people unto Jehovah thy God, and Jehovah hath chosen thee to be a people for his own possession, above all peoples that are upon the face of the earth.*"
 - b. The Jew would say to Paul, what about our history and relationship to God? The Jew viewed their relationship to God as enough to save them (Jn. 8:33ff).

2. The second question the Jew posed is, *“what profit is there in circumcision”* Paul if you say we are in the same spiritual condition of condemnation as the Gentile?
 - a. Circumcision was a sign of a covenant made between God and the Jews (Gen. 17:9-23; Deut. 10:16).
 - b. Why even be circumcised? The Jews considered their circumcision to be a sign of their belonging to God and thereby a means by which they are saved.
- B. *“Much every way: first of all, that they were entrusted with the oracles of God”* (3:2).
 1. Paul uses this method of teaching throughout the book of Romans; i.e., asking a rhetorical question and then giving an answer. The Jew had numerous advantages over the Gentiles.
 2. *“First of all, they were entrusted with the oracles of God.”* One would expect to read of many more advantages than this one statement due to the words *“first of all”* however at this time Paul mentions no other advantages. Romans 9:4 picks up with the list of advantages the Jews had over the Gentiles.
 3. God gave the Jews His oracles:
 - a. The oracles would be the whole OT revelation.
 - b. The Jews had great responsibility laid on them since they were entrusted with God’s oracles.
 - c. The prophet Amos said, *“You only have I known of all the families of the earth: therefore I will visit upon you all your iniquities”* (Amos 3:2).
- C. *“For what if some were without faith? Shall their want of faith make of none effect the faithfulness of God? God forbid: yea, let God be found true, but every man a liar; as it is written, That thou mightest be justified in thy words, and mightest prevail when thou comest into judgment”* (3:3-4).
 1. God had made promises through Abraham’s seed that all nations would be blessed (Gen. 12:1ff). As one studies Genesis a quick conclusion is made regarding God’s gracious gift of salvation; i.e., it is conditioned upon one’s obedience (cf. Gen. 18:19; 22:18 etc.). The Law thereby called for obedience.
 2. How then can God fulfill His promises to a disobedient people while remaining true and just? The author of Hebrews reveals the fact that though God entrusted the Jews with His oracles, they rebelled and acted irresponsibly (Heb. 3:16-19). Notice in this Hebrews passage that the Jew’s *“unbelief”* is equivalent to their *“disobedience”* (cf. Jn. 3:36) (see study # 31; Bible Faith).
 3. This is a reoccurring theme in Romans that is often missed by our faith only friends! The faith Paul speaks of in Romans is an obedient faith else it is without value.
 4. Paul simply says that though the Jews disobeyed God, His promises regarding Jesus, the Messiah, are still active. Thus Paul said, *“God forbid”* in relation to the Jews lack of faithful obedience: God remains true to his promises to those who will be faithful and true. It is man who does not remain true to his covenant agreements. Paul refers to unfaithful men as *“liars”* and then quotes Psalms 51:4 (see study # 32; Who are Liars?).
 - a. David had sinned in taking Bathsheba and committing adultery.
 - b. David was without excuse; he knew the oracles of God regarding this matter.
 - c. Therefore God was just in punishing him (Bathsheba and David’s son died).
 - d. Just as David knew God’s oracles and disobeyed them deliberately, even so have the Jews. They stand justly condemned by the just God.
 - e. When man opines of the injustice of God, God prevails through his own words. It is man who is condemned as a liar in disobedience, not God (cf. I Jn. 2:4).
 - f. Throughout this chapter the apostle Paul effectively quotes from the law that the Jews were under to illustrate to them that God demands obedience rather than knowledge alone.

II. The righteousness of God is illustrated in his wrath against Sin (3:5-6):

- A. *“But if our unrighteousness commendeth the righteousness of God, what shall we say? Is God unrighteous who visits with wrath? (I speak after the manner of men.)”* (3:5).
 1. Apparently the Jew viewed his own unrighteousness as commending the righteousness and mercy of God. In other words, the more they sinned the more righteous and merciful was God toward them because they are his chosen people.

2. When David sinned, God's righteousness was revealed in His punishing the king. Likewise, as God dealt with the sins of Israel, his righteousness was shown. As Nebuchadnezzar besieged Jerusalem for 1 1/2 years (Jeremiah 52), God's righteousness was being shown.
 3. The rhetorical question Paul asks is one the Jew may contemplate: If man's unrighteousness reveals the righteous judgments of God against sin, does that make God an unjust vengeance filled God? Is God preying upon the unrighteous world just so He can show his righteousness? If so, does this not make God unrighteous?
- B. "*God forbid: for then how shall God judge the world?*" (3:6)
1. Again, Paul says, "*God forbid*" (3:6). Paul reasons that if God were unjust in punishing sinners to show his righteousness then how would He ever be able to judge the world?
 2. Every man and woman shall one-day stand before God to be judged of their deeds in this life (Heb. 9:27; Rom. 14:10; II Cor. 5:10; Acts 17:30-31 etc.).

III. The Jew's excuse is not Valid (3:7-20):

- A. "*But if the truth of God through my lie abounded unto his glory, why am I also still judged as a sinner?*" (3:7).
1. Paul was viewed as a condemned sinner for preaching the gospel message to the Jews (cf. notes below on the charges he faced by brethren in Corinth). Paul thereby turns the dilemma back on the Jews.
 2. If God's righteousness is seen in man's unrighteousness, then why do you now condemn me as a sinner? The Jews were now faced with a decision. According to their line of reasoning God shows his mercy in forgiving the Jewish sinner even though he walks in sin. If this be the case then why is it that the Jews are condemning a fellow Jew (i.e., Paul). Paul's point was that you cannot have it both ways; i.e., condemn some Jews for sin and excuse others based on the reason of like and dislike.
- B. "*and why not (as we are slanderously reported, and as some affirm that we say), Let us do evil, that good may come? Whose condemnation is just*" (3:8).
1. Paul says, surely you don't mean to say, "*Let us do evil, that good may come*" as many falsely charged Paul with preaching.
 2. The charges Paul was dealing with in Corinth, as he wrote this epistle to the Romans, may be under consideration here. Paul was accused of inconsistency (II Cor. 1:17), commending himself (II Cor. 3:1; 4:5; 5:12; 10:12; 13:3), he was deranged (II Cor. 5:13), lacked courage (II Cor. 10:1, 10), an idiot (II Cor. 11:5), and denied his apostleship (II Cor. 11:7-9; 12:11).
- C. "*What then? Are we better than they? No, in no wise: for we before laid to the charge both of Jews and Greeks, that they are all under sin; as it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one; There is none that understands, there is none that seeks after God; they have all turned aside, they are together become unprofitable; There is none that does good, no, not so much as one: Their throat is an open sepulcher; with their tongues they have used deceit: the poison of asps is under their lips: Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness: their feet are swift to shed blood; Destruction and misery are in their ways; and the way of peace have they not known: There is no fear of God before their eyes*" (3:9-18).
1. While it is true that the Jews have an advantage over the Gentile in that the oracles of God were entrusted to them; however, this does not make the Jew any better than the Gentile for both are found justly condemned for violating their respective laws.
 2. Paul now proceeds to prove the guilt of Jew and Gentile together by turning to the very oracles that were entrusted to the Jews. With precision of inspired knowledge Paul brings the Jew to a memory of their teachings out of their own law that condemns them. The first is found at Psalms 14:1-3 (Romans 3:10-12) and thereby indicates that the Psalms are considered the Law.
 - a. "*There is none righteous, no, not one;*" The Jew could not argue with this, for Paul quotes it from their oracles that God had entrusted to them.
 - b. "*There is none that understandeth.*" No one is using their minds the way God intended for them to be used. They are sinners!
 - c. "*There is none that seeketh after God;*" because of their faulty reasoning, they are not persuaded to seek after God.

- d. *“They have all turned aside”* They have turned from God’s commands to do as they please.
 - e. *“They are together become unprofitable”* They’re faulty reasoning rendered them useless or worthless. If man is not giving God glory, he is considered *“unprofitable”* (Cf. Matt. 25:30).
 - f. *“There is none that doeth good, no, not so much as one:”* Not even one person is found to keep God’s law, thus all are condemned.
3. Psalms 5:9 (Romans 3:13):
 - a. *“Their throat is an open sepulcher;”* these sinful Jew and Gentile used their mouths not for bringing glory to God but rather as a filthy open grave.
 - b. *“With their tongues they have used deceit:”* Men use their tongue in a treacherous manner to deceive for their own betterment.
 4. Psalms 140:3 (Romans 3:13b).
 - a. *“The poison of asps is under their lips:”* The poison of this venomous snake is deadly. The allusion here is to words used by men that are deadly to others; they have no concern for others (see study # 28).
 5. Psalms 10:7 (Romans 3:14).
 - a. *“Whose mouth is filled of cursing and bitterness:”* This is an outpouring of wrath and anger in abusive language directed at others.
 6. Isaiah 59:7 (Romans 3:15):
 - a. *“Their feet are swift to shed blood”* These people have reached such a state of debauchery that they do not hesitate to murder those in whom their foul abusive language is thrust at. Note that the writings of the prophets were considered Law (see study # 3).
 - b. *“Destruction and misery are in their ways”* they ruin not only their lives but also the lives of others.
 7. Isaiah 57:8 (Romans 3:17).
 - a. *“The way of peace have they not known:”* they had lived in such a way that was contrary to peace.
 8. Psalms 36:1 (Romans 3:18)
 - a. *“There is no fear of God before their eyes.”* Here is a comprehensive statement that gives the disease of sin its foundation for the Jew and Gentile alike. No fear of God is equated with no understanding and obedience (cf. Prov. 1:7).
 - b. The idea of fear and obedience go hand in hand in the scriptures (consider God’s reason for striking fear into the Jews at Sinai while receiving the law / cf. Ex. 19:16 compared to Ex. 20:20). Where there is no fear neither is their honor, reverence, and respect (see study # 33; Fear God).
- D. *“Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it speaks to them that are under the law; that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may be brought under the judgment of God: because by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified in his sight; for through the law comes the knowledge of sin”* (3:19-20).
1. Let us not be guilty here of saying that keeping law (in general) will not lead to one’s justification. Many have thus concluded that God does not demand that His people keep the law based upon verses such as this. Said conclusion ignores the context of this chapter. Paul is explaining to the Jews that the reason they stand condemned is because they did not keep God’s laws.
 2. In light of the passages Paul quotes from out of the OT, and all that was said in chapter one and two regarding the guilt and penalties due the sinner, no man (Jew or Gentile) had place for boasting. The Jew could not lay claims to being God’s chosen people and expect to escape God’s condemnation of sin. Neither could the Gentile say that he was not given written revelation and thus escape the condemnation of God due to their sins.
 3. All are found guilty of violating their respective laws as the OT passages state (3:19). When the Jew and Gentile violated their respective laws, there was no amount of further law keeping that could erase that one sin. Therefore Paul says, *“by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified in his sight;”* (3:20).
 4. Man needed a way to escape the judicial wrath of God against sin and it was not to be found in law keeping. Therefore law is not a means of Justification. The word *“justification”* was defined at

Romans 2:13 as (*dikaioo*) = “to deem righteous... to think fit” (LS 202). God views those who are obedient to law as right or fit for His rewards... so AG defines the word as, to “be acquitted, be pronounced and treated as righteous and thereby become upright” (AG 196).

5. The purpose of the Mosaic Law never was to justify a man from his sins. The Jew may very well ask Paul, “what is the purpose of the law if one cannot receive justification through it?” (see study # 34; The Purpose of the Mosaic Law).
 - a. Paul says that the Law brings the knowledge of sins (3:20).
 - b. Romans 7:7 Paul says, “*What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Howbeit, I had not known sin, except through the law: for I had not known coveting, except the law had said, thou shalt not covet.*”
 - c. To the Galatians Paul said, “*What then is the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise hath been made; and it was ordained through angels by the hand of a mediator*” (Gal. 3:19).
 - d. Paul is stating the obvious. The law pointed up sin and helped man realize his need for justification that would only come through Jesus Christ. This being the case the Jew and Gentile’s conscience should have “*accused*” them when in sin rather than “*excusing*” them (cf. Rom. 2:15).
 - e. Again, Paul told the Galatians “*the law is become our tutor to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith*” (Gal. 3:24).

IV. Paul has proved that all men have sinned and stand guilty before God from Romans 1:16 – 3:20. The apostle now passes on to the positive side of this issue: Justification can be realized in Jesus Christ (3:21-26):

- A. “*But now apart from the law a righteousness of God hath been manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ unto all them that believe; for there is no distinction*” (3:21-22).
 1. “*The law*” Paul speaks of here must be the law under consideration in these three chapters; i.e., the law of Moses for the Jews and the law of nature for the Gentiles. Neither of these laws could remove sin.
 2. Paul explains to the Jews that now there is a way of obtaining righteousness that is apart from the Mosaic Law. The idea of being “*righteous*” (*dikaiosune*) = “right, just” (LS 202), “investiture with the attribute of righteousness, acceptance as righteous, justification... a provision or means for justification” (Moulton 102). Note the necessary inference that Mosaic Law keeping could not make one right before God. Why? Because it demanded perfection (Gal. 3:10), was not designed to remove sin (Heb. 7:18-19), and every man was going to fail it at some point (cf. Rom. 3:23). At this point one may be saying, if Paul then is condemning the Jew for seeking justification in the Mosaic Law that demanded obedience why would he demand perfect obedience to the law of Christ? Here is the difference: No provisions for sin were given in the Mosaic system (cf. Heb. 7:18-19; 10:1ff) whereas provisions (i.e., forgiveness) is offered under the Law of Christ (thus its superiority) (cf. Acts 8:22; I Jn. 1:8-10). Paul, thereby, continued to preach to produce faith and obedience (cf. Rom. 1:5) knowing that when a man failed God would forgive as the sinner repented and asked for forgiveness (Acts 8:22; I Jn. 1:8-10) (see study # 35; Bible Forgiveness).
 3. This righteousness, apart from works of the Law of Moses has been manifest or revealed by the law and prophets (3:21). Paul gives no specific examples here; however, when one reads the OT one sees the cohesion between it and the coming of Jesus. Both the Mosaic Law and the prophets of that Law alluded to a day when Christ would come into the world and acquit mankind of their sins as they repented.
 4. Paul now introduces his theme for the letter; i.e., justification is found through a faith in Jesus Christ. We shall follow Paul’s line of reasoning and conclude that the faith he speaks of is not a simple belief that Jesus is but rather a life of obedience that evidences our faith (cf. Heb. 11:1ff).
- B. “*for all have sinned, and fall short of the glory of God*” (Rom. 3:23).
 1. No one individual could actually claim that he or she kept the law of God perfectly and thereby are due His righteousness (cf. Rom. 3:10).

2. At verse 23 Paul states that individuals will be justified based on their faith in Jesus Christ and then adds, “*there is no distinction*” between Jew or Gentile (cf. Rom. 2:11).
 3. God’s judgments are not based upon the color of one’s skin but rather upon the condition of the heart (cf. Gal. 3:28) (see study # 36; Prejudice).
- C. “*being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:*” (3:24).
1. The word “*freely*” (*dorean*) = “a gift, present, esp. a free gift” (LS 218), “a gift, without payment” (AG 209). Paul states that man’s “*justification*” (*dikaioo*) = “to deem righteous... to think fit” (LS 202) is a ‘free gift’ from God “*by his grace.*” The word “*grace*” (*charis*) = “favor, goodwill for or towards one, to confer a favor on one, to withhold a return for what one has received” (LS 882-883). “A generous gift, an act of favor, free favor, free gift, free favor specially manifested by God towards man in the Gospel scheme” (Moulton 433). Lastly let us define the word “*redemption*” (*exagorazo*) = “to buy up” (LS 268). “To but out of the hands of a person; to redeem, set free” (Moulton 143). “To recover ownership of by paying a specified sum. To pay off, as a promissory note. To set free; rescue or ransom (the release of a person or property in return for payment of a demanded price)” (AHD 1027). The word redemption simply means that one has purchased another’s freedom and thereby has rescued, saved, or set the individual free from the state of bondage that they were in. Possession leaves one’s hand and goes to another.
 2. Now let us put the whole sentence together as a paraphrase: “**Man is deemed right (acquitted of sin) as a free gift by the favor of God through Jesus Christ paying a price.**” Paul makes a similar statement in Ephesians 2:8-9 saying, “*for by grace have ye been saved through faith: and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not of works, that no man should glory.*” Man was and continues to be in desperate need of God’s gracious gift because all sin (Rom. 3:23). Earlier, Paul stated, “*For circumcision indeed profits, if thou be a doer of the law: but if thou be a transgressor of the law, thy circumcision is become un-circumcision*” (Rom. 2:25). As state above, the Mosaic Law demanded perfection (cf. Gal. 3:10) and the moment one sinned there was nothing to remove that sin in the law (Heb. 10:1ff). Once one sinned no amount of lawful living could remove that one sin. The dilemma man finds himself in is sin (for all sin... every last one of us). By God’s grace; however, He deems us justified because Jesus paid the price for our sins (i.e., He hung upon the cross and took the penalty of the curse of the law for us [cf. Gal. 3:13]). Forgiveness is thereby directly correlated to God’s grace and is the distinguishing factor between what the Mosaic Law and Law of Christ represent (see study # 35).
 3. Let us not forget that when one approaches a study of any subject all things written on that subject must be factored in before we draw a conclusion as to its meaning. Let us factor into these statements Paul’s advice at Romans 2:3-10 where the apostles states that God will “*render to every man according to his works*” in the day of judgment (Rom. 2:6). Furthermore, the same apostle addresses the subject of God’s grace and the redemption of mankind in the book of Ephesians saying that God’s grace is equivalent to the redemption through Christ which is equated to the forgiveness of sins (cf. Eph. 1:7; Col. 1:14). God’s gracious gift to man is the forgiveness of sins and that by Christ redeeming sacrifice. Now we continue to examine all aspects of redemption and God’s grace as it is connected to the forgiveness of sins and note that in order for me to receive the forgiveness of my sins and gain access into God’s grace of redemption I must be baptized (cf. Acts 2:38; 22:16; Rom. 6:1ff). Furthermore, if I want to continue to possess God’s gracious gift of forgiveness I need to repent and ask the Lord to forgive me when I sin after baptism (cf. Acts 8:22; I Jn. 1:8-10). Being a recipient of God’s grace is therefore conditioned upon my faithful obedience and humble heart that is willing to repent and request His forgiveness when I sin (cf. I Cor. 15:1-2; Col. 1:22-23). Please note that such a condition of the heart is set in contrast and diametrically opposed to the hard heart displayed during one’s disobedience (cf. Rom. 2:5) (see study # 24) (see study # 4).
 4. Throughout the OT and NT we gain great incite as to how God’s gracious promises are always conditioned upon the obedience of the individual (cf. Gen. 12:7 compared to Josh. 21:43ff; Gen. 18:19; 22:15-18; 26:4-5; Josh. 6:2ff; etc.).
- D. “*whom God set forth to be a propitiation, through faith, in his blood, to show his righteousness because of the passing over of the sins done aforesaid, in the forbearance of God; for the showing, I*

say, of his righteousness at this present season: that he might himself be just, and the justifier of him that hath faith in Jesus” (3:25-26).

1. Christ was set forth by God to be a “*propitiation*” (*hilasmos*) = “gracious” (LS 379), “propitiation, expiation; one who makes expiation” (Moulton 201), “expiation” (AG 375). The Greek word is translated “sin-offering” at Ezekiel 44:27. Jesus was the sin offering to appease God’s wrath against sinful man. Christ one time sacrifice removed the sins of those past, present, and future who call upon His name (cf. Heb. 7:26ff; 10:1ff). Note the connection of Christ’s blood with the forgiveness of sins (cf. Heb. 9:22; Col. 1:14, 20) (see study # 35).
 2. The wages of sin is death (Rom. 6:23) and the Law records, “*cursed is any man who keeps not all the words of this law to do them*” (cf. Gal. 3:10). Jesus paid the price of sin; i.e., death and became a “*curse*” by hanging upon a tree for the redemption of the world.
 3. God did not punish man’s sins immediately in most cases because He is a patient and longsuffering God. He is “*just*” in His patience (over looking man’s sins) in that He ever had the price of sin set; i.e., the blood of His only begotten son (cf. Acts 17:30) (see study # 37; Bible Redemption).
- E. “*Where then is the glorying? It is excluded. By what manner of law? Of works? Nay: but by a law of faith*” (3:27).
1. Man has no room to boast of his self accomplishments in law keeping because he has certainly failed the law that he is under (cf. Rom. 3:23). Once one fails to keep all the law he is doomed and thereby has no room for glorying, i.e., it has been “*excluded*.”
 2. Since I know that I will fail in my attempts to keep God’s law the only thing I really can glory in is the “*law of faith*.” Receiving justification by faith through God’s grace is a law in itself now termed, the “*law of faith*.” Though the Mosaic Law has been nailed to the cross we must see that we remain under law today (i.e., the “*law of faith*”) (see study # 3). The beauty of this law is that it too demands perfection but it offers provisions for the law violator. Though I sin under the Law of Christ I can continue to be justified by my humble acts of repentance and receive forgiveness from God. The Law of Christ is thereby a “*BETTER covenant*” than that of the Mosaic (cf. Jer. 31:31; Heb. 8:6).
- F. “*We reckon therefore that a man is justified by faith apart from the works of the law*” (3:28).
1. The context has clearly inferred that the forgiveness of man’s sins can in no way occur through the Mosaic Law (cf. Rom. 3:20). Please note that it is the Mosaic Law under consideration when Paul speaks of the law in this chapter (cf. Rom. 3:10-18 as Paul quotes from the Old Testament).
 2. A contrast is clearly developed in this chapter between “*the law*” of Moses and the “*law of faith*.” The Law of Moses is weak in that it has no power to perfect a man (Heb. 7:18-19) and the law of faith is powerful because it can remove sins (i.e., perfect a man) (cf. Rom. 1:16).
 3. We know that Paul is not inferring a “*faith only*” life but rather a life that is obedient due to one’s faith (cf. Rom. 1:5). Remember, though one cannot be justified by works of the Mosaic Law he can now be justified by works in the Law of Faith. Though we will continue to fail in sin the law of faith provides provisions for our perfection.
- G. “*Or is God the God of Jews only? Is he not the God of Gentiles also? Yea, of Gentiles also: if so be that God is one, and he shall justify the circumcision by faith, and the uncircumcision through faith*” (3:29-30).
1. If man could receive justification from sins by Mosaic Law keeping he would have place for glorying in self as opposed to God’s gracious offer to forgive. If this was the means of justification the Gentiles would be excluded from God’s grace and thereby His promises to Abraham would make little sense.
 2. The fact that God forgives any and all who put their faith in Jesus Christ and obey His commandments proves that He is the God of all flesh (cf. Jer. 32:27).
 3. Both Jew and Gentile’s salvation is dependant upon a humble heart and obedient faith.
- H. “*Do we then make the law of none effect through faith? God forbid: nay, we establish the law*” (3:31).
1. The contrast between the Mosaic Law and Law of faith continues. Paul asks a rhetorical question: If man can in no way be justified by the Mosaic law is it thereby of “*none effect*” (*katargeo*) = “to leave unemployed or idle... to occupy the ground uselessly, cumber it... to make of none effect”

(LS 413). To paraphrase Paul he says, “Is the law rendered unemployed (i.e., no longer useful) since man is justified by the law of faith?”

2. Paul answers his own question saying, “*God forbid.*” Rather than the Mosaic Law being unemployed and useless Paul states that the Law of Faith actually “*establishes*” the Law of Moses. To “*establish*” (*histemi*) = “to make to stand, establish, institute... to be set or placed, to stand... stand firm” (LS 384-385). The Law of Moses and the Law of faith work together rather than against each other as each serves their purpose (cf. Gal. 3:18-25). The old law continues to be useful to this day (cf. Rom. 15:4). The clear point; however, is that justification comes of the law of faith and not that of Moses’ Law. The Law of Moses was never designed to remove man’s sins but rather to bring them to Christ through an understanding of their helpless estate (see study # 34).

Synopsis of Chapter 3

Both Jew and Gentile needed to have a change in heart, in relation to their religious practices, if they expected to be saved in the day of God’s judgment. The Gentile would never be saved by simply following a law of nature and the Jew could not be saved by following the Mosaic Law. Said laws demanded perfection and the moment one failed their respective law there was no provision for the sin (cf. Gal. 3:10; Heb. 10:1ff). The violator of law was due punishment with no hope of acquittal. The Jew would naturally ask Paul that if this were the case then what profit is it to be a Jew (Rom. 3:1). Paul answers by saying that the Jew’s profit was in the fact that they were given the oracles of God (Rom. 3:2). Though the Jews had the oracles of God’s divine revelation they violated that law and were thereby due God’s punishment (Rom. 2:1ff; 3:9, 23). Paul quotes from the Jew’s own law (several places) to illustrate the fact that the consequence of sinful living was punishment (Rom. 3:9-18). Furthermore, Paul states that no man can receive justification through law keeping because at some point of life all sin in some form or fashion (Rom. 3:23). A contrast in laws is thereby established. The Mosaic Law was never intended to be a law that offered man perfection through the forgiveness of sins (cf. Rom. 3:20; Heb. 7:18-19; 10:1ff). The function of the Mosaic Law was simply to identify sin and its consequences to man (cf. Rom. 3:20b). The law of faith, on the other hand, provides justification through the propitiatory blood sacrifice of Jesus Christ (Rom. 3:24-25). These two laws (i.e., Law of Moses and Law of Faith) are similar in that they demand perfection (cf. Gal. 3:10; I Cor. 15:1-2; Col. 1:22-23). These two laws; however, are very different in that no provisions for sin is offered under the Mosaic Law whereas said provisions are offered through the redemption found in Christ Jesus (Eph. 1:7; Col. 1:14). Said distinction exposes the superiority of the Law of Jesus Christ (i.e., it is better / cf. Heb. 8:6) over the Mosaic Law. The superiority of the law of Christ (cf. Gal. 6:2); however, does not negate the importance of the Mosaic Law (i.e., it identifies sin / Rom. 3:20). Paul concludes by saying that rather than being “*none effect*” the Mosaic Law actually establishes (i.e., makes stand) the “*Law of faith*” (cf. Rom. 3:31). The thrust of the letter to this point is obvious. Both Jew and Gentile stand condemned in the law they follow because there is no forgiveness (i.e., justification). Let both Jew and Gentile leave off these laws and follow the law of faith that they may be redeemed by the precious blood of Christ. Note that man is under law even though Christ redeemed us from our sins. If there were no law then there would be no sin (cf. Rom. 4:15; I Jn. 3:4). Since sin occurs there must be a law to follow; i.e., “*the Law of faith.*”

Some today want to ignore the “*law of faith*” and follow different laws. The law of common sense (nature) and various denominational creeds are often sited as sources of salvation (after all, surely a loving God will not condemn a morally good person). There are those who actually believe that if they follow their own conscience, regarding good and bad deeds, that God will overlook their failures and admit them into heaven. The problem with these systems is that Christ is not included. There is only one faith and or law of faith that saves through the precious blood of Christ and this is the standard by which man is determined to be in sin or forgiven (cf. Eph. 4:1ff). Romans chapter 3 proves that man cannot take other standards, apply them to their lives, and expect to be forgiven of their sins. No matter how good and kind type of a person I may be, if I leave out Christ’s standard of truth I remain in my sins. No amount of good works will save me.

Chapter 4

Prologue:

Paul stated in 3:21 that the “*law and prophets*” have born witness to the system of justification offered by God. At that point, Paul did not give any examples of this merciful offering on the part of God. He stated it as a fact. Chapter 4 deals with two examples of “*witnesses*” from the Old Testament. The two are Abraham and David. Abraham and David were two men whom the Jews respected and greatly honored. The Jews took pride in being of the seed of Abraham (cf. Jn. 8:39). Therefore the argument made by Paul using these characters is most effective:

Paul made three points in Romans 3:28-31 which the Jews would have obviously rejected due to their preconceived ideas of their salvation: (1) Justification comes of faith and not perfect law keeping (3:28). (2) God is the God of Jew and Gentile, the circumcised and uncircumcised (3:29-30). (3) Paul emphatically states that it is not his objective to cast out the law as useless but rather to “*established the law*” (Rom. 3:31). The Mosaic Law is confirmed as valid (made to stand) because it served the purpose God intended for it. The Law helped man identify sin and its consequences and bring man to an understanding of his need for Jesus Christ, the Messiah (Gal. 3:24) (see study # 3).

I. Abraham discovers that Justification comes through the Propitiation of Christ and the Obedient Efforts of Man (4:1-5):

- A. “*What then shall we say that Abraham, our forefather, hath found according to the flesh?*” (4:1).
1. The word “*forefather*” (*propatora*) = “the first founder of a family, forefather, ancestors” (LS 682), “A grandfather; a progenitor (an originator of a line or descent), or ancestor” (Moulton 346). The Jewish people had their physical beginnings with Abraham (see study # 38; Abraham).
 2. The Jews put much stock in their ancestry as they traced it back to Abraham (Jn. 8:39ff). The Jews had concluded that their ancestry to Abraham was enough to save them from the consequences of sin (cf. Matt. 3:9). Secondly, their being a chosen people of God was enough to persuade them that all was presently ok (cf. Deut. 14:2) (see study # 16).
 3. Abraham, the forefather of the Jews, “*found*” something about his justification that was far different than the conclusion the Jews had presently made. They put their trust in their ancestry and being chosen of God.
 4. The word “*found*” (*heurisko*) = “to find out, discover... to find out for oneself” (LS 331). The context of our discussion is justification by faith as opposed to perfect Mosaic Law keeping (cf. Rom. 3:28). Abraham made a discovery about justification.
- B. “*For if Abraham was justified by works, he hath whereof to glory; but not toward God*” (4:3).
1. Note that Abraham existed before the Mosaic Law was formed; however, he was under Law to God and bound to obey (cf. Gen. 22:18).
 2. Abraham’s acquittal (justification) did not come from keeping God’s laws perfectly because we know he failed (cf. Gen. 12:9ff [asked Sarah to lie]; Gen. 17:15-19 [Abraham doubts God’s omnipotence]; and Gen. 20:9 [Abraham is rebuked by a sinner for sin]). Abraham falls into the same category that everyone else who has ever lived on the earth falls into (except for Jesus [cf. Heb. 4:15]) i.e., he was a sinner (cf. Rom. 3:23).
 3. Had Abraham never sinned God would owe him salvation. Note that in such a case a man would have no need for God, His mercy, His forgiveness, etc. Said salvation would be separate from God’s help.
- C. “*For what saith the scripture? And Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned unto him for righteousness*” (4:3).
1. Paul quotes from Genesis 15:6 and thereby reveals what Abraham “*found*” in relationship to his justification and “*righteousness*.” Abraham “*found*” that he could not be saved without the help of God; i.e., God’s forgiveness, because he was a sinner. Abraham believed in the reality of Jesus and His sacrifice for the remission of sins (Gal. 3:6-9) and looked forward to that day coming (Jn. 8:56).
 2. Note that the author of Hebrews ties the belief or faith of Abraham to his obedient acts (cf. Heb. 11:8-10, 17-19). Though Abraham disobeyed God’s commands at times and sinned he

- nonetheless was under law to keep (cf. Gen. 17:1). Each time Abraham violated law he sinned and needed forgiveness. Question: Did his sin negate his responsibility to keep God's laws? Again, should Abraham have left off all efforts to be faithfully obedient to God's laws because he sinned?
3. The answer to these questions is, God forbid. Abraham learned that God's promises (i.e., his righteousness, seed promise, the great nation promise, and land promise) were all contingent upon his being obedient to God's laws (cf. Gen. 18:19; 22:15-18; 26:4-5). When he failed he had to pick himself up (knowing that Jesus would come into the world and be a propitiation for man's sins) and keep trying.
 4. The Bible thereby reveals "*obedience*" to be equivalent to (or an evidence of) "*belief*" or "*faith*" (cf. Heb. 11:1-2). Jesus said, "*He that believes on the Son hath eternal life; but he that obeys not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him*" (Jn. 3:36).
 5. Remember: Paul is contrasting two laws (cf. Rom. 3:27-28). The "*law of faith*" (Rom. 3:27) is "*better*" (Heb. 8:6) than the Mosaic Law because it has a means whereby its violators may be forgiven (justified) (cf. Rom. 3:24-26). Abraham knew this fact and thereby continued to try even when he failed at keeping God's laws. Paul speaks about this at Philippians 3:14 saying, "*I press on toward the goal unto the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus...*" God desires our effort (cf. II Tim. 2:15; II Pet. 1:5). When we sin, and we will from time to time (cf. I Jn. 1:8-10), let us with a spirit of humility ask God to forgive us (cf. Isa. 57:15; Acts 8:22) (see study # 39; Giving Diligence).
 6. Said **efforts** on the part of Abraham were "*reckoned*" unto him for righteousness. The word "*reckoned*" (*logizomai*) = "to count, reckon, calculate, compute... to take into account, consider... to count, deem, consider that... to reckon or account so and so... to conclude by reasoning, infer that a thing is" (LS 476). Abraham was "deemed" or "considered" "*righteous*" (or justified) by God because of his continued efforts to please God through obedience. The greatest example of Abraham's faithful obedience was the willingness to sacrifice his son Isaac at the command of God (cf. Gen. 22:1-18 compared to Heb. 11:17-19).
- D. "*Now to him that works, the reward is not reckoned as of grace, but as of debt*" (4:4).
1. Keeping the context, we understand Paul to be speaking of those who would seek their salvation ("*the reward*" [cf. Rev. 22:12]) through pure works of the law. Those who seek their justification through faithful efforts, knowing that they will fall from time to time, are individuals God accepts.
 2. The word "*grace*" (*charis*) = "favor, goodwill for or towards one, to confer a favor on one, to withhold a return for what one has received" (LS 882-883). "A generous gift, an act of favor, free favor, free gift, free favor specially manifested by God towards man in the Gospel scheme" (Moulton 433).
 3. When someone works, he receives wages as his earnings. His employer gives him what he has earned (nothing more and nothing less). Grace does not work this way. If man received what he earned it would surely be death! However, God provides justification by mercy and grace (unmerited or unearned favor).
 4. Since it is an impossibility for man to seek justification by works of law (Rom. 3:20), he must realize that it shall come only by the grace of God through faithful efforts of obedience (see study # 4).
- E. "*But to him that works not, but believes on him that justifies the ungodly, his faith is reckoned for righteousness*" (4:5).
1. The man who seeks justification differently than Abraham did (i.e., one who looks only to keeping perfectly the law rather than recognizing his shortcomings and need for Christ forgiving blood) will not be justified.
 2. The man or woman who seeks justification by the same means that Abraham did (i.e., he gave diligence) will be justified due to God "deeming" or "considering" them righteous. Note that the state of justification and righteousness is made equivalent here (see study # 40; Bible Justification). One can only be just and right after violating God's law of faith by repentance, baptism, and prayer.
 3. A study of the life of Abraham proves that justification is not obtained by perfect law keeping and neither is it obtained by no efforts (little to no obedience of God's laws). Belief (faith) in the

reality of God, heaven, and hell is evidenced in one's life when they give diligence to keep the Lord's will (cf. Heb. 1:1ff).

II. David sought justification through faith in the Messiah (4:6-8):

- A. *"Even as David also pronounces blessing upon the man, unto whom God reckoneth righteousness apart from works,"* (4:6).
1. Paul quotes a statement of David's made in Psalms 32:1-2. David pronounces "*blessings*" (the fulfillment of God's promises [cf. Gen. 17:16]) on the individual who God reckons as righteous not through works of law but by faith.
 2. We begin seeing that when Paul uses the term "works" in relation to one's salvation that he intends for us to understand that this is a seeking of justification by means of living perfectly (i.e., never violating the laws of nature nor the Mosaic Law). The fact remains that this is an impossible task for humanity (cf. I Jn. 1:8-10).
 3. The word "*reckon*" (*logizetai*) is used here again as to "deem" or "consider" that a thing is. The man who does not have his sins put to his account is indeed blessed (a recipient of God's promises of salvation as was Abraham). Here in is the grace of God seen in Jesus. God considers the sinner just and righteous because said individual continues to try to do what is right through Jesus Christ. The Christian is not a quitter. The author of Hebrews said, *"But we are not of them that shrink back unto perdition; but of them that have faith unto the saving of the soul"* (Heb. 10:39; cf. also Rev. 2:10).
 4. That which is reckoned (put to one's account) is righteousness apart from works (perfect obedience to law).
- B. *"saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not reckon sin"* (4:7-8).
1. David knew precisely the meaning of God's promise to Abraham when He said, *"in thee shall all nations of the earth by BLESSED"* (Gen. 12:3). The blessed promise of justification through the blood of Christ (cf. Gal. 3:8, 16).
 2. God will not consider or deem the sinner worthy of death as said one evidences his faith in God through acts of obedience (cf. Heb. 11:1ff). The first and foremost act of obedience is being baptized so that one's sins may be remitted (cf. Acts 2:38; 22:16).

III. A Rhetorical Question with an Answer (4:9-11):

- A. *"Is this blessing then pronounced upon the circumcision, or upon the un-circumcision also? For we say, To Abraham his faith was reckoned for righteousness"* (4:9).
1. What "*blessing*" is under consideration here? Paul speaks of the blessing of having one's sins forgiven (i.e., justification and righteousness) (cf. Rom. 3:23-current verse). This "*blessing*" is God's **promise** to forgive man of their sins (cf. Gen. 12:3; Gal. 3:6-8, 16).
 2. Paul asks the question: "Is this blessing (i.e., God's promise to forgive man of sins) for the circumcision alone or is it for the un-circumcised as well?"
 3. If it can be proved that Abraham received justification before circumcision at Genesis 15:6 then it must be conceded by the Jews that God's blessings of salvation includes the Gentiles (this had been God's design all the while / cf. Gen. 12:3 "*all nations*").
- B. *"How then was it reckoned? When he was in circumcision, or in un-circumcision? Not in circumcision, but in un-circumcision: and he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had while he was in un-circumcision: that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be in un-circumcision, that righteousness might be reckoned unto them;"* (4:10-11).
1. Abraham received justification through faith in Christ before his circumcision and thus he is placed in the unique position of being the forefather of all those who believe (both Jew and Gentile).
 2. Genesis 17:10-11 states, *"This is my covenant, which ye shall keep, between me and you and thy seed after thee: every male among you shall be circumcised. And ye shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskin; and it shall be a token of a covenant betwixt me and you."* The word "*token*" here (LXX) is the same as "*sign*" (Romans 4:11). It is a mark! This sign or mark is

defined further by Paul as being “*a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had while he was in un-circumcision.*”

3. The word “*seal*” means to “confirm, attests, or authenticate” (AG 804). Genesis 15:6 was stated some 15-30 years before Abraham was even circumcised. Abraham was thereby considered justified (acquitted of sins through faith in Jesus Christ) before he was circumcised. The circumcision only confirmed as true that which already existed (i.e., Abraham’s justification).
4. All those who are thereby uncircumcised have the same hope of the forgiveness of sins through faith in Jesus Christ as do the Jews (cf. Romans 5:1-2).

