



PAUL
to the
ROMANS

New Albany-Louisville Bible Students

2014

Paul

to the

Romans



New Albany–Louisville Bible Students Ecclesia 2014

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Start Here

The Book of Romans is powerful. Of course, this is not surprising since all the Word of God is powerful — “quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul (our humanity) and spirit (our new minds), and of the joints (our actions) and marrow (our life-blood or cells: our FAITH), and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.” (Hebrews 4:12)

But Romans is powerful in an additional sense. It has the power which launched the Protestant Reformation in the early Sixteenth Century — the greatest upheaval in the history of the Church. Its contents struck Martin Luther like a thunderbolt, and the Church has not been the same since.

We habitually refer to the “books” of the New Testament. But most of the New Testament writings are letters, Romans included. The Gospels and Acts are, indeed, very little history books, and Revelation defies description! It is more like a report of a phenomenal prophetic dream. All other “books” are letters written to the Church as a whole, to specific ecclesias, or to individuals. We are not amiss, however, to think that two of these “epistles” are so very significant in their content and impact as to qualify as books — MAJOR BOOKS, despite their diminutive size as compared to what we normally call a book. Hebrews and Romans are these two. Hebrews opens to us the world of the Old Testament as a great allegory — the TYPES of the Jewish Law unfolding the REALITIES of the Christian Age before our hungry and receptive appetites.

Romans, on the other hand, treats TWO very basic, but life-producing and life-altering concepts: (1) the place of the Body of Christ as a sacrifice made acceptable (justified) only because of its faith, and (2) the life of sanctification-works which will mature the individuals of the Body for their future assignment.

It seems incredible that this great book can be encapsulated in a description so small as the previous paragraph! But when one considers carefully the above two points, what more is there to Christianity? Thus, Romans IS Christianity — Christianity in its two parts: its CALL, and its DEVELOPMENT.

Simplicity is a wonderful thing. To see Romans in its bare-bones minimum is to make us want to fit its multitude of words into its simple structure. In one sense, Romans IS gloriously simple. Great works of art usually are, and Divine art is no exception. But Romans doesn't APPEAR simple, and the reasons for this are multiple.

First, God knows how to hide the obvious so that only the eyes of His saints can truly comprehend. Secondly, when great detail is heaped upon the simplest of structural designs, the basic structure seems to disappear. The world has an expression for this: “We can't see the forest for the trees!” Thirdly — and this is important — the most basic (yet wonderful) doctrine of Christianity is not seen by most everyone in the history of the Christian Church. That doctrine is that the Church has part in the offering made to God so that all sin (past, present, and yet future) WILL BE ELIMINATED. This is the doctrine we simply call by two words: SIN OFFERING.

Because translators are ignorant of this foundation teaching, they cannot comprehend the words or the intent of the Apostle Paul. This makes their versions of Romans “nice,”

but inadequate. It makes them say we are “dead to sin” instead of “dead for sin.” Consequently it makes Paul sound as if he is lecturing us on the importance of not sinning. (He does do this! But it is not the THRUST of his POWERFUL POINT.) Paul is placing us on notice that our examples in life must reflect our PURPOSE IN LIFE. We are dying for the same reason that Jesus died! We are “immersed into his death.” He and we die as “just” sacrifices (really, ONE big sacrifice) in order TO REMOVE SIN FROM EVERYONE ELSE DURING THE KINGDOM! The doctrine and the prospect are awe-inspiring beyond what most minds can receive. Indeed! It is only “the mind of the spirit” that can even begin to grasp it all.

And built upon that basic concept of the purpose of Christianity, Paul adds two other items — one even more awe-inspiring; the other, consummately practical.

The awe-inspiring item is that this Church of God is to be made into a “New Creation” — His personal, intimate, family — even sharing His own nature of divinity and immortality and incorruptibility. They will, so to speak, sit with God at His family table. God planned, or PREDESTINED, this group as a class long before creation ever began. Can such spine-chilling realizations do anything but urge us on to faithfulness? It is based on God’s special personal concern for these embryo sons that Paul writes Romans 8, assuring us that, because of our place in God’s plan, it is insane to consider that He is not directing every jot and tittle of our experiences.

The practical item is that anyone in our positions, as part of this secret but mind-altering program, will instinctively want to bring his fallen flesh as much into conformity with his ideals and objectives in life as is possible. We call this “sanctification,” and it is Paul’s subject from Chapter 12 onward.

Some have mistakenly concluded that Paul is “heavy” on faith, and James is “heavy” on works. Nothing could be further from the truth. Romans is BOTH faith and works. It is Paul’s point that justification comes by faith, but that sanctification IS WORKS! These two items form the two parts of Romans. The first eleven chapters reject works as a justifier. The rest of the book encourages works as the sanctifier. It is ultimately simple; it is ultimately clear.

* * * * *

Our study in Romans took almost exactly a year — once a week with 90-minute sessions. It changed our lives, as all of us will testify. As one participant put it, “This was not a study. It was an experience.” Comprehension was sometimes difficult, but it was not because of Paul’s writings; it was almost entirely because translators did not grasp Paul’s intent, and, consequently, they could not convey it.

We know that those who were not in the study will miss some of the particular blessings we have had. But we do know that those who pursue it with the help of these records of our warfare will gain immense blessings; and we not only recommend these blessings to you, we urge them upon you!

One cannot help, with an honest study and with a comprehension of THE WHOLE of this book of Romans, but come away with a Christian life more focused and richer in every way. That is our sincere prayer for all who study it.

As the preparation of this book progressed, it became increasingly evident that understanding is an organic sort of thing. It never stops. Consequently, insights continued to occur beyond those wonderful things our study uncovered. What this means in practical terms is that once this work is off the press, it will be ready for updates and expansions. But those things will be up to the reader. May we all never cease to grow and to discover new, delightful, and important depths to the truths we already have learned.

THE NEW ALBANY-LOUISVILLE ECCLESIA

2014

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A LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS, TERMS & REFERENCES USED IN THIS BOOK

A

ANCIENT WORTHIES — The faithful of Old Testament times. (See Hebrews 11.)

B

BARCLAY — William Barclay, translator of The New Testament and author of commentaries thereon.

C

CHART OF THE AGES — The Bible diagrammed on one page as presented in The Divine Plan of the Ages, Volume 1 of the series STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES by Charles Taze Russell (1886). (See Appendix G.)

C.J.B. — The Complete Jewish Bible, a translation by David H. Stern.

CLARKE — Adam Clarke, author of the extensive commentary on Scripture commonly called Clarke's Commentary.

CONCORDANT — The Concordant Greek Text and The Concordant Literal New Testament.

C.T.R. — Charles Taze Russell (1852-1916); see Russell.

D

DIAGLOTT — The Emphatic Diaglott, a Greek-English interlinear translation by Benjamin Wilson.

D.N.A. — Deoxyribonucleic acid — a molecule that is the main constituent of the chromosome and which carries the genetic code of each individual.

D.V. — Latin *Deo Volente*; expression meaning “*God willing*” which means “It will be so if God approves.”

E

ECCLESIA — Church; from the Greek for “*called out*.”

e.g. — from the Latin “*exempli gratia*,” meaning “*for example*,” or “*for the sake of example*,” or “such as.”

F

ff — (and the) following

G

GOSPEL AGE — (See Appendix G.) The time from Jesus' baptism until the completion of the Church during his second advent.

GNB — The Good News Bible translation.

H

HIV — Human immunodeficiency virus; the virus responsible for the disease commonly known as AIDS.

H.N. — Harry Nugent; one of the participants in the Romans study.

I

i.e. — Latin: *id est.*; meaning “*that is.*”

J

JEWISH AGE — (See Appendix G.) The time from the death of Jacob until the end of the 70 weeks of Daniel 9.

K

KJV — The King James' version of the Bible — the popular name for the Authorized Version of 1611 translated for the Anglican Church.

KUENZLI — Ernest Kuenzli, an elder and student of Scriptures in Orlando, Florida. (The Author of Appendix D.)

L

LB — The Living Bible translation.

M

MEDIATION — The Millennial Age period during which The Christ restores humanity on an individual basis.

MEGGISON — John A. Meggison; a scholarly student of Scripture and zealous servant of the Lord during the 20th Century. His notes on the Bible are published by the Chicago Bible Students.

(The) MESSAGE — The Message translation of Old and New Testaments by Eugene H. Peterson.

MILLENNIAL AGE — (See Appendix G.) The seventh thousand years (beginning in A.D. 1874) of man's history (since the fall of Adam) during which Christ reigns for the purpose of eliminating the old order of sin and restoring mankind to perfection.

MS (MSS) — Abbreviation for manuscript (MSS = plural). Refers to extant hand-written copies of Scripture.

N

NAS — New American Standard translation of the Bible. (Sometimes called NASB.) This Bible is under constant revision by its translators and may, thus, sometimes have variant readings cited.

NEB — The New English Bible translation.

NEW COVENANT — That part of the original covenant made with Abraham (typified by his final wife, Keturah) under which the earthly seed of Abraham (“the sands of the seashore” class) will be restored to life and communion with God. It is secured by the blood of Jesus and by the Church’s part in the great offering for sin (Romans 6). It will go into effect (made first with Israel) once those developed under the “Sarah” or “Grace” Covenant are completed — the “mother” of the “Isaac” class (Galatians 4:28).

NEW CREATURE — The spirit-begotten new mind in a Christian.

NIV — The New International Version translation of the Bible.

O

O.T. — Old Testament.

P

Ph — See Phillips.

PHILLIPS — The New Testament in Modern English translation by J. B. Phillips.

PLANE M — (See Appendix G.) M is the line representing life-granting justification of those begotten of the spirit during the Gospel Age.

PLANE N — (See Appendix G.) N is the line representing a friendship with God (due to faith or due to human perfection) for all so justified, except the spirit begotten during the Gospel Age.

Q

QE II — Queen Elizabeth II; the name of an ocean liner. (Sometimes QE 2.)

QV — Latin: *quod vide* = “which see.”

R

R.____ — See REPRINT(S).

RANSOM — The exchange to justice: The man Jesus for the man Adam. The doctrine of the ransom is central to the Christian concept of redemption. (See I Timothy 2:5, 6.)

REPRINT(S) — (See also TOWERS.) This word (or R. followed by numbers) refers to periodical articles reprinted by the Chicago Bible Students. A number of them dealing with the Book of Romans appear as Appendices in this book.

RSV — Revised Standard Version translation of the Bible.

ROTHERHAM — The Emphasized Bible, a 19th Century translation by Joseph Rotherham.

RUSSELL — (sometimes Bro. Russell or Pastor Russell) a reference to Charles Taze Russell, author of STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES, a six-volume treatise on Bible study, as well as of a multiplicity of other writings. Sometimes abbreviated C.T.R., Russell was the pre-eminent and possibly the most widely known Bible expositor of his day. (1852-1916)

S

S — a reference to the Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible by James Strong. The letter S will be followed by numbers which indicate word definitions from the Hebrew and Greek.

Strong is so universally used that his lexicon numbers are used commonly in many other publications.

SIN OFFERING — The sacrifice of Jesus and his disciples which will provide the mechanism for sin removal from humanity under the New Covenant once instituted. The doctrine of the sin offering in its two parts is woefully neglected or misunderstood by the vast majority of those claiming the Christian faith.

SPIRIT BEGETTAL — The legal beginning of a future spirit nature granted to consecrated Christians. The spirit-begotten individual is often called a “new creature” (q.v.) in Christ.

T

TABERNACLE SHADOWS — An early small book by C. T. Russell (q.v.) outlining the meanings of the typical sacrifices offered by the Jewish priesthood.

TCNT — The Twentieth Century New Testament; a translation by about twenty scholars from the Westcott and Hort Greek text.

TOWERS — an abbreviated title for periodical articles by C. T. Russell. These are not to be confused with the periodical known as “The Watchtower” of the Jehovah’s Witnesses sect. The C.T.R. periodical (1879-1916) is “Zion’s Watch Tower and Herald of Christ’s Presence.” A few of its articles are reprinted in an Appendix of this book. (See R. and REPRINT.)

TM — The Message translation of the Bible.

V

v. (or vs.) — abbreviation for verse (plural = either vs. or vss.)

VINE — An Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words, by W. E. Vine.

viz. — Latin, videlicet = “*that is to say*” or “*namely*.”

Vol. — abbreviation for volume (q.v.).

Volume — a reference to one of the six volumes of the series STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES by C. T. Russell (q.v.). The abbreviation or the word will be followed by A through F (for Volumes 1-6) and by page numbers.

W

WEY — See Weymouth.

WEYMOUTH — The New Testament in Modern Speech, a 19th Century translation by Richard Francis Weymouth. The First Edition was completed by others when Weymouth died. Subsequently later editions were altered by numerous others.

WILSON — Benjamin Wilson, translator of The Emphatic Diaglott.

Y

Y — Young’s Literal Translation of the Holy Bible, by Robert Young.

YOUNG — Robert Young; see Y.

144,000

The number (apparently quite literal) is the quantity of those who will be successful in becoming a part of The Christ, the Body of Christ, or the Bride of Christ. (See Revelation 14:1.) Thus it frequently is used interchangeably with “the Church” (meaning that select group who will reign with Christ). This does not imply that other disciples will not go to heaven; but they will constitute that “Great Multitude” of which Revelation 7 speaks, and to which Paul refers in I Corinthians 5:5, and which John relegates to those not receiving a “full reward” (II John 8).

PARAPHRASE of ROMANS

A PREFACE to the PARAPHRASE of ROMANS

In the preparation of this commentary on Romans, many approaches were considered. In the end, it seemed best to open with a paraphrase of the book. So many translations exist, each with some merit. But translators, like students, struggle with word meanings. Translators also have not been the recipients of “present truth.” Thus their struggles often miss important intent in the text.

The strength of a paraphrase is that it can offer an initial exposure to Romans which is not so much concerned with translating difficulties as with clear concepts. But it is very necessary that the reader fully realize that a paraphrase is the result of the study of the book, not of the study of correct translating efforts. A paraphrase IS AN EXPANSION — an effort to convey revealed ideas — an effort to supply “connective tissue” where needed in order to enhance comprehension. We believe that this paraphrase is accurate in conveying Paul’s message, but it does take great liberties in the ways it does that.

Reading the paraphrase before actually studying the intricacies of Romans should give the student a comfortability with Paul’s letter. Then, while studying, the student can carefully ascertain the accuracy of that comfortability.

Therefore, we recommend the reading of the paraphrase before beginning a study. It may help the study process go more smoothly in that comprehension before analysis is always an advantage.

* * * * *

A NOTE ON EMPHASES:

It may bother the eyes of some, but we extensively use underlining, capitalizations, etc., in order to stress certain words. It often makes significant difference in reading a sentence when one word is given stress over other words. This practice of emphasizing is at least as old as the Nineteenth Century in translations like THE EMPHATIC DIAGLOTT (Wilson) and THE EMPHASIZED BIBLE (Rotherham). We feel the practice is legitimate and helpful. However, we extend our apologies to those readers who are bothered by the practice.

A PARAPHRASE of ROMANS

SALUTATION

(1:1-7)

- 1:1 DEAR BRETHREN,
This is your brother, Paul, writing as a lovingly-willing slave of the Anointed Savior who called me to be an Apostle of his.
- 1:2 I am totally devoted to God's Gospel which, long ago, He promised through the Old Testament prophets — a source with which I want you to become very familiar.
- 1:3 This Gospel is about God's son, Jesus, who was born (in his human genealogy) as a descendant of King David (as was prophesied of Messiah).
- 1:4 But, his more important genealogy was revealed by the Holy Spirit through his resurrection which proved him to be God's own Divine Son endowed with extraordinary power.
- Jesus, the Anointed One, is our Lord, our Master, our Head.
- 1:5 It is through him that I have received grace — that help from above without which I would fail. And it is from him that I have received my special Apostolic assignment — to bring GENTILES under the name of Messiah! This is made possible because they will OBEY, not by works, but by FAITH.
- 1:6 And, you, my dear Gentile brethren at Rome, are the recipients of that call by Jesus Christ.
- 1:7 So, I write to you who have thus become the beloved ones of God in Rome. You have been called to be saints, and I address you as saints — those set aside to this holy calling.
- Because of your special relationship with God and His Son, I send you greetings, hoping for you the kind of grace I have received, and the resultant peace that comes from receiving such amazing grace. You are recipients of these two awesome gifts from our Father and from our Lord and Head, Jesus, whom God has Anointed to his lofty position. (Yes! He is our Father, too! Not just Jesus' Father!)

MY DESIRE TO VISIT YOU

(1:8-15)

- 1:8 First, I want to tell you of the thanks I give my God through the merit of Jesus Christ because your faith-strength is being mentioned by the saints everywhere. I am thankful for you.
- 1:9 And God, whom I serve, not perfunctorily, but in the very spirit of the Gospel of His Son, is a witness on my behalf of my perpetual prayers on your behalf
- 1:10 — that I continually ask Him, if it be His will, that I might at last be permitted to visit you.
- 1:11 My longing to see you is for a very specific purpose. Only we Apostles can transmit the miraculous "gifts of the spirit" that will help to establish you quickly — even without access to or study in the Scriptures. I want you to have that advantage.

- 1:12 When I do come, you will then, with this special gift, be able to share with me the deeply encouraging things of faith which you do not yet know. Thus I will be strengthened by your fellowship, and you by mine.
- 1:13 I wanted you to be aware that I have wanted to do this for some time, and I have made plans to do so. However, the Lord permitted obstacles to my plans. But I have wanted so much to come because you will bear fruitage faster with the help of these gifts — just as has been the experience of other Gentile Churches.
- 1:14 My specialized Apostleship to Gentiles takes no backgrounds into consideration. I am bound to preach to sophisticated Greeks or unlearned barbarians. It makes no difference to me if all of these have some sort of wisdom or if they are captives of their foolish superstitions.
- 1:15 Thus, as far as I am concerned, no matter what I find in Rome, I have a great eagerness to share the beauties of the Gospel with anyone who will hear.

MY POINT IN WRITING
(1:16, 17)

- 1:16 If I find either superstition or acute human reasoning when I come, the Gospel which I preach will stand up to it all. There is no shame, no need for excuses for the Gospel I preach! What my Gospel says is that God has put POWER behind this message! It is God's power which WILL SAVE EVERYONE once they believe!
- 1:17 In this message, early JUSTIFICATION FROM GOD is revealed to those with faith to receive it. Their faith will then grow because of it! This entire concept is revealed in only a few words from the prophet, Habakkuk (2:4).

He wrote,

“BUT THE JUSTIFIED MAN
SHALL LIVE BY HIS FAITH!”

Do you see that? If we receive this justification, we can gain life ahead of the world!

[These two verses above will constitute the outline for much of what I will be writing to you.]

FROM WHAT YOU ARE ESCAPING
(1:18-32)

- 1:18 (So, by faith you have now begun to have life — 1:17), but the rest of the world still is under God's wrath which clearly is revealed from Him when we perceive the condition of the world. You are escaping the ungodliness, the unrighteousness of mankind who actually hide the truth in order to maintain their unrighteousness!
- 1:19 And why do they hide truth? It is because they actually think that they know better within themselves! It is their way around a reality they do not want to face.

God has left evidences of truth all over the place!

- 1:20 Ever since Eden, the visible parts of creation have been such clear testimonials to His attributes and His nature that mankind has virtually no excuse for his wanderings (other than his desire to wander!).
- 1:21 What has happened is this: Regardless of what man has known, they had no desire to give honor to God. They had no desire for or spirit of thanksgiving. They had runaway minds that preferred colorful speculations which only led to darkness — the normal result of misdirected hearts.
- 1:22 They liked to profess the wisdom of their reasonings, which in fallen beings inevitably turns them into fools!
- 1:23 Since they hid the true God, their innate desire for worship led them to the incredible foolishness of worshipping statues of people, birds, mammals, and even creeping things like snakes!
- 1:24 God, as part of His plan, just let them go! He let their corrupted hearts seek all of the impurities their corrupted minds thought they would enjoy. It led to physical corruptions which don't even honor the bodies with which they were born.
- 1:25 So what is the result? They had God's truth available, but they preferred trading it in for a lie — a basic lie, that the worship of the creature is more gratifying than the worship of the Creator! (But Amen to the truth that He will ultimately be blessed forever!)
- 1:26 So, as we have noted (verse 24), God let them indulge in the degradations of their fallen passions. Instead of functioning in the way intended, women found ways of doing things never intended with their bodies.
- 1:27 Men, also, lost their natural desires for women and, instead, invented ways of misusing their bodies in a passion for each other — all now living with the various consequences of their perversions.
- 1:28 Their continuing to ignore God resulted even more in God's letting them follow the various depravities of their minds, resulting in all kinds of improprieties:
- 1:29 Unrighteousness became endemic; it has manifested itself in purposeful wickedness, greed, generalized evil, envy, murder, strife, deceit, maliciousness, gossiping,
- 1:30 slandering, and even in hating God. They have become insolent, arrogant, boastful, inventors of ways of being bad. They disobey parents;
- 1:31 they don't comprehend life — its purposes, privileges, and responsibilities. Consequently they cannot be trusted. They don't know how to love or to show mercy.
- 1:32 Strangely, they know God's ordinances to some degree (even instinctively) — they know that the blessings of continuing life could not rightly be given to those of such a disposition; yet they continue to pursue such things with abandon and even to applaud others who do such things also!

NOT WORKS NOR CONSCIENCE CAN SAVE US

(2:1-29)

- 2:1 Now, it is imperative that you understand something clearly: These sins are part of our genetic code, our D.N.A. So, if you rise up in judging the world for these things, you have no excuse! You only condemn yourselves because you cannot on your own keep from being practitioners of the same things! Your degree of guilt, your desire for sin, may not be the same as in some; but that is not a factor.
- 2:2 The fact is that God, VERY RIGHTLY, passes judgment against the practice of all sin —
- 2:3 Do YOU, therefore, think you can escape this judgment, just because you hate it in others, yet (even reluctantly) practice it in your own beings? (I speak of “you” in terms of any who harbor this error.)
- 2:4 If you think this way, you have not given sufficient weight to the doctrine of justification which I am going to stress with you.
- The fact is this: God has arranged for a way around the severity of His judgment for those (1:16, 17) whom He leads to repentance. The RICHES from His kindness, and His tolerance, and His patience are what are leading you OUT OF CONDEMNATION.
- 2:5 But hearken to the importance of this matter: There will be only two classes of humanity in this Gospel Age. One will be the stubbornly unrepentant who “treasure” a continuation in the wrath we have described (1:18) by which God is revealing the results of such a course.
- 2:6 As He wrote in such places as Job 34:11, Psalm 62:12, Proverbs 24:12, and Jeremiah 32:19, GOD RENDERS TO EACH PERSON ACCORDING TO HIS DEEDS.
- 2:7 So, let me contrast these two classes of humanity: Those who now (by grace!) persevere in good — seeking glory, honor, and incorruptibility of character — those will begin “life” eternal now (1:17) because of their faith-justification.
- 2:8 But those (2:5) who now are centered in self-interests and who have no inclination for the truth, preferring the “benefits” of their unrighteousness — they will continue to “enjoy” the wrath and indignation (1:18) in which they find themselves.
- 2:9 But, once Mediation arrives, the tribulum and the narrowing will knock away the sin of every soul which has lived in accordance with the old evil world. This will be the experience of the Jew first, but then of all others.
- 2:10 But to those now having accepted the “repentance” and its subsequent faith-justification (2:4), there will be the glory, honor, and peace from pursuit of good. It came first to the Jew, but is now also to the Greek.
- 2:11 I mention Jew and Greek in both instances because God is not partial in justifying or condemning.
- 2:12 I will now go on to demonstrate that this justification can be to either Jew or Gentile because it comes not from the Law of the Jew nor from the natural conscience of the Gentile. After all, don’t all perish? Those without the Law perish; those under the Law are condemned by the Law! They also perish.

- 2:13 Consider this about the Law: If you hear it and like it, are you made just? No! The Law specifically states that you are not just unless you can DO what the Law commands!
- 2:14 What about Gentiles who aren't under the Law? Reason with me on this. Suppose they instinctively are in harmony with the Law they don't even know. This is good. They have some of the Law within themselves
- 2:15 which demonstrates less-corrupted hearts. But are they inwardly comfortable with this? No! Their consciences and their thoughts keep telling them, "Well, you did okay on this, but, wow! — you certainly can't seem to live up to all of your ideals!"
- 2:16 And these accusations and guilt from within their own souls will remain with them until, according to my Gospel, they awaken to have God point out to them the things which were secret even to themselves when they were trying to assess their own moral value. Jesus is appointed to do this for them when that day arrives.
- 2:17 Now, let's look specifically at the Jew and his mistaken concepts under the Law. The Jew RELIES ON THE LAW, and, instead of seeing it as cursing him, he BOASTS of his relationship with God.
- 2:18 The Jews are confident that they know God's will, and they feel quite approved that, due to the Law, they are essentially doing well.
- 2:19 If you are a Jew, you will tell us how you guide the blind world, how you shed the only true light in the world's corners of darkness,
- 2:20 how your wisdom corrects the foolish, how your maturity instructs the immature, and how your Law is the totality of knowledge and the truth.
- 2:21 Permit me some embarrassing questions! Why do you who teach others fail to note that you just might need some teaching for yourselves?
Why is it we see you stealing while you preach to others not to steal?
- 2:22 You brazenly condemn adultery. Have you not noticed this in your own society? You look aghast at idols! So, why do you rob them from temples and keep them for yourselves?
- 2:23 The arraignment is clear: You BOAST in your Law. Have you not considered that when you break it, you give great DISHONOR to the God who upholds it?
- 2:24 You need to heed your own prophet (Isaiah 52:5) who says of you shamefully, "THE NAME OF GOD IS BLASPHEMED AMONG THE GENTILES BECAUSE OF YOU." (Ouch!)
- 2:25 You observe symbols of the Law without understanding. For instance, circumcision means that the Divine Law has let you cut yourself off from fleshly thinking. But if you transgress the Law, your symbol of circumcision is null and void.
- 2:26 If an uncircumcised man kept the Law, wouldn't he logically be considered circumcised even if he didn't have the actual symbol?
- 2:27 And wouldn't he by his righteousness, instead of by circumcision, judge your unrighteousness even with your circumcision?
- 2:28 You must understand, the symbol doesn't make you a Jew. Symbols don't make the man.

2:29 But what is inside your heart is what makes you a Jew. This might be a difficult concept now as the age changes, but justification is going to come by the spirit, not by the letter. God will see who is the true Jew, even though it may not be evident to men.

THE TRUE IMPORTANCE OF THE OLD LAW
(3:1-31)

3:1 You probably are in shock (particularly if you are Jewish!) that I have just rejected the Law as a JUSTIFIER. Is there, then, any advantage in being a Jew? Is there any benefit from the Law and its symbols?

3:2 There are great advantages in every way — so long as you understand the true purpose of the Old Testament. First and foremost — and this is of particular importance for you Gentiles: The Jews were given the oracles of God — His Word, containing prophecies, types, symbols, admonitions, and myriad wonderful things for our learning. You Gentiles have not had this! But it is a treasure you must learn to explore.

3:3 The fact that many Jews during the Jewish Age did not have faith in God's Word does not nullify its value. The fact that the Law didn't bring justification does not nullify its value.

3:4 God's faithfulness and infallibility in every age is true — even though every man contradict it!

David made a point of this in Psalm 51:4 when he said of God:

YOU WILL BE FOUND JUSTIFIED
IN YOUR WORDS AND
BLAMELESS WHEN YOUR
JUDGMENT IS ASSESSED.

3:5 I mentioned (1:14-16) that the Gospel overcomes the peculiar philosophical reasonings of men. Here is an opportunity to demonstrate that. Some might say (as I mentioned in 3:4) that since our Jewish errors under the Law will, in the end, prove God's righteousness, His punishment of us Jews was unwarranted! (Talk about fallen human reasoning!)

3:6 How foolish! This same kind of reasoning would have to conclude that God couldn't judge the world if His punishments are unwarranted!

3:7 But let me repeat the question because it can have an additional illogical conclusion coming from it. My human reasoning question was: "If my lies VERIFY God's truths, shouldn't He be happy and not be condemning me?"

3:8 What grows out of this question (and what some evilly say I am promoting!) is the foolish conclusion: "Shouldn't we continue to do evil so that more good can come out of it?" Whoever loudly condemns this thinking is very justified!

3:9 So, back to the question of Jews. Are we better than the Gentiles? You won't like the answer! No! We are not at all better. As I have already charged (2:12): Jews and Greeks — all the world — are under sin.

3:10 I will give you a list of Scriptures to prove the point:
From Psalm 14:1-3:

- 3:11 • THERE IS NO ONE RIGHTEOUS — NOT EVEN ONE!
- THERE IS NO ONE WHO UNDERSTANDS!
- THERE IS NO ONE WHO SEEKS FOR GOD!
- 3:12 • ALL HAVE TURNED ASIDE!
- TOGETHER THEY HAVE BECOME USELESS!
- THERE IS NO ONE WHO DOES GOOD — THERE IS NOT EVEN ONE!
- 3:13 From Psalm 5:9:
 - THEIR THROAT IS AN OPEN GRAVE!
 - WITH THEIR TONGUES THEY KEEP DECEIVING!

From Psalm 140:3:

- THE POISON OF ASPS IS UNDER THEIR LIPS!
- 3:14 From Psalm 10:7:
 - WHOSE MOUTH IS FULL OF CURSING AND BITTERNESS!
- 3:15 From Isaiah 59:7, 8 and Proverbs 1:11:
 - THEIR FEET ARE SWIFT TO SHED BLOOD!
- 3:16 • DESTRUCTION AND MISERY ARE IN THEIR PATHS!
- 3:17 • AND THE PATH OF PEACE THEY HAVE NOT KNOWN!

3:18 From Psalm 36:1:

- THERE IS NO FEAR OF GOD BEFORE THEIR EYES!
- 3:19 We, who are Jews, know that the Law is to us. Thus, these texts will shut our mouths if we claim superiority! Clearly, accountability to God's condemnation falls on us as well as on the whole world
- 3:20 because the WORKS OF THE LAW will not justify anyone in God's sight. On the contrary, the Law is there to teach us that we are not just, but sinners!

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- 3:21 But now we have entered a new age, and God has manifested from Him a JUSTIFICATION apart from the Law. And even though it is apart from the Law, the Law and the Prophets both witnessed to it in Old Testament writings.
- 3:22 And what is this JUSTIFICATION FROM GOD? It is a justification that comes about THROUGH FAITH IN JESUS CHRIST. But it is ONLY to those who BELIEVE, regardless of their Jewish or Gentile origins, because God makes no distinctions in this faith
- 3:23 since all (Jew and Gentile) have sinned and cannot claim worthiness to have exclusive access to God's glory.
- 3:24 Thus, this newly-available justification to life of which I speak is strictly a GIFT due to God's GRACE because of the REDEMPTION He has provided by the sacrifice of Christ Jesus.
- 3:25 Here is the basis of this faith:
 God has publicly put forward Jesus as A PLACE TO GO FOR ATONEMENT — the antitype of the Tabernacle's "mercy seat." It is FAITH IN THAT ANTITYPICAL SPRINKLED BLOOD that justifies.

This is complex in detail, though simple in concept. God wants to demonstrate what justification from Him really means for us. In His merciful

- forbearance, He is PASSING OVER, or skirting, or working around the sins of our past
- 3:26 in a demonstration of how His justification for us now in the Gospel Age allows Him to make us right in His sight. And He can make us right in His sight WITHOUT COMPROMISING HIS PERFECT JUSTICE! But this does require our total faith in the merit of Jesus' redeeming sacrifice.
- 3:27 Now, I believe, you can see why Jewish boasting in the Law is invalid! It is by this "new law of faith" that we are made just — not by the old Law of animal sacrifices and works!
- 3:28 Thus we forcibly maintain that a man can be justified by faith APART FROM THE WORKS OF THE LAW.
- 3:29 So, is God the God of Jews only? Is He not also now the God of Gentiles? Yes, indeed! There is now no different God for the faithful Jew or Gentile.
- 3:30 He is ONE GOD who now, by life-justification through faith, will be the ONE GOD of those with or without the symbolic circumcision.
- 3:31 One question remains: Does this faith-justification nullify the Law? Oh, no! Quite to the contrary! It establishes the validity of the Law as a teacher, as a type, as a prophecy, and as a standard for righteousness in moral matters. Faith-justification magnifies THE SPIRIT OF THE LAW while it removes its burdens.

ABRAHAM'S EXPERIENCES PROVE MY POINT

(4:1-25)

- 4:1 I want to talk about how Father Abraham's life corroborates what I am saying about justification outside of the Law.
- 4:2 If Abraham had been able to gain life by works, he would, indeed, have had something to boast about — although, even then, he couldn't boast to God! But he didn't gain justification by works.
- 4:3 But, let's turn to the source of our information. What do the Scriptures say about this matter? According to Genesis 15:6, "Abraham BELIEVED God, and that was what allowed God to GIVE to him some sort of righteousness or justification" — a fellowship with God.
- 4:4 Reason on this: If you WORK and get paid for it, your pay is not counted as a favor or GIFT, but it is only what is rightly due to you. But Abraham didn't do WORKS; he just BELIEVED and got credit paid to him!
- 4:5 So, if you DON'T DO WORKS, but rather BELIEVE that God can somehow work with the ungodly, that belief, that faith, will be credited to your account as a form of righteousness or justification. That is what Genesis 15:6 is telling us!
- 4:6 The Scriptures also record that David confirms this idea — that God CREDITS, reckons, or imputes a righteousness APART FROM WORKS as a blessing (a gift!) to the one who believes.
- 4:7 In Psalm 32:1, 2, David says:

BLESSED ARE THOSE
WHOSE LAWLESS DEEDS
HAVE BEEN FORGIVEN

AND WHOSE SINS HAVE
BEEN COVERED.
BLESSED IS THE MAN
WHOSE SIN THE LORD
WILL NOT TAKE INTO
ACCOUNT. ”

4:8

(That’s a good definition of imputed justification, isn’t it?)

4:9 Let me ask, Is the blessing of which David speaks just for the circumcised, or does it also apply to the uncircumcised?

Let’s look closely. Genesis 15:6 told us that “FAITH WAS CREDITED TO ABRAHAM AS JUSTIFICATION.”

4:10 Here’s the important question. Did that justification come to Abraham BEFORE or AFTER he was circumcised? We know the answer! It was BEFORE. (That answers my question in 4:9.)

4:11 And he afterward received circumcision AS A SIGN — a token of remembrance, a confirmation — of the FAITH HE HAD EXHIBITED prior to that circumcision.

This is why Abraham is considered the FATHER OF ALL OF THE FAITHFUL, even when they are not circumcised. JUSTIFICATION will be a gift to them as it was to Abraham without circumcision.

4:12 But, he also is the FAITH-FATHER of the circumcised IF they, like Abraham BEFORE his circumcision, follow in the footsteps of Abraham in terms of BELIEF. (Thus the Jews also have access to this gift.)

4:13 Don’t miss this point: The Abrahamic Promise that makes him and his descendants heirs of the world did not come about by the Law Covenant! It comes about through JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH.

4:14 If the heirs of the Abrahamic Promise are made heirs because of the WORKS OF THE LAW, then the Abrahamic Promise is NOT A PROMISE! It would be merely compensation.

4:15 The only thing the Law has produced is God’s wrath — not justification! However, if a person is not responsible to a law, he is not in violation of it, and he is not a recipient of its wrath.

4:16 And for this very reason, the promise of justification IS BY FAITH opening the way for GRACE, not wrath, so that Abraham’s PROMISED seed will, indeed, be by PROMISE, not WORKS. Thus the PROMISE is open to ALL of Abraham’s seed — not only those who have been trapped under the Law, but also to the Gentiles when they display the same FAITH as Abraham! And so Abraham is the FAITH-FATHER of all of us in Christ.

4:17 The Scriptures once again confirm this when in Genesis 17:5 it states, “A FATHER OF MANY NATIONS I HAVE MADE YOU.” This is God’s perspective (not that of men), and it is so BECAUSE ABRAHAM BELIEVED!

How can we even begin to describe a God who takes us who are dead and gives us life? This is that same God who makes everything from nothing!

4:18 Abraham’s faith is so exemplary. Even though hope seemed irrational, yet he continued to BELIEVE that hope which was held before him! While the

concept of his having one son seemed so remote, yet he believed God Who told him in Genesis 15:5 that he would have myriad descendants!

- 4:19 This man (though he surely could become faith-weak while contemplating his body, which being about a hundred years old was as good as dead, and while contemplating the deadness of Sarah's womb) —
- 4:20 this man, in respect to God's promise, never wavered into disbelief, but actually GREW STRONG IN FAITH, glorifying God
- 4:21 by being fully persuaded that God could and would perform anything He had promised! (THIS must be our faith, too!)
- 4:22 And because of this, his faith "WAS ALSO IMPUTED TO HIM AS JUSTIFICATION OR RIGHTEOUSNESS." (Genesis 15:6)
- 4:23 This brings us to the subject of us! When Moses wrote these words in Genesis 15:6, it was written long after Abraham's death. And, therefore, the words were written not just because it was explaining that Abraham's faith gave him justification,
- 4:24 but it was written FOR OUR BENEFIT, ALSO, because the same justification will be credited to us if we believe God, and believe that He raised our Lord Jesus from the dead,
- 4:25 and believe that Jesus was delivered over to death for our transgressions, and believe that he was raised for our justification. This brings us to the condition which Abraham had, and it sets the stage for the next part of my letter:

THE BREADTH OF GRACE IN THIS WHOLE MATTER
(5:1-21)

- 5:1 Now that you can see how Abraham's faith justified him, and that ours justifies us to the same friendship with God, you can understand that through our faith in the Lord Jesus, we have a special peace with God —
- 5:2 but it has brought us MORE! We have received a higher justification yet (as I explained in 1:17). We were introduced into this grace of JUSTIFICATION TO LIFE wherein we stand — something Abraham never had, and which makes us exult in the special hope of sharing the glory of God's nature.
- 5:3 But I want to tell you more about our justification — perhaps we could call it "the rose-colored glasses of faith." This makes us exult also in tribulations! And we do this because we know that they will give us a spirit which actively holds on — perseverance.
- 5:4 Even more: Perseverance will develop into proven character — what we need to obtain that hope of sharing the glory of God's nature.
- 5:5 And this hope (unlike others) will not be disappointed because it grows by God's love which He has poured out within our hearts through His Holy Spirit which (imagine this!) — which He has GIVEN US through the spirit begettal which has begun our new faith-life.
- 5:6 Here is how this has happened:
Even up through the Jewish Age we still were helpless in the matter of a way into life. But now, at the right time for the development of God's New Creation, Christ died for the ungodly.