IV. Abraham is an all times example of one who Evidenced his Faith by Obedience (4:12-16)

- A. “*And the father of circumcision to them who not only are of the circumcision, but who also walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham which he had in un-circumcision*” (4:12).
 1. The word “*walk*” is used throughout the NT to indicate a manner of life (cf. Eph. 4:1). We have thoroughly proved that Abraham’s faith was reckoned (considered or deemed) unto him for righteousness (i.e., justification) as he continued in obedience to God’s laws (Gen. 15:6; 18:19; 22:15-18; 26:5; Heb. 11:8). Abraham gave effort!
 2. Those who “*walk in the steps of Abraham*” would be those who try their best to keep God’s laws and thereby evidence their true faith in Jehovah God (like Abraham did while in a state of un-circumcision).
- B. “*For not through the law was the promise to Abraham or to his seed that he should be heir of the world, but through the righteousness of faith*” (4:13).
 1. This justification by faith on the part of Abraham had nothing to do with law keeping. The promises made to Abraham happened 430 years before the law even came about (Gal. 3:17).
 2. God’s promises to Abraham included the coming of the Messiah (seed promise / cf. Gal. 3:16).
 3. This promise is not founded in the law but in Christ. If Justification could be obtained by law then God’s promises to Abraham regarding all nations being blessed through his seed would mean nothing (vs. 14). There would be no need for a new covenant (Jer. 31:31; Heb. 10:1ff).
- C. “*For if they that are of the law are heirs, faith is made void, and the promise is made of none effect*” (4:14).
 1. God’s promise of justification through faith in Jesus Christ would mean nothing if righteousness was of the Mosaic Law (cf. Heb. 10:1-2). Paul is careful to state that God did make these promises to Jew and Gentile.
 2. The Jew who denies said promises to the Gentiles is in effect saying that “*faith is made void, and the promise is made of none effect.*” The Jew is saying to God, “Faith in Jesus is useless and Your promises are none effective since we receive justification and righteousness through the Mosaic Law.”
- D. “*For the law works wrath; but where there is no law, neither is there transgression*” (4:15).
 1. The whole argument comes to a head right here. The issue is the contrast between the Mosaic Law and the Law of faith (Rom. 3:27). The “*weakness and unprofitableness*” (Heb. 7:18-19) of the Mosaic Law was that it could not remove sins. Such a law leaves one subject to the wrath of God because at some point disobedience is going to occur (cf. Rom. 2:5).
 2. If the Jews are going to claim that they have no sin based upon their physical relationship to Abraham, being of the circumcision, and a chosen people of God then what they are saying in effect is that there is no real law. If law exists so must sin. The two are inseparably connected and thereby Paul’s approach is irrefutable. The Jews stand condemned in sin without justification by faith in Jesus Christ (see study # 3).
- E. “*For this cause it is of faith, that it may be according to grace; to the end that the promise may be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all*” (4:16).
 1. Due to the fact that law and sin are inseparable man’s justification must thereby be by “*faith according to grace*” (acceptance or fellowship with God based upon one’s efforts to keep God’s laws through faith).
 2. Justification is God’s “*promise*” to man (cf. Acts 2:38-39; 13:23, 32, 38-39; Gal. 3:14, 17 etc.). Those who receive the promise of God; i.e., forgiveness of sins, are those who live or walk as did

Abraham (see study # 2). Abraham was a sinner; however, he endeavored to keep all of God's laws knowing that sin occurs as one violates that law, all men sin, and all thereby need to be forgiven. Though Abraham realized he was a sinner he did not give up on trying to keep God's laws. He humbly recognized his failures and continued to press on in obedience (his walk in life) to the best of his abilities and so must we!

VI. Abraham's faith: the "*father of many nations*" (4:17; from Gen. 17:5) (4:17-25):

- A. "*as it is written, A father of many nations have I made thee) before him whom he believed, even God, who giveth life to the dead, and calleth the things that are not, as though they were*" (4:17).
1. Paul now quotes from Genesis 17:5 to prove that Abraham was the forefather of not just the Jews but all who believe and obey as did he.
 2. Abraham believed that God had the power of granting spiritual life to those who so choose to believe and evidence that faith in their obedience (like Abraham did).
- B. "*Who in hope believed against hope, to the end that he might become a father of many nations, according to that which had been spoken, So shall thy seed be*" (4:18).
1. That "*which had been spoken*" was "*So shall thy seed be*" and taken from Genesis 15:5.
 2. The Genesis 15:5 passage is in relation to God's promise to Abraham to give him a son from his wife Sarah. Abraham believed that God would do this and evidenced this faith in his obedience and so the next verse reads, "*And he believed in Jehovah; and he reckoned it to him for righteousness*" (Gen. 15:6).
- C. "*And without being weakened in faith he considered his own body now as good as dead (he being about a hundred years old), and the deadness of Sarah's womb; yet, looking unto the promise of God, he wavered not through unbelief, but waxed strong through faith, giving glory to God,*" (4:19-20).
1. Abraham believed God would revive (quicken) the womb of Sarah though it was a physical impossibility due to both his and her age. Abraham was 100 years old and Sarah was 90 (Gen. 17:17-22; 18:11-14). In light of these physical impossibilities, Abraham did not doubt God's power to perform his promise.
 2. Abraham grew stronger and stronger in faith toward God's promises and gave God glory. How does one "*give glory to God?*" Jesus tells us that God is glorified when one keeps His commandments (cf. Jn. 15:5-10). Abraham gave God glory through his obedience and thereby evidenced his faith in God.
- D. "*and being fully assured that what he had promised, he was able also to perform. Wherefore also it was reckoned unto him for righteousness*" (4:21-22).
1. Abraham was "*fully assured* (convinced)" that God would perform this miracle. This faith in the promises of God was therefore "*reckoned unto him for righteousness*" (4:22).
 2. God considered or deemed Abraham to be "just" because he faithfully obeyed the Lord's commands to the best of his abilities.
- E. "*Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was reckoned unto him; but for our sake also, unto whom it shall be reckoned, who believe on him that raised Jesus our Lord from the dead, who was delivered up for our trespasses, and was raised for our justification*" (4:23-25).
1. God deemed or considered Abraham justified due to his faith and obedience in God's laws and promises. The Lord did not have Moses record these things in Genesis for the benefit of Abraham alone but "*our sake also.*"
 2. Paul now ties in Abraham's faith with the sacrifice of Jesus for the remission of sins. Abraham's faith and hope was in Christ (Jn. 8:58). Though Abraham did not live to see Christ he saw Him with spiritual eyes of faith. Abraham knew that Jesus would come into the world and be crucified for the justification of all those who would call upon His name.
 3. Abraham's justification is therefore a lesson for all peoples of all times to grasp! "*Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it (righteousness) was reckoned unto him*" (4:23). Isaiah 53:6 says, "*Jehovah hath laid upon him the iniquity of us all.*"

Synopsis of Chapter 4

Paul now turns to the example of Abraham to illustrate how God justifies a man or woman from their sins. If one can understand how Abraham was justified and considered righteous by God then one can certainly see what God requires for all today to achieve the same status. Abraham was indeed a sinner; however, he stands as an example of how sinful men today can be justified. Herein is the continued contrast of the Law of Moses and the “*law of faith*” (Rom. 3:27). While one was under the Mosaic Law there was no forgiveness for the sins he was surely to commit (cf. Rom. 3:20, 23). Moses’ Law demanded perfection (Gal. 3:10) just as the Law of Christ (Gal. 6:2; I Cor. 15:1ff; I Jn. 3:4). The difference between the two laws was that the Law of Moses provided no forgiveness for the one who violated its laws while the Law of Christ did give said provisions through repentance, baptism, and prayer (cf. Acts 8:12, 22).

The Jew, who would lay claim to being under the Mosaic Law as God’s chosen race, could in no way excuse their lawlessness based upon their birthright. Likewise, Paul illustrates in Romans chapter four that Abraham’s faith in the promises of God (i.e., justification of man) did not excuse him from keeping God’s laws. One who concludes that their soul is in good standing with God while sinning has certainly deluded themselves with fanciful and fictional ideas (see study # 16). Paul states, “*For the law works wrath; but where there is no law, neither is there transgression*” (Rom. 4:15). How can one continue in sin and conclude that there will not be a day when they have to give an account of the things they have done contrary to law (cf. Rev. 20:11-13)? The fact of the matter is that all mankind are subject to the Law of Jesus Christ today (again, read Rev. 20:11-13). Those who evidence their faith in God, as did Abraham, through obedience to that law can be justified and deemed righteous just like Abraham (cf. Rom. 4:3, 12, 23-24). Abraham is thereby the forefather (in matters of faith) of all who seek to be justified by faith in Jesus Christ (cf. Rom. 4:16-17). The great lesson of Romans four is that God desires man’s efforts (cf. Phil. 3:13-14; II Tim. 2:15; Heb. 2:1; 6:1, 11; 11:6; II Pet. 1:5ff etc.). He knows that all are going to sin (Rom. 3:23). God’s desire is that man would see his mistake, with a spirit of humility repent of those things, and asks God to forgive (cf. II Cor. 7:8-9; I Jn. 1:8-10). Abraham’s “*belief*” went further than a simple, “I believe that God and Jesus exist.” Abraham was justified and deemed righteous because his obedience evidenced his faith and this is what God is looking for in all His people (cf. Heb. 11:1-2, 8-10, 17-19). James thereby writes, “*Was not Abraham our father justified by works, in that he offered up Isaac his son upon the altar? Thou seest that faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect; and the scripture was fulfilled which saith, and Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned unto him for righteousness; and he was called the friend of God*” (James 2:21-23). Let us all realize that we are under law and when that law is violated we are sinners and due God’s punishment. Thanks be to God; however, that the Law of Christ provides a remedy whereby man can be saved from the consequences of their sins through the blood of Jesus Christ (cf. Rom. 3:24).

Chapter 5

I. The fruit of the work of Jesus (5:1-11):

- A. “*Being therefore justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ;*” (5:1).
1. The “*therefore*” points us back to the discussion of chapter 4; i.e., Abraham was justified by faith (Rom. 4:3) when he evidenced his belief through a working obedience (cf. James 2:21ff). When we walk as did Abraham; i.e., in faithful obedience (Rom. 4:12), then we too are justified from the consequences of our sins (cf. Rom. 4:23-24). Again, the word “*justified*” (*dikaioo*) = “to deem righteous... to think fit” (LS 202). God considers a man righteous or justified when said individual evidences their faith through acts of obedience. When a man or woman is in a state of justification there is peace between them and God (i.e., reconciliation).
 2. Note that a man’s justification and peace with God is “*through our Lord Jesus Christ*” (cf. Rom. 3:24-26). Therefore my justification through acts of faithful efforts to obey God’s laws has something to do with Jesus.
- B. “*Through whom also we have had our access by faith into this grace wherein we stand; and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God*” (5:2).
1. Paul reveals the work of Jesus to thereby be “*justification*,” “*peace*,” and now “*access*” into God’s grace. The word “*access*” (*prosagoge*) = “a bringing to or up to, a bringing up... a bringing to,

- acquisition... a solemn approach... approach, access to a person, esp. to a king's presence" (LS 685). The Christian can approach God in full fellowship (i.e., having the forgiveness of sins) by "*faith*." This "*faith*" is the faith of Abraham's as mentioned above. This approach to the God of light is made possible by Christ.
2. Note that God's "*grace*" is equated with man's "*justification*." By the grace (favor) of God man is acquitted (forgiven) of sin. Note that an obedient faith plays a part in my access into this favor of God. So, Peter told those on Pentecost that they needed to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ that they may receive the forgiveness of sins (i.e., justification) (God's favor). Who can deny that God demands our obedience in light passages such as these (cf. Eph. 2:8 compared to Eph. 1:7)?
 3. The Christian's response to God's gracious favor of justification:
 - a. The Christian is to "*stand*" (*histemi*) = "to be set or placed... to stand firm" (LS 385). Paul tells the Colossians, "*For though I am absent in the flesh, yet am I with you in the spirit, joying and beholding your order, and the steadfastness of your faith in Christ*" (Col. 2:5). The Colossians were holding their post ("order") in the faith though many false teachers sought to sway them away (cf. Col. 2:8) (see study # 41; Stand your Post).
 - b. Secondly, the Christian is to "*rejoice*" in hope of the glory of God. To understand the repercussions of justification and God's gracious favor upon me is to give me great joy (cf. Phil. 3:21; Col. 3:4; I Jn. 3:2).
- C. "*And not only so, but we also rejoice in our tribulations: knowing that tribulation works steadfastness*" (5:3).
1. Paul takes us through a circular proof of one's joy in life beginning with hope and ending with hope. Not only are Christians to rejoice in the hope of heaven "*but also rejoice in our tribulation*" (*thlipsis*) = "to press, squeeze, pinch... of a person heavy-laden... metaphorically to oppress, afflict, distress" (LS 367).
 2. The condition of being oppressed, afflicted, or distressed will "*work steadfastness*." The idea of "*work*" (*katergazomai*) = "to effect by labor, to achieve, accomplish... to earn or gain by labor, to achieve, acquire... to be successful" (LS 420-421). When I undergo affliction and distress it helps me to achieve or accomplish "*steadfastness*" (*hupomone*) = "patient endurance, patient awaiting, a patient frame of mind, patience, perseverance, endurance in adherence to an object" (Moulton 418) (see study # 42; The Persecuted Christian).
 3. When I am ill treated by the world or false brethren (II Tim. 3:12) I achieve greater endurance and perseverance in this life. The more I am afflicted the more I ought to grow spiritually (cf. Ex. 1:12). Without tribulation in my life I would have no patience or endurance to persevere. Jesus said, "*In your patience (steadfastness) ye shall win your souls*" (Lk. 21:19 cf. also Acts 14:22).
- D. "*and steadfastness, approvedness; and approvedness, hope*" (5:4).
1. My ability to patiently endure the ill treatment of others and life's difficulties is brought about by my knowing that heaven is far superior to any pain I may face here on earth. Said mindset actually works "*approvedness*." The word "*approvedness*" (*dokime*) = "a proof, test, tried character" (LS 208). When my mind is fully focused on heaven, no matter what trials and tribulations I face, then I have a proved and tried character that will see me into my objective of heaven. The approved character is the "*perfect*" mind that Paul speaks of to the Philippians (3:13-15) (see study # 43; Bible Perfection).
 2. The argument comes full circle back to hope. True hope is desire and expectation. One's desire for heaven causes him to press on in life no matter how difficult the way may be.
- E. "*and hope puts not to shame; because the love of God hath been spread abroad in our hearts through the Holy Spirit which was given unto us*" (5:5).
1. The Christian will never be disappointed in their hope if they continue in the faith of Abraham.
 2. Through the love of God, we are "*given the Holy Spirit*" (5:5). The Holy Spirit has been "*spread abroad*" or "*poured out*" (cf. Joel's statement as quoted by Peter in Acts 2:17-21). Each individual receives the Holy Spirit through the hearing of faith (cf. Gal. 3:2), through obedience (Acts 5:32), through assurance of our faith (II Cor. 1:22), and through "*pouring*" the word of God (Titus 3:5-6). So the Holy Spirit dwells in the Christian through the word of God (Gal. 2:20) (see study # 44; Indwelling of the Holy Spirit) (see study # 47; The Gift of the Holy Spirit).

- F. *“For while we were yet weak, in due season Christ died for the ungodly”* (5:6).
1. Man could do nothing of himself to receive justification and salvation apart from the propitiation and revelation of Jesus Christ.
 2. God therefore sent his son at the appropriate time (cf. Gal. 4:4) that he might die for sinners to be reconciled unto God.
 3. This coming near to God by His grace through our faithful efforts is made possible by Christ’s death upon the cross. This is the defining moment of man’s redemption.
- G. *“For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: for peradventure for the good man some one would even dare to die. But God commends his own love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us”* (5:7-8).
1. Not many would consider dying for a righteous law abiding citizen and neither would most consider dying for a good, fair, and honest man. People are just not willing to give up their lives for others. God; however, “*commends*” his love toward us. The word “*commend*” (*sunistao*) = “to bring together as friends, introduce or recommend one to another... of a debtor, to offer another as a guarantee” (LS 777). God offered His only begotten Son as a propitiation for our sins and thereby a “guarantee” that His promises are true (see study # 2).
 2. Jesus did give up His life for us (an exceedingly sinful people) and is thereby the ultimate example of love toward others. This shows a deep contrast between God and man. Man would scarcely consider dying for even the best people much less the vilest. God; however, sent his son to die for the worst people. This indicates a love that is unparalleled in the abilities and mind of man (see study # 22).
- H. *“Much more then, being now justified by his blood, shall we be saved from the wrath of God through him”* (5:9).
1. Sinful man has a loving God who has handed over His own Son to be a blood sacrifice for the sins of the world. The spilling of Christ blood was the means by which man is saved from their sins (cf. Matt. 26:28; Col. 1:19-20; Heb. 9:21-28).
 2. Note that justification (i.e., the forgiveness of sins) averts the wrath of God (cf. Romans 2:3-6). Those who have not been justified by an obedient faith, as was Abraham, have only the wrath of God to look to. The scriptures reveal in a pointed fashion that those who have not been baptized for the remission of sins have the wrath of God abiding upon them. Again, those who have been baptized yet have turned away from God have His wrath abiding upon them as well.
 3. Abraham’s justification was thereby connected to the blood of Christ even though Christ had not come into the world at that time. Abraham, as well as all who walk in his faithful steps, is justified from sins by Christ blood. Jesus paid the price for sin so that Abraham and all of us who so live would not have to suffer punishment.
- I. *“For if while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, shall we be saved by his life; and not only so, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation”* (5:10-11).
1. The total alienation of man is depicted as one who is “*weak*” (5:6), “*sinners*” (5:8), and now “*enemies*.” Without the propitiatory sacrifice of Jesus we would be forever separate from God. The marvelous love of God is depicted in the fact that while we were all enemies of God through sin Jesus willingly fulfilled His work and bore our sins upon the cross (cf. Heb. 9:28).
 2. Through the blood of Christ there is the opportunity of reconciliation. Said reconciliation ought to cause us great rejoicing and happiness. Without Christ’s sacrifice we could humbly try all we wanted to please God yet the fact would remain that our sins separate us from Him. Jesus made the ultimate sacrifice for the sins of the world. I gain access to the benefits of this sacrifice by God’s gracious favor. So, when I live as did Abraham (i.e., in faithful obedience to the best of my abilities) then I too can be saved from the consequences of my sins.
 3. What is it that brings you happiness in this life? True happiness is found in Jesus Christ.

II. A proper perspective of the magnitude of Christ gracious gift (5:12ff):

Prelude to Romans 5:12-21

As a Bible class teacher, it is often difficult to state everything that a series of passages say with one or two statements. A proper exegesis of any text takes time and patience. However, summary statements may be made which indicate the thrust of the passages that help the hearers see the focal point of said passages. We often times refer to such statements as a “thesis statement.”

The thesis statement of Romans 5:12-21 begins with ideas taken from as far back as 4:1. Abraham was justified by a working faith. Man can only be justified today by walking in the faithful steps of Abraham (cf. 4:23-24). Chapter 5 begins with Paul’s assessment of the magnitude of Christ dying on the cross for our justification. Chapter 5:12-24 builds upon this magnification of the work of Jesus by comparing the enormous consequences of the one act of Adam with the enormous consequences of the one act of Jesus. One helpful hint may be to remember that each time we read “*death*” in Romans 5, Paul is not limiting the term to physical death but in some instances it includes spiritual death. The antithesis of this is that Christ offers unconditional physical life (humans are created with choice) and conditional spiritual life. This thought shall be developed through the study of the text.

Romans 5:1-11 indicates the blessed fruit resulting from the work of Jesus Christ:

- A. Man is justified (vs. 1).
- B. Man has peace (vs. 1).
- C. Man has access by faith into God’s grace (vs. 2).
- D. Man is given the Holy Spirit (vs. 5).
- E. Man is saved from the wrath of God through Jesus (vs. 9).

The theme of Romans is found in 1:16. The gospel message has the power to save man. This gospel message tells of Jesus, “*who was delivered up for our trespasses, and was raised for our justification*” (Rom. 4:25). It appears that the apostle Paul is not satisfied with merely making these statements from Romans 1:16 – Romans 5:11. Beginning with verse 12 of Romans 5, Paul sets in order a proper perspective of the magnitude of Christ’s gracious work of dying on the cross. This death resulted in our justification. The magnitude of Christ’s work is indicated by use of a parallel. Adam is viewed as a type of Christ. Christ is seen as the antitype of Adam (Rom. 5:14). By one act on the part of each of these men were tremendous consequences. If this parallelism is overlooked, the 5th chapter of Romans dissolves in meaning.

I. Adam and Christ contrast (5:12-21):

- A. “*Therefore, as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin; and so death passed unto all men, for that all sinned:*” (5:12).
 - 1. God gave Adam a command not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (Gen. 2:16). Adam disobeyed God’s command as Satan’s cunning voice, through the mode of Eve, “*beguiled*” him (I Tim. 2:14). This first time occurrence, in the history of mankind, of disobedience caused sin to “*enter into the world.*” Adam’s sin apparently opened the door for Satan’s wicked work in the world. Not only did Adam’s sin bring sin into the world as a whole but death as well.
 - 2. Since Adam, no other has had the opportunity to live in a world without sin. Keeping the context of Adam’s sin, as enumerated in Genesis 2, we find that there were consequences of his sin. First there was physical death and secondly man experienced spiritual death (i.e., separation from God). Spiritual death is Paul’s focal point in Romans 8; however, one cannot overlook the aspect of physical death that resulted from Adam’s sin either.
 - 3. Genesis 2:17 states, “*In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.*” The very nature of Adam changed on the day that he sinned against God. He was changed from a living being to a dying being. God said, “*behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil; and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever...so he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden the Cherubim, and the flame of a sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life.*” (Gen. 3:22-24). Adam was to

suffer the consequences of his sin, which was physical death. The apostle Paul stated, *“for since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive”* (I Cor. 15:21-22). Adam died at the age of 930 (Gen. 5:5). The author of Hebrews said, *“and inasmuch as it is appointed unto men once to die, and after this comes judgment;”* (Heb. 9:27). Though man began to die physically this day Paul has in mind a spiritual death in this context (I Cor. 15 focuses on the physical death of man).

4. The spiritual death of Adam due to his sin was *“passed”* (*dierchomai*) to all men. The word *dierchomai* = “to pass through... to pass along... to spread abroad... to extend to (Moulton 100). As Adam failed in temptation so to all *“for that all sinned.”* Due to Adam’s sin God expelled he and Eve from the Garden of Eden and they were no longer in a place of God’s complete care. God allowed the test of Adam and the man failed thereby opening the door of sin for all of mankind because he was expelled from Eden.
- B. *“for until the law sin was in the world; but sin is not imputed when there is no law”* (5:13).
1. The word *“for”* (*gar*) indicates an explanation or basis for what he has just said in vs. 12.
 2. A time frame is given:
 - a. From the time of Adam *“until”* the time of the Mosaic Law given on Sinai, sin was in the world.
 - b. Man was charged with sin due to the implied statement; i.e.; *“but sin is not imputed when there is no law.”* The word *“imputed”* (*ellogeo*) = “to reckon, impute (to ascribe / assign a crime or fault to another)” (LS 251). No law equates to no fault. Where there is law there is sin. Paul states that law existed during the time from Adam to the Mosaic Law and thereby sin existed. Remember, Paul has already said, *“where there is no law, neither is there transgression”* (Rom. 4:15) (see study # 3) (see study # 52; Calvinism: Limited Atonement / Imputation of Right or Wrong).
- C. *“Nevertheless death reigned from Adam until Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the likeness of Adam’s transgression, who is a figure of him that was to come”* (5:14).
1. Though there was no written law that we know of (like the Mosaic) law existed. Where there is law there is transgression and where there is transgression of the law there is spiritual death (i.e., separation from the pure and holy God). Mankind did not have to sin in the *“likeness of Adam”* to be considered a transgressor. Sin in general identifies one as a transgressor.
 2. Adam is identified as a *“figure”* of *“him that was to come”* (i.e., Christ / cf. next passage). The word *“figure”* (*tupos*) = “the print or impress of a seal... a figure, image, statue... general form or character, the type or model of a thing” (LS 824). Adam was a “type” or “model” of Jesus. Let us continue to see how Adam is a type of Christ.
- D. *“But not as the trespass, so also is the free gift. For if by the trespass of the one the many died, much more did the grace of God, and the gift by the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, abound unto the many”* (5:15).
1. Paul affirms that there are similarities in the acts of Adam and Christ; however, he is quick to point out the differences. Adam’s act led to spiritual death of the whole human race.
 2. Christ one act (crucifixion) leads to spiritual life of the whole human race. Here in is the great contrast between Adam and Christ: The enormous consequence of Adam’s sin was physical and spiritual death to the human race. The consequences of Christ’s one act of obedience, results in both physical and spiritual life to the human race (Phil. 2:8).
 - a. One being universal (physical resurrected life of every soul whether just or unjust {Acts 24:15}).
 - b. The other being spiritual life through the reconciliatory work of Jesus by his grace (cf. Rom. 3:25-26). Spiritual life is offered to all of humanity; however, not all humanity gains access into this grace by faith (each man makes his choice) (cf. Rom. 5:1-2).
 - c. Evidently Paul has in mind here the “spiritual life” or justification of “the many” as verse 16 illustrates.
- E. *“And not as through one that sinned, so is the gift: for the judgment came of one unto condemnation, but the free gift came of many trespasses unto justification”* (5:16).
1. Note the consequences of each man’s acts. Due to Adam’s failure to keep God’s commandments judgment and condemnation results to the sinner.
 2. By Christ one time act of obedience mankind has the opportunity to receive the *“free gift”* of *“justification.”* The words *“free gift”* is taken by our Calvinists friends to mean that God’s salvation or justification is **freely given** with **no conditions** whatsoever. Ephesians 2:8 is quoted

along with this verse to further prove the unconditional salvation of man. Ephesians 2:8 states, *“for by **grace** have ye been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is **the gift of God.**”* We have already adequately proved that God demands our obedience today as He did with Abraham (cf. Rom. 4:3, 12). There must, thereby, be an explanation rather than a contradiction.

3. The explanation to God’s conditional grace and free gift is found in understanding the workings of God’s promises. Note that God told Abraham that He would “GIVE” Abraham and his seed the land of Canaan (Gen. 12:7) yet we find that it was through many years of bloody battle that God’s people would untimely receive this free gift. Again, God told Joshua that He had *“GIVEN Jericho into his hand, and the king thereof, and the mighty men of valor”* (Josh. 6:2) and then proceeds to give Joshua instructions to follow in order to receive this gift.
 4. God’s promises have always been conditioned upon man’s obedience (if Adam and Eve would not have eaten the forbidden fruit they would have remained in paradise. Their lack of obedience negated God’s promise).
 5. God has *“promised”* to save man from the consequence of sin (cf. Gal. 3:14). This promise is referred to as the *“gift of the Holy Spirit”* at acts 2:38-39. This gracious gift of justification is identified as forgiving man of their sins (cf. Eph. 1:7). Acts 2:38 states that one receives the forgiveness of sins through the act of baptism. So, God says, I will freely give you salvation, justification, and righteousness; now go and be baptized for the remission of your sins and justification will be freely yours. It is clear that as long as man keeps his part of God’s covenant agreement salvation is ours. Protection from the eternal consequences of sin remains the Christian’s as long as we faithfully follow the Lord’s instructions. An example may be seen in war. As long as a nation remains in subjection to another then they are protected; however, the moment the subject nation rebels it is on its own (see study # 4).
- F. *“For if, by the trespass of the one, death reigned through the one; much more shall they that receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one, even Jesus Christ”* (5:17).
1. The great contrast of consequences between Adam and Christ continues. Through the sin of Adam spiritual death reigned supreme.
 2. Through the gracious gift of Christ; however, all of humanity have the opportunity to receive the forgiveness of their sins. Interestingly, the word *“receive”* (*lambano*) = “to take; to take hold of, grasp, seize...” (LS 463). Those who so desire God’s *“abundance of grace”* must grasp, seize, and take hold of it. To passively sit back and expect Christ to zap you with justification is to ignore the plain and simple teachings of Christ through His apostles. Jesus said, *“come unto me all ye that are weary and heavy laden and I will give you rest”* (Matt. 11:28) (see study # 39).
 3. They that receive the abundance of grace shall *“reign in life.”*
 - a. This reign occurs here on earth (Rev. 5:10; I Pet. 2:9).
 - b. Secondly, the future tense of reign points toward our eternal reign in life with Jesus (Rev. 2:10).
 - c. Said statement helps us understand the nature of the church of Jesus Christ. The church is often referred to as the kingdom of God. Heaven, is at times, referred to as the kingdom of God too. There really is no distinction between the two as one understands that the church is comprised of the saved (those reigning in life now and into the future in heaven) (cf. I Cor. 15:24) (see study # 45; The Church of Christ).
- G. *“So then as through one trespass the judgment came unto all men to condemnation; even so through one act of righteousness the free gift came unto all men to justification of life”* (5:18).
1. Clearer words could no man speak regarding man’s justification (i.e., the forgiveness of sins).
 2. Adam’s one act of sin brought judgment and condemnation on the world. Jesus’ one act of obedience (i.e., righteousness) resulted in the *“free gift”* of *“justification of life.”* Christ was obedient to the point of death and so must His followers be. To obtain justification initially I must obey the commandment to be baptized for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38).
- H. *“For as through the one man’s disobedience the many were made sinners, even so through the obedience of the one shall the many be made righteous”* (5:19).

1. Adam's one error of disobedience causes all others to be made sinners. Note a key Greek word here in understanding what Paul is saying; i.e., "*were made*" (*kathistemi*) = "establish... to bring into a certain state, to make or render so and so... to come into a certain state, to become" (LS 39). By Adam's one sin he "established" a pattern for all men who would follow. Paul is not claiming that Adam's sins were imputed to humanity (see study # 52). The prophet Ezekiel states, "*the soul that sins, it shall die: the son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son; the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon, him and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him*" (Ez. 18:20). Adam sinned, thus sin had an entrance into the world because of Adam's disobedience. All mankind is therefore tempted to sin and all fail the test like Adam did (Rom. 3:23). Therefore all are declared sinners.
 2. This is very similar to Paul's statement to the Corinthians (II Cor. 5:21) regarding Jesus. "*Him who knew no sin he made to be sin on our behalf; that we might become the righteousness of God in him.*"
 - a. Was Jesus guilty of sin? Certainly not! If so then he needed a sin offering for his own sins which is false (cf. Heb. 7:26).
 - b. Jesus was undefiled and holy, One who was without sin (Heb. 7:25). God had; however, laid the iniquity of us all on him (Isa. 53:6). Our sins were not imputed to Christ, He simply paid the penalty for our sins which is death, physical death (Isa. 53:5) (see study # 52). Christ tasted death for every man (Heb. 2:9) (see study # 35; Bible Redemption).
 3. Jesus' one act of obedience made many righteous. The obedience of Jesus is depicted at Philippians 2:8 and Hebrews 5:8. The two men, Christ and Adam, are alike in that their actions resulted in enormous consequences to the human race. Again, Jesus' righteousness was not imputed any more than Adam's sins were (see study # 52). Man "*received*" God's gracious offer and was thereby "*declared*" righteous.
- I. "*And the law came in besides, that the trespass might abound; but where sin abounded, grace did abound more exceedingly.*" (5:20)
1. The words "*came in besides*" (*pareiselthen*) = "to supervene (to follow immediately after) (Moulton 307). The Law, that Adam and all others to the point of the Mosaic Law being given on Sinai, ended with the Mosaic Law. Paul thereby states that the Mosaic law "immediately followed after" the law that Adam was under. Trespasses abounded under the Mosaic System because they already were present under the Law leading up to the Mosaic Law.
 2. The question then is: Why did the Law of Moses follow immediately after the Law Adam was under if both lead to spiritual death? Law was added that the transgressor might not only identify sin but understand the heinousness of sin (cf. Rom. 7:12-13) (see study # 3). Paul poses the same question at Galatians 3:19 and then answers. Paul states, "*What then is the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise hath been made.*" As sins were identified, man knew he was guilty. The more he sinned the more sins were identified. As man violated law, grace abounded. No sin is too great for the boundless grace of God to cover. There is; however, a sin that will not receive the grace of God. That sin is the sin a stubborn and rebellious man will not ask forgiveness for (cf. I Jn. 5:16 {the sin unto death}).
- J. "*that, as sin reigned in death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord*" (5:21).
1. The consequence of Adam's disobedience was great. The consequence of Jesus' one act of obedience was still greater.
 2. This last statement brings together the consequences of Adam's disobedience. "*Sin reigned in death;*" the two are inseparable. Spiritual death and sin go together (see study # 46; Spiritual Death) (see study # 48; Sin Separates from God). Likewise Jesus gives eternal life which is directly associated with his "*grace*" through righteousness.
 3. Note, once again, the correlation between "*grace, righteousness, eternal life, and Christ.*" An equation of equivalence is given: Grace continues (reigns) as long as one is righteous (justified) = eternal life is through Christ.

Chapter 6

Prelude to Chapter 6

Romans chapter 5 has magnified the work of Jesus Christ in reconciling sinful man to God. “*Through*” Christ man is “*justified*” (5:1), at “*peace*” with God (5:1), gains “*access into His grace*” (5:2), receives the gift of the “*Holy Spirit*” (5:5), “*saved from the wrath of God*” (5:9), “*reconciled*” (5:10-11), “*reign in life*” (5:17), “*made righteous*” (5:19), and gain “*eternal life*” (5:21). Comparing sinful man with the justifying work of Jesus, one surely sees how gracious God is. However, this grace is not to be abused. Paul begins in chapter 6 to answer possible objections that may arise in the minds of his readers. This type of writing is very common with the epistles of Paul. He poses a question that he knows surely is in his hearers’ mind and then answers the question himself. Four rhetorical questions are posed and answered in Romans chapters 6 and 7:

1. Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? (6:1).
2. Shall we sin, because we are not under law, but under grace? (6:15).
3. Is the law sin? (7:7).
4. Did then that which is good become death unto me? (7:13).

These questions are closely connected to Paul’s statements regarding our access to the abundant grace of God in Romans 5:2, 20b. Grace, faith, and obedience are shown to be inseparable in these passages. Paul has already said, “*where there is no law, neither is there transgression*” (Romans 4:15 see also Rom. 5:13). The inference is easy. There is obviously something for the Christian to do and maintain. Paul explains in chapter 6.

I. The first of four questions: “*Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?*” (6:1-11)

A. “*What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?*”

1. The word “*abound*” (*pleonazo*) = “to be more, esp. to be more than enough, be superfluous... of persons, to go beyond bounds, take or claim too much... to have an excess of, abound in a thing... to state a larger amount... to be exaggerated” (LS 645).
2. Paul seems to be using a play on words. At Romans 5:15-17 he uses the word “*abound*” in relation to the abundance of Christ’s grace compared to man’s sin. Though sinful man abounded in sin God’s grace abounded the more. Paul’s point at chapter 5 was that no amount of sin can overwhelm God’s gracious gift of forgiveness. Some may conclude that if this were the case then the more they sin the more God’s grace would abound. Said case loses sight of the consequence of sin (i.e., God’s wrath cf. Rom. 2:5-6 and separation of fellowship cf. Rom. 5:21).
3. Paul now challenges his hearers to draw a conclusion about sin and grace. The wrath of God against sinners can be averted by the grace of God (cf. Rom. 5:9); however, this grace is not to be abused. Man cannot sin without repentance and asking for forgiveness that grace may abound. The scriptures prove that baptism (Acts 2:38), repentance, and confession (Acts 8; I Jn. 1:8-10) are required that God’s gracious offer of forgiveness might be realized.

B. “*God forbid. We who died to sin, how shall we any longer live therein?*”

1. The answer is now given to the question, “*shall we sin that grace may abound?*” “*God forbid.*” No, that is not the way grace works. Grace works through acts of obedience rather than acts of disobedience.
2. Paul asks another question: “*We who died to sin, how shall we any longer live therein?*”
 - a. When does the Christian “*die to sin?*” The following text indicates that this occurs when I make a conscience decision to forsake sin and be forgiven of the sin I have committed through the act of baptism. I put to death the desire to sin in my mind. The Christian is a man or woman with a purpose and that purpose is to not sin against God (see study # 49; The Purpose Driven Christian).
 - b. The conclusion is simple, if I purpose not to sin (die to sin) then why go back to sinful living?

- C. *“Or are ye ignorant that all we who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?”* (6:3).
1. Note that the context necessarily infers that *“all we”* who are recipients of God’s saving grace are those who have been *“baptized”* for the remission of their sins.
 2. To be *“in Christ”* is thereby equivalent to receiving the forgiveness of sins (i.e., the purpose of baptism). When I am baptized for the remission of my sins I am now in Christ (cf. Gal. 3:27 / Gal. 2:20) (see study # 50; Bible Baptism).
 3. Baptism is now compared to a death (i.e., a burial). Christ was crucified on the cross that man might have the opportunity to receive the forgiveness of sins. Those who are baptized for the remission of their sins have buried the old man of sin in death.
 4. Note that Paul uses the word *“or...”* *“or are ye ignorant....”* The Greek word *“e”* (*eta* in the Greek alphabet) is the English *“or.”* This letter is left out of the Textus Receptus which is very significant to Paul’s argument. The Greek word *“e”* = “Disjunctive (serving to separate or divide... Gram. to establish a relationship of contrast or opposition) to subjoin one or more clauses differing from the first” (LS 346). Thayer’s definition is clear, a “disjunctive conjunction used to distinguish things or thoughts which either mutually exclude each other, or one of which can take the place of the other; before a sentence contrary to the one just preceding, to indicate that if one be denied or refuted the other must stand” (Thayer 275).
 - a. The sentence preceding the *“eta”* is *“We who died to sin, how shall we any longer live therein?”*
 - b. The sentence after the *“eta”* is *“all we who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?”*
 - c. Both of these sentences are in the form of a question and written in such a way that these were known facts to the Romans. Paul was appealing to the Roman’s prior understanding by saying, *“are you ignorant...”* (vs. 3) (have you so soon forgotten / cf. Gal. 1:6; 3:1).
 - d. The answer to the disjunctive conjunction is negative. We shall not live in sin because we who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death! When one is baptized into Christ, they are introduced into the spiritual blessings offered by Christ by the grace of God.
 1. Obviously then, there is a relationship between the death of Christ on the cross for the forgiveness of sins and the Christian’s baptism.
 2. Jesus died physically on the cross. Man must die to sin. In death the physical is separated from the spiritual. The illustration is obviously figurative. Christians separate the body of sin from the heart. We purpose to not sin.
- D. *“We were buried therefore with him through baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we also might walk in newness of life”* (6:4).
1. Burials only take place for the dead. Jesus was dead therefore he was buried in a tomb.
 2. Christians are to be dead in order to be buried with Jesus in baptism. Again, only the dead can be resurrected to life. Jesus was dead, buried in a tomb, and raised *“through the glory (power) of the Father.”*
 3. Keep the beginning of the argument before us (the Christian cannot *“live”* {conduct himself} in sin). To be alive spiritually and live in sin at the same time is contradictory (cf. Ephesians 2:1; I Jn. 1:5-7). Even so, the Christian is raised from the watery grave of baptism to walk in newness of life. He has had his sins remitted in the process (Acts 2:38; 22:16 etc.). If he has voluntarily submitted to Christ in baptism for the remission of those sins it stands that he has indeed died to that style of life.
 4. If we have died to the old conduct of life, there must necessarily be a new standard of life (*“newness of life”*).
- E. *“For if we have become united with him in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection;”* (6:5).
1. Keeping the illustration of physical death and burial before us, Paul now moves to the resurrection of Jesus and our spiritual resurrection. We, of course, are not resurrected from the dead physically but spiritually.