- 5:7 Now, just think about that! It is difficult to conceive of dying for someone, even if it is a person worth dying for — although we might even entertain the idea that a good and noble person could inspire us to self-sacrifice.
- 5:8 But God demonstrated His own magnanimous love toward us by having Christ ransom us BEFORE ANY REPENTANCE on our part! (He is making His new creation from that which is FALLEN!)
- 5:9 But there is MUCH MORE than just the ransom! He now has given us VITALIZED or LIFE-JUSTIFICATION based on that ransom which takes us out from under the wrath which still abides on the world! (See 1:18 and 8:1.)
- 5:10 Catch this thought carefully: While we were yet God’s enemies, we were given the mechanism of reconciliation to God by the ransom-sacrifice of Jesus. But (and here is the “MUCH MORE” of 5:9), having the merit of that ransom, we are saved (LIFE-JUSTIFIED) by Jesus’ having been brought back to life again. (See 4:25.)
- 5:11 And, not only this, but our entire attitude is changed into an exulting in our God’s being the foundation of our new lives through Jesus Christ through whose unspeakably kind sacrifice we have now entered into atonement — a life-path!

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- 5:12 I want to expand on the concepts of how the ransom will apply to everyone ultimately.
- It was BY ONE MAN that sin entered this world. The result was death — not only on that one man, but upon all of his descendants since they could not escape the sinning which began with him.
- 5:13 But note this legal point: Even though Adam’s progeny continued sinning, until the Law came along, they were not individually accountable for the sins of their lives. They were not under individual judgment responsibility. (This is why the ransom can work.) (See 4:15.)
- 5:14 Thus, from Adam until Moses, death was upon all, even though it was only INHERITED. In other words, the RESPONSIBILITY for all death rested on Adam’s offence, not on anyone else. Adam was, like Jesus will be, the single LIFE-GIVER of the race. Hence, Adam was a type of Christ. (But Adam didn’t have real life to pass on to us!)

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- 5:15 From here through verse 19, I want to CONTRAST what came from Adam versus the GRACE which comes through Christ.
- THE ABUNDANCE OF GRACE (a free gift) which will result from the ransom has so many more results than did Adam’s transgression! By one man’s (Adam’s) transgression, everybody died; BUT, by God’s gift of grace through the one man, Jesus, there is going to be a SUPER-ABOUNDING in benefits — both to us and to the world.

- 5:16 On one hand we have judgment against one transgression resulting in condemnation. But on the other hand, we have the free gift of grace which will result in actual righteousness, actual justification, the actual erasing of the MULTITUDES of transgressions in human history! (Some exchange!)
- 5:17 Let me play on the word “reign.” By one man’s error, death has had the reign over this world. But by the abundance of grace which will come from the “other” one man, Jesus Christ, both Church and restored man will reign over the earth — not in death, but in life! (Some exchange!)
- 5:18 To say it one more way: One transgression condemned an entire race; but one act of righteousness has begun justification to LIFE ultimately for each individual, Church and world.
- 5:19 Just as through one disobedience, the many (all of us!) were made sinners, the opposite will be true through the obedience of one: the many (all of us) will individually and personally be made righteous.

* * * * *

- 5:20 Now, I want to expand on how the Law fits into this picture.
The Law was given so that transgression would increase! What am I saying?! Transgression “increased” in two ways: (1) The Law allowed our AWARENESS of transgressions to increase; (2) but it also increased RESPONSIBILITY for the transgressions to increase because where a Law exists, sin is imputed. (See 5:13.) But, I’m certain you can see, when sin increases, the opportunity increases for grace to abound all the more! (You see how the free gift is SO MUCH LARGER than the original transgression! It not only will cancel original sin, it will free those under the Law’s additional condemnation.)
- 5:21 So, we have another “reign” going on: While sin has been reigning with its resulting death, now, as the new age opens, grace can “reign” by giving to us (his Church) justification to life through our Lord Jesus Christ.

THE REASON FOR,
AND THE RESULTING RESPONSIBILITY OF,
OUR JUSTIFICATION
(6:1-23)

- 6:1 Returning to my earlier philosophically-absurd question: Should we continue to sin so that more grace can be exercised? (3:5-8)
- 6:2 May no one ever consider such a course! (You catch my meaning, I hope. Living under the Law just to be relieved by grace would be an insane course!) (See 5:20.)
- But I now am making a much more sober point. Our justification was SO THAT WE CAN DIE AS PART OF THE SIN OFFERING. If we are dying in order to ultimately DO AWAY WITH SIN, is it consistent that in our lives we can yet consciously practice sin? (See 6:1.)

- 6:3 Perhaps you have not deeply enough thought of the implication of our baptism into Christ Jesus. By being immersed into him — by becoming part of all he stands for — we have become immersed into the REASON FOR HIS DEATH.
- 6:4 Therefore, we have our perfect humanity (our imputed righteousness) buried (sacrificed) by immersion INTO THE SAME DEATH as his! And his death was to do away with sin for the whole world. Thus, ours is also!
- Now, just as God's glory raised Jesus from the dead in order TO ACCOMPLISH that assignment, we, after our symbolic raising from the dead as we came out of the water, must now walk as if we are no longer humans! It is only consistent.
- 6:5 After all, if we are dying AS HE DID — for the very same purpose — we will live again for the very same purpose for which he lives again; and in a very special sense, our new life has begun.
- 6:6 Know this well: Our humanity is crucified with him for one purpose only: THAT THE WHOLE BODY OF SIN — every sin the world has known or will know — WILL BE DONE AWAY WITH! Why? Because we (all the world) are SLAVES TO SIN, and that must end!
- 6:7 But we need a strong focus: If we have died (that is, have been crucified with Christ), we are free — no longer slaves to sin (ahead of the world).
- 6:8 Now, if the PURPOSE of our death is the SAME as the PURPOSE of Jesus' death (that sin can be done away with),
- THEN,
- we are justified in believing that we, LIKE HIM, will COME TO LIFE with him as spirit beings TO FULFILL THE PURPOSE for which he and we died: to eradicate all sin.
- 6:9 Consider this: We know that Christ, having been raised from the dead, never is to die again — death never can again enslave him.
- 6:10 Why? Because his death was for a special purpose only. He died to eradicate sin once and for all. Now that he lives again — and that is permanent! — He lives to serve God — to actually eradicate the sin.
- 6:11 It is EXACTLY in the same manner that you must now consider your own dying and your own new life — a life now only in embryo, but soon to be permanent in heaven with him. You are dying as he did, for the purpose of helping to eradicate sin; but you also are “alive” (as new creatures) in Christ Jesus for God's service.
- 6:12 What are the implications of this for us now? It is so obvious! We must abhor and fight any and all sin in our mortal bodies (because that is where it resides). We cannot obey the fallen tendencies within us.
- 6:13 We cannot present our bodies' strengths, talents, and opportunities in support of sin or unrighteousness. Instead, we must take those same mortal powers as if they were reborn in perfection and present them as tools in God's service
- 6:14 because sin must not now be imputed to us, must not rule us, as if we were under the Law (5:20), BECAUSE WE NOW ARE UNDER GRACE!
- 6:15 So, I return to my absurd question (6:1) in another form: Shall we, not being under a law where sin is imputed, SIN just because we are free from the

Law? Does being under grace encourage sin? You can see from our discussion above how foolish this is.

- 6:16 You know how it works. You cannot serve two masters. Either you present your abilities to obey sin (which will result in death), or you will present your abilities to obey righteousness (resulting in the continuance of our justification).
- 6:17 But we thank God on your behalf that, while you were slaves of sin, you switched your allegiance from deep in your hearts to be obedient to and committed to
- 6:18 righteousness which has freed you from sin.
- 6:19 I'm speaking in human terms about "slavery" because you know, indeed, that the weaknesses of your flesh are exactly that — slavery! Your former lives had you presenting your talents, time, efforts, and thoughts to impurities and license which seemed only to result in more impurities and licenses which you actually thought of as "liberties"! But now I am adjuring you to present your fleshly powers as slaves to righteousness. This is going to result in the big doctrine and reality of SANCTIFICATION for you — a subject I soon will treat at length.
- 6:20 You see, of course, that when you were enslaved to sin, you had no attachment to righteousness.
- 6:21 What good were you getting out of those things you were doing and of which you now are ashamed? The only outcome of that life was death.
- 6:22 But now, you have been emancipated from sin and have willingly enslaved yourselves to God. And you are deriving your BENEFIT (which is justification). It is beginning to result in your CHANGING OF SELF (which is sanctification). The outcome is the beginning of eternal life.
- 6:23 Sin pays out death. God GIVES FREELY eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

THE SPIRIT OF THE LAW:
THE NEW CREATURE VERSUS THE FLESH
(7:1-25)

- 7:1 For the sake of my Jewish brethren, I need to focus on your ability to abandon your commitment to the Law. After all, we well know that as long as a Jew lives, he is responsible to the Law.
- 7:2 This is reflected in the marriage laws. A wife is bound to her husband under these laws until he dies. Then she is free.
- 7:3 Thus, if while her husband is yet alive, she is with another man, she would be an adulteress. But, if her husband dies, she is free from her marriage and may lawfully marry another man.
- 7:4 Now, I want to apply that concept to the Jew who has been joined to Christ and separated from the bonds of the Law. It is a similar contractual agreement. Not only has the Law died for you, but you ALSO have died to the Law.

The Law has become dead to you because it couldn't give you life. You might say that YOU died because of this. And because sacrificing the flesh of Messiah did give you life-justification which you sacrificed (6:3), you are not only dead from the Law, but also dead in the flesh. You are alive ONLY as new creatures (not as Jews under the Law), JOINED TO CHRIST now instead of to the Law, and able to bear fruitage for God. (You can see why you cannot be in Christ and still under the Law! That would be adultery.)

7:5 While we were "in the flesh" and under the Law, sin still worked in the actions of our bodies — and the only fruitage was death.

7:6 But now that we Jews have been transferred from Moses into Christ, we are dead to the Law that bound us, and we serve God in the SPIRIT OF THE LAW instead of struggling under the old fatal rule of having to keep its LETTER.

7:7 Let me caution though, that the Law itself is not sin. We never should make this conclusion.

I am going to represent myself as being all of Israel in order to make a point. If the Law had not been added to the Abrahamic Covenant, I never would have fully realized what sin is and how it was ever-present with me. If the Law had not specified, "YOU SHALL NOT COVET," for instance, then I never would have realized what coveting is and how it was in my very being.

7:8 But, the result was that the commandment awakened in me the realization that I coveted all kinds of things all the time! Whereas BEFORE the commandment, sin didn't make me feel guilty. I was sort of dead or numb to it.

7:9 So for me (for Israel), I felt fairly alive under the hopes of the Abrahamic Promise, but when the Law came, it was SIN that became a living reality before me, and I died! — I realized I stood without justification.

7:10 Thus this simple commandment which, in spirit, was to result in life, proved, in reality, to result in death for me.

7:11 What happened next was quite remarkable. The good intentions of the commandment were SEIZED BY THE SINFUL MIND and made to be a DECEPTION for me — made me think the Law was saving me. And the result was that it killed me! That has been the history of Israel under the Law.

7:12 It is important that we understand the matter correctly. The Law itself is holy, and its commandment is holy, and righteous, and good. I cannot stress this too strongly!

7:13 But another caution is in order here. I might want to reason that something good (the Law) became the cause of death for me. This is not correct! It was SIN that caused death for me. But, in the end, the effect of this will be revealing. Sin will be seen in its true light AS SIN — as a deceptive, malignant, and fearsome thing. Sin utilized that which was good to bring about my death. Thus, by means of the commandment, the unspeakable sinfulness of sin might be plainly shown.

7:14 The Law is good because it has spiritual standards and a spiritual origin. Only those in perfect harmony with the spirit world can keep it. But I, as a man, was sold into the slavery of sin as my inheritance since Eden.

- 7:15 So, regardless of my new-creature intentions, I do not recognize as my own actions the things I do! I do not practice what I want to do; to the contrary, I do the very things I hate!
- 7:16 But, in doing the very things I do not want to do, I am confessing the goodness of the Law because it contains the good I really want to do, and shows me that I'm not doing it.
- 7:17 What is the conclusion? I, the new creature, am not the one doing my sinning! It is inherited sin within my humanity that does it.
- 7:18 I know that no good thing is inherent in me — I mean, in my flesh. But the WILL to do it is ever-present in me — just not the DOING.
- 7:19 Thus the good I want, I don't do; but the evil I don't want, I practice.
- 7:20 I must keep telling myself that if I am doing what I don't really want to do, I AM NOT THE ONE DOING IT! It is inherited sin ensconced in me that is doing it.
- 7:21 This is a Christian principle we must keep in mind for the sake of our faith: Evil is irremovably in me — in me who wants only to do good.
- 7:22 I joyfully concur with the Law of God in my inner man,
- 7:23 but I see clearly a different law in the workings of my body. It constantly wages war against the law of my mind. It constantly has me to a degree IMPRISONED in my flesh — unable to escape the law of sin.
- 7:24 How wretched this makes me! I know this is a rhetorical question, but “Who will set me free from this death-burdened body?”
- 7:25 It is God Who does and will, through Jesus Christ our Lord — and I thank Him for it!
- 7:26 Until my complete deliverance from my flesh, I will continue on the one hand serving the Law of God with my new mind; but on the other hand I know my flesh will yet serve the law of sin.

THE HONOR AND PROTECTIONS OF SONSHIP

(8:1-39)

- 8:1 Now, after all I have just explained, you see and rejoice in this one fact of your vitalized justification: There now is NO CONDEMNATION (from Adam or the Law) for those who are new creatures in Christ Jesus! (Yes! Read that again!)
- 8:2 The LAW OF THE SPIRIT OF LIFE in Christ Jesus has ended your slavery to THE LAW OF SIN AND OF DEATH!
- 8:3 The Jewish Law could not do this. We saw that it was weak (not in itself, but because of sinful flesh). But God overcame that by sending His own Son made human, but perfect, as an offering for sin. This forever provided the death-knell for sin in the flesh (a benefit we receive ahead of the world)
- 8:4 so that the righteous requirements of the Law actually can be fulfilled in us because we do not function according to the flesh, but according to the spirit.

- 8:5 This works because, though those yet “in the flesh” set their minds on the things of the flesh, we who are “in the spirit” set our minds on the things of the spirit. (We virtually are another kind of creature!)
- 8:6 The mind of the flesh is yet in death; but the mind of the spirit is alive and at peace.
- 8:7 Those yet under Adam’s condemnation have minds which are hostile toward God; they do not subject themselves to the Law of God — they cannot, even if they try!
- 8:8 Thus those “in the flesh” cannot please God.
- 8:9 However, you, my brethren, are not “in the flesh,” but rather “in the spirit” as long as God’s spirit-begetting works in you. But all who are without the Spirit of Christ do not belong to Christ.
- 8:10 If Christ is in you, your flesh is ignored by God in considering your case. He considers your body dead because of sin. But he considers your mind alive because of justification.
- 8:11 But here is a remarkable expansion of that thought: If the spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead lives in you, He who raised Jesus from the dead will GIVE A LIFE TO YOUR MORTAL BODIES by the power of His Spirit which lives in you. In other words, He can make our fallen flesh alive in His service!
- 8:12 So then, brethren, we are not debtors to the flesh with any obligation to live according to its standards or wants
- 8:13 because if you are living according to the flesh, you must die. But, if by your cooperation with the Holy Spirit, you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live,
- 8:14 because — and here is the miracle! — all who are being led by the Spirit of God ARE SONS OF GOD! (Read that again!)
- 8:15 As sons you have not received a spirit of slavery. This would only return you to your fears. But, instead, you have received the spirit of SONSHIP. Dearest brethren, you may, in all sincerity and without fear, address your new Father as “Abba!” You are now a part of His intimate family!
- 8:16 And we have internal witness of this relationship. The Holy Spirit itself working in us testifies to our spiritual minds that we are, indeed, children of God.
- 8:17 And if we are children, we also are heirs. We are heirs to God’s promises jointly with Christ! Nevertheless, before receiving our full inheritance, we must suffer the experiences which will sanctify us as did he. Then we can be glorified with him.
- 8:18 However, evaluating the experiences of the present life against the glory we are promised leads us to only one conclusion:
- THERE IS NO COMPARISON!
- 8:19 I want you to comprehend clearly the importance of our promised inheritance. THE WHOLE CREATION anxiously (though ignorantly) longs for the day when we all are revealed as their saviors.
- 8:20 They (since Eden) had their existence become functionally futile, not because man wanted this kind of existence, but because God (in His wisdom)

- subjected the race to this period when evil is permitted. This was done not maliciously, but rather with the very real hope
- 8:21 that BECAUSE of the permission of evil, the whole creation will be eternally set free from being enslaved by corruption and will be brought into that life-giving freedom from sin that will be the GLORY of all who become God's children on any plane.
- 8:22 Thus, up through the present, the whole race experiences that groaning (that intense feeling of incompleteness) until that age when mankind will experience a new birth.
- 8:23 In one sense they are not alone in their groaning. We, too — we who have received the Holy Spirit before it is poured out on all flesh — even we groan within ourselves (have that intense feeling of incompleteness) while we eagerly await our birth as sons — sonship on a scale so much fuller than our present embryo state. We eagerly await the deliverance of the entire BODY OF CHRIST.
- 8:24 Our salvation is, of course, still in the “hope” stage. It is VERY REAL, but until we see its culmination, it can only be defined as hope.
- 8:25 But it is reality to us. We believe it though we don't “see” it yet. (That is a prime definition of our justifying faith!) So, we not only wait for it eagerly, we also persevere through anything that precedes it.
- 8:26 In the same way that hope overrides the lack of sight, so also do our spiritually-oriented minds help to override in the particular weakness we all experience — our inability to pray intelligently and correctly in meaningful words. But our new minds plead with God on our behalf with intense feelings far too complex for words.
- 8:27 And God, Who can read our deepest feelings which we cannot articulate, KNOWS what the innermost disposition of our new-creature mind is, because our new mind pleads for us in a way that is harmonious with the will of God.
- 8:28 The above is only one example. We know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called ones according to His purpose. (It is inconsistent with His relationship to us for Him to do otherwise.)
- 8:29 Consider our calling. In the remote past, before creation, He foreknew that He wanted this intimate family on His own Divine plane of existence. He predestinated that all who would become a part of that family would have to be conformed to the character image of His Son, so that Jesus will forever be the first of many brethren.
- 8:30 So He called individuals who would be given the honor of conforming to that predestined mold. Now, those whom He called, He had justified; and before their justification, He honored them with the truth.
- 8:31 Can anyone suggest any lack of involvement on His part for those who are a part of this most important project in all of universal history? If God be for us, who can be against us?!
- 8:32 Since God allowed His Son (His eternal joy!) to suffer and die FOR US, how incredible to think that He would spare anything else (any and every detail) for our good!

- 8:33 Therefore, if God considers us right in His eyes (His elect!), who (including the devil, himself) can accuse us? God has justified us —
- 8:34 who can condemn us?
And Christ Jesus died for us — and was raised to sit at God’s right hand. It is he who intercedes on our behalf in all matters.
- 8:35 Knowing this, do we think any being will separate us from Christ’s love? Do we think that pressure, or calamity, or persecutions, or hunger, or being ill-clothed, or being in danger, or being at the point of a sword will make a difference?
- 8:36 These items have been prophesied of the Church in Psalm 44:22. David said, “For your (Christ’s) sake we are being put to death (a gradual process!) all day long (— indeed, the whole Gospel Age). We are considered as “sheep to be slaughtered.” (But so was our Master!)
- 8:37 But in all of these things we abundantly conquer through Him who loved us so!
- 8:38 Therefore I am convinced that nothing — not death, not the temptations of life, not fallen angels, not rulers, not the “advantages” of the present nor the speculations of tomorrow, not the forces of nature,
- 8:39 not the expected barriers, high or deep, nor any other thing in creation — nothing will be able to separate us from God’s love which He gives us in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Do you feel secure?)

THE TWO ISRAELS
(9:1 – 11:36)

- 9:1 The new Gospel Age is about us; it is no longer about Israel. So I, as a Jew, must tell you both my feelings and understanding about this. Being in Christ, I will tell you truthfully how I feel inherently about this matter and how the Holy Spirit affects my conscience in this matter.
- 9:2 I have in my heart a great sorrow — an unceasing grief —
- 9:3 I COULD WISH (but I won’t) that I, myself, could be accursed — separated from Christ for the sake of my Jewish family — my kinsmen according to genealogy.
- 9:4 They are Israelites, who had sonship offered to them first. They had all of the advantages: the glory of being dealt with exclusively, the seat of the covenants, the administrations of the Law with its religious services and promises.
- 9:5 They had among them the faith-fathers, and even the genealogy of Messiah who is now over us all, blessed of God forever. Amen!
- 9:6 BUT,
- It is not as though all of those things were failures. God does nothing that doesn’t have wonderful purpose. It is not that Fleshly Israel’s days are passing without significance. So (verse 3), I don’t wish to give up what I have on behalf of Fleshly Israel, because all of those with a genealogy of Israelites are not whom God considers Israel.

- 9:7 Here is a great secret: Abraham's natural descendants are not considered by God automatically to be Abraham's children. In Genesis 21:12 we are told, "Through Isaac your descendants will be named."
- 9:8 This is a subtle promise! What it means is this: God's SONS (the heavenly seed of Abraham) will not be the children born naturally, but the children who come about BY PROMISE, as Isaac did. (That's us.)
- 9:9 You will recall the circumstances of Isaac's birth as recorded in Genesis 18:10. A PROMISE was given: "At that time I will come, and Sarah shall have a son." (So it is with the Church. We are Abraham's seed by PROMISE.)
- 9:10 Another typical instance you may recall was Rebekah who conceived twins by our father, Isaac.
- 9:11 Her twins were not yet born and hence could not be judged good or bad. But God chose one of them over the other, CLEARLY NOT BY THEIR WORKS, but because God wanted it that way to show that one Israel will be favored over another.
- 9:12 So, it was said to Rebekah "The older will serve the younger." (Genesis 25:23)
- 9:13 Thus also it is written (Malachi 1:2,3), "Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated." (Thus, in type, we see the products of the Gospel and Jewish ages.)
- 9:14 We cannot conclude that God has injustices!
- 9:15 He told Moses that His workings are planned. He said in Exodus 33:19, "I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion."
- 9:16 So, then, it matters not what mankind wants or what mankind does. It all depends on God who extends His mercies when He wants for the good of all.
- 9:17 Another instance is recorded in Exodus 9:16 to show us how God uses anyone He wants to further His purpose. God said to Pharaoh, "For this very purpose I raised you up, to demonstrate My power in you and that My Name might be proclaimed throughout the whole earth."
- 9:18 Thus we see that He has mercy on whom He desires, and He hardens whom He desires for the eventual good of all.
- 9:19 This might legitimately raise a question in your minds: "Why are we responsible for anything, seeing that He determines everything?"
- 9:20 I don't want to be harsh in my answer, but you should know by now how little we know about God's merciful workings. Who are we poor humans to challenge God? There is a passage in Jeremiah 18:1-6 which catches the spirit of my answer. Will the thing molded say to its molder, why did you make me like this?
- 9:21 Doesn't a potter have a right with his clay to make out of one lump of clay one vessel for especially honorable use (like the Church), and one vessel for a less honorable but very practical use (like Israel)?
- 9:22 This being the case, WHAT IF God very patiently endured an arrangement which He knew was designed only for temporary use? And then, because he had to go on with His plan, demonstrated His power and wrath against that corrupt arrangement?
- 9:23 And WHAT IF He did this because it was time to make known the riches of His glory, heaping His mercy on a new arrangement which, since remote times past, He had planned as His masterpiece? Could we argue against this if there is no injustice, but only good to all in the end?

- 9:24 Well, this IS what He has done. He is now heaping that mercy on us, the called, not from among Jews only (the less-honored arrangement), but also from among Gentiles (who by promise become part of Abraham's promised seed).
- 9:25 Notice the texts which incorporate Gentiles into this "new Israel": Hosea 2:23 says, "I will call those who were not my people, 'MY PEOPLE,' and her who was not beloved, 'BELOVED.'"
- 9:26 And it shall be that in the place where it was said to them, 'You are not my people,' there they shall be called the sons of the Living God."
- 9:27 Isaiah 10:22,23 tells us about Israel: "Though the number of the sons of Israel be like the sand of the sea, it is the remnant that will be saved;
- 9:28 for the Lord will execute His Word on the earth thoroughly and quickly." – showing the rejection of the old arrangement.
- 9:29 And Isaiah said in 1:9, "Unless the Lord of Hosts had left to us a posterity (a remnant), we would have become like Sodom, and would have resembled Gomorrah."
- 9:30 What should we gain from these texts? The summary is this: The Gentiles who did not pursue justification have now attained it! They are justified by faith.
- 9:31 But Israel, who pursued a law based on righteousness, did not arrive at righteousness or justification by that law.
- 9:32 Why not? Because they did not pursue justification BY FAITH, but BY WORKS.
- 9:33 This WAS PROPHESED about them! Isaiah prophesied in 28:16 and 8:14: "Behold, I lay in Zion a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense [faith in Jesus], and he who BELIEVES in him will not be disappointed!"
- 10:1 Brethren, my heart's desire and my prayer to God for Israel is for their ultimate salvation (rather than for their current conversion).
- 10:2 I can testify for them that they do have a zeal for God. But, unfortunately, it is not a zeal based on any knowledge of what God is doing.
- 10:3 And not knowing about God's new faith-justification offer, they continue to seek justification on their own under the Law. Consequently, they are not subjecting themselves to justification by God.
- 10:4 Justification of any kind under the Law is a dead concept to everyone who believes in Christ.
- 10:5 Moses made this plain in Leviticus 18:5. He showed that justification under the Law was only possible to the man who could actually keep the Law perfectly. That is works.
- 10:6 But when it comes to justification by faith, there are things we won't say or try to do because they are based on works. (Let me reflect on Moses' words in Deuteronomy 30:11-14.) For instance, those with faith-justification never would presume to think in their hearts, "We've got to send out seekers to heaven to find out how we can bring Messiah down to the people."
- 10:7 Or, "We've got to go out to the sea of humanity to find the answers on how to make Messiah a living reality for them." In other words, we don't really think we can do anything to affect God's plan!

- 10:8 So, what do those with faith-justification say? They quote the spirit shown by Moses, “The Word (the Truth) is available to you; it’s both in your mouth and in your heart.” What do these words by Moses mean? They mean we HAVE FAITH in what God says, and we preach it!
- 10:9 And what does this preaching say? It says, If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord, and if you believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, THAT is the basis of your salvation!
- 10:10 After all, it is with the heart that a person really believes, and that is what results in our justification. And it is with the mouth that we spread that belief which results in the salvation of all that truly hear.
- 10:11 As I said earlier (9:33), Isaiah comforts us by teaching that “Whoever believes in him will not be disappointed.”
- 10:12 And this formula is applicable both to Jew and Greek. God is God of all who call on Him, abounding with riches on their behalf —
- 10:13 as Joel 2:32 puts it, “Whoever will call on the Name of the Lord will be saved.”
- 10:14 I want to expand on the concept of calling on Him. To “call upon Him” means to RELY on Him. (It is a FAITH concept.) So, how can we call on Him if we don’t believe in Him (or have FAITH in Him)? And, obviously, how can we believe in Him if we’ve never heard about Him?
And how do we hear? We hear because someone preached to us.
- 10:15 And no one preaches with authority unless he is sent.
For this reason, Isaiah exclaims in 52:7, “How beautiful are the feet (the traveling) of those who bring good news of good things!” — those who are sent. (That’s us!)
- 10:16 However, we should not expect that all would heed this good news, for Isaiah also says (53:1), “Lord, who has believed our report?”
- 10:17 So the basic formula for our receiving our faith is that we heard, and our hearing was made valuable by the message we heard of Christ.
- 10:18 But what if I were to claim that not many were ever exposed to the message? The answer, covering the whole age to come, is given us in Psalm 19:4: “Their voice has gone out into all the earth, and their words to the ends of the world.”
- 10:19 But does Israel know about it? My first witness to this is Moses in Deuteronomy 32:21. He says, “I will make you jealous by that which is not a nation, by a nation without understanding will I anger you.”
- 10:20 To this testimony, Isaiah 65:1 adds boldly, “I was found by those who did not seek Me; I became manifest to those who did not ask for Me.” Thus the “nation” of which Moses spoke which makes Israel jealous is the Gentiles.
- 10:21 But to be very specific about Israel, Isaiah 65:2 says, “All the day long (the whole Jewish Age) I have stretched out My hands to a disobedient and obstinate people.”
- 11:1 I must, then, ask the logical question: Has God totally rejected His people, Israel? O, no! May it never be! In the case of individual Jews (a remnant from the preceding age), I am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin. So,

- 11:2 God has not rejected His people (either individually or collectively) whom He foreknew.
 FIRST OF ALL, let me treat (into verse 7) the remnant of Jewish individuals who have become Christians. You may remember the Scriptures regarding Elijah's skepticism, thinking all was lost. He pleads with God, impugning his own people!
- 11:3 He said (I Kings 19:10-18), "Lord, they have killed your prophets, they have torn down your altars, and I alone am left, and they are seeking my life."
 11:4 But God answered, "I have kept for Myself seven thousand men who have not bowed the knee to Baal."
 11:5 Well, it is that way now. There is a remnant of Jews who, by God's grace, are among us as His chosen ones.
 11:6 And since it is by His grace, they are no longer under the Law's requirements of works. IF they were, grace would not be a factor.
 11:7 SECONDLY, let me treat the question of Israel as a nation.
 What Israel wanted (thinking it was getting it under the Law) it has not obtained. Only the remnant of Jews now among the chosen got what Israel really wanted. The great majority of Israel were hardened (9:18) — made impervious to the Gospel.
 11:8 Both Isaiah (29:10) and Moses (Deuteronomy 29:4) record this hardening: "God gave them a spirit of stupor, eyes to see not, and ears to hear not, down to this very day."
 11:9 David (Psalm 69:22, 23) also confirms the hardening: "Let their table (the Law they were "eating") become a snare, and a trap, and a stumbling-block, and a retribution to them.
 11:10 Let their eyes be darkened to see not, and bend their backs for the age."
 (David meant they couldn't stand up straight to see ahead until the Gospel Age ends).
 11:11 Let's reason on the implications of all of this for Israel as a nation. Did Israel stumble in a way as to have fallen irretrievably? May it never be! But their transgression has allowed this Gospel Age when salvation has come to the Gentiles. This is, among other things, to make the Jews jealous! (10:19) Why make them jealous if no good could come out of it?
 11:12 Therefore, if their transgression brings the riches of the Gospel message spread all over the world (10:8), and, additionally, their failure brings the riches of sonship to the Gentiles, can you even imagine the blessings in store when the fulfillment comes of all the prophecies concerning their being a blesser nation?!
- 11:13 By my spreading the Word to you Gentiles (which is my assignment), my ministry is enlarged
 11:14 by my accomplishing two things for my Jewish countrymen:
 (1) I am making them jealous (11:11)
 — thus preparing for their eventual reinstatement; and
 (2) I am harvesting some of the remnant to be a part of our calling
 — that is, save some of the Jews now.

- 11:15 Just think, if Israel's rejection is going to result in the reconciliation of the whole world eventually, then, when the actual time for their reinstatement comes, it will be the TIMES OF RESTITUTION AND RESURRECTION.
- 11:16 In the Millennium, Israel will be the first-fruitage of the Age (— the grain offering of Numbers 15:20 and Leviticus 23:10 from which came the bread offered to God as a consecrated offering). If the part of the dough offered as first-fruitage is holy, then the whole batch is holy. Thus as the whole world comes into Israel's New Covenant, they also will be holy.
- Let me make another analogy — this time to the Olive Tree, representing the results of the Abrahamic Covenant, the Masterpiece of the Holy Spirit's functioning. If the root (the Abrahamic Promise) is holy, then everything branching out of it also will be holy.
- 11:17 But if some of the branches were broken off because of temporary unholiness, and, instead, you Gentiles (being a wild olive tree) were grafted in among the remaining holy branches and, as a result became with them partakers of the rich root of the olive tree —
- 11:18 THEN, you must take great care not to have an arrogance toward the natural branches. If, indeed, you do become arrogant regarding the cut-off branches, you also have become unholy! You will have forgotten that the root supports you, not you the root!
- 11:19 You might just rationalize your position by saying, "Well, the Jewish branches were broken off so that I, the Gentile branch, might be grafted in."
- 11:20 You would be right! They were broken off for that purpose, but the REASON was their unbelief. Remember, you only stand by your faith. Forget your conceit; have a little sober fear lest your fate be like theirs.
- 11:21 After all, if God did not spare the branches that were natural to the tree, there is no way that He will spare you, either.
- 11:22 Behold then the lesson of 9:18. We see both God's kindness and His severity. Upon the natural seed who fell, there is a severity; but to you, the spiritual seed, there now is God's kindness — but only if you continue in His kindness! Otherwise, you also will be cut off.
- 11:23 And a Jew also, if he doesn't continue in unbelief, can be grafted in individually because God is able to reinstate such a person.
- 11:24 Reason on it. If your origin is a wild olive tree, and yet you were placed contrary to nature into a cultivated olive tree, how much more easily could the natural branches be grafted into their own olive tree?
- 11:25 This this also applies beyond the Gospel Age. There is something which yet is a mystery to the Jew and to most of the world, but I don't want you to be ignorant of this mystery. Otherwise, you might think yourselves too wise! Israel has only a partial hardening (9:18) — partial in time and in concept. Once the body of Christ has been completed, and all the Gentile branches have come in, that blindness will end.
- 11:26 So, contrary to public opinion, ALL Israel (natural and spiritual) will be saved. Isaiah (59:20, 21) wrote the assuring words — the two-part salvation of both Israels — when he said, "The deliverer (Spiritual Israel) will come from Zion (their spiritual reward) and will remove ungodliness from Jacob (natural Israel.)" Isaiah 27:9 and Jeremiah 31:31,34 add definition to that

- promise with the words, “This is My covenant with them, when I take away their sins.”
- 11:27 So, dear brethren, from the standpoint of the incoming Gospel Age arrangement, natural Israel are enemies of God — but for your benefit!
- 11:28 But, and this is so important, from the standpoint of God’s purposes and election, they remain beloved because of the faith of their forefathers.
- 11:29 Never forget that God’s gifts and callings are irrevocable!
- 11:30 You once found yourselves disobedient to God; but now you have been shown mercy because of their disobedience.
- 11:31 But now, in the Gospel Age, Israel is in the disobedient category — but for a marvelous reason and with a marvelous prospect — so that BECAUSE OF THE MERCY SHOWN TO YOU, they now have mercy guaranteed to them!
- 11:32 God has so arranged it that, since all have been captives of disobedience, His mercy might be seen and appreciated in the release of all!
- 11:33 It is all almost more wonder than we can contain!
Oh, the depths of the riches, both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God!
How unsearchable are His judgments, and how unfathomable His ways!
- 11:34 As Isaiah said (40:13, 14), “Who has known the mind of the Lord, or who became His counselor?”
- 11:35 Job also touches on this (35:7; 41:11). His message basically is this: “Who has ever given advice to God that God should feel indebted to pay him for it?”
- 11:36 Everything is FROM Him; everything comes THROUGH His attributes; everything owes itself TO Him. To Him be the glory forever and ever. Amen.

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HOW THE NEW CREATION MUST SANCTIFY ITSELF
(12:1 – 15:13)

- 12:1 Dear brethren, I have concluded the doctrinal part of my letter, and I want to help you now to think about the applications of what we have learned. God’s mercies have justified you to life. Therefore, I urge you, based on those mercies, that you learn to bring your human bodies’ powers into supporting that new mind, making your bodies a part of a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God. We call this sanctification, and it is an appropriate part of your worship. What else could we possibly do? (6:13, 19, 22)
- 12:2 This will mean that you will not be a reflection of this age; rather, by submitting your thought processes to change, you must become something unearthly new, allowing yourselves to explore God’s will working in you, with the expectation of finding it good for you, pleasing for you, and maturing for you as new creatures.
- 12:3 I am going to explore a long list of sanctification objectives with you. God’s grace given to me wants me to begin this list with a very primary foundation principle. So, I say to every single one of you, you need HUMILITY. Humility is accurate assessment. Therefore, each of you must keep from having an

- inflated concept of self; BUT it is important that you have sound judgment of self. You all DO have worth. God has, by His calling you, assured your faith that you have worth. What I am counseling is accurate assessment of it.
- 12:4 But this leads to an additional consideration in proper sanctification. Your assessment of self must be in the context of cooperation with others. The body of Christ is not you alone; it is many members. There is a reason for that: We all are not supposed to be alike, nor are we supposed to be able to do the same things.
- 12:5 So we, who are many individuals, form one corporate completeness in Christ. Individually we are connected to all the others and have resulting cooperative responsibilities.
- 12:6 But we do differ. Our talents will be magnified and utilized according to how God's grace directs. Here are some sanctification objectives:
If we have a proportion of faith that allows us to understand prophecy, let us help others to understand it.
- 12:7 If we can DO ANYTHING that is helpful to the ecclesia or to individual saints, by all means do it!
If we can present concepts clearly, then help others to see them in fellowship or in meetings.
- 12:8 If we have the kind of personality that can stimulate faith in others, give them that stimulation.
If we can be generous with temporal assets, give with the expectant joy of being helpful.
If we have the talent of organizing, let us do so with the care necessary to indicate our willingness without any desire to be manipulative.
If we can enter into sympathy with any of the body who need it, let us never do so as a sense of duty, or do so grudgingly, but with that internal cheer that considers it a privilege to do so.
- 12:9 Let us all examine our agape to be certain it is principled. If it is, it will hate all evil, and it will preserve everything good. This is one assessment that applies to us all.
- 12:10 Concerning our other "love" — our affections for the brethren: The Church is your kindred, your family. We must CHERISH each other! This means that we will anticipate each other in showing respect, and we will be pleased when credit goes to another.
- 12:11 Our attitude in all service we can give should be one of fervency. We should be able to tell the Lord, "No matter how poorly I did things, I did them with sincere enthusiasm!"
- 12:12 Base your happiness on your hope.
Endure pressures.
Consecrate time to prayer. Without it, we will fail.
- 12:13 The saints have all kinds of temporal and spiritual needs. If we get our minds off of self, we will see these and be able to contribute to their welfare. This is the essence of practicing hospitality. "True hospitality is marked by an open response to the dignity of each and every person."

- 12:14 Find a way to do something for the benefit of those who go out of their way to make you look bad. Don't rail against them; do them some good turn.
- 12:15 Learn sympathy and compassion. Enter into the spirit of the responses that others have to their situations. Try to feel their losses and joys.
- 12:16 After all, our Millennial assignment will be based on our ability to understand the state-of-mind of others. We must do that now with each other.
- Don't think that a good mind makes you better!
Learn from those who have had less in life and in education.
Don't think your own opinions are the standard for wisdom.
- 12:17 "Tit-for-tat" is not permissible for us.
A general honesty of character in the world's eyes must be expected of us.
- 12:18 While some people will make it impossible, it always is necessary on OUR PART that we live peaceably with all men.
- 12:19 "Getting even" is a concept that must never enter our minds. But, as a comfort, brethren, I want you to leave room for the wrath of God. If He decides that your detractors have gone too far, He will intervene on your behalf. As He had Moses write in Deuteronomy 32:35, "Vengeance is Mine; I will repay," says the Lord.
- 12:20 But, as for your part in this kind of situation, Solomon has said in Proverbs 25:21, 22, "But if your enemy is hungry, feed him; and if he is thirsty, give him a drink; for in doing so, you will heap burning coals on his head; and the Lord shall reward thee." You will thus be giving your enemy the blessing of going home with coals (in a container which is carried on his head) to start his home fires burning — a genuine act of hospitality.
- 12:21 What is the lesson? Don't be ground down by the evils which attack you. Instead, fight them and their effects by doing good!
- 13:1 I want to spend some extended time on our responsibility toward earthly governments. Our liberties in Christ do not give us liberties from laws unless they conflict with God. This is a sanctification imperative. God, Himself, ordained that the era of the permission of evil would be governed by men.
- 13:2 Consequently, if we defy governments, we actually are defying God's arrangement for the present time. If the government condemns you for law-breaking, it is correct in doing so. God, Himself, will be displeased at your behavior.
- 13:3 The general concept is this: Rulers are there to keep order. Thus, a fear of them should be had only by those who defy order, not by those of us who behave well. So, if we don't want to fear rulers, we must go out of our way to be respectable and respectful citizens. In many instances this may even result in our receiving praise!
- 13:4 In a very special sense, an earthly authority is a deacon of God for our benefit; he maintains a peaceful atmosphere in which we can function. But if we are law-breakers, we should be apprehensive of the results! He carries the sword for good reason: He needs it, as God's order-keeping deacon, to bring anger against anyone who practices evil.

- 13:5 Therefore, there are two good reasons for us to be in subjection to laws:
(1) because we will suffer the consequences if we disobey them,
and
(2) because our consciences should bother us if we do not conform to what God has ordained.
- 13:6 This means several things for us. It means that we willingly pay taxes to support God's temporary deacons of order.
- 13:7 It also means that various branches of rulership exact varying requirements. It is due to them from us whether it be taxes levied on a population on a regular basis, or whether it be a custom collected for some specialized public project. Some branches of government only require a certain RESPECT. Give them their due! Some parts of government require an honor for the office. This promotes stability. Give them their due!
- 13:8 And, since we owe, we must pay what we owe. Never be in debt to anyone. But I will make one exception: Never feel that you have paid off your debt to owe love to each other. This debt has to do with the fulfilling of God's Law, and it is a perpetual debt. He who loves his neighbor has, indeed, fulfilled the spirit of the Law.
- 13:9 After all, the commandments such as "Thou shalt not commit adultery," or "You shall not murder," or "You shall not steal," or "You shall not covet" — or you can name any other commandment you wish — these commandments all are summed up in the words of Moses (Leviticus 19:18), "You shall love your neighbor as yourself."
- 13:10 Love cannot wrong a neighbor; therefore, love is the fulfillment of the Law.
- 13:11 Strive for this, knowing that it is time for you to awaken from any drowsiness you might have. Our time for sanctification already is shorter for us than it was when we first believed.
- 13:12 Even in the sense of humanity's history, the horrible night of sin is in its last age, and the Millennial dawn is nearing. It is our hope and our focus. Therefore, let us lay aside all of the deeds of the dark era of sin, and let us put on light as an armor against the intrusion of dark deeds.
- 13:13 Let us pretend we already are in the Millennial day — immune to the surrounding carousing, drunkenness, sexual promiscuity, sensuality, strife, and jealousy.
- 13:14 Instead, let us wear the identity of the Lord Jesus Christ, and let us treat the flesh and its lusts as if they were non-existent!
- 14:1 Another sanctification objective for us is a particular application of our faith as regards our brethren. We must accept as part of the ecclesia and as part of our fellowship a person whose faith might be weak in certain areas. But we must not accept him with the thought that we will focus on and judge his opinions which will differ from ours!
- 14:2 I'm going to give you some examples — not because the examples are the important things, but because they will make my point.
For instance, one person's faith allows him in good conscience to eat almost anything. But a person with a skittish conscience may not have developed a

- faith which allows that. He may feel comfortable in conscience only eating vegetables.
- 14:3 Now, there are TWO ERRORS OF FAITH possible in this situation. First, the one who eats anything may have a breakdown of faith by HOLDING IN CONTEMPT the vegetarian. But, secondly, the vegetarian may have a breakdown in faith by judging negatively the one who eats everything. Both are exhibiting a kind of pride. But here's the point: GOD HAS ACCEPTED THEM BOTH! We must have faith in His wisdom and overrulings in dealing with all of us in our peculiarities.
- 14:4 If God has accepted someone, WHO ARE YOU to judge God's servants? It is in the eyes of the Master that a servant stands or falls. And you know what? Both of these servants will stand, because it is God who is able to make each stand, regardless of his foibles.
- 14:5 You know how it goes. One person thinks certain days are special; another thinks they all are alike. The important factor is that each must be fully convinced IN HIS OWN MIND of why he thinks that way.
- 14:6 Consequently, if someone reveres a special day, he is doing so because he thinks it will please the Lord. If someone has unrestricted dietary intake, it is because he thinks that that meets with the Lord's approval, and he thanks the Lord for it. But the man who restricts his diet also does it because he thinks it will please the Lord; and he, too, thanks the Lord for his food.
- 14:7 Brethren, fix this concept in your minds: There is not one of us who approaches the questions of daily living for himself. There is not one of us who approaches the questions of our spiritual sacrificing (our dying for Him) for himself.
- 14:8 Because in life's temporal matters, we live for the Lord; in spiritual matters of sacrifice, we die for the Lord. Therefore, whether in temporal or in spiritual matters, we are the Lord's.
- 14:9 Christ died and rose so that he might be the Lord of everything in our lives: our daily temporal things, and our spiritual things, also.
- 14:10 But why would you either judge your brother's freedoms or hold his weaknesses in contempt? We all stand before God's judgment as His servants — not before each other.
- 14:11 God reminds us of this in Isaiah 45:23. He writes, "As I live, says the LORD, every knee shall bow to Me, and every tongue shall give praise to God."
- 14:12 So then, each of us will give our accounting only to God.
- 14:13 Therefore, let us never judge one another any more. Instead, let's put our energies toward a new attitude: We will not put any obstacle or discouragement in the path of our brethren.
- 14:14 I am informed, and I know by experience, that in Christ all things (except sin) are holy — not common or unclean. ANYTHING we use or do in his service becomes holy. HOWEVER, perception is important. If one of us PERCEIVES in his conscience that something is unholy, then, to him, IT IS UNCLEAN. I am introducing the importance and ascendancy of conscience.
- 14:15 Therefore, and this is imperative, if you hurt your brother over a matter of food (!), you are not walking according to agape. Christ died for him! Will you destroy his faith by your eating habits?

- 14:16 What I am saying is this: Just because you have a liberty, just because you have something you think to be a perfectly innocent behavior, don't let it end up being a practice for which you can legitimately be criticized.
- 14:17 The Kingdom of God is not a collection of liberties we have gained in eating and drinking. The attitude of those who constitute the embryo Kingdom is one of righteousness, peace, and joy in the leadings of the Holy Spirit.
- 14:18 And he who grasps this, and serves Christ with it, will keep his acceptance with God and will even find approval among men.
- 14:19 My summary is this: Whatever makes for peace and edification among us, PURSUE THAT COURSE.
- 14:20 Whatever you do, don't tear down a work that God has begun in another by uncaringly pursuing your liberties in food intake! Remember, all things in His service (except sin) are CLEAN. BUT, nevertheless, they are evil (they are sin) for the person who gives offense by using them without regard for the consciences of others.
- 14:21 It is a good practice not to eat meat, or to drink spirits, or to do anything which manifestly challenges your brother's conscience. All you are doing is discouraging him.
- 14:22 Let me bring it back to faith. No matter how strong your faith is that what you are or are not doing is correct, Keep it to yourself! Agree to it with God. Don't parade it in front of anyone whose conscience will find offense by it. You will be a happier man if the things you approve of don't condemn you!
- 14:23 But if you are one of those with a skittish conscience — if you have sincere doubts — LISTEN TO YOUR CONSCIENCE. Don't eat what you think is wrong to eat. That is an abrogation of your faith. And whatever is outside of your faith structure is sin.
- 15:1 I hope you have caught my point. Those among us with super confidence ought to support those among us without such strength; it is not our place to please ourselves at their expense.
- 15:2 Each of us is to please his neighbor with one objective — his edification.
- 15:3 Christ is our standard. He did not live life to please himself. As the matter of fact, Psalm 69:9 says, from his standpoint, "The reproaches of those who reproached you fell on me." What does this mean? It means he was willing to take the criticism aimed at another. We call that "guilt by association." Therefore, let us who are strong associate with and edify the weak, even if it brings reproach.
- 15:4 I cannot help but be repetitive about preaching how these Old Testament texts were written for our instruction. These old Scriptures encourage us, and give us perseverance, and engender hope.
- 15:5 May the God who gives this perseverance and encouragement grant to you all the unity of mind, each with the other, in these matters according to the unity brought about by Christ Jesus
- 15:6 so that WITH ONE ACCORD you may with ONE VOICE glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.
- 15:7 Therefore, in the best sense, accept one another, just as Christ also accepted us — all to the glory of God.

- 15:8 Just think (speaking of unity amongst diversity), how Christ deals with the diverse peculiarities of both Jews and Gentiles. (What a gamut!) He has become a servant to the circumcision in order to show the truth of God by confirming the promises given to the faith-fathers.
- 15:9 But he also has become a servant for the Gentiles to glorify the MERCIES OF GOD as was predicted in so many Old Testament texts.
For instance, in Psalm 18:49 and II Samuel 22:50 we find these words:
“Therefore I will give praise to you
among the Gentiles, and I will sing
to your Name.”
- 15:10 In Deuteronomy 32:43 he says, “Rejoice, O Gentiles, with His people.”
- 15:11 In Psalm 117:1 we have, “Praise the Lord all you Gentiles, and let all the peoples praise Him.”
- 15:12 Isaiah (11:1,10) adds, “There shall come the root of Jesse, and he who arises to rule over the Gentiles, in him shall the Gentiles hope.”
- 15:13 Now, may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you will abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

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PERSONAL ITEMS AND A BENEDICTION
(15:14 – 16:27)

- 15:14 In the end, my dear brethren at Rome, I personally am convinced that you are full of goodness, and full of all the knowledge you need about how to admonish one another.
- 15:15 Nevertheless, I have been particularly bold in bringing some points to your attention (as in Chapter 14) because you do need to be reminded of these points. And since God gave me a special grace
- 15:16 to minister to the Gentile Church as a priest of God’s Gospel, I want to be certain that you Gentiles not lose your acceptability as part of the sin offering because you failed the sanctification test of accepting the WHOLE BODY of saints — regardless of their weaknesses of conscience.
- 15:17 I have, therefore, my reason to boast of my relation to God in Christ Jesus — exulting in the privilege of serving you Gentiles — a special relationship with God which He gave me as a service in Christ.
- 15:18 I can hardly dare to express the power which Christ has used through me by words and actions in bringing the Gentiles into Christ.
- 15:19 He has used the power of signs, and wonders, and of various manifestations of the Holy Spirit so that from Jerusalem and everywhere as far as east-central Europe, I have fully preached the Gospel of Christ.
- 15:20 And that was my assignment — to preach the Gospel where it had not been heard. Others had other assignments, but I was given a unique opportunity to lay the foundation for building up the Gentile part of the Church.

- 15:21 I have been privileged to fulfill a part of Isaiah's prophetic words (52:15),
 "They who had no news of him shall see; and they who have not heard shall understand."
- 15:22 Because of these extensive travels, I have been prevented from coming to see you on numerous occasions.
- 15:23 But now it appears that my assignment in these regions is over. And since I have had for many years a longing to visit you
- 15:24 whenever I go to Spain — for I hope to visit you on the way, and I hope to be helped by you in making the trip once I have first enjoyed the pleasure of your company for a season —
- 15:25 I will plan on that course.
- But now, I first must go to Jerusalem to deliver a gift for the saints there.
- 15:26 The brethren in Macedonia and Achaia generously have made a contribution for the poor among the Jerusalem saints.
- 15:27 They were pleased to be able to do so, and, in essence, are indebted to Jerusalem.
- It is an exchange to be remembered as an example. Since the Gentile Churches have been enriched by the spiritual things sent out by the Jerusalem Church, they have a debt to minister to the Jerusalem Church material things when the need exists.
- 15:28 So, when I have finished this delivery which will put my seal of approval on this evidence of Gentile fruitage, I will, Lord willing, go to Spain by way of Rome.
- 15:29 I know that when I come to you, I will come with the full blessing of Christ.
- 15:30 I want to implore you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by the love we share in the Holy Spirit, that you join with me in fervent prayers to God for me
- 15:31 that I may be spared interference from the disobedient Jews in Judea so that my mission for Jerusalem may prove a blessing for the saints,
- 15:32 because I want to be speedily on my way to you, full of joy by God's will, and enjoying a refreshing rest in your company. Until then, may the God of peace be with you all. Amen.

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- 16:1 Permit me a postscript. Our Sr. Phoebe will be delivering this letter to you. She is a deaconess in the Cenchrea Ecclesia, and I recommend to you her fellowship.
- 16:2 Please receive her in a manner worthy of saints and also give her help in whatever matter she may have need of your help. She is a willing helper of so many — myself included.
- 16:3 I know many of you there. Please give greetings on my behalf to Priscilla and Aquila who have worked with me in Jesus' service.
- 16:4 They risked their own necks to preserve mine! So, not only do I give thanks, but so do all the Gentile ecclesias which, as a result, have been served.
- 16:5 Please also give my greetings to the Church in their house. Please greet my beloved Epaenetus who is the very first Asian convert to Christ!

- 16:6 Greet Mary who has worked so diligently on your behalf.
- 16:7 Also greet Andronicus and Junius, my kinsmen and my fellow prisoners who are outstanding examples among those sent out in the service. They have been in Christ before I was.
- 16:8 Greetings also to Ampliatius, my beloved in the Lord.
- 16:9 Also Urbanus, our fellow-worker in Christ, and also my beloved Stachys.
- 16:10 Greetings also to Apelles who has demonstrated his approval in Christ. Greet also the whole household of Aristobulus.
- 16:11 Greet another of my kinsmen, Herodion, as well as those of the household of Narcissus who are in the Lord.
- 16:12 Add greetings also to Tryphaena and Tryphosa who labor in the Lord's service. Greet the beloved Persis whose labor in the Lord seems particularly zealous.
- 16:13 To my greetings, please add Rufus, a fine example in the Lord, as well as his mother — who also functions as mine!
- 16:14 Greet Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermes, Patrobas, Hermas, and the brethren with them.
- 16:15 Please also greet Philologus and Julia, Nereus and his sister, Olympas, and all the saints who are with them.
- 16:16 And while you are passing out all of these greetings, greet each other with the holy symbols of affection on my behalf. All of the Churches of Christ greet you!

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- 16:17 I have thought of one more item of concern I want to pass on to you. The oversight of what happens in your ecclesia is your collective responsibility. Therefore, I am urging your watchfulness regarding any who cause rifts or scandals. Causing such things is contrary to the doctrine of the unity of the body we have discussed.
- If any do these things, turn away from them to show your displeasure. Don't exhibit the usual warmth; don't share fellowship in the usual way; don't honor them with service opportunities.
- 16:18 Such men are slaves — not of our Lord, but of their own carnality. Rather than using open challenges, they deceive by smooth and flattering words. Thus it is more the hearts than the minds of the unsuspecting that are deceived.
- 16:19 But be of good cheer. The reports of your obedience to Christ are everywhere; therefore, I can only rejoice over you. But that doesn't mean that you can be complacent. Goodness is a wonderful trait, but it must be accompanied by the wisdom of WATCHING. Evil is a terrible trait, but it affects us all. What is of paramount importance is that when we fall into it, it is by INNOCENCE, not by giving in to the flesh.

16:20 Rest assured, the God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet. To that end, may the grace of our Lord Jesus be with you.

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16:21 Tertius wishes to add his own postscript:

Timothy, my fellow worker greets you, as do Lucius and Jason and Sospater, my kinsmen.

16:22 I, Tertius, who have done the writing in this letter, want also to greet you in the Lord.

16:23 Gaius, who hosts me and the whole Church here, also greets you. Erastus, treasurer of this city, also sends his greetings — as does Quartus, his brother.

[16:24 IS SPURIOUS.]

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16:25 Now, I, Paul, would like to have one final postscript to offer a benediction. To Him Who is able to establish you according to my Gospel message and by my preaching of Jesus Christ —
To Him Who has revealed to you the mystery which has been kept secret for long ages past,

16:26 but which now is manifested unto all the Gentiles through the Scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the Eternal God — (this mystery which is dedicated to obedience, not by works, but by FAITH) —

16:27 to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, be the glory forever and ever. Amen.

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AN OUTLINE of ROMANS

AN OUTLINE OF ROMANS

If you have read the PARAPHRASE OF ROMANS, you probably have noticed how Paul presents one concept at a time in an order which allows him to build as he goes. Paul, in all of his writings, is a builder. He first uses a word or a phrase early in an epistle. Later we learn that the word or phrase was placed as a “seed” which will grow as the epistle progresses. His epistles are not random or haphazard collections of thoughts. They are orderly, planned, and progressive. It is important to see this. Paul is a man of many words. It is easy to get lost in them if we lose track of where we are in his structure — in his step-by-step journey to his conclusions.

The purpose of this section, AN OUTLINE OF ROMANS, is for us to see what was likely in the Apostle’s mind before and during his writing of this epistle. Apparently he has two major things in mind. As he pursues these two major objectives, he breaks his lecture into a number of sub-sections — all of which give color, depth, and perspective to his two major points. Once we see this, we are less likely to get lost in his many words and seeming digressions.

It is good to see his structure BEFORE we attempt to analyze his words. It is like having a map to a destination. It keeps us focused, and it keeps us from overestimating or underestimating the importance of the landmarks along the way. Paul makes a multitude of exciting observations. They all are strengthening and edifying. But they also can distract our attention so that we forget where we are going. They can even make us misinterpret the context.

Among other things, Paul is intent on impressing upon the Gentile Christians the sacred importance of Jewish Scriptures. Paul always uses these texts to prove, illustrate, or enhance his points. We must decide THE REASON for each quotation. Usually we use Old Testament quotes with very specific accuracy as to their meanings. Sometimes Paul, on the other hand, ignores that specificity in order to use the text for a secondary purpose. It actually makes the texts come more alive to us. It helps us to see how the Holy Spirit can pack much more than one meaning into the prophetic Word.

THE TWO-PART OVERVIEW

The most basic, and, in some respects, the most accurate summary of Romans is this:

PART I (Chapters 1–11): FAITH JUSTIFICATION

PART II (Chapters 12–16): THE WORKS OF SANCTIFICATION

There is something extremely satisfying in this simplicity. Paul is treating FAITH and WORKS in their appropriate applications. However, we must not let this simplicity make us miss the enormity of these concepts. JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH has legal, personal, and practical importance for all who claim the name of Christ. The concept, as Paul pursues it at great length, puts the Jewish Law into its proper perspective. It makes our consciences as Christians ACCEPT that we can, indeed, sacrifice with Jesus. It RELIEVES the horrible weight from us which comes from our realization that we cannot actually escape the sin within us. That Paul could accomplish a demonstration of all those things in only eleven chapters is a testimony to his personal reasoning prowess enhanced by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

SANCTIFICATION, then, occupies the remainder of Romans. Paul, in Thessalonians, makes it clear that sanctification is THE WILL OF GOD concerning us. We all want to do the will of God! So, in Romans, Paul gives us an uncannily complete listing of areas and objectives for sanctification. With his “checklist,” we are supplied with a life-time of WORKS to do in ourselves. These are not works which will justify us; they are works which will mature our “new creatures” — our embryo beings which need growth before birth.

When this second section of Romans begins (Chapter 12), Paul in essence says, “Therefore — because you are a faith-justified sacrifice — indenture your physical beings into the service of your new-creature minds. Learn to let God transform your very thinking processes.” Thus begins the journey to sanctification.

In review: Romans is written (1) to convince us of our total acceptability to God because of our faith in Jesus’ sacrifice that we may be sacrificed WITH HIM; and (2) to help us bring our physical and mental powers into conformity with the privilege outlined in the first part of the book.

As your study progresses, try to relate these two primary parts of Paul’s intent to every verse under consideration. You will be blessed and kept oriented by doing so.

FOURTEEN DIVISIONS OF ROMANS

When the Bible was divided into chapters and verses, the process was dependent on the understanding of translators which was, at least in part, deficient. Nevertheless, we are often quite impressed by the way chapters were divided into logical subject-matter units. This is, of course, not always the case. In Romans, Chapters 2 through 8 are quite excellent divisions. Other chapter divisions, or lack of them, are not as good.

It is only natural that some arbitrary decisions were made by us as we studied. The following division of Romans into fourteen sections could justly be criticized. However, it should be helpful in organizing thoughts as the study progresses. This list is written in first-person as if it is the Apostle's telling us what he will be writing.

ROMANS PART I: JUSTIFICATION

1. (1:1-7) Opening Greetings
2. (1:8-15) I want to visit Rome in order to give you the establishing benefits of the gifts of the spirit.
3. (1:16-17) My letter to you is to define Gospel doctrine as being based on faith that will give you life ahead of the world.
4. (1:18-32) Thus you will escape early from the accumulated defilements which characterize this poor world.
5. (2:1-29) I must stress: You will not escape these defilements (which are built into your flesh) by works of the Law (if you are a Jew), or by works of conscience (if you are a Gentile).
6. (3:1-31) You must be cautious to understand that while I am rejecting the Law as a justifier, I am promoting it as a teacher: The Grace Covenant "stands on the moon!" (Revelation 12:1) But your justification is based on the ransom; thus God's justice is not compromised when he calls the imperfect justified!
7. (4:1-25) Abraham stands as the perfect example of how faith can result in justification.
8. (5:1-21) How can I stress the breadth of God's grace in this justification process? He even now provides a higher justification (to life) based on the ransom — something Abraham could not have.
9. (6:1-23) You are receiving this higher justification so that you may offer your humanity (along with Jesus) as the sin offering for the world! Consistent with this, of course, will be the need for your sanctification — a striving for holiness against sin.
10. (7:1-25) Don't faint under the concept of becoming holy! Your humanity will remain an uncooperative opponent. But it will be the "spirit of the Law" living in your new mind that will give you the victory.
11. (8:1-39) Your sanctification has even a larger purpose. The new mind or new creation is making you into what God planned before time as

we know it: an intimate, personal family for Himself in His own plane of existence. Consequently, every detail experienced now is being minutely overruled!

12. (9:1–11:36) Now, I think you can see why Fleshly Israel is being supplanted by spiritual Israel — the “promised seed” of Abraham. Fleshly Israel has an appointed place and blessing in God’s plan, but it is later. Works will then again be the standard; but the standard now is faith.

ROMANS PART II: SANCTIFICATION

13. (12:1–15:13) There are, however, works of sanctification, the work of developing a new way of thinking that we must now accomplish if we wish to be born as New Creatures. I am supplying you now with a “check list” of sanctification objectives.
14. (15:14–16:27) Let me part from you now with a few personal items and personal messages as well as with a final benediction.

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Hopefully the above is a tantalizing invitation to see just how Paul accomplishes the detail of these fourteen sections. Referring back to these fourteen summaries as study progresses should help to keep all of the detail in balance.

Below is a very short version of the same sections.

— ROMANS: PART I —

SECTION I	Salutation	(1:1-7)
SECTION II	Paul’s desire to visit	(1:8-15)
SECTION III	Thesis statement	(1:16,17)
SECTION IV	The current condition of the unjustified world	(1:18-32)
SECTION V	Neither <u>works</u> of law <u>nor</u> conscience can extricate us	(2:1-29)
SECTION VI	The <u>true</u> import of the Old Testament	(3:1-31)
SECTION VII	Abraham a prime example of Paul’s point of faith justification	(4:1-25)
SECTION VIII	The breadth of grace toward us	(5:1-21)

SECTION IX	The reason for and the resulting responsibility of our justification	(6:1-23)
SECTION X	The spirit of the law: The new creature versus the flesh	(7:1-25)
SECTION XI	The honor and protections of sonship	(8:1-39)
SECTION XII	The two Israels	(9:1–11:36)

— ROMANS: PART II —

SECTION XIII	<u>How</u> the new creature must be sanctified	(12:1–15:13)
SECTION XIV	Personal items and a benediction	(15:14–16:27)

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THE MAIN BODY
OF THIS
STUDY-BOOK ON ROMANS:

OVERVIEWS OF FOURTEEN SECTIONS
and
VERSE-BY-VERSE OBSERVATIONS

Part One of Romans
(Chapters 1—11)

FAITH-JUSTIFICATION

SECTION I
(1:1-7)

Salutation

OVERVIEW of SECTION I:

Salutation

(1:1-7)

This short section seems a simple greeting. But Paul never is simple. He uses his opening remarks to the Church at Rome to plant little seeds which he will later develop.

Once we have studied all of Romans, we can return to these seven verses and be struck with the eventual import of a few words and phrases which initially seem like only casual remarks.

Since the section is so short, we will not here summarize those “planted seeds” since the verse-by-verse examination will make them plain.

SECTION I: VERSE-BY-VERSE OBSERVATIONS (1:1-7)

(We are using the New American Standard [NAS] translation as a basis.)

1:1 Paul, a bond-servant of Christ Jesus, called as an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God,
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When Paul writes to the Hebrews, his first word is “God.” (Hebrews 1:1) That was a guaranteed attention-getter for the Jews. Here, however, his first word is “Paul.” That there is nothing self-serving about this is quickly assured by his next words that describe himself as a slave! Paul’s identity is important because he, unlike the other eleven Apostles, had been given special charge over the ministry to Gentiles. He will accentuate that commission as his letter progresses.

In all of his epistles (save Hebrews), the first word is “Paul.” This Apostle is direct, and he wastes no words in identifying the source of the letter. In all of his epistles except four (Philippians, I and II Thessalonians, and Philemon), he mentions his Apostleship in the first verse. This was important to him, but also for him because his Apostleship was questioned by some. He was a replacement, and he was the only Apostle who was not a disciple while Jesus was in the flesh. Additionally, his Apostleship was wider than that of the others. His message was to the entire non-Hebrew world. “Paul” is a word that stands for more than the name of an individual! It stands for a commission.

Paul’s “bond-servant” status is important for him and for us. His immediate recognition of his servitude strikes deeply into our hearts. Men rarely become slaves willingly — especially powerful and educated men like Paul. His willing enslavement to Christ Jesus says volumes of the one to whom Paul indentured himself. It also immediately reminds us of our own personal commitment-covenants, and the enormous responsibilities which consequently fall upon us.

It is instructive to note that Paul acknowledges in this epistle both “the Gospel of God” and “the Gospel of Christ.” (Contrast, e.g., 15:16 to 15:19.) Obviously, they are, in one sense, the same. But they are different in one important sense. Since Paul, himself, in Galatians 3:8 points out that the preaching of the Gospel is at least as old as the Abrahamic Covenant, Paul is subtly distinguishing the Old Testament promise from its New Testament fulfillment in Jesus. Hence, “the Gospel of Christ” is a restrictive part of “the Gospel of God.” So, as Paul opens, he is promising that his letter will not restrict itself to questions regarding the Gospel Age, but it will answer questions regarding the Jewish Age — an important part of “the Gospel of God.” We can so easily miss these subtle but fundamental “seeds” of Paul’s thinking process.

1:2 which He promised beforehand through His prophets in the holy Scriptures.

Paul was “set apart for the Gospel of God” (verse 1). We can rightly read between the lines of this phrase. “Set apart” equals sanctified — separated for a purpose. By “set apart,” does he mean simply that he is consecrated to the Gospel? Or, could he mean that he was distinguished from the other Apostles in that it was given to him to explain the relationship of Old and New Testaments? We believe the latter to be true — mostly because he does this to an extent never matched even by the accumulated writings of all other Apostles combined. Thus he serves the Gospel of God — something distinctly larger than the Gospel of Christ. And he had to do this, because only by careful Old Testament examination and explanation could he justify the incorporation of Gentiles into the “promised seed.” That is, indeed, one of the major achievements of the Book of Romans.

Thus, verse two immediately relates “the Gospel of God” to God’s Old Testament promises through prophets.

This “little item” of verse two takes on gigantic proportions as this epistle continues. Paul is dealing with Gentiles who DON’T KNOW THE HEBREW SCRIPTURES! We frequently miss this fact. Paul wants immediately to tell his Gentile brethren that they must learn the Hebrew Bible. As Romans progresses, Paul systematically and purposefully proves and enhances all of his points by references back to the prophets. He is setting a standard for the Gentiles as well as giving Jewish disciples continuing faith in their Scriptures even while he will be weaning them from the Law.

Verse two looks so innocent!

1:3 concerning His Son, who was born of a descendant of David according to the flesh.

Immediately after focusing on the Gospel’s Old Testament roots, Paul defines the Gospel as “concerning His Son.” He gives legitimacy to Jesus as Messiah BECAUSE the Old Testament insists that Messiah would descend from David as far as human (“flesh”) genealogy was concerned. (Already Paul is beginning to refer to the Hebrew Scriptures to substantiate his points!)

But Jesus, while a human descendant of David, is far more than that — a fact which Paul instantly introduces in 1:4:

1:4 who was declared the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead, according to the Spirit of holiness, Jesus Christ our Lord,

This verse is awkward in the NAS, the KJV, and others. The Message (TM) seems to catch its meaning well:

“...his unique identity as Son of God was shown by the Spirit when Jesus was raised from the dead, setting him apart as the Messiah, our Master.”

The important points of verses 3 and 4 are these: Messiah had to be a man for the sake of the RANSOM. And that man, because of promise, had to descend from David. Verse 3 settled that point.

Verse 3 also declares that this man who descended from David was God's Son. This made him perfect — suitable to be a ransom. But it also establishes the beginning of a two-part sonship:

- (1) Jesus, the human, was a Son of God. But that did not make him Messiah! Indeed, he was not Messiah until
- (2) his baptism and spirit-begetting at age 30.
 - At that point, Jesus THE NEW CREATURE — also begotten of God (a different creature than his manhood) — becomes Messiah, not the human Jesus. He is thenceforth God's Son (in embryo) on another level.

All of this is Paul's presentation of one of the great mysteries of Christianity in a few introductory words. The man son was to die a ransom. But the new creature son was to be born to wield power. Note the specific wording in 1:4 — “He was DECLARED the Son of God WITH POWER.” What does this mean? It means that for thirty years Jesus, the man, was a Son of God; but he was not Messiah, and he was not endowed with power. But Messiah — the spirit-begotten new creature — did receive the Holy Spirit and the power needed for his office as Messiah (“the anointed”).

This “second sonship” of God for Jesus was “declared” (made manifest) to the multitudes not so much by his miracles during his last 3-1/2 years in the flesh, but “by the resurrection from the dead” when he received power in the most absolute sense, being born rather than just begotten.

Thus TM captures the thought so very well: “His unique (spiritual) identity as Son of God (other than in the flesh) was shown by the (Holy) Spirit when Jesus was raised from the dead (no longer a man).”

Then Paul adds that this manifestation sets “him apart as the Messiah, our Master” — Master because of the voluntary enslavement which Paul first acknowledged in 1:1.

1:5 through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience

of faith among all the Gentiles for His name's sake.

When verse 5 arrives, Paul now can, in context, explain the power and specialization of his Apostleship. We now know why he would enslave himself. He has explained the majesty of his Master's position. What an honor to serve such a Messiah! Furthermore, Paul acknowledges that Jesus grants him the GRACE (help from above) to accomplish his assignment.

Next, Paul defines his specialized Apostleship:

- (1) He is to incorporate Gentiles into the Gospel picture.
- (2) This will be accomplished by FAITH-obedience, not by bringing them under a law of works. Thus, already (by verse 5), Paul has established the subject of the first eleven chapters of Romans!
- (3) And Paul concludes the verse with the simple phrase "for His name's sake." We will later learn that we cannot read too much into this phrase. "Name," certainly, is a Scriptural code for character. And, surely, the incorporation of Gentiles as well as some Jews into the Abrahamic seed of promise does much in explaining God's character.

But there is more. As Paul later confirms, these disciples are called in order to become a part of God's pre-planned, intimate spiritual family. They become "Christ"! They will be incorporated into God's family name. (Hence: "for His name's sake.") We are talking about a spine-chilling realization for sincere Christians. Paul will elaborate in a future chapter.

1:6 among whom you also are the called of Jesus Christ;

The sixth verse is the first that addresses the Roman Ecclesia directly. "You also are the called." The brethren (mostly Gentiles) at Rome are shown (with the word "also") to be among those who are Paul's special charge.

And he introduces another word which later will receive special attention: "the called." Paul wants us all to be as sober as possible about our new station in life. We have not decided to join this exciting new religious group. We were called to it — selected to have the honor. Thus we, as was he, are "set apart" for the Gospel. By the sixth verse, Paul has embraced a world of ideas for exploration. And he embraces us as his fellow travelers in the highest calling that the universe will ever see.

1:7 to all who are beloved of God in Rome, called as saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Paul ends his opening salutation with this verse. He strengthens the brethren in their calling by noting that, because of their calling, they "are beloved of God." Meditation

on this phrase can only result in a change of self-perception and in a confidence which can help in overcoming any challenges.

“Called as saints” can be rendered “called saints” or “called to be saints” as some translate it. We are saints (it is not future) — persons set aside (sanctified) to a holy calling. “Holy” is the true meaning of the root of this word “saints.” Paul’s point in using this word seems to be to focus our realization of our separateness — even our enslavement by choice — in the lives we lead. He also may wish to lay the groundwork for our connection to such Old Testament prophecies as the Psalmist’s words, “Gather My saints together unto Me, those who have made a covenant with Me by sacrifice.” (Psalm 50:5)

The opening benediction is simple and important:

“Grace to you and Peace from God,
Our Father, and the Lord, Jesus Christ.”

Paul already had mentioned the “grace” which sustains his Apostleship. He wants it also for us so that our discipleship can be sustained. All he is yet to tell us will result in the Peace he wants for us. And, with Grace accepted from God, only Peace can result!

The family relationship has already been alluded to in Paul’s remarks. “Father” is not a word for the Jewish mind. It is revolutionary! But Paul will build on this revolution for our thinking — that we are sons of God! And this will make us younger siblings of Jesus who is also our Lord! He also will grant us the same grace and peace as comes from God. His resurrection “DECLARED” his power to do so. It also declared our full desire to have him as “Lord” — one to whom we gladly submit as bondservants.

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SECTION II
(1:8-15)

Paul's Desire To Visit

OVERVIEW of SECTION II: Paul's Desire To Visit (1:8-15)

In this second section, Paul tells the Roman brethren that their faith-reputation has travelled throughout the Roman world and that he wants a part, if God permits, in rewarding that faith. Consequently Paul confesses to them that visiting them is a burden of his prayers.

Paul wants to do something which only an Apostle can do. He wants to give these brethren gifts of the spirit. The importance of this cannot be overstressed. The early Church needed miraculous help for the secure establishment of its faith. They had no New Testament Bible yet. The Gentiles did not have Old Testament familiarity at all. What the Jews had in Old Testament copies was not understood by them.

It was possible (even likely) that a few Jews in Rome had been at Pentecost (Acts 2:5, 10, 33) and had witnessed the results of the baptism of the spirit on those who had been in the house. But there is nothing to specify that the Roman Jews at that time actually received the “gifts (miracles) of the spirit.” It does say that they received the “gift (grant) of the spirit” (2:38) — i.e., spirit begettal. Even if these few Roman Jews had received the “gifts,” they were yet only a minority in an ecclesia which was apparently largely Gentile.

Thus Paul is very solicitous of their spiritual well-being. He wants to give them the advantages of understanding without study, communication with other languages without having to learn them, opportunities to heal as a forcible witnessing tool to draw others to the realities, the POWER of this “new religion.” He wants the already-present faith they have to be “ESTABLISHED.”

Among other things, Paul points out that this advantage will allow them to share valuable fellowship, LEARNING FAST from Paul when he comes; also, Paul would be able to PROFIT FROM THEM.

Paul explains that he has been able to do this elsewhere, and now he wants to share the wealth similarly with the Roman ecclesia.

Obviously he shares an immense amount of truth with them via this epistle. And their spirit begettal, no doubt, let them comprehend it well. But the Church was young, scattered, and yet ill-equipped with explanatory writings. The need for the gifts of the spirit was evident. Only a visit from an Apostle could make this happen.

SECTION II:
VERSE-BY-VERSE OBSERVATIONS
(1:8-15)

1:8 First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, because your faith is being proclaimed throughout the whole world.

Paul has yet to present the power of his argument about how faith justifies. But in verse 8 he suggests the importance of faith by saying “FIRST” he is thankful for their “FAITH.” If the kind of faith that can be “proclaimed throughout the whole world” were not there, Paul would be writing to the wrong Church to preach about faith justification. But it was there, and Paul is thankful to use the opportunity for his most important treatise on its importance.

1:9 For God, whom I serve in my spirit in the preaching of the gospel of His Son, is my witness as to how unceasingly I make mention of you,
1:10 always in my prayers making request, if perhaps now at last by the will of God I may succeed in coming to you.

These two verses LINK the faith of verse 8 to the “Gospel of His Son.” The Gospel of His Son is in large measure faith-justification — the opportunity to become a part of Christ simply BY BELIEF. The concept is so compelling and overwhelming that it escapes even the vast majority of “Christians” due to both its simplicity and its nearly-unbelievable magnitude.

Why does Paul “unceasingly...make mention...in...prayers” of these brethren? It is because of their famous faith — their example of what is IMPERATIVE to the Gospel of Christ.

Why does Paul call on God as “witness” to his prayers? Among other things, God witnesses the Apostle’s fervent conviction that faith deserves reward. Paul wants both God and the brethren to know of his own faith in faith. By asking God for the opportunity to go to the Roman saints, he is showing his inner fire to edify those who have faith. Paul knows that he is personally responsible to lay a two-thousand-year foundation for a Gentile faith-based Church. But that foundation must have a FIRM or “established” basis. And that can only come by personal visit, not just by an eloquent letter.

1:11 For I long to see you so that I may impart some spiritual gift to you, that you may be established;

This little verse is definitive for serious students of the Word. The concept can be gleaned from the New Testament that only Apostles could transmit the miraculous gifts of the spirit by the laying on of their hands. (The only exceptions to this were Pentecost and its Gentile parallel in the house of Cornelius — the two parts of “the baptism of the Holy Spirit.”) Thus the Apostle Paul knows the import of his visit to these faithful saints. He wants to “impart some spiritual gift” to them. And he wants to do this so that they “may be established.”

We all know that FAITH establishes us. But faith needs bolstering. The Apostle will expand that concept later in Romans. The “establishing” of which Paul speaks is that bolstering. Remember, these saints have no New Testament to instruct them in Christian life and doctrine. As Gentiles, they have no Old Testament familiarity. And even if they had, it would give them no more light than it gave the Jews unless it were accompanied by instruction (which is what the New Testament eventually would provide).

The great faith of the Roman saints was, indeed, worthy of world-wide acclaim once we realize how little they had upon which to base it! But Paul wants to SECURE them. How? By giving them remarkable (un-human) abilities.