2. One cannot live in sin and yet conclude that they are alive in Christ. Living in sin is actually considered by God to be dead in sin (cf. Eph. 2:1ff). True life is defined as living apart from sin (cf. Eph. 2:1ff). True spiritual death is thereby the idea of walking in sin.
 3. The apostle Paul introduces a new thought regarding spiritual life and death. The true Christian will metaphorically die to sin and live (be spiritually resurrected) unto God.
 - a. We died to the old way of life (a life of spiritual death).
 - b. We were buried in baptism.
 - c. We are raised, as Christ was raised, to now walk in “*newness of life.*”
- F. *“Knowing this, that our old man was crucified with him, that the body of sin might be done away, that so we should no longer be in bondage to sin; for he that hath died is justified from sin”* (6:6-7).
1. Paul reveals, in clear language, what takes place at baptism. The old man was crucified with Jesus. The old man is that sinful form that we lived prior to having obeyed the gospel (cf. Eph. 4:22; Col. 3:9).
 - a. The old man of sin is nailed to the cross with Jesus (in a figurative sense).
 - b. Purpose: that the body of sin might be done away with. Note that the inference now become crystal clear. Baptism is for the remission of sins (cf. Acts 2:38; 22:16).
 2. Secondly, man is baptized so that we would no longer serve sin as we did before. Serving sin goes against our profession of Christ and propitiatory sacrifice in which we are baptized into.
 3. Man will never be baptized into Christ who does not want to end the current sinful life. Therefore, as Paul states from the beginning, we cannot remain in sin and expect to be found consistent with our profession and neither shall we inherit eternal life. Those today who are baptized into Christ to satisfy a parents nagging request have not truly crucified the old man of sin.
- G. *“But if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him; knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death no more hath dominion over him. For the death that he died, he died unto sin once: but the life that he lives, he lives unto God”* (6:8-10).
1. The Christian dies with Christ when purposing not to sin any longer and baptized into Him for the remission of our sins. Said individual will also “*live with him.*” Jesus died once never to die again (vs. 10; cf. Heb. 7:27; 10:10).
 2. The inference to be made is that Jesus died and will no longer return to the earth to dwell among the fleshly living. Likewise, the Christian is to die to sin no longer to return to its rule. Rather than living in sin, let the Christian live “*unto God*” (i.e., faithfully as did Abraham).
 3. Question: What if one does not live “*unto God*?” Said case is called sin and it is returning to the old man of life. Can our Calvinist friends not see that God demands our obedience else we live in sin? (see study # 51; Calvinism; Irresistible Grace).
- H. *“Even so reckon ye also yourselves to be dead unto sin, but alive unto God in Christ Jesus”* (6:11).
1. As the physical body is separated from the spiritual at death, even so the Christian is to separate from sin. Spiritual death separated from spiritual life (cf. Eph. 2:1ff).
 2. Be dead unto sin and “*live in Christ Jesus.*”
 - a. Again, to “*live in*” is used metaphorically as to a manner of life or a way in which man conducts himself.
 - b. Our conduct is to be in Jesus (i.e., by His authority) (more on this at verse 17).

II. Admonitions to the Romans as a consequence of their having Died to Sin (6:12-14):

- A. *“Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey the lusts thereof”* (6:12).
1. To let sin reign in your body is to be dead spiritually. The word “*reign*” (*basileuo*) = “to be master of a thing” (LS 148). Sin is not to be the master of the body (i.e., in bondage to sin).
 2. The lusts of the flesh makes demands upon the body and those who have not died with Christ will heed to those unlawful demands (see study # 53; Sin).
- B. *“Neither present your members unto sin as instruments of unrighteousness; but present yourselves unto God, as alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God”* (6:13).
1. Note that one’s “*members*” is directly associated with “*obeying the lusts*” of our “*mortal bodies*” at Romans 6:12. The best commentary on this verse can be found by Paul’s statements at Colossians 3:5-10.

2. The baptized Christian is to live a life of righteousness and exercise the *“fruit of the Spirit”* (Gal. 5:22-23).
- C. *“for sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under law, but under grace”* (6:14).
 1. The sinner’s life is a life of bondage. Those who allow sin to reign in their lives have been given over to Satan and his devices (see study # 53).
 2. The Christian is not under Mosaic Law (a law of bondage) but rather a law of freedom (i.e., freedom from sin). James refers to this law as the *“perfect law of liberty”* (James 1:25; 2:12) (see study # 3). The Christian is thereby not under a law that cannot forgive sins but rather under *“grace.”* Note that being under *“grace”* infers being under another law (not the Mosaic, but the *“law of faith”* / Rom. 3:27).

III. The second of four questions: *“Shall we sin, because we are not under law, but under grace?”* (6:15-23):

Prelude:

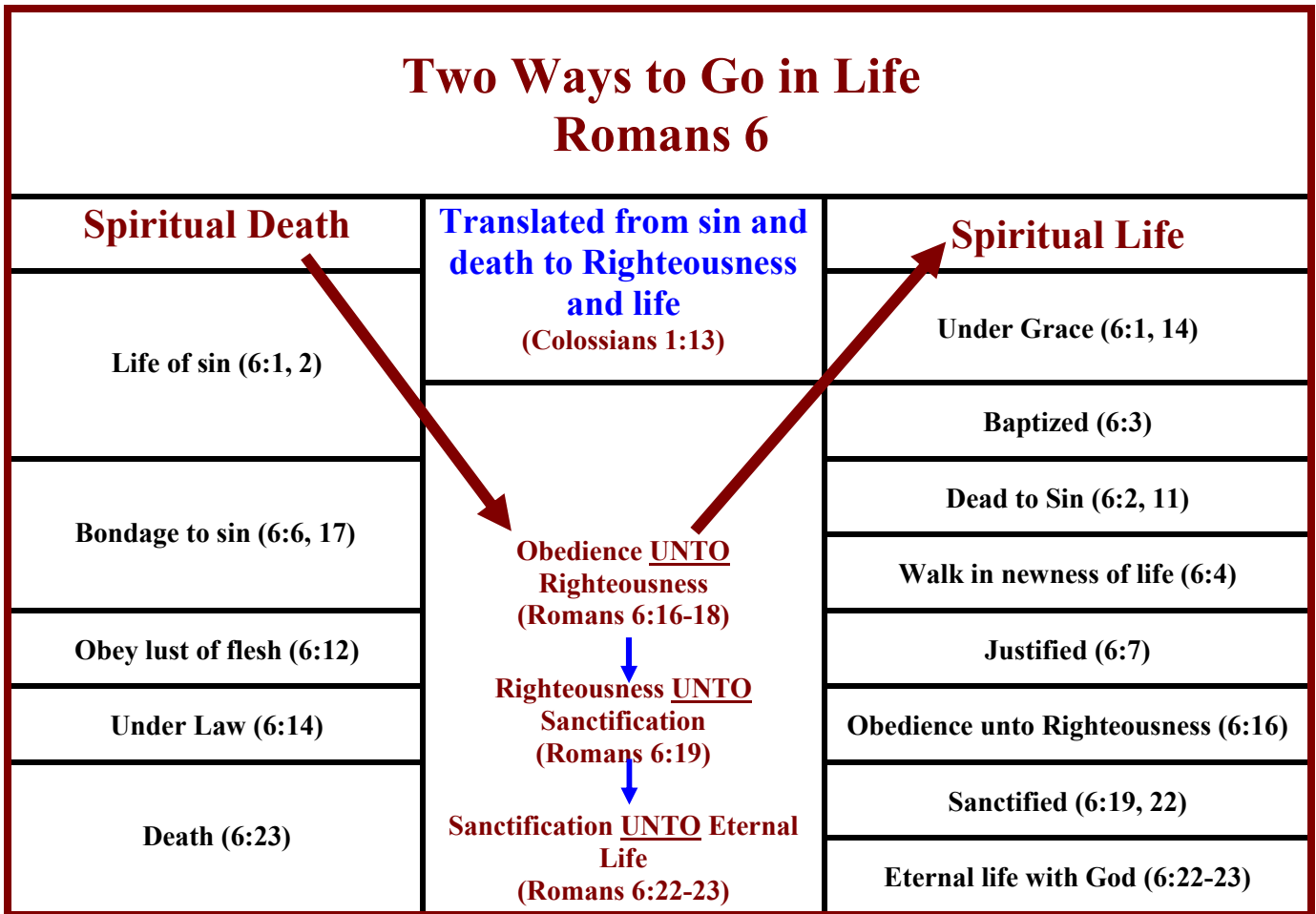
A change has taken place in the baptized believer. He is no longer a servant of sin but of righteousness. Paul indicates this fact by using two illustrations in which the Romans were familiar with. First he uses the illustration of the slave master relationship and secondly he uses the man wife relationship. Paul answers an erroneous hypothetical question in the form of a rhetorical question. Again, he is anticipating any faulty reasoning on the part of the Roman brethren:

- A. *“What then? Shall we sin, because we are not under law, but under grace?”* Again, Paul answers emphatically, *“God forbid”* (6:15):
 1. Paul is systematically eliminating any faulty reasoning that seeks to justify sinful living. Man can find no justification in sin. Being liberated from sin is opposed to being held in bondage to it (Jn. 8:32). The Christian’s liberty from sin involves freedom from the consequences of sin based on justification by faith through God’s grace. Therefore Paul answers the possible objection: No, we do not have liberty to sin simply because we are not under law but under grace.
 2. Note again; however, that Paul is not speaking of eliminating all law keeping else grace would have no true meaning. Grace is a law unto itself. If Grace does not entail law then how is one instructed through it not to sin and be told that there are consequences to sinful living (cf. Titus 2:11-12) (see study # 4)?
 3. A contrast between two laws is really what is under discussion. The Law of Moses relieves no one of sin. The law of grace (law of faith, Christ, liberty) sets man free from the bondage of sin through forgiveness.
- B. *“Know ye not, that to whom ye present yourselves as servants unto obedience, his servants ye are whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?”* (6:16).
 1. Man is pictured as being in either one of two spiritual conditions. Man is either spiritually dead and in bondage to sin (cf. Rom. 6:6; Eph. 2:1ff) or spiritually alive being free from the bondage of sin (cf. Rom. 6:11). Each of us will *“present”* ourselves to God as either a slave to sin or a slave to righteousness.
 2. If I choose a life of sin this leads to a life of spiritual death. A life of *“obedience”* leads to *“righteousness.”* Here our Calvinist friend’s doctrine found in the acronym TULIP, the “P” for perseverance of the saints (impossibility of apostasy), crumbles to the ground. The faulty theory is crushed (see study # 21). Those holding to said erroneous doctrine are left wallowing in their shame. Note very carefully that *“obedience”* is equated to *“righteousness”* and *“righteousness”* is equated to *“justification”* (cf. Rom. 4:3-5). Now we see clearly that when Paul states that Abraham was justified by faith this occurred through his obedience (cf. Rom. 4:12, James 2:21f).
 3. The Greek word *“unto”* (*eis*) = “to express relation, to or towards... in regard to... of a purpose” (LS 231). The Christian’s *“obedience”* is “to express, in regard to, for the purpose of” *“righteousness”* (i.e., justification and the forgiveness of sins / God’s grace cf. Eph. 1:7). A great blow to our Baptists friends and all those who hold to a “no obedience free salvation theology.”

- C. *“But thanks be to God, that, whereas ye were servants of sin, ye became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching whereunto ye were delivered; and being made free from sin, ye became servants of righteousness”* (6:17-18).
1. Jesus said that man can only serve one master (Matt. 6:24). At a point in the past, the Roman Christians were slaves to sin (just as those of us today who have now obeyed the gospel and those who now walk in sin). Paul is thankful to God; however, that now the Romans were slaves to Jesus. The Romans heard the gospel message of grace and came to a faith in Jesus Christ. Said faith moved them to obedience (i.e., repentance and baptism for the remission of their sins).
 2. That which now dictates their life is not sin, but the doctrine of Jesus Christ!
 - a. The word *“form”* in Romans 6:17 is defined as, “a mold or pattern of teaching, a model” (AG 837). The pattern of teaching, the Romans received, caused them to renounce their master of sin and accept their master Jesus (cf. Rom. 10:17; II Tim. 1:13) (see study # 3).
 - b. This pattern of teaching *“delivered”* them from the bondage of sin. They now belonged to Christ and were subject to his teaching or doctrine.
- D. *“I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh: for as ye presented your members as servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity, even so now present your members as servants to righteousness unto sanctification”* (6:19).
1. Paul calls upon the Roman Christians to be holy. The *“infirmity of your flesh:”* (6:19) indicates the Romans weakness in spiritual insight and discernment. Therefore Paul puts his thoughts in simplistic terms that all may understand.
 2. Secondly, he uses the illustration of the slave master since all were very familiar with this. This illustration indicates that they had once been servants of lawless deeds yet now they are called upon to exercise righteousness and obedience.
 3. *“Obedience”* indicates “relation, toward something, regarding something, and purpose for something” and that something being *“righteousness”* (cf. Rom. 6:16). Christians are called upon to be obedient (to God’s law of grace) that they may attain a state of *“righteousness”* (justification). Now Paul states that a state of “righteousness / justification due to one’s obedience” is in relation, regarding, for the purpose of *“sanctification”* (*hagiasmos*) = “sanctification, moral purity, sanctity, holy, righteous” (Moulton 3).
 4. One who thereby claims to be justified from sins by the grace of God is one who is saying that they have obeyed God’s commands and continue to obey (see study # 35).
- E. *“For when ye were servants of sin, ye were free in regard of righteousness. What fruit then had ye at that time in the things whereof ye are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death”* (6:20-21).
1. A before and after illustration is given and carried on into chapter 7 in relation to the Roman Christians past life as servants of sin and current life as Christians.
 2. The before condition:
 - a. In the state of being a servant of sin, they were free in regards to the pattern of teaching revealed by Jesus (Rom. 6:20). They sinned at will! The *“fruit”* (results, outcome, product) of said condition was indeed *“death”* (6:21) (see study # 48).
 - b. The only fruits or results was and is death, spiritual death, and eternal separation from God. Such a state caused the Roman Christians to now look back in shame as is the case with you and I.
- F. *“But now being made free from sin and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto sanctification, and the end eternal life”* (6:22).
1. Let us fit all the pieces of the puzzle together now. My *“obedience”* produces *“righteousness”* and my *“righteousness”* equals *“justification”* (Rom. 6:16; 4:3-5). My *“righteousness and justification”* produces *“sanctification”* and my *“sanctification”* *“eternal life”* (cf. Rom. 6:19, 22).
 2. The result of being freed from sin through obedience is eternal life! Those with a mind to make it to heaven will do all they can do to cast off sin in their lives and remain faithful to God to receive that heavenly reward or prize of heaven (cf. Phil. 3:13-15, 20) (see study # 43, and # 49).
- G. *“For the wages of sin is death; but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord”* (6:23).
1. So you want to continue in sinful living? My wages for such a life is death. Here is merited favor (the very opposite of grace). One gets what he or she deserves (see study # 4).

2. Note that the “*free gift of God is eternal life*.” How can God say that “*eternal life*” is a “*free gift*” when Paul just said that such eternal life is conditioned upon our obedience? Easy, the argument proves that God’s gifts are conditional as we have noted all along in this study.
- Paul states, “*for all have sinned, and fall short of the glory of God; being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:*” (Rom. 3:23-24). God freely gives (cf. Eph. 2:8) justification to those who seek it through obedience.
 - To deny God’s command of obedience unto justification is to deny the writings of the inspired writings of Paul. Trace it out for yourself. Man is under a “*law of faith*” (Rom. 3:27) that “*instructs*” (cf. Titus 2:11-12) man to “*obey unto righteousness*” (Rom. 6:16) which is equated to “*justification*” (Rom. 4:3-5). To obey is to be justified and to be justified is to be sanctified and to be sanctified is to have a true hope of eternal life! God wants us to obey (cf. Eccl. 12:13-14) (see study # 4).

Synopsis of Chapter 6



Chapter 7

Prologue:

Paul poses the second of four rhetorical questions in chapter 6:15; *“shall we sin, because we are not under law, but under grace? God forbid.”* Paul explains his answer by comparing the Christian to a slave. A slave is bound to his master, he does not serve two but one (Matt. 6:24). The Christian who serves sin shall receive the fruit of spiritual death. The Christian who serves Jesus, through obedience and righteousness, receives eternal life with God. The gospel or doctrine of Jesus Christ is the mold the Christian is to be obedient to (Romans 6:17).

While servants of sin (i.e., before we became Christians) we were free in relation to right conduct as revealed by Jesus (Romans 6:20). Now that we have died to sin (Rom. 6:11) we are servants of Jesus. The apostle presents man with only two options (see study # 54; Two Paths to take in Life). One can either live in sin or obedience unto righteousness. There is no middle ground.

Interestingly, Paul states that we are not under law but under grace (3:20-24). The overall thrust of Romans is to prove that God’s gracious gift of the forgiveness of sins and eternal salvation comes through meeting conditions of obedience. Grace thereby comes to be seen as a law itself (see study # 4). Note that Paul connects God’s *“free gift of eternal life”* (Rom. 6:23) with *“sanctification”* at Romans 6:22. To be sanctified is to have a hope of eternal life. Tracing further back we find Paul connecting *“righteousness unto sanctification”* (Rom. 6:19). To be righteous is to be sanctified and to be sanctified is to have eternal life. Let us continue to trace backwards and find the truth Paul is establishing. One who is *“righteous”* is one who is *“obedient”* (Rom. 6:16). Remember that the idea of *“righteousness”* and *“justification”* (i.e., the forgiveness of sins) are made equal at Romans 4:5. Paul states that the forgiven sinner is *“justified freely by his grace...”* (Rom. 3:24). Note all the elements in the salvation equation. Obedience leads to justification and righteousness. Righteousness leads to sanctification and sanctification to eternal life. The theme of Romans is thereby that obedience leads to one receiving the *“free gift”* of God’s gracious offer of salvation. Paul’s preaching was designed to produce said obedience (cf. Rom. 1:5). Those who receive the forgiveness of their sins are those who are obedient (cf. Rom. 1:16-18). Man cannot go on sinning (transgressing God’s NT laws) and expect that all is well in his *“unrighteousness.”* Romans chapter seven deals with the second, third and fourth questions that illustrate the Christian’s faithful obedience to God.

I. The second illustration that answers the absurdity of such a question: *“shall we sin, because we are not under law, but under grace?”* (6:15) / (7:1-6):

A. *“Or are ye ignorant, brethren (for I speak to men who know the law), that the law hath dominion over a man for so long time as he lives?”* (7:1).

1. Paul states a universal known fact, *“the law has dominion over a man for so long time as he lives”* (7:1). When an individual dies physically, he naturally is not subject to any law. Law is reserved for the living, this is a known fact that no one argues thus the parenthetical statement, *“for I speak to men who know the law”* (7:1).
2. This ties in beautifully with what had been previously stated regarding the Christian dying with Jesus. We are dead to sin no longer to return. I was once under the law of sin but now I have died to that way of life and am no longer under it (see study # 53).
3. Keeping this thought of death before us, Paul moves on into his second illustration to answer the question above.

B. *“For the woman that hath a husband is bound by law to the husband while he lives; but if the husband die, she is discharged from the law of the husband”* (7:2).

1. The illustration involves the *“married woman”* (*hupandros gune*) literally means under a man woman. The word *gune* is a generic word meaning women whether she be single or married. However the *gune* in this sentence is modified by the word *hupandros*, thus she is a woman under the man that indicates her subjection to the man in the marriage relationship. She is under his law! She is under his authority (see study # 55; The Marriage Relationship).
2. The Roman Christians were well familiar with this concept as Christians today are.
 - a. *“Wives, be in subjection unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, being himself the saviour of the body”* (Eph. 5:22-23).

- b. *“For after this manner aforetime the holy women also, who hoped in God, adorned themselves, being in subjection to their own husbands: as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord: whose children ye now are, if ye do well, and are not put in fear by any terror”* (I Peter 3:5-6).
3. The woman is *“bound”* by the law of the husband who is over her for so long as he (or she) lives. The word *“bound”* (*deo*) = “to bind, tie, fetter... put in bonds... metaphorically to bind, enchain” (LS 181) (consider the use of the word at I Cor. 7:27, 39). Clearly, when a man and woman are married they are “enchained” together by the law of God (see study # 56; The Marriage Bond).
- a. The husband must of necessity be bound to the law of his wife; else he would not be free from law when his wife dies. We must keep the overall theme before us, which is that when one dies to one law (whether male or female) that person is now free from that law. The wife is under the law of her husband and the husband under the law of the wife for so long as they both shall live.
- b. The law Paul speaks of here deals with the fact that both the man and wife must remain faithful to each other so long as they live (they are bound by law to each other). To commit adultery would be to violate their marriage vows and to violate the law of marriage that rides from woman to man and man to woman. Both are subject to the law of marriage (Matt. 19:1ff).
- C. *“So then if, while the husband lives, she be joined to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if the husband die, she is free from the law, so that she is no adulteress, though she be joined to another man”* (7:3).
1. If the woman (or man) were to violate the **law** of marriage by an unfaithful act of adultery, they are to be named an adulteress. The only thing that frees a man or woman from the law of marriage is death of the mate (Paul does not consider Matt. 19:9 and the cause of adultery here because it is not relevant to his argument).
2. A principle is thereby laid down; i.e., man is subject to law so long as he is under that law. Death dissolves said responsibility. This principle is now illustrated with the marriage bond. If a man lives and his wife goes to another she is an adulterous woman. If the husband dies she is free from the law of their marriage. Paul states, *“though she be joined to another man”* (i.e. joined is aorist tense which indicates present state based on past action). Some time in the past she married another man. The question is whether this marriage happened while her first husband lived or after he died. The aorist tense seems to indicate that she married the new man while her husband was alive and was thereby termed an adulterous woman. Now, the husband dies and she is freed from the original bond. She is now free to remarry; however, the death of her husband does not make all things right with her present marriage. Why? She was living in sin before the man died and after he died she is still in sin due to the fact that she had not repented. Should she see the error of her way and repent asking God to forgive her she is now clean and free to remarry in the Lord (I Cor. 7:39). If this is not the case then it would follow that the woman, once her husband dies, is not under the totality of the law of Christ. She has the right of forgiveness through repentance and prayer as anyone else. Once she has repented she has the right of remarriage, due to her husband dying, as anyone else would.
3. A secondary proof is the word *“bound”* (*deo*): “To bind by a legal or moral tie, as marriage, Rom. 7:2; I Cor. 7:27, 39” (Moulton 89). Paul is using this illustration to indicate what releases one from a particular law; in this case the law of marriage. Death is here considered as an event that legally separates mates where as the surviving mate is at liberty to marry again. Though the marriage question is not under consideration, we learn some valuable truths about its permanency and legal dissolution (see study # 57; Divorce).
- D. *“Wherefore, my brethren, ye also were made dead to the law through the body of Christ; that ye should be joined to another, even to him who was raised from the dead, that we might bring forth fruit unto God”* (7:4).
1. Paul draws a conclusion from the being dead to a peculiar law argument.

2. Death frees one from the law of marriage and allows a joining to another. Likewise, those who have died to the law of sin and death may now be joined to another, which is Christ. Note that the entire illustration infers that the one in Christ is **one who is under a new law** (see study # 4).
 3. In this state of being joined to Christ (his law), we are servants of Christ and commanded to “*bring forth fruit unto God*” through our obedience (cf. Jn. 15:4-8 and Gal. 5:22 ff.).
- E. “*For when we were in the flesh, the sinful passions, which were through the law, wrought in our members to bring forth fruit unto death*” (7:5).
1. Note that being “*in the flesh*” is equated to being outside of Christ (i.e., guided by the desires of the flesh rather than the law of Christ).
 2. The law that binds man does not cause sin, it simply identifies sin as sin. As man sins, its fruit was spiritual death.
- F. “*But now we have been discharged from the law, having died to that wherein we were held; so that we serve in newness of the spirit, and not in oldness of the letter*” (7:6).
1. Man is “*discharged*” (*katargeo*) from law through death = “to make of none effect... to be abolished, cease... to be set free from the law” (LS 413). When we die to sin through baptism in the name of Jesus Christ, we die to sin. We are now “*servant*” (slaves metaphorically speaking) in “*newness of the spirit, and not in oldness of the letter*” (7:6b).
 2. The “*newness of spirit*” is set in contrast to the “*oldness of the letter*:”
 - a. “*Newness of spirit*” is a reference to the new condition of the soul. It must mean that the one under consideration who serves Jesus, has been cleansed from their sins, and is now under a new master. Thus, he or she serves in “*newness of spirit*.” Interestingly, Paul states, “*We were buried therefore with him through baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we also might walk in newness of life*” (Rom. 6:4). A new “*walk*” of life is under consideration. We no longer are governed by the flesh but by the teachings of Christ (cf. Rom. 6:17). Abraham “*walked*” in said obedience and was thereby justified (cf. Rom. 4:12). This is further proof that God desires our obedience to His laws.
 - b. The reference to “*oldness of the letter*” can be a reference to none other than the previous condition of the Christian before being buried with Christ in baptism. We were under a system of law that in no way could free us from sin.

II. A third question that systematically eliminates any faulty reasoning that seeks to justify sinful living, “*Is the law sin?*” (7:7-12):

- A. “*What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Howbeit, I had not known sin, except through the law: for I had not known coveting except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet.*” (7:7).
1. Someone may say that if one must be “*discharged*” (set free) (Rom. 7:6) from the law to be saved from sins then the law is to be blamed for my sin. Again, Paul eliminates this excuse.
 2. Paul answers this faulty reasoning by giving us the purpose of the Mosaic Law: The law identified sin but gave no provisions for its forgiveness. Some things are known inherently (naturally) (cf. Rom. 2:14 / stealing, adultery, cheating, etc). Other thoughts and actions must be spelled out; i.e., “*covetousness*.” The written law of Moses made a record of such sinful thoughts and actions (cf. Gal. 3:19) (see study # 3).
- B. “*But sin, finding occasion, wrought in me through the commandment all manner of coveting: for apart from the law sin is dead*” (7:8).
1. Sin, by grasping opportunities through the law (finding occasion), produces or creates (wrought) desire for those things that are prohibited by God. It should be noted that sin causes violation rather than human nature (Cf. James 1:13ff) (see study # 58; Calvinism: Total Hereditary Depravity).
 2. The propensity to covet and have lustful feelings are a part of man just as desires to be kind, gentle, caring and loving. What distinguishes a commendable character from the condemned character is God’s law. If there were no law to reveal the condemned character traits then sin would be dead (i.e., non-existent).
- C. “*And I was alive apart from the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died*” (7:9).

1. When was Paul spiritually “*alive apart from the law?*” Paul tells us that it was “*when the commandment came.*” At this point “*sin revived*” and “*I died*” (spiritually). The word “*revived*” (*anezesev*) = “to return to life, be alive again” (LS 55). Sin came to life in Paul’s life when the law revealed an action he performed to be sinful. The only way one may be “*alive*” spiritually apart from law is to have no knowledge of the law he or she is violating. Leaving the matter here one may say that “*ignorance is thereby bliss.*” Not so, Paul condemned such behavior at Romans 2.
 2. The conclusion must be that man must be of an age where he can comprehend law and understand that sin is a violation of that law. Law is beneficial to those who have the ability to comprehend it. Little children and mentally handicapped people cannot possibly comprehend the idea of sin and the resultant consequences and are thereby not subject to said judgment (see study # 25).
- D. “*and the commandment, which was unto life, this I found to be unto death.*” (7:10).
1. The very law that Paul thought would bring him salvation actually identified sins and provided no forgiveness.
 2. Paul had spent his life in a state of delusion thinking that following the Mosaic Law gave him acceptance with God (cf. Acts 26:9) (see study # 16).
- E. “*for sin, finding occasion, through the commandment beguiled me, and through it slew me*” (7:11).
1. The commandments of God exposed sin. Sin took opportunity “*through the commandment*” and “*beguiled*” Paul and thereby caused him to be spiritually dead.
 2. We see exactly what takes place when one sins. The law of God identifies a deed as lawlessness yet we are “*beguiled*” and thereby killed (made spiritually dead).
 3. The word “*beguiled*” (*exepatesen*) = “to deceive” (LS 270). The same word is used in the LXX (Greek Septuagint) of the Hebrew text at Gen. 3:13; the devil “*beguiled*” Eve and she sinned (II Cor. 11:3; I Tim. 2:14). One therefore sins when he or she is deceived, beguiled, or seduced by the devil, as was Eve (Gen. 3:13). The devil is the Father of deceptions (Acts 13:10; I Jn. 3:7-8; Rev. 12:9).
 4. How then does the devil take opportunities by God’s commands to deceive? The devil distorts God’s laws so that man justifies their sin through his deception (Ex. Gen. 3 and Matt. 4) (see study # 15).

III. The fourth and final question which systematically eliminates any faulty reasoning that seeks to justify sinful living, “*Did then that which is good become death unto me?*” (7:13-25):

- A. “*Did then that which is good become death unto me? God forbid, But sin, that it might be shown to be sin, by working death to me through that which is good; that through the commandment sin might become exceeding sinful*” (7:13).
1. If indeed sin beguiles man by use of the law (cf. vs. 10-11), is the law the cause of spiritual death? “*God forbid*” (certainly not)!
 2. The law brings to light or makes evident (“*be shown*”) sin to be sin. When one examines, understands, and identifies sin with the law then law has done its work.
 3. The man (or woman) who sins and comes to a knowledge of that sin through the law now understands the heinous character of sin.
 4. The wording of this verse helps us see that the devil uses the law of God as a tool to tempt man to sin (i.e., “*working death to me through that which is good*”). This is a verse that indicates to the Christian that we are to know God’s. The devil’s tactics are distortion, craft, and justification of one’s sins (see study # 15). Many brethren today are being deluded and deceived by the devil as they distort God’s laws to fit their mode of life.
- B. “*For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin*” (7:14).
1. When man sins it’s not the law’s fault. The law reveals facts through divine revelation to help man; however, when these laws are twisted Satan beguiles the hearts of man. Can we not see the importance of approaching a study of God’s word with pure and sincere hearts? The one who studies to justify his wrong actions is the one who has been “*beguiled*” (see study # 59; Bible Study).
 2. So Paul states that it’s not the Law’s fault that I sin but rather my fault. I am “*carnal*” (*sarkinos*) is “*belonging to the realm of the flesh*” (AG 750) (see Rom. 7:5).
 3. The law is “*spiritual*” (i.e., filled with instructions to lead one to life).

- a. To be “*spiritual*” is to be of divine origin (cf. Gal. 1:11-12).
 - b. Paul states that the message of God appeals to the spirit of man saying, “*which things also we speak, not in words which man’s wisdom teaches, but which the Spirit teaches; combining spiritual things with spiritual words*” (I Corinthians 2:13). The man of the flesh is governed by his own will whereas the one guided by the Spirit is governed by God’s laws. The Christian is to be careful not to mix and mingle the two courses of life (see study # 54).
- C. “*For that which I do I know not: for not what I would, that do I practice; but what I hate, that I do*” (7:15).
- 1. The following verses seem to define what it means to be “*sold under sin.*” When I do those things I know to be unlawful I sin. Though I know it to be sin I still do it because I have a momentary failure in faith. I allow myself to be deceived by Satan and I attempt to justify my wrong doing with faulty reasoning.
 - 2. Paul does those things that he hates which is the universal experience of man who wages war with the fleshly appetites. Paul hates sin yet he finds that his fleshly passions and appetites often win over the inner battle.
- D. “*But if what I would not, that I do, I consent unto the law that it is good*” (7:16).
- 1. The fact that Paul acknowledges that his actions are not good in light of revealed law indicates that the law is indeed good.
 - 2. The law is good and it is not the cause of death. Spiritual death comes to the individual who has been beguiled by sin through the law.
- E. “*So now it is no more I that do it, but sin which dwelleth in me*” (7:17).
- 1. The word “*I*” includes both Paul’s spirit and flesh. Man is a dichotomous being divided into two parts; the spirit and the flesh.
 - 2. Paul’s spirit or flesh does not will to sin; however, often times the battle between the appetites of the flesh win over against the will of the spirit (inner man).
 - 3. The cause of this victory of sin is here delineated: “*Sin which dwells in me.*” Sin is doing that which God prohibits. The word “*dwells*” (*oikousa*) can be better defined by looking to other passages of scripture where it is used.
 - a. Of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit (Romans 8:9, 11; I Cor. 3:16; II Tim. 1:14).
 - b. Of the indwelling of faith in Timothy’s mother Eunice and Grandmother Lois (II Tim. 1:5).
 - c. The indwelling of sin therefore is of one’s own volition just as the indwelling of the Holy Spirit and faith is. Sin does not have a permanent dwelling in our flesh unless we give it a place.
 - d. The point then is that when I do those unlawful acts and allow sin to dwell in me it is done at my own bidding at times of spiritual weakness. I have allowed myself to be deluded by Satan as he uses the Law of God to cause me to sin (i.e., I seek to justify my wrong).
- F. “*For I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me, but to do that which is good is not*” (7:18).
- 1. Here we see the nature of man. The “*me*” has as its antecedent “*my flesh.*” The flesh itself is neutral as to good and evil. Our fleshly bodies are given appetites and passions that are determined to be satisfied. The flesh has the potential of committing great sin in the fulfillment of fleshly or carnal desires which are contrary to God’s revealed pattern.
 - 2. These fleshly desires are perpetual as long as one has breath in his nostrils. Therefore Paul said, “*in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing.*” The battle is ever present between the fleshly desires and spiritual knowledge.
 - 3. Paul desires, through his spirit, to live lawfully however his carnal fleshly side often gets the better of him (who among us cannot relate to this?).
- G. “*For the good which I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I practice*” (7:19).
- 1. Paul’s trained conscience tells him what is lawful and right to do; however, he does not always do what he knows to be right.
 - 2. The flesh wars against the spirit and often prevails. Again, we fall due to weakness and self justification.
- H. “*But if what I would not, that I do, it is no more I that do it, but sin which dwelleth in me*” (7:20).

1. Paul is not excusing his sin here but rather stating the facts revolving around the unlawful action.
 2. Rather than allowing the teachings of Christ to dictate his life's decisions he allows the fleshly lust to take over. Self control is lost in said case and sin occurs.
- I. *"I find then the law, that, to me who would do good, evil is present"* (7:21).
1. Consequently Paul has discovered a general rule of thumb (*"the law"*). This is the universal experience of all Christians. We want to do as God commands; however, at times our flesh wins the battle and we sin.
 2. When he desires to live good, evil is present with his flesh to make war on the spirit. Satan's powerful distortion of God's laws often appeal to us in moments of weakness and we give in.
- J. *"For I delight in the law of God after the inward man:"* (7:22)
1. The Law of God (written revelation / cf. Rom. 6:17) causes Paul's *"inward man"* (the spiritual side) to greatly rejoice. The *"law of God"* is the same law mentioned in Romans 3:27 and 8:2 (i.e., *"a law of faith"* and *"The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus"*) which equals the gospel of Jesus Christ. However, it too would represent the Mosaic Law (It is *"spiritual"* {vs. 14} because it was of divine origin).
 2. The *"inward man"* is set in contrast with man's *"flesh"* (cf. Rom. 7:18). The inward man seeks to please God due to a trained conscience while the flesh seeks to fulfill desires. A longing to fulfill desires with no guidance (i.e., spirituality) is a life of sin. Satan seeks to distort our trained conscience with erroneous thoughts that appeal to our fleshly appetites.
- J. *"but I see a different law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity under the law of sin which is in my members"* (7:23).
1. First, Paul has discovered a *"law"* which appears to be an accepted rule that he surely desires to do good; however, often his carnal appetites lead to sin. Said thought is the universal experience of man.
 2. Secondly, Paul mentions the law of God that his inward man delights in. Law of Moses/ Law of Christ (gospel) [that which is delivered by divine revelation].
 3. Now (vs. 23), Paul speaks of *"a different law in my members."*
 - a. The law under consideration in vs. 23 is *"different"* than the *"law of God"* (vs. 22).
 - b. This *"different law"* is identified as *"the law of sin which is in my members"* (vs. 23) as opposed to the *"law of my mind"* (*"law of God"* vs. 22). The word *"mind"* (*nous*) = "perception, to apprehend... to have one's mind directed to something... the mind, heart... purpose" (LS 535). Here in is the human dilemma, the passions of the flesh (*"law of sin"*) wars against the *"law of my mind"* (my mental ascension to do those things which are right).
 - c. But what is *"the law of sin"*? (vs. 23). *"Law of sin"* is the same law spoken of in vs. 21. The *"Law of sin"* is that universal experience that we desire to do good yet we give in to the desires and passions of the flesh and sin. I once walked after the law of sin but now have died to that law. Unfortunately, Satan gets the best of me at times and I go back to that old law of sin that I was supposed to have died to. We are frustrated, dejected, and filled with sorrow (when we come to our proper senses) at such failures in life.
- K. *"Wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me out of the body of this death?"* (7:24):
1. The word *"wretched"* means "miserable" (AG 811).
 2. The day to day battle between the flesh and spirit is a miserable battle. I know the consequences of sin yet I still do it from time to time (I Jn. 1:8ff). That experience of wanting to do good yet having the ever-present fleshly carnal side to contend with is indeed a miserable state.
 3. The idea of *"rest"* is brought out in the scriptures in this relationship as well as others. We will one day, in heaven, have *"rest"* from persecution (II Thess. 1:7ff) and from the works of Satan.
- L. *"I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then I of myself with the mind, indeed, serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin"* (7:25).
1. Here is the answer to the question posed in vs. 24: *"who shall deliver (set free) from this body of death (spiritual death due to sin)."* It is Jesus (Jn. 8:32).
 2. Now Paul makes a summarization of all that he has just stated: *"So then I of myself with the mind, indeed serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin"* (7:25b).

- a. A statement which indicates once again the struggle between the two parts of all dichotomous beings.
- b. Our spiritual minds tell us to do according to the “*law of God;*” however, often “*the law of sin*” through the flesh wins the battle. Since we loose battles and are sinners, we need the cleansing blood of Jesus to help us (I Jn. 1:8-9).

Chapter 8

Prelude

The apostle Paul draws a conclusion to all that has been said to this point in the book of Romans. Man has sinned and due the punishment thereof (Rom. 3:23; 6:23). God, in His rich mercy and grace; however, provides a way of escape for man called justification (cf. Rom. 3:24-26). Jesus is the propitiatory sacrifice for man’s sins and thereby has paid the high price for our iniquities (i.e., redeemed us) (Rom. 3:25; 5:8). Those who gain access into this grace have been justified by obedience to Christ’s commandments (Rom. 5:1ff; 6:16ff). Said justification does not cause one to be immune from sin (chapter 7). Once justified; however, there is now “*no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus*” (Rom. 8:1). The eighth chapter is one of encouragement. Chapter 5:1ff gives the Christian hope and chapter 8:1 gives the Christian stamina to continue onward in the spiritual battle between the flesh and spirit (cf. chapter 7).

I. Words of encouragement (8:1-2):

- A. “*There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus*” (8:1).
 - 1. The word “*condemnation*” (*katakrima*) = “judgment... to give as sentence against... sentence of death has been passed... to condemn... to be condemned” (LS 409). Condemnation belongs to the disobedient (cf. Rom. 2:8-9). Those who believe in Christ are justified and those who are justified are righteous (Rom. 4:3-5). The righteous are those who obey (Rom. 6:16), have been sanctified (Rom. 6:19), and have a hope of eternal life (Rom. 6:22-23). Though we share a common struggle against sin (Rom. 7) we are encouraged to know that as we continue to try to do good (be obedient to God and asks His forgiveness when we err) He will reward us. This is one of those verses in the Word of God that illustrates the fact that God desires our efforts against Satan (see study # 39).
 - 2. The believing, obedient, righteous, justified, and sanctified Christian has a true hope of heaven and is thereby “*in Christ.*” Consider other Bible passages on what it means to be “*in Christ.*” (see study # 60; In Christ):
 - a. One gets “*in Christ*” initially through the act of baptism (Gal. 3:27).
 - b. To have died to sin (Gal. 2:20) through the obedient act of baptism (Rom. 6:3-11) is to be in Christ.
 - c. Those of God have a proper attitude toward sin in their lives (I Jn. 1:8-9; 3:3), they are the “*begotten of God*” (I Jn. 2:29; 5:18), they love (I Jn. 3:16; 4:10-17), they “*believe*” that Jesus is the Christ (I Jn. 5:1), and unashamedly “*confess*” His name (I Jn. 4:2). Said individuals are “*in Christ*” and He in them (I Jn. 5:20).
 - d. To be “*in him*” (Jesus) is to be in fellowship with the Lord abiding in His truths (I Jn. 1:3, 5-6; 2:6, 24).
 - e. Paul lists 7 ways to be found “*in Christ*” at Philippians 3:9-11
 - f. Once baptized, one receives the remission of sins and is thereby “*in Christ,*” “*of God,*” and “*begotten of God.*”
- B. “*For the law of the Spirit of life freed me from the law of death*” (8:2).
 - 1. What is the “*law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus?*”
 - a. The law of the Spirit of life delivers one from the law of death. This is none other than the gospel of Jesus Christ (cf. Rom. 1:16) that Paul refers to as the “*law of faith*” at Romans 3:27 and “*the law of my mind*” at Romans 7:23. Paul has already stated that where there is no law neither is their sin... if sin exists so must law (cf. Rom. 4:15; 7:8). Sin exists today so man must continue to be under a law (i.e., the “*law of the Spirit of life*”) (see study # 3).

- b. Said law of God is a law that was communicated to man by the Holy Spirit. Paul told the Corinthian brethren regarding the gospel message, *“which things also we speak, not in words which man’s wisdom teacheth, but which the Spirit teacheth; combining spiritual things with spiritual words”* (I Cor. 2:13).
- 2. What is the *“law of death?”*
 - a. The *“law of death”* is equivalent to *“the law of sin”* (Rom. 7:23).
 - b. This law worked death in people because it is the mind that allows fleshly appetites and passions to govern them. It is to be carnally minded rather than spiritually minded.
- 3. How did the *“law of the Spirit”* *“free”* me *“from the law of death?”* When I obeyed the gospel message I came to be righteous (Rom. 6:16). Obedience to the gospel brought me freedom from the bondage of sin and death (cf. Rom. 1:16-18; Col. 1:13).

II. Christians are led by the Spirit of God as opposed to the Flesh (8:3-17):

- A. *“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.”* (8:3).
 - 1. The *“law”* was *“weak through the flesh.”* What does this mean?
 - a. *“The law”* required perfection (Gal. 3:10). When one violated its principles they sinned. The universal experience of man is that he sins, he gives into the fleshly desires (Rom. 3:23; 7:21).
 - b. Having sinned at one point or another, we all die spiritually (Rom. 6:23).
 - c. The Law of Moses, Law of Gentiles or any law other than Christ does not have the power nor design to offer forgiveness and justification. Therefore it is weak and unprofitable in relation to removing sin (cf. Heb. 7:18-19).
 - 2. God gave a remedy to weakness of the law by sending his Son (Jesus Christ) into the world. Jesus was sent in *“the likeness of sinful flesh.”* In one respect, Jesus is like every other man, he came in flesh. On the other hand he is unlike every other man, he never one time gave in to the tempting devices of the devil as do we (cf. Heb. 4:15). This proves that man is not one who inherits sin (the “T” in Calvinism) (see study # 58). Christ was in the flesh yet he did not sin... we are in the flesh but we do sin. We are not thereby inherently evil but rather choose the rout of sin at times because we give into temptation.
 - 3. God sent Jesus into the world that he would *“condemn sin in the flesh.”*
 - a. The word *“condemned”* has already been defined above as to *“give a sentence against...”* Jesus condemned sin in the flesh through his one act of obedience; i.e., laying down His sinless life as a propitiatory sacrifice for man’s sins. The author of Hebrews writes, *“Since then the children are sharers in flesh and blood, he also himself in like manner partook of the same; that through death he might bring to nought him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and might deliver all them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage”* (Heb. 2:14-15).
 - b. When Christ died on the cross, He delivered the crushing blow to Satan’s head (cf. Gen. 3:15). The devil no longer had the power of sin and death on his side. Man has the opportunity, through Christ, to be forgiven of sins and thereby, *“there is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus”* (8:1).
- B. *“that the ordinance of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit”* (8:4).
 - 1. Having paid the penalty of sin, i.e. death, Jesus fulfilled the *“ordinance of the law.”* The ordinance or requirement of the law was that the violator is to be condemned and due punishment (cf. Gal. 3:10). Jesus paid that debt for all. The author of Hebrews states, *“but now once at the end of the ages hath he been manifested to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. And inasmuch as it is appointed unto men once to die, and after this comes judgment; so Christ also, having been once offered to bear the sins of man, shall appear a second time, apart from sin, to them that wait for him unto salvation”* (Heb. 9:26-28; see also Gal. 3:13-14) (see study # 37).
 - 2. Note; however, that this grace of God (i.e., forgiveness of sins) is only available to those who *“walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit.”*
 - a. To walk after the flesh is to be led by the carnal, fleshly passions and desires of the flesh (to live by the law of sin).

- b. To walk after the Spirit is to conduct self as the gospel message has instructed.
 - c. Salvation is thereby conditioned upon my obedience to God's NT laws.
- C. *"For they that are after the flesh mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit"* (8:5).
 - 1. To *"mind the things of the flesh"* is to walk in accordance to *"the law of sin"* (cf. Rom. 7:25). When sin governs my actions I walk after the flesh (Satan's tempting vices work on me and so I live in sin).
 - 2. When I walk *"after the Spirit"* I mind the *"things of the Spirit."* Divine revelation or the gospel message is delivered by *"the Spirit"* (again note I Cor. 2:13). Two ways in life to go by therefore are the way of fleshly sinful desires or the way of the Holy Spirit's teachings (see study # 54).
- D. *"For the mind of the flesh is death; but the mind of the Spirit is life and peace: because the mind of the flesh is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can it be: and they that are of the flesh cannot please God"* (8:6-8).
 - 1. To be governed by the carnal fleshly appetites that are sinful is to have the *"mind of the flesh."* Said life can only lead to spiritual death because it is a life of sin.
 - 2. To walk by the instructions of the Holy Spirit (i.e., identifying sin and avoiding it) is to have the *"mind of the Spirit"* and said life leads to spiritual life and peace with the heavenly Father.
 - 3. God is against those who sin; i.e., there is *"enmity"* ("hating or hostile" (AG 331)) that exists between God and the sinner who walks after the flesh rather than the Spirit. The word *"enmity"* is used in James 4:4, *"Ye adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? Whosoever therefore would be a friend of the world maketh himself an enemy of God."*
 - a. There is hostility between God and the sinner because his fleshly mind *"is not subject to the law of God; neither can it be."*
 - b. To be subject to is to obey. The carnal mind does not and will not obey the commands of God. His mind is controlled by the gratification of the flesh rather than being spiritual. Consequently, said individuals do not please God.
- E. *"But ye are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you. But if any man hath not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his"* (8:9).
 - 1. The Christian is not one governed by fleshly sinful desire but rather by the instructions of the Holy Spirit. To walk by the instructions of the gospel message is thereby identified as having the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, God, and Christ (see study # 44).
 - 2. The indwelling of the Holy Spirit identifies the mind of the spirit. The word *"dwell"* (*oikei*) means "live, dwell, have one's habitation" (AG 559). The *"Spirit of God"* *"dwells"* in one by the following:
 - a. Just as God dwells in believers (II Cor. 6:16).
 - b. The word of Christ dwells richly in Christians (Col. 3:16).
 - c. Faith dwelled in Timothy's grandmother Lois, and his mother Eunice (II Tim. 1:5).
 - d. Holy Spirit dwells in us (the Christian) (II Tim. 1:14).
 - e. Holy Spirit dwells in Christians by the hearing of faith (Gal. 3:2).
 - 3. One who does not follow the instructions of the gospel message delivered by the Holy Spirit *"he is none of his."* Said individual is not *"in Christ"* and thereby separated from God through sin and recognized as spiritually dead.
- F. *"And if Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the spirit is life because of righteousness"* (8:10).
 - 1. Christ dwells in the Christian as the Christian hears, understands, and applies the gospel message to his life (cf. Gal. 3:20) (see study # 44). Said state of mind does not preclude one from physically dying yet said one will live eternally with the Lord in spiritual life.
 - 2. Note that spiritual life is due to one's *"righteousness."* I am *"righteous"* when I *"obey"* the inspired words delivered by the Holy Spirit (cf. Rom. 6:16).
- G. *"But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwelleth in you, he that raised up Christ Jesus from the dead shall give life also to your mortal bodies through his Spirit that dwelleth in you"* (8:11).

1. As God raised Jesus from the grave to immortality even so will He do to those who have the Holy Spirit governing their lives (cf. I Thess. 4:13ff) (see study # 61; Resurrection).
 2. Those who are led by the Spirit are put in antithesis to those who are led by their fleshly desires.
- H. *“So then, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh: for if ye live after the flesh, ye must die; but if by the Spirit ye put to death the deeds of the body, ye shall live”* (8:12-13).
1. Concluding thought: Christians are debtors to live as the Holy Spirit directs through the gospel message. We are not debtors to the flesh. We have no obligation to the flesh. To give my allegiance to the flesh is to have no hope. The consequences of being a debtor to the flesh is to suffer spiritual death; eternal separation from God (vs. 13a).
 2. Here we see that Paul nowhere condones or tries to justify his sin of Romans 7. The Christian MUST be victorious over his flesh (vs. 13b). To live by the spirit is to put to death the deeds of the body the consequence of which is eternal life and peace.
- I. *“For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God”* (8:14).
1. Note that having the indwelling of the Holy Spirit is not compared to being “led by the Spirit of God” (i.e., by the gospel message) (see study #44).
 2. To be led by the Holy Spirit rather than the flesh is to be a *“son of God”* (cf. Gal. 3:26-29).
 3. Interestingly, we noted above that those who are recognized as *“sons of God”* are those who have Christ dwelling within (cf. Gal. 3:26ff).
 4. What this verse says: Jesus came to this earth as proof of the Father’s love toward man (Jn. 3:16). Through the blood of Jesus is the forgiveness of sins (Matt. 26:26-29). Forgiveness of sins places one in fellowship with God (I Jn. 1:5-6). Such a new state of man (once in darkness) is referred to as a new birth (to be born again) (Jn. 3:3-7; I Pet. 1:23). Such a new birth gives a man a new name (Christian), new relationship (fellowship with God), a new life, and a new hope. Such a one is now an adopted son of God (Gal. 4:5; Eph. 1:5).
- J. *“For ye received not the spirit of bondage again unto fear; but ye received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father”* (8:15).
1. Verse 15 gives further explanation as to what it means to be led by the Holy Spirit and to be a *“son of God.”* The Christian, when he obeyed the gospel, purposes not to go back to the law that governed him before his baptism. The Holy Spirit (teachings of Christ), now leads the Christian. There is no fear here.
 2. The Christian was *“adopted”* by God when justified of sins (cf. Gal. 4:5-7; Eph. 1:5). Before adoption man is in bondage to law like a common slave. After adoption, man is considered an heir of the inheritance that God has for man (i.e., justification and hope of eternal salvation).
 - a. The word *abba* means “my” or “our” Father and from a multitude of commentators seems to be a phrase commonly used during this time to express a special relationship to God the Father as a young child would address his own earthly father in a tender appeal.
 - b. The idea, therefore, of one crying *“Abba, Father”* is produced as an effect of having heard the divine message that the Holy Spirit brought forth through the apostles and prophets. Jesus used this term in the Garden of Gethsemane when praying and addressing God (Mk. 14:36). Interestingly, Paul said, *“no man can say Jesus is Lord but in the Holy Spirit”* (I Cor. 12:3). It is divine revelation that reveals these things to man so that when one who has knowledge of divine revelation speaks he is speaking *“in the Holy Spirit.”* This does not mean that the Holy Spirit has taken possession of one it simply means that the Spirit’s teachings have come known to the man through revelation (see study # 44).
- K. *“The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit, that we are children of God: 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 with him”* (8:16-17).
1. Verse 16 gives us proof that we are the adopted *“children of God.”* The Holy Spirit *“bears witness”* (*summatureo*) = “to bear witness with or in support of another... to a fact” (LS 760).
 2. How do we know that the Holy Spirit gives His support to the fact that *“we are children of God?”*
 - a. The Holy Spirit has revealed God’s mind to man through the apostles and prophets (Eph. 3:3; I Cor. 2:10-12) that we may know what to do to be an heir unto salvation.

- b. When we receive these words, we are assured that as we obey these words, we indeed are “*sons of God*” because the Spirit tells us this is so. Our spirit (our disposition, attitude, or character) is formed then by what the Holy Spirit has revealed to us.
- 3. As a son in a house is the heir of his father’s possessions, even so we who have obeyed the gospel (sons of God) are heirs to what belongs to God the Father (A heavenly Kingdom).
- 4. Therefore we shall share this kingdom of God with Jesus Christ (“*joint heirs*”). Conditions however exist in order to receive this promise (see study # 42).
 - a. We must “*suffer with Christ*” (8:17). Christ suffered for doing the will of God before he was glorified (Phil. 2:8-9).
 - b. Paul said at II Tim. 3:12, “*Yea, and all that would live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.*” This was stated after Paul had announced the sufferings he endured in Galatia due to his teaching Jesus.
 - c. The point being, that all we who do God’s will shall suffer at the hands of Godless men (I Peter 3:17). This is our “*appointment*” as Christians (I Thess. 3:3) and “*grant*” (Phil. 1:29) because we are hated by the world when exposing their sins (cf. Jn. 7:7; etc.).
 - d. The consequence of enduring this suffering is that we shall be “*glorified with Him* (Jesus)” (vs. 17b.).

III. The glorification of our Bodies (8:18-25):

- A. “*For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed to us-ward*” (8:18).
 - 1. Making it to heaven was far more important than any comfort he may experience while here on earth (cf. II Cor. 4:16f).
 - 2. Notice that this “*glory*” is spoken of in a future tense; that is, it is yet to come. Paul told the Colossian brethren, “*for ye died, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ who is our life, shall be manifested, then shall ye also with him be manifested in glory*” (Col. 3:3-4).
 - a. An exact time is therefore given as to when we (as Christians) shall be glorified with Christ. It is when he shall be manifest.
 - b. The word manifest simply means to reveal or appear. We therefore will be glorified when Christ appears a second time. The apostle John writes, “*Beloved, now are we children of God, and it is not yet made manifest what we shall be. We know that, if he shall be manifested, we shall be like him; for we shall see him even as he is*” (I Jn. 3:2). The apostle Paul writes, “*Our citizenship is in heaven; whence also we wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall fashion anew the body of our humiliation, that it may be conformed to the body of his glory according to the working whereby he is able even to subject all things unto himself*” (Phil. 3:20-21). The dead (those currently in the grave) and Christians today are waiting the time of Jesus’ appearing when we to shall be glorified as He.
 - c. I deduce from these scriptures that our glorification is Jesus’ glorification in the resurrected state. This is our immortal bodies fit for eternity (cf. I Cor. 15). Romans 8:23 and 29 enforce this idea (see study # 61).
- B. “*For the earnest expectation of the creation waiteth for the revealing of the sons of God*” (8:19).
 - 1. Paul gives further explanation regarding the importance and value of being a child of God who endures sufferings:
 - 2. The glorification of the sons of God is an eagerly anticipated event even by the “*creation.*” What is the “*creation*” here?
 - a. Creation (*ktiseos*) = “that which was created” (LS 453)... “the whole creation below the human level” (AG 456). Evidently that which is under consideration is the animate (living creatures below humans) and inanimate (not having life; ex. Dirt and rocks) objects. One may say, “How can animals and rocks eagerly anticipate the glorification of the redeemed?”
 - b. Paul uses figurative language to illustrate just how anticipated the glorified state of Christian is by saying that even the rocks and trees look forward to this day. At Psalms 98:8 we find floods clapping their hands, hills being joyful together, and mountains singing together for joy (see study # 61).
 - c. Again, at Isaiah 55:12 we find trees clapping their hands and mountains and hills that sing.

- C. *“For the creation was subjected to vanity, not of its own will, but by reason of him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God”* (8:20-21).
1. The *“creation”* (inanimate and animate objects) at one point in the past was subjected to *“vanity”* (frailty). When Adam and Eve sinned in the garden incident, God said, *“cursed is the ground for thy sake...it shall bring forth thorns and thistles”* (Gen. 3:17-19). This illustrates that all of creation suffered due to sin entering into the world. This was of God’s doing that he may bring men back to Him through His love. Hope brought it all back for all.
 2. The reason for the hope mentioned in vs. 20 is given in vs. 21:
 - a. The creation shall be *“delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God.”* The creation shall be set free from the bondage of corruption (decay). When sin entered into the world so did death and decay.
 - b. This will come to an end when Christians are glorified with Christ. Jesus will be victorious over death (I Cor. 15:26).
- D. *“For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now”* (8:22)
1. All creation (animate and inanimate creatures of the earth) groans and endures pain. To *“groan”* indicates grieving and sadness. Travail in pain indicates agony like a woman who gives birth to a child.
 2. At this present time grief, agony, and pain exists in the world.
- E. *“And not only so, but ourselves also, who have the first-fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for our adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body”* (8:23).
1. Not only does the creation experience grief and pain but so do Christians. No one is exempt from this current state of agony. The creation awaits the glorification of the saint in a figurative since and the child of God awaits in a literal since.
 2. That which is awaited is the glorification of the body, which will occur when Christ comes again. Our bodies shall be changed (I Cor. 15:50ff; Phil. 3:21; I Jn. 3:1f).
- F. *“For in hope were we saved: but hope that is seen is not hope: for who hopes for that which he seeth? But if we hope for that which we see not, then do we with patience wait for it”* (8:24-25).
1. Hope is a word that points to future expectations (things not seen). The child of God hopes and anxiously awaits the redemption of the body (the resurrection which shall make us like Christ and share in his glory).
 2. We have not yet received our full reward (the glorification as Christ) so we patiently and obediently wait for the fulfillment of that promise.

IV. The Called of God (8:26-31):

- A. *“And in like manner the Spirit also helps our infirmity: for we know not how to pray as we ought; but the Spirit himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered;”* (8:26).
1. Not only do we have our hope in the glorification of our bodies as an incentive to press onward in the face of suffering, but we have the Holy Spirit. How does the Holy Spirit help in our infirmity (weakness) or (grief vs. 23)? (see study # 62; Work of the Holy Spirit)
 - a. The Holy Spirit makes intercession for us when we know not what to pray regarding our infirmity. Pressed with suffering, we sometimes do not know what to pray.
 - b. Here is where the Holy Spirit comes in; he *“intercedes”* on our behalf when we know not what to pray. The Holy Spirit groans to God on our behalf and God, knowing the *“mind of the Holy Spirit”* (vs. 27) translates the groaning of the Holy Spirit regarding our infirmities.
 2. This does not negate the work of Jesus (i.e. intercessor and mediator {I Tim. 2:5; I Jn. 2:1}).
 3. Christians, like the Holy Spirit, make intercessions for all men (I Tim. 2:1; Eph. 6:18).
- B. *“And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God”* (8:27).
1. The Holy Spirit is therefore not infringing on the work of Jesus; He is simply doing a God ordained work that comforts Christians in difficult situations.
 2. This is *“according to the will of God.”*
- C. *“And we know that to them that love God all things work together for good, even to them that are called according to his purpose”* (8:28).

1. It is common knowledge, that to them who love God (i.e.; those who keep the commandments of God cf. Jn. 14:23-24; I Jn. 3:18; 5:3) that “*all things*” (i.e.; God’s purpose of glorifying the Christian, our hope, and the help of the Holy Spirit; all) work together to benefit “*them that are called according to his purpose.*”
 2. God’s purpose is that Christians would be glorified (sharers in Christ’s glory in a resurrected state (cf. II Thess. 2:14).
 3. They that are called are none other than Christians who have obeyed the gospel call to salvation (cf. II Thess. 2:13-14). Christians should take courage and be encouraged by these words.
- D. “*For whom he foreknew, he also foreordained to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.*” (8:29).
1. The firstborn among many brethren is a reference to Jesus being resurrected from the dead to die no more. We shall all share in this glorification of Christ one day; however, he was the first to experience this (cf. I Cor. 15:20). Resurrection and glorification are thereby still under consideration.
 2. Following the context, “*those who love God* (keep God’s commands)” are those who are “*called*” (obey gospel) “*according to his purpose*” (end result being the glorification of the saints).
 3. Christians who have been called by the gospel message and have a hope of eternal glorification through the resurrection were “*foreknew and foreordained*” by God to be “*conformed to the image of his Son.*”
 4. To be “*foreknown*” (*proginosko*) = “to know, perceive, learn, or understand beforehand... to foreknow... to judge beforehand” (LS 673). To be “*foreordained*” (*proorizo*) = “to determine beforehand, to predetermine, pre-ordain” (LS 682).
 5. God had prior knowledge and he appointed before hand the “*called*” to be conformed to the image of his Son. Herein is God’s purpose for the saints a reality (that we share in Christ glorification).
- E. “*and whom he foreordained, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified*” (8:30).
1. Verse 30 gives us the progression in an orderly manner: Those who God “*foreordained*” (appointed beforehand for glorification) are identified as those: “*Whom he called*” (the calling is by the gospel). Those who obey the gospel are those who are justified (i.e., forgiven of their sins). Said people will be glorified.
 2. This verse puts our study into perspective. The “*justified*” are the “*righteous*” i.e., those forgiven of sins. There is an association between the gospel that calls and justification. Romans 6:16 reveals obedience to be that which brings one to righteousness. Who can deny that the Christian is to obey the gospel message to be justified and thereby foreordained of God (see study # 51).
- V. **If God is for us, who can be against us (8:31-38)?**
- A. “*What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who is against us?*” (8:31).
1. The answer to this rhetorical question is obvious. No one or thing!
 2. In light of all the encouragement given from 5:1 to the present verse one is overwhelmed with what God has provided for mankind. The opportunity to be forgiven of sins is the grandest opportunity known to humanity throughout the history of man. Those of us who have been baptized for the remission of our sins are recipients of the greatest treasure known to mankind.
- B. “*He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not also with him freely give us all things?*” (3:32).
1. If God spared not his son but offered him as a sacrifice for the sins of the world, do we not see that He truly cares for us and will indeed accomplish His purpose of glorifying us?
 2. Only God would think of giving His only begotten Son to death for a wicked lot of humanity. This being the case we are to be confident that He will, “*freely give us all things*” (i.e., justification and glorification by His free grace).
 3. Throughout the NT we continue to run across the idea of God’s “*free gifts*” of salvation. The more one studies these statements in their context it becomes clear that God gives us what He promises when we meet His instructions. When I follow God’s instructions in obedience He freely gives of His promises.

- C. *“Who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect? It is God that justifies; who is he that condemns? It is Christ Jesus that died, yea rather, that was raised from the dead, who is at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us”* (8:33-34).
1. The word *“elect”* (*eklektos*) = “picked out, select” (LS 240). Who are God’s “select and picked out” people? The apostle Peter states, *“But ye are an elect race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God’s own possession, that ye may show forth the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.”* (I Pet. 2:9). The elect of God are thereby those who have been called out of darkness to light. Note that Paul tells the Thessalonians that it is the gospel that does such calling to any and all who would obey (cf. II Thess. 2:13-14). When one complies with God’s commands and receives the forgiveness of sins what fool is there that would condemn or lay a charge against such a one?
 2. For the good of the redeemed, Jesus was raised from the dead and makes intercession on our behalf to God. Again, this ties in with vs. 28 as the *“all things working for the good of those who love God!”*
- D. *“Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or anguish, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? Even as it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we were accounted as sheep for the slaughter”* (8:35-36).
1. God has a *“purpose”* for man (cf. Rom. 8:28) and that purpose is to *“glorify”* His saints (Rom. 8:30). Those who are glorified are those who are forgiven of sins (Rom. 8:30). Those who obey God’s command to be baptized for the remission of sins and those who humbly asks the lord to forgive them of their sins shall in no way be separated from the *“love of Christ.”* Here is a picture of one who completely understands the glorious inheritance offered by God and is not going to give it up or loose it.
 2. God’s love for man is personified in the fact that he provides opportunity for every person to be glorified, as was Christ. One who loves Jesus by keeping his commands will in no way be disappointed. One, who loves Jesus, will in no way be separated by any force unless he removes himself in disobedience. Man can fall from God’s grace (Gal. 5:1ff); however, it is not God that causes the falling, it is man’s own choosing.
 3. What is emphasized in vs. 35-38 is Christ love for us: Christ’s love is true and thereby nothing can separate us from his love:
 - a. tribulation
 - b. anguish
 - c. persecution
 - d. famine
 - e. nakedness
 - f. peril
 - g. sword
 4. Paul then quotes from Psalms 44:22, *“For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we were accounted as sheep for the slaughter.”*
 - a. In the OT, it was common for God’s people to be killed for their stand in God’s commands.
 - b. Even so, Christians today must be determined to even die for the cause of Jesus Christ. Even in death through persecution we can be encouraged because of God’s purpose (our glorification).
- E. *“Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us”* (8:37).
1. Since the Lord justifies, keeps us in His care, and promises to glorify us there should be nothing that can defeat us in this life.
 2. No power can take away the fact that we have been forgiven of our sins. Indeed, the Christian is a *“conqueror”* in this life over sin and death by the power of Christ (see study # 63; More than Conquerors).
- F. *“For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, 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”* (8:38-39).

1. The Christian is to confidently know that though this life is filled with heartaches and pain there is not one thing or person that can take away the forgiveness of our sins that has been graciously granted to us through Jesus Christ.
2. A second list which indicates nothing has the power to separate the love of Christ toward the called out according to his purpose:
 - a. death
 - b. life
 - c. angels
 - d. principalities
 - e. things present
 - f. things to come
 - g. nor powers
 - h. height
 - i. depth
 - j. any other creature
 - k. Nothing shall separate us from the love of Jesus Christ

Concluding thoughts:

The justified saint of God lives with great expectations. The hope of eternal glorification rest upon the promises of God and we are sure that He will deliver. A study of Romans chapter 8 leaves one with a sense of excitement. The Christian gains great encouragement and is spiritually charged to go into the world and live faithfully to the Lord. With the help of Jesus we can conquer any obstacles in this life.

Chapter 9

I. Sorrow and unceasing pain for Jews who reject the gospel message (9:1-5):

- A. *“I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience bearing witness with me in the Holy Spirit, that I have great sorrow and unceasing pain in my heart”* (9:1-2).
 1. Three proofs of Paul’s genuine feeling of *“great sorrow”* and *“unceasing pain”* in his heart are that he speaks truth in Christ, he is not lying, and his conscience bears witness with the Holy Spirit.
 2. Paul’s *“conscience”* had been trained by the teachings of the Holy Spirit and thereby did not make lying a part of his speech (Gal. 1:11-12). In light of the wonderful blessings in Christ Jesus mentioned in chapter eight it saddens Paul that his kinsmen, the Jews, will not conquer sin and death in this life as they continue on their present course.
- B. *“For I could wish that I myself were anathema from Christ for my brethren’s sake, my kinsmen according to the flesh:”* (9:3).
 1. Paul’s grief was so great that if it were possible, he would give up his own salvation for their sakes that they may be saved.
 2. His brethren in the flesh were thereby an *“anathema from Christ”* (i.e., separated due to their sin) (see study # 48). Many of the Jews had not taken advantage of the grace of God.
- C. *“Who are Israelites; whose is the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises; whose are the fathers, and of whom is Christ as concerning the flesh, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen”* (9:4-5).
 1. Paul had said at Romans 3:1, *“What advantage then hath the Jew?”* He only gave one advantage at that time, however, now proceeds to give further advantages. The Jews were not without opportunities to receive the remission of their sins.
 2. Consider these Jewish spiritual advantages over other peoples of the earth: The Jews were **adopted by God**:
 - a. Chapter 8:15 Paul had referred to Christians as God’s adopted sons. Here, however, the meaning is somewhat different.

- b. God had selected the Israelites as His son (nationally; cf. Ex. 4:22; Deut. 14:1, 32:6; Jer. 31:9 etc.). When a Jew was born, he or she was born into the family of God.
- 3. The **glory**: This word glory is “*doxa*” in the Greek, which is equivalent to *shekinah* in the LXX. The meaning is “brightness, splendor, radiance” (AG 202):
 - a. The Hebrew word *shekinah* appears several times in the OT in reference to God appearing to the Israelites in a pillar of cloud.
 - b. Cf. Ex. 16:10 and Heb. 9:5.
- 4. The **covenants**: A covenant is an agreement that is binding. It is a law in essence.
 - a. God made a covenant with Abraham in Gen. 12 and 15:18-21 that through his seed all nations would be blessed. Secondly, the land of Canaan would be as an inheritance. Thirdly, that his descendants would become a great nation.
 - b. God fulfilled all these covenant promises, the most important one to us being the seed promise (cf. Gal. 3:8, 16).
- 5. The **Law**: Apparently this refers to the Mosaic Law given to the Israelites on Mt. Sinai:
 - a. The Mosaic Law was given to the Israelites only (Deut. 5:3).
 - b. The book of Law was kept with the Ark of the Covenant (Deut. 31:24-26).
- 6. The **service of God**: this would evidently be the worship of Jehovah as described in the Mosaic Law (Heb. 9:1ff).
 - a. This service would have included various animal sacrifices.
 - b. Sabbath day convocations.
 - c. Various feast (i.e., Passover, Feast of Unleavened Bread, Day of Atonement, Feast of Tabernacles), cf. Lev. 23.
- 7. “*The promises*:” God had promised that through Abraham and David’s seed would come the Messiah who would bless all nations with the opportunity to receive the forgiveness of sins (cf. Gal. 12:1ff; II Sam. 7:12ff; Gal. 3:8, 16).
- 8. Who’s are the **Fathers**: These were the Patriarchs which the Jews came from. They were Abraham, Isaac and Jacob etc. (Ex. 3:13-15; 4:5). God’s great promise of salvation came through these “*fathers*.”
- 9. The Jews were members of the **same physical family that produced the Christ** (Messiah) that the OT prophets foretold of:
 - a. Jesus was of the seed of David “*according to the flesh*” (cf. discussion on Romans 1:3).
 - b. Notice the deity of Jesus here as Paul breaks into a doxology: “*Christ...who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen*” (see study # 64; The Deity of Christ).
 - 1. ICB: “*Christ is God over all. Praise him forever! Amen.*”
 - 2. NKJB: “*Christ came, who is over all, the eternally blessed God. Amen.*”
 - 3. NASB: “*Christ according to the flesh, who is over all, God blessed forever. Amen.*”
 - 4. NIVB: “*Christ, who is God over all, forever praised! Amen.*”

II. A proper perspective of the true Israel verses Israel of the flesh (9:6-13):

- A. “*But it is not as though the word of God hath come to nought. For they are not all Israel, that are of Israel.*” (9:6).
 - 1. Here in is a delicate issue among the Jews of Paul’s time. Paul states clearly that just because one is born a Jew does not mean that he or she belongs to God today. Paul points out that many of them are not saved even though they were born into this physical relationship (see Jesus’ discussion with the Jews at John 8:33ff).
 - 2. This does not mean that the word of God has failed (i.e., “*come to nought*”). The word of God came through the prophets and is now being fulfilled.
 - 3. Paul gives the reason for one not being recognized by God even though he or she is a Jewish Israelite saying, “*They (Jews) are not all Israel, which are of Israel.*”
 - a. This statement is the theme of chapter nine. The true Israel are those who receive the promise of eternal salvation (Gal. 6:16) through their acts of obedience (Rom. 6:16).
 - b. Not all physical descendants of Jacob (Israel) are the true Israel because many do not obey the words of Jesus. Many Israelite Jews simply did not accept the sayings and commands of Jesus.

- B. *“Neither, because they are Abraham’s seed, are they all children: but in Isaac shall thy seed be called”* (9:7).
1. Abraham had sons and daughters through many wives (i.e., Hagar, Sarah and Ketura); however, the children of promise were the ones that descended from Isaac (Gen. 21:12). The Messiah would come through Isaac, not Ishmael or any other son of Abraham’s.
 2. God made the choice of Isaac, it was His sovereign decision. All proceeding peoples of promise would be the *“called.”*
- C. *“That is, it is not the children of the flesh that are children of God; but the children of the promise are reckoned for a seed”* (9:8).
1. Abraham’s many children were *“children of the flesh.”* These were not born of the promise (through Isaac, which would make them children of God).
 2. The point with these facts is that being a physical descendant of Abraham is not enough to save the Jew (cf. Gal. 4:21ff).
 3. Now we can place clear meaning to God’s *“foreordination”* and *“foreknowledge”* of the saved as mentioned in Romans 8:29. The saved are a class of people (not individuals known by name to God as though the Lord hand picked certain individuals to bless and decided to randomly curse others. Said activity would make God a respecter of persons). The saved are those of promise who have been called by God.
- D. *“For this is a word of promise, According to this season will I come, and Sarah shall have a son”* (9:9).
1. The promise is now identified. God had promised Abraham that Sarah would have a son (Gen. 18:10-14). Abraham was old (100) as was Sarah (90).
 2. Isaac was born by miraculous help from God as he promised.
- E. *“And not only so; but Rebecca also having conceived by one, even by our father Isaac – for the children being not yet born, neither having done anything good or bad, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calls, it was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger. Even as it is written, Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated”* (9:10-13).
1. Not only did Sarah have a son by promise (i.e., Isaac), but also Rebecca had a son of promise (Jacob).
 2. Rebecca had both Jacob and Esau in her womb (twins). Who would continue the promise (the seed of the Messiah)? God tells us that He made the sovereign choice of Jacob (vs. 11). This choice was made before the two (Jacob and Esau) were out of their mother’s womb, *“before they did good or evil.”* Before they did any works! The point is, God made the choice, which indicates His control and sovereignty. Esau, the older, would serve the younger (Jacob) (vs. 12). This is a quote from Gen. 25:23. A contrast is thereby examined between physical and spiritual Israel.
 3. Keep in mind here that God’s choosing Isaac over Ishmael and Jacob over Esau was not a matter of their individual salvation. Paul is simply indicating that God has the right to make choices as to whom His Son (Jesus) would ultimately come.
 4. Further more, God as creator, has the right to love and hate those whom he chooses. He chose to love Jacob and hate Esau, however, this had nothing to do with the salvation of each. Again, the promise of the coming Messiah is under view. A choice had to be made as to whom and God made it.
 5. The word *“hate”* (as used in Romans 9:13 is *miseo* or *emisesa*) = “to be hated... an object of hate” (LS 514), “to regard with ill will... to detest, abhor... to regard with less affection, love less, esteem less” (Moulton 270). Here is a true picture of God’s foreknowledge and foreordination. Why did God hate Esau? God hated Esau for what he represented; i.e., sin (cf. Heb. 12:15-17). Esau (the Edomites) stands in metonymy to wickedness throughout the OT and thereby abhorred by God (cf. Isa. 34:8ff; Jer. 49:7ff; Ezek. 25:12ff). God knew this about Esau before he was even born.
 6. At this point, Paul uses Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob as those who represent people of *“promise”* and then he uses Esau to represent those who live in sin and are abhorred by God. God’s *“purpose according to election”* is that all would be saved (cf. II Pet. 3:9). Those who meet God’s purpose are the *“called”* (cf. Rom. 8:30; 9:11) and thereby children of *“promise.”* We clearly see then that

those who are obedient to the call of God's gospel message are the ones of promise (like Abraham, Jacob, and Isaac).

III. Paul answers objections to the above argument that God chose Isaac over Ishmael and Jacob over Esau and this decision was not even based on their individual goodness or evil (9:14-18):

- A. *"What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid"* (9:14).
1. To be *"unrighteous"* (*adikia*) = "wrong doing or injustice" (LS 13). Did the Lord perform a wrong, unfair, or act of injustice toward Esau because He chose Jacob over him? Was God unjust in making such a decision before the two did either right or wrong?
 2. Paul answers: *God forbid*," certainly not.
- B. *"For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion"* (9:15).
1. Paul explains the just and omnipotence of God by looking at historical examples: The Jews, being very respectful toward Moses, would have been very receptive to a statement made by God to Moses regarding His sovereignty or right to make certain decisions.
 2. Paul therefore quotes from Exodus 33:19 stating, *"I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion"* (9:15).
 - a. Again, this indicates that receiving God's mercy and compassion is not something that someone can earn or work for.
 - b. God makes the choice as to who shall receive this mercy and compassion.
 - c. The NT is clear on those whom shall receive this mercy and compassion of God. God, by his sovereignty, has chosen to give his mercy and compassion to those who hear and obey the gospel (II Thess. 2:14).
 - d. God shall reject Jew and Gentile alike if they do not obey his words (cf. Rom. 4:16; Gal. 3:7-8; 4:28).
 - e. Moses is thereby used as an example of one who found favor in God's eyes due to his obedience.
- C. *"So then it is not of him that wills, nor of him that runs, but of God that hath mercy"* (9:16).
1. God's principle of His choosing whom he may is now put into application (vs.16).
 2. One cannot will or purpose God's grace, mercy or compassion on himself.
 3. One cannot run as to earn this mercy, grace, or compassion.
 4. Again, this is not talking about individuals who may or may not receive God's salvation by his choice. Paul is discussing God's choices over giving mercy and compassion at his own choosing.
 5. God's choice is to offer his grace (salvation) to those who will submit to him (cf. I Cor. 9:24)! In this light we must run to attain.
- F. *"For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, For this very purpose did I raise thee up, that I might show in thee my power, and that my name might be published abroad in all the earth"* (9:17).
1. Paul quotes from Ex. 9:16 regarding God using Pharaoh to indicate his severity. God may have mercy and compassion at His choosing and he may exercise severity on those whom he chooses as well.
 2. God providentially caused Pharaoh to raise to power in Egypt to accomplish His purpose.
 - a. God raised Assyria (Isa. 10:5-7) and Babylon (Jer. 51:20) in the same manner. By God's providence, Assyria rose to power and were used as a *"rod of mine anger"* against those of the Northern Kingdom and Babylon a *"battle-axe"* against Judah (the Southern Kingdom).
 - b. God did not make the Assyrians and Babylonians evil but rather used them to accomplish His purpose. Once His purpose was served, He punished Assyria for those same evil acts (Cf. Nahum et. all) as well as the Babylonians (Hab. 1:6; Zeph. 1:12-18).
 3. What was God's purpose in raising Pharaoh?
 - a. God demonstrated His great and awesome power to the world through Pharaoh (this occurred through the plagues and the collapsing of the Red Sea upon Pharaoh's army).
 - b. Secondly, God declared His name throughout the whole earth through Pharaoh (cf. Ex. 15:14-15; Josh. 2:9-10).
- G. *"So then he hath mercy on whom he will, and whom he will he hardens"* (9:18).

1. How did God “*harden Pharaoh’s heart?*” Pharaoh’s Pride: God’s command was, “*Let my people go that they may serve me*” (cf. Ex. 8:20) yet Pharaoh could not find it in himself to do so even though there were many great signs performed (cf. Jn. 12:37-40; Matt. 13:10-15). The more we read Exodus the greater understanding we gain in the area of God hardening the heart of Pharaoh. **The command of God itself is what hardened Pharaoh’s heart** (cf. Ex. 7:16; 8:20; etc.). The thought of the Pharaoh of all Egypt submitting to another’s commands was beyond the ability of his stubborn and pride stricken heart (cf. Ex. 10:3). Pharaoh refused to recognize the supreme authority of Jehovah (cf. Ex. 5:2). There are “types” of Pharaoh’s today who are hardened by God’s commands (cf. Matt. 13:10-15; Jn. 7:7; 12:37-40; I Cor. 1:18).
2. One must remember when studying this thought that God causes no man to sin (James 1:13-15). Man sins because he chooses to do so.
3. The spirit of Pharaoh is opposed to the spirit of those of promise.

IV. A rhetorical question regarding God making sovereign choices between individuals and nations (9:19-29):

- A. “*Thou wilt say then unto me, why doth he still find fault? For who withstands his will?*” (9:19).
1. Paul addresses a question that was sure to be on the Jew’s mind: “if God raised these individuals up (hardened them), why does he find fault with them?” (Paraphrased). Such a question displays a lack of spiritual thinking on the part of the Jews. It is not God’s will that any be lost (II Peter 3:9).
 2. God providentially used the evil character of these nations and men to accomplish His ends. He did not cause them to be this way, they chose to be this way. God put obstacles and opportunities before these individuals knowing what course they would take and He in this fashion used them.
- B. Secondly, Paul responds to this foolish question with strong words of rebuke saying:
1. “*who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, why didst thou make me thus?*” (9:20).
 2. Again, “*Or hath not the potter a right over the clay, from the same lump to make one part a vessel unto honor, and another unto dishonor?*” (vs. 21).
 - a. This power of the Potter is his freedom to choose what he will from the lump of clay.
 - b. Therefore, God has the power to choose the seed of Abraham and Isaac to honor. God too has the power of choice to “*raise up*” Assyria, Babylon, and Pharaoh of Egypt to be vessels of dishonor to accomplish his will.
 - c. This has nothing to do with whether or not one obeys the gospel message to salvation; it is a statement of God’s eternal sovereignty and His right to make superior choices. He is God, our ultimate king in whom we are subject.
 - d. Notice! God now has the choice to bring the gospel message to the Gentiles if He so chooses that they may be offered salvation (His mercy and compassion).
 - e. Note the contrast between “*vessels of honor and vessels of dishonor.*” Children of promise (Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob i.e., those obedient to the gospel message) are depicted as “*vessels of honor*” while the unrighteous (Esau and Pharaoh) are depicted as “*vessels of dishonor.*”
- C. “*What if God, willing to show his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much longsuffering vessels of wrath fitted unto destruction: and that he might make known the riches of his glory upon vessels of mercy, which he afore prepared unto glory, even us, whom he also called, not from the Jews only, but also from the Gentiles?*” (9:22-24).
1. Verses 22-24 form a long sentence of logic: If God so chooses to: Show his wrath and make his power known through the “*vessels of wrath*” (those obstinate and stubborn peoples and nations as depicted in Esau and Pharaoh) He too can be longsuffering toward these individuals; this is all God’s choosing (cf. Heb. 5:2). Who are we to question God?
 2. The vessels of wrath are “*fitted unto destruction*” (vs. 22). Who does the “*fitting*”? Evidently the people themselves.
 3. What if God so chooses to “*make known the riches of his glory upon the vessels of mercy, which he afore prepared unto glory: Both Jew and Gentile!*” Vessels of wrath and vessels of mercy are not specific individuals but a class of people who either do God’s will or do not. Those vessels of wrath are obstinate, however, God desires, through His longsuffering, that they repent that they may fit the mold of the vessel of mercy. Said individuals are the “*called*” (cf. Rom. 8:30).