When the gifts would be given, these brethren would be able to quote Scriptures they had never heard of! They would be able to interpret and apply those Scriptures correctly without ever having studied them! They would be able to hear or read them in Hebrew even though they never knew a word of Hebrew in their lives! They would be able selectively to heal the ill around them as a witness of the power of Christianity, rather than having men see it only as some new upstart set of religious philosophies. Their faith would be established by Scriptural facts as well as by visible signs of the powers of the Holy Spirit. This was Paul’s objective.

1:12 that is, that I may be encouraged together with you while among you, each of us by the other’s faith, both yours and mine.

In verse 12, Paul provides PERSONAL benefits in addition to the general establishment of the Church mentioned above. He says that he will gain encouragement and instruction from their fellowship with him because their fellowship powers will be magnified by the knowledge they will possess due to the gifts. Paul exults in the TWO-WAY exchange this will provide — “each of us by the other’s faith, both yours and mine.” This gives us a very precious insight into Paul’s character. He is not the “listen-to-me” authority. He is a part of the body, both imparting and receiving the blessings the Holy Spirit will impart by true and sincere Christian exchange — fellowship.

1:13 I do not want you to be unaware, brethren, that often I have planned to come to you (and have been prevented so far) so that I may obtain some fruit among you also, even as among the rest of the Gentiles.

God made Paul's plans. Paul wants the Roman brethren to know that he, personally, would have been there much sooner except that God had other priorities for him. It is clear from the end of this verse that it was other Gentile ecclesias that needed Paul's help first. Perhaps, since Roman Ecclesia faith was so strong and notable worldwide, God knew that they could wait until some weaker congregations were "established." So Paul says that these others had fruitage due to his visits, and he so very much desires that Rome, so deserving, might soon experience the same benefits.

1:14 I am under obligation both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to the wise and to the foolish.
1:15 So, for my part, I am eager to preach the gospel to you also who are in Rome.

These two verses reveal at least two things. First, they suggest that in verse 13, Paul may have had something larger in mind when he said "obtain some fruit." While the primary application of these words is most probably referring to the spirit-begotten, Paul also may be saying that he wants to do some evangelizing, some witnessing and converting. After all, he was specially commissioned to bring Gentiles into the Church. And where on earth would one of the largest varieties of Gentiles be? In the Roman Empire's capital city, of course. So Paul says he has the obligation to preach to them all — whether the learned Greeks, the obstreperous barbarians, the worldly-wise, or the rude dregs of society. Paul concludes that Rome gives him eager anticipation of these possibilities as well as the expansion of Gospel concepts to the saints there.

Secondly, these verses open the door to the next two verses which will be Paul's thesis statement for the entire letter. We will see how as we continue.

SECTION III:
(1:16, 17)

Thesis Statement

OVERVIEW of SECTION III:
Thesis Statement
(1:16,17)

It may seem peculiar to isolate these two verses from their context. On the surface, their import is not obvious. But, as we shall see, in these two verses the Apostle sets the agenda for the entire Book of Romans.

We will, of course, need to connect these verses to their context, if for no other reason than that they both begin with “for” (one of the Apostle’s favorite words!); and the next verse also begins with “for.” Thus, they do not stand alone except for their import.

These verses mention:

- The Gospel,
- God’s Power,
- Salvation,
- Jew vs. Gentile,
- Justification (or righteousness),
- Faith Growth,
- Attaining Life,
- and an Old Testament connection.

Upon these things will Paul’s letter be built.

These are swing verses which take Paul from the opening greetings into the DOCTRINAL MEAT which is the purpose of this letter.

SECTION III:
VERSE-BY-VERSE OBSERVATIONS
(1:16,17)

1:16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.

In verses 14 and 15 Paul anticipated that in Rome he would be coming face to face with arguments and opinions so varied as to be seen as “wise” and “foolish.” He would have to argue against sophisticated Greeks and headstrong barbarians. Rome must have been the hot seat of all dispute from all over the Roman world. But Paul didn’t fear these things. In verse 15, he said he was EAGER to put the Gospel up against them all as well as to elaborate on it for the saints.

Thus verse 16 opens with this statement that might seem strange if seen out of context: “I am not ashamed of the Gospel.” No one would accuse him as being ashamed of it! His intent, in context, is to say, “The Gospel message we have received is so far superior to all theories, religions, philosophies, prejudices, and arguments made by ANYONE, that it will never need excuses made for it!” (Contrast that to what the “churches” now preach, and WEEP!)

Thus the very first part of Paul’s thesis statement for this letter is:

YOU CAN HAVE EXPLICIT AND
IMPLICIT FAITH IN THE GOSPEL
AGAINST ALL ENEMIES.

What could possibly be more important to mankind than salvation? Nothing. It is the true basis of all religions and philosophies. Thus Paul wants to define the Gospel in terms of SALVATION — in the Gospel Age, the POWER to save everyone who BELIEVES. Thus FAITH is introduced as the present way to salvation — not works in general, and not the works of the Law in specific. Justification BY FAITH, salvation BY FAITH, in this Gospel Age is Paul’s first and primary point about the Gospel. Paul defines FAITH as POWER — enough power to save! This is a very revolutionary concept.

Paul appends a time proviso: This salvation by faith is offered FIRST to the Jew, but ALSO to the Greek.

(Why he doesn’t say “Gentile” needs explanation. The Greeks were among the most prominent of Gentiles in the empire. Thus Greek becomes virtually synonymous with Gentile. While “Rome” as an empire was extensive, it was a conglomerate of many peoples. And while Latin was the official language of the Empire, Greek was the favored international language and, without question, the language of learning and philosophy.)

Paul mentions that the Gospel goes to the Jew FIRST. This is important. As he will explain later, it is because the Jew (as a group) could not grasp FAITH as a justifier that God would have to turn to the Gentiles. So Paul here is laying the foundation of the need for the call to go to the Gentiles AFTER being offered to His covenanted people.

1:17 For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, “BUT THE RIGHTEOUS man SHALL LIVE BY FAITH.”

This verse is the rationale for all of Paul’s arguments in the first eleven chapters of Romans. Its point is this: “In the Gospel, justification from God is explained as given to two kinds of faith, giving two meanings to Habakkuk’s prophecy.”

We will see throughout Romans and its various translations the interchangeable use of “righteousness” and “justification.” The words are synonymous. Which way they are translated is solely a matter of choice. The connotation of one of the words versus the other is mostly a function of our own individual thinking.

In this verse we prefer JUSTIFICATION. As the NAS presents it above, it might be mistakenly taken that this is a reference to God’s righteousness. But that is not the thought. Paul is not speaking here of “the righteousness of God,” but rather of “justification from God.” This is virtually proven by the fact that Paul’s quote from Habakkuk 2:4 makes no sense with the former idea, and full sense with the latter.

Look carefully at the lessons of this verse. “In it (in the Gospel message) justification from God (a gift — a grace from Jehovah that allows a fellowship with Him) is revealed — (no such gift was ever CLEARLY REVEALED prior to this time).”

Now, to those who look carefully, is revealed the secret of TWO LEVELS of justification; hence “faith to faith”:

- (1) Justification to friendship (Plane N justification on the Chart of the Ages) has its own revealing as a friendship. For this group, Habakkuk’s words mean that these people apply faith as the basis for their existing lives. (See Appendix G.)
- (2) But to the greater faith (of full consecration — Plane M on the Chart) is revealed a justification TO NEW LIFE. It’s there! But we must read ever so carefully. Paul will elaborate later, but this thesis statement presents it to us. It is a dramatic concept.

The PROOF of Paul’s intent is in the text he quotes. As with all sentences, the word which receives the most stress tends to interpret the sentence.

“But the justified man shall LIVE by faith.”

There is no mistake. Paul is telling us that this Habakkuk prophecy promises LIFE from sufficient faith — the condition which we tend to call VITALIZED (i.e., “living”)

JUSTIFICATION. In other words, Paul is not saying to this second group that “The justified man will conduct his life in accordance with his faith.” He is, on the contrary, saying, “The justified man will, because of his faith, GAIN LIFE (ahead of the world).” What a revelation!

This is Paul’s first Old Testament quote. He had alluded to the Old Testament when he said that Jesus was of David’s lineage. But now he begins with the first of very many Scriptures to convince the Gentiles of the importance of Hebrew Scriptures, and also to convince the Jews that their Scriptures are yet alive and important — even though the Law was passing away.

These two thesis verses have laid the groundwork for an excursion of reasoning on justification, the true meaning of Gospel, the relationship between and the place of Jews and Gentiles, and God’s use of power in this age.

SECTION IV
(1:18-32)

The Current Condition of the Unjustified World
or
That from which We Escape Early

OVERVIEW of SECTION IV:
The Unjustified Condition from which We Escape
(1:18-32)

This seeming diatribe against sin is far more than that. While Paul delineates a list of sins, it is not because he wishes to be ranting against sin like a preacher who says, “You be good! Here is a list of what you shouldn’t do.” Quite to the contrary. When 2:1 arrives, Paul cautions the saints that these faults ARE BUILT INTO us.

So, what is Paul’s objective? First, he had just concluded that our justification brings LIFE. His list here is of what we had, what we practiced, and what we were DYING under, before that justification. He wants us to review with appreciation what we are escaping AHEAD OF THE WORLD. But he particularly wants to mention a few of the REASONS the deplorable conditions prosper so that we don’t fall into those deceptive traps that hold the world ensnared. He warns that human thinking does a number of strange things:

Paul points out that our human tendency is (verse 18) to “suppress” what we don’t want to hear. He says (verse 19) that we feel “evidence” in us (i.e., conscience) that we do wrong — but we ignore it! Paul shows that we even block out what should be “clearly seen” (verse 20). Paul concludes that our self-inflicted blindness is due (verse 21) to a lack of wanting to say “thank you,” and to our proud tendency to appreciate our own “speculations.” We like (verse 22) to consider ourselves “wise.”

Because we are creative (verse 23), we tend to worship the works of our own hands over the power we can’t see but instinctively know is there. Thus we admire and seek the tangible over the unseen — the created over the Creator (verse 25). Consequently we seek the pleasurable over the rational (verses 26, 27).

Like children who think they can slip things by their parents’ notice, the whole race knows it is faulty, but enjoys the challenge! (verse 32)

These faults in our reasoning are why Paul creates this extensive list. He wants us to know that one reason that justification is there is for us to escape not only the problems, but, most particularly, the faulty thinking that leads to them. If we receive the Lord but continue in human reasoning, our justification will be for naught. That is Paul’s lesson for us in these verses.

SECTION IV:
VERSE-BY-VERSE OBSERVATIONS
(1:18-32)

1:18 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven
against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of
men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness,

This verse begins with “For.” What is the connection to the previous verse? Verse 17 had told us that we have VITALIZED JUSTIFICATION — a justification which has LEGALLY made us in the category of having life rather than being under the death sentence. Paul merely is finishing a thought here. Paraphrasing the transition from verse 17 to verse 18:

“The justified man’s faith has made him
ALIVE, not like the rest of the unjustified
race who continue under “the wrath of
God” (death).

Paul inserts so many thoughts in his writings that connections sometimes are lost. This happens here. In 1:17 we see LIFE (“live”); but the CONTRASTING word, DEATH, does not appear until 1:32! Once we see this, however, it shows us that verses 18-32 all are parenthetical, or filler, or explanatory of the conditions from which the justified ESCAPE, and in which the unjustified world REMAINS.

Paul, of course, shows later that this unjustified multitude of humanity will receive the opportunity for life. But that is not his focus here. His focus is on us, and how we have miraculously escaped the inescapable, and how we must never let the human thought-process ensnare us. It can!

God’s wrath “IS REVEALED from heaven.” How? By His disappearing from the scene — by His permitting evil to flourish without His stepping in to stop it (at least in the eye of the faithless!). Thus the “wrath” here mentioned is the whole “dying thou shalt die” process which began in Eden and which continues to our day.

What is God’s wrath aimed against? It is aimed “against ALL ungodliness and unrighteousness.” Unrighteousness, of course, is anything not just. But what is ungodliness? It is IMPIETY — a word which basically means no feeling toward God, no need for worship, no God-fearing or God-revering tendencies. Thus, if a man like an atheist has strong tendencies toward righteousness, his inability to acknowledge something higher than himself becomes the equivalent of unrighteousness. And thus we find all of mankind under wrath — except those whose faith will give them an escape ahead of time.

Then Paul gives us our first lesson in depraved human reasoning, and he does so in order that WE don’t hang on to the same fault. His point is that much (not all) of ungodliness and unrighteousness comes from suppression of truth.

“Suppress the truth” is an important phrase here. It is not referring to the suppression of “the Truth” (as we are inclined to call religious truths), but to any and all truth regarding man, his history, his conscience, and his rightful deeds. Paul is saying that we all (even knowing better internally), “bury” our consciences so that we can have what we want. It is a universally true fault in men. It also is a sobering reminder and warning for all of us.

Paul then concludes that suppression of truth is in itself an act of unrighteousness.

1:19 because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them.

The world would dispute this claim. But that is because they “suppress the truth.” Part of the blame, of course, must be heaped upon Christendom which has so disgustingly misrepresented God that mankind doesn’t really want to know anything about Him.

One thing is universally certain: Man does have an instinctive tendency to want to worship — even when it gets in his way and he must mold his worshipping to fit his desires. This is Paul’s point in this verse. In the end, mankind will not really be surprised when God reveals Himself. They all seem to know instinctively that this will happen.

1:20 For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse.

It is Paul’s contention that creation itself has so reflected God’s qualities that the visible has made inevitable a connection with the invisible. But since men tend to “suppress the truth,” they don’t want to admit the connection lest it hamper their “life-style.” But Paul will not allow mankind an “excuse” for this suppression.

Even in our day, the tensions between some sciences and religious groups demonstrate the authenticity of this verse. One cannot, in one sense, blame scientists for rejecting the nonsense of nominal Christianity. So-called “Christian” doctrine is beyond the “invisible attributes” of God. But, nevertheless, Paul gives no leeway to science or to false religion in their absurd positions. It is Paul’s contention that the honest seeker will find. The others are “without excuse.” (See Job 12:7-10.)

1:21 For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became

futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened.

Paul continues his argument adding another lesson for our benefit. His point is that, even though man's inherent need for worship was strong, there were two quirks in man's reasoning that overcame the inherent desire for a connection with the spiritual world. (1) While in word they may have honored Him, they did not "honor Him as God." In other words, He was just fine as a figure-head or as someone to call upon as a last resort in an emergency, but they had NO INTENTION of placing His will or ways above their own desires. (2) The second deficiency in man's character is, though he loves to receive thanks, he doesn't really care to give thanks. After all, if they didn't want Him dictating their lives, why would they ever want to thank Him for them? There is an internal hypocrisy when we thank someone for what we ignore.

The result, according to Paul is that their own "speculations" were dearer to them than Divine guidance — despite the fact that their "speculations" have a track record of futility! The persistence in this folly has given man a dark and foolish heart — an innermost conviction that nothing will ever work right. The lessons for the New Creation are clear.

1:22 Professing to be wise, they became fools,

What can we add? A wise man never has to profess his wisdom. Others see it if it's there. But mankind has always been intent on DEMONSTRATING and INSISTING on his wisdom! Nothing makes a man more foolish — particularly when his plans end up in disaster or miserable failure which has been the case of nearly all of us since Eden.

1:23 and exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible man and of birds and four-footed animals and crawling creatures,

One of man's foolishnesses is his need to SEE rather than just to BELIEVE. Hence God's value placed on FAITH. So, somewhere shortly after Eden, man began to craft his "speculations" about God into visible objects for veneration. One cannot but wonder at the mind (the "futile" mind) which can actually give value to its creations as having superiority over the hands that crafted them! The absurdity should be immediately apparent. Paul obviously considers it to be absurd. But it is all the natural consequences of speculations which come when we exclude God as the authority.

1:24 Therefore God gave them over in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, so that their bodies would be dishonored among them.

It is a part of God's plan that permitting evil will be the most effective teacher to bring the creation to its senses eventually. Thus it is inconsistent for God to be insistent and to intervene when man decides that his own desires are his paramount standards.

Obviously, man's fallen desires only lead to further fall. We have a penchant for the impure, and we have much talent to magnify it. Paul's comment on this is that man's life-style desires eventually work their way down to the defilement of our physical beings — not just our heart wanderings and social-political-economic-religious scheming.

1:25 For they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshipped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.

The end result of all of this is that man, who began with truth and with a knowledgeable connection to God, was quick and pleased to ignore it all for self-deceiving fables. Mankind preferred his senses to his sense. His priority became himself; his duty to his origin was abandoned. Paul exclaims out of relieving conviction that none of this will change the ultimate blessing of the Character and Being who is our Creator. He punctuates it with an Amen!

1:26 For this reason God gave them over to degrading passions; for their women exchanged the natural function for that which is unnatural,
1:27 and in the same way also the men abandoned the natural function of the woman and burned in their desire toward one another, men with men committing indecent acts and receiving in their own persons the due penalty of their error.

Continuing on the theme of the efficacy of the permission of evil, Paul repeats that God, for their ultimate good, abandoned mankind to his foul devices. Without any limits on degradation, mankind's disconnect with reality continued to widen. The original beautiful and productive sexual complement as expressed by and sanctioned in marriage became confused and centered only in pleasurable sensations. It went so far that women and men lost contact with their natural complement in each other, and sought out others (regardless of which sex) to experience passion.

What the Apostle means by "receiving in their own persons the due penalty of their error" is not clear. Some boldly claim it is HIV; but HIV appears to have come on the scene in the 20th Century. The Apostle may mean something so basic as a change in genetic code which makes homosexuality an inherited trait. We must await clarification on this point.

While it is natural to view these two verses as a condemnation of homosexuality, it is important to see that they are much more than that. They are warnings that self-will and self-aggrandizement lead us from rationality toward nothing more than

sensuality. Remember that Paul's point in all these verses is to show us what led to man's horrible condition. Paul is not just condemning homosexuality. To the contrary, he is saying to us, "Don't exchange truth for a lie!" (verse 25) He is saying (verse 22), "Don't profess your own wisdom!" He is saying (verse 25), "Never forget the protocol — the Creator is always more important than the created." If we lose this basic purpose for Paul's writing this section, we merely become "self-righteous" critics of the "sinful" world — an attitude Paul condemns sharply in 2:1.

1:28 And just as they did not see fit to acknowledge God any longer, God gave them over to a depraved mind, to do those things which are not proper,
1:29 being filled with all unrighteousness, wickedness, greed, evil; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malice; they are gossips,
1:30 slanderers, haters of God, insolent, arrogant, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents,
1:31 without understanding, untrustworthy, unloving, unmerciful;

Paul continues his list of the results of losing sight of the proper place of man in the order of things. He again makes reference to God's giving "them over to a depraved mind." This is important. It is the third time he has mentioned God's abandonment of man. This is Paul's code for "the permission of evil." It is well expressed in Psalm 106:15, "He gave them their request; but sent leanness into their souls." This lesson is needed even by the saints. There is probably no one among us who has not "managed" details so that we got our own ways. If we manipulate God's will in order to get results favorable to our preferences, we might well have "leanness of soul" resulting. The permission of evil wasn't designed for the Church, but its concepts apply to us!

Lest anyone think that Paul is preoccupied with homosexuality, he quickly adds twenty-one (that's TWENTY-ONE!) maladies resulting from human thinking! Going through the list (as evil as it is) provides a good self-examination exercise for us to see if ANY remnant of these things yet abides in us.

1:32 and although they know the ordinance of God, that those who practice such things are worthy of death, they not only do the same, but also give hearty approval to those who practice them.

Paul's final comment in this section shows how perverse our thinking can become. To paraphrase: "They do (deep down) know what's right. They do (deep down) know that prolonged life in such depravity would not be good. But, mystery of mysteries (!), they continue doing the wrong AND even encourage it in others!" This is the tragedy of human thinking. And even we who have been justified can slip into it — perhaps not as gross and depraved sins, but as justifications of the "little deviations" which please our flesh.

SECTION V
(2:1-29)

Neither Works of the Law nor Conscience
Can Extricate Us

OVERVIEW of SECTION V:
Neither Works of the Law nor
Conscience Can Extricate Us
(2:1-29)

In most translations, this appears a very difficult chapter — partly because it is not always clear to whom Paul is speaking, and partly because it is not clear which ages are meant.

While we know that this is a letter TO the Rome Ecclesia, it is not always ABOUT the Rome Ecclesia. Much of this chapter is about ideas rather than about the ecclesia.

Paul concluded Chapter 1 with a statement about the corruption of mankind and the kind of human warped thinking that causes and perpetuates that corruption. As he begins Chapter 2, he wants to focus on GROUPS and how those groups react to the condition of the sinful world. He wants to talk about those who think this way, and those who think that way. So, for instance, when he begins verse 1, he uses the word “YOU” in a generic sense. He is not aiming his condemnation at the brethren in Rome, he is aiming it at ANYONE who thinks in the pattern he is condemning. It is IMPERATIVE to realize this about this chapter or we will be hopelessly confused about what Paul is saying.

In this overview, it probably will be best to break the chapter into sections — to show in each section the kind of “group thinking” the Apostle is addressing.

(1) In verses 1-4 Paul condemns self-righteousness in ANYONE. “If the shoe fits, wear it.” So, if there are remnants of this thinking among the brethren, the brethren must learn from his remarks. But Paul’s point is about thinking processes, not so much about certain individuals.

His point in these verses is that God condemns ALL sin — no matter where it is. Thus any who think themselves “a little better” and thus condemn those who are “a little worse” are deceiving themselves. Paul is showing that this “sliding scale” of sin has NOTHING to do with justification. BUT, as these verses end, Paul reminds that there IS a way out!

(2) Then, in verses 5-11, Paul is defining the Gospel Age in terms of TWO CLASSES — (a) those who seek after God, and (b) those who don’t. In other words, those whose faith will give them justification, and those who will constitute the great masses of mankind, unjustified, and on the “broad road which leadeth to destruction.”

(3) In verse 12, he reminds us that class “b” (above) is itself divided into those who tend to justify themselves by their own rules of conscience, and those (the Jews) who think the Divine Law is justifying them. Paul says that neither approach works.

Then Paul addresses each of those subgroups separately:

(4) In verse 13, he addresses those who had hope in the Law.

(5) In verses 14-16, he addresses the Gentiles and their inability to think and do right as evidenced by their inner struggles.

(6) Next Paul feels the need to address Jewish thinking with a more in-depth criticism. This takes up verses 17-29.

* * * * *

So, in summary, this chapter addresses thought-patterns of those who want to escape the state of the world as described in Chapter 1. This is important. Paul wants to ELIMINATE these thought-patterns to make way for an appreciation of the JUSTIFICATION by FAITH that God now offers as the new age begins.

SECTION V:
VERSE-BY-VERSE OBSERVATIONS
(2:1-29)

2:1 Therefore you have no excuse, everyone of you who passes judgment, for in that which you judge another, you condemn yourself; for you who judge practice the same things.

Paul begins this verse with “Therefore” because he wishes to include all of us in the inherited sin just described. Sin is in our DNA. But the force of this verse is that EVEN IF we are BETTER than most, we are YET sinners. Degree is immaterial. So Paul says, “Don’t look down on sinners as if that will separate you from their plight. It won’t. THAT is not the way of escape from condemnation.”

Throughout this chapter Paul will show the various things that don’t provide escape. This is only the first. It is important that he do this because he wants us to come finally to the realization and appreciation that FAITH JUSTIFICATION is the only way out during the Gospel Age.

The “you” here is generic. He speaks to ANY and ALL who might think thusly. This chapter is about groups who think that they know a way out, but don’t.

2:2 And we know that the judgment of God rightly falls upon those who practice such things.
2:3 But do you suppose this, O man, when you pass judgment on those who practice such things and do the same yourself, that you will escape the judgment of God?

These two verses are very sequential. Verse 2 says, in response to the critics of verse 1, “Yes, we know that God has rightly judged against the terrible state of mankind.” Then, in verse 3, he adds a caveat: “But just think, you who are critical, that when you criticize “those people” you will inevitably find yourself doing the same thing! And when you do, will you expect God’s judgment to ignore the fault in you?”

We realize, and Paul realizes, that DEGREE of sin in the critics may well be less than in those being criticized. But DEGREE DOESN’T MATTER! Paul is here saying what James said in 2:10 — one slip and you’re dead!

Paul uses the word “practice” three times in these first three verses. This is important. The Apostle John has taught us that the practice of sin is treacherous for a saint. Paul is teaching the same lesson. Later in Romans he will teach that the avoidance of sin that dwells within us is impossible. But the practice of it — the knowledgeable giving in to it — is simply not permitted for a new creature.

Thus “practice” in verse 1 is aimed at the self-righteous because the self-righteous do practice sin; they are merely not usually aware of it because they feel that their practice is so much less objectionable than the practice of “these sinners.”

“Practice” in verse 2 applauds God’s justice against the practice of sin. (See the last verse of Chapter 1 to see that the world condones and encourages its own unrighteous practices.)

“Practice” in verse 3 brings the lesson home. There has to be an escape from the practice! Paul will ultimately show that only faith justification provides that escape, and that new creature sanctification will drive away the “practice of sin” and leave only the unavoidable occurrences of the sin that dwells in our flesh.

2:4 Or do you think lightly of the riches of His kindness and tolerance and patience, not knowing that the kindness of God leads you to repentance?

Paul here issues an ultimatum. He is about to divide mankind into two groups in the following verses. So, in this verse, he is saying: “If you are among those who hear my Gospel — if you are among those who have been self-righteous — if you are among those who REALLY want a way out, then, don’t think lightly of the fact that God, with riches of kindness and of tolerance and of patience, is LEADING you to repentance of your old way of thinking — your old way of viewing things and of considering yourselves somehow right.”

He is saying, “Please listen carefully, because, if you don’t respond favorably, you will be in that one of two groups which will remain condemned until the Kingdom.”

2:5 But because of your stubbornness and unrepentant heart you are storing up wrath for yourself in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God,
2:6 who WILL RENDER TO EACH PERSON ACCORDING TO HIS DEEDS:

Look first at verse 6. This quote comes from one of many possible sources. (See Psalm 62:12, Proverbs 24:12, Jeremiah 32:19, and Job 34:11.) Paul uses it here to set the stage for his reasoning in verses 7-11. But it also comments on verse 5.

Paul is entering the subject of JUDGMENT. He is, in essence, going to point out that there are TWO GROUPS — TWO SALVATIONS. One is for those justified and judged now in this life, and the other is for those whose justification and judgment must await the Mediation. It is the same thought offered by Jesus in John 5:29. Once we see this, the following verses lose most of their difficulties of interpretation.

Verse 5 might be a “touchy subject” for some. Paul is speaking about those who are “drawn” but refuse the drawing — even refusing the “friendship justification” of Plane N on the Chart of the Ages. He is speaking of the “self-righteous” attitude in some which keeps them stubbornly wanting to be critical of others rather than to be repentant (verse 4) of their own foolish perspectives.

Paul’s conclusion for these is that they are making ultimate repentance (in the Kingdom) less likely. He says they are “storing up wrath” — increasing their guilt — so that “in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God” they will be much less likely to fare well. Why? Because God will “render to each person according to his deeds” — some now, some later.

This is not saying that judgment now is being pronounced against unbelievers. Indeed, most unbelievers will be in that general group of humanity which never has even been drawn. But 2:5 seems reserved for the few of that group who have spurned even a drawing due to “stubbornness” of heart — a heart that is hardened to learning. It is akin to Jesus’ teaching that judgment will be more tolerable for Sodom than for Capernaum — even though both will be part of that general “resurrection by judgment.”

Having dealt with that particular subgroup, Paul now turns to teaching us about the two salvations, expanding upon his Old Testament quote in verse 6.

2:7	to those who by perseverance in doing good seek for glory and honor and immortality: eternal life;
2:8	but to those who are selfishly ambitious and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness: wrath and indignation.

The first group (verse 7) is those who will be anywhere in a spiritual resurrection.

- An important translation item is necessary here. “Immortality” here is incorrect. The word should be “incorruption” — in the sense of incorruption of character.

To this group (verse 7) will go “eternal life” — the resurrection of life versus the resurrection by judgment (John 5:29). This “judgment” (eternal life) is being determined now.

“But” is the first word of verse 8. Here we have the second group. It is the group who choose to stay in (or have no opportunity to be freed from) the worldly condition Paul described in Chapter 1. Paul says their lot is “wrath and indignation.” While much of Christianity would interpret this as the “judgment” of this group, we know that it is not. It is their lot until the Kingdom releases them. Paul is saying merely that this group is the whole world as described by him in Chapter 1. They are living in “wrath” (1:18). They are living in the situation which has come about by God’s “indignation” with the race. But, as it is written, “God so loved the world that He gave His only-

begotten Son.” In the Kingdom, this group will believe in him and gain the promised life.

So, to this group (verse 8) goes the CONTINUANCE in the “wrath and indignation” of the present order of things. Then (in the Kingdom) they will have “resurrection by judgment.”

2:9	There will be tribulation and distress for every soul of man who does evil, of the Jew first and also of the Greek,
2:10	but glory and honor and peace to everyone who does good, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.
2:11	For there is no partiality with God.

In verse 9, the NAS adds the words, “There will be...” It is likely that this is correct. The KJV makes verse 9 sound like a continuation of verse 8, but it probably is not. Verses 9 and 10 are beginning another comparison of the two groups — both of which are about “Jew first and also the Greek.”

In verse 9, Paul is referring to the group of verse 8; in verse 10, Paul is referring to the group of verse 7.

But now, Paul is turning to look to the future — beyond the Gospel Age.

The TIME setting of the ULTIMATE RESULT of the lives of these groups is specified in verses 5 and 6 and in verse 16 which we have not yet considered. The flow of verses 5-16 is VERY DIFFICULT to see because Paul refers to CURRENT results in verse 8, but ULTIMATE results in verses 9-11. This mixing of judgment results is made necessary (though confusing!) because some are now under judgment; some are under judgment later, but do have consequences in their lives now.

Thus, verses 9 and 10 should be interpreted as saying:

Verse 9: “When the individual judgment of the Kingdom comes, the tribulum and narrowing to knock away sin from every soul which has lived in accordance with the old evil world will be the experience first of the Jew (because they will be first under the Covenant), but also of all others.

“BUT

Verse 10: The glory, honor, and peace of having judgment as a thing of the past (the Gospel Age) will go to those who separated themselves by sanctification from the world as it was. The opportunity for this was first given to the Jew, but then expanded to the Gentiles.”

This verse 10 explanation is justified by a subtlety. A very fine distinction might profitably be noted in the prepositions of verses 9 and 10. Verse 9 specifies “OF the Jew...and OF the Greek...whereas verse 10 says, “TO the Jew...and TO the Greek.”

The distinction seems to be this. Verse 9 is a judgment which BEGINS in the Kingdom. It is thus a judgment-resurrection OF the BEING (soul) OF Jew and OF Gentile.

But the group in verse 10, even though their REWARD is in the Kingdom, had their JUDGMENT during the Gospel Age. Thus, they have their glory, honor, and peace EARLY — TO the Jew first (at Pentecost) and then TO the Gentile (Greek) at the conversion of Cornelius at the end of “the seventy weeks.” This RESULTS in their spiritual reward as the Kingdom opens, but does not detract from the fact that these BLESSINGS started TO them EARLY.

Verse 11 thus shows that both resurrections are free from discrimination for Gentile or Jew.

2:12 For all who have sinned without the Law will also perish without the Law, and all who have sinned under the Law will be judged by the Law;

In the Overview of this section, it was mentioned that this verse stands alone. It is, in essence, a summary telling us of the futility of Judaic and Gentile efforts to extricate themselves from both the sin and the sins of the world. In the verses following this one, Paul will address each group separately.

Here it says simply: Gentiles without the Law perish. Jews with the Law sinned, and, therefore, perish.

One item is worthy of note: Paul will later tell us that sin is not imputed where there is no law. So, what the first part of this verse really tells us is that inherited sin kills those outside the Law. But the Law does impute sin. So the second part of this verse lets us know that those under the Law not only die from inherited sin, but also because they “have sinned under the Law.” This verse is thus a rather clear statement of the “double condemnation” of the Jew.

2:13 for it is not the hearers of the Law who are just before God, but the doers of the Law will be justified.

Verse 13 addresses those who had hope in the Law that it might extricate them. But Paul points out that knowing (hearing) the Law creates NO JUSTIFICATION. Only if you can keep the Law (do it), can you have justification. No one could.

2:14 For when Gentiles who do not have the Law do instinctively the things of the Law, these, not having the Law, are a law to themselves,
2:15 in that they show the work of the Law written in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness and their thoughts alternately accusing or else defending them,

In verses 14 and 15, Paul turns to the Gentiles to show the futility of their efforts to free themselves from sin. He points out that some of the features of the Law are “instinctive.” For instance, murder and theft are just about universally considered wrong — even among totally irreligious people. Paul points out that, consequently, even without the Law, Gentiles have their own standards — their own laws, their own consciences to live up to.

With this remnant of God’s Edenic Law remaining in their hearts, something happens to them. This makes the last half of verse 15 rather colorfully descriptive. To paraphrase:

Their thoughts and their consciences are at constant warfare regarding sin.
They at one moment justify their actions, and at the next moment condemn themselves.
And the alternations never stop!

2:16 on the day when, according to my gospel, God will judge the secrets of men through Christ Jesus.

Verse 16 actually concludes the thought begun in verse 9. It is, at best, an awkward sentence construction. It does not flow smoothly from verse 15! Nevertheless, there is a connection to verse 15 is thusly:

Paul concludes that this alternation of condemnation and self-approval found in verse 15 will not result in extrication from sin, but will follow the race all the way into “the day” of judgment.

Paul points out that this is the thrust of “his Gospel” — i.e., the “Gospel of God” of which he is a servant (1:1). So the Gospel clearly shows that neither dedicated Jew nor sincere Gentile will find peace from sin until the Kingdom. (Only those with faith-justification will find this peace.)

Paul’s phraseology at the end of this verse is delightfully appropriate. As individuals in a fallen race, their consciences, their hearts, their thoughts all are one big collection of “secrets” they would prefer not to reveal. Jesus, as God’s agent of judgment, will look into these recesses and purge them. Thus will the Millennium “justify” by cleansing works rather than only by belief.

2:17 But if you bear the name “Jew” and rely upon the Law and boast in God,
2:18 and know His will and approve the things that are essential, being instructed out of the Law,
2:19 and are confident that you yourself are a guide to the blind, a light to those who are in darkness,
2:20 a corrector of the foolish, a teacher of the immature, having in the Law the embodiment of knowledge and of the truth,

For the remainder of this chapter, Paul turns his attention exclusively to those who cling to the Law for justification. They, of all people, were most certain that the Law continued to be “the way out.” After all, for nearly two millennia God had dealt with them exclusively, and they had seen miracles such as the rest of the world could never claim.

Thus verse 17 stresses this attitude of the Jew — reliance on the Law, and PRIDE in God.

Verse 18 confirms that (at least in part), Israel knew more about God’s will than all other nations and had (at least nominally) an approval of what the Law taught as essentials for them.

As Paul continues in verse 19, we get a sense that Paul is beginning to chide his countrymen. He is saying that the REAL effect of the facts of verses 17 and 18 is that the Jew will tell to everyone that he (the Jew) is CONFIDENT to tell the blind what to do! That he (the Jew) is a BEACON of light in a sea of darkness! Paul continues in verse 20 where each subsequent point must have made the “confident” Jew a bit squeamish:

“I can correct the foolish.”

“I can teach the immature.”

“I have in the Law the very essence of all I ever need to know!
(Nobody can enlighten me further!)”

2:21 you, therefore, who teach another, do you not teach yourself? You who preach that one shall not steal, do you steal?
2:22 You who say that one should not commit adultery, do you commit adultery? You who abhor idols, do you rob temples?
2:23 You who boast in the Law, through your breaking the Law, do you dishonor God?

Once having made his “Law-keeping” hearer uncomfortable, Paul indicts him for hypocrisy. These three verses are totally self-explanatory. It is a point-by-point echo of

Paul's indictment in verse 1: "You do everything you condemn!" Paul's final thrust: "Your actions dishonor the God you claim as yours." How painful!

2:24 For "THE NAME OF GOD IS BLASPHEMED AMONG THE GENTILES BECAUSE OF YOU," just as it is written.

Then comes the "Thus saith the Lord." Paul quotes Isaiah 52:5. Paul couldn't get more pointed or more painful. He appoints blame directly on Jewish attitudes, not only for the way the world looks at Jews, but for the way the world looks at God! If he hasn't whetted their appetite for a better source of justification, nothing can! And he does it with the words of one of their most-revered prophets.

2:25 For indeed circumcision is of value if you practice the Law; but if you are a transgressor of the Law, your circumcision has become uncircumcision.

2:26 So if the uncircumcised man keeps the requirements of the Law, will not his uncircumcision be regarded as circumcision?

2:27 And he who is physically uncircumcised, if he keeps the Law, will he not judge you who though having the letter of the Law and circumcision are a transgressor of the Law?

2:28 For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh.

2:29 But he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that which is of the heart, by the spirit, not by the letter; and his praise is not from men, but from God.

For the remainder of the chapter, Paul offers the Jew a little lecture on the import of reality over symbolic profession. He uses the Jews' sacred rite of circumcision. Circumcision is a REMINDER of something that one has already supposed to have accomplished — and still is accomplishing. It represents the acceptance of God's thinking over fleshly thinking — hence, the cutting off of the flesh.

Paul's argument here is this:

2:25 If you DO what is symbolized, the symbol has merit. If you do not PRACTICE what is symbolized, the symbol is a lie and a farce.

2:26 Thus, someone KEEPING the Law, even if he does not use the symbol of keeping it, may be regarded as a LIVING SYMBOL.

2:27 So, the KEEPER of the Law who does not use the symbol is a LIVING REBUKE to those who use the symbol but only PROFESS rather than KEEP the Law.

2:28 So, what REALLY makes a Jew? It is not a physical symbol! What REALLY is circumcision? It is not cutting off of literal flesh.

2:29 What makes a Jew in God's sight is the man who has imbibed the Law's precepts to the point where they have become an integral part of his being. Thus, this man's HEART is cut off from fleshly reasoning — the REAL cutting off or circumcision. And, since it is impossible to live up to the LETTER OF THE LAW, this man is a success because he has imbibed and lives the SPIRIT OF THE LAW. Fleshly thinking (the mind of men) cannot well discern this distinction. Thus, this man's praise comes not from men, but from God (— and his FAITH becomes a justifier!)

* * * * *

A REVIEW

Chapter 2 is intense and complicated. Before going on to Chapter 3, encapsulating the concepts of what we have seen will be helpful.

Paul has shown the futility of trying to escape the condemnation upon the world (Chapter 1) by any one of three processes:

- (1) Being "better" than others;
- (2) Obeying the Jewish Law;
- (3) Living up to conscience.

No one of these provides justification.

He explains that SOME in the Gospel Age can escape via faith-justification — although he has yet to define it well.

Thus the chapter flows in this manner:

2:1-4 Paul condemns self-righteous attitudes which, some mistakenly conclude, justify a person BY COMPARISON.

2:5-6 Some, whose judgment will be in the Millennium, can, nevertheless, make their ultimate judgment harder on themselves by what they do in this life.

2:5-11 Mankind in the Gospel Age is divided into two classes —

- (1) Those justified now by faith and developed by sanctification. These are GAINING LIFE NOW ahead of time (2:7,10);

AND

- (2) Those yet a part of the unjustified masses who REMAIN under "wrath and indignation" (2:8) but will receive WORKS-JUSTIFICATION in the Kingdom by struggles ("tribulation and distress" — or knocking off of their sins, and restricting or narrowing their opportunities for sin.) (2:9,16)

2:12-16 This second class tries to justify itself either by works of the Law, or by "conscience" obedience. But both methods are failures.

2:17-29 The Jewish positions and arguments are given some detailed analysis and criticism to show how desperately faith-justification is needed.

SECTION VI
(3:1-31)

The True Importance of the Old Testament

OVERVIEW of SECTION VI:
So, Why Bother with the Old Testament?
(3:1-31)

It must have made an impression upon us, and it certainly made an impression upon Paul's Jewish hearers, that in Chapter 2 he virtually destroyed the Law Covenant as a justifier. Paul knew what a shocking change this was for the Jew, and he also knew that both Jew and Gentile might IMMEDIATELY be tempted to reject everything in the Old Testament as a result. That is why Chapter 3 is here. Paul must thwart that seemingly inevitable reaction.

Thus, verse 1 asks if there is ANY benefit in being Jewish or even in the symbolisms of the Law. He affirms that there is.

Then Paul brings up questions about contradictions to the Law.

- (1) He questions whether or not the Law and God were hurt by those who didn't conform. No! (3:3, 4)
- (2) He questions, as a result, if it is not beneficial to God to have us as violators of the Law since it only strengthens the Law's teachings. No! (3:5-8)
- (3) He questions whether or not the Jews are better than the Gentiles because the Jews had the Law. No! The Law proved the Jews are no better. But they were advantaged. (3:9-20)

Once those points are established, Paul gets to the very crux of the matter. He explains what WILL justify.

- (1) JUSTIFICATION FROM GOD (the alternative to all the justifications that did not work) is now made manifest and available. And, THE LAW AND OLD TESTAMENT PROPHETS PREDICTED IT! (3:21)
- (2) This justification comes only by FAITH IN JESUS. And it is available to all who will have that faith. (3:22, 23) Thus Gentiles are now acceptable.
- (3) This justification is not by works, but is a GIFT BY GRACE because of Jesus' sacrifice. (3:24) Hence, WHY it will work!

Next, Paul explains the LEGALITY behind this new justification and links it to Old Testament types. (3:25, 26)

Finally, in 3:27-31, Paul summarizes the meaning of his points.

This is a marvelous and important section of Romans. It provides the rationale for KEEPING and VALUING Old Testament Scripture while it POINTS TO what those Scriptures truly mean.

This chapter tells the Gentile that he must learn, and learn to appreciate, Hebrew Scriptures. It tells the Jew that he must maintain his Scriptures and place new value on them even at the same moment that he is rejecting any justification by the Law which dominates those Scriptures.

Most importantly, this chapter explains the legal basis for justification only by BELIEF!

In short, in Chapters 2 and 3 Paul has rejected three false roads to escaping sin, and he has replaced them with the one real and only escape at the present time: FAITH IN JESUS. Paul has rejected the Law as a justifier, but he has magnified it as a teacher. Thus, as he will elsewhere summarize it, “The Law is a schoolmaster to lead us to Christ.” Consequently, Old Testament Scripture becomes more important and more vital to saints than ever thought possible before the onset of the Gospel Age.

SECTION VI:
VERSE-BY-VERSE OBSERVATIONS
(3:1-31)

3:1 Then what advantage has the Jew? Or what is the benefit of circumcision?

Here is the only logical question to be asked after reading Chapter 2. If the Law doesn't justify you, what good did it do you to be its possessor and its captive? Do its peculiar symbolisms have any benefit whatsoever?

Paul will now show the age-abiding merit of Old Testament writings. He has successfully deflated all Jewish claims to ethnic superiority and to hopes of escaping sin by keeping the Law. But now he will proclaim the long-lasting benefits of the Jewish heritage. In our common-day idiom, he doesn't want us to throw out the baby with the bath water!

3:2 Great in every respect. First of all, that they were entrusted with the oracles of God.

Paul begins to answer by saying, "Great in every respect." From this we must conclude that NO ILL has worked toward Israel from their relationship with God. We must conclude that Old Testament lessons, as we dig for them, will be nearly endless in applicable riches.

But then we must note that among the "all respects" there is one of PRIMARY ("FIRST") importance for us: GOD'S WORD — "the oracles of God."

Scripture contains the writings of historians, the predictions of prophets, and the life-applicable lessons of moral standards. Paul and Peter tell us that these words were "God-breathed" — INSPIRED. Thus, no matter how Israel strayed, the "oracles" do not stray. They are for us THE INFALLIBLE record of all that God wished preserved for us before the onset of the Gospel Age. And, even with Israel's strayings, we must give them credit for their incomparable devotion and care in keeping God's Word in as accurate a condition as is humanly possible. Note Paul's hint of this: "They were ENTRUSTED with the oracles of God." In all of Israel's failures, this TRUST was faithfully maintained. We are eternally grateful. Their PRIDE in what they had actually worked some good.

3:3 What then? If some did not believe, their unbelief will not nullify the faithfulness of God, will it?

Paul sees our questions coming even before we ask them! Verse 3 asks a very legitimate question. Does the fact that God's people failed mean that somehow God failed?

3:4 May it never be! Rather, Let God be found true though every man be found a liar, as it is written, "THAT YOU MAY BE JUSTIFIED IN YOUR WORDS, AND PREVAIL WHEN YOU ARE JUDGED."

Paul's answer is swift and sure: NO! Behind Paul's words are many implications. One of those implications is TIME. Paul is saying that God will ULTIMATELY be found to have so directed every detail of His plan that REGARDLESS of the seeming failures, NOTHING has failed. Thus he concludes that (in the end) God will be found true even if every man has contradicted Him.

Paul, from this point on, steadily increases his use of Scripture to solidify his points. That is one of the objectives of this chapter (and those that follow). Paul began this chapter by saying that FIRST in importance from the Jewish Age was possession of "the oracles of God." With this fourth verse he begins to show the Rome Ecclesia, point by point, how these "oracles" establish all of Paul's reasonings. It likewise encourages us to try to do the same thing.

Paul's quotation is from Psalm 51:4. Its various New Testament translation attempts frequently obscure rather than enlighten the meaning of the words. Looking at the Psalm itself probably is safer than considering multiple New Testament translations.

Probably the best translation would be something like:

"You will ultimately be found justified in your words,
and flawless in your judgments."

AN ASIDE:

The following is a synopsis of the Old Testament source and context for the quote. It should reveal why Paul chose this particular text to bolster his answer. It also should teach us the value of actually going to the source of Paul's quotes in order to learn extra gems from their contexts.

In Psalm 51, David asks for the removal of his guilt. It is good subject matter for Paul who in Romans is showing that sin removal is going to be by "grace," not by works. David's first words are "Be gracious to me."

In verse 4, David acknowledges that this sin, AS ALL SIN, is not only (or even primarily) against the victims, but it is against God — a point Paul also is stressing in Romans. At the end of verse 4 we have the words which Paul quotes in Romans 3:4:

“So that Thou are justified (margin: mayest be in the right)
when Thou dost speak (margin: in Thy words), and
blameless (margin: pure) when Thou dost judge.”

Then, in verse 5, David blames it all on INHERITED SIN (which Paul also does in Romans). How interesting, also, how verse 6 is echoed in Romans 2:29!

What is David saying, (and what, therefore, is Paul saying)? David is speaking ABOUT GOD. He is saying that, since all sin is against God, God is justified in condemning it in His own way and by His own standards. His judgment is pure and not subject to challenge.

Thus, in Romans 3:4, Paul quotes David to prove that God’s judgment is perfect WHETHER OR NOT WE HEED IT. So, anything we do wrong or believe wrong proves God to be right.

3:5 But if our unrighteousness demonstrates the righteousness of God, what shall we say? The God who inflicts wrath is not unrighteous, is He? (I am speaking in human terms.) 3:6 May it never be! For otherwise, how will God judge the world?

Because of the meaning of the Psalm just quoted, Paul brings up his second logical question regarding our contradictions of God: “If our sins always show God to be right, isn’t there an element of unrighteousness in God when He punishes us for having part in establishing His being right?”

Paul immediately wants us to know (if we think that way) that we really are using human reasoning — to put it in Paul’s context, we are using uncircumcised reasoning.

Paul exclaims vehemently, “Never consider such foolishness!” We must here recall verse 4. Paul had just proven from the 51st Psalm that God’s ways are FLAWLESS. So, NO! This reasoning in itself contradicts the Scripture. An extension of this reasoning would be that God could not possibly judge the world if this kind of defect existed in Him.

3:7 But if through my lie the truth of God abounded to His glory, why am I also still being judged as a sinner? 3:8 And why not say (as we are slanderously reported and as some claim that we say), “Let us do evil that good may come”? Their condemnation is just.
--

These two verses are the end of the arguments of verses 1-6. Verses 7 and 8 sound nearly identical to verse 5. Actually, verse 7 is identical to verse 5. But Paul here is being repetitive because he wants to make an additional point.

Also, it seems that the Jewish mind was (understandably) intent on establishing that Israel's nearly two-thousand-year experience with the Law should mean something and should absolve them of some guilt! Thus Paul restates their (false) claim: "My falsity established God's truth. So why is He intent on labeling me as a sinner? It seems to me that if God works things that well that I should be able to enjoy evil so that He could continue to show His good!" Paul says the condemnation of such fleshly reasoning is just.

But Paul is repetitive of verse 5 in verses 7 and 8 because he needs to refute the slanderous rumor that he is suggesting this idea (verse 8). There seems to be no record of where Paul said something that might be thusly misinterpreted. But Paul's contentions that we are not responsible for living up to the letter of the Law could well be the source of such a rumor. In any case, Paul has here put a period on his argument. He will bring it up again to make yet another point. (See 6:1.) But he has here, with one simple quote from a Psalm, destroyed the erroneous argument.

3:9 What then? Are we better than they? Not at all; for we have already charged that both Jews and Greeks are all under sin;
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BALANCE is always an issue with Paul. Verse 1 established that Israel is ADVANTAGED. But Paul is not now talking about the advantages the Jew brings out of the Law. He is talking about how Jewish and Gentile standing before God in terms of justification DOES NOT DIFFER. One can easily see how careful Paul must be in making things clear. He said the Jew had advantages which were "great in every respect." He needed to do this to establish the everlasting integrity of the Old Testament. But he needs, just as importantly, to say that the advantages were in what they had, NOT in that they themselves were BETTER.

3:10 as it is written, "THERE IS NONE RIGHTEOUS, NOT EVEN ONE; 3:11 THERE IS NONE WHO UNDERSTANDS, THERE IS NONE WHO SEEKS FOR GOD; 3:12 ALL HAVE TURNED ASIDE, TOGETHER THEY HAVE BECOME USELESS; THERE IS NONE WHO DOES GOOD, THERE IS NOT EVEN ONE." (Psalm 14:1-3) 3:13 "THEIR THROAT IS AN OPEN GRAVE, WITH THEIR TONGUES THEY KEEP DECEIVING." "THE POISON OF ASPES IS UNDER THEIR LIPS." (Psalms 5:9 and 140:3) 3:14 "WHOSE MOUTH IS FULL OF CURSING AND BITTERNESS." (Psalm 10:7)
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3:15 “THEIR FEET ARE SWIFT TO SHED BLOOD,
3:16 DESTRUCTION AND MISERY ARE IN THEIR
PATHS,”
3:17 “AND THE PATH OF PEACE THEY HAVE
NOT KNOWN.” (Proverbs 1:16; Isaiah 59:7, 8)
3:18 “THERE IS NO FEAR OF GOD BEFORE
THEIR EYES.” (Psalm 36:1)

Paul, lest he seem to have only a Scripture here and there to support his view, sends a barrage of texts now. All of them, of course, are right out of “the oracles of God” — something the Jew must respect. But they all make the point that Jews ARE NO BETTER.

(It is interesting to note, not only in Romans, but elsewhere in Paul’s writings, the preponderance of Paul’s use of the Psalms.)

3:19 Now we know that whatever the Law says, it speaks to those who are under the Law, so that every mouth may be closed and all the world may become accountable to God;
3:20 because by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified in His sight; for through the Law comes the knowledge of sin.

It was “the Law” (the Old Testament) that said the things above. And Paul virtually says, “These things apply to you Jews who were under that Law. Thus, EVERY CLAIM to Jewish superiority has been squelched by your own Law! And, thus also, all men (not only Jews) render their accounts to God, not to the Jewish Law which can JUSTIFY NOBODY. The Law merely DEFINES sin; it doesn’t remove it!” Thus, the Law only tells us of the IMPOSSIBILITY OF OUR SITUATION (until faith-justification opens a way out).

3:21 But now apart from the Law the righteousness of God has been manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets,
3:22 even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe; for there is no distinction;
3:23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

So, here is THE SOLUTION! Apart from the Law “JUSTIFICATION FROM GOD has been manifested” — now made known as the Gospel Age opens. And, Paul pointedly reminds us, this great new justification has been “witnessed” (predicted in many ways) through “the oracles of God.” This verse so cleverly takes justification out of the Law while giving the Law credit for prophesying it. Hence the important lessons for both

Jews and Gentiles: Cherish the Hebrew Scriptures, but put no stock in being justified by the works of the Law.

Verse 22 defines the new life-justification from God which the Old Testament predicted in its shadowy way. Life-justification from God is THROUGH FAITH IN JESUS CHRIST — not by the works which that faith will engender, but by BELIEF. It is, therefore, to ANYONE with that belief. And (verse 23) since all are in the common condemnation, the release is for all (Jew or Gentile) who believe. Sin doesn't discriminate. It's in us all.

3:24 being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus;

Paul is, at this point, turning to an explanation of how this new justification WORKS. His first point is that IT IS NOT EARNED. It is a gift. And the gift comes about by GRACE — a word which means stooping down to help an inferior. In other words, this justification comes about not as a rich man lavishly and haphazardly dispensing favors, but as a concerned and loving God who, in making a new family for Himself, compassionately selects and helps those He is calling.

BUT — and this is of vital importance — it is neither gift nor grace outside of justice! It is BASED ON THE RANSOM — “the redemption which is in Christ Jesus.” Paul's intent in the next few verses is to ESTABLISH LEGALITY for this justification.

3:25 whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation in his blood through faith. This was to demonstrate His righteousness, because in the forbearance of God He passed over the sins previously committed;

To establish LEGALITY, Paul once again turns to the Old Testament and the Law — showing the REAL VALUE of the Old Testament as a teacher and prophecy of good things to come.

Verse 24 told us that our justification is made possible BY REDEMPTION — purchase. Now, in verse 25, Paul shows how God fulfills Old Testament types in Gospel Age reality. God publicly shows Jesus as the PLACE TO GO for salvation. Jesus is the PROPITIATORY — the PLACE in the Most Holy of the Tabernacle where atonement was made, where blood was offered, where sin was expiated.

Paul's point again is a LEGAL one. God just doesn't excuse sin. He has it PAID FOR. And if “through faith” we can receive that Jesus' sacrifice was that payment, we can appeal at the JUSTICE SITE (the Propitiatory) for the needed merit which we and Paul call “justification.”

So Paul continues: God DEMONSTRATED that His justice is perfect, resolute, and uncompromising by NECESSITATING a purchase to get us out of sin (the RANSOM).

God “demonstrated His righteousness.” But He also demonstrated His “FORBEARANCE.” This word means a putting-up-with over time — a delaying of consequences. What does it mean here? It means that God, by this sacrifice, has ACTUALLY paid what was necessary to remove the sin; BUT He “passes over” those previously committed sins. In other words, though those sins yet reside in our fallen flesh, he delays the actual death of our flesh and puts up with what that involves because He needs our fleshly bodies as the incubation vessels for the development of our new creatures.

The almost incomprehensible doctrinal depths of this verse make it, in a sense, the very center of the Book of Romans — maybe of the entire New Testament!

We have, somewhat arbitrarily, entitled this Section VI of Romans THE TRUE IMPORT OF THE OLD TESTAMENT. It is certain that Chapter 3 does deal with Paul’s contention that Hebrew Scripture is of sacred importance. But it is THIS VERSE that, above all others, makes the Old Testament Tabernacle types come alive as representing the very critical center of all Christian theology.

God, instead of waiting for the actual imputation of Jesus’ merit to Adam’s one personal and all-encompassing sin, arranges for our EARLY USE of that merit due to our faith in it. And He forbears — he “puts up with over time” — our sinful flesh so that He has something which is “justified” to deal with.

3:26 for the demonstration, I say, of His righteousness at the present time, so that He would be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.
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Paul wants to be even clearer in pointing out what this plan of God demonstrates. Paul almost certainly knew that we might not grasp what he had just said in the previous verse. So this verse is Paul’s “in other words...”

Paul had mentioned “demonstrate” in verse 25. It means to indicate or to prove (Strong’s 1731). “To prove” is the strongest. Thus God would “prove His righteousness” by providing an antitypical mercy seat with blood having actual efficacy. In verse 26, Paul restates that God PROVES His righteousness (justice) but adds “AT THE PRESENT TIME.” In other words, the ransom is really for Adam and his race in the Millennial Age. But God can JUSTLY USE its merit early for select members of the race who NOW have “faith in Jesus” — i.e., can fully accept that Jesus’ sacrifice has sin-erasing merit.

Thus Paul’s reasoning is: God can justify us AHEAD OF TIME and still be JUST — He is breaking no rules about the absolute nature of His Divine justice.

AN ASIDE

Reading between the lines we can see the meaning of the Leviticus 16 Atonement Day sacrifices. Jesus (the bullock) could have, and would have, been the sole necessary merit for the sin offering. But God wanted Jesus to have Divine brethren. So He arranged not to apply the bullock as the sin offering for Israel UNTIL the justification merit of the bullock made the “Lord’s goat” acceptable as part of the same offering. Thus, as Leviticus 16 shows, the bullock’s sacrifice is applied for the PRIESTHOOD; they (the priesthood) are then represented by the goat whose imputed merit is then applied for the PEOPLE. Thus, in one offering to do away with sin, a set-aside portion of the people (the priesthood) gets its merit EARLY — corresponding EXACTLY to verses 25 and 26 as Paul presents them. When we get to Romans 6, Paul will assume we got this point way back here in Chapter 3, and he will build on it.

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<p>3:27 Where then is boasting? It is excluded. By what kind of law? Of works? No, but by a law of faith.</p> <p>3:28 For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from works of the Law.</p> <p>3:29 Or is God the God of Jews only? Is He not the God of Gentiles also? Yes, of Gentiles also,</p> <p>3:30 since indeed God who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through faith is one.</p>

These are summary verses focusing mainly on dismissing the Law as a justifier and, thus, on opening the TRUE JUSTIFICATION to both Jew and Gentile — necessitating ONE GOD only for all who believe, not a God who dealt only with Israel but knew not the nations.

These verses summarize an entire chapter, but they also PREPARE for the next chapter. Paul has shown in verses 22, 26, 27, 28, and 30 that the ENTIRE BASIS of our justification is FAITH in Jesus’ sacrifice. His next chapter will deal with the intricacies of faith-justification and its TWO KINDS: (1) faith-justification to friendship before the time of Christ, and (2) faith-justification to life in the Gospel Age — a justification which will be treated more in Chapters 5 and 6. All of this is NECESSARY in order to understand the COMPLETE LEGALITIES of justification. Paul is a lawyer!

<p>3:31 Do we then nullify the Law through faith? May it never be! On the contrary, we establish the Law.</p>

The Apostle concludes this chapter with a natural, but probing and necessary question. He has DESTROYED the Law as a justifier. So, does that mean the Law is

not valid for something? Clearly not! It does not mean that. Paul's position is this: before faith-justification, the Law was an ADVERSARY because it demanded one thing, and Israel could only produce another. There was an unfriendly relationship (an antagonism) between the Jew and the Law. It was an unbearable weight. But with faith-justification, the Law doesn't impose DEMANDS. Instead, it becomes a lovely standard as well as a teacher and prophet. It now imposes CURIOSITY, and RATIONALITY, and SUPPORT. Our faith establishes it in our minds as something wonderful WITHOUT feeling any condemnation from it. The literal mercy seat, for instance, was an annual reminder that they were sinning. The antitypical mercy seat, on the contrary, SCREAMS AT US, "You are free!"

SECTION VII
(4:1-25)

Abraham's Faith-Justification
Pictured Something Larger

OVERVIEW of SECTION VII:
Abraham's Faith-Justification Pictured Something Larger
(4:1-25)

It always is beneficial to pause for a moment to see where we have been before we take the next step forward.

So far Paul has

- (1) mentioned the kinds of thinking that have helped keep the world in its downward course;
- (2) shown the kinds of thinking of those who want to escape from the downward course; These thinkings have been:
 - (a) "I'm better by comparison;"
 - (b) "The works of the Law make me better;"
 - (c) "I obey my conscience; therefore I'm better;"
- (3) debunked these three self-justification attempts;
- (4) admonished regarding the VALIDITY of Hebrew Scripture in predicting what will TRULY justify;
- (5) legally explained the ONLY justifying path available.

Once Paul has covered these issues, he feels the need to establish firmly the concepts of FAITH and GRACE which form the personal basis for our justification. There are TWO KINDS of justification before the Kingdom — one leading to a friendship with God, the other to the legal beginning of a new LIFE. Paul knows the importance of making these two justifications clear and distinct. In Chapters 4 and 5 he will concentrate on this.

Among other things, Paul is constantly impressing upon Jewish brethren the lessons they must LEARN and MAINTAIN from their Jewish heritage, as well as the CONCEPTS and PRACTICES they must now ABANDON from the Law. This is a tricky process, and it dominates almost everything which Paul presents in the first eleven chapters of Romans. This is important also to his Gentile hearers. Paul must encourage them to delve deeply into Hebrew Scripture WITHOUT having them think that they have any responsibility to the Law.

All of this accounts for Paul's heavy and constant references to the Law — even though his main subject is Christian life-justification. If we do not see this, we will focus too much on his Jewish arguments and insufficiently on his justification arguments.

* * * * *

Once we realize the context of all of the above points, Chapter 4 is a logical next step in Paul's sequence of teachings.

In verses 1-10 Paul uses Abraham's justification experiences to PROVE that justification happened BEFORE and OUTSIDE OF THE REQUIREMENTS of the Law. Paul stresses justification as a GIFT, a GRACE, and a BLESSING — never (before the Mediation) something earned. Thus, it is not because of law, and thus not exclusively to Jews.

In verses 11-18 Paul exposes a MYSTERY regarding the Abrahamic Covenant. He proposes that "Abraham's Seed" — the heir to the Covenant — would not be by inherited birthright (i.e., not by fleshly inheritance), but by PROMISE to a faith class. Thus Abraham could legitimately be called "A FATHER OF MANY NATIONS" — even though genetically he is not! So Paul concludes that "Abraham...is the father of us all" who are in Christ.

In verses 20-22 Paul comments on the GROWTH of Abraham's faith. He does this because he wants to show us how our faith can grow from friendship (Plane N) to sonship (Plane M).

That this is Paul's objective becomes obvious in verses 23-25. In these verses Paul tells us that this whole account of Abraham was written "FOR OUR SAKE"! And Paul is explicit to expand friendship to LIFE (verse 25) by showing that Jesus' sacrifice is for "our transgressions." Thus "our justification" is one of a higher plane.

SECTION VII:
VERSE-BY-VERSE OBSERVATIONS
(4:1-25)

4:1 What then shall we say that Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh, has found?
4:2 For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God.
4:3 For what does the Scripture say? “ABRAHAM BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS CREDITED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS.”

Abraham, of course, is the family standard for the Jews. Paul is already hinting in this verse that he is going to make Abraham something considerably larger than the foundation of the nation. When he inserts the totally unnecessary phrase, “according to the flesh,” he is predicting that the fleshly relationship may not be the only — or even the most important — part of the relationship. The hint is that Abraham may well be a forefather in some way other than “according to the flesh.” In any case, Paul introduces the subject of Abraham here because it will suit him in building enormous truths based on the life of this man.

It has been clear that Paul considers his kinsmen after the flesh to be “boastful.” In referring to Abraham, he points out that boasting (except to God) would, indeed, have been appropriate for Abraham if he had found a way out of condemnation by works. Paul definitely is “tongue-in-cheek.” NO ONE could ever justify himself by works. So he is saying to the Jews, “Even your forefather couldn’t do what you seem to claim to do!”

In the third verse, Paul resorts again to Scripture to prove his point. (Genesis 15:6) (1) Abraham BELIEVED God. Faith is the item. (2) That faith was CREDITED TO HIM as righteousness; i.e., it was GIVEN, not actually his by nature. (3) We have here the Scriptural right to add a modifier to Abraham’s kind of justification. Any one of several words would work: credited justification; imputed justification; reckoned justification, etc. It is credited to him “as righteousness.” Abraham was not really righteous! But God counted his faith as righteousness — in place of righteousness. And, as we have learned, righteousness and justification are interchangeable words. So, Abraham’s faith resulted in reckoned justification.

We all know that Abraham did not gain LIFE from this justification. He became the “friend of God.” Thus we are justified in believing that more than one kind of justification exists. Paul will make this assertion as he continues.

4:4 Now to the one who works, his wage is not credited as a favor, but as what is due.
--

4:5 But to the one who does not work, but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is credited as righteousness,

Paul sometimes assumes we understand a matter and goes on with his argument. Sometimes, however, he takes the trouble to reinforce his reasoning. That is what he does here. Paul (no doubt to the joy of Martin Luther!) is so intent on getting us to understand the basis of our Gospel Age justification, that he keeps hammering on this point: YOUR WORKS DON'T SAVE YOU! YOUR FAITH WILL! So, to paraphrase verses 4 and 5:

4. If you work and get paid for it, it's no favor. (Or, to put it bluntly, if your works save you, you don't need God!)
5. But, if you can't get the kind of reward you need from work, just think! God will give it to you if you believe Him!

But the lesson-import of these two verses goes well beyond the above paraphrase. The three words, "justifies the UNGODLY" (verse 5, NAS) are rich in conveying the mercies of the Gospel Age arrangement. UNGODLY is what Paul preached in 2:1 (and context) that WE ALL ARE. Paul is saying that God doesn't choose to work with the "nice people" — because, in His sight, nobody is nice! But He does choose to work with those of faith DESPITE THEIR UNGODLY NATURES with which they were born. God has arranged (through Christ) to OVERLOOK GUILT! The implications for our consecrated lives are ENORMOUS. If He overlooks our guilt, WE MUST LEARN (in our faith) TO DO THE SAME. And, thus, our "faith is credited" (reckoned or imputed) as RIGHTEOUSNESS." What a marvelous example of DIVINE MAGIC (if we can pardon the expression!).

Here might be a good place to note that (NAS) "credited" is an important REPEATED word by Paul. It occurs in verses 3, 4, 5, 6, 10, 11, 20, 23, and 24. It clearly is an important doctrinal concept by Paul. Reckoned Justification is a fundamental doctrine of Christian belief.

4:6 just as David also speaks of the blessing on the man to whom God credits righteousness apart from works:
4:7 "BLESSED ARE THOSE WHOSE LAWLESS DEEDS HAVE BEEN FORGIVEN, AND WHOSE SINS HAVE BEEN COVERED.
4:8 "BLESSED IS THE MAN WHOSE SIN THE LORD WILL NOT TAKE INTO ACCOUNT."

Paul will now turn to Psalm 32:1, 2 to build a surer foundation for his teaching. In 4:6, Paul introduces the word "blessing" — in part because David uses it, but also in part because blessing is so very opposite "earning." Paul wants us to think more about the free-gift grace of this Gospel Age under which we can be developed as new creatures, and under which the Ancient Worthies obtained a "better resurrection" in past ages. (Hebrews 11)

Again, (NAS), Paul stresses the non-function of “works” in the equation: “...God credits righteousness (reckons justification) APART FROM WORKS.”

Note the two parts in verse 7: (NAS):

- (1) LAWLESS DEEDS HAVE BEEN FORGIVEN.
- (2) SINS HAVE BEEN COVERED.

DEEDS, of course, are doings (works). These are forgiven. This happens at consecration when our past is erased. As Paul later says in 8:1, “...there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.”

SINS (our very nature: We were born in sin and shapen in iniquity) are covered by the robe of righteousness (i.e., the justification which HIDES).

So, DEEDS are what we’ve DONE; SIN is what we ARE.

Paul, in quoting David, is telling us the LAW of Gospel Age justification — a justification of forgiveness and covering, UNLIKE Millennial Age Justification which will rely on a justification by the WORK of actually doing away with sin and misdeeds in self.

In verse 8, the quote continues. David (and Paul echoing him) is pointing out the additional blessing (grace) which promises that any unintentional sin after consecration will not be listed against us. It is an ACCOUNTING (NAS) question. God leaves post-consecration, unintentional sin off the ledger! Is that a “blessing” or what? He only “credits” on the account what is “right”! (All credit; no debit.)

4:9 Is this blessing then on the circumcised, or on the uncircumcised also? For we say, “FAITH WAS CREDITED TO ABRAHAM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS.” 4:10 How then was it credited? While he was circumcised, or uncircumcised? Not while circumcised, but while uncircumcised;

In verse 1, Paul virtually asked, “What do we learn by looking at Abraham’s experiences about who gets justified?” Paul wants it known convincingly that justification has nothing to do with being a Jew. From verses 9 through 18 he keeps stressing this concept. In verses 9-12 he reasons how this was pictured by the DATING of Abraham’s circumcision.

So, in verse 9 Paul’s question is, “The blessings of which David spoke — are they restricted to the Jews (“the circumcised”)? In order to answer, he returns to Genesis 15:6 to remind us of where he began his argument in Romans 4:3. Thus, as the first part of Paul’s answer, he is saying, “Remember, Abraham’s blessing was a GIFT because of FAITH.”

He continues: “Now, did Abraham demonstrate that faith BEFORE or AFTER circumcision? CLEARLY BEFORE. So, you see, circumcision has NOTHING TO DO with justification; consequently, it is available to the uncircumcised Gentiles.”

4:11 and he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had while uncircumcised, so that he might be the father of all who believe without being circumcised, that righteousness might be credited to them,
4:12 and the father of circumcision to those who not only are of the circumcision, but who also follow in the steps of the faith of our father Abraham which he had while uncircumcised.

These two verses are important not only because they INCLUDE the faithful Gentile, but also because they DO NOT EXCLUDE the faithful Jew. BOTH can have “righteousness...credited to them.”

Paul again clearly DEFINES circumcision as a REMINDER — a symbol of something which had previously occurred. It is like water immersion in that physical baptism is a symbol of what has already occurred in the heart.

Thus in verse 11, Paul is explicit to say that TWO parts of Abraham’s experience are important antitypically:

- (1) He was circumcised,
but
- (2) it represented him BEFORE circumcision. Then Paul shows why the TWO POINTS are important. It is SO THAT

- (1) He is CONCEPT-FATHER of the uncircumcised,
and
- (2) he is CONCEPT-FATHER of the circumcised ONLY if their circumcision, like Abraham’s, represents the “steps of faith” which Abraham had.

The symbol of circumcision is central to Paul’s arguments because it so closely represents WORKS versus FAITH. Just as baptism is a commitment to renouncing our human wills in favor of God’s spiritual mind, so is circumcision.

Paul has been saying that WORKS don’t justify. Is he not saying that HUMAN EFFORT, human reasoning, etc., is fruitless? He replaces HUMAN EFFORT with FAITH in God’s directions. Thus, circumcision represents EXACTLY that — the cutting off of FLESHLY reasoning and effort IN FAVOR OF FAITH. That is what Abraham did; he abandoned his own fleshly reasoning (which, among other things, resulted in Ishmael), and, instead, HE BELIEVED GOD (which, among other things, resulted in Isaac).

Consequently God asked Abraham to cut off some flesh as an everlasting reminder to him of the faith he had exhibited and which must be the standard for Abraham’s faith-

progeny. God could have asked Abraham to cut off an ear, or finger, or toe, or eye-lid, etc. But these would hamper function and be more of a sign to the world than a reminder to Abraham. So, God suggested circumcision — a sign perpetually evident to Abraham (rather than to others), but causing no dysfunction. Thus was circumcision instituted, and its symbolism has never changed.

It must be asked, of course, why the sign was attached to those under the Jewish Law. The answer seems to be in what God expressed elsewhere. He told the Jews in no uncertain terms that the REASON He was dealing with them, the REASON He even bothered to give them a Law, was NOT BECAUSE OF THEM, but, rather, FOR THE FATHERS' SAKES. In other words, circumcision STILL was a REMINDER of the faith-justification of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob which caused God to promise to deal with their descendants even if those descendants did not live up to the same faith standards.

So, circumcision CAME TO BE synonymous with those under the Law. But that was not its origin or purpose. The Law came out of the true meaning of circumcision; circumcision did not come from the Law.

4:13 For the promise to Abraham or to his descendants that he would be heir of the world was not through the Law, but through the righteousness of faith. 4:14 For if those who are of the Law are heirs, faith is made void and the promise is nullified.

4:13 — Now Paul, realizing that the Jews had come to think of circumcision as being a mark of being under the Law (which it WAS NOT!), finds it necessary to separate the whole question of the Law from the matter under discussion. He says (in essence), “The Abrahamic Promise is not, and never was, connected to the Law. It ALWAYS was connected to Abraham’s justification by faith.”

4:14 — Paul reminds us to use our reasoning capabilities: If the promise goes to those developed under the Law, it is no longer a PROMISE, but a work — and the whole point of rewarding Abraham’s faith (Genesis 15:6 and Romans 4:9) is NULL and VOID!

4:15 for the Law brings about wrath, but where there is no law, there also is no violation. 4:16 For this reason it is by faith, in order that it may be in accordance with grace, so that the promise will be guaranteed to all the descendants, not only to those who are of the Law, but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all, 4:17 (as it is written, “A FATHER OF MANY NATIONS HAVE I MADE YOU”) in the presence of Him Whom he believed, even God, who gives life to
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the dead and calls into being that which does not exist.

4:15 — Thus, the Law, INSTEAD OF BRINGING ABOUT THE BLESSING (Psalm 32:1, 2), brings about condemnation! At least those WITHOUT THE LAW (the uncircumcised Gentiles) are FREE from an obligation which they cannot keep! (Galatians 3:15-18)

4:16, 17 — Now here is Paul's summary point: "For the above-stated reasons, the promise, the inheritance, and the JUSTIFICATION (Psalm 32:1, 2) are ONLY BY FAITH which is rewarded ONLY BY GRACE (Ephesians 2). And because of this, the promise is GUARANTEED to ALL the faith-seed of Abraham (whether or not they had been under the Law).

— FATHER OF US ALL —

Recall Paul's reasoning. Starting in Romans 4:11, he begins to show how Abraham is the faith-father of all who share his kind of faith. In verse 11, he makes him "father" of UNcircumcised believers; in verse 12, he makes him "father" of the circumcised believers — as long as THE FAITH also is present. When Paul finally reaches verse 16, he returns to this "father" concept and reiterates this concept by lumping us all together: he "is the father of us all." Then, in verse 17, Paul again resorts to Scripture to substantiate his point. Genesis 17:5 has God promising that Abraham would be "A father of many nations." Using this clue, Paul extends the promise BEYOND the faithful of the Gospel Age Justification, TO THE WHOLE WORLD at the close of the Millenium:

"God...gives life to the dead (the whole race of Adam UP TO Abraham which will become Abraham's earthly seed) and calls into being that which does not exist (the remainder of humanity after Abraham AND — most importantly — the heavenly seed which would not begin to exist before Jesus' resurrection.)"

How marvelously Paul builds on the smallest seeds of information! And how revealing and exciting are the results of his reasoning for us who discover the intent of his writings!

An AWKWARD transition (NAS) exists in the connection of verses 16 and 17. A paraphrase with a slight rearrangement of the order of words corrects the problem. Perhaps most helpful is the suggestion that the words "in the presence of Him" has the meaning of "from God's point of view." With this much of an introduction, we suggest the following interpretive reading:

Verse 16 — "...Abraham, who is the father of us all (verse 17) in God's sight because Abraham believed Him. Thus God said (Genesis 17:5), 'A father of many nations have I made you.' This God said because He gives life to the dead and calls into existence things not yet existing!"

See Weymouth for an ELEGANT translation of this passage.

4:18 in hope against hope he believed, so that he might become a father of so many nations according to that which had been spoken, "SO SHALL YOUR DESCENDANTS BE."

"In hope against hope" is a wonderful expression to state the absolute impossibility of a fleshly solution, and the absolute hold of TRUST that a solution does exist. Thus FAITH — "he believed!" Genesis 15:5 said that Abraham's seed would be like the stars of heaven. ONE child would be a miracle at this point — but "like the stars of heaven" (in number)? This is the strength of faith over works. FAITH TRANSCENDED the point of human rationality. Abraham could not know what we know — that his "seed" would be those LIKE HIM IN FAITH, not descendants in the flesh.

4:19 Without becoming weak in faith he contemplated his own body, now as good as dead since he was about a hundred years old, and the deadness of Sarah's womb;
4:20 yet, with respect to the promise of God, he did not waver in unbelief but grew strong in faith, giving glory to God,
4:21 and being fully assured that what God had promised, He was able also to perform.
4:22 Therefore IT WAS ALSO CREDITED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS.

The NAS is good here. It shows that Abraham DID consider reality. "Yet...(verse 20) he did not waver." In 4:20, the words "grew strong in faith" are important. Faith GROWS — both friendship-faith and life-gift faith grow.

4:19 — The KJV here reads, "And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead." Apparently the second "not" (underlined) does not appear in the Vatican MS. (See Diaglott footnote.) Wilson (Diaglott) makes (as a result) his English translation read: "And not having grown weak in the faith, though he regarded his own body as deadened... (verse 20) he did not dispute against the promise of God, by unbelief, but was made strong in the faith..."

Most translations seem to agree with Wilson (— not with the KJV). So, the result is this: Paul is interpreting Genesis 17:17-19 for us as meaning that Abraham's STARTLED response and his suggestion to God regarding Ishmael WAS NOT A FAITH BREAKDOWN. It was a normal and instant (i.e., not thought-out) fleshly response — one which Abraham immediately repudiated as witnessed by CUTTING OFF OF THE FLESH (circumcision).

It is a good example for us since our flesh frequently has spontaneous reactions which we immediately regret. By Abraham's reactions, and Paul's explanation, we are strengthened in our own walks. Thus, contrary to the KJV, Abraham DID consider his body (and Sarah's), but eliminated (in faith) the results of that consideration.

4:20 — Abraham was both willing and able (through faith) not only not to “waver in unbelief,” but also to GROW STRONG by rejecting his own fleshly reasoning. This is another powerful example and encouragement for us.

4:21, 22 — “Fully assured” is the key. It is clear that if we have complete assurance of faith because God spoke it, that is the KEY to imputed justification.