4. Notice that the vessels of mercy include both Jew and Gentile (vs. 24).
 - a. Paul has effectively argued that God has the right and power to make choices in the history of man.
 - b. Those choices have always had the obedient and the disobedient in mind.
 - c. God made a promise through Abraham that all nations would be blessed through his seed. God's promises were conditioned upon Abraham's obedience as is ours (cf. Gen. 18:19; Rom. 4:12). Whether Jew or Gentile, the one who submits to his will shall be fitted with God's mercy rather than his wrath.
 - d. This is the thesis of the entire chapter. The Jew had no right to fuss over the Gentiles being accepted into God's kingdom. God has always had the Gentile in mind. Any Jew who rejected the Gentiles was willfully ignorant of their own prophet's words.
 - e. Paul now turns to the Prophets to prove his point!
 - i. Hosea 2:23 (Rom. 9:25).
 - ii. Hosea 1:10 (Rom. 9:26).
 - iii. Isaiah 10:22 (Rom. 9:27). Notice that not every Jew would be saved but only a remnant (a part of the whole).
 - iv. Isaiah 10:23 (Rom. 9:28).
 - v. Isaiah 1:9 (Rom. 9:29)

V. **Jew and Gentile contrasted in a heart wrenching way for Paul (9:30-33).**

- A. *“What shall we say then? That the Gentiles, who followed not after righteousness, attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith: but Israel, following after a law of righteousness, did not arrive at that law”* (9:30-31).
 1. Here was reality staring the Jews in the face. The Gentiles were not given a written revelation, as were the Jews. Secondly, the Gentiles were not even pursuing eternity with God, as were the Jews. Yet by their acceptance of the gospel message, they were the vessels of mercy due to their obedient faith in Jesus Christ. Justification by faith has been the aim of the entire book!
 2. The Jew, on the other hand, followed the Law of Moses refusing to see that the OT system had come to an end. Sadly, it was even foretold of coming to an end by the prophets (II Cor. 3:13; Jeremiah 31:31ff) yet many Jews were willfully blind.
 3. The Jews stubbornly attempted to keep the law refusing to see that when they sinned there was no remission all the while claiming special relationship to God and appealing to God's choosing them through their father Abraham.
 4. From one side, we are made to feel sorrow for the stubborn Jew. However, their ignorance was too serious to be sympathetic with, they needed to be taught more correctly that their souls would be saved.
 5. Many correlations and applications can be made today with the denominational world. The lost need to be brought to the light of the gospel by faithful labors in the fields of humanity. Though these lost ones seem to be tangled in a web of religion that would be impossible to untangle we should look to the book of Romans and see that Paul made a serious effort to untangle the religious confusion of the Jews (see study # 11).
- B. *“Wherefore? Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by works. They stumbled at the stone of stumbling; even as it is written, Behold, I lay in Zion a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence: and he that believes on him shall not be put to shame”* (9:32-33).
 1. Finally, Paul gives the reason for the Jews failure. The Jews sought justification by works of the law.
 2. Secondly, they stumbled (were offended and rejected (AG 723)) over Christ. Both the above conditions were devastating to the Jew's spiritual welfare. Again, prophecy abounded regarding not only the Messiah but also the fact that many would reject Him. For this reason He is termed the *“rock of offence”* (Cf. Isa. 28:16 quoted by Paul in Rom. 9:33).
- C. Paul ends the chapter by reminding the Jews and Gentiles of Rome that *“belief”* (faith in Jesus conjoined by obedience / cf. Jn. 3:36) will save.

Concluding thoughts on chapter 9

The theme of Romans comes to life in chapter nine. There are two classes of humanity in the eyes of God; i.e., “*good and bad*” (cf. Rom. 9:11). Paul explains to the Jews that it has ever been God’s sovereign choice (His purpose / Rom. 9:11) to save the good and reject the bad. The good are depicted as children of promise (9:8), the elect (Rom. 9:11), vessels of honor (Rom. 9:21), vessels of mercy (Rom. 9:23), and the called of God (Rom. 9:24). God has predetermined that those unacceptable to Him will be the bad people who are hardened in sin (Rom. 9:18), vessels of dishonor (Rom. 9:21), and vessels of wrath (Rom. 9:22). The apostle Paul has made an earnest appeal to the Jews of Rome to accept, by obedient faith, the gospel message of salvation. By obedience to the gospel call, they too can become sons of promise. The outward performing of ordinances was not acceptable to God (Cf. Isa. 1:11ff). God demanded their hearts through obedience to his will. Paul uses OT examples to prove his case. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are depicted as obedient people of promise. Esau and Pharaoh represent a sinful class of people who reject God’s commands and live in sin. Again, chapter nine brings out the idea of classes of humanity. One class is disobedient and the other obedient to the Lord’s commands.

Chapter 10

I. The state of the Jew (Paul’s kinsmen according to the flesh) (10:1-7):

- A. “*Brethren, my heart’s desire and my supplication to God is for them, that they may be saved*” (10:1).
1. The Jew of chapter nine is still under consideration. Said individual has truly missed out on God’s gracious and merciful promises (cf. Rom. 8:1, 31, 37; 9:1-3).
 2. The desire of Paul’s inner man was to see the Jews accept the gospel message and be forgiven of their sins.
- B. “*For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. For being ignorant of God’s righteousness, and seeking to establish their own, they did not subject themselves to the righteousness of God*” (10:2).
1. Paul had firsthand knowledge of the Jew’s “*zeal for God*.” The word “*zeal*” (*zelos*) = “eager rivalry, zealous imitation, emulation, a noble passion... fierceness” (LS 344). The passion the Jews shared for God was “*not according to knowledge*.” The Old Testament had foretold of a coming Messiah (Isa. 2:2ff), His kingdom (Dan. 2), and his doctrine (Jer. 31:31ff). The Jew had access to these prophecies yet he chose to ignore them.
 2. The Jew’s ignorance came in the area of “*God’s righteousness*” (cf. Mk. 4:12; Matt. 15:8-9). Let us note that God’s righteousness leads one to “*sanctification*” (cf. Rom. 6:19) and “*sanctification unto eternal life*” (Rom. 6:22). One is considered “*righteous*” by God when “*obedient*” to His commandments (cf. Rom. 6:16). Righteousness is thereby directly associated with God’s merciful justification through faith (cf. Rom. 4:5; 5:1-2; Eph. 1:7).
 3. Paul is clearly saying that the Jew is ignorant of God’s means for justifying man of sins as is revealed in the gospel message.
 4. The Jews were not unlike many today in that they sought to “*establish their own*” righteousness and thereby “*did not subject themselves to the righteousness of God*.” One can only be right with God when their sins have been forgiven (cf. Eph. 1:7) and God has clearly revealed baptism (Acts 2:38) and then humble and prayerful repentance (cf. I Jn. 1:8-10). The Jews sought this righteousness through Mosaic Law keeping and thereby were found guilty of sin. Apart from the gospel of Jesus Christ there is no forgiveness (see study # 3). Man may put their faith in Methodists, Baptists, Catholic, Lutheran, Presbyterian, and or any other doctrines yet they will not receive the forgiveness of sins until they “*subject*” themselves to the plain teachings of Jesus Christ.
- C. “*For Christ is the end of the law unto righteousness to every one that believeth*” (10:4).
1. The Mosaic system was never designed to take away man’s sins (cf. Heb. 10:1ff). The Law of Christ, on the other hand, was so designed (cf. Jer. 31:31ff).
 2. When Christ hung upon the cross He put to an end the Mosaic system that had no power over sin (cf. Col. 2:13-15).

3. Once again faith or "*belief*" is brought into the equation of obtaining righteousness which is the forgiveness of sins (cf. Rom. 5:1-2). Paul thereby connects the teachings of Christ to a "*law of faith*" at Romans 3:27. Note the correlation between belief and obedience. I will obey that which I put my faith into. I will either obey sin unto death or Christ unto righteousness (cf. Rom. 6:16).
 4. It is only through Christ that one is saved from the consequences of sin (cf. Acts 4:12). The law of Moses was designed to bring the Jew to this understanding (cf. Gal. 3:24ff), however, the Jew "*did not arrived at that law*" (cf. Rom. 9:31); i.e., they were blinded to this great fact and thereby had not taken advantage of the function of the Mosaic Law (point up their sins and help them see their need for Jesus).
- D. "*For Moses writeth that the man that doeth the righteousness which is in the law shall live thereby*" (10:5).
1. This statement of Paul's is taken from Leviticus 18:5 which states, "*Ye shall therefore keep my statutes, and mine ordinances; which if a man do, he shall live in them: I am Jehovah.*" The point is obvious, if one desired to obtain righteousness through the Mosaic Law then he or she must keep it perfectly (cf. Gal. 3:10). Incidentally, this verse clearly identifies the Mosaic Law as the "*law*" that must be kept perfectly. Many read through Romans and believe that all law keeping is condemned without following the context.
 2. Interestingly, Paul had told the Galatian brethren, "*if righteousness (the forgiveness of sins) is through the law, then Christ died for nought*" (Gal. 2:31). The author of Hebrews states that if following the ordinances of the Mosaic Law would have provided forgiveness of sins then there would have been no need to discontinue the sacrificing of animals (cf. Heb. 10:1ff).
 3. The fact is that all mankind have a universal and common experience. That common experience is that we all sin and need forgiveness (cf. Rom. 3:23). Christ is the only answer.
- E. "*But the righteousness which is of faith saith thus, Say not in thy heart, who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down:) or, who shall descend into the abyss? (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead.)*" (10:6-7).
1. The "*righteousness which is of faith*" is a phrase depicting the sinner who has been cleansed from sin due to an obedient faith. Justification comes of one's obedience (cf. Eph. 1:7). The same phrase; i.e., "*righteousness of faith*" was used to describe the obedient faith of Abraham (cf. Rom. 4:12-13 and also the Gentiles at Rom. 9:30).
 2. This being the case, as the OT reveals, one should not say within that we need to bring Christ down from heaven to prove this (He was already here and did that). Neither should one say within that there must be a resurrection of a dead one in the Hadean world to testify as to whether or not Paul is telling the truth.
- F. "*But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach.*" (10:8).
1. Consider Deuteronomy 30:11-14 with what Paul is now saying. Moses told Israel that God's laws were not too hard to follow or to know and understand. Even so, the "*righteousness which is of faith*" is not too difficult to follow and know if only one would give some effort. Jesus said, "*ye shall know the truth and the truth shall set you free*" (Jn. 8:31) (see study # 65; Can We Know Truth?).
 2. Secondly, note a very important fact about "*faith*." Paul connects "*the word of faith*" to the "*righteousness which is of faith*." Following the progression of thought it is easily determined that Paul speaks of the gospel message (the word of faith) that brings about one's "*righteousness*" through instructions (see remaining thoughts in this chapter). Faith and righteousness is thereby brought about by God's word. The word of God is a message that must be heeded and the only way one will heed said words is through hearing and believing. If I have no faith in one's instructions I certainly will not follow them. The "*word of Faith*" (see study # 3).
- G. "*because if thou shalt confess with thy mouth Jesus as Lord, and shalt believe in thy heart that God raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved: for with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation*" (10:9-10).
1. Paul has stated that one comes to a state of righteousness (forgiven of sins) through the instructions of "*the word of faith*" (Rom. 10:8).

2. Up to this point I have learned that justification and righteousness are synonymous terms with Paul (cf. Rom. 4:5). I have learned that righteousness leads to sanctification and eternal life (i.e., salvation) (cf. Rom. 6:19-23). I have learned that obtaining righteousness comes by being obedient (Rom. 6:16) to the “*law of faith*” (Rom. 3:27), “*law of the Spirit of life*” (Rom. 8:2), “*law of God*” (Rom. 8:7), and “*the word of faith*” (Rom. 10:8). I have learned that one’s faith is directly correlated to one’s state of being righteous and justified (cf. Abraham at Rom. 4:13; the Gentiles at Rom. 9:30; and to “*all who believe*” at Rom. 10:4-6). I have learned that it is through my faith (that is produced by the word of God) that I gain access into God’s grace (i.e., the forgiveness of sins, justification, and righteousness / cf. Rom. 5:1-2; Eph. 1:7; 2:8). Now that I have learned that justification can be had by means of the gospel’s instructions I find that the word of faith commands me to “*confess with thy mouth Jesus as Lord*” and thereby evidence my true faith in the saving message of the gospel. Not only is confession demanded but also “*belief*” in the resurrected Savior of mankind. I find, thereby, that my justification is conditioned upon “*confession*” and “*belief*” in the resurrected Lord. One may say, “I understand that I am to be obedient to obtain righteousness as per Romans 6:16 but what is it that I am to do?” Here Paul tells us, “*confess*” and “*believe*.” When I do this, I have illustrated my true faith in Jesus Christ. Note; however, that “*baptism*” was also placed into the justification equation at Romans 6:6 (i.e., “*doing away with the body of sin*”) as is “*repentance*” at Romans 2:4.
 3. Note that Paul states that “*belief*” is “*unto righteousness*” and “*confession*” is “*unto salvation*.” The logical conclusion thereby is that faith and confession is inseparably connected to righteousness and salvation just as obedience, righteousness, sanctification, grace, and eternal life were all connected at Romans 6:16-23.
- H. “*For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be put to shame*” (10:11).
1. Paul quotes from Isaiah 28:16 to prove that the one who obtains righteousness through faith and obedience will not be disappointed (eternal life belongs to you).
 2. Isaiah speaks of a “*corner-stone*” in the foundation of God’s kingdom that shall not disappoint any who seek him. The apostle Peter (I Pet. 2:3-8) and Paul (Eph. 2:20) help us identify this “*corner-stone*” in Zion as none other than Jesus Christ. The name of Christ stands in metonymy with the truth He represents in these passages as is the case in Colossians 2:8 (see study # 3).
 3. Here is a statement that ought to fill the saint of God with great confidence. When I obtain faith through the gospel message and find justification through obedience to that message I have true hope that will never disappoint (cf. Rom. 8:1, 31, 37) (see study # 66; The Christian’s Confidence).
- I. “*For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek: for the same Lord is Lord of all, and is rich unto all that call upon him*” (10:12-13).
1. Paul has already stated in this study, “*for there is no respect of persons with God*” in relation to God’s judgment of mankind (i.e., Jew and Gentile) (cf. Rom. 2:11).
 2. The only distinction God now knows is good and evil (cf. Rom. 9:11 / cf. Jn. 5:28-29). An individual’s skin color, gender, and state of being free or slave does not affect God (cf. Gal. 3:27).
 3. Note that God’s “*rich(ness)*” is directed to those who “*call upon him*.” What “*riches*” does Paul have in mind here? Clearly the “*riches*” under consideration is the riches of God’s mercy and grace (cf. Rom. 9:23 / cf. also Eph. 1:7; 2:7). If grace is connected to justification at Romans 3:24 (and Eph. 1:7) then I find another “*condition*” to salvation here. The condition is “*calling upon him*.” What does it mean to “*call upon him*?”
 - a. To “*call*” upon the name of God is to “*invoke*” or “*appeal to*” (cf. LS 292). Ananias had instructed Saul of Tarsus to do so after he had been baptized for the remission of his sins (cf. Acts 22:16). Every action in one’s life is an appeal to the authority found in the name of Jesus Christ.
 - b. Examples of men calling upon the name of God are found at Ps. 3:1ff; Acts 2:21; 9:14, 21; 22:16; Rom. 10:12-13; I Cor. 1:2; II Tim. 2:22). In order to properly call upon the name of the Lord one must follow the divine revelation delivered by Jesus through His apostles and prophets (cf. Eph. 3:3ff). Those who do not call upon the name in authorized ways are rejected (cf. Jn. 4:23; Isa. 1:10ff; Jer. 6:20; Ezek. 23:38-39) (see study # 67; Calling Upon God).

- c. I submit thereby that God's rich grace and justification belongs not only to the one who hears (Rom. 10:17), believes (Romans 10:9), confess (Rom. 10:9), repent (Rom. 2:4), and is baptized (Rom. 6:6) but also to the one who continues in the authoritative teachings of Christ (making an appeal to the name of Christ) as they "*call upon him*" in truth throughout their lives.
- J. "*How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in him whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent? Even as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that bring glad tidings of good things!*" (10:14-15).
 - 1. The logic is irrefutable. How can one make an appeal to the authority of Christ in life (i.e., call upon him) if there is no belief? Will not happen! Again, how can one believe in Jesus if they have not heard of him? Will not happen! But again, how can anyone appeal to Christ's authority in life and gain faith without a preacher to teach them the rudiments of Christ? Will not happen. These verses proclaim that one's obedience is a consequence of their faith (cf. Heb. 11:1ff).
 - 2. Since faith (the foundation of one's obedience and justification) cannot be obtained without preaching God saw fit to "*send*" preachers to inform the world of His gracious promise of salvation. The apostles were men commissioned and delegated by God to preach the gospel message (cf. Rom. 1:5; I Cor. 1:17; II Cor. 5:18-20; Eph. 3:3ff etc.). So Jesus sent men into the world to preach that others may be justified from their sins (cf. Matt. 28:18ff; Mk. 16:15-16). The apostle Paul told Timothy, "*and the things which thou hast heard from me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also*" (II Tim. 2:2) (see study # 11).
 - 3. By the "*feet*" of preachers the message of the gospel is spread throughout the world and so they are "*beautiful*" in the sense that they bring the beautiful news of salvation.

II. The gospel message fell on deaf ears (10:16-21):

- A. "*But they did not all hearken to the glad tidings. For Isaiah saith, Lord, who hath believed our report?*" (10:16).
 - 1. Though the apostles proclaimed the gospel message to the Jews and Gentiles, many rejected it. Paul quotes from Isaiah 53:1a to establish a point. The prophet Isaiah preached a message of deliverance for the people of Judah based upon their repentance however they rejected the message and thus rejected God's promises.
 - 2. Likewise, the Jews had been preached unto regarding deliverance from sins, however, they rejected the offer and sought to establish their own righteousness based on law keeping.
- B. Paul draws a conclusion to all said up to this point by saying, "*so belief cometh of hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ*" (10:17).
 - 1. What have we seen regarding Paul's use of faith to this point in our Romans study? Faith or belief is directly correlated to one's state of being righteous and justified (cf. Abraham at Rom. 4:13; the Gentiles at Rom. 9:30; and to "*all who believe*" at Rom. 10:4-6). We have learned that it is through faith (that is produced by the word of God) that I gain access into God's grace (i.e., the forgiveness of sins, justification, and righteousness / cf. Rom. 5:1-2; Eph. 1:7; 2:8).
 - 2. To believe is to be righteous and to be righteous is to be justified through obedience (all go together in the study of Romans). How does this initial faith begin? Paul tells us that it comes by "*hearing the word of Christ.*" What Paul termed the "*word of faith*" at Romans 10:8 he now calls "*word of Christ.*" We must note that the "*word of Christ*" is equated to a covenant law (cf. Jer. 31:31ff compared to Hebrews 8:6ff). "*Hearing*" this law or "*word of Christ*" produces faith in me. "*Hearing*" is thereby a prerequisite to my obtaining faith. Faith is a prerequisite to my obedience, repentance, baptism, justification, and calling upon the name of the Lord.
- C. "*But I say, Did they not hear? Yea, verily, Their sound went out into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world*" (10:18).
 - 1. Verse 18 deals with an excuse the Jews may attempt to use to justify their unbelief. The excuse may sound something like this: "the gospel message never reached me."
 - 2. Paul refutes this by saying that the apostle's message had now gone through out all the earth and to the ends of the world which affirms that this message was preached to all the inhabited world. The phrase "*ends of the world*" (*peras*) "an end, limit, boundary" (LS 622) (*oikoumene*) = "the

- inhabited world, a term used to designate the Greek world, as opp. To barbarian lands... so in Roman times, the Roman world” (LS 546).
3. One cannot say, “I never heard the word of Christ.”
- D. *“But I say, Did Israel not know? First Moses saith, I will provoke you to jealousy with that which is no nation, with a nation void of understanding will I anger you. And Isaiah is very bold, and saith, I was found of them that sought me not; I became manifest unto them that asked not of me”* (10:19-20).
1. Verse 19 deals with a second excuse: The Jews may say that they did not know that God intended to bring the Gentiles in with them unto salvation therefore they continued to persecute them and not believe what the new gospel message had to say regarding the *“all nations being blessed”* (Gal. 3:26ff).
 2. To remove this excuse, Paul quotes first from Moses (Deut. 32:21) and then from Isaiah (Isa. 65:1) to prove that this has ever been God’s intention (vs. 19-20).
- E. *“But as to Israel he saith, All the day long did I spread out my hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people”* (10:21).
1. Sadly, though the Jew had God’s revelation and prophets to plead for their repentance and obedience, they rejected their own God.
 2. Secondly, Paul quotes from Isaiah 65:2 stating that God had extended special efforts to save the Jews however they were *“disobedient and a gainsaying people”* (10:21).
 - a. *“Disobedient”* (*apeitheo*) = “to be disobedient, refuse compliance, to disobey” (LS 90).
 - b. *“Gainsaying”* (*antilego*) = “to speak against, gainsay, contradict, to declare in opposition... to speak one against the other, speak in opposition” (LS 79).
 - c. Though the Lord tried to help His people they refused compliance to His laws and declared themselves in opposition to His Christ.

Thoughts on Chapter 10

The Roman Road to Salvation

Type in the phrase “Roman Road to Salvation” in your favorite online search engine, and you will come up with multitudes of results (36 found using mamma [mother of all search engines]). There are many variations of this “Roman Road” on the net. Below is one example I found at www.faithbc.net/salvation.html

- All sin (Rom. 3:23)
- The wages of sin is death (Rom. 6:23)
- Christ died for sinners (Rom. 5:8)
- Whoever calls on the name of Jesus will be saved (Rom. 10:13)
- Confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and you will be saved (Rom. 10:9)
- Pray the sinner’s prayer: “Dear God, I know I am a sinner, and I repent of my sins, Thank you for taking my sins upon yourself and dying on the cross for me. Lord Jesus come into my heart and change me. Be my Lord and Savior. Fill me with your spirit and your love. Thank you for saving me from an eternity in hell. Amen”
- “Friend, if you just prayed this prayer, I welcome you into the kingdom of God. You need to tell someone that you are now a Christian.”

Where this “Roman Road” started and by whom is unknown to this author. Any map, however, that does not give accurate directions is truly useless and will only cause one to be lost. The “Roman Road to Salvation” is designed to take one through the book of Romans and help man see the path to salvation. The Road, however, takes its readers on many spiritual wrong turns and deadly detours. Let us examine the “Roman Road to Salvation” from a Biblical perspective.

While it is true that the book of Romans instructs one to *“call upon the name of Jesus”* (Rom. 10:13) and *“confess that Jesus is Lord unto Salvation”* (Rom. 10:9), it is equally true that other acts of obedience are involved. The apostle Paul calls upon the Romans to consider the *“goodness of God that leads to repentance”* (Rom. 2:4). Without **repentance** there is the wrath of God (Rom. 2:5ff). I would say, therefore, that repentance must be a part of the salvation equation found in the book of Romans. Furthermore, consider the fact that Paul identifies **baptism** with doing away with the *“body of sin”* (Rom. 6:1-6). If I have not done away with the body of sin through

baptism, how then can I be saved? God's "*free gift*" (Rom. 5:16; 6:23) of "*justification*" (forgiveness of sins or the doing away with the body of sin) (Rom. 3:24) belongs to those who obey (6:16).

What is the true "Roman Road to Salvation?" The true is revealed in the book itself. The unbiased mind will find the following map:

- All sin (Rom. 3:23)
- The wages of sin are death (Rom. 6:23).
- Jesus died and was resurrected that He may serve as a sacrifice for our sins (Rom. 3:24-26).
- To know the above facts I must **hear** the gospel message (Rom. 10:14, 17).
- I must **believe** that Jesus is the Son of God and that He has been raised from the dead to be a propitiation for our sins (Rom. 3:24-26; 10:9).
- I must **confess** that Jesus is Lord and that God raised Him from the dead (Rom. 10:9-10).
- Said knowledge will leave me with the understanding of my undone condition without Christ's sacrifice. I will thereby **repent** of my sins committed against the Lord (Rom. 2:4).
- Jesus' sacrifice provides the "*free gift*" of salvation to those who have an obedient faith (cf. Rom. 5:16; 6:23). The apostle Paul thereby calls upon men to be **baptized** to put away the body of sin (Rom. 6:1-6).
- Lastly, we are told to "*call upon the name of the Lord*" to be saved. After Saul (later the apostle Paul) was baptized for the remission of his sins Ananias told him to "call upon the name of the Lord." This calling is an invoking or an appeal to the name of Christ for everything one does in life (cf. Col. 3:17). The request is, therefore, **authoritative living!**

Hearing the word of God does three beneficial spiritual things for me. First, the word of God **convicts** me of sin (Rom. 3:23; 4:15). Secondly, I am given **hope** of being forgiven of my sins through Christ's sacrifice (Rom. 3:23-26). Thirdly, I am **instructed** as to what to do to be forgiven of my sins. The state of forgiveness is termed "*justification*" and "*righteousness*" in Romans (cf. 3:24; 4:5; 5:1-2; 6:19 etc.). Paul meticulously connects justification to God's free grace (Rom. 3:24; 5:1-2) and obedience (Rom. 4 all and 6:16ff). The obedience required is spelled out in Romans; i.e., hear, believe, confess, repent, be baptized, and live in faithful obedience.

Chapter 11

Chapter 11 discusses the two-fold purpose of preaching to the Gentiles. First, the Gentiles were to be members of the kingdom of God just as the Jews. The Gentiles would have the opportunity to be justified by faith and have access to God's grace just as the Jews. The gospel message was preached to them because of the rejection on the part of the Jews. The apostles turned to the Gentiles when the Jews rejected the gospel. Therefore the rejection on the part of the Jews turned out to be a blessing to the Gentiles. Secondly, however, when the Gentiles accepted the gospel message, this provoked the Jews to jealousy. The design of this jealousy was to bring them to Christ. So the Gentiles benefited from the Jews and the Jews could benefit from the Gentiles in relation to their salvation.

I. God has not rejected all the Jews (11:1-10):

A. "*I say then, Did God cast off his people? God forbid. For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin*" (11:1).

1. The reason for this phrase takes us back to chapter 9:1. Paul's desire for his kinsmen in the flesh (i.e., the Jews) was that they be saved from the consequences of their sin. Willing that one be saved, however, saves no one. God saves those who answer His gospel call whether Jew or Gentile (cf. Rom. 9:24). Those who obey the gospel call are viewed as "*children of promise*" (Rom. 9:8). God has determined to grant mercy and grace to those who obey His words (cf. Rom. 6:16). The Lord desires that man **hear** the gospel message (Rom. 10:14, 17), **believe** (Rom. 10:9), **confess** (Rom. 10:9), **repent** (Rom. 2:4), be **baptized** (Rom. 6:1-6), and live **faithfully** (Rom. 10:13).
2. God did not cast the Jew off any more than He cast the Gentile off. The subject under consideration is salvation and the fact that it matters not whether one be Jew or Gentile. What matters is whether one is willing to follow the instructions of the Word of God unto salvation. Those willing to follow God's instructions represent a class of individuals that God had "*foreknowledge*" of and are thereby "*foreordained*" to be His (cf. Rom. 8:29-30). To these God exercises mercy; i.e., He forgives them of their sins as they

- humbly repent (cf. Rom. 9:18). The rebellious are hardened by God through His commandments. They are offended by God's will and thereby are hardened (cf. Rom. 9:18).
3. There is thereby an "election" process on the part of God. Those who receive the forgiveness of sins do so through His prescribed means. God elects that obedient and faithful men and women attain justification (cf. Rom. 8:33; 9:11). Note that this election process was fully formed (all decisions made) before any man or woman came out of the womb and made any decisions toward good or evil (cf. Rom. 9:11). Individuals decisions in life determine whether or not they will be accepted of God through His mercy and election process that was predetermined before the foundations of the world (Eph. 1:3-7) (see study # 68; Calvinism: Unconditional Election).
 4. God had not cast off His true people (i.e., the children of promise or elected individuals). True Israel gained God's mercy, the forgiveness of their sins, due to obedience (Rom. 6:16).
 5. Paul uses his own self as an example. God has not cast off the Jews and he is proof (cf. Phil. 3:5ff). Paul has had his sins forgiven not because of his Jewish race but because he was and remains obedient to the teachings of Jesus Christ.
- B. *"God did not cast off his people which he foreknew. Or know ye not what the scripture saith of Elijah? How he pleaded with God against Israel:"* (11:2).
1. Note that Paul, once again, brings in the word "*foreknew*" (cf. Rom. 8:29). Who are "*foreknew*?" The context reveals the justified to be those who God had foreknowledge of. Those God exercises mercy on is a class of people (i.e., the obedient).
 2. Paul extracts a part of the OT (I Kings 19:1ff).
- C. *"Lord, they have killed the prophets, they have 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 left for myself seven thousand men, who have not bowed the knee to Baal"* (11:3-4).
1. Elijah considered himself the only Jew left serving God. The Lord, however, tells Elijah that there are 7000 men who had not bowed their knee to Baal.
 2. The point Paul is making is that just as there was a remnant of people in Elijah's day that had not rejected God, even so there is a remnant of Jews today who have not rejected God and therefore He has not rejected them.
- D. *"Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace"* (11:5).
1. Here we find a connection between God's "*election*" and His "*grace*." To be "*elect*" is to be a recipient of His "*grace*." Paul connects "*justification and redemption*" to God's "*free grace*" at Romans 3:24. Justification, redemption, and God's grace are connected to the forgiveness of sins at Ephesians 1:7. Said forgiveness is certainly a "*gift of God*" (Eph. 2:8). The gift is in respect to His mercy on sinful man. If man got what he deserves for sin it would certainly be death (cf. Rom. 6:23). Yet God is rich in mercy and desires that all men would come to repentance (cf. II Pet. 3:9).
 2. Paul states that at this present moment there are Jews who have freely received the forgiveness of their sins by the mercy of God due to their obedient faith. They are recognized as elect children of promise due to their attitude toward sin. They did something about it and thereby gained access into God's grace (cf. Rom. 5:1ff) (see study # 68).
- E. *"But if it is by grace, it is no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace"* (11:6).
1. Paul has brought this idea up on several occasions now in the book of Romans. Many Jews were stuck in the mental rut of keeping the Mosaic Law (that is all they had ever done and they continued in it at the present time) (cf. Rom. 9:31; 10:5). The Law demanded perfection (Gal. 3:10). The man or woman who lived under this system was doomed because at some point they would sin (Rom. 3:23). No amount of law keeping after this could remove one sin (cf. Heb. 7:18-19).
 2. Receiving the forgiveness of sins (i.e., God's grace) is not achieved by keeping the Mosaic Law (or any other system other than Christ). One who seeks God's grace through denominationalism will seek in vain.
- F. *"What then? That which Israel seeks for, that he obtained not; but the election obtained it, and the rest were hardened:"* (11:7).
1. Israel had a "*zeal for God*" (cf. Rom. 10:2) yet they "*obtained not*" God's grace because many were hardened in sin.

2. Again, we see two classes of people in the Word of God. One class are known as children of God, those of promise, and “*elect*.” Paul has clearly and firmly established the fact that the reason one stands elected is due to their humble obedience to God’s NT commandments (see study # 68).
 3. The second class, under discussion, are those lost in sin. They are not the elect and are thereby termed, “*hardened*.” God does said hardening (cf. Rom. 9:18). The Lord does so by delivering commandments to all humanity and the dividing line is thereby drawn. Some obey unto righteousness and others are offended and hardened by God’s laws. Pharaoh stands as the great example. God commanded him, “*Let my people go...*” and Pharaoh rejected God’s commands. Pharaoh did not want to do things God’s way and thereby he goes down in history as a wicked man whom God hardened with His commandments (cf. Ex. 7:16; 10:3) (see study # 24).
- G. “*According as it is written, God gave them a spirit of stupor, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear, unto this very day. And David saith, Let their table be made a snare, and a trap, and a stumblingblock, and a recompense unto them: Let their eyes be darkened, that they may not see, and bow thou down their back always*” (11:8-10).
1. Paul quotes from Isaiah 29:10 and Psalms 69:22-23 to illustrate the point that some are hardened by God’s commands.
 2. The Scriptures proclaim that “*God gave them a spirit of stupor... and a stumblingblock...*” If God is not willing than any should perish then why did he cause some to have a spirit of stupor and put a stumbling block before them? First, let us answer the question of what this spirit of stupor and stumbling block is. Paul has already identified the “*stumblingblock*” to be Christ (cf. Rom. 9:31-33). Christ’s teachings caused many Jews to stumble because they were not the words they wanted to hear (cf. Jn. 6:47-68). Like Pharaoh, they wanted things their way rather than God’s ways. God’s gift of “stupor” and “stumblingblock” came in the form of His commandments (see study # 24).

II. The results of the hard hearted Jews who rejected the Messiah (11:11-16):

- A. “*I say then, Did they stumble that they might fall? God forbid: but by their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles, to provoke them to jealousy*” (11:11).
1. The Jews are not forever lost. As long as there is breath in their nostrils they have opportunity to turn to Christ in obedience just as the remnant of Jews did and just as the Gentiles did.
 2. Through the obstinate hard hearts of the Jews, the apostle turned away from them and preached to the Gentiles, which resulted in their salvation (cf. Acts 13:46).
- B. “*Now if their fall, is the riches of the world, and their loss the riches of the Gentiles; how much more their fullness?*” (11:12).
1. Through the rejection on the Jews part, the gospel was preached to the Gentiles and many were thereby saved.
 2. Those of a hard heart had not been completely cast off with out hope. If they so choose, they may express their faith in Jesus and be saved as well.
- C. “*But I speak to you that are Gentiles. Inasmuch then as I am an apostle of Gentiles, I glorify my ministry; if by any means I may provoke to jealousy them that are my flesh, and may save some of them. For if casting away of them is the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead?*” (11:13-15).
1. Paul had been sent to the Gentiles as “*the apostle of Gentiles*” though he was a Jew (cf. Acts 9:15).
 2. Though sent to the Gentiles he too had a responsibility to preach to the Jews (his kinsmen in the flesh / Rom. 9:1). Paul was not only bound by duty but by love to teach the Jews.
 3. The Jews were once considered God’s peoples. Their disobedience took them out of God’s favor. The Jew can, however, come back into an acceptable relationship with God. To illustrate this point, Paul uses the figure of a wild olive tree and a cultivated olive tree.

I. Illustration of the olive trees (11:16-21):

- A. “*And if the firstfruit is holy, so is the lump: and if the root is holy, so are the branches. But if some of the branches were broken off, and thou, being a wild olive, was grafted in among them, and didst become partaker with them of the root of the fatness of the olive tree; glory not over the branches: but if thou gloriest, it is not thou that bearest the root, but the root thee*” (11:16-18).

1. The branches in this illustration represent the Jews. The branches grew off of an olive tree that is representative of Abraham and his promised seed (i.e., Jesus / cf. Gal. 3:16).
 2. The Gentile represents the “*wild olive*” branch that was grafted onto the promised seed of Abraham (i.e., Jesus) through their obedient faith. Attachment to the promise of God through Abraham’s seed is thereby contingent upon one’s approach to Jesus. If I believe and obey His commands I am part of Abraham’s seed if I reject the Laws of Christ through hardness of heart I have no part in these promises.
 3. Paul warns the believing Gentiles not to be haughty because they are now a part of Abraham’s promise (the root of the olive tree). The promise to forgive man of sins comes through the root and not the other way around (i.e., forgiveness is not possible without the Gentile).
- B. “*Thou wilt say then, Branches were broken off, that I might be grafted in. Well; by their unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by thy faith. Be not high minded, but fear:*” (11:19-20).
1. Faith and unbelief are set as antithetical to each other in this section: Faith includes an acceptance that Jesus is the Messiah which motivates one to obedience to Jesus’ teachings. Unbelief is equivalent to a hard (stubborn) heart that rejects Jesus and His teachings. The Gentile was faithful (obedient to the gospel call and received justification) whereas the Jew rejected God’s Son.
 2. Since the natural branches of the olive tree of salvation through Christ were broken off through “*unbelief*” the Gentile ought to fear lest by their unbelief they be cut off the tree of hope.
- C. “*For if God spared not the natural branches, neither will he spare thee*” (11:21).
1. Why did God not spare the natural branches (i.e., the Jews)? Paul states it was because of their “*unbelief*” (cf. Rom. 11:20). Why were the unnatural branches (Gentiles) grafted into the promises of God? Paul tells us that it is due to their belief (Rom. 11:20).
 2. My salvation today is thereby contingent upon my “*belief*” or faith.
 - a. I gain faith by hearing the gospel message (cf. Rom. 10:14, 17).
 - b. I illustrate my faith in God through **confessing** the name of Jesus (Rom. 10:9) and **calling** upon His name in faithful obedience (Rom. 10:13). God’s promise through Abraham (the olive tree in the above parable) is the forgiveness of sins. I will have no part of this justification without belief. Belief will motivate me to confess Christ, repent of sins, be baptized, and live a faithful life to the Lord.
- D. “*Behold then the goodness and severity of God: toward them that fell, severity; but toward thee, God’s goodness, if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off*” (11:22).
1. Paul is addressing the grafted in Gentile here. The Gentile has been saved from the consequences of sin through their faith in Jesus Christ. Paul now calls to their attention that it was through the Jew’s unbelief that they were cut off from having their sins forgiven (the very purpose of the olive tree in the parable). The Gentile may very well find themselves cut off from the tree if they exercise unbelief.
 2. Note that if the Gentile “*continues in his goodness*” they will remain attached to the olive tree. This verse destroys the Calvinistic theory of “perseverance of the saints” (see study # 21). Note that Paul has conjoined “*belief*” with “*continuing in his goodness.*” In a technical sense Paul is telling us that our obedient acts evidence our faith (cf. Heb. 11:1ff). Those who live by faith experience God’s goodness, however, those who live in unbelief through disobedience are due the “*severity of God.*”
- E. “*And they also, if they continue not in their unbelief, shall be grafted in: for God is able to graft them in again. For if thou wast cut out of that which is by nature a wild olive tree, and wast grafted contrary to nature into a good olive tree; how much more shall these which are the natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree?*” (11:23-24).
1. What if the Jew hears the gospel, believes, repents, and is baptized for the remission of their sins, will they not be grafted back into the tree of the promises made to Abraham?
 2. Paul reasons with the Gentile now. If you, being a wild olive branch, were grafted into the good tree and was accepted how much more will the natural branches be grafted in and accepted?
 3. Faith in Jesus Christ is the condition that determines whether one truly possesses the promises of God.