4:23 Now not for his sake only was it written that it was credited to him, 4:24 but for our sake also, to whom it will be credited, as those who believe in Him Who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead, 4:25 He who was delivered over because of our transgressions, and was raised because of our justification.

Paul now tells us in a nutshell why he wrote this chapter. He has enriched us by helping us understand Abraham’s faith and its relationship later to Jew and Gentile. He now (verses 23, 24) wants us to be fully persuaded that all of Abraham’s history was written “FOR OUR SAKE.” He is telling us, BEFORE HE STUNS US WITH GREATER TRUTH (in 5:1, 2) that we can have the SAME FRIENDSHIP-JUSTIFICATION credited to us — PROVIDING that we BELIEVE four things.

Paul’s list of the four necessary things we need in order to have Abraham’s faith is:

- (1) Our willingness “to believe in Him” like Abraham did: to trust God over the flesh; (verse 24)
- (2) Our willingness to believe that God raised Jesus from the dead — (somewhat akin to Abraham’s belief that God WOULD raise Isaac); (verse 24)
- (3) Our willingness to accept that Jesus’ deliverance over to death is efficacious FOR OUR TRANSGRESSIONS; (verse 25)
- (4) Our willingness to believe that his resurrection results in the possibility of OUR JUSTIFICATION. (verse 25)

The third and fourth points are extremely intriguing! The first point brought Abraham reckoned justification — friendship with God. The second and third points show that in the Gospel Age (as circumstances have progressed) that friendship possibility must have added to it a faith in Jesus as being alive and being the source of forgiveness.

But the third point seems to suggest something bigger — a sin cancellation! And the fourth point MUST mean a new kind of justification. Since the first two points are sufficient for friendship-justification, the fourth point PROMISES something more — something which Paul will immediately present as Chapter 5 opens. Paul is ready to confirm (as he already lightly mentioned) that LIFE-JUSTIFICATION is now available BEYOND friendship-justification.

SECTION VIII
(5:1-21)

Oh! The Grace of It All!

OVERVIEW of SECTION VIII:
Oh! The Grace of It All!
(5:1-21)

It may not be obvious initially, but this chapter is in a large measure about grace. Chapter 4 was in a large measure about faith.

Grace occurs only six times in this chapter. But it occurs at such strategic points as to make it the theme. Calling Romans 5 “The Great Grace Chapter” is not inappropriate. The concept is stressed earlier when Paul argues that Abraham’s justification — and all subsequent justification — is a GIFT, a blessing, or a product of grace. Paul’s point seems to be that while FAITH is the great justifier, it is only so BY GOD’S GRACE. It is not a “given” that God should grant justification just because a person has faith. Paul wants us to APPRECIATE FULLY why we stand where we stand. Yes, it is BY faith, but it is BECAUSE OF Divine Grace. Hence, in 5:2 Paul says, “...this Grace in which we stand.”

Paul never leaves the subject of justification in the first eleven chapters of Romans. But he does show how other topics like faith, grace, calling, etc., all RELATE to it. We could get lost in these other topics and forget that everything Paul is teaching is only to fortify our understanding of faith-justification.

The great central core of Chapter 5 is in a large sense centered in the ransom because the ransom is the legal force behind vitalized justification by faith. Paul already has taught us that God can be just in justifying us BECAUSE OF our belief in the efficacy of the ransom.

But while the great central core of Chapter 5 is anchored in the ransom, we would be MISSING PAUL’S POINT if we thought it was ABOUT the ransom! The ransom is, simply stated, the one-for-one offset price for an original sin. THAT is not the Apostle’s thrust in this chapter. To the contrary, his point is that while original sin did ONLY ONE THING — it brought death — Jesus’ sacrifice (the center of God’s GRACE now, rather than justice) brings a DELUGE OF BENEFITS, not just a price for Adam. One man’s sin brought death. One man’s sin-offering opens the door for unceasing benefits! That’s grace! This concept functionally is treated in verses 6-21.

Chapter 5 of Romans, then, is constructed along these lines:

- Verses 1-5 extend Chapter 4 which left off with Abraham’s justification and hints of something greater. But 5:1-5 immediately CONTRASTS the TWO JUSTIFICATIONS. Verse 1 acknowledges that we have initially received the same justification as Abraham. But verse 2 quickly cautions that WE HAVE MORE. We have “ALSO” obtained “THIS GRACE IN WHICH WE STAND” — the “high calling,” spirit-begettal, and a sonship which gives us hope of sharing the Divine “glory.”

- The great core of the chapter (5:6-21) is here to make us appreciate how GRACE is so much greater than JUSTICE. The ransom is involved for sure! But Paul's focus is on ALL THE BENEFITS FROM THE RANSOM because he wants us to appreciate GRACE and its enormity.
- One more item should be noticed especially. The Law is mentioned in verse 13 and then again in verse 20. There is a connection between the verses which will be discussed in the analysis. But the important item is this: The Law is mentioned because Israel is under a double condemnation. They are dead in Adam, but they are also dead due to the Law's condemnation. One of Paul's many points about the magnitude of grace is that Grace redeems Israel from BOTH death sentences.

SECTION VIII:
VERSE-BY-VERSE OBSERVATIONS
(5:1-21)

5:1 Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, 5:2 through whom also we have obtained our introduction by faith into this grace in which we stand; and we exult in hope of the glory of God.

There is a wonderful simplicity in these two verses:

- (1) As Abraham was justified by faith and thus had “peace with God” (i.e., friendship), **SO DO WE**.
- (2) But now, in the Gospel Age, that “faith” which Abraham had necessitates a mandatory new element: Our acceptance of (faith in) our Lord Jesus Christ.
- (3) Because of his sacrifice, we have been “**ALSO**” introduced, due to our faith, **INTO THIS GRACE** (the high calling) **IN WHICH WE STAND**.
- (4) Our higher justification is the door to a new kind of life. Thus, beyond friendship, we have spirit begettal which gives us the hope of sharing Divine glory — being a part of God’s spiritual creation and intimate family.

There is perhaps nowhere a clearer statement of Gospel Age justification philosophy. We see that imputed righteousness (Abraham’s kind of justification to friendship) is now “tentative” because it can become something greater. That greater justification is the beginning (the begettal) to spiritual life — hence, we have at that point “vitalized” justification.

AN ASIDE

It is often noted that Bro. Russell suggests (at different times) **TWO** meanings for 5:1. One suggests Plane N (friendship) justification; one suggests Plane M (vitalized) justification. **INSTEAD** of thinking of Bro. Russell’s “difference” as being two opposing interpretations, it might be more helpful to think of them as two different perspectives:

- (1) Perspective #1. If we look at 5:1 and 2 as representing the **PROGRESSION** of Christian justification experiences, then we see verse 1 as happening **PRIOR** to verse 2. In other words, God brings us to Plane N from which He **CALLS** us to the benefits of Plane M. This makes Plane N truly “tentative” for us — a step along the way to something greater. This perspective makes perfect sense if we are looking at **PROGRESS** in our individual relationships with God.

(2) Perspective #2. However, Paul is PROBABLY NOT here interested in progression. He is, instead, interested in the WHOLE COMPLETED PICTURE of our Christianity AS WE STAND — that is, what we ARE IN COMPARISON to Abraham, not how we start out LIKE him. Therefore, in this perspective, verses 1 and 2 must be considered UNIFIED, not progressive. Thus they are saying, “We not only have the friendship benefits enjoyed by Abraham, but also a GRACE and HOPE which he never had.” Thus Paul is summarizing Gospel Age SONSHIP rather than pre-Christ FRIENDSHIP.

We might want to note that the discussion of these above verses has made us use just about ALL of the modifiers which brethren use in discussing justification: imputed, reckoned, tentative, progressive, and vitalized. What a pity that usually we never stop to define Scripturally what we mean!

* * * * *

5:3	And not only this, but we also exult in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance;
5:4	and perseverance, proven character; and proven character, hope;
5:5	and hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit which was given to us.

Now that the Apostle has quickly brought us out of Old Testament justification into the new and living New Testament justification, he wastes no time in explaining the PRACTICAL difference which our justification makes as well as the PURPOSE for our new kind of justification.

These both are introduced with the word “exult;” we “exult” in the PURPOSE: (verse 2) becoming part of God’s glorious New Creation. But we also “exult” in the PRACTICAL: (verse 3) character development.

Consider the PURPOSE first. Paul says that our experiences end up with the “proven character” which enforces our “hope.” Abraham’s hope was for a piece of land and a family of descendants. Ours is immeasurably greater. It is to be Abraham’s spiritual seed which will bless all the families of the earth. The purpose of our justification is a VISION (a “hope”) — as it was with Jesus who endured “for the JOY set before him.” All successful people succeed because they have a vision.

The long-term “hope” of our vision is immortality — an eternity as God’s personal family on His exalted plane of existence. Paul wants us to be sure that this hope will not result in disappointment. To do this he gives us what we need for confidence. He is

telling us that our spirit begettal (verse 5) witnesses to us on a constant and growing basis THROUGH OUR EXPERIENCES (verses 3 and 4) that our hope is real.

This brings us to the PRACTICAL DIFFERENCE our justification makes over the simpler “friendship-justification.” Paul says, (verse 2) “We not only stand in this higher GRACE, but (verses 3, 4) we, unlike everyone else in any age, see our lives ‘through rose-colored glasses.’ Because we know that our proven characters will take us to our birth as Divine beings, we EXULT in any tribulations that lead us in that direction! We, as embryo new creatures, KNOW that these experiences are there to bring out perseverance — the long-term reliance on God. Once that is accomplished, our characters will be PROVEN, and our hope will be secure!”

What a formula for facing life with optimism! If we imbibe, digest, and fully accept these words, we will appear the happiest among men REGARDLESS of the actual circumstances of our lives. Thank you, Bro. Paul!

5:6	For while we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly.
5:7	For one will hardly die for a righteous man; though perhaps for the good man someone would dare even to die.
5:8	But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

Verse 5 spoke of the “love of God.” It is a many-faceted subject, but Paul picks out ONE of those facets in verse 6 by beginning with “For.” Thus, the “love of God” is in our hearts BECAUSE (among other reasons) He cared for us while we were yet sinners — He didn’t wait for us to seek Him; He sought us while we were “ungodly.” That reasoning has to have an effect on a receptive heart. The emphasis MUST be on the word “we” in verse 6 in order to understand where Paul is going. He is not speaking of the general ransom; he is speaking about its application by grace to the Church class.

In verse 6 we also see Paul’s words, “at the right time.” Think about that phrase. As a ransom, time is relatively unimportant. But for the development of the Church, it is crucial. We can see what Paul is doing. He introduces the ransom, BUT he is also preparing the foundation for his little sermon on grace. We have been “bought” — the ransom, the LEGAL item. BUT, we were bought “at the right time” — as the Law has run its course and the GRACE Covenant opens the door for us to hope for a resurrection on high — in the presence of the glory of God. (verse 5)

With the above consideration, verses 7 and 8 take on a meaning far more beautiful than first meets the eye. God is developing a NEW CREATION — a personal, intimate family for Himself. That’s part of “the right time” philosophy of verse 6. But in verses 7 and 8 Paul is showing us another look at amazing grace. God provides to make this New Creation out of those who “were yet sinners.” The real aim of these two verses is shown by the two uses of the word “us.” Verse 8 yet refers back to the “love of God” in verse 5. In verse 8, he says that the first thrust of this ransom IS HIS LOVE FOR US

— His Church. Thus verse 7 is not a haphazard statement about dying for someone; it is Paul’s meditation on the fact that God chose UNRIGHTEOUS, NOT GOOD men for His New Creation. Think about that.

Verse 7 is clearer with a slightly modified reading of TM translation:

“It is difficult to conceive of dying for someone, even if it is a person worth dying for — although we might even entertain the idea that a good and noble person could inspire us to self-sacrifice.”

(The heralded actions of military men who jump on grenades to protect their comrades gives credence to this thought.)

But the gist of Paul’s argument is this: God had Jesus die for ungodly persons with the aim of making them into something holy later — a concept which could only come from the loving mind of God.

5:9 Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him.
5:10 For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.

“Much more” is used by Paul twice in these verses. He is talking about grace which is much more than the legal exchange provided by the ransom. Verse 8 was ransom-oriented even though it really was about us. It might just be construed to say that we get an early release from Adam’s condemnation. But Paul wants us to see the “much more” of that release. The first “much more” is that we have LIFE-JUSTIFICATION (“justified by his BLOOD”). The second “much more” is that we have been granted extrication from the course of the world and the Law at this time — the “wrath” which Paul mentioned in 1:18, 2:5, and 4:15.

Verse 10 then summarizes Paul’s points:

- (1) God chose us while we were yet enemies to be recipients of reconciliation to God via early application of the ransom merit.
- (2) BEYOND that reconciliation (i.e., friendship), we have so “much more” — the justification to life and the subsequent sanctification process BECAUSE Jesus lives again!

5:11 And not only this, but we also exult in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation.

Paul now uses “exult in” for the third time. Having used it twice, he adds, “And not only this...” “And not only” is another way of saying, “There’s much more.” What more

can there be? Paul states the crowning point in words we have to think about: “We also exult in God.” This is, no doubt, partly a reminder of Paul’s words in verse 2. There it meant our hope of sharing a portion of His “glory” — being part of the Divine resurrection. It means the same, but “much more” here. Our ultimate exultation is our consideration of something no man ever dared to think. We can become God’s highest creation and His personal joy in a realm far beyond our imaginations. But this “exult in God” differs from the verse 2 “exult in the hope of the glory of God.” Verse 2 is about the future. Verse 11 is about the present — WE NOW HAVE A HEAVENLY FATHER personally in our lives! All of this is through our Lord Jesus Christ “through whom we have now received the reconciliation (Greek = atonement).” We have received ransom-benefits and “much more” now — ahead of all the world. Paul’s subject is grace — ABOUNDING grace!

5:12 Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned —
5:13 for until the Law sin was in the world; but sin is not imputed when there is no law.
5:14 Nevertheless death reigned from Adam until Moses, even over those who had not sinned in the likeness of the offense of Adam, who is a type of Him who was to come.

Here begins Paul’s treatise on ransom versus the grace that comes out of it. He has already focused on the grace that comes out of it TOWARD US. But now he is going to expand in order to let us know of God’s grace that can be trusted, and admired, and wondered at for all eternity — all growing out of the grace of providing the ransom.

Verse 12 begins Paul’s general argument by stating that sin is singular; it was Adam’s disobedience. This, of course, doesn’t mean that there is only one sin! It is that all sin stems from one disobedience. Thus, sin is inherited — it “entered the world.” Its punishment did also: “death through sin.” Again, the punishment also is inherited — “death spread to all men.” And it did so because sin was not avoidable due to inheritance — “because all sinned” — not having any options.

Next Paul introduces the Law in order to expand his little legal treatise on inherited sin. His argument is this:

Inherited sin kept sin in the world until the Law, BUT IT WAS NOT IMPUTED — it was not a debit against anyone’s account. All were dying by inheritance. There was no point in holding everyone personally responsible. The ransom (one-for-one) would not have worked!

So Paul continues (verse 14):

Even though sin wasn’t being legally charged against each individual, since sin and death were inherited, the punishment continued to reign all the time from Adam to Moses.

Paul's explanation for SIN'S RESPONSIBILITY is this:

The race had not sinned like Adam sinned. (They couldn't have avoided sin like he could have.) But Adam in a special sense became typical. He was FATHER OF THE RACE. Hence he typed or foreshadowed the one who would REPLACE HIM IN THAT FUNCTION — Jesus. It is only in that they both become fathers of the race that makes Adam a type of Jesus.

Paul makes the reference to Adam's being typical because he wants to draw contrasts between what Adam did and what Jesus does. They both had the lives of all humanity in their hands. Paul wants to show the results of the action of one of them versus the results of the action of the other. The one only gave death. The other gives a multiplicity of blessings which demonstrate the greatness of the grace which supplied the ransom.

The mention of the Law in verse 13 doesn't give much information. HOWEVER, much is implied. When Paul says, "Sin is not imputed when there is no law," he is warning that the debiting of the personal accounts of individuals DOES happen if there is a Law. Paul is planting a seed of a serious question. The Jew might at this point well ask, "Do you mean that I have to have a responsibility for my sins that the rest of the world doesn't have?" Paul's answer would have to be "Yes!" But he won't explain the consequences until the final two verses of this chapter.

5:15 But the free gift is not like the transgression. For if by the transgression of the one the many died, much more did the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abound to the many.
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Beginning with verse 15 and extending through verse 19, we have five verses — each of which compares what Adam (the first father) passed on to us versus what Jesus (the second father) passes on to the race. It is a five-verse follow-up to the last part of verse 14.

Before examining each verse for its own lessons, a brief overview of the contrasts can be helpful:

- (1) Paul points out that we get nothing from Adam except DEATH:
 - 5:15 "by the transgression...the MANY DIED"
 - 5:16 "from one transgression resulting in condemnation"
 - 5:17 "by the transgression of the one, death reigned through the one"
 - 5:18 "through one transgression there resulted condemnation to all men"
 - 5:19 "through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners"

The conclusion is simple: The only thing we get from Adam is DEATH.

(2) If Paul were speaking of the ransom, his CONTRAST would be that by Jesus' sacrifice, all will live. But this is not his emphasis. His emphasis is that MORE than this exchange happens:

- 5:15 "MUCH MORE did grace...ABOUND to the many."
- 5:16 "the free gift arose from MANY TRANSGRESSIONS [not just Adam's!] resulting in justification."
- 5:17 "MUCH MORE [the recipients of] THE ABUNDANCE of GRACE and the Gift of JUSTIFICATION will reign."
- 5:18 "through one act of righteousness, there resulted JUSTIFICATION of LIFE to all men."
- 5:19 "the many WILL BE MADE RIGHTEOUS [not just awakened!]"

Looking now at verse 15, we see the power of the contrast. Paul first states his thesis: "The free gift IS NOT LIKE THE TRANSGRESSION." The next 5 verses show us how this is true.

"By the transgression of the one, the many died." Look at the next words which we first saw in verses 9 and 10: "MUCH MORE." Then we have TWO GRACES — first, the GRACE OF GOD, second, the GRACE OF JESUS. It is not just an exchange of death for grace as being equals. Strong points out that the word "abound" is a very superlative word. "Superabound" would be more accurate. The CJB translates it "overflowed." While Paul fails in this verse to tell us how, he doesn't fail to let us know that transgression CANNOT COMPARE with Grace.

5:16 The gift is not like that which came through the one who sinned; for on the one hand the judgment arose from one transgression resulting in condemnation, but on the other hand the free gift arose from many transgressions resulting in justification.

Now the second of five installments. "Grace is not like what came out of Adam's sin (singular) BECAUSE, on the first hand, all we had was unfavorable judgment with resulting condemnation; but on the other hand, grace applies itself TO MANY TRANSGRESSIONS with the ultimate result of making everything RIGHT."

5:17 For if by the transgression of the one, death reigned through the one, much more those who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.

Next, the third installment. "Through the sin of one, death reigned through one (by inheritance), but MUCH MORE results from the abundance of grace given to the

Church in the form of the GIFT OF JUSTIFICATION, because they will not only LIVE, but reign through the one responsible: Jesus.”

This interpretation of this verse requires some detailed explanation.

5:16-19 — Bro. Russell (R. 3655) interprets verse 17 as applicable to Church and world. The connection of verses 16, 17, and 18 justifies his position.

Note these subtleties:

- Verse 16 is connected to verse 17 by the word “For.”
- Verse 17 is connected to verse 18 by the words “So then.”
- Verse 18 is connected to verse 19 by the word “For.”

These connections show us the continuity of thought.

Working backwards, it is easy to establish Bro. Russell’s point that the WHOLE WORLD is included. This is seen in the fact that (in these connected verses) the WHOLE WORLD is referred to in verse 18 by “all men.” It is referred to in verse 19 by “the many.”

But where does Bro. Russell obtain the thought that the reference also is to the Church? It may well be by the peculiar phraseology of verse 17. We cannot forget our larger context. In verse 11 Paul shows our ADVANCE benefits by saying “...we HAVE NOW received the atonement.” So, when we get to verse 17, we can observe how IN ADVANCE:

- (1) death no longer reigns in us;
- (2) we have received (already) the grace;
- (3) we have received the “gift of justification.” It can be argued against, but, strictly speaking, the world’s justification (which comes about as a result of the “gift”) is not a gift at all. It will be earned by works. Their justification will be actual, not reckoned or imputed. Thus, “gift of justification” may be a phrase in support of Bro. Russell’s position that the Church is specially represented in this verse (and at the end of verse 16 which CONNECTS to this verse.)
- (4) The “reign” of this verse can easily have application to both world and Church. Revelation 22:5 is the word applied to the world; Revelation 5:10 is the word applied to the Church. Applying it to the world has merit, but a strong case can be made for its application in this verse to the Church:

IF (as outlined above) “GIFT of JUSTIFICATION” is a code for OUR peculiar imputed justification, the reign applies to the Church’s reign. Another subtle hint in support of this is that this reign is said to be “through the One, Jesus Christ. The Church, INDEED, reigns THROUGH Jesus. The world, on the other hand, will reign AFTER Messiah steps aside; thus, speaking of their reigning THROUGH JESUS is a stretch.

Thus, because context stresses the benefits of GRACE to ALL (Church and world), it is easy to see, and agree with, Bro. Russell’s dual application.

5:18 So then as through one transgression there resulted condemnation to all men, even so through one act of righteousness there resulted justification of life to all men.

The fourth installment of the Apostle's reasoning might take a little reasoning on it to help his argument remain constant: that GRACE is LARGER THAN an even exchange. Here it appears that the exchange is even: (1) "Condemnation to all men" exchanged for (2) "justification of life to all men." It is not even because the "one transgression," while THROUGH INHERITANCE resulted in condemnation upon all, is NOT THE EQUIVALENT of Justification of Life (= perfection) to all men BECAUSE the justification will not be by inheritance, but by the Grace of working with each individual to bring him personally to life.

5:19 For as through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, even so through the obedience of the One the many will be made righteous.

Here is the fifth and final contrast installment. Again, it is difficult on the surface to see the inequality. But note: First of all, disobedience was ONE ACT, whereas obedience was a lifetime. Thus, the equality has already disappeared. But the contrast continues as we look more closely. "The many were made sinners" was a ONE-TIME occurrence which came about through inheritance. But when "the many will be made righteous," it will not be a ONE-TIME occurrence, but rather a one-on-one project by the Mediator to make each individual whole. Grace is so much more than the act which necessitated it!

5:20 The Law came in so that the transgression would increase; but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more,
5:21 so that, as sin reigned in death, even so grace would reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

In verse 13, Paul had noted that being under the Law does mean that sin is imputed to anyone who breaks that Law. Those not under the Law escape that imputation upon themselves. Thus, Israel needs a special GRACE because they are dead because of Adam's sin, but they also are dead due to their inability to keep the Law.

Consequently, Paul writes that the Law made "transgression...increase." It is not that there was more sin! It is that there was increased liability for sin. This gives Paul his opening to let us know that God's Grace is bigger than the problem.

Verse 21 explains that while the sin under the Law was an additional “reign” of death, the “JUSTIFICATION TO ETERNAL LIFE” through Jesus’ sacrifice and its application to us now is a new “reign” — a reign of grace. Thus the life-justification of the remnant faithful Jewish-Christian has ERASED BOTH CONDEMNATIONS FOR HIM. And, while Paul doesn’t mention it here (he does, elsewhere), that same grace will allow the erasing of the double-condemnation eventually for all of Israel. Oh! The Grace of it ALL!

SECTION IX
(6:1-23)

The Reason for
and the
Resulting Responsibility of
Our Justification

OVERVIEW of SECTION IX: Why We Were Justified (6:1-23)

In one sense, Chapter 6 is the very center of Paul's justification presentation. It physically falls in the center of the first eleven chapters which deal with justification by faith. But, more importantly, it philosophically forms the CORE of Paul's presentation. After all, while it's nice to be justified, there must be a reason why God is life-justifying by faith a small group ahead of the world.

We know, and Paul will yet elaborate on it, that one reason is that God is building a personal family from among men. This, in itself, is worthy of all wonderment; and justification must be a part of that process. But God always has more than one objective in what He is doing.

As far as the earth is concerned, God has as "the secret of His will" the restoration and perfection of the human race and its habitants. Paul expresses this so extraordinarily well in Ephesians 1:8-10. The Weymouth translation, First Edition, is superb:

“...so abundant was God's grace, the grace which He, the possessor of all wisdom and understanding, lavished upon us when He made known to us the secret of His will. And this is in harmony with God's merciful purpose for the government of the world when the times are ripe for it — the purpose which He has cherished in His own mind of restoring the whole creation to find its one Head in Christ; yes, things in heaven and things on earth, to find their one Head in him.”

In order to accomplish this secret “cherished in His own mind,” it is necessary to OBLITERATE SIN. And this is not to be done by the waving of a wand, but, as Paul has shown, through LEGAL PROCESS — an offering for sin which will seal the New Covenant. As Paul points out in Hebrews, this all was foreshadowed in Old Testament types — most particularly by Leviticus 16, the Day of Atonement sin offering. It is THAT which constitutes the purpose for Romans 6. Romans 6 is directly and specifically about the Church's part in the sin offering. Unfortunately, translators NEVER have understood the concept and, therefore, have nearly obfuscated Paul's message!

The ransom is a sin offering. But it is part of THE sin offering. In Romans 6, Paul is stating (in a very brief but pointed paraphrase):

“You are justified SO THAT you may be a part of Jesus' death — that is, so that you and he die for the same PURPOSE: that the entire BODY OF SIN will be OBLITERATED. This (obviously!) will require on your part that you sanctify your lives

to reflect your abhorrence of the sin you are dying to obliterate.”

It couldn't be more simple. It couldn't be more explicit. Paul probably never dreamed that translators would make this chapter look like a sermon on not sinning! Bro. Russell finally threw the light on this chapter and elevated it to the importance it deserves.

THE MARCH OF IDEAS

It again is wise to refresh our minds as to how the Apostle is building this letter. We may have become lost in detail, but we must push the detail aside now and then to see the progression of ideas which Paul presents.

Romans 1-6 can be summarized like this:

- Chapter 1: The thought patterns which keep the world in its current downward spiral
- Chapter 2: The three kinds of futile attempts man makes to extricate himself from the spiral
- Chapter 3: What will extricate some now
- Chapter 4: The Hebrew Scriptures PREDICTED this extrication by FAITH
- Chapter 5: How life-justification by faith can be LEGAL, and how the arrangement reflects Divine Grace
- Chapter 6: The PURPOSE of our life-justification is so that we can BE OFFERED as part of the great OFFERING FOR SIN. (This implies a sanctification imperative.)

We could make it even shorter:

- Ch. 1: The World's state
- Ch. 2: Self-justification attempts
- Ch. 3: The only currently valid justification
- Ch. 4: The FAITH-BASIS of our justification is proven in the Old Testament
- Ch. 5: Justification is a GRACE based on justice
- Ch. 6: WHY we are justified: to sacrifice with Jesus

CHAPTER 6

Chapter 6 divides like this:

- Verses 1 – 3 A repeated question with the ULTIMATE ANSWER
- Verses 4 – 11 The effect on us resulting from our being a part of the sin offering
- Verses 12 – 23 The resulting sanctification responsibilities: Harnessing the flesh to serve our sacrificing

SECTION IX:
VERSE-BY-VERSE OBSERVATIONS
(6:1-23)

6:1 What shall we say then? Are we to continue
in sin so that grace may increase?

As this chapter opens, we have the echo of the question posed by Paul in 3:8 where he asked it in order to establish a different point. Here Paul asks it because he is using it as an introduction to the second verse. However, it is related to 3:8 where Paul affirms that God brings good out of bad — although that does not justify doing bad!

Chapter 5 was about grace. Chapter 6 opens, continuing the subject, with a question about grace. Paul answered it in one context in 3:8; so why ask it again? It is because Paul is going to show that grace has, indeed, arranged to bring good out of bad on a grand scale. We were sinners. (That's bad!) God justified us. (That's good!) But He will, by grace, bring "MUCH MORE" (to quote Paul's famous words from Chapter 5) — God will bring "MUCH MORE" than our justification out of it — He will bring about the offering for sin which will make sin "done away with" (verse 6).

Thus this seemingly innocent and repetitious question in 6:1 is actually very powerful. It connects Paul's subjects in Chapters 3 and 5 with his crowning argument for justification in Chapter 6. Paul is a masterful writer. Unfortunately, his thoughts are so richly laden with gems that we often merely stumble over them.

6:2 May it never be! How shall we who died to sin
still live in it?

In four words Paul dismisses forever our purposeful sinning so that grace can abound. In essence, he is saying, "The objective of grace is not so that God can continue to excuse sin and appear magnanimous to us!" So what is the objective? Paul states it: The objective of grace is that we "DIED FOR SIN." (Therefore, practicing it is wholly inconsistent!)

But WAIT! We have an immense (but not insurmountable) translation problem. The words should be (as above explained), "Died FOR sin."

The translation accuracy needs careful investigation and thought.

FIRST — The preposition in the Greek is consistent throughout the chapter. Thus, if we can prove that "FOR" is accurate in just one of its appearances, we can feel comfortable in using "FOR" throughout the chapter.

SECOND — The key use of the phrase is in 6:10. There it reads: "He (Jesus) died to sin once for all." The problem should be immediately apparent. Jesus never lived "to sin," so he, likewise, couldn't die "to sin." It is an interesting fact that the NAS, in

editions later than the one being used here, CHANGES the phrase in 6:10 to “died for sin.” The translators know that there is a problem here. They just cannot figure it out because of their ignorance of the sin offering. Unfortunately, the later NAS leaves the other uses with the incorrect “dead to sin.”

THIRD — Many translators struggle with this. Wilson’s Diaglott says “died by sin.” Moffat uses “for,” but only in verse 10 — DESPITE THE FACT that verse 11 is a parallelism for the Church! “Dead FOR sin” is not only correct, but it is the only translation which takes away from the church denominations’ distortion of Romans 6.

FOURTH — It is a fact that this word for sin can also be translated “sin offering” or “sacrifices for sin.” It is freely thus rendered by translators in Hebrews where no other translation could work! Hence, we would not be out of order to read verse 2 as

“How shall we who died as a
sin offering still live sinfully?”

That is not as good as “died for sin,” but it does reflect Paul’s reasoning.

Thus verse 2 sets the stage for this immensely important chapter. It shows that sanctification (not living in sin) is going to be imperative for us BECAUSE we have sacrificed with Jesus for the eradication of sin. THIS (our sacrifice’s acceptability) is the REASON for our life-justification. Thus Paul has reached the pinnacle of his explanation about justification by faith in its special form of VITALIZED justification.

6:3 Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death?

“Do you not know” seems to be Paul’s saying: “Is it possible that you have missed THE POINT of the doctrine of baptism? This “DYING FOR SIN” is the point of your real baptism.”

We must not miss the connection of this verse to verse 2. IF verse 2 meant that we died TO sin (i.e., we gave it up for a righteous life), THEN the baptism of this verse 3 would have to be John’s baptism — a baptism of repentance for sin. That clearly is not Paul’s point, thus establishing the accuracy in verse 2 of “died FOR sin.”

Thus verse 3 is another attempt by Paul both to clarify and to stress our participation in the great offering for sin.

Paul is not speaking primarily about water immersion — although he will allude to its symbol. He is speaking of baptism even as Jesus did when he said “I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how I am straitened until it be accomplished.” Jesus spoke of the reality, not the symbol. Jesus’ true baptism (as is ours) was an IMMERSION INTO sacrificial death.

So, Paul, following up on the words “we who died for sin” (in verse 2), continues by saying (paraphrased):

“You surely know that our baptism into Christ IS our immersion into death for the same purpose as his death. It is dying FOR sin — to be a part of the sin offering.” (Cf. I Corinthians 15:29, 30).

We have in this verse one of the most sublime moments in New Testament theology. Its importance and its meaning cannot be overstated.

6:4 Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.
6:5 For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection.

With the word “Therefore,” Paul uses this verse to summarize:

(1) We have been accepted as a legitimate (perfect through justification) SACRIFICE. Our humanity (what we would have had at the Millennium’s end) is buried — has DIED into HIS death, (i.e., having sacrificed our humanity for the SAME OBJECTIVE).

(2) Jesus (not now human) is raised in order to accomplish the work for which he died; we also (with the figurative awakening out of water baptism as New Creatures), now have a NEW LIFE — completely divorced from our old selves — which will ultimately give us the same completed resurrection as his.

The second half of verse 4 shows the relationship of bullock and goat in Leviticus 16. “Christ...raised from the dead...so we too might walk in newness of life” is the antitypical fulfillment of the acceptability of the bullock making possible the acceptability of the goat. We could not have “newness of life” without having been life-justified by the first part of the sin-offering sacrifice. ALL of the merit is in the bullock, but he GIVES it to the goat! Thus the goat HAS MERIT to offer — its justified humanity. Are we still talking about GRACE!

And (verse 5), if we now are successful in being acceptable parts of the sin offering — “united with him in the likeness of his death” (i.e., dying to do away with sin in the world — a sin offering), then maybe (!?!), no, CERTAINLY we will share his resurrection — a resurrection which has as its FIRST OBJECTIVE sin obliteration!

6:6 knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin;

The word “our” (before “body”) in this verse is inexcusable and unconscionable. It is not in the Greek and is here because of a forced Babylonish interpretation that Paul is

speaking about our sinful fleshly bodies. He is not. Most translations, fortunately, are not so boldly erroneous here.

Here is what Paul is saying:

- KNOW THIS: Our old self (our old JUSTIFIED humanity) was crucified. What does crucified mean? For Jesus AND us, it means the voluntary slaying for the purpose of a sacrificial offering of a perfect (or reckoned-perfect) life. (It does not mean giving up sin!)
- We (our justified humanity) were offered IN ORDER THAT THE BODY OF SIN (the whole entity, the whole existence, the whole mass of sin) WILL BE DONE AWAY WITH. [Is there a better definition than this of sin offering?!]
- This means two things. If our flesh (justified but not literally free from sin) is DEAD, we are no longer slaves to it. (It also secondarily means that, once the body of sin is destroyed at the close of the Millennium, NO ONE will any more be enslaved by it.)

Perhaps a paraphrased translation of the verse would be helpful.

“Know what verses 4 and 5 mean. They mean this: Jesus and our justified humanity have been crucified as a sin offering so that all sin everywhere will vanish and sin will no longer enslave anyone — not us now, nor the world later.”

6:7 for he who has died is freed from sin.

That Paul’s PRIMARY thought at the end of verse 6 is aimed at the Church is proven by verse 7. He here says that our offering, our sacrificial death, our “crucifixion,” has freed us from sin. Paul will soon build more and more on our status as “new creatures” rather than as humans. John says that the new creature does not sin. It is John’s parallel comment to Paul’s words in this verse. Paul will have to calm our fears about this concept! That will be his objective in writing Chapter 7.

6:8 Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him,

So, Paul puts our “death” in the past, but he puts our real lives in the future: “we shall...live with him.” What about the present — the time between our past death and our future life? That is what Paul will address in the next three verses. Verse 8 is here to raise that very question in our minds so that Paul can answer it.

It is an important tenet of our belief that our “resurrection” is GRADUAL. Our entire consecrated lives ARE our resurrection in process. The AWAKENING in new bodies is the culmination or completion of the process. Jesus alone had an instantaneous resurrection. He needed no re-standing with God. We do. And our embryo new creatures are synonymous with our resurrection PROCESS. (This concept is reflected in Paul’s words in Philippians 3:10, 11.)

6:9 knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, is never to die again; death no longer is master over Him.
6:10 For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God.
6:11 Even so consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus.

In these three verses Paul accomplishes several things. In verse 9, following up on the promise of verse 8, Paul is assuring us that our sacrifice of our humanity (“we have died with Christ”) is going to give us what it gave Christ — a “never to die again” existence. Consequently, “death is no longer master over him.” Actually, it’s not even a threat. Paul’s point seems to be that this sacrificial death as part of the sin offering is (verse 10) a “once for all” experience. In other words, he and we receive immortality and incorruptibility.

Verse 10 continues to explain details of sacrificial death. When Paul writes “the death that he [Jesus] died,” Paul is saying that he did not die because of sin. He was sinless. Instead, he died FOR sin. The “death that he died” was different. It was an offering to do away with the sin that makes others die. So Paul says (with the ONLY correct translation), “the death that he died, he died FOR sin once for all.” A real and acceptable offering that really accomplishes its objective needs to happen only ONCE. The Greek is actually akin to the English expression “once and for all” — meaning “THAT DOES IT!”

(The correct translation of “died FOR sin” was discussed under verse 2.)

Now that Jesus’ sacrificial death resulted in his Divine-nature reward, it is only appropriate to describe that reward. Paul says, “But the life that he [now] lives, he lives to God.” (Again, FOR God would be clearer.) After all, the WHOLE REASON Jesus wanted to give the sin offering was FOR God. It is only consistent that all life subsequent to that offering he would live FOR God.

Verse 11 is exciting, and noble, and doctrinal to the core!

The first two words, “Even so,” create a parallelism impossible to ignore and, without immense faith, nearly impossible to take in for its grace toward us.

“Even so” — in the same way — consider YOURSELVES doing exactly what Jesus did! Yes, we’re only the goat that required the gift of merit from the bullock that went before us. But the bullock DID GIVE us that merit so that we could sacrifice it acceptably. So Paul says to us that we are to consider ourselves as part of the sin offering: “Consider yourselves (even like Jesus) to be dead FOR sin.” WOW!

He doesn’t stop there. But he must now make an accommodated application for us. When Jesus was crucified, he was LITERALLY dead, and then LITERALLY alive again “for God.” But our “crucifixion” (verse 6) was at the acceptance of our consecrations. We are only accepted as dead. BUT, we are now expected to be “ALIVE FOR [to] GOD

in Christ Jesus.” In other words, our post-sacrificial lives start on this side of the veil, whereas Jesus’ post-sacrificial life in Paul’s scenario began after his literal crucifixion.

Dear brethren, we are overwhelmed by these verses. The power of them has been lost over the centuries. The honor bestowed upon the saints is beyond mere words. But when we contemplate the whole matter, it makes so much Divine sense! Why are we disciples? Why have we received life-justification? Surely it’s not because we want to go to heaven! Surely it’s not because God wanted us to have an advantage over the rest of mankind! NO. It is because God promised Abraham that his faith-seed would bless all families of the earth. And how is that to be done? It is to be done by the removal of sin! And how is that to be done? It is to be done by BLOOD — the blood which seals the New Covenant. And by inexplicable Grace, we have been invited to have our blood made clean and offered with the blood of Jesus (our antitypical bullock of the sin offering).

If we went no further in Romans, we would have blessings so far too great for expression.

6:12 Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its lusts,

This is Paul’s introduction to us of the doctrine of sanctification — a doctrine he will expand upon in great detail beginning in the twelfth chapter.

But, appearing here as it does, this verse, in modern vernacular, is a “DUHHH!” verse — “a no-brainer!” Paul is stating the OBVIOUS. Because of our commission, our sacrifice, our consecration, to do away with sin, WE CAN’T BE SUBJECT TO THE SIN in our mortal vessels.