IV. A call to Reasoning (11:25-27):

- A. *“For I would not, brethren, have you ignorant of this mystery, lest ye be wise in your own conceits, that a hardening in part hath befallen Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in;”* (11:25).
1. The *“mystery”* has to do both with what Paul has just said (i.e., many Jews were cut off the olive tree through disbelief and many Gentile grafted in due to belief) and what he now reveals. The reason many Jews have been cut off from having their sins forgiven is because of *“a hardening”* of their hearts against God. Like Pharaoh of old they have heard God’s commandments (cf. Rom. 10:18) yet they rejected them because it was not what they wanted or expected to hear (cf. Ex. 10:3) (see study # 24).
 2. The hardhearted disposition toward God’s scheme of redeeming man from the consequences of sin is to last *“until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in.”*
 - a. Interestingly, Jesus stated, *“And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led captive into all the nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled”* (Lk. 21:24). Charles T. Russell (originator of the Jehovah’s Witnesses organization) believed that this passage had to do with the end of Gentile governments on the earth and the beginning of the kingdom of God. He formulated a theory that in the year 1914 the world’s government systems would end and Christ would take over (cf. Gentile Times: When Do They End? October 1876 / The Bible Examiner Vol. XXI. No. 1 whole no. 313).
 - b. At the establishment of the kingdom of God *“all nations”* had the opportunity to be blessed with the forgiveness of sins (cf. Gen. 12:1ff; Gal. 3:28). This, I believe, is the fullness of the Gentile times... i.e., a time when their sins would be forgiven.
 - c. While a *“part”* of Israel rejected God’s commands through His beloved Son many Gentiles believed (i.e., their fullness).
- B. *“and so all Israel shall be saved: even as it is written, There shall come out of Zion the Deliverer; He shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: And this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins”* (11:26-27).
1. The Israel under consideration must be the *“Israel of God”* (cf. Gal. 6:16) and the *“inward Jew”* of Romans 2:28-29.
 2. Paul quotes from Isaiah 59:20-21 and Isa. 27:9. Jerusalem would produce the Messiah. Jesus would *“deliver”* us from the wrath that is to come (I Thess. 1:10). He would do this by removing our sins as we seek access into His grace through our obedient faith (Rom. 11:27).

III. All are under sin and in need of God’s Mercy (11:28-32):

- A. *“As touching the gospel, they are enemies for your sake: but as touching the election, they are beloved for the father’s sake. For the gifts and the calling of God are not repented of”* (11:28-29).
1. Due to the Jew’s rejection of the gospel message, they were displeasing to God. Due to the hostility on the part of the Jews toward God, the Gentiles had an avenue to God’s grace (vs. 28b). Even so, the Gentiles are to learn that the Jews are God’s elected people. He chose them among all the peoples to bring forth his plan of redemption. Without the Jew no Gentile could be elected of God.
 2. Though the Jews have for the most part rejected God, He does not *“repent”* of his decision to choose them from other peoples to bring forth His Son (11:29).
- B. *“For as ye in time past were disobedient to God, but now have obtained mercy by their disobedience, even so have these also now been disobedient, that by the mercy shown to you they also may now obtain mercy. For God hath shut up all unto disobedience, that he might have mercy upon all”* (11:30-32).
1. In *“time past”* the Gentiles were disobedient to God and thereby were excluded from His promises. Through the Jews disobedience to God’s offer of mercy the Gentiles found that mercy through their obedience.
 2. Paul’s point is that both Jew and Gentile are in need of God’s mercy due to their disobedience (cf. Rom. 3:23). God hath *“shut up”* (*sugkleio*) all unto disobedience. The Greek word *sugkleio* = “to shut up together, to hem in; to enclose... met. To band under a sweeping sentence...” (Moulton 380). “To shut or coop up, hem in, enclose... having portions that join, bordering, neighboring”

(LS 755). Both Jew and Gentile are banded together as disobedient and thereby in need of God's mercy and grace. All sin and all are due punishment (cf. Rom. 3:23; 6:23).

IV. Paul erupts into a doxology which ends the entire section of the book of Romans on the argument of justification by faith in Jesus Christ (11:33-36):

- A. *"O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past tracing out"* (11:33).
1. We must remember that this is a doxological statement of praise toward God. We could not praise him if He has delivered a word that we cannot understand.
 2. God has put forth a plan to save man from the consequences of sin. Who can fathom the entire picture of creation, man, sin, and God's mercy? Why did God create what he has and why is man sinful? Why is it that God devised a plan to save man? These thoughts belong to God.
- B. *"For who hath known the mind of the Lord? Who hath been his counselor? Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? For of him, and through him, and unto him, are all things. To him be the glory for ever. Amen"* (11:34-36).
1. God has no need from anyone. No one shall council Him. No one can comprehend his infinite mind!
 2. He is God! *"To Him be the glory for ever. Amen"* (11:36b) (see study # 18).

Synopsis of chapter 11

Chapter 11 ends the great discussion of what man must do to be forgiven of sin. Paul begins the discussion with the fact that God has the power to remove man's sins (Rom. 1:16). The apostle explains that there are eternal consequences to sin (cf. Rom. 2:3ff). The real fact is that all sin and are thereby due God's wrath (Rom. 3:23). Each of us follow the first man Adam in that we sin (Rom. 5:12). God is not willing, however, to leave man in such an undone condition. God is rich in mercy and grace and thereby granted to man an opportunity to be saved (Rom. 3:24ff). This salvation comes through Christ (Rom. 5:8-9).

God's plan to save man came to form through Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (cf. Rom. 9:6ff). Jesus would be of their seed and thereby save many from their sins (cf. Matt. 1:1ff; 21). Those who thereby live faithfully as Abraham did will be justified of their sins (cf. Rom. 4:12). A true faith in Jesus Christ will lead one to obedience to His laws (cf. Rom. 6:16). The truly faithful child of God will hear the gospel message (Rom. 10:14, 17), believe (Rom. 10:10), repent (Rom. 2:4), confess that Jesus is the Christ (Rom. 10:9-10), be baptized for the remission of sins (Rom. 6:1-6), and live faithfully unto the Lord all the days of their lives (Rom. 10:13). Said individuals can rest assured that there is *"no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus"* (Rom. 8:1). Said individuals can rest assured in the fact that *"if God is for us, who is against us?"* (Rom. 8:31). Truly the faithful children of God are *"more than conquerors through him that loved us"* (Rom. 8:37). The wonderful promise of God's salvation (i.e., justification and or forgiveness of sins) belongs to those whom the Lord *"calls"* through the gospel message (cf. Rom. 8:30; 9:11, 24 and II Thess. 2:13-14).

Some will harden their heart in disobedience and thereby display the spirit of Pharaoh of Egypt (cf. Rom. 9:18; 11:7). Some, however, will hear and obey through faith. Those who by faith seek out their justification through mercy and grace of God are termed the *"elect"* of God (Rom. 8:33; 9:11). God has always had this class of individuals in His mind (cf. Rom. 8:29-30). Salvation is His divine *"purpose"* (Rom. 9:11).

Chapter 12

Synopsis:

Paul has given clear instructions regarding how one is justified by faith through God's grace in chapters 1 – 11. He now turns his attention to the Christian's day to day life as a justified saint of God. The Christian's character is defined as being transformed from the world to a mind that considers a future heavenly home. Said state of mind will live selflessly, lovingly, and in accordance with God's authoritative scriptures. Such a life is defined as a *"living sacrifice."*

I. The Christian is a “*living Sacrifice*” to God (12:1-2):

- A. “*I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service*” (12:1).
1. The apostle Paul has written information by divine revelation that cannot be refuted. Man has sinned (Rom. 3:23). The wages of said sin is death (Rom. 6:23). The remedy is Christ (Rom. 3:24ff; 5:9-11). The salvation offered through Christ is termed justification. Man is justified from the consequence of sin through God’s grace (Rom. 3:24; 5:1-2). Though this grace is “*freely given*” (cf. Rom. 3:24; 5:16; 6:23) it is not received without man doing his part. So Paul reveals the conditions that must be met to be a recipient of God’s grace. We know that there are conditions due to Paul speaking of man’s obedience (cf. Rom. 6:16). The conditions are “*hearing*” (Rom. 10:14, 17), “*believing*” (Rom. 10:10), “*repenting*” (Rom. 2:4), “*confessing the name of Christ*” (Rom. 10:9-10), being buried with Christ in “*baptism*” (Rom. 6:1ff), and living faithfully all the days of one’s life (Rom. 10:13).
 2. “*Therefore*” (i.e., since God has provided a means of salvation and given the instructions thereunto), Paul “*beseech(es)*” the Romans to “*present your bodies...*” The word “*beseech*” (*parakaleo*) = “to call on, invoke... exhort, cheer, encourage... to excite... to demand, require...” (LS 597). Paul knew that obedience to the will of God was necessary else man dwells in sin (cf. I Jn. 3:4). The apostle thereby exhorts, calls upon, encourages, demands, and requires that the Roman brethren (and all today) “*present your bodies as living sacrifices, holy, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service.*”
 - a. Christians are “*living sacrifices*” in that while we live we give up the mind and body to Christ will. Paul said, “*I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I that live but Christ liveth in me: and that life which I now live in the flesh I live in faith, the faith which is in the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself up for me*” (Gal. 2:20). We have died to sin and purpose to no longer live therein (Rom. 6:1ff).
 - b. Christians are to be “*holy*” (*hagios*) = “pure, righteous, ceremonially or morally” (Moulton 3). Christ’s blood is the only means whereby man may be viewed as pure (cf. Rom. 3:24-25).
 - c. “*Acceptable*” (*euarestos*) to God = “well-pleasing” (LS 322).
 3. The attributes of a living sacrifice, pure, and well pleasing to God are to be accomplished because they are the Christian’s “*spiritual service.*” The word “*spiritual*” (*logikos*) = “of or belonging to the reason... logical, logic” (LS 476). Man’s justification by grace is contingent upon his or her obedience. Thereby the Christian should view their responsibilities of being sacrificial, pure, and well pleasing to God as a logical conclusion to Paul’s instructions regarding justification by faith through God’s grace.
- B. “*And be not fashioned according to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God*” (12:2).
1. To be “*fashioned*” (*suschematizo*) = “to conform one thing to another... to form oneself after another... to be conformed” (LS 784). “To form... to fashion in accordance with; to conform or assimilate one’s self to (see Rom. 12:2 and I Pet. 1:14)” (Moulton 393).
 2. That which the Christian is not to be formed after is the “*world*” (*aion*) = “a period of time of significant character; life; an era; an age: hence, a state of things marking an age or era; the present order of nature; the natural condition of man, the world; illimitable duration, eternity... the material universe” (Moulton 11). “one’s lifetime, life... an age, generation... a long space of time, an age, of old, for ages... a definite space fo time, an era, epoch, age, period... this present world” (LS 25). The lexicons leave us thinking the Greek word *aion* is primarily a word that deals with ages of time yet the use of *aion* in cross references indicates that it can be used to describe the realm of the devil (cf. the use of *aion* at II Cor. 4:4 as compared to John 12:31; 16:11, and I Jn. 2:15 where the Greek word *kosmos* is used). Paul uses the Greek *aion* at I cor. 1:20; Gal. 1:4; Eph. 2:2; 6:12; II Tim. 4:10 and Titus 2:12 to illustrate unlawful living. The Christian is sanctified from the ungodly world. The Christian is governed by the “*law of faith*” (Rom. 3:17), “*law of the Spirit of life*” (Rom. 8:2), “*law of God*” (Rom. 8:7), “*word of faith*” (Rom. 10:8), “*gospel*” (Rom. 10:16), and the “*word of Christ*” (Rom. 10:17). The fact that Paul commands that the Christian not be like the world that lives in sin and governed by the fleshly desires necessarily infers that

- there is a law for man to obey (see study # 69; Bible Authority: Necessary Inference) (see study # 6).
3. The Christian is one who was once in the world and walked after the ways of the flesh (cf. Eph. 2:2; Col. 3:7). There was; however, a “*transformation*” (*metamorphoo*) = “to undergo a spiritual transformation” (Moulton 266). The apostle Paul writes to the Colossians saying, “*who* (God the Father) *delivered us out of the power of darkness and translated us into the kingdom of the Son of his love*” (Col. 1:13). Yes God provides this transformation yet the book of Romans proves that man must do his part in this transformation process. Paul terms the process a “*renewing of your mind*.” To “*renew*” (*anakainosis*) = “renewal” (LS 56); “renovation” (Moulton 22). Paul used the same word speaking to Titus saying, “*not by works done in righteousness; which we did ourselves, but according to his mercy he saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit*” (Titus 3:5). The word “*renewing*” seems to insinuate that there was a time in the past that we were viewed as holy and clean and not in need of any fixing. To “renew” something is to renovate... to restore to an earlier condition, as by repairing or remodeling (AHD 1047). That which is being repaired or remodeled is the “*mind*.” The mind, before becoming a Christian, is in need of repair.
 - a. The mind of the world is earthly (i.e., sensual or carnal). Said disposition considers the world we live in as a prize. This minded person seeks satisfaction in this life. Said person will seek to impress others in this world with their prestige, high position at the work place, the finest homes, and automobiles. Their god is their money and who ever has money is respected by them. Success in life is measured by what one has rather than what one has to look forward to; i.e., heaven (cf. Phil. 3:17-20; James 3:13ff).
 - b. The mind of the Christian is the mind of Christ (i.e., humble, selfless, respectful and fearful toward the heavenly Father, seeks no selfish glorification from the world, compassionate, and loving) (cf. Phil. 2:1-5).
 - c. What will cause me to go from a mind that is selfish and seeks glorification of the world (Jn. 12:43) to a mind that is humble and seeks to glorify the name of Jehovah God alone? Paul tells us that it will be done through a renewing or transformation process of the mind. When I was a child I was innocent of sin yet when sin revived (when I recognized my error) I was found to be guilty of sin. Faith in Jesus and His promises of heaven, all of which is revealed in the gospel message, will motivate me to be transformed from a sinful state of mind to a godly state (see study # 11; Personal Work) (see study # 70; Repairing the Mind).
 4. The renovation of my mind from desiring vainglory, lustfulness, and life interest in the world itself to a disposition of humility, compassion, and trying to make it to heaven will “*prove*” three things in relation to God. The word “*prove*” (*dokimazo*) = “to prove, try, examine, scrutinize” (Moulton 105). Jesus used this word in the same fashion at Luke 14:19 saying, “*And another said, I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them; I pray thee have me excused.*” When the world sees my transformation from sinner to saint I illustrate one who has weighed the cost of being lost through examination of God’s word. What I find is that God desires that I be good and acceptable as is made known through His perfect word. Three things then that I prove (see ASV footnote) in relation to the will of God is what good, acceptable, and perfect behavior is.

II. Exhortations Against Self Conceit (12:3-8):

- A. “*For I say, through the grace that was given me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but so to think as to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to each man a measure of faith*” (12:3).
 1. The “*grace that was given*” Paul is divine revelation (cf. Gal. 1:11-12). Revelation, the mind of God spoken to apostles and prophets, communicated to them that man is not to be conceited. When man begins bragging about self and various accomplishments the mind of Christ is far from view. The word “*highly*” (*hyperphroneo*) = “to be over-proud, to have high thoughts... to be proud in or of a thing... to look down upon, despise, to think slightly of” (LS 839). That which Paul warns about in the Christian character is the idea of thinking highly of self and at the same time looking down on everyone else (see study # 71; Pride Comes Before the Fall). The idea is

- I'm great and all others are no where in comparison to me. Such an attitude elevates oneself above others and is sinful.
- a. *“Renewing the mind”* (cf. Rom. 12:1-2) means that I *“fashion”* my mind no longer after the conceit of the world but after Christ. Jesus did not walk this earth tooting His own horn and looking down at everyone else. The Lord was careful to give the Father all glory and honor for all the miraculous things He did and words He preached (cf. Jn. 8:28). The Lord commended the spirit of meekness and lowliness in His Sermon on the Mount. The apostle Paul revealed the lowly mind of Christ at Philippians 2 saying, *“but in lowliness of mind each counting other better than himself; not looking each of you to his own things, but each of you also to the things of others, Gave this mind in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:”* (2:3-5) (see study # 70).
 - b. Let *“each count others better than self.”* I am to deem (have the opinion) of others as being *“better than”* myself (*huperecho*) = “to hold one thing over another... to be above, rise above the horizon... to rise above” (LS 835-836). My view of self is lower than my view of others (all are above me). Consider Paul’s attitude (cf. I Cor. 15:9; Eph. 3:8; I Tim. 1:15). Paul stresses the fact that the Christian must avoid the high mind of thinking too much of one’s self because this leads to faction and division in the church (cf. Phil. 2:1ff). The conscientious Christian should be able to detect when others are trying to aggrandize him and squash it before it blossoms into faction and vainglory rather than feeding it.
 - c. Note that the Christian is not to elevate self but rather elevate others. This may be difficult for the self centered individual.
2. The Christian is to think *“soberly”* (*sophroneo*) = “to be sound of mind... to be temperate, discreet, shew self-control,... to come to one’s senses, learn self-control” (LS 789). It may be difficult not to brag or aggrandize self when an accomplishment is made, however, the Lord explains that this is the sound minded thing to do (i.e., control yourself from doing so).
 3. The context of said conceit comes in the area of gifts that were distributed by God to the saints for the purpose of revealing and confirming truth. Some individuals had the ability to speak in tongues and others could prophecy or teach. Christians had unfortunately put degrees of importance on each gift and thereby considered brethren (such as the tongue speaker) to be greater than others with gifts (cf. I Cor. 14:1ff).
 - a. Paul answers the how and why gifts were distributed at I Corinthians 14:4-11.
 - b. Note that Paul states, *“But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit to profit withal”* (I Cor. 12:7). When one begins looking to the gifts and assigning importance to individuals they have lost sight of why one has the gift in the first place; i.e., *“that the church may receive edifying”* (I Cor. 14:5b).
 - c. Similar uses of *“measure”* are found in I Cor. 12:7, 11, 18 and Eph. 4:16.
- B.** *“For even as we have many members in one body, and all the members have not the same office: so we, who are many are one body in Christ, and severally members one of another”* (12:4-5).
1. Here are the facts about the church (Christ’s body / cf. Eph. 1:22-23) that will help us understand that I cannot possibly elevate my self in the realm of gifts. If the purpose of gifts is to edify others (build up others in the knowledge of Christ) then why do I elevate myself? Gifts are designed to help others yet I am looking more to what I can get out of it (i.e., having others look up to me and tell me how great I am because I have the power of prophecy, tongues, etc.).
 2. Facts about the church (see study # 45):
 - d. There are many members in the one body (church). The church is comprised of the saved (cf. Acts 2:47).
 - e. The many members do not share the same *“office”* (*praxis*) = “action, doing, act, practice, practical ability” (LS 666). All the members of the body of Christ do not share the same “actions, doings, acts, practices, and practical ability.” The early church was not comprised of all tongue speakers but rather there was diversity in the gifts.
 - f. Paul makes a logical comparison: The body of Christ is comprised of many members with differing duties and gifts. Though there are many with differing gifts they all comprise the one church. Likewise, many saints make up the one body of Christ and thereby are a part of each other. We all share in a common goal of making it to heaven and are thereby members one of

another (one in purpose). One's gift of tongues would help others get to heaven. Another's gift of prophecy will benefit the whole as well.

- g. Practical application: The church today has roles (i.e., elders, deacons, preachers, members) (cf. Phil. 1:1). Each member has various authorized actions to perform in the church. All work together, as one, to achieve the goal of edification and in the end a heavenly home (cf. Eph. 4:11-12). The church works as one! If, however, one of these parts elevates self above the one body he throws a wrench in God's ordained plan for the church. Fictious brethren (Phil. 2:3) generally cause upheavals within the body due to their desiring to be preeminent among brethren. Paul said such activity must occur that they that are approved may be made manifest (cf. I Cor. 11:18-19).
- C. *"And having gifts differing according to the grace that was given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophecy according to the proportion of our faith; or ministry, let us give ourselves to our ministry; or he that teaches, to his teaching; or he that exhorteth, to his exhorting: he that gives, let him do it with liberality; he that rules, with diligence; he that showeth mercy, with cheerfulness"* (12:6-8).
- 1. Note that God's *"gifts according to grace"* are not only in the realm of salvation (Acts 2:38) but also in the areas of miracles and divine guidance for the first century church.
 - 2. Whatever gift has been dealt to you, use it to the best of your ability:
 - a. *"Prophecy according to the proportion of our faith"* (vs. 6). The prophet is one who revealed the mind of God as it was distributed to him. Paul encourages the one with the gift of prophecy to use his gift for the benefit of the body alone.
 - b. *"Ministry"* = To serve in some capacity such as a deacon (cf. I Tim. 3:8ff) or teacher of the gospel (cf. Col. 4:12).
 - c. *"One who teaches"* should give themselves to doing so for the benefit of the body.
 - d. *"He who exhorts"* (vs. 8). Barnabas was known as the *"son of exhortation"* (Acts 4:36). This one has talents in encouraging others to pursue a certain course of action.
 - e. *"He that gives, let him do it with liberality"* If you have much, give to those who have little. The church's work is dependant upon the contribution of its members.
 - f. *"He that rules, rule with diligence."* To rule is to "take the lead; be a protector or guardian; to give aid" (AG 714). The word rule is found in I Thess. 5:12; I Tim. 3:4, 5, 12; 5:17. It is evident when studying these verses that the person here spoke of is the elder of the body of Christ. The *"rule"* is to be with diligence "eagerness, earnestness, zeal... will toward, devotion for someone" (AG 771) (see study # 72; Church Organization: The Elder).
 - g. *"He that shows mercy, show mercy with cheerfulness."* Indicates the happy state of one who has the ability to truly put the other fellow's shoes on. To sympathize and show mercy to the ailing.
 - h. Practical application: What ever one's "gift" today let us fulfill our responsibilities so that God would be glorified, to unite the church of Christ together as one body, and help self and others make it to heaven.

III. Love of truth embodies the Christians' duties (12:9-21):

- A. *"Let love be with out hypocrisy. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good"* (12:9).
- 1. The word *"love"* (*agape*) = "love: esp. brotherly love, charity; the love of God for man and of man for God" (LS 4). "Love, generosity, kindly concern, devotedness" (Moulton 2). The generosity, kindness, and concern that I have for God, self, and others should be a direct reflection of what is in my inner being. I love others because I see that they are created beings, like myself, that have an eternal soul along with physical, emotional, and spiritual needs that must be met. My true desire is to help others rather than doing something for them to gain their favor. The function of Bible love is five fold (see study # 73; Bible Love):
 - a I am to love because this is the nature of God (I Jn. 4:7-17).
 - b I am to love God by keeping His commandments (cf. Jn. 14:15; 15:10).
 - c When I keep God's commandments I illustrate a love for my own soul that God blessed me with. I love my self in this way (cf. Rom. 10:17).
 - d My love toward brethren should be true (I Pet. 1:22). I am to care for brethren's physical, emotional, and spiritual well being (cf. Eph. 5:1-2, 11; I Jn. 3:17-18).

- e I am to love those who are lost in sin and teach them (cf. Matt. 28:18ff).
2. To “*abhor*” (*apostugeo*) = “to hate violently, abhor, loathe... to be disgusted” (LS 108)... “to hate, to shrink from with abhorrence, detest” (Moulton 47). That which the Christian is to violently hate and be disgusted with is “*evil*” (*poneros*) = “bad, worthless, knavish... laboriously wicked... the evil one... base, cowardly” (LS 661)... “bad, unsound, evil, wrongful, impious” (Moulton 336) (please read Amos 5:14-15).
 3. The Christian is to love, hate evil, and “*cleave to that which is good.*” To “*cleave*” (*kollao*) is to “to glue, cement... to join one metal to another... to join fast together” (LS 441). The Christian is to be cemented to “*good*” (*agathos*) = “good in a moral sense” (LS 3)... “good, profitable, generous, beneficent, upright, virtuous” (Moulton 2). Moral uprightness and goodness is defined in the word of God. Let the Christian cement themselves to acts of righteousness.
- B. “*In love of the brethren be tenderly affectioned one to another; in honor preferring one another;*” (12:10).
1. The Christian’s love toward brethren is discussed above. The Christian’s kind and caring spirit is to also be “*tenderly affectioned*” (*philostorgos*) = “loving tenderly, affectionate, of the love of parents and children, brothers and sisters” (LS 865)... “natural affection, tenderly affectionate” (Moulton 427). A parent has their child’s best interest in mind in all things that are done. The greatest care and tenderness goes into every bit of instruction and discipline. Likewise, each Christian should view each other in such a tender and affectionate light. I should tenderly and affectionately care for by brothers and sisters in Christ like my own flesh and blood family members (see study # 73).
 2. Members of the body of Christ are likened unto family and so are called the family of God and brethren. I am to “*prefer*” said brethren. To “*prefer*” (*proegeomai*) = “to go before, precede, lead onward; met. To endeavor to take the lead of, vie with, or, to give precedence to, to prefer” (Moulton 343)... “to go first and lead the way, to be the leader... to take the lead... of things, to go before, precede... going first” (LS 676).
 3. Christians should give precedence (priority and or rank) to other Christians in their kind and tender affection rather than caring more for those in the world who do not share a like precious faith.
- C. “*in diligence not slothful; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord;*” (12:11).
1. The Christian is one who gives effort in establishing a loving and tender relationship with brethren. The word “*diligence*” (*spoude*) = “haste, speed, according as one makes speed... zeal, pains, exertion, trouble... to take pains to do a thing... zealous exertions... earnestness, seriousness... an object of attention, a serious engagement ... with great exertion, with difficulty, hardly, scarcely.... urgently... very busily” (LS 741). Each Christian is to exert urgent energy to express their love toward others and live godly in this present world (consider the use of *spoude* at II Pet. 1:5 and Jude 1:3).
 2. The Christian exerts great effort to be loving and tenderly affectionate toward other brethren as opposed to being “*slothful*” (*okneros*) = “to shrink from doing, hesitate to do a thing” (LS 550)... “slow, slothful, indolent, idle” (Moulton 286). The word has to do with slowness... one who displays a spirit of not really wanting to do something. Unwilling to exert one’s self due to laziness. There are things that the sloth will do with urgency but expressing love and tenderness toward another in the body of Christ is generally not one of them. Spiritual sloth is a sure indicator that one’s faith in heaven and hell is deficient (see study # 73).
 3. Let the Christian be “*fervent*” (*zeo*) = “to boil, seethe, of water... metaph. of passion... fervent... to boil up or over with a thing” (LS 343). The Christian’s passion is “*in spirit*” (*pneuma*). The word *pneuma* is used in a variety of ways in the NT. *Pneuma* is a Greek word used for wind (Matt. 7:25, 27), a bodiless spirit (Lk. 24:37), the soul of man (Matt. 26:41; I Cor. 7:34), the spirit as the seat of thought and feeling, the mind (cf. Mk. 8:12; Acts 19:21), spiritual gifts as one inspired (I Cor. 14:37), and a host of others (cf. Moulton 331). It seems to me that Paul uses the Greek *pneuma* here much like he used it at Eph. 2:2; I Cor. 4:21; II Cor. 7:1; 11:4. These verses use *pneuma* to indicate one’s disposition, character, teaching, or thinking on spiritual matters. Other NT writers have used the word in a similar way (cf. Jn. 4:23; I Jn. 4:1, 6) (see also Psalms

- 51:17). The Christian's passion is in areas of spirituality (i.e., moral disposition, godly character, teaching truth, and clean thinking; i.e., spiritual as opposed to carnal). When I think of my brethren I ought to have a fervent character of spirituality.
4. Finally, the verse states "*servicing the Lord*" which seems to sum up the previously stated character traits of the Christian (i.e., one who exerts great energy with a sincere passion in the realm of spirituality). When I treat a brother in Christ with a spirit of love and tenderness I am serving the Lord faithfully. Likewise when I treat a brother or sister in an ill fashion I am not serving the Lord but rather sinning against the person and God.
- D. "*Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing steadfastly in prayer;*" (12:12).
1. The hope of every Christian is to be forgiven of sins and to receive a heavenly home with God. Said hope keeps us rejoicing due to our great faith (cf. Phil. 4:4).
 2. The Christian is to be "*patient in tribulation.*"
 - a. To be "*patient*" (*hupomeno*) = "endure, suffer patiently... to continue firm, hold out, remain constant, persevere... an enduring of affliction" (Moulton 418)... "to be patient under... to stand one's ground, stand firm... to submit or dare to do a thing" (LS 845).
 - b. "*Tribulation*" (*thlipsis*) = "to press, squeeze, pinch... to be compressed... metaph. to oppress, afflict, distress" (LS 367). The Christian has been both "*appointed*" (cf. I Thess. 3:3) and "*granted*" (cf. Phil. 1:29) the ill treatment of ungodly men. Paul tells Timothy that "*all those who live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution*" (cf. II Tim. 3:12). The Christian is to thereby stand firmly in the truth no matter the onslaught of the ungodly.
 - c. The Christian should "*continue steadfastly in prayer.*" To be "*steadfast*" (*proskartereo*) = "to persist obstinately in... to adhere firmly to a man, be faithful to him" (LS 692)... "to be intently engaged in, attend constantly to" (Moulton 350). My communication with God should be constant. I ought to be in a prayerful state of mind at all times as I am in fellowship with God (cf. I Thess. 5:17) (see study # 74; Praying).
- E. "*communicating to the necessities of the saints; given to hospitality*" (12:13).
1. The idea of "*communicating*" (*koinoneo*) = "to have or do in common with, have a share of or take part in a thing with another... to have a share of or take part in a thing... to have dealings with or intercourse" (LS 440). Each Christian should consider the needs of other saints and provide as we are able. Monetary fellowship is thereby authorized among the faithful saints of God (cf. study # 74; Bible Fellowship). Here is an example of Bible love as we care for the physical necessities of each other (see study # 73).
 2. The Christian is also to be "*hospitable*" (*philoxenia*) = "kind to strangers" (Moulton 426).
- F. "*Bless them that persecute you; bless, and curse not*" (12:14).
1. We noted above that persecution and tribulation are a part of the Christian's life. Those administering the ill treatment are our persecutors. It would be very easy to get angry or even which such individuals, however, the Word of God instructs the Christian to "*bless*" such and never to "*curse*" (see study # 42).
 2. The word "*bless*" is used in a variety of ways throughout the Bible. To be a recipient of God's blessings indicates that one has received God's gracious promises. To bless others may very well indicate that you wish for them to be recipients of God's gracious promises through hearing, believing, repenting, being baptized and living faithfully. I should wish the best for my fellow man rather than cursing them to an eternal existence in hell. This is what Bible love is all about; i.e., caring for the souls of others even when they are mean spirited or religiously confused (see study # 73).
- G. "*Rejoice with them that rejoice; weep with them that weep*" (12:15).
1. When I truly care for my brethren and those of the world I will rejoice with them in times of their rejoicing. Maybe they have obeyed the gospel, received good news, accomplished a great feat, met a long term goal, etc. whatever the cause of their rejoicing I ought to share in their joy (be happy for them).
 2. The same holds true during times of sorrow. When my fellow man is saddened due to persecution, a death in the family, financial struggles, etc... I ought to be genuinely saddened as well (see study # 73).

- H. *“Be of the same mind one toward another. Set not your mind on high things, but condescend to things that are lowly. Be not wise in your own conceits”* (vs. 16a).
1. *“Being of the same mind one toward another”* indicates Bible unity (cf. Jn. 17:21; I Cor. 1:10; Eph. 4:13; Phil. 1:27). When Christians understand the word of God alike they will love each other with an unfeigned love (see study # 76; Bible Unity).
 2. Christians are to *“set not your mind (phroneo) on high things.”* The Greek word *phroneo* = “to be minded in a certain way, to mean, intend, purpose” (LS 872). That which the Christian is not to be minded or purposed is *“on high things” (hupselos)* = “high, lofty, high-raised... stately” (LS 852)... “to have lofty thoughts, be proud” (Moulton 421). The success of the world has nothing to do with my eternal abode. My focus should be on spiritual things (see study # 77; Worldliness).
 3. Rather than setting lofty goals and focusing on this earthly life the Christian ought to *“condescend to things that are lowly.”* To *“condescend” (sunapago)* = “to conform one’s self willingly to certain circumstances” (Moulton 386). What lowly “circumstances” would the Christian find self conforming to? The Christian may find that life is filled with persecution, hardships, and general un-acceptance in the society we live due to our faith. Rather than putting aside our faith to attain greatness in this world the Christian ought to condescend to these circumstances and look forward to the coming of Jesus Christ and an eternity in heaven (see study # 70).
 4. Again, Paul instructs the Christian to *“not be wise in your own conceits.”* The word *“conceit” (heautou)* = “self” (Moulton 110). An over inflated estimation of one’s own wisdom is truly ignorant.
- I. *“Render to no man evil for evil. Take thought for things honorable in the sight of all men”* (12:17).
1. To *“render” (apodidomi)* = “to render what is due, to pay, as debts, penalties, submission... to give him back his insult... to return” (LS 97). Jesus tells us to turn the other cheek when one is treating us with contempt (cf. Matt. 5:39). The Christian’s duty is not revenge but rather love for man’s soul.
 2. The Christian’s thoughts should be on those things that are *“honorable” (kalos)* = “in a moral sense, beautiful, noble... moral beauty, virtue” (LS 397). The apostle Paul tells us of such noble things to think on at Philippians 4:8.
- J. *“If it be possible, as much as in you lieth, be at peace with all men”* (12:18).
1. Some men will not let you have peace with them. The point being, the Christian should always strive for peace.
 2. Peace with God comes through obeying His divine authority (cf. Phil. 4:9) and so peace with all men can be obtained when we walk by the same rule (cf. I Jn. 1:5-6).
- K. *“Avenge not yourself, beloved, but give place unto the wrath of God: for it is written, Vengeance belongeth unto me; I will recompense, saith the Lord”* (12:19).
1. When one is abused by tribulation, we are commanded to bear it with out retaliation (cf. I Pet. 2:23ff). Our concern is for the soul. Matthew 18 is an example of this. We seek not revenge nor judgments, but the soul of the individual. If the individual will not repent, the church has the authority to exercise discipline but not judicial judgment (see study # 42).
 2. Final judicial judgment belongs to God. The Lord will certainly render to each man according to their deeds (cf. Rom. 2:3ff; Rev. 20:12-15) *“as it is written”* (cf. Deut. 32:35).
- L. *“But if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him to drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire upon his head”* (12:20).
1. Take care of your enemy rather than seeking vengeance. It may be by your good conduct toward him or her, you may cause them to repent and come back to the Lord. *“For in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire upon his head”* (vs. 20b).
 2. To heap coals of fire upon ones head would be physically painful for the recipient. The phrase is used metaphorically to produce shame in the one whom has wronged you by your good conduct toward them. If one does not experience shame for their evil works, they never will repent (Cf. II Thess. 3:14).
- M. *“Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good”* (12:21).
1. Following the context Paul states that the Christian is not to be conquered by a desire to avenge himself or herself when wronged. The word *“overcome”* means to conquer. Rather than letting

- my desire to get even conquer me, let me do good to my enemy that he or she may repent and come back to the Lord.
2. The soul is always at the forefront of Paul's writing. The Christian is to ever be on the lookout for his brother's soul.

Chapter 13

Synopsis:

Chapter 12 began the process of explaining the Christian's life in relation to the world we live in (Rom. 12:1-2). Secondly, Paul examines the Christian's responsibility within the church (12:3-8). Lastly, Paul examined the Christian's day to day behavior in the world (12:9-21). Chapter 13 deals with the relationship of the Christian to civil government.

I. The Christian is to be subject to existing Civil Government (13:1-2):

- A. *"Let every soul be in subjection to the higher powers: for there is no power but of God; and the powers that be are ordained of God"* (13:1).
 1. Paul's writing ("*every soul*") indicates that the Laws of God are universal (i.e., they apply to Christian and non-Christian alike). Jeremiah referred to the Lord as the "God of all flesh" (Jer. 32:27) (see study # 78; God's Laws Apply to All).
 2. To be "*subject*" (*hypotasso*) = "to place or arrange under... to post under, to subject... to be obedient" (LS 848). The Christian is to be subject to one another "in the fear of Christ" (Eph. 5:21). Christian women are commanded to be in subjection to their husbands (Eph. 5:22ff). Paul now calls upon Christians to be subject (i.e., voluntarily place one's self under and be obedient to) "the higher *powers*" (*exousia*) = "An office, magistracy (A civil officer with power to administer and enforce law)" (LS 276).
 3. Why should man be subject to magistrates (civil governing rulers)?
 - a. First, Paul makes it clear that the only real power (administer and enforcer of law) is the Lord.
 - b. Secondly, Paul states that the current civil authority is "*ordained*" of God. The word "*ordained*" (*tasso*) = "to draw up in order of battle, to form, array, marshal, both of troops and ships... to be appointed to a service... to appoint one to do a thing" (LS 793). God's sovereign choice for man's civil order is government.
 - c. I am to be subject to the current civil authorities because God has appointed them to serve in this capacity and He is the only real law giver.
- B. *"Therefore he that resisteth the power, withstands the ordinance of God: and they that withstand shall receive to themselves judgment"* (13:2).
 1. To "*resist*" is to "oppose" (AG 75).
 2. To oppose the God ordained governing civil authorities is to "*withstand the ordinance of God.*"
 - a. "*Withstand*" is to "set oneself against, oppose, resist, withstand" (AG 66).
 - b. They not only are against civil government but against the ordinance of God.
 - c. The consequences are grave. They shall "*receive to themselves judgment*" of damnation.
 - d. This verse delivers a universal principle. God is the God of all flesh and thereby demands that "every soul" heed His commandments. Those who reject, oppose, resist, or withstand His laws shall be eternally condemned (see study # 25).
- C. *"For rulers are not a terror to the good work, but to the evil. And wouldest thou have no fear of the power? Do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise from the same:"* (13:3).
 1. Paul now equates the "*rulers*" (*archon*) = "a ruler, commander, chief, captain... chief magistrates" (LS 122) with those of "power" from verse one and two. No doubt He has in mind civil authorities here. The governing power is designed to enforce law against those who would deteriorate society.
 2. There must be law and order in any society else chaos reigns. Rulers are thereby to be a terror only to those who do not respect their authority and laws. Those who live as law abiding citizens have nothing to fear. The civil authorities actually "*praise*" those who respect and keep their laws.

- D. *“For he is a minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he bears not the sword in vain: for he is a minister of God, an avenger for wrath to him that doeth evil”* (13:4).
1. The power or rulers are appointed by God as *“ministers”* (servants) to reward those who do good in society and punish the wicked who violate law.
 2. The *“sword”* would be a representation of the power to punish evil doers. God has not given this power to the civil rulers *“in vain.”* If we break the law we become evil doers and subject to the wrath of civil punishment.
- E. *“Wherefore ye must needs be in subjection, not only because of the wrath, but also for conscience’ sake”* (13:5).
1. The Christian (and all else) are to be obedient to civil governing authorities because they were appointed by God to punish those who live unlawfully (the wicked) and secondly for *“conscience”* sake.
 2. The word *“conscience”* (*suneidesis*) = “to share in the knowledge of a thing; to be privy... an inward moral impression of one’s actions and principles... the inward faculty of moral judgment” (Moulton 391). My actions of obedience to civil authorities is evidence that I believe in the reality of God. If I violate civil law while knowing that God demands that I keep the laws of the land then I have violated my conscience and sinned against God. I thereby violate civil and divine law. I am subject to God’s wrath. God’s laws mold man’s conscience (see study # 29).
- F. *“For this cause ye pay tribute also; for they are ministers of God’s service, attending continually upon this very thing”* (13:6).
1. The magistrates work full time at this work and therefore are to be monetarily supported. Knowing that the government is ordained of God, we pay taxes as they are due.
 2. The Christian then pays taxes with the idea of the rulers being God ordained for His good work.
- G. *“Render to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honor to whom honor”* (13:7).
1. Since the civil governing authorities are appointed by God, given the power to punish the unlawful and praise the good, and work full time in this service the Christian is to pay their taxes else be found in sin. Tax money will not only pay the wages of government workers but put into place their plans for the betterment of the communities that Christians live in.
 2. The Christian should attend to the *“custom”* that is due the civil authorities as well. The word *“custom”* (*telos*) = “an impost (something imposed or levied, as a tax or duty), due” (Moulton 400).
 3. Christians should *“fear”* (*phobos*) the civil governing authorities; i.e., “panic fear, such as causes flight... fear, terror, properly of the outward show of fear... an object of terror” (LS 867-868).
 4. The Christian should *“honor”* (*time*) civil governing authorities; i.e., “that which is paid in token of worth or value: honor, dignity, lordship... a dignity, office, magistracy... of things worth, value, or price” (LS 807).
 5. **Consider I Peter 2:13-17**, *“Be subject to every ordinance of man for the Lord’s sake: whether to the king, as supreme; or unto governors, as sent by him for vengeance on evil-doers and for praise to them that do well. For so is the will of God, that by well-doing ye should put to silence the ignorance of foolish men: as free, and not using your freedom for a cloak of wickedness, but as bondservants of God. Honor all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the king.”*
 - a. A note to the reader: Let us all be careful in how we communicate with others about our government. This author has heard many derogatory and mean spirited remarks made against our presidents of the United States of America (esp. Bill Clinton of the late 1990’s). I did not care for the man’s moral character nor did I vote for him, however, I honored him as president because God tells me to do so!
 - b. Let us all be careful how we speak about dignitaries knowing that they are *“ministers of God”* having been *“ordained”* by God (Rom. 13:4).
 - c. Consider the fact that these words were written by Paul at 58 AD (dating book from Rom. 15:22-29; see introduction). Nero Claudius Caesar Augustus Germanicus was the Emperor of Rome. Nero was known for his cruelty toward Christians. The Emperor even banished the Jews from Rom (cf. Acts 18:1-2). Though our governing authorities may be wicked we are commanded to subject ourselves to their authority. I am to reject their authority only in areas

where they would demand that I do things contrary to Christ (cf. Acts 5:29) (see study # 79; The Individual's Responsibility to Government).