6:13 and do not go on presenting the members of your body to sin as instruments of unrighteousness; but present yourselves to God as those alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God.

Paul continues. Our physical bodies are primed to do everything wrong — to give in to the sin with which they were born. But this verse IMMEDIATELY tells us that the POWER OF THE MIND can, to a great degree, control those impulses. Thus, Paul does not say, “Don’t let your bodies do this or that.” Instead, he says “DONT PRESENT YOUR BODY TO SIN.” The thought is completely different. In the first example (which he doesn’t use), the body has preeminence in deciding. In the example he does use, the mind has preeminence.

So, Paul says, “You have a mind. It must remain in the ascendancy. It must not consent TO USE THE BODY OR ANY OF ITS PARTS as ‘instruments of unrighteousness’.” Since he says “do not go on,” the point is clear that all of us have

always in the past actually presented our abilities somehow in the service of unrighteousness.

So, the alternative is this: “You can enlist your physical strengths and talents as a PRESENTATION TO GOD — to use those strengths in His service.” Then, Paul refers back to the concept of verses 4, 6, and 11. We are “alive from the dead” — we are POST-sacrificial beings. Our flesh sacrificially died at consecration. We now live as new creatures — even though yet in an embryo state. Thus the new mind, the spirit-oriented new creature, controls the strengths and talents of the physical body which is its slave. In this context, Paul says, “present...your members as instruments of righteousness to God.” The statement IS the epitome of the doctrine of sanctification. Paul will give details later.

6:14 For sin shall not be master over you, for you are not under law but under grace.

This verse does two things. It concludes a part of Chapter 6, but it also introduces the rest of Chapter 6. Paul already has introduced THE REASON why sanctification is needed. We are part of the offering which will do away with sin. Therefore our lives cannot reflect sin in any way as much as possible.

In the rest of the chapter, Paul will tell us to be “perfect”! In the next chapter he will quell our fears about that concept! But he is not sugar-coating his lesson. He is telling us in the most certain terms that compromise with unrighteousness will cost us our crowns. He is telling us that life-justification without sanctification is like a fruit tree without fruit.

This verse, however, is meant to be a comfort. It begins by saying that sin cannot be our master despite its inescapable presence in our very beings. His point is that ONLY LAW requires perfection of works. On the other hand, GRACE (that “MUCH MORE” power of Chapter 5) has released us from the condemnation of imperfect works — the burden of absolute perfection — and lets us “consider” ourselves (verse 11) alive in the fullest sense!

6:15 What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? May it never be!

To begin his conclusion to this chapter, Paul once again asks a question we have heard several times before. But each time he asks it, he focuses more closely on the real answer. This time he will give the answer that forms the philosophy of sanctification as related to sin offering.

6:16 Do you not know that when you present yourselves to someone as slaves for obedience, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin

resulting in death, or of obedience resulting in righteousness?

This is another of the Apostle's "Please-think-about-it" points. He asks us to consider the very basic tenet: If you sign up to serve someone, you are responsible for his actions — if they are sinful, you are asking for death; if they are good, you will get a part of the righteous credit that comes out of it.

It is a good exercise for us to consider this. Most humans "sign up" for something that looks profitable before they consider all of the implications and consequences. Paul now will let us know the implications behind that for which we "signed up."

6:17 But thanks be to God that though you were slaves of sin, you became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching to which you were committed,
6:18 and having been freed from sin, you became slaves of righteousness.

So, Paul says, "Be thankful to God that you signed up to a good contract! Formerly you were contracted to your sinful humanity. But now you have switched allegiance — and not because of expediency, but because your heart fell in love with the message to which you consecrated your all."

"Breaking the old contract has taken the weight of sin off of your shoulders. You now are indebted, ENSLAVED, to righteousness!"

6:19 I am speaking in human terms because of the weakness of your flesh. For just as you presented your members as slaves to impurity and to lawlessness, resulting in further lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves to righteousness, resulting in sanctification.

To what "human terms" does the Apostle refer? He is referring to SLAVERY — a very human item. He says he is using this normally ugly human word because our flesh is weak. He means it's hard for us to get the point! So he uses a word with shock value. Slavery is inescapable and undesirable. But Paul, on a spiritual level, will turn it into the most lovely of concepts!

This verse presents a contrast — one part being the ugliness of human slavery; the other part being the glory of spiritual "slavery." Our old lives are presented first: We used our strengths and talents (our "members") to entangle ourselves in impurities and lawlessness (lack of self-control). What was the result? We became even more lawless. We kept giving in more and more because it was easy, sometimes enjoyable

(to a fallen human), and because we ended up with a “What’s-the-use-of-trying?” attitude.

But the Apostle presents the alternative we have now VOLUNTARILY chosen: Present (offer) your strengths and talents (“members”) to GOOD SLAVERY! The words seem contradictory! But who would not indenture himself to the promise of EVERYTHING GOOD! Then Paul says, “THIS is sanctification.” It is what we need to have in order to succeed as part of “the Lord’s goat” class in the sin offering.

We must not overlook here a very encouraging concept. We often (and properly) consider our flesh as an adversary. Surely, what dwells in it is. But Paul is looking at the other side of the coin. He is saying that our flesh can be forced into the service of holiness. It is an important concept. He wants us to “present” our bodies as a part of our consecrated living sacrifice. He will repeat this concept in 12:1 in order to launch his dissertation on sanctification specifics. That will constitute the entirety of Part II of The Book of Romans.

6:20 For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness.

6:21 Therefore what benefit were you then deriving from the things of which you are now ashamed? For the outcome of those things is death.

6:22 But now having been freed from sin and enslaved to God, you derive your benefit, resulting in sanctification, and the outcome, eternal life.

6:23 For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

In his final verses of this chapter, Paul restates the contrast of verse 19. With these thoughts he has thoroughly explained the relationship of sin offering and personal sanctification.

6:20 “BECAUSE when you were enslaved in your weaknesses, you were free only from one thing: the control of righteousness!” Upon reflection, this is a searching verse. Paul is saying it’s ALL or NOTHING! We can be a “little” in favor of unrighteousness, but CANNOT at the same time claim that we like righteousness! Paul is stressing the EXCLUSIVITY of sanctification! We cannot serve two masters.

6:21 Paul invites us to look back. “Were you deriving any benefit from your old life? If so, why are you now ashamed of some of the things you thought or did? The only outcome of that life is dying” (which should be obvious if we look around. That’s why we want to do away with the “body of sin.”)

6:22 But now (the opposite of verse 20) we have become totally free from sin — its influence, its draw, its “benefits” — and we have willingly and purposely enslaved ourselves to God. This will have REAL benefits — and it will (as we grow) result in

holiness (sanctification), resulting ultimately in eternal life free from all evil, hurt, disappointment, and dying.

6:23 We EARN death through sinning; but God is GIVING us life even now as we become a part of our Lord and his sacrifice.

SECTION X
(7:1-25)

The Spirit of the Law:
The New Creature Versus the Flesh

OVERVIEW OF SECTION X:
The Spirit of the Law and the
New Creature Versus the Flesh
(7:1-25)

Chapter 6 left us with Paul's stressing that we must have sanctification (= holiness!) in order to be successful as part of the sin offering. This could (and should!) leave the hearer at least concerned, if not discouraged. Thus, one of the objectives of Chapter 7 will be to let us know that holiness for us is not perfection of the flesh. Sanctification will be by the spirit of the Law rather than by the letter of the Law.

This chapter, then, is so logical in its placement. Paul has led us to the pinnacle of the purpose for our justification by telling us that we are part of THE SACRIFICE. Now he will encourage us that the assignment is, indeed, attainable. It is an extension of Paul's argument that our justification is not by perfect works, but by faith. Imperfect works will prevail! — but their imperfections will be ignored.

Another function of Chapter 7 is to comfort and to instruct the Jewish Christian. The Jew knew very well that the Law was binding. Yet, the Apostle was asking the converted Jew to abandon the Law Covenant to become a part of the sacrifice (the Sarah Covenant) that will seal the New Covenant. This, as Paul will explain, is nigh unto adultery — abandoning Moses to marry Christ. Because this item needed great care and detail in order to set the Jew free, this chapter is focused much on the questions posed by this change from Moses to Christ.

Thus Paul is freeing each of us from our flesh, and freeing the Jew from his commitment to the Law. We might well call this the Freedom Chapter.

SECTION X:
VERSE-BY-VERSE OBSERVATIONS
(7:1-25)

7:1 Or do you not know, brethren (for I am speaking to those who know the law), that the law has jurisdiction over a person as long as he lives?

The very last words of Chapter 6 were “eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.” Paul was speaking, of course, of the life we have begun by receiving life-justification — something impossible under the Law. So, when he begins this chapter with “OR,” he is maintaining a DIRECT CONNECTION with that thought. In other words, 7:1 is throwing out a challenge to the Jewish brethren.

In Galatians 4:24, 26, and 28 Paul shows that Christians are under the Sarah Covenant — a covenant totally separate from the Hagar (Law) Covenant. Here in Romans, he is addressing the impossibility of being under both.

We could well reword this verse to have a little more bite — although the Jewish reader probably felt the bite without a rewording.

“You brethren who are Jews: How are you going to explain your acceptance of life under a covenant other than the one you were born under and obligated to for your lifetime?”

It is a great question. It needs an answer. And Paul asks it because he wants to supply the answer. It is a logical extension of the life-justification subject which is his constant and continual theme in these first eleven chapters.

7:2 For the married woman is bound by law to her husband while he is living; but if her husband dies, she is released from the law concerning the husband.
7:3 So then, if while her husband is living she is joined to another man, she shall be called an adulteress; but if her husband dies, she is free from the law, so that she is not an adulteress, though she is joined to another man.

Paul cites the Law regarding marriage and adultery in order to use it as the basis for switching covenants. He is not doing this to make the Jew feel badly, but because he wants to make a powerful point regarding LEGALITY. He wants to illustrate that there is a DEATH that has occurred for the Christian — a death that will RELEASE the Christian Jew from his familial obligation to the Law.

Paul’s argument is complex. It is understood only when we give much thought to it. If we recall that Chapter 6 stressed our BAPTISM into Christ, we get an additional

window into Paul's reasonings. As he points out in I Corinthians 10:1, 2, Israel also was BAPTIZED into Moses; and he points out that those experiences were TYPICAL. (See I Corinthians 10:4, 11.) It is this TRANSFER from Moses to Christ, from typical to antitypical, that Paul is teaching to Jewish brethren. Moses had PREDICTED (Deuteronomy 18:15, 18) that God would raise up a REPLACEMENT for him. In Chapter 7, Paul is using the marriage laws to show how that will work. In essence, Moses dies so that Christ might replace him. His point will be based partly on the concept that Jewish Christians were dead to (and by) the Old Covenant. They were now alive in (and by) the Grace Covenant. In another sense, as we shall see, it is, indeed the Law that died, and, consequently, the Jewish Christians were freed because the Law died (to those who could receive that fact). It seems certain that Paul had both concepts in mind — a DOUBLE ARGUMENT as to why Jews could abandon the Law Covenant.

A secondary point, but one which Paul teaches elsewhere with vehemence, is that one CANNOT be under the Law and be in Christ at the same time. By his reasoning in these two verses, it is abundantly clear that that would be adultery! All responsibility to the former husband (the Law) is absolved. All subsequent responsibility is to the new husband (Christ). This does not mean that one cannot admire and emulate the qualities of the former husband (the "spirit of the Law"); but all legal connection, all indebtedness, all obedience, has VANISHED and must be renounced.

Thus, as we look at verses 2 and 3, we find the following points:

- ◆ The married woman (the individual Jew) is bound by (marriage) law to her husband (the Law Covenant) as long as the Law is living (functioning).
It is of value to note that (for those who can receive it) the Law ceased to function at the cross. The true sacrifice having been offered, the typical sacrifices became an abomination in the sight of God. (Daniel 9:27; Jeremiah 16:18) The Jew who does not recognize this is, of course, yet bound to the Law. In his mind, the Law still is alive. (Colossians 2:14)

So, Paul continues:

- ◆ BUT, if her (the individual Jew's) husband (the Law) dies (ceases to function), then she (the individual Jew) is RELEASED from all obligations of the marriage law (all connection) toward her husband (the Jewish Law).
- ◆ (Verse 3) So then, if her husband (the Law) is living (functioning), and she (the Jew) leaves him (the Covenant) and is joined to another (Christ), she shall be called an adulteress. [The need for the Christian Jew to acknowledge the fulfillment of the typical law in Christ thus becomes the imperative.] BUT, if her husband (the Law) dies (ceases to function), she (the Jewish Christian) is free from all obligation and, therefore, will not be guilty in being joined to another man (Christ).

In short: The type died; the antitype is alive; the marriage is terminated legally.

7:4 Therefore, my brethren, you also were made to die to the Law through the body of Christ, so that you might be joined to another, to Him who

was raised from the dead, in order that we might bear fruit for God.

This is the verse which becomes clear ONLY if we consider the type-antitype factors just mentioned. If we link this verse with ONLY the marriage law in mind, we have a terrible confusion. Verses 2 and 3 clearly have the woman (the Jew) set free because the husband (the Law) dies. But in verse 4, it is the Jew who dies TO THE LAW — not the other way around! But THAT is not Paul’s point. His perspective is type and antitype even though he never even hints at it before this verse. And in this verse, the hint is very subtle unless we are aware of it.

The hint is in the words, “You also were made to die to the Law through the body of Christ.”

First, consider some subtle items.

- (1) “Body of Christ” CANNOT refer to our membership in Christ because “body of Christ” in this verse is the reason (the way by which) we “might be joined to Christ.” Thus “body of Christ” here is something that happens BEFORE our joining the mystical body of Christ. “Body of Christ” is here a reference to the ransom: “My flesh I give for the life of the world.” (John 6:51)
- (2) The word “also” is very important. In verses 2 and 3, the husband died. Paul is not saying in parallel terms that we are the husband. He is saying that there ALSO is another death taking place. In other words, not only did the Law die, but we died ALSO.
- (3) The mention of “Christ” is the key to Paul’s thinking. “Christ” is not a factor in the Law. It is a factor ONLY IN THE ANTITYPE. “Christ” is the one who Moses predicted as his antitypical replacement. “Christ” is the antitypical bullock. Mentioning “Christ” in the context of DYING TO THE LAW is an obvious and inescapable reference to the end of TYPE and the beginning of ANTITYPE.

If these three subtle meanings are clear to us, this fourth verse can be interpreted without being in total conflict with the two verses which come before it.

The key, then, when making a connection of verse 4 to verses 2 and 3, is to think of verses 2 and 3 as saying, “The TYPE died. That set us free to be a part of the ANTITYPE.” This is a very valid perspective on those verses, and the ONLY one that eliminates the seeming confusion.

With all of this in mind, verse 4 tells us this:

“BECAUSE of the death of the type and the institution of the antitype, my Jewish brethren, you also were, through the flesh-sacrifice of the antitypical bullock, made to die to the type by becoming part of the goat antitype — resulting in your being now joined to Christ. He was raised from the dead to give us this privilege of being fruitful for God in a way impossible under the type.”

All of this was a difficult exercise in reasoning — but one which results in the “ring of truth” about it. The Apostle’s reasoning thus is in harmony both with his writings in other books and with the contextual flow of Romans.

7:5 “For while we were in the flesh, the sinful passions, which were aroused by the Law, were at work in the members of our body to bear fruit for death.”

Following up on the previous thought, Paul continues:

“Because while we were under the type — responsible to flesh rather than spirit — our fallen humanity was magnified by the Law, and our strengths and talents couldn’t bear fruit for God (as they now can), but only death-fruitage.”

7:6 But now we have been released from the Law, having died to that by which we were bound, so that we serve in newness of the Spirit and not in oldness of the letter.”

This verse again refers to type and antitype, but does so by using the words “spirit” and “letter.” The Law was “binding” because it insisted on the absolute letter of performance. But since our justified humanity was sacrificed (= dead), we are FREED from the bondage of our imperfect flesh. We now, as new creatures, serve in something NEW (= antitype and “spirit”) rather than in something OLD (= type and “letter.”)

7:7 What shall we say then? Is the Law sin? May it never be! On the contrary, I would not have come to know sin except through the Law; for I would not have known about coveting if the Law had not said, “YOU SHALL NOT COVET.”
7:8 But sin, taking opportunity through the commandment, produced in me coveting of every kind; for apart from the Law sin is dead.
7:9 I was once alive apart from the Law; but when the commandment came, sin became alive and I died;
7:10 and this commandment, which was to result in life, proved to result in death for me;
7:11 for sin, taking an opportunity through the commandment, deceived me and through it killed me.
7:12 So then, the Law is holy, and the commandment is holy and righteous and good.

That verses 7-12 form a unit is plain from the question in verse 7, “Is the Law sin?” to the answer in verse 12, “The Law is holy.”

Before this section began, Paul expressed clearly that the Law held the Jew “bound” to his sinful propensities. So, the logical next step is to assure the Jew that the problem IS NOT THE LAW. This will allow Paul to lead into his argument that the problem (even for the new creature) is that sin is ever-present in our flesh. So Paul uses six verses to explain how the Law is AN EXPOSER of sin — not only in that it defines sin, but that the sin in us deceives us about the Law!

This probably is the place to remind ourselves that Paul has not abandoned justification by faith as his continuing topic. What he is doing in this chapter is to show that life-justification by faith is a LEGAL concept. It has no practical effect on the sin that dwells in us. Thus, when Paul preaches that sanctification must accompany this justification, he does not want us to feel burdened by the fact that our sinful propensities do not disappear. But, at the same time, he wants us to know that while they are ever-present with us, they are NOT ACCOUNTED to us as long as the new creature’s mind dominates.

Verse 7: The question is plain: “Is there a problem with the Law?” The initial answer is: “Don’t even make such a suggestion.”

This is not the only time in Paul’s writings where he uses himself as representative of something else. In verses 7-13, he uses the first-person singular pronoun to refer to all of Israel, not to himself.

His first point, then, is: I (Israel) would never really have appreciated what sin is were it not for the Law.

It is interesting that when we read the accounts of the lives of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, sin is not really a topic of concern. These men were friends of God, and they enjoyed a friendship-justification with Him due to their faith. We all know that these great men were sinners along with the rest of us. But their stories are there for lessons of faith, not for lessons of sin. In verse 7, Paul is telling us that lessons OTHER THAN FAITH had to be impressed on God’s people (Israel) in order to prepare them for their assigned place in God’s plan once the Kingdom comes. So, Paul says, the Law needed to be added as a constant reminder of human frailty — a trigger to make Israel ignite within itself a true desire for liberty from their fleshly corruption.

Paul gives an example. “How would I (Israel) know that coveting is sinful unless the Law had told me not to covet?”

Verse 8: How does the Law “tell” Israel about coveting? First it said, “Don’t do it.” Well! We all know that from childhood up, “Don’t do it” meant “Why? What am I missing? I’d better look into this through doing it!” This is what Paul means with the words, “Sin, taking opportunity through the commandment.” The sinful tendencies in Israel BLOOMED with every “Thou shalt” and “Thou shalt not.” Without these rules, the challenges would be absent, and the punishments would be absent. As Paul says, “Apart from the Law, sin is dead.” He didn’t mean that it didn’t exist; he meant that it

didn't seem to be a real problem or concern. Hence, we almost never, for instance, think of it when we think of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

Verse 9: Paul yet speaks as if he were the nation. When he says "I was once alive apart from the Law," he obviously doesn't mean that Israel wasn't dying. He means that Israel, in the hope of the Abrahamic promise, figured that nothing could get in the way of a bright and rosy future. As Abraham "just knew" that God would raise Isaac from the dead if Abraham slew him, thus Israel before the Law "just knew" they were "alive" in promises.

But Paul continues: "When the commandment came, sin became alive, and I (Israel) died." What does he mean? He means that the imposition of the Law kept Israel in an almost paranoid state. "If we do this wrong, THEN what will happen?" The Law held daily as well as annual sacrifices — ALL based on the failures of the people and on efforts to keep them in the Lord's favor, lest everything fall apart! They were in CONSTANT awareness of their sins and their need to ATONE. "Sin became alive, and Israel died." The being "alive" of optimism gave way to the "death" from fear of and realization of transgression.

Verse 10: So, Paul concludes that the Law, which was given with promises of life and blessings for the keepers thereof, proved to work to the contrary. In the end, it did "kill" Israel as a polity. During the second half of the Jewish double, Israel is "dead" as "prisoners" in "the pit wherein is no water" (Zechariah 9:11). And, as Jesus expresses it, they have been dead "and buried in hell (oblivion)" (Luke 16:22,23).

Verse 11: Why did Israel fail so miserably? It was because of sin, not because of the Law. As Paul puts it, sin found a way to use the Law for its own advantage! — "Sin, taking an opportunity through the commandment." We must not miss Paul's point here. It tells us the second way the Law teaches about sin. The first way was by defining it. But the second way is much more devious and powerful. The second way is that in fallen men sin STRIVES to corrupt Law — to twist it, to redefine it, to use it for ill. "Sin, taking an opportunity through the commandment DECEIVED me — and through it, KILLED ME."

What a lesson for us all. Sin in us will manipulate good to get its own way out of it! The Jews fell for it. Once they realize it, what vehement reform it will stimulate. But the lesson for us is in the here and now. How on guard we must be in our new minds ("watch and pray") lest we, too, manipulate the vastly superior good we have received in order to serve our flesh. It is a living threat. We call it "justifying our actions" — sounds good, doesn't it? It was epitomized in the Pharisee who prayed, "Lord, I thank thee that I am not like other men."

Verse 12: Paul ends this mini-section (7-12) with the answer to verse 7. "So then" — based on what I have just told you, THE LAW IS HOLY." Don't blame circumstances! Blame the culprit — which is inherited sin. "The commandment is holy, and righteous, and good." In other words, it is perfect, and just, and pleasing.

7:13 Therefore did that which is good become a cause of death for me? May it never be! Rather it was sin, in order that it might be shown to be sin by effecting my death through that which is good, so that through the commandment sin would become utterly sinful.

This is a summary verse. But it also is an emphasizing verse. The remainder of Chapter 7 is dedicated to helping us know THAT WE CANNOT ESCAPE the internal sin that destroyed Israel. But it destroyed Israel because they were responsible TO THE LETTER. It will not destroy us who obey THE SPIRIT if so be that our new creatures strive for the needed sanctification.

The first two sentences of verse 13 are clear. The rest of the verse is made substantially clearer by Weymouth: (We have added the underlining.)

“But sin did (it) [caused my death]. So that it (sin) might be seen in its true light as sin: It utilized what was good to bring about my death, that by means of the commandment, the unspeakable sinfulness of sin might be plainly shown.”

Weymouth makes clear what we have termed the Law’s second way of teaching about sin. For instance, if we define sin, we think we comprehend it. But as Paul says, he wants it to “be seen in its true light AS sin.” In other words, ONLY by experiencing how our fallen natures can TWIST evil to make it look GOOD can we get an appreciation of what sin really is. We finally see it “AS sin” — an abrupt and frightening thing we find in ourselves which STARTLES us! This is a wonderful verse.

7:14 For we know that the Law is spiritual, but I am of flesh, sold into bondage to sin.

When Paul words this verse, he is introducing us to the part which the Law can play IN OUR LIVES. When he says “the Law is spiritual,” he is not saying that it isn’t a great law for perfect non-spiritual beings. He is saying that for humans in their fallen state, the only benefit of the Law is “the spirit of the Law” — an appreciation of the Law’s precepts in the minds of those who have been spirit-begotten. But he knows that we are dual-beings in that our new minds are carried in earthen vessels. Thus the first part of this verse is for our new minds. But the second part is for our earthen vessels.

The rest of the verse is to comfort us when we cannot escape our earthen vessels. Hence Paul bemoans the fact, “I am of flesh, sold into bondage to sin.”

7:15 For what I am doing, I do not understand; for I am not practicing what I would like to do, but I am doing the very thing I hate.

7:16 But if I do the very thing I do not want to do, I agree with the Law, confessing that the Law is good.

7:17 So now, no longer am I the one doing it, but sin which dwells in me.

7:18 For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh; for the willing is present in me, but the doing of the good is not.

7:19 For the good that I want, I do not do, but I practice the very evil that I do not want.

7:20 But if I am doing the very thing I do not want, I am no longer the one doing it, but sin which dwells in me.

7:21 I find then the principle that evil is present in me, the one who wants to do good.

7:22 For I joyfully concur with the law of God in the inner man,

7:23 but I see a different law in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin which is in my members.

7:24 Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of this death?

7:25 Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, on the one hand I myself with my mind am serving the law of God, but on the other, with my flesh the law of sin.

This might look like an unusually long grouping of verses, but they all are dedicated to one point. As we recall, Chapter 6 told us that, because of our being part of the sin offering, we must not sin. Now Paul is telling us what that DOES NOT MEAN! He is comforting us in our struggle.

Note first THREE differing uses of “law” in these verses.

- “The Law” (Jewish) [7:16]
- The “law of God” (Apparently God’s standards from forever — including, but not restricted to, the Jewish Law Covenant) [7:22, 25]
- The “law of sin” (The workings of imperfection in our flesh) [7:23, 25]

Distinguishing these may be of import — especially in separating what Paul says to the Jewish brethren from what he intends for us all.

Verses 16-25 can generally be summarized as Paul’s (and our) struggles between the desires of the new mind versus the actions of our flesh due to the indwelling of inherited sin. Because Paul had introduced his new subject of SANCTIFICATION in 6:19 and 22, he is very likely here beginning to build on this doctrine. He is showing us that sanctification is OF THE SPIRIT rather than of the flesh. (This is not to say

that the new mind won't have a SANCTIFYING INFLUENCE on the flesh, but rather to stress that discouragement should not set in if control over our flesh seems less than successful.)

A few points might well be emphasized in these verses:

Verse 15: Paul's point is that the new creature (the real "I") does not understand why it can't conquer the contradictions of the flesh. Do we not also feel this frustration? He explains this by saying that his PRACTICE is not to his liking. (We all know the feeling!) And what his practice is, HE HATES. This is an important concept. The new mind must hate iniquity. It must not just pass it off as "That's just the way I am; I'll have to put up with it."

Verse 16: Paul's "doing" contrary to what his will is establishes that he agrees with the Jewish Law and confirms that the Law itself is good. How? This is so because it is saying that his mind or will wants the ideals of the Law as his own. As long as his mind doesn't WANT what his body DOES, he is "confessing that the Law is good."

Verse 17: The truth of verse 16 thus CONFIRMS that "the REAL Paul" is not the offender. The offender is the genetic code (sin) in his flesh.

Verse 18: So Paul ACKNOWLEDGES (as must we) that our flesh is INCAPABLE of good. But he EQUALLY ACKNOWLEDGES that the WILL to do good IS NOT ONLY A CAPABILITY, but it is the very center of his sanctification!

Verse 19: The whole matter is accurately summarized by the facts speaking for themselves: Paul WANTS GOOD, but he fails to accomplish it in his flesh; his flesh PRACTICES EVIL (inherently) even though he vehemently DOES NOT WANT (the WILL) that to happen.

Verse 20: Thus Paul must conclude — and he wants us to have the same convicted conclusion in order to avoid discouragement — that DESPITE our continuance in fleshly failure, WE (our wills) are not consenting to it, and it is THEREFORE not us (it is not imputed to us); it is all the fault of inherited sin.

Verse 21: Paul reduces it to a principle: Evil is IN me; but it is not what I want or consent to.

Verse 22: Our "inner man" (the real us) not only wants "the law of God," but it is JOYOUS in it and joyous in its concurrence with it.

Verse 23: NEVERTHELESS, we recognize (and, therefore, must deal with) the "law" that governs our physical strengths and talents. That "law" is our constant WARFARE — battling our minds without respite. This is so much the case that we will always feel imprisoned to a degree by the sinful contradictions of our own flesh.

Verse 24: A personal assessment is always in order. We, like Paul, must always conclude that our flesh is "wretched." Our "freedom" from it is our goal. That "freedom" is sanctification of the spirit.

The translation (NAS): “the body of this death” is quite accurate to the Greek. The translation is not a problem; interpreting it is. Perhaps a paraphrase can help:

“Who will set me free from the flesh, motivated only by sin and, therefore, which practices only deadly actions?”

Verse 25: We have already heard the answer, and Paul thanks God for it. Through Jesus we have been set free. Thus Paul says, “Knowing our freedom, we will be content to live with the situation. On one hand, my flesh will continue in its ingrained service to the law of sin; but on the other hand, I, MYSELF, (the real me) am faithfully serving the law of God.”

* * * * *

ONE FINAL NOTE:

To leave this chapter at this point would, in a sense, be criminal! Chapter 8 will begin with “Therefore...” It will be a good beginning for Chapter 8, but it is an IMPERATIVE ENDING for Chapter 7:

“Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.”

This is the grand culmination of Paul’s argument about our struggles with bodies that will not quit sinning. He is giving us the grandest of all comforts. He is telling us that REGARDLESS of our failures, IF our new minds never consent to them, THERE IS NO CONDEMNATION. We should feel the ultimate setting free (verse 24)!

Thus this Chapter 7 has defined for us the concept presented in Chapter 6. We are an offering for sin. We must not, therefore, sin! But our bodies DO NOT FACTOR IN to this directive AS LONG AS our new creatures do not consent, and as long as they fight the influences of their own fleshly vessels. This is part of our “justification by faith.” We must believe this strange but wonderful dichotomy. We must have FAITH that God can retain His JUSTICE at the same time as He is justifying us “wretched” souls who have the honor of believing Him.

SECTION XI
(8:1-39)

The Honor and Protections of Sonship

OVERVIEW of SECTION XI:
The Honor and Protection of Sonship
(8:1-39)

Because Chapters 9-11 will deal with us as the new Spiritual Israel and explain the various relationships between the two Israels, Chapter 8 becomes the final chapter that deals quite directly with our life-justification and what it means for us on a personal level. Chapter 8 thus becomes the summit of Paul's treatise on faith-justification.

In one sense, Chapter 6 was a summit of its own in that it treated the REASON for our justification — the breathtaking truth that we are allowed to sacrifice in order to eliminate sin eventually. But Chapter 6 is in that regard "group oriented." It explained how the body of Christ (the antitypical goat) is made acceptable.

Chapter 8, on the other hand, is more "personal oriented." It is going to sober us as individuals by helping us understand how our individual callings make us each individual "sons" of the Most High. This will bring us to tears of realizations regarding our personal status with God. It will bring us to strengths we never imagined we might have when we realize the power that is with us on a minute-by-minute basis.

While Chapter 7 focused much on the flesh and its challenges to us, Chapter 8 will focus on the new mind and its uncanny ability (with the Lord's help) to enlist the flesh in Divine service.

Chapter 8 thus becomes the last in a series of "Where-do-we-stand?" perspectives. This time it is from the highest of all perspectives — our sonship to the Almighty.

This chapter IN TERMS OF JUSTIFICATION stresses how life-justification (vitalized justification) makes us SONS. As a corollary, and as an echo of Chapter 6, it will stress again the PURPOSE OF OUR JUSTIFICATION — the blessing of the whole world (which ignorantly awaits our victory).

This chapter IN TERMS OF SANCTIFICATION stresses that sanctification is of the spirit which can effectively enlist the body (regardless of its imperfections).

This chapter IN TERMS OF SONSHIP impresses forcibly the insanity of any doubting that God is in full and in detailed control of our new lives BECAUSE WE ARE HIS SONS — a relationship planned BEFORE CREATION!

A brief synopsis of the sections of Chapter 8 is this:

- 8: 1-10 — The new mind stands in God's presence.
- 8:11-13 — While the flesh is officially dead, God can energize it.
- 8:14-17 — The new mind can dominate the fallen flesh
BECAUSE the new mind IS A SON OF GOD.
- 8:18-25 — Our "now" is based on the "reality hope" of what we shall be.

8:26-39 — Because we are His treasured offspring (planned for in the remote recesses of the past), God's control over the minutiae of our development is both assured and incontrovertible.

SECTION XI:
VERSE-BY-VERSE OBSERVATIONS
(8:1-39)

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

This verse is treated in large part at the end of SECTION X because it is a concluding thought for the presentation which Paul makes in Chapter 7. But this verse is also a powerful opening for Paul's presentation in Chapter 8.

The opening truth, then, is this: Brethren, if we are in Christ — if we have received vitalized justification — we are not Adamic stock. We are something new and separate which can stand before God WITHOUT FAULT — without “condemnation.” What kind of faith does this take?! This thought is so revolutionary that only the spirit-begotten mind in full exercise of faith can accept it. Our new minds HAVE NO MEDIATOR; we are not “at odds” with God. What care, what zeal, what thankfulness, what sobriety, what vehemence, what commitment this awakens in us! The hand of Paul's secretary must have quivered as it wrote this verse.

8:2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death.

Paul introduces a “law” which he has hitherto not referenced: “the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus.” This is something new and unique to the Gospel Age. It is the “law” of those in verse 1 who have no condemnation. It is not like the Jewish Law or the New Covenant of the Millennium in that it does not expect or require perfection of deeds. It, by its own words, requires “THE SPIRIT OF LIFE” — a mind, attitude, and perfect intention of love for the actions which lead to life.

It is because of this law — the law of the uncondemned — that we are set free from the law under which our bodies function: “the law of sin and of death.”

8:3 For what the Law could not do, weak as it was through the flesh, God did: sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and as an offering for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh,

As a reminder of atonement philosophy, Paul uses verses 3-10 to help us understand how the miracle of verses 1 and 2 works. He reviews: The Law could not, due to the weakness of flesh, accomplish life.

But God could accomplish life WITHOUT THE LAW by sending His own Son as a human without sin as a SIN OFFERING — most specifically as the antitypical bullock of Leviticus 16.

The expression, “He condemned sin in the flesh” could seem a bit obscure. It really belongs as the beginning to verse 4. Connecting it to verse 4 helps to do away with the obscurity:

8:4 so that the requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

Let’s read the applicable part of the sentence and then analyze its meaning:

“He condemned sin in the flesh SO THAT the requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.”

“Condemning sin in the flesh” seems the equivalent of saying that fleshly attempts at justification have been officially rejected.

In other words, by condemning the flesh because it cannot do otherwise than sin, He leaves open the door that a “non-flesh being” (an embryo new creature) CAN fulfill the Law “in the mind” — “according to the spirit.” This is legally and philosophically why verses 1 and 2 work — the flesh is separate and rejected — it IS CONDEMNED. But the part of us IN CHRIST (the mind of the new creature) is not condemned because it is separate from the flesh, and it renounces the sin of its own flesh. Thus, “By works of the Law shall NO FLESH be justified.” (Galatians 2:16) Our flesh has been justified (BUT ONLY TO BE SACRIFICED) by the application of the ransom’s merit.

There is only one way this can work. That way is spirit begettal — the legal beginning of and recognition of something new and removed from the old being. And because it is begotten of God, it is GOD’S SON. The concept is mind-staggering. But it is exactly what Paul is teaching and what he will elucidate fully before this chapter ends.

8:5 For those who are according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who are according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit.

8:6 For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace,

For practical reasons, Paul reduces the matter to “MIND-SET.” He does this because, while the new creature LEGALLY exists, it does not PHYSICALLY exist. The new creature is A STATE OF MIND until it is born.

So, Paul's summary of the difference of those in Christ versus those not in Christ is:

“Those who are according to the flesh” — the non-spirit-begotten — “set their minds” (quite naturally, since they only have fleshly minds) “on the things of the flesh.”

“But, those who are according to the spirit” — the spirit-begotten who are by definition new minds, set their minds on “the things of the spirit” — DISMISSING their organisms' desires.

“The mind set on the flesh is simply yet a part of the Adamic race, and it, therefore, goes on dying.” (If, of course, the new creature should rebel and set itself on things of the flesh, it, too, would die.) But “the mind set on the spirit” — on its development toward spirit birth — “is life and peace.”

It has begun its eternity, and it is comfortable (at peace) with its objectives.

8:7 because the mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God; for it does not subject itself to the law of God, for it is not even able to do so, 8:8 and those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

There is a subtle distinction in the thoughts of verses 7 and 8. Verse 7 speaks of a mind set on the flesh. In other words, a mind which has only as its basic concern the vessel which carries it. This kind of selfish concern is automatically “hostile toward God.” It doesn't “subject itself to the law of God” simply because it doesn't care to. With self as center, a being is “not even able” to consider God's law.

Verse 8 is slightly different. It is saying that JUST BEING FLESH makes it impossible to please God — because flesh is imperfect. Paul knows well that God is pleased by the faith of those “in the flesh” (like Abraham). He is not ignoring that here. He simply is focusing on his point in verses 1 and 2. The KIND of “pleasing God” of which Paul speaks is not in the domain of an earthly being — only in the mind of a “new creature.” This again stresses how very much God considers our spirit begettal a very real thing!

8:9 However, you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him. 8:10 If Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, yet the spirit is alive because of righteousness.

These two verses end this mini-section of this chapter. The problems with being “human” (verses 5-8) are now dismissed BECAUSE WE ARE NOT HUMAN — “not in the flesh.”

Paul summarizes this whole section by confirmation of what makes verse 1 possible: “You are not in the flesh, but in the spirit.” Success as disciples is reliant on our functional acceptance of this fact. When Paul adds, “...if, indeed, the spirit of God dwells in you,” he is saying, “if you are spirit-begotten.”

There is an interesting switch of terms from “spirit of God” to “spirit of Christ.” Paul’s intent seems to be that “spirit of God” represents our begettal. “Spirit of Christ” seems to be the resultant application and growth of that begettal to our part in the body of Christ.

Consequently, these verses appear to say:

“You function as new creatures if you have been begotten. But, if that functioning — if that new mind — is not constantly focused on your place in Christ, then you cease belonging to God. But, if the CHRIST MEMBERSHIP, MISSION, PHILOSOPHY, AND OBJECTIVE is in you, then, INDEED, your fleshly vessel, dead because of its imperfections, is inconsequential, while your MIND is alive because it is righteous.”

8:11 But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who [which] dwells in you.

8:12 So then, brethren, we are under obligation, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh —

8:13 for if you are living according to the flesh, you must die; but if by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live.

Bro. Russell, commenting on verse 10, says that the fleshly body, still sinful, is “not reckoned of God in considering” our cases. This is, indeed, Paul’s intent in that verse. However, Paul has no intention of letting us dismiss our flesh as USELESS! So, he begins verse 11 with an astounding “BUT.” After having used all of Chapter 7 to let us know the worthlessness and the constant contradiction of our flesh, Paul now says: God can overcome that!

To paraphrase:

“BUT, If God’s Holy Spirit had the power to raise a dead Jesus to the Divine Nature, do you not think that He could accomplish something little in you, like making your fallen flesh actually COOPERATE with your new-creature minds?”

It is a beautiful and necessary thought. We yet function through our bodies. They MUST BE ENLISTED to serve our dedication to Christ.

We have in this verse the very epitome of SANCTIFICATION: Sanctification of the spirit FORCING sanctification of the body. It is almost akin to Paul's reasoning on the marriage of a believer to an unbeliever. He points out that the sanctification of the believer results in the sanctification (in a sense) of the unbeliever and of their children.