I. The Christian's relationship to his "*neighbor*" (13:8-10):

- A. "*Owe no man anything, save to love one another: for he that loves his neighbor hath fulfilled the law*" (13:8).
1. Jesus was asked by a lawyer, in a spirit of trial, how to inherit eternal life. After receiving a non-satisfactory answer, the lawyer asks, "*who is my neighbor?*" (Lk. 10:29). Jesus replies to the question by giving the parable of the Good Samaritan.
 2. Who is our "*neighbor*?" Our neighbor (*plesion*) is anyone. "one who is near by; i.e., neighbor" (LS 647) (Moulton 330). "Any other man irrespective of race or religion with whom we live or whom we chance to meet" (Thayer 519).
 3. Our relationship to all men is to love them. To *agape* their souls with all of our hearts (mind). To do all we can for them in light of their salvation.
 4. Paul tells us to owe no man anything but owe love to all (see notes on Bible love at Romans 12:9).
 - a. The word "*owe*" (*opheilo*) is used metaphorically in I Cor. 7:3 as a euphemism for marital duties (AG 598). The point being that the man or woman pays what is due to their mates to keep each other from sin.
 - b. Even so, Christians are to pay what is due. We pay our bills in a timely fashion and we pay our debt of love to our neighbor in a timely fashion.
 - c. To do this is to "*fulfill the law*" (vs. 8c).
- B. "*For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not covet, and if there be any other commandment, it is summed up in this word, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself*" (13:9).
1. Bible love is selfless and looks toward the betterment of others emotional, physical, and spiritual well being. To commit adultery with another's wife, kill another, or covet another's possession is to display hatred rather than love toward one's neighbor.
 2. The clear admonition is to treat others as we treat ourselves (Matt. 7:12). I would not want another to commit adultery with my wife, covet my property, or kill me and so I should not do so to others (see study # 73).
- C. "*Love works no ill to his neighbor: love therefore is the fulfillment of the law*" (13:10).
1. The word "*ill*" (*kakos*) = "mean, ugly, bad, evil, wicked" (LS 394). Bible love calls for me to be nice and good to my neighbor rather than mistreat him or her in any way.
 2. To "*fulfill*" (*pleroma*) = "perfect performance" (Moulton 329). When I agape my neighbor I perfectly perform the law of God. One may necessarily conclude that the Christian is no doubt under law today. Paul has termed this law a "*law of faith*" (Rom. 3:27), "*the law of the Spirit of life*" (Rom. 8:2), and "*law of God*" (Rom. 8:7).

II. Christians are to grow in holiness recognizing that our salvation is near (13:11-14):

- A. "*And this, knowing the season, that already it is time for you to awake out of sleep: for now is salvation nearer to us than when we first believed*" (13:11).
1. The word "*season*" (*kairos*) = "a limited period of time ... a short season" (Moulton 209). Paul calls upon the Roman Christians to consider time... i.e., it is quickly passing. We have a limited time which is certainly viewed as short here on this earth. There is no time for our disobedience or spiritual slumber.
 2. The Nestle and Marshal text translate the verse literally to say, "*that hour now you out of sleep to be raised*" (NM 644). "*To be raised*" is one Greek word "*egerthenai*" = "To excite, arouse, awaken... to rouse one's self to a better course of conduct" (Moulton 112). The apostle Paul used the exact same word to the Ephesians saying, "*Wherefore he saith, Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall shine upon thee*" (Eph. 5:14).
 3. Why should I awake out of spiritual sloth? I should awake because my salvation is nearer than when I first obeyed the gospel. Time is transpiring and growing ever closer when Jesus shall return to the earth to claim his own (cf. I Thess. 4:13-18). Here is a verse to motivate the apathetic. Romans 13:11 incites purpose to the Christian life. Judgment and eternity draws near and thereby there is no time to waist (see study # 80; Developing Conviction).

- B. *“The night is far spent, and the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light”* (13:12).
1. The idea of *“night”* illustrates the late hour of man’s time here on earth. Soon *“day”* will come and the Lord Jesus shall come to claim His own (cf. I Thess. 4:13ff).
 2. *“Cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light.”*
 - a. *“Cast off”* = “lay aside, rid oneself of” (AG 100).
 - b. The Christian is to rid themselves of *“works of darkness.”* “Darkness” (*skotos*) = “blindness... metaphorically, to hide in darkness... dark and uncertain” (LS 878). Works of darkness are opposed to works of light. Works of darkness are works which violate the will of God (Cf. I Jn. 1:5).
 - c. The idea of *“light”* (*phos*) in the Bible represents “Pure radiance, perfect brightness” (Moulton 432). “Light is the element and sphere of the divine” (AG 872). “Light” (LS 878). “Light is continually used as figurative of holiness and purity (Prov. 6:23; Isa. 5:20; Rom. 13:12)” (New Unger’s Bible Dictionary; pg. 777). “Light is often used as a symbol of goodness, uprightness, or blessing” (ISBE; Vol. 3, pg. 135). Clearly light represents holiness, righteousness, justice, a state of sinless perfection (cf. Eph. 5:8ff).
 - d. God’s word (Jn. 12:36; II Cor. 4:3-6) and God’s people (Col. 1:12; I Thess. 5:5) are represented by *“light.”*
 - e. The Christian’s *“armor”* is to be that of *“light”* (i.e., defined by the word of God as all that is good and lawfully right) (cf. Eph. 6:11ff) (see study # 81; The Christian’s Armor). Let the Christian cast away darkness and cloth self with the gospel message of righteousness.
- C. *“Let us walk becomingly, as in the day; not in reveling and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and jealousy”* (13:13).
1. The *“walk”* or conduct of the Christian is to be *“becomingly”* (*euschemonos*) = “with decency” (LS 333). “In a becoming manner, with propriety, decently, gracefully (cf. also I Cor. 14:40; I Thess. 4:12)” (Moulton 176). People generally act gracefully and decently *“in the day”* as opposed to *“reveling”* and so forth in the night time hours. Note to young people: wickedness lurks during the night hours.
 2. The Christian is not to walk the following ways:
 - a. *“Reveling”* (*komos*) = “a festive procession, a merry-making; a revel, lascivious feasting (see also Gal. 5:21; I Pet. 4:3). “A village festival: a revel, carousal, merry-making, ... ex. It ended in the party parading the streets crowned, bearing torches, singing, dancing, and playing frolics” (LS 460). Reveling can take place after big championship games are won, before during and after concerts, at people’s homes and in the streets.
 - b. *“Drunkenness”* (*methe*) = “strong drink, to be pretty well drunk... drunkenness” (LS 492). Often times people will take verses like this and claim that a Christian can thereby participate in moderate drinking. Let us see what the same apostle said in I Thessalonians 5:6-7, *“So then let us not sleep, as do the rest, but let us watch and be sober. For they that sleep sleep in the night; and they that are drunken are drunken in the night”* (5:6-7). To be *“sober”* (*nepho*) = “to drink no wine... to be sober, dispassionate” (LS 532). The illustration of the effects of alcohol on an individual is most effective in this context. Alcohol, even when drunk in moderation, causes one’s judgment to be effected (Prov. 31:5; Isa. 28:7-8), takes away one’s understanding (Hosea 4:11), makes one sick (Hosea 7:5), and causes a loss of mastery over self (Prov. 20:1). Such a state of mind is dull, uninterested, tolerant, lethargic, apathetic, and generally of little care (see study # 82; Drinking Alcohol).
 - c. *“Chambering”* (*koite*) = “a bed, the conjugal bed (cf. Heb. 13:4)... sexual intercourse, concubitus; hence, lewdness, whoredom, chambering (Moulton 227). The Greek word *koite* is a noun (person, place or thing) (Friberg 502). The thing under consideration is the bed in a bedroom. Consider the next word and it is clear what the meaning is.
 - d. *“Wantonness”* (*aselgeia*) = “licentious (lacking moral discipline or sexual restraint)” (LS 123). The idea between chambering and wantonness is that an individual is not in the right place doing the right thing. The sexual bed belongs to the married (Heb. 13:4) yet often man’s lust gets the best of him and he goes to the bed of fornication and or adultery.

- e. “*Strife*” (*eris*) = “altercation, strife... contentious disposition” (Moulton 166). Some have a problem with getting into altercations because they have a “short fuse.” Little things may set them off. This is not to be the disposition of the Christian.
 - f. “*Jealousy*” (*zelos*) = “jealousy, rivalry for a thing...” (LS 344). We ought to be content with who we are and the things that we have knowing that God’s gracious promise of salvation is ours (the greatest treasure ever known to mankind).
- D. “*But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof*” (13:14).
1. Rather than walking in said disorderly fashion Paul admonishes the brethren to “*put on the Lord Jesus Christ*.” To the Galatians Paul too said, “*put on Christ*” (cf. Gal. 3:27). To the Ephesians (cf. Eph. 4:24) and Colossians (cf. Col. 3:10) Paul spoke of putting on the new man in Christ. To “put on” (*enduo*) = “metaph. to put on, assume the person of” (LS 261). To assume the person of Christ is to take on all the Lord’s attributes (cf. Col. 3:12; I Pet. 2:21) (see study # 83; Put on Christ).
 2. Let us cloth ourselves in the attributes of Christ and never give “*provision*” (*pronoia*) to the flesh. *Pronoia* = “Foresight, forethought, forecast, with forethought, purposely...” (LS 681). Here is a key to understanding Paul’s request. Flesh and lust are the objects of provision. If a man or woman formulates in their minds, through forethought, sinful activities they have made provision for the flesh and have violated the commandment of God. Said one has fulfilled (obeyed) the lust thereof.

Chapter 14

Prologue:

The gospel’s power is that it saves souls from eternal condemnation (Rom. 1:16). God has graciously offered salvation (justification) through faith (Rom. 5:1-2). The Christian is called upon to contemplate God’s mercy and conclude that he or she must serve as a living sacrifice (Rom. 12:1-2). A living sacrifice is to do the following:

- A. Remain obedient unto righteousness (Rom. 6:16) just as Abraham did (Rom. 4:4ff).
- B. Take into consideration his or her own talents in relation to brethren and never think too highly of self (Rom. 12:3).
- C. Abhor evil (Rom. 12:9).
- D. Exercise love and tender affection toward other brethren (12:10).
- E. Humbly leave vengeance and wrath to God (12:17ff).
- F. Subject self to civil governing authorities (13:1-7).
- G. Exercise love toward neighbors (13:8-10).
- H. Understand that the day of Jesus’ return is coming sooner day by day. Therefore let us conduct self with purity of life (13:11-14).

Romans chapter 14 continues the thought of Christian duties in light of our justification by faith through God’s grace. One would not be persuaded to follow such selfless instructions were it not for the love, mercy and grace of God. God has made provisions for man in heaven therefore we obey him in hope of receiving those provisions.

Paul discussed the Christians relationship toward each other in 12:10-21. He now delineates the brethren into two classes. There is a strong brother and a weak brother (14:1; 15:1). Each has a responsibility toward each other in the realm of *adiaphora* (matters of religious indifference). This outline shall defend the proposition that Romans 14 deals with non-doctrinal issues. Paul said in I Cor. 8:8, “*food will not commend us to God: neither, if we eat not, are we the worse; nor, if we eat, are we the better.*” The idea of Romans 14 may be summed up in 14:15b, “*destroy not with thy meat him for whom Christ died.*” Let us not be so bent on exercising our liberties that we destroy a brother over a matter of indifference. Indeed this would be the height of selfishness.

A defining of the strong and weak brother must be accomplished before we begin the study. Neither the strong nor the weak are lacking in their conviction that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God. The strong brother understands his liberties in Christ. The weak brother is limited in understanding regarding liberties. See the definitions of

strong and weak in the outline below. Secondly, let us firmly fix in our mind the issue of judging. Jesus said, “*judge not that ye be not judged*” (Matt. 7:1). Paul said, “*let us not therefore judge one another any more:*” (Rom. 14:13). To some, the implication is, “leave the sinner alone and do not judge him lest you be found a hypocrite.”

Consider the definition of the word “*judge*” (*krino*) as it is used in Rom. 14:3. “to separate, distinguish... pick out... to judge unjustly... to bring to trial, accuse... to pass sentence upon, to condemn” (LS 451). Of the judgment which people customarily pass upon (and thereby seek to influence) the lives and actions of their fellowmen... b. esp. in an unfavorable sense pass an unfavorable judgment upon, criticize, find fault with, condemn” (AG 452). Moulton adds, “To separate; to make a distinction between; to exercise judgment upon; to estimate” (241). The activity is obviously a singling out of an individual and putting him or her on trial for a supposed crime. The Point of Romans 14 is that if no crime against God’s laws have been committed why single the person out and try him as if he had violated God’s laws.

Two areas of life that the Christian has no right to judge others should be considered. First, the Christian has no authority to judge (condemn) a brother’s actions when matters of indifference are involved. Why? Again, because Paul said “*food will not commend us to God: neither, if we eat not, are we the worse; nor, if we eat, are we the better*” (I Cor. 8:8). Secondly, the Christian has no authority to judge matters of the heart other than what is revealed in the heart by outward actions (cf. Matt. 7:15-16). There is but one who can see into the hearts of man and that is Jehovah God (Jer. 17:10). Man cannot see into another’s heart (I Cor. 2:11). One who condemns (judges) his brother with no factual evidence is condemned himself (Deut. 17:2-7; 19:15; Matt. 7:1; Matt. 18:15ff; Heb. 10:28ff).

The question then arises: “Is there a time to Judge (find fault with, condemn, criticize or censure)?” The answer is emphatically yes! Paul “*judged*” (*kekrika*) the un-repenting sinner of I Corinthians 5. The word judged (*krino*) is defined above by LS 426 and Moulton 241 (i.e., singling out and trying for a crime committed). That which was determined was the guilt of the fornicator in I Corinthians 5. Yet the same apostle states in Romans 14:13 that we are not to “*kekrika*.” There is a time to judge and a time to refrain from such judgments. The same apostle told Timothy that part of the work of the evangelist is to “*reprove and rebuke*” (II Tim. 4:2). The word “*reprove*” (*elegcho*) = “to disgrace, put to shame... accuse... to be convicted... of arguments, to bring to the proof, to disprove, confute... to bring convincing proof” (LS 249). The word “*rebuke*” (*epitimao*) = “to reprove, chide, censure, rebuke, reprimand” (Moulton 162 / LS 305). Notice the underlined words from the meaning of reprove and rebuke in II Tim. 4:2 are the same as the ones for “*judge*” in Romans 14:3. There is indeed a time for the Christian to judge others. All judgments revolve around love. Jesus said, “*Judge not according to appearance, but judge righteous judgment*” (Jn. 7:24) (see study # 20). The Christian is to therefore judge the sinner in view of the eternity of the soul. The Christian is not to judge over matters of indifference for the same loving reason. God forbid that I would destroy my brother for my liberties. These facts help us to identify the subject of Romans 14; i.e., not to judge in matters of indifference.

One final note needs to be interjected here. There are brethren today who have abused Romans 14 and brought into it areas that do not belong. Consider the following quotes throughout history:

W. Carl Ketcherside: (Mission Messenger: Vol. 29, No. 12; Dec. 1967)

“Fellowship is not contingent upon unanimity of opinion and has no real relation to it, although the twisted factional mentality seeks to establish such a relationship. The unity of the Spirit is based upon community, not conformity. **The only unity attainable by thinking men is that of diversity.** The unity of conformity must first reduce men to robots. It belongs to the wax museum and not to the temple of God. Jesus did not die for puppets nor allow himself to be murdered for manikins.”

“**In Romans 14 we learn that there were varied opinions in the early church.** These were not allowed to become the basis of rejection. As for the man who is weak in faith, welcome him, but not for disputes over opinions” (verse 1). “One man believes he may eat anything, while the weak man eats only vegetables.” **Paul effectively spiked the creeping credal conformity which has so often blossomed forth in all of its inglorious tendencies in modern Church of Christism. The entire chapter is a stirring apologetic for unity in diversity.** It stands squarely athwart the path of every partisan journalist in our day....”

Leroy Garrett: Restoration Review, XVII, No. 3, pp. 42-46

"The implications of all this to unity and fellowship are weighty. It means that the gospel itself, not our doctrinal interpretations, is the basis of our being one in Christ and in fellowship with each other. That is, when one believes in Jesus and obeys him in baptism, he is our brother and in the fellowship. ... This is oneness and this is unity. That fellowship is strengthened and made joyful by doctrine, but it is the gospel and not doctrine that determines fellowship. ... In doctrinal matters there can be and will be diversity of opinion and interpretation. It was so with the apostles themselves. But this is good, for we stretch each other's minds and help each other to grow in knowledge in our mutual search for truth..."

Ed Harrell – (A series of 16 articles titled “The Bounds of Christian Unity” printed in the “Past, Present and Perfect” section of Christianity Magazine)

November 1988 (Harrell on Romans 14):

Covers error taught regarding divorce and remarriage (pp. 6-9).

April 1989 (Harrell on Romans 14):

Covers error "in matters of 'faith.'"

May 1989 (Harrell on Romans 14):

"Tolerates contradictory teachings and practices on important moral and doctrinal questions."

Covers error of "considerable moral and doctrinal import" (p. 6).

Bob Owen: Sermon titled “Fellowship” at TT Florida September 2, 1993

“The brethren who say that the principles of Romans 14 and 1 Corinthians 8 and 10, can only be applied in matters that are matters of indifference, have effectively eliminated those passages for any application within our brotherhood.”

Rubel Shelly: "A Call to Action," 11/3/94, ACU

"My comments here will be based on Romans 14:1 -- 15:13. This section of Paul's most sublime epistle deals with doctrinal differences among baptized believers. That brothers differ on the millennium, work of the Holy Spirit, church organization, instrumental music, having a glass of wine, the role of women in church leadership, and a dozen other issues does not change the fact that they are all children of God." (p. 2-5)

Free in Christ, Ch. 10, By **Cecil Hook**

“In promoting and defending our doctrinal positions, we preachers have made many denunciations of false teachers whom we identified as persons who teach error. While we have admitted that no one teaches total error, we have declared that any point of error is sufficient to pervert the word of God and to make its proponent a false teacher...”

Such branding has a solid, fundamental ring to it until one inquires a bit more deeply. The denouncer implies that he himself is in error on no point! He is right on everything; hence, he is no false teacher. Others teach some error, so they are false teachers. How blind and bigoted one can become!....”

In Romans 14 and 15, Paul taught the saints to love and respect each other and to live in harmony even though they had some differing convictions....

Those who have gained freedom in Christ are free to accept brothers who bear the fruit of the Spirit even though they are not in total doctrinal agreement.”

Indeed these are alarming statements. There is today an all out effort to broaden fellowship. This effort will be successful only if the proponents convince brethren that matters of doctrine are to be allowed into Romans 14 and thereby we should all “*receive*” (Rom. 14:1) the erring false teacher rather than judging.

October through November of 1995, Mike Willis ran a series of four articles dealing with Romans 14 in the Guardian of Truth Magazine. A reproduction of his final conclusion is worthy of quoting here. The statements below should be used whenever a practice is contemplated as being a matter of indifference or doctrine (try plugging in fornication and see if it works {jcr}).

- I. Do not engage in criticism nor judge a brother over the practice (14:1).
- II. God has received the one under consideration (14:3).
- III. God will make this man stand (in judgment) (14:4).
- IV. The conduct is acceptable if is done in full assurance (14:5).
- V. The thing practiced is to be done unto the Lord with thanksgiving (14:6).
- VI. Do not condemn (14:10, 13).
- VII. The matter under discussion is not unclean (14:14).
- VIII. The conduct is described as “good” (14:16)
- IX. The conduct is to be done in service to Christ (14:18).
- X. The conduct is acceptable to God (14:18).
- XI. The conduct is clean (pure) (14:20).
- XII. The conduct is acceptable so long as it is practiced with a clear conscience not wounding another brother (14:22-23). (Guardian of Truth; “Romans 14 in Application” November 16, 1995).

Let us now consider the text of Romans 14

I. Receiving the weak in Faith (14:1-8):

A. “*But him that is weak in faith receive ye, yet not for decision of scruples*” (14:1).

1. The word “*but*” helps us to connect what is said here with what was previously said. Christian conduct is thereby under consideration as it was from chapter 12:1 to present.
2. Each of the above words must be scrutinized and examined that we may understand the chapter in its simplicity.
 - a. The “*weak*” (*asthenounta*) = “To be weak in faith, to doubt, hesitate, be unsettled, timid, Rom. 14:1; I Cor. 8:9, 11, 12; II Cor. 11:29” (Moulton 55). “To be weak, feeble, sickly” (LS 123).
 - b. That which the brother has doubts, is unsettled about, timid, or feeble is in the area of “*faith*” (*pistei*) = “persuasion of a thing, confidence, assurance” (LS 641). The brother under consideration is unsettled about certain areas of faith and thereby not fully confident.
 - c. Said unsettled brother in the realm of confidence in a spiritual area is to be “*received*” (*proslambanesthe*) = “To take to oneself, take as one’s helper or partner... to take part in a work, be accessory to it” (LS 693). The weak brother’s unsettled spirit is not in areas that would affect his soul else how could the strong be commanded to receive (take part in and be accessory to) the sinful deeds (consider Jude 3 & II Jn. 9-11).

- d. The strong brother concludes (makes a “*decision*” or judgment) to receive the weak brother “*not for decision of scruples.*” The word “*scruples*” (*dialogismon*) = “to distinguish between a thing” (LS 190). “Reasoning, ratiocination, thought, cogitation, purpose” (Moulton 93).
 3. Paul states that the strong brother is to receive the weak yet not because of the reasoning of the weak brother. Why receive the brother then? The text will bear out that the strong should not receive the weak brother’s conclusions as binding but rather receive the brother because his practices really don’t affect anyone’s eternal standing with God.
- B. “*One man hath faith to eat all things: but he that is weak eats herbs*” (14:2).
1. Paul gives an example of the weak brother’s unsettled faith. The weak may feel it sinful to eat meats and so they refrain from doing so and thereby remain vegetarian. The context of Romans 14 proves that this weak brother is not binding this conviction on any others but has so decided to do this for his or her own conscience sake.
 2. The strong brother realizes that all foods are good and acceptable in the eyes of God to eat as long as prayerful thanksgiving is offered for the meal. Paul told Timothy that some, through a form of ascetics, had determined not to marry or eat meat and even commanded others to follow suit (I Tim. 4:1-2). Paul answers by saying that, “*every creature of God is good, and nothing is to be rejected, if it be received with thanksgiving: For it is sanctified through the word of God and prayer*” (I Tim. 4:4-5). To the Corinthians Paul said, “*But food will not commend us to God: neither, if we eat not, are we the worse; nor, if we eat, are we the better. But take heed lest by any means this liberty of yours become a stumblingblock to the weak*” (I Cor. 8:8-9). The strong brother has knowledge and conviction whereas the weak brother has conviction with less knowledge. Since eating meats or not eating meats will not get one any closer to God the strong are to leave the weak brother alone in his conscientious practices.
- C. “*Let not him that eats set at nought him that eats not; and let not him that eats not judge him that eats: for God hath received him*” (14:3).
1. To “*set at nought*” (*exoutheneito*) = “to set at nought” (LS 276). “To make light of, set at nought, despise, contemn, treat with contempt and scorn” (Moulton 148). The strong brother was not to look down upon the weak brother and treat him with contempt and scorn due to weak brother’s conscience.
 2. The brother who refused to eat meats, for conscience sake, was not to “*judge*” (*krino*) (to single out and condemn [as defined above]) the strong brother who did eat meats.
 3. This verse helps us to see that the apostle Paul is not condoning ignorance in areas of indifference but rather requesting that Christians respect each other’s conscientious decisions in these areas. If the weak brother cannot condemn the strong brother then certainly his decision to not eat meats is to be understood as a matter of indifference by both parties. No “*judging*” can take place in areas of spiritual indifference.
 4. “*For God hath received him*” (14:3c).
 - a. The point is clear: If God receives the brother who is at liberty to eat, so should the weak.
 - b. Secondly, if God receives the brother who does not eat (the weak), consequently so should the stronger brother.
 - c. Here in is the burden of saints. Keep peace in the church over non-doctrinal issues in light of love for each other’s souls.
 - d. There is no darkness dwelling in God (I Jn. 1:5). There will be no unclean thing that shall find its way into heaven and the presents of God (Rev. 21:27). Sin separates man from God (Isa. 59:1-2).
 - e. The “*receiving*” in 14:3 is not in areas of doctrinal import. The only sinner God receives is the one who repents of his wrong (I Jn. 1:9).
 - f. God receives the weak brother who abstains or observes things that are neither right nor wrong. God receives the strong brother in the same manner. We often refer to these actions as matters of indifference. The eating of meats and observing of certain days have no bearing on where I will spend eternity. Again, Paul told the Corinthian brethren, “*food will not commend us to God: neither, if we eat not, are we the worse; nor, if we eat, are we the better*” (I Cor. 8:8). Again, Paul said of circumcision, “*circumcision is nothing, and un-circumcision*

is nothing; but the keeping of the commandments of God" (I Cor. 7:19). The point is clear. Circumcision is not commanded of God (and neither is eating meat). These are areas where personal judgment comes in and all ought to respect a neighbor's decision.

- D. *"Who art thou that judgest the servant of another? To his own lord he stands or falls. Yea, he shall be made to stand; for the Lord hath power to make him stand"* (14:4).
1. Shall the non-owner of a servant condemn the work of another's servant? The owner of that servant will examine and make judgment. Christians belong to God and are His servants.
 2. Since God has received the weak and the strong who are we to judge His servants in areas where He has accepted? All Christians belong to God (Acts 20:28) and will give answer to God (Rom. 2:3ff). Neither the weak nor the strong have the authority to judge each other (censure, tax or find fault with) in areas of indifferent activity.
 3. If the strong judges the weak or vice versa, it will not change the brother's standing with God. Through the power of the gospel, that individual will stand before God (4c and Rom. 1:16).
 4. God's people find themselves in danger when they begin condemning others in areas that God accepts.
- E. *"One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day alike. Let each man be fully assured in his own mind"* (14:5).
1. To *"esteem"* (*krino*) (defined above as to single out or distinguish from others). A second illustration in matters of indifference is given. Some Christians would single out certain days above others for spiritual reasons (cf. vs. 6). Still yet, other Christians saw no religious difference in any days aside from Sunday.
 2. The one who did or did not set aside certain days for spiritual purposes was to be *"fully assured"* (*plerophoreistho*) in his own mind. The Greek *plerophoreistho* = "to have full satisfaction, to be fully assured, to be fully believed" (LS 647). One's conscience in the amoral matter practiced needs to be settled in one's mind.
- F. *"He that regards the day, regards it unto the Lord: and he that eats, eats unto the Lord, for he gives God thanks; and he that eats not, unto the Lord he eats not, and gives God thanks"* (14:6).
1. Notice that both the weak and strong brother have one purpose in mind and that is that they *"regard unto the Lord and give thanks"* for their conscientious decisions.
 2. He that regards the food or days conscientiously does so *"unto the Lord"* (an act done in service to the Lord). How can a sinful issue be placed into the text here? God will not receive the sinner and neither does He instruct Christians to be thankful or serve Him in this sinful activity.
- G. *"For none of us lives to himself, and none dies to himself. For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; or whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's"* (14:7-8).
1. The Christian is a servant of Jesus because His blood purchased us (I Cor. 6:19-20). We belong to Him (Acts 20:28). The conscientious decisions we make take into consideration the will of Christ.
 2. Therefore we do not live nor die for our selves but for Christ. Even in areas of *adiaphora*, we are mindful of our service to Jesus. Said verse helps us understand that though we live in this world we are not of this world. Our concerns are spiritual (see study # 77).

II. Let us not destroy one whom Christ died for (14:9-16):

- A. *"For to this end Christ died and lived again, that he might be Lord of both the dead and the living"* (14:9).
1. Whether we are alive or dead we are servants of Christ because he purchased us (redeemed us from the bondage of sin) (cf. I Pet. 1:18ff).
 2. To the Corinthians Paul states, *"Or know ye not that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit which is in you, which ye have from God? And ye are not your own; for ye were bought with a price: glorify God therefore in your body"* (I Cor. 6:19-20).
 3. Christ is the Lord and we, Christians, are the servants. He determines what is right, wrong, and things that do not affect my service to Him. When I condemn another in areas of indifference I am usurping the authority of Christ. I am not the lord of Christ's servants. What gives me the right to condemn the Lord's servants in areas that He does not?

- B. *“But thou, why doest thou judge thy brother? Or thou again, why dost thou set at nought thy brother? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of God”* (14:10).
1. Servants do not determine what other servants do but rather the lord of the servants. Paul tells the Romans that a Christian does not have the right to condemn a fellow servant of Christ for areas of practice that Christ does not condemn.
 2. One can easily see how friction could be caused within the church here. A strong brother who disdains or condemns the weak brother for his *adiaphora* practices will cause a division. Likewise a weak brother who judges the strong brother on matters of *adiaphora* shall cause division with his words of condemnation (see study # 84; Church Problems).
 3. Both strong and weak are to tolerate each other’s conviction in the area of *adiaphora*. However, if a brother were to bind his indifferent practices on the strong brother as a matter of doctrine, Paul would have no part in this (cf. Gal. 1:6-7; 3:1ff; 5:1ff; Col. 2:14ff).
 4. Note that Paul makes it clear that the real judge in all matters is God. All servants shall stand before God rather than each other.
- C. *“For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, to me every knee shall bow, and every tongue shall confess to God”* (14:11).
1. Paul continues to drive the point home to the Roman Christians that we do not answer to each other as servants but to God.
 2. To illustrate this fact the apostles quotes from Isaiah 45:23 (not only servants of Christ but all of humanity will give answer to God) (see study # 78).
- D. *“So then each one of us shall give account of himself to God”* (14:12).
1. The subject under consideration is passing condemning judgments against another servant of Christ in areas of indifference. Paul condemns such behavior on the bases that God has received such a one due to their giving thanks for their practice or non-practice.
 2. Each and every one of us shall give account to God for the actions we took in this life rather than to other servants.
- E. *“Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge ye this rather, that no man put a stumblingblock in his brother’s way, or an occasion of falling”* (14:13).
1. Paul admonishes the Roman brethren to put a stop to all judging of others in the area of indifference. We are all fellow servants of the same master and give answer to Him alone.
 2. The Greek word *krino* (judge) is used uniformly throughout this study (as in this verse). The meaning is “to separate, distinguish... pick out... to judge unjustly... to bring to trial, accuse... to pass sentence upon, to condemn” (LS 451). Paul states that the Christian is not to separate and judge unjustly in areas of indifference but rather separate and bring to trial the idea of not putting a “*stumblingblock*” in the way of a brother in Christ who may have different opinions than you on indifferent matters.
 3. The word “*stumblingblock*” (*proskomma*) = “A stumbling block, an occasion of sinning, means of inducing to sin” (Moulton 350). To press my opinions to the point of singling out and condemning others for not practicing these things is to give a means whereby another may sin by violating their conscience. Love must rule the minds of both the weak and strong. My opinions are just that. Why should I try to press my opinion on others?
- F. *“I know, and am persuaded in the Lord Jesus, that nothing is unclean of itself: save that to him who accounts anything to be unclean, to him it is unclean”* (14:14).
1. Context demands that the “*nothing*” is in relation to indifferent issues. A study of the word “*unclean*” will bring this out:
 - a. “*Unclean*” (*koinos*) “profane, N.T. (irreverence toward God, vulgar, coarse)” (LS 440)... “of that which comes into contact with anything and everything, and is therefore common, ordinary, profane...” (AG 438).
 - b. The “*nothing*” under consideration is not “*unclean*” acts and thereby Paul must have in mind those “clean” acts. Clean (*Katharos*) “To cleanse from sin, free from the influence of error and sin” (Moulton 206)... “in a moral sense, clear from shame or pollution, pure, clear of guilt or defilement, clean, pure...” (LS 388)... “ceremonially pure; everything is ritually pure, hence fit for use” (AG 388). Things are morally “clean” in that there is no shame in practicing it.

- c. If all things are clean in and of themselves one could say from Romans that adultery would thereby be a clean act unless it violates my conscience. Consider what Paul tells the Corinthians... *“All things are lawful for me; but not all things are expedient. All things are lawful for me; but I will not be brought under the power of any”* (I Cor. 6:12). The *“all things”* Paul speaks of cannot possibly be sinful things for he previously condemned such living as being unlawful at I Cor. 6:9-10.
- 2. The matter may, however, become an unclean activity for the one whom *“accounts”* it unclean (14:14b).
 - a. *“Accounts” (logizomai)* = “to count, reckon, calculate, compute... to take into account, consider... deem, to reckon or account so and so... to conclude by reasoning, infer that a thing is” (LS 476).
 - b. Therefore if I draw some conclusions, by my personal reasoning abilities, that a thing is clean or unclean (even though the indifferent matter is always clean) I need to hold to my personal conviction. To practice an indifferent matter against my personal conclusions of wrong would be to sin. This is how one’s character is judged. When one knows to do right yet does wrong there is something amiss in his character. God’s word reveals right from wrong and there are clearly areas that the Lord leaves to the judgment of individuals to practice or not practice (i.e., circumcision).
- G. *“For if because of meat thy brother is grieved, thou walkest no longer in love. Destroy not with thy meat him for whom Christ died”* (14:15).
 - 1. Paul gives an example of one who accounts a matter (i.e., eating meats) clean and forces his judgments upon another who has drawn the conclusion that he should not be eating meats. When this weak brother eats, he violates his conscience of right and wrong (in the area of adiaphora) and thereby sins. I have caused this brother to sin. I have caused this brother to stumble in his Christian walk. I had no right to judge this fellow servant but I did because of arrogance, selfishness, and a mind frame that thinks everyone ought to follow my opinions.
 - 2. To cause another brother to sin in such a way is to *“grieve”* him. To *“grieve” (lupeo)* = “feel pained” (Moulton 254). This grief must be that which leads to condemnation (cf. 14:20, 23). Paul’s point is that the strong brother has coerced the weak brother to participate in something that has caused him to violate his conscience and therefore sin. Such conduct displays a lack of love on the strong brother’s part. He has *“destroyed”* the weak brother (14:15b) all for a matter that God had accepted (cf. 14:3).
- H. *“Let not then your good be evil spoken of:”* (14:16):
 - 1. Again, Paul tells the Corinthians, *“All things are lawful; but not all things are expedient. All things are lawful; but not all things edify”* (I Cor. 10:23ff). The word *“expedient”* = “to conduce to, be for the benefit of any one, be profitable, advantageous, expedient” (Moulton 384).
 - 2. The idea of *“edifying”* is “a building or structure” (LS 546). “A builder, architect... to build a house; to build... to repair... to advance a person’s spiritual condition, to edify... a spiritual structure, as instanced in the Christian body... religious advancement” (Moulton 284).
 - 3. Paul’s point is that even though a circumstance is lawful to participate in it may not edify all involved. Practicing the matter will not be advantageous to the weak, but rather it may destroy him (see study # 85; Bible Expediency).
 - a. Wisdom must be used in Christians of all ages when participating in areas of indifference. We would not want to cause a brother in Christ to stumble over our liberties (I Cor. 10:24 and 8:13). Doing so would cause our *“good* (practice of matters acceptable to God) *to be evil spoken of.”*
 - b. *“Wherefore, if meat causeth my brother to stumble, I will eat no flesh for evermore, that I cause not my brother to stumble”* (I Cor. 8:13).
 - c. Again, *“do nothing through faction or through vainglory, but in lowliness of mind each counting other better than himself; not looking each of you to his own things, but each of you also to the things of others. Have this mind in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:”* (Phil. 2:3-5).
 - d. My opinions are not worth my brother’s or my own eternal soul!

III. Purpose of not pressing liberties (14:17-23):

- A. *“For the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit”* (14:17).
1. The context suggests that the weak and strong are a part of *“the kingdom of God.”* The New Testament reveals the *“kingdom of God”* to be the spiritual realm of the saved (see Eph. 2:19-22). Christians are those who have been called into the kingdom of God by the gospel message (see I Thess. 2:12). One thereby enters the kingdom of God when being called out of the world of sin (Col. 1:13). When one obeys the gospel message by being baptized for the remission of sins one has now answered the gospel call to receive the forgiveness of sins and is added to the church (Acts 2:41). The church is the kingdom of God. Matthew referred to it at times as the *“kingdom of heaven.”* John the baptizer preached a message because this kingdom’s coming was *“at hand”* (cf. Matt. 3:1-2). There were some alive during the days of Jesus that would see the kingdom of God being established (cf. Mk. 9:1) (see study # 45).
 2. The *“kingdom of God”* (the church that is comprised of the saved) is not about eating and drinking (i.e., things of religious indifference) but rather *“righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.”*
 - a. *“Righteousness”* (*dikaioisune*) = “right, lawful, just” (LS 202).
 - b. *“Peace”* (*eirene*) = “peace, time of peace, to keep peace” (LS 230).
 - c. *“Joy”* (*chara*) = “joy, delight... joy in or at a thing” (LS 881).
 3. These three traits are *“in the Holy Spirit.”*
 - a. To be *“in the Holy Spirit”* is equivalent to being *“in Christ Jesus”* (Rom. 6:11).
 - b. One is in Christ Jesus when he obeys the call of the gospel (Gal. 3:27) and thereby in the church (the kingdom of God).
 - c. Likewise, one is in the Holy Spirit and the Holy Spirit in you as one accepts the teachings of Jesus (Cf. Jn. 16:14; Gal. 3:2; Eph. 3:3-4).
 - d. The doctrine of Jesus Christ makes one righteous, peaceful, and joyous. Why would one want to destroy this state of peace, joy, and righteousness of one in a matter that God has not accounted as worthy to be part of His teachings whereby man may be condemned if practiced?
 - e. The one who serves Christ (one who is righteous, at peace, and joyous through the word of God with the Spirit dwelling in him through the word of God {Gal. 3:2}) is well pleasing to both God and man. Only one who lacks love would seek to destroy such a brother over a matter of *adiaphora* (14:18).
- B. *“For he that herein serves Christ is well pleasing to God, and approved of men. So then let us follow after things which make for peace, and things whereby we may edify one another”* (14:18-19).
1. The context demands that we keep the *adiaphora* issue before us. Righteousness, peace, and joy comes through the doctrine of Jesus Christ yet it can come too by my proper perspective of the realm of *adiaphora*.
 2. Edification comes through the doctrine of Jesus Christ yet I can edify my brother in areas of *adiaphora* as well by taking another’s opinions into consideration.
 3. When all accept truth alike there is peace. When all view matters of religious indifference for just that, then peace may reign in the church. Let us all remember that we are servants of Christ.
 4. Rather than seeking to destroy my brother in areas of indifference, let us all pursue a course which will *“make peace and edify one another”* (14:19).
- C. *“Overthrow not for meat’s sake the work of God. All things indeed are clean; howbeit it is evil for that man who eats with offence”* (14:20):
1. The work of God is saving souls (Rom. 1:16; II Thess. 2:13; II Pet. 3:9).
 2. Since God receives the weak and strong (vs. 3), let us not destroy each other over matters of indifference.
 3. *“All things indeed are clean; howbeit it is evil for that man who eateth with offence”* (14:20b).
 - a. The word *“clean”* was examined above (*katharos*) “in moral sense, clear from shame or pollution, pure, clear of guilt or defilement, clean, pure...” (LS 388).

- b. Though the matter may be clean (clear of defilement) if I believe it to be unclean and participate in the activity (“*eateth with offence*”) I have sinned (“*it is evil*”).
- c. Here in lies the importance of the strong brother’s attitude toward the weak. God tells us that if a man violates his conscience, he sins. Once conscience is thereby the standard whereby I am judged in matters of opinion (see study # 86; The Standard). Therefore if I am the cause of a brother violating his conscience, I have caused him to sin (I have caused him to be rejected of God as a sinner).
- d. What then should my attitude as a “strong brother” be? “*It is good not to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor to do anything whereby thy brother stumbleth*” (14:21).
 - 1. My disposition should be that of Paul’s (I Cor. 8:13). The Christian should always think of others and not be overly occupied with thoughts of one’s own rights.
 - 2. The things spoken of in this context are matters of indifference. Therefore our moderate liquor-drinking brethren have no justification here. There are nine prohibitions against drinking intoxicants in our Bible: (Lev. 10:9; Numb. 6:3; Prov. 23:31; Hab. 2:15-16; I Thess. 5:6; II Tim. 4:5; I Pet. 1:13, 4:7; 5:8).
 - 3. There should not be any religious indifferent activity that I am willing to participate in at the expense of my brother’s soul!
 - 4. Again, the soul is the heart of the matter. My love for my fellow brother will cause me to want to give up eating and drinking if his soul is affected. To be a Christian is to be selfless and to put others before self (cf. Phil. 2:3-4) (see study # 87; The Selfless Christian).
- D. “*The faith which thou hast, have thou to thyself before God. Happy is he that judgeth not himself in that which he approveth*” (14:22).
 - 1. Let the strong brother have his opinions to himself. He need not flaunt his liberties.
 - 2. Personal liberties are to be participated in with self; being “*fully assured in his own mind*” (14:5b).
- E. “*But he that doubteth is condemned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith; and whatsoever is not of faith is sin*” (14:23).
 - 1. To “*doubt*” (*diakrino*) = “to separate one from another... to part and join different parties... to come to a decision... to doubt, hesitate” (LS 189).
 - 2. The brother who has any hesitation in participating in an activity should not even begin in it. To do something, even in the area of indifference, against one’s conscience (not of faith) is to sin.
 - 3. Note that sin can occur when the word of God condemns an act and when my conscience condemns me.

Concluding thoughts on Romans 14

Brotherly love seems to be the thrust of Romans 12, 13, and 14. Paul tells us, “*in love of the brethren be tenderly affectioned one to another...*” (Rom. 12:10). Again, the apostle states, “*Love works no ill to his neighbor: love therefore is the fulfillment of the law*” (Rom. 13:10). Then, at Romans 14:15 Paul states, “*For if because of meat thy brother is grieved, thou walkest no longer in love. Destroy not with thy meat him for whom Christ died.*” No doubt many converts to Christianity were not far removed from the Mosaic Law of keeping Sabbaths, not eating meats sacrificed to idols, and circumcising their male children on the eighth day of their life (to name a few). Many Mosaic Commandments were brought over to New Testament Law (i.e., murder, stealing, foul language, etc.) and there were just as many left behind (i.e., instrumental worship, sacrificing upon the altars, dietary restrictions, etc.). When Christ died on the cross the Mosaic System ended (Col. 2:14). Most of us can only attempt to empathize with individuals who had been rigorously trying to follow a set of laws for generations and then have their whole lives changed through conversion. Many Jews converted to Christianity were told that Saturday was no longer a day of worship but rather the first day of the week (Acts 20:7; I Cor. 16:1ff). They were told that circumcision really doesn’t matter any longer (I Cor. 7:19). Even the way they ate was changed. The Mosaic system had put strict limitations upon their diet yet now they were being told that they could eat any and every kind of meat as long as they gave thanks for it (cf. I Tim. 4:4-5). Such an abrupt change would not readily be marked in one’s life that had been so practicing for years.

Romans chapter 14 deals with issues that will not bring one any closer to God if practiced or refrained from practicing. New converts who had previously refrained from eating certain meats and setting aside special days of worship, aside from Sunday, were not being asked to give up those practices. Christ is the master of all who profess their faith in Him through obedience (cf. Rom. 14:4). Some, however, attempt to play master though they are nothing more than a fellow servant. Said individuals may try to restrict fellow servants from activities that the Master openly allows. The Point of Romans 14 is that such judging on the part of a fellow servant is not right. Let us consider five major lessons learned from Romans chapter 14.

- Romans 14 demands that both strong and weak identify matters of indifference. When the strong presses liberties they may cause a brother to stumble (Rom. 14:13). When the weak presses a liberty as though it were a matter of one's salvation he no longer represents truth (Rom. 14:3; compare Acts 15:5 and Gal. 2:3-4)
- Each Christian should know their place (i.e., we are servants rather than masters). As a servant, I have no right to condemn a fellow servant in areas the Master has clearly accepted (cf. Rom. 14:4).
- Each servant should be aware, respect, and leave other servants alone in areas of liberties (Rom. 14:22).
- Character and spiritual integrity are under consideration in Romans 14. If I have a personal belief that a matter should not be practiced and I do it anyway I have sinned even though the issue was a matter of indifference (Rom. 14:20). If I know that all matters are clean and I persuade another brother to violate his conscience by participating in an act he deems unclean I have caused another to sin (Rom. 14:15). Character thereby is under consideration. How will I respond in those situations whereby I “*account*” a matter to be sinful conduct (Rom. 14:14) (see study # 87; Bible Character)? My reaction or lack thereof will identify my true convictions of truth.
- Lastly, Romans 14 seems to deal with my attitude toward sin. Interestingly, I may find myself in sin even though my actions were considered clean by God (Rom. 14:23). Though I may be weak in the faith I am not at liberty to sin against my conscience. If I deem a matter sinful, even though its not, yet practice it anyway then I have sinned. If I handle matters of indifference with such a light mode what shall I do with other doctrinal issues that I face? Sin, thereby, is defined by law and made alive when I violate my conscience.

Chapter 15

I. A Call to Bear Others Weaknesses (15:1-4):

- A. *“Now we that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves. Let each one of us please his neighbor for that which is good, unto edifying”* (15:1).
1. The “*strong*” are those who recognized clean and unclean actions and are not offended to partake (i.e., meats, days etc. cf. Rom. 14:20). The “*weak*” are those who recognize or differentiate between clean and unclean acts yet cannot conscientiously participate in the clean act (i.e., eating meats sacrificed to idols).
 2. The “*infirmities*” (*asthenema*) of the weak are “weakness, infirmity, met. Doubt, scruple, hesitation” (Moulton 55 / LS 123). Note the very close similarity between the Greek words used here and at Romans 14:1 translated “*weak*.” The strong are called upon to “*bear*” (*bastazo*) these hesitations of the weak (i.e., “to bear in mind, consider, weigh, make proof of... to carry off, take away” (LS 148)).
 3. Let the strong brother consider the hesitations of the weak. This means there will come times when the strong must refrain from practicing an act that is clean due to it offending the weaker brother. Such selfless acts will be pleasing to our brethren rather than simply looking to please self.
 4. To “*edify*” (*oikodomen*) is simply to “build up” (AG 561).
- B. *“For Christ also pleased not himself; but, as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell upon me”* (15:3).
1. Jesus is an example for all times of one who put others first that their souls would be saved.

2. He did not seek to please himself.
3. Jesus absorbed the reproach hurled at God (cf. Psalms 69:9b).
- C. *“For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that through patience and through comfort of the scriptures we might have hope”* (15:4).
 1. Quoting from the OT scripture causes Paul to make a statement regarding their value. The OT scriptures were recorded for our *learning* (teaching). We learn about the character of God, the heinous course of sin, and the consequences thereof.
 2. As we learn from the OT scriptures about Christ, we gain patience (endurance) and *comfort* (consolation) which produces *“hope”*!

II. A Call for Unity (15:5-13):

- A. *“Now the God of patience and of comfort grant you to be of the same mind one with another according to Christ Jesus: that with one accord ye may with one mouth glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ”* (15:5-6).
 1. Attributes of God are *“patience”* and *“comfort.”* God’s will is that brethren (strong and weak) be of the same mind one with another. The strong is not to impose his convictions in clean areas upon the weak and the weak ought not force his scruples upon the strong.
 2. How can the strong and weak be one in mind and glorify God if they have not first distinguished between the clean and unclean acts? This verse helps us to see that all parties are given the responsibility to distinguish between clean and unclean.
 3. Being of one mind, in the teachings of Christ, is not a new concept. Jesus had prayed for this (Jn. 17) and the same apostle had demanded it from the Corinthians (I Cor. 1:10) and the Philippians (Phil. 1:27) (see study # 76).
- B. *“Wherefore receive ye one another, even as Christ also received you, to the glory of God”* (15:7).
 1. Christians of the same mind yet who differ in areas of indifference ought to *“receive”* one another because Christ receives all such ones (cf. Rom. 14:3).
 2. To *“receive”* (*proslambano*) = “take to oneself, take as one’s helper or partner... to take part in a work, be accessory to it” (LS 693). The meaning of this word excludes all sinful activities that some may think belong in these chapters. How can I partner with one who is a fornicator (cf. Eph. 5:11; II Cor. 6:14; II Jn. 9-11).
- C. *“For I say that Christ hath been made a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, that he might confirm the promises given unto the fathers, and that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy; as it is written, Therefore will I give praise unto thee among the Gentiles, and sing unto thy name. And again he saith, Rejoice, ye Gentiles, with his people. And again, Praise the Lord, all ye Gentiles; and let all the peoples praise him. And again, Isaiah saith, there shall be the root of Jesse, and he that ariseth to rule over the Gentiles; on him shall the Gentiles hope”* (15:8-12).
 1. The *“promises”* to the Fathers is what we refer to as the scheme of redemption beginning in Gen. 3:15; 12:1ff; etc.
 2. Christ is a minister of God for this purpose (that both Jew and Gentile would receive each other in the Lord because He has received both of them). The quoted passages are comprehensive as they represent the scriptures (Law of Moses, Psalms and prophets cf. Lk. 24:44).
 3. Psalms 18:49 (Both Jew and the Gentiles join together in praising God).
 4. Deuteronomy 32:43 (Both Jew and Gentile depicted as praising God together).
 5. Psalms 117:1 (Again, Jew and Gentile praising God together).
 6. Isaiah 11:10 (Jesus prophesied as being the hope of the Gentiles that shall rule over them).
- D. *“Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, in the power of the Holy Spirit”* (15:13).
 1. Paul prays that God, as the source of all hope, would fill these Christians with joy and peace through the power of the Holy Spirit.
 2. These Roman Christians were no different than the Galatian Christians or different in this respect to Christians today. We *“receive”* the power of the Holy Spirit (Rom. 1:16) by hearing, learning and teaching (Jn. 6:44; Gal. 3:2; Rom. 10:17). Obedience to the gospel message indicates acceptance to this teaching (Acts 2:38; Eph. 1:13-14; Gal. 4:6).

IV. Paul’s reason for writing the epistle to the Romans (15:14-21):

- A. *“And I myself also am persuaded of you, my brethren, that ye yourselves are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another. But I write the more boldly unto you in some measure, as putting you again in remembrance, because of the grace that was given me of God”* (15:14-15).
1. Paul commends the Romans for their abilities and knowledge however it is the purpose of Paul to “*remind*” these brethren of the power of the gospel of Jesus Christ.
 2. Paul served Christ as he preached to the Gentiles (he was a minister in this respect) (cf. Acts 26:16-19). It seems that here the word “*grace*” is equated with the truth or gospel message as is the case at Titus 2:11-12 (see study # 3).
- B. *“that I should be a minister of Christ Jesus unto the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God, that the offering up of the Gentiles might be made acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Spirit”* (15:16).
1. Because of Paul’s work, many Gentiles became “*sanctified*” (set apart for God) by the Holy Spirit and thereby acceptable to God.
 2. Consider the following verses: I Cor. 6:11; II Thess. 2:13; I Pet. 1:2. Sanctification comes of being forgiven of sins (the very promise of the fathers to all nations).
- C. *“I have therefore my glorying in Christ Jesus in things pertaining to God. For I will not dare to speak of any things save those which Christ wrought through me, for the obedience of the Gentiles, by word and deed, in the power of sign and wonders, in the power of the Holy Spirit; so that from Jerusalem, and round about even unto Illyricum, I have fully preached the gospel of Christ, yea, making it my aim so to preach the gospel, not where Christ was already named, that I might not build upon another man’s foundation; but, as it is written, They shall see, to whom no tidings of him came, and they who have not heard shall understand”* (15:17-21).
1. Knowing these things, Paul is satisfied in his accomplishments among the Gentile world as he does the work of God.
 2. Paul is completely aware that the betterment of the Gentiles came not of his own doings but by the glory of God (see study # 5). It was through God that Paul performed miracles and thereby confirmed the words he spoke and he was therefore merely an agent through which God worked. Paul accepted this work and was joyous over its results (14:18-20). His preaching promoted “*obedience of the Gentiles*” (cf. Rom. 1:5 for a similar purpose in general).
 3. Paul’s journeys took him from Jerusalem westward to Illyricum.
 4. “There is no mention in Acts of Paul’s preaching in that country (Illyricum); but in describing the circuit of Paul’s labors in Macedonia, Luke employs the comprehensive expression, ‘*when he had gone through those parts*’ (Acts 20:1-2). We may conclude, therefore, that one of the ‘parts’ was Illyricum, which was adjacent to Macedonia...”¹
 5. These were remote areas concerning the gospel message. It was Paul’s desire to bring these glad tidings to areas that have not as yet heard. His aim was to lay the foundation of Jesus Christ where no others had done so. He chose the most difficult fields (cf. I Cor. 3:10).
 6. A quote from Isaiah 53:15 indicates Paul’s fulfillment of this prophecy. The far away regions of Gentiles would hear of the suffering savior who gave his life a ransom for many unto the remission of sins (vs. 21).

V. **Paul’s intentions to visit Rome after discharging his duties to the needy saints in Jerusalem (14:22-29):**

- A. *“Wherefore also I was hindered these many times from coming to you: but now, having no more any place in these regions, and having these many years a longing to come unto you, whensoever I go unto Spain (for I hope to see you in my journey, and to be brought on my way thitherward by you, if first in some measure I shall have been satisfied with your company)”* (15:22-24).
1. Up to this point, Paul had been hindered from visiting the Roman brethren due to two reasons. First he was busy preaching in remote areas where the gospel had not yet reached. Secondly, he had been busy collecting funds for the needy saints in Jerusalem.

¹ Lipscomb, David and Shepherd J.W. New Testament Commentaries Based on the American Standard Version (Romans) pg. 264

2. Paul tells the Romans that he intends to visit them on his way to Spain. Before this can happen, however, he must now travel to Jerusalem (end of third tour) that he may deliver the money collected from the Gentile churches in Macedonia and Achaia (cf. I Cor. 16:1-4; II Cor. 8 and 9 Acts 19:21).
 3. These funds were stored in a common treasury and were to be distributed among the needy saints alone (see study # 88; The Work of the Church).
- B.** *“but now, I say, I go unto Jerusalem, ministering unto the saints. For it hath been the good pleasure of Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor among the saints that are at Jerusalem. Yea, it hath been their good pleasure; and their debtors they are. For if the Gentiles have been made partakers of their spiritual things, they owe it to them also to minister unto them in carnal things”* (15:25-27).
1. Paul adds a fact. The Gentiles owe this bounty to the Jews because it is through the Jews that the promises of God are fulfilled.
 2. The benefits of the *“spiritual”* things (a hope of heaven) is repaid with *“carnal”* things (those things which meet the necessities of life).
- C.** *“When therefore I have accomplished this, and have sealed to them this fruit, I will go on by you unto Spain. And I know that when I come unto you, I shall come in the fullness of the blessing of Christ”* (15:28-29).
1. Paul is determined to relieve the poverty of saints in Jerusalem with these Gentile funds and then travel to Spain with a brief visit at Rome (14:28).
 2. Upon arrival, Paul is confident that he shall *“come in the fullness of the blessing of Christ”* (vs. 29). Romans 1:8-13 indicates that Paul desired to lay hands on the Roman brethren that they may have *“spiritual gifts”* to the edifying of each other in truth.

VI. A prayer request (15:30-33):

- A.** *“Now I beseech you, brethren, by our Lord Jesus Christ, and by the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with me in your prayers to God for me; that I may be delivered from them that are disobedient in Judea, and that my ministrations which I have for Jerusalem may be acceptable to the saints”* (15:30-31).
1. The Holy Spirit revealed to Paul that bonds and affliction would accompany him in Jerusalem (Acts 20:22-24).
 2. Due to the persecution that had already occurred and was sure to reoccur, Paul petitions the brethren for prayers.
 - a. First of all, he asks for prayers regarding being delivered from the unbelieving in Jerusalem. Most likely Paul had in mind the Pharisees and Scribes who were unmercifully against “the way.”
 - b. Secondly, Paul prays that the monies collected from the Gentile churches in Macedonia and Achaia would be accepted among the Jewish Christians in Jerusalem and that the barrier between the two may be lowered.
 - c. Evidently the Jewish Christians welcomed Paul and accepted the funds collected (cf. Acts 21:17; 24:17) (therefore this portion of Paul’s petition was granted). However, the non-Christian Jews did not allow him to escape the bonds of imprisonment. Paul was arrested and spent two years in a Caesarea prison before traveling to Rome as a prisoner (Acts 24:27).
- B.** *“that I may come unto you in joy through the will of God, and together with you find rest. Now the God of peace be with you all. Amen”* (15:32-33).
1. Paul’s hope was to come to the Roman brethren in peace (15:32).
 2. Paul closes the chapter with words of peace for the Roman brethren, *“now the God of peace be with you all. Amen”* (vs. 33).

Chapter 16

Overview:

Church autonomy and fellowship are important issues of Romans 16. Consider the fact that five different churches are addressed in Romans 16 (vs. 1, 5, 14, 15 and 23). Three of these churches were in Rome (vs. 5, 14 and 15). Paul sends his letter to the Roman brethren requesting that they receive certain brethren and exclude others (cf. Rom. 16:17ff). The word “*salute*” is used in each case of acceptance that is conditioned upon these individuals stand for the truth “*in the Lord*” (16:8 etc.). The word “*salute*” (*aspazomai*) is defined as “to welcome kindly, bid welcome, **greet**... as the common form on meeting... to embrace, kiss, caress...” (LS 124). “Greet, **welcome**, express good wishes, pay respects... to treat with affection” (Moulton 56). “A greetings to or remember me to” (AG 116). Thayer states “to salute one, greet, bid welcome, **wish well** to” (81). No such “welcome, kiss, or greeting” can be extended to those who are walking contrary to the teachings of Jesus Christ (II Jn. 9-11).

Paul defines the limitations of church autonomy in Romans 16 by stating that the Roman brethren’s “*obedience is come abroad unto all men*” (16:19). Notice that no violation of church autonomy between these three churches in Rome and the church in Cenchreae occurs (see study # 9). The brethren obviously communicated with each other and knew who were being faithful to the Lord. Not only Paul, but “*all men*” had received report of the faith of the Roman church. This was not gossip but rather statements designed to comfort others as they took a stand for the truth in Jesus Christ. The apostle Paul therefore authorizes communication between autonomous churches which defines whether that local church is faithful or unfaithful (see study # 89; Can we determine whether a church is Sound in the Faith?! The church that met at Chloe’s house in Corinth practiced this very thing (cf. I Cor. 1:11; 5:1; 7:1).

It may be said that there are no inspired apostles for churches to report to today. True, however, the Roman brethren’s faith had reached the ears of “*all men*” not just other apostles. Evidently there was communication occurring that was very important for the souls of all Christians. Such communication revealed the faithfulness of congregations and therefore kept a traveling brother or sister from violating commands of fellowship (II Jn. 9-11). Secondly, such knowledge of the faithfulness or unfaithfulness of certain churches served to keep one from being influenced by false teaching. Paul, for this cause, tells the brethren to “*mark... and turn away... from those who are walking contrary to the doctrine of Jesus Christ*” (Rom. 16:17ff). The watchful eye of marking would identify the errant to all who were faithful. Communication, not gossip, would reveal the false teachers and their local works and thereby keep souls from being influenced and tainted with sin.

I. Phoebe of the church in Cenchreae (first of five churches mentioned in Romans 16) (16:1-2):

A. “*I commend unto you Phoebe our sister, who is a servant of the church that is at Cenchreae*” (16:1).

1. Cenchreae was a town located approximately seven miles to the southeast of Corinth. Paul gives his vote of spiritual confidence in Phoebe, a “*servant of the church*.” Consider the fact that this is the **first church** mentioned in Romans 16.
2. The word “*servant*” (NM / *diakonon*) = “a servant, waitingman... minister... a messenger... a minister of the church, a deacon or deaconess” (LS 189). Due to the fact that the word is translated as “deaconess” by some lexicons some believe that Phoebe is proof that women served in the official office of deacon at Cenchreae. Lenski states, “this is the first mention of women deacons in the church. The way in which Paul introduces this deaconess to the Romans indicates that the fact that women served in this office was not a novelty but something that was already known... since the arrangement of having male deacons in Jerusalem had proved highly beneficial at the very start, the appointment of women was the next logical step.”²
3. A study of deacons proves Lenski’s thoughts to be erroneous.

The deacon is to be a man not a woman:

- a. The word deacon as used in Phil. 1:1, I Tim. 3:8, 12 (the only three uses of the word in an official sense) have the same noun declension. That declension is “N-AM-P (Noun-Accusative, Masculine-Plural). Therefore there is to be a **plurality** of deacons who are **men** (masculine).

² Lenski, R.C.H. A Commentary on Romans pg. 899.

- b. Secondly, the work of having control over local church finances indicates leadership. The deacon is to be a proven leader by the way he “*rules his home and children*” (I Tim. 3:12). Women are expressly forbidden to occupy such a role. Paul said “*But I permit not a woman to teach, nor to have dominion over a man, but to be in quietness*” (I Tim. 2:12). To have dominion over is to exercise authority over (*authentain*) “to govern one, exercise dominion over one” (Thayer 84). To exercise dominion would be to “control or exercise the control over.” (AH Dictionary 417). Leadership is clearly set forth in the scriptures as belonging to the men.
 - c. The apostle Paul clearly states that deacons, as the case with elders, are to be proved men (I Tim. 3:10). The way he proves himself is by having one wife and ruling his household well (I Tim. 3:12). How many Christian women have “one wife?”
 - d. No doubt, as Paul states, Phoebe was a servant of the church in Cenchreae. How she served is apparent. Phoebe was a servant of the church in that she was actively involved in promoting the work of the church like all other members are to be.
4. Evidently Phoebe was traveling to Rome due to some sort of business. Paul was aware of her strong spiritual stand and thereby requests that the Roman brethren receive her. The fact that a church is mentioned in Cenchreae tells us of the results of Paul’s preaching in Corinth.
- B. “*that ye receive her in the Lord, worthily of the saints, and that ye assist her in whatsoever matter she may have need of you: for she herself also hath been a helper of many, and of mine own self*” (16:2).
- 1. Paul calls upon the brethren in Rome to “*receive her in the Lord.*” To “*receive*” (*prosdechomai*) = “to receive favorably, accept... to admit into a place... to admit to citizenship” (LS 687). Note that the Roman faithful were to accept and give Phoebe admittance among them “*in the Lord.*” Said statement qualifies their acceptance of Phoebe as spiritual in nature. Had Phoebe been an ungodly woman who taught false doctrine Paul would have rather warned the brethren of her (cf. II Tim. 2:16-18). Phoebe was not ungodly but rather she lived “*worthily of the saints.*” Said thoughts help us to see the close knit community of believers though they be miles apart. They were united in their common love of truth. Those who did not share this common love were not to be welcomed or accepted among the faithful as Paul will explain at verse 17-18 of this chapter.
 - 2. Phoebe’s service to the church in Cenchreae may be further defined by the word “*helper.*” Phoebe was a “*helper*” of many including the apostle Paul. The word “*helper*” (*prostates*) = “at Athens, of a citizen who took care of the *metoikoi* i.e., those who were migrants to the area” (LS 698). Phoebe had a reputation of taking care of traveling preachers while visiting Cenchreae. Phoebe now finds herself on the road of travel to Rome and Paul’s request is that the brethren care for her as she has cared for so many that have traveled her way. Paul thereby tells the Roman brethren to be hospitable to her.

II. The following salutations are directed toward saints that were already in Rome:

- A. “*Salute Prisca and Aquila my fellow-workers in Christ Jesus, who for my life laid down their own necks; unto whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles: and salute the church that is in their house*” (16:3-4).
 - 1. The **second church** mentioned in Romans 16 is the church that met in the home of Prisca and Aquila.
 - 2. Acts 18 records the first mention of Prisca and Aquila. Paul met the two on his second tour of preaching in Corinth after leaving Athens. Aquila was a Jew who had left Italy with his wife Priscilla due to a decree made by Claudius that all Jews were to leave Rome (AD 49). The two made their home in Corinth and shared the same occupation as Paul (tent makers {Acts 18:3}).
 - 3. Paul, Priscilla, and Aquila became good friends and fellow workers in spreading the gospel of Jesus Christ. Paul takes the two along with him when he left Corinth (Acts 18:18ff). The three land in Ephesus where Paul preaches in the synagogues and then departs for Judea leaving behind Priscilla and Aquila.
 - 4. The work Priscilla and Aquila did in Ephesus cannot be measured however it is evident that their stay resulted in much fruit. Apollos, a man “*mighty in the scriptures*” (Acts 18:24) was taught more “*accurately*” the way of the Lord by Priscilla and Aquila (Acts 18:26).

5. History reveals that Claudius died in AD 54. The door was now open for Aquila and Pricilla to return to their home in Rome. As Paul is addressing the Roman brethren, he includes this husband wife team indicating their location at Rome. Paul has great respect for these two and refers to them as his *“fellow-workers in Christ.”*
6. Secondly, Paul reveals their faithfulness in God and love shown toward him in that at some point they had risked their own lives to save Paul.
7. The importance of Pricilla and Aquila’s work is indicated when Paul states that not only does he thank them but the *“Gentile churches”* thank them as well. Evidently the two were well known among the Gentile churches for their labor in the Lord. The *“Gentile churches”* represent a **third church (i.e., churches)** mentioned by Paul in Romans 16 (no doubt the *“Gentile churches”* would have included the region of Achaia, Macedonia, and Asia; i.e., many churches of God’s people). These numerous churches covered a broad geographic area and were not only familiar with Prisca and Aquila’s work but apparently experienced it first hand and so they were thankful.
8. Lastly, Paul calls upon the brethren in Rome to extend fellowship with the faithful church that meets in the house of Aquila and Pricilla by way of *“saluting”* them. The word *“salute”* was defined in the introduction of this chapter as to “welcome, greet, and wish well.” While we are to treat all those of the world with said affection Paul qualifies this saluting by way of saying, *“in Christ Jesus.”* Said statement conditions the greeting upon one’s stand in the authoritative teachings of Jesus Christ. Phoebe’s reception into the faithful churches in Rome were likewise contingent upon her faithfulness (cf. Rom. 16:2a).
9. It may be that the faithful church which assembled in the house of Aquila and Pricilla included the next eight names: Paul states, *“Salute Epaeetus my beloved, who is the firstfruits of Asia unto Christ. Salute Mary, who bestowed much labor on you. Salute Andronicus and Junias, my kinsmen, and my fellow-prisoners, who are of note among the apostles, who also have been in Christ before me. Salute Ampliatus my beloved in the Lord. Salute Urbanus our fellow-worker in Christ, and Stachys my beloved. Salute Apelles the approved in Christ”* (16:5-10).
 - a. **Epaeetus:** Paul refers to him as *“my beloved, who is the firstfruits of Asia unto Christ”* (16:5). An affectionate friend who Paul had baptized (first) in Asia.
 - b. **Mary:** *“who bestowed much labor on you”* (vs. 6). The labor was for the gospel however no other details about this person is given.
 - c. **Andronicus and Junias:**
 1. These two men were at some point fellow prisoners with Paul (cf. II Cor. 11:23).
 2. Both were Christians before Paul.
 3. Both were *“of note among the apostles”* (vs. 7). The word *“note”* here indicates “outstanding” (AG 298).
 - d. **Ampliatus:** beloved (dear friend) of Paul.
 - e. **Urbanus:** another fellow worker of Paul’s.
 - f. **Stachys:** beloved friend of Paul.
 - g. **Apelles:** *“the approved in Christ”* (vs. 10). The word *“approved”* here is “the tried and true Christian” (AG 202). Evidently, Paul knew something about the testing of Apelles faith and his success.
- B. The *“household”* of Aristobulus (vs. 10). The *“household”* cannot represent a church as due to the fact that Paul addresses the household of Narcissus *“that are in the Lord”* (vs. 11b) indicating that some in this family were not Christians.
- C. *“Salute Herodian my kinsman. Salute them of the household of Narcissus, that are in the Lord”* (16:11).
 1. Herodian was a relative of Paul’s in some unrevealed way.
 2. Why didn’t Paul command the faithful in Rome to *“salute”* everyone in Narcissus’ household? Apparently there were some *“in the Lord”* and some not *“in the Lord.”* One gets *“in the Lord”* through baptism and one remains *“in the Lord”* through faithful living and service (cf. Gal. 3:27). This is further proof that the Christian’s fellowship with others is dependant upon one’s walk in truth.
- D. *“Salute Tryphaena and Tryphosa, who labor in the Lord”* (16:12)... possibly two sisters that labored together in the Lord.

- E. *“Salute Persis the beloved, who labored much in the Lord”* (16:12). Again, a person who served diligently in the work of the Lord that nothing else is known of.
- F. *“Salute Rufus the chosen in the Lord, and his mother and mine”* (16:13):
 1. There is another Rufus identified in Mark 15:21. His father, Simon of Cyrene, bore the cross of Jesus. Whether or not the Rufus of Romans 16 is the same as the one mentioned in Mark 15 is unknown.
 2. Paul states that Rufus is *“chosen in the Lord”* a phrase which simply means that he is “excellent” (Thayer 197), “outstanding” (AG 242).
 3. Paul requests the brethren salute the mother of Rufus as well. Rufus’ mother had acted in a motherly caring fashion to Paul at some point as well.

III. The **fourth and fifth churches** Mentioned by Paul (16:14-16):

- A. *“Salute Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermes, Patrobas, Hermas, and the brethren that are with them”* (16:14).
 1. Paul request the Roman brethren to salute *“Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermes, Patrobas, Hermas, and the brethren that are with them.”*
 2. This second clause of verse fourteen indicates a separate church (**fourth church**) assembling in Rome whom Paul recognizes as a faithful group of Christians.
 3. Nothing further is known of these five individuals.
- B. *“Salute Philologus and Julia, Nereus and his sister, and Olympas, and all the saints that are with them”* (16:15).
 1. Again, nothing more is known about these individuals.
 2. That which is known is that there was a church (the **fifth church**) associated with them that were faithful in the Lord.
- C. *“Salute one another with a holy kiss. All the churches of Christ salute you”* (16:16).
 1. Again, the word *“salute”* means to greet, welcome, or wish well. The context of the chapter indicates that this is not a general act of affection to those of the world but rather a symbol that illustrates one’s standing with God. The Christian could not possibly greet, welcome into their fellowship, or wish one well who was lost in sin. If God does not receive one how can we (I Jn. 1:5-7)? The way in which brethren greeted each other in the early church was with a literal kiss (cf. Acts 20:36-38). Paul terms it a *“holy kiss”* because it was distinguished from a kiss one might give as a display of affection toward others who were not members of the body of Christ.
 2. Paul sums up churches such as the *“church that is at Cenchreae, Gentile church, church that is in their house”* (cf. Rom. 16:1-5) by terming them all *“churches of Christ”* (see study # 45).
 3. Please note that such greeting, welcoming, or well wishing could not take place without communication between the churches. While some may cry “violation of church autonomy” when brethren from different churches communicate about the faithfulness or unfaithfulness of various brethren it was not so in Paul’s day. Said greetings and warnings were not considered gossip or a violation of church autonomy but rather a brotherhood of believers who truly cared for one another (cf. I Peter 2:17). This indicates the closeness and brotherly love that the universal church had for each other. Such care prompted Paul to make a command that they look out for each other (cf. Rom. 16:17ff) (see study # 9).

IV. Paul delivers a Commandment from God that the purity of the Church may Continue (16:17-20):

- A. *“Mark them that are causing the divisions and occasions of stumbling, contrary to the doctrine which ye learned: and turn away from them”* (16:17)
 1. *“Mark”* (*skopio*) = “A lookout-place, a mountain-peak,... metaph. the height or highest point of anything, a watchtower, a look-out, watch, to keep watch” (LS 735). “To look around, survey... a watcher; also, a distant object on which the eye is kept fixed... to view attentively, watch, reconnoiter; to see, observe, take care, beware” (Moulton 369-370). Those who Christians are to “watch and observe” are those who *“cause divisions and stumbling contrary to the doctrine which ye learned.”* Note that the cause of division in the church and brethren stumbling in their faith is teaching that does not represent the truths revealed in the gospel message. Paul tells the Roman brethren to be aware and beware of those who teach a different doctrine (cf. Gal. 1:6-7; Col. 2:8; II Jn. 9-11). The whole of chapter 16 has led Paul to this statement. Sixteen times he mentions that

- brethren are to “*salute*” each other “*in the Lord.*” This indicated their being united on the teachings of Jesus Christ. Now, Paul warns them against false teachers who would ruin this unity.
2. The Romans are commanded to “*turn away*” from these false teachers. The phrase “*turn away*” (*ekklino*) = “to decline or turn away from, avoid” (Moulton 125). “To bend out of the regular line: to turn away, give ground, retire, to avoid, shun” (LS 239).
- B. “*For they that are such serve not our Lord Christ, but their own belly; and by their smooth and fair speech they beguile the hearts of the innocent*” (16:18).
1. Those who teach error and consequently divide the church cause many to stumble in their faith and thereby “*serve not our Lord Christ.*” These serve “*their own belly.*” The apostle Paul gives commentary to the meaning of serving one’s own belly at Philippians 3. Paul writes, “*For many walk, of whom I told you often and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: whose end is perdition, whose god is the belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things*” (Phil. 3:18-19). Those who serve their own “*belly*” are those who glory in shameful things and have great care for the things of this world.
 2. “*Smooth*” (*chrestologia*) = “fair or smooth speech” (LS 895)... “bland address, fair speaking” (Moulton 439). “*Fair*” (*eulogia*) = “good or fine language... a fair speech, specious talk (deceptively attractive... having the ring of truth or plausibility but actually fallacious)” (LS 327) (see study # 28).
 3. Said deceptive language “*beguiles*” (*exapatao*) = “to deceive or beguile thoroughly” (LS 270). Many honestly mistaken people teach error and with their doctrines are deceiving the hearers. The doctrine of once saved always saved may be preached by honestly erroneous Baptists preachers with a ring of truth or plausibility, however, it is fallacious and affronts the word of God.
 3. Those who are deceived, divided, and caused to stumble are the “*innocent*” (*akakos*) = “unknowing of ill, guileless... innocent, simple” (LS 25)... “free from evil, innocent, blameless; artless, simple” (Moulton 11). “Fearing no evil from others, distrusting no one” (Thayer 21). “Unsuspecting” (AG 28).
- B. “*For your obedience is come abroad unto all men. I rejoice therefore over you: but I would have you wise unto that which is good, and simple unto that which is evil*” (16:19).
1. Once again the idea of universal communication is depicted here. Brethren were communicating about the “obedience” (i.e., the Romans) of some and the “disobedience” of others (II Tim. 2:16-18; III Jn. 9-10). The faithfulness of the Romans gave Paul occasion to rejoice.
 2. Paul encourages them to be “*wise unto that which is good*”
 - a. Wise (*sophous*) = “skilled in the sciences, learned, profound, wise” (LS 738).
 - b. That which they were to be experts or learned in was that which is “*good*” (*agathon*) = “good, profitable, generous, beneficent, upright, virtuous” (Moulton 2).
 3. Paul encourages them to be “*simple unto that which is evil*” (vs. 19c):
 - a. Simple (*akeraios*) = “pure, innocent” (AG 29).
 - b. That which the Romans are encouraged to be pure of is evil!
- C. Finally, Paul makes a statement of unity that shall bring peace in vs. 20. “*The God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly.*”
- a. This is not the fulfillment of God’s statement to Adam and Eve in Gen. 3:15.
 - b. The author of Hebrews said, “*Since then the children are sharers in flesh and blood, he also himself in like manner partook of the same; that through death he might bring to nought him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and might deliver all them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage*” (Heb. 2:14-15).
 - c. The death of Jesus on the cross served as a sacrifice which supplied the antidote to sin. This death was the crushing of the power of Satan mentioned in Gen. 3:15.
 - d. The bruising of Satan here in Romans 16 can only mean that the false teachers who ruined the peace and unity that ought to prevail through the gospel of Jesus Christ will be defeated shortly. The Roman brethren were to turn their backs on any who would not hold to the teachings of Jesus which promote peace and unity and thereby they would bruise Satan under their feet.

VI. Paul sends greetings from Christians that are with him (16:21-24):

- A. “*Timothy my fellow-worker saluteth you; and Lucius and Jason and Sosipater, my kinsmen*” (16:21).

1. Timothy: Paul's fellow worker. Paul first met Timothy on his second tour of preaching with Silas (Acts 16:1ff). Timothy became Paul's faithful traveling companion, friend, and fellow evangelist for the cause of Christ.
 2. Much speculation has been given as to the identity of the next three men whom Paul mentions as his "*kinsmen*" yet nothing else is revealed about them (Lucius, Jason and Sosipater).
- B. *"I Tertius, who write the epistle, salute you in the Lord. Gaius my host, and of the whole church, saluteth you. Erastus the treasurer of the city saluteth you, and Quartus the brother"* (16:22-24)
1. Tertius: The scribe who Paul dictated the Roman letter to. Nothing more is known of him.
 2. Paul baptized Gaius at Corinth (I Cor. 1:14). Evidently, Gaius was "*host*" to not only Paul but to one of the churches in Corinth
 3. Since Paul is writing from Corinth, it is evident that the Erastus spoken of here was the treasurer of that city. The word "*treasurer*" is defined as "the superintendent of the city's finances" (Thayer 441). Somewhat like a city manager today.
 4. Nothing is known of Quartus yet Paul approves of him as a brother in Christ.

VII. The Farewell Statement (vs. 25-27):

- A. *"Now to him that is able to establish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery which hath been kept in silence through times eternal, but now is manifested, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the eternal God, is made known unto all the nations unto obedience of faith:"* (16:25-26).
1. Paul begins his final doxological statement regarding Jehovah God. God is able to "*establish*" (*sterizo*) = "to make fast, fix, set... metaphorically to confirm or establish" (LS 746). The word "*according*" (*kata*) = "after our liking... to the best of one's power... in relation to, concerning, ... according to this way, in this view" (LS 403). The Christian is "*established*" (i.e., set or fixed) "*according*" to "*revelation and the commandment of the eternal God*" to obtain the "*obedience of faith*."
 2. This verse clearly indicates that one is made to remain faithfully obedient to the Lord throughout life by a constant association with the Word of God. Paul's preaching had ever been designed to produce obedience in his audience (cf. Rom. 1:5).
- B. *"to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory forever. Amen"* (16:27).

Concluding thoughts:

Romans is a book of fellowship gained with God through justification (Rom. 5:1-2). This theme is detailed through the first eleven chapters. Secondly, the end of Romans is a treaties on fellowship maintained with God and brethren (Romans 12-16). Peace will prevail among brethren when we follow only God's word. Matters of indifference should not destroy us.