Note the WORKING TOGETHER with God in this verse (verse 13). We have a part; He has a part: "If BY THE SPIRIT you are putting to death the deeds of the body." It is us ("you"), and it is God ("by the Spirit"). He won't do it without us; we can't do it without Him. Leviticus 20:7, 8 (Tabernacle Shadows, page 41) shows the two parts: "Sanctify yourselves" and "I will sanctify you."

Paul still dismisses the flesh in one important sense. He says (verse 12) in the RSV, "So then, brethren, we are debtors NOT TO THE FLESH, [i.e.,] to live according to the flesh." Then he continues in verse 13: For IF we do, death is our only destiny; but, if by the ascendancy of the new mind we slay the deeds of the body, WE WILL LIVE. Hence — the FORCED COOPERATION of the dead flesh with the Holy Spirit in the new mind: The Complete Sanctification Picture.

"We are debtors NOT TO THE FLESH" is a wonderful phrase. We owe it nothing! Not certainly "to live according to the flesh." The flesh, even when ENLISTED, will perpetually try to dictate that it needs food, water, air, clothing, and shelter. But the KINDS of those things it cannot dictate. It will rebel. But giving in to its rebellions will yield results like those of giving in to a child's tantrums just to hush him up. The child will know he can dominate. That dominion by our flesh, as Paul warns, will result in the awful words, "You must die."

8:14 For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.

This is no small moment in Paul's letter. He has already referred to God as our Father. But this is the first time he calls us sons. The two words are inseparably related, but perhaps their impacts are not equal. Paul has laid sufficient foundation for our understanding that our new "minds" are, indeed, not just a nice new way of thinking, but are very legally new lives, new creatures, new entities — something sinless and without condemnation. But in Romans 8 he wants no mistake about his teaching. He will expand shortly on the process and significance of our sonship.

Christians today can read this verse with a passing indifference. The words might be acceptable; the concept in a perfunctory sort of way might be acceptable. But Paul in his day was dropping the equivalent of a thermo-nuclear explosion. These words are shocking as well as an "it-can't-be" wonderful. Jesus was crucified because he said he was God's son!

From before all creation God has planned to have a very special, intimate, incredibly-powerful personal family. And while all intelligent beings in perfection are considered

His “sons,” these sons are to be in a class by themselves. When we read back over the first thirteen verses of this chapter and then come to verse 14, we are slammed with the power of why thirteen verses can work. It is BECAUSE WE ARE GOD’S PREDESTINED SONS!

Does vitalized-justification-by-faith mean more now? Indeed, it does! We are beyond the doctrinal; we are in the awestruck!

8:15 For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, “Abba! Father!”

As sons, we are FREE from all slaveries we have had. We are not slaves to the fall, the Law, the flesh, the attacks of enemies. There remain no fears ever AGAIN!

Instead, we have received the spirit (the attitude) of SONSHIP. (“Adoption” is WRONG!) And we can “cry out” — not a cry of fear, but a cry of exclamatory jubilation!

Then Paul caps it all with the most intimate of Hebrew terms to be used by children toward their father: “Abba.” “Father” would be spectacular. But Paul wants us in no uncertain terms to grasp the intimacy of our relationship. Jesus used the word. No one else in history would ever have dared to turn toward God and to call Him “Abba.” The Jews won’t even speak His name — even though God told Moses to introduce Him as “Yahweh.”

We cannot ever tire of meditation on the meanings of this verse. And Paul wants us to meditate on its implications. The remainder of Romans 8 will be expansions on what this “Abba” relationship truly means.

8:16 The Spirit itself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God,
8:17 and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him so that we may also be glorified with Him.

Paul IMMEDIATELY encourages the examination of self-felt witnesses of God’s spirit working in our new minds. The new mind, our “sonship,” “our spirit,” receives “testimony” from God that this sacred relationship has been established. Based on this testimony, we can have the hope of verse 17.

The first expansion of the concept of sonship deals with our inheritance beyond the veil. God, unlike dying humans, does not die and leave an estate. But He does have heirs. All of His sons on all levels will receive some kind of inheritance. But His first-born (Jesus and the Church) will receive the greatest of inheritances. The scope of the inheritance is yet to be seen. But the initial inheritance will be being part of the “seed

of Abraham” which will bless all families of the earth — an inheritance which contains and requires the Divine Nature. It is the inheritance which will DO AWAY WITH SIN. Because we are yet embryos, Paul cautions that we must here “suffer with him (Christ), so that we may also be glorified with him.” Paul has already introduced the sufferings of sanctification as being the key to new creature maturity.

(A note on verse 16: We have changed the NAS reading of “Himself” to “itself.” All of us who know better should change all pronoun references to the Holy Spirit to the impersonal form in our Bibles. We have no excuse for continuing to read these texts as if the Holy Spirit has personality. Surely we don’t want to perpetuate this abominable heresy!)

8:18 For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us.

This is a kind of swing verse. It makes connections with the “suffer” word of verse 17; but it also introduces the “glory” to be described in the following verses.

The Apostle’s point is that the INHERITANCE of verse 17 obliterates the suffering mentioned in the same verse. In other words, How could we possibly focus on the tribulations of this life once we recognize our sonship and its implications beyond the veil? (The translation should be “revealed in us.”)

8:19 For the anxious longing of the creation waits eagerly for the revealing of the sons of God.

And are its implications beyond the veil selfishly related only to us? No! ALL OF CREATION is “eagerly” (though ignorantly) waiting for our appearance beyond the veil!

Does this verse not bring instant mind-connections back to Chapter 6? We are the offering for sin. We, as part of our inheritance, will be charged with doing away with THE BODY (the entirety) OF SIN! It’s no wonder that all creation in its innermost longings is waiting for our revealing!

8:20 For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it, in hope
8:21 that the creation itself also will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God.

Re-translating these verses is helpful.

“Creation [mankind] was subjected to frailty, not because it really wanted to be, but because God let it happen in hope that [the permission of this

evil] will [eventually] set the creation free from its slavery to corruption [of mind and body]. They will thus receive the freedom that is reflected in the glory present in all of the perfect children of God.”

In these two verses Paul explains the philosophy of the permission of evil. It is the perfect sequitur to verse 19 which tells what the world awaits. Verses 20 and 21 tell why the world had to go through the waiting period.

<p>8:22 For we know that the whole creation groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now.</p> <p>8:23 And not only this, but also we ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our body.</p>

The Apostle continues: It is obvious that mankind groans (demonstrating an intense feeling of incompleteness), and they, as one unit, feel like they await painfully a childbirth.

The “pains” are the permission of evil. The “childbirth” is the world’s own undefined desire to be born as children of God rather than as children of wrath.

The “childbirth” some have suggested to be the spirit-birth of the Church. But this is not likely so since “until now” (i.e., until the Gospel Age) suggests that the pains of childbirth have been endemic to the race since Eden. Man has always (unconsciously) wanted to return to the “sonship” which Adam enjoyed. They await this “rebirth” anxiously — but only as an undefined hope.

Paul acknowledges that WE ALSO groan — demonstrating our intense feeling of incompleteness. Verse 23 is very much a parallel to verse 22. In each verse there is a body of people groaning because they are awaiting something better. In each case, that something better is a birth: a rebirth for the world in verse 22, and a real birth for the completed Body of Christ in verse 23.

“Adoption” (verse 23) is, again, simply wrong. The word should be “sonship.” We already have sonship, but we are embryos. In this case, sonship means the realization by all that we are sons. As verse 19 put it, all creation awaits “THE REVEALING of the sons of God.” That birth is the meaning of “sonship” (not adoption) in verse 23.

“Redemption” (verse 23) also is wrong. The word should be “deliverance.” Not only is this the meaning of the Greek text, but the context demands it!

8:24 For in hope we have been saved, but hope that is seen is not hope; for who hopes for what he already sees?

This verse confirms the embryo sonship versus the born sonship. “Hope” is our embryo. Verse 23 pointed out that we have “the firstfruits” of the spirit. It implies something more coming. The firstfruits of the spirit include such things as (verse 16) the testimony of the spirit that we are sons. What is yet to be is the Divine Bodies that will SHOW that we are sons. So, verse 24 is a commentary on Paul’s remarks in verse 23 that “we groan” until that which is perfect is come. We still are creatures of hope. Our hope, unlike the world’s, is DEFINED; but it still is hope.

8:25 But if we hope for what we do not see, with perseverance we wait eagerly for it.

But Paul points out that hope is a good thing. If it is real and sincere it promotes PERSEVERANCE. We thus “eagerly wait” for our deliverance — not just accept it as some remote item of interest. And, in our wait we persevere. Perseverance is a continuing of trust, faith, and reliance on God. Only with perseverance can we continue to be eager in our waiting.

8:26 In the same way the Spirit also helps our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we should, but the Spirit itself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words;

“In the same way” is a phrase which demands explanation. The connection of verses 25 and 26 shown by the phrase, “In the same way,” seems to be the word “NOT.” In other words, verse 25 says we do “NOT SEE,” and verse 26 says, we do “NOT KNOW.” So, “in the same way” that we do not see, we also do not know. Let’s see what this means.

Both verses are dealing with a FAITH that keeps PERSEVERING. Verse 25 says we have a hope, but we yet DON’T SEE its fulfillment. Verse 26 says we pray even if we DON’T KNOW the words to use. Thus, we approach both situations by FAITH — faith that we will be born (verse 25), and faith that we will be understood (verse 26). Our justification and our continuance BY FAITH are an ever-present theme with Paul.

With that connection established, verse 26 becomes a wonderful promise for us. The verse has been so mangled by translators who couldn’t comprehend its meaning that we must, of necessity, analyze it with great care.

Looking back at the context of “groaning,” (verses 22, 23, and now 26), we see that the world groans while it awaits the hopeful but the unknown. The Church groans as it awaits its glorification. But the world, in ignorance, can’t DO ANYTHING about its groanings. The Church can — and that is the object of verse 26. The Church, while it

waits and groans, CAN PRAY. But, as the Apostle sympathetically points out: “WE DO NOT KNOW HOW TO PRAY AS WE SHOULD!” (By the way, “groan” consistently in this context represents an intense feeling of incompleteness. The definition works in all three verses. The world, the Church, and our new minds all have this condition.)

Next we are faced with the abominable translation: “But the Spirit Himself intercedes for us.” Bro. Russell appropriately points out how ludicrous that a personal Holy Spirit should GROAN! As will be noticed, we again have CHANGED “Himself” to “itself” — and it is NOT a reference to the Holy Spirit at all! It is a reference to our spirits — our new minds.

Here is how things stand in our interpretation effort:

(verse 25) Just as we “don’t see” the results of our hope,
(verse 26) in the same way we “don’t know” how to word our prayers.

But we do know this: Our new mind (“the spirit”) is able to overcome (“helps”) our weakness in this regard. So, even though we don’t know exactly how to express ourselves in prayer, our new mind itself intercedes (because of its total leanings toward God). “Intercedes” means “entreats” or “pleads”. Thus our new creatures give up on words, and say to God in our prayers, “You KNOW what I mean!” In other words, our groanings (our intense and internal feelings of incompleteness) go before God as PLEADINGS too complex for us to put into words. And what happens? —

8:27 and He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because it intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.
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What happens is this: God (“He who searches the hearts”) knows what the new mind (spirit) is thinking. He “knows what the mind (the thoughts) of the spirit (the new mind) is.”

How can God hear a prayer which isn’t actually uttered, but is only felt? The verse explains: “Because it” (NOT “HE”!) — the new creature mind — pleads (“intercedes”) for us (“the saints”). How can this work? Paul explains that the new mind pleads “according to the will of God.” In plain words, this means that our new minds are SO IN TUNE with the will of God that God READS INTO our pleadings what we truly are TRYING TO SAY. As Paul said, God “searches THE HEARTS” — He therefore knows the thoughts beyond any word incapacities.

* * * * *

Stand back for a moment and see what the Apostle has accomplished. He has eradicated any and all hindrances to the success of our life-justification. In Chapter 7 he said that our bodies will keep sinning — but that IT WON’T BE COUNTED AGAINST US. In Chapter 8 he says that God will even HARNESS our bodies to help us! Then Paul says that our new minds CAN’T EXPRESS THEMSELVES intelligently. But he adds that this is not a problem because God reads GROANINGS!

Paul does everything for us to eliminate any avenues for discouragement. This is not a letter; this is not a book; this is an entire Divine Philosophy!

8:28 And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to *His* purpose.

And that brings us to this very famous verse! But how much more it now means once we have searched out and been humbled by its greater context.

A few mundane observations are helpful. First, the NAS is correct. The Greek is not “all things work together;” but, rather, “God causes all things to work together.”

Secondly, this verse, like others before it, concludes the thoughts of previous verses while it opens the way for new considerations. It concludes the thoughts of two chapters — that our enemy bodies can also be our harnessed servants, and that our willing but inadequate minds can be “read” by God who doesn’t need eloquent verbal expressions from us. Thus Paul concludes: WE KNOW that God causes ALL of these things (and others) to work for our good.

Thirdly, Paul uses this verse to launch into the details of how God actually MAKES His new creation — a creation predestined since eternity backwards, but, strangely, fabricated from fallen humanity. He begins this section by stating simply that God works all for the good of this class who love Him and “who are CALLED ACCORDING TO HIS PURPOSE.” We have just spoken of “His purpose” — His long-planned intimate, personal family. Beginning with the next verse, His process in “calling” them will be detailed.

It is important, however, that we not leave verse 28 without restating its contextual importance.

This is a beloved verse even by those who have never felt the impact of its context. It is a verse which WE ALL NEED. First of all, we need TO KNOW — not to think or feel — that ALL THINGS in our consecrated lives are WORKING TOGETHER. Our lives are not a collage of miscellaneous experiences that just happen. They are a pieced-together, Divinely designed, well-lubricated machine which was conceived for successful operation and result. Yes, the “all things” don’t merely somehow coexist. To the contrary, they WORK together. God CAUSES them to do so. And, without exception, they work for our GOOD. To have faith in this is to have an unquestionably lovely spiritual life while yet in the flesh.

But it is the last part of this verse that gives us the real Divine connection. These “all things” are caused to work together by God because of three things:

- (1) We love God. There is no new creature without this.
- (2) We are “the called.” Paul has not yet developed this point. He will do so in verse 30. But the point here is that we are special. Ecclesia means “called out.” We are SELECTED — not a point of pride, but rather of wonderment and humble acceptance.

- (3) We have been called because we are a part of GOD'S PURPOSE. Paul has already revealed the purpose: sonship on the Divine level. This is the most restricted and honored call and purpose in the annals of the universe. And Paul's point in verse 28 is this: Considering your unspeakable place in God's own personal desires for a personal family, can you even dare to imagine that He will not direct every detail ("all things") regarding your development and success? To think that He isn't doing this is to have one of the greatest breakdowns of faith imaginable.

8:29 For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the first-born among many brethren;
8:30 and these whom He predestined, He also called; and these whom He called, He also justified; and these whom He justified, He also glorified.

These verses begin with "For." The Apostle is making a direct connection to verse 28 in which he mentioned that we are the "called." In verses 29 and 30 he is explaining how that "called" condition came about — how we were human, but are now new creatures, sons of the Highest.

Paul begins in the remote past — time before time, so to speak. Thus, the first step in his explanation is that God "FOREKNEW" long before creation that He was, as the culmination of His creative activity, and as the delight of His desires, going to make THE NEW CREATION — His family of beings OF HIS VERY OWN DIVINE NATURE.

God also "PREDESTINATED" at that time that the New Creation would have His Son Jesus as its head and standard. Thus everyone in this Divine family would be "CONFORMED" to the character image of His Son who would be the "first-born" of the family of many brethren.

But how was He going to make such a creation? It would not be a direct creation because, unlike all other beings, this creation would have to be tested before it was completed! What a strange but wonderful requirement! So, the new creation would have to be "CALLED" out from an existing creation. Hence, it is known as the "Church" (= ekklesia = "called out" ones). So, those whom He predestined as a class, He "CALLED" as individuals — called into the unspeakable opportunity of being remolded into something entirely new.

Since, however, He is making the perfect out of the unclean, it was necessary that as part of the CALLING, He must somehow legally have these individuals "JUSTIFIED." But their justification had to be based on the FAITH that Jesus' sacrifice can actually release them from their condemnation.

HOW do they gain that faith? They get it because He “HONORED” (not “glorified”) them with the truths necessary to accept that justification.

Paul will wait until Chapter 10 to describe the steps involved in honoring us with that truth. The details were not needed at this point. But these two verses are a master-work of brief but pointed summary of how God makes the Divine out of the fallen!

It is good to remember that this is yet all connected to the promises of verse 28. The Apostle’s point remains: If God, since time immemorial, planned for and is executing this metamorphosis of sinful men into the grandest of all of God’s conceptions, CAN WE DOUBT that “all things” are being worked BY HIM for their good?

So Paul can now draw the jubilant conclusions regarding where we stand — where vitalized justification by faith has brought us:

8:31 What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who is against us?
8:32 He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him over for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things?
8:33 Who will bring a charge against God’s elect? God is the one who justifies;
8:34 who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus is He who died, yes, rather who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us.

How can we comment or summarize? Paul is ecstatic in realizations of who we are and what it means. Brethren, if we can internalize these reassurances, we will be secure against anything. We will have “entered into His rest” (Hebrews 4). It will allow us to trust our faith on a daily basis. In summary:

— **THINGS THAT PROTECT THE NEW CREATURE** —

Verses 26, 27 — God reads our desires so that we need not fret whether or not we express ourselves well.

Verse 28 — God works all details for our success because, He, having called us for something very special, has a vested interest in our success.

Verses 29, 30 — God WILL HAVE his foreknown Divine Family, and He will have them conformed to the character of Christ. He carefully called those He had previously justified; He carefully justified those He had previously honored with truth. Could anyone suggest any lack of involvement on His part toward those who are a part of this most important project in all of universal history!

- Verse 31 — Thus, there is NOTHING that shall or could work against the fact that God is FOR US!
- Verse 32 — Since God allowed His Son (His eternal joy!) to suffer and die FOR US, how incredible to think that He would spare anything else (any and every detail) for good!
- Verse 33 — This verse should include the first phrase of verse 34. If God Himself considers us right in His eyes, is there anyone (including the devil!) who can say otherwise!
- Verse 34 — As though it were not enough that God is on our side, His Son (who went through torture and death for us) ENTREATS on our behalf!

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<p>8:35 Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?</p> <p>8:36 Just as it is written, “FOR YOUR SAKE WE ARE BEING PUT TO DEATH ALL DAY LONG; WE WERE CONSIDERED AS SHEEP TO BE SLAUGHTERED.”</p>

8:35 — After showing us our sacredness in the Divine purpose, Paul now concludes that nothing (except self!) is a real threat to us. So he asks the rhetorical question: “Can any of the following things threaten us?” The implied answer is an emphatic “NO!”

As we analyze the possible meanings of each item in Paul’s listing, two things seem evident:

- (1) It is not so important that we understand each item as that we understand that Paul is simply listing everything that comes to his mind with the intent that we conclude that nothing threatens us.
- (2) On the other hand, musing or meditating on each item can be strengthening to us because our own personal experiences will magnify some of these items in our own minds.

It is evident from the VARIETY of translations that translators, themselves, are uncertain — not of the actual meaning of each word, but of the implied meaning.

We will only lightly touch on each item.

TRIBULATION — The word seems to mean PRESSURE as in STRESS.

DISTRESS — The word implies NARROWNESS — as in when things seem to close in on us from all directions, or when we suffer from restrictions. But, “the way is narrow!” “Calamity” is one suggested interpretation.

PERSECUTION — Apparently this means exactly what it says — tauntings or actions against us because of who we are or what we believe.

FAMINE — Hunger is the simple meaning; deprivations might be included.

NAKEDNESS — This can mean ill-clothed, perhaps homelessness.

PERIL — = in danger.

SWORD — being threatened by weapons.

(See John 10:28, 29.)

8:36 — Paul interrupts in order to say, “These items have been PROPHESED about the Church in Psalm 44:22.” So, the above items all fall in a category we can call “Just as it is written” — the words with which Paul opens the verse.

The words from the Psalm make several points:

- “For your sake...” Whatever is being done to hurt us, we gladly accept it as being our privilege because of our love of His service.
- “Put to death all day long;” Reprint 5173, paragraph 2, suggests this is the entire Gospel Age. The phrase also suggests that literal death is not necessarily the objective of our detractors since an “all-day-long” of being put to death suggests an attempt to kill our faith by gradual onslaught, rather than to kill our flesh in one swift stroke.
- “Sheep to be slaughtered” puts us in the good company of Jesus! It suggests also our quiet willingness to submit. It also suggests that our detractors find no more value in us than in an anonymous animal which was designed only to fulfill the needs of their existence.

8:37 But in all things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us.
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In Revelation 2 and 3, the promises are “to him that overcometh.” When Paul here adds the superlative, “We are more than overcomers,” he is not trying to make Jesus’ words seem inadequate! Paul is speaking somewhat as Peter does (II Peter 1:11). Paul is telling us that if we be rooted in the things he has just explained, we will not worry as to whether or not we are just “squeaking by.” He is saying that these promises give us the faith and the assurances that nothing even remotely challenges us! We are OVERWHELMING our enemies with our faith, and thus conquering them “through Him who loved us.” Context means everything!

8:38 For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, 8:39 nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.
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Can anyone question that Romans 8 is a summary of the bulwark of our faith?! So Paul closes it “CONVINCED.” Oh, that we might also be!

Some translators make contrasting PAIRS of the items in these verses. Thus:

- (1) life – death
 - (2) angels – principalities
 - (3) present – future
 - (4) powers on high – powers below
- or
- (5) high and low powers – other created things.

It is worthy of consideration.

DEATH — The temporary cessation of existence does not threaten us.

LIFE — The experiences of living will not sway us.

ANGELS — Could be fallen spirits. Could also be messengers (human teachers/pastors) who try to lead us astray. (I Corinthians 3:21)

PRINCIPALITIES — Again, evil influences from the mighty of the spirit world, or the power-holders of earth.

THINGS PRESENT — The now with its real challenges.

THINGS TO COME — The expected. Fears over prophetic outlooks can make some feel unsettled.

POWERS — the forces of nature might well be the meaning (tornadoes, hurricanes, earthquakes, droughts, etc.) It may just mean an array of outside influences including, but not limited to, miracles, the threats of darkness (lack of understanding), earthly authorities, sickness, etc.

HEIGHT — Perhaps a manic state! Feeling too good for too long can edge us away from God. This word and the next can also suggest BARRIERS — “It’s too far up; I can’t dig that deeply,” etc.

CREATED THING — Paul is covering anything he might have missed! These might be animate or inanimate. It might include human relationships, family, etc. It might include our own personal “likes” — music, astronomy, gardening, etc.

In short: The lesson is that NOTHING exterior can challenge God’s foreknown and predestinated personal family. (Romans 8:29)

SECTION XII
(9:1—11:36)

The Two Israels

OVERVIEW of SECTION XII: The Two Israels (9:1 — 11:36)

It may well seem that to make one section out of three chapters is unwise. But Chapters 9-11 do, in fact, form one unit of Paul's dealing with the justification question.

These chapters deal with the contrast between Natural Israel and Spiritual Israel. But this is not to say that Paul has abandoned justification as his main topic. Quite to the contrary. He is explaining how vitalized or life-justification separates the Gospel Age from the Jewish Age, the type from the antitype, the "stars" seed of Abraham from the "sand" seed of Abraham, the spiritual from the earthly, the natural from the engrafted. And all of this is based on faith versus works — imputed versus earned justification.

Thus, these three chapters explain why Fleshly Israel is set aside (not abandoned) until the faith seed, Spiritual Israel, is developed — at which time Fleshly Israel will be reestablished with special prominence as was promised.

The three chapters are well-divided in order to break down Paul's presentation into logical segments.

Chapter 9 focuses on PROPHETIC REASONINGS regarding Fleshly Israel's being set aside. As usual, Paul wants to establish everything by Scripture. He wants it known clearly that this change-of-age and change-of-group is no surprise. The Hebrew Bible had been speaking of it since its writing — and, actually, before its writing, as reflected in the allegorical lives of the Patriarchs.

Chapter 10 focuses on why Fleshly Israel cannot see the change of dispensation. Their thinking processes have been so molded by the Law that anything short of WORKS seems inconceivable. But Paul shows how events of the Gospel Age will work to make Fleshly Israel "jealous" so that, when the time comes, they will be ready to hear. So Paul again presents FAITH as the Gospel Age justifier and explains how the members of Spiritual Israel receive that faith.

Chapter 11 concludes the contrast. Paul shows that when the Kingdom arrives — an age of perfect WORKS — natural Israel will be re-engrafted in order to function as the "sands" seed of the Abrahamic Covenant.

* * * * *

By the end of this chapter, Paul will have finished his masterful presentation on the whole subject of justification. The first part of his letter to the Romans will be concluded, and we will have absolutely no remaining questions about justification in its many facets: by works, by faith, to friendship, to sonship on a spiritual plane, and eventual sonship for the race on an earthly plane. We will have encountered imputed, counted, reckoned, tentative, life, vitalized, and merited justification. We will better understand the mind and the grace of God.

SECTION XII:
VERSE-BY-VERSE OBSERVATIONS
(9:1—11:36)

UNIT #1, The Prophecy Regarding
the Setting-Aside of Fleshly Israel
(9:1-33)

9:1 I am telling the truth in Christ, I am not lying, my conscience testifies with me in the Holy Spirit, 9:2 that I have great sorrow and unceasing grief in my heart.
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While he doesn't say so until the third verse, Paul's subject is natural Israel.

These opening verses might, at first, appear strange. Consider, however, the circumstances. Judaism and Christianized Jews had reason to view Paul with suspicion. He first had persecuted Christian Jews; then he "betrayed" Judaism by becoming a disciple of Jesus. He is about to discuss the place of both "Israels" — both of whom, at least at one time, had very great reason to distrust him.

Earlier in Romans, Paul had richly criticized Jewish Law-abuse and Jewish attitudes. Now he is going to express GREAT AFFECTION for natural Israel. Those who had not yet fully comprehended Paul's position might well think him less than truthful — or, at best, contradictory! Hence, and in this context, Paul's protestations in verse 1 are eminently appropriate. To paraphrase:

"You may very well have not yet balanced and harmonized my teachings and feelings about my two families: my family in the flesh, and my family in the spirit, both of which are named Israel. What I have said might lead you to think me prejudiced. I am not. I speak the truth in its entirety and in its balance; I am not fabricating things. When I express great personal grief for my countrymen, I am most sincere."

In verse 1 there are two phrases which lie at the foundation of all that Paul will be preaching. One is "IN CHRIST," the other is "IN THE HOLY SPIRIT." With these two phrases Paul separates himself from Fleshly Israel — a distinction upon which he will constantly call. Regardless of Paul's love and compassion for Fleshly Israel (verse 2), he remains a Spiritual Israelite without compromise. This distinction will help to interpret the next verse.

9:3 For I could wish that I myself were accursed, separated from Christ for the sake of my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh,

In understanding this verse, the word “COULD” is of paramount importance. Paul does not say, “I wish...” Instead, he says, “I COULD wish...” The actual conclusion of Paul’s thought is so far away as to easily go unnoticed. Verse 3 has its conclusion in verse 6. Thus the thought of the Apostle is this:

“For I could wish...But, it is not as though the word of God has failed.”

Verse 6 proves that Paul has no intention of doing what he said he “could” do. To the contrary, he is stressing that if he carried out the words of verse 3, it would contradict the plan of God for both Fleshly and Spiritual Israel. Again to paraphrase the CONNECTION of verses 3 and 6:

“I could wish that I could abandon Christ if it would help my kinsmen...BUT their place in God’s plan is not a failure! (If I tried to change it, I would be denying God’s purpose in the changing of the age.)”

Here in verse 3 Paul is careful to call Israel his “kinsmen according to the flesh” — a kind of relationship he abandoned in verse 1 when he used the words, “in the Holy Spirit.”

9:4 who are Israelites, to whom belongs the adoption as sons, and the glory and the covenants and the giving of the Law and the temple service and the promises,
9:5 whose are the fathers, and from whom is the Christ according to the flesh, who is over all, God blessed forever. Amen.

In these verses Paul reviews the ADVANTAGES that have been Israel’s (in the Jewish Age) and which will continue advantages to them in their eventual outcome.

Paul’s first point is that they are ISRAELITES — hence, that which was promised to JACOB becomes their promise. It is worthy to note that as the Abrahamic promises came down to Isaac, the “stars of heaven” feature was stressed. When stated to Jacob (ISRAEL), it was the “sand of the seashore” that was featured. It is no accident that Paul’s first advantage to his “kinsmen according to the flesh” is that they are ISRAELITES — i.e., inheritors of the earthly promise.

In verse 4, “belongs” is spurious, though not inappropriate. The Greek reads “whose are the sonship.” Again, “adoption” is just wrong! Goodspeed translates it well: “To them belong the rights of sonship.” We should not jump to the conclusion that Gospel Age sonship is meant! To Israel belong the rights of Millennial Age (human) sonship. No one will become a “son” in the Kingdom without first becoming Israelitish. It should

be added, however, that the FIRST OPPORTUNITY for Gospel Age sonship did, indeed, belong to Israel. (John 1:11, 12)

Paul then says that “GLORY” was theirs. This probably is the glory that comes from the exclusive presence of God to that nation. (Amos 3:2) What a glory to have God directing the nation! His glorious presence, of course, was shown in the Shekinah light in the Tabernacle, but that was merely symbolic of His presence in their affairs.

The “COVENANTS” are next in Paul’s listing of their benefits. For all practical purposes, ALL covenants are represented as centered in or prophesied through Israel as the inheritors of the Abrahamic promises. (Ephesians 2:12)

The “GIVING OF THE LAW” is probably (because of its context here) not the Law Covenant, but rather the listing for the people of all the things which will benefit them.

The “RELIGIOUS SERVICE” is a better translation than “the temple service.” In any case, the reference seems to be to TYPES (Hebrews 10:1). Israel was a “house of servants,” and, as such, they had a primary service of type-making for the ages to come.

It is not clear whether “PROMISES” stands alone, or whether it is connected to the first item in verse 5: “WHOSE ARE THE FATHERS.” In other words, the two possibilities seem to be:

- (1) The promises which come down to Israel are BECAUSE of their Fathers.
- (2) There are two separate items which belong to Israel:
 - (a) promises;
 - (b) the ancestry.

The first possibility seems strongest because of the testimony of Deuteronomy 7:6-8 and Hebrews 11:13.

The “PROMISES,” however, seem clearly to be what Israel received via the prophets: the hope or the vision of the future. No other nation or religion has such a wealth of promises and the hopes connected therewith.

Finally, Paul shows that the Christ, “according to the flesh” was to come only through Israel. The “flesh” remains a strong point with Paul. The Christ (in its spiritual entirety) is not exclusively through Israel. Paul will elaborate on this. But it is so important to see the “hints” in his writing. Christ “according to the flesh” was Israel’s blessing; THE CHRIST is not. But the head of The Christ, Jesus, from Israel, is over all, God-blessed, forever! Thus verses 4 and 5 clearly are parenthetical to demonstrate the riches of Israel’s heritage so that Paul can comment on the greater riches which are not theirs.

9:6 But it is not as though the word of God has failed. For they are not all Israel who are descended from Israel;
--

9:7 nor are they all children because they are Abraham's descendants, but: "THROUGH ISAAC YOUR DESCENDANTS WILL BE NAMED."

9:8 That is, it is not the children of the flesh who are the children of God, but the children of the promise are regarded as descendants.

We already have noticed that verse 6 is the end of Paul's sentence in verse 3. While (in terms of human thinking) Paul "COULD WISH" he could dive in and help Israel now (verse 3), he fully realizes (verse 6) that THAT is not what God wants, and that while it looks like Israel was a failure, THAT is an impossibility! God's word doesn't fail!

In verses 6-18 Paul will be making the point that God, in justice, sanctified Israel, not to be the promised seed, but to be honored to perform other functions — among which was TYPE-MAKING in the Jewish Age, and being the blessing nation in the Millennial Age. No one has the right to quarrel with God's having done this.

Verse 6 is where the Apostle first forcibly introduces the concept of a Spiritual Israel. He begins by redefining the concept of the name, Israel — showing that the natural descendants of Jacob (Israel) are not necessarily "Israel."

When Paul said, "But it is not as though the Word of God has failed," he very definitely has a double meaning in mind. We have discussed the first meaning: that natural Israel's history is not a failure; therefore, Paul doesn't have to "wish" he could help them. But the second meaning is that the promises about Israel (on a higher, spiritual, antitypical plane) are fulfilled in the PROMISED SEED rather than in the NATURAL SEED. Thus (with antitypical Israel in mind), "Israel" doesn't mean the descendants of Jacob.

Then, in verse 7, Paul steps back two generations from Jacob because it is the ABRAHAMIC PROMISE that will explain the whole matter. Obviously, if one were Jacob's (Israel's) descendant, he also would be Abraham's descendant. But Paul says, "NOT SO FAST!" And he turns TO THE PROMISE: "Through Isaac your descendants will be named." (Genesis 21:12) Now, it really would be easy to be confused here! Isn't Isaac the father of Jacob? Of course. Natural Jews come from Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. But Paul is CENTERING ON ISAAC because Isaac was UNUSUAL. How?

Verse 8 answers the question. Isaac is unusual because he was BY PROMISE. Paul now is deep into the subject of TYPES rather than genealogy. His point is that the REAL INHERITORS of the Abrahamic Covenant — those who will inherit the promise to bless all families of the earth — are not by D.N.A., but exclusively BY PROMISE. They can be of Abraham's and Jacob's D.N.A., but THAT is not the point. TRUE ISRAEL, Paul is saying, is exclusive of the flesh, and it is TRUE ISRAEL who are the "sons of God."

9:9 For this is the word of promise: "AT THIS TIME I WILL COME, AND SARAH SHALL HAVE A SON."

So Paul dives even more deeply into TYPICAL meanings — drawing inferences out of Scripture which before his day were not seen by anyone.

Paul is continuing to ignore natural genealogy. Of course, Isaac WAS Abraham's genetic son. But Paul warns: Ignore all of that! Abraham would not have had and COULD NOT HAVE HAD Isaac except by Divine intervention. Isaac was not a son by nature. He was a son by PROMISE. The Lord's angel says, "I'll come back at this time next year (i.e., Isaac was not yet conceived), and Sarah will have a son." Paul calls this "the word of PROMISE." By this point in his argument, the Apostle has clearly distinguished natural Israel from the Israel of PROMISE.

Antitypically, then, we are being told that there would be a child by promise (The Christ), that it would arrive at a specific time (The Gospel Age), and that it would be by the SARAH COVENANT, not by HAGAR (The Law Covenant). Compare Galatians 4:21-28.

9:10 And not only this, but there was Rebekah also, when she had conceived twins by one man, our father Isaac;
9:11 for though the twins were not yet born and had not done anything good or bad, so that God's purpose according to His choice would stand, not because of works but because of Him who calls,
9:12 it was said to her, "THE OLDER WILL SERVE THE YOUNGER."
9:13 Just as it is written, "JACOB I LOVED, BUT ESAU I HATED."

Rebekah's twins pictured (or were TYPICAL of) the same relationship between the two Israels (typical and real — Fleshly and Spiritual). In this case, the one literally through whom the promise was to come (Isaac), fathers two TYPICAL "twins." Jacob is typical of the Church; Esau is typical of Fleshly Israel. (In REALITY, of course, Jacob BECAME Israel, and Esau BECAME Arabs; — but Paul is not talking about REALITY. He is talking about types.)

Paul stresses that Rebekah was TOLD IN ADVANCE that the older would serve the younger. In other words, Fleshly Israel's station in the Divine Plan would be inferior to Spiritual Israel's station. But Paul wants it to be clearly understood that it was all determined IN ADVANCE (when they were "yet not born"), and that it had absolutely nothing to do with merit or works. (As Paul says, they "had not done anything good or bad.")

Paul explains his stressing of these factors:

"So that God's purpose according to His choice would stand."

This means that Jacob and Esau (and, thus, the Church and Israel) had NOTHING TO DO WITH THEIR DESTINIES — they were merely PICTURING the Divine Plan. So Paul is continuing his sermon by stressing that the relationship between Jews and the Church is BECAUSE GOD NEEDED IT TO BE THAT WAY for His plan to work. Neither

class is inherently better or worse. They are all God's servants for the blessing of all the families of the earth.

So, two statements from the Old Testament are there merely to inform us of God's sequence in planning for that blessing:

- (1) Genesis 25:23: "The Older will serve the Younger" — The Church which is younger (last to be developed) will be served by Israel (which is older) in the administration of the earthly kingdom.
- (2) Malachi 1:2, 3: "Jacob I loved, but Esau I loved less." Genesis 25:23 proves that this prophecy refers to NATIONS, not to the individuals involved (Jacob and Esau). Again, it can be (and in Malachi is) about literal nations: Israel and Arabs. But Paul is not sermonizing about the literal, but the symbolic. The Church is God's beloved sons; Israel is God's "house of servants" — vessels of less esteem as He will call them later in this chapter.

9:14 What shall we say then? There is no injustice with God, is there? May it never be!

It is quite plain from the previous verses that "no injustice" is involved. But Paul wants to be certain that the fact has registered with us! All of the "maneuvering" of peoples is for one thing. God, in essence, is saying, "Let Me use each and all of you as factors in working out YOUR blessing through MY plan."

But, again, Paul wants to establish his point with Scripture (Exodus 33:19):

9:15 For He says to Moses,
"I WILL HAVE MERCY ON WHOM I HAVE MERCY,
AND I WILL HAVE COMPASSION ON WHOM I
HAVE COMPASSION."

This could sound arbitrary and unfair. The fact is that God will have mercy and compassion on all of the willing — but each at the right time. To paraphrase: "In the working out of My plan for your good, I will extend mercies and compassions throughout the permission-of-evil period as I know will best work for ultimate good."

9:16 So then it does not depend on the man who wills or the man who runs, but on God who has mercy.

No man will interfere with the progress of the perfect plan. It doesn't matter what imperfect man wills; it doesn't matter how hard imperfect man races in his own directions. The only factor is the sequence of, and the reasons for, God's mercies.

9:17 For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, “FOR THIS VERY PURPOSE I RAISED YOU UP, TO DEMONSTRATE MY POWER IN YOU, AND THAT MY NAME MIGHT BE PROCLAIMED THROUGHOUT THE WHOLE EARTH.”

Now Paul gives another historical incident proving his point. This time it shows that God can also direct in the lives of individuals, not just nations. He quotes Exodus 9:16. Pharaoh may have thought he was supreme ruler in Egypt, but Paul, emphasizing his point from the previous verse, says that God maneuvered Pharaoh into his position and used him as only one of many tools for the ultimate working of God’s plans.

9:18 So then He has mercy on whom He desires, and He hardens whom He desires.

Paul’s summary here is pointed. He is saying that God has His way! When we know God, we wouldn’t want it to be otherwise. Paul wants us to realize this because it is endemic in mankind (and, therefore, in our flesh) to rebel against such authoritarian power. But the principle of this verse is beyond controversy. If this verse were not true, there would be no hope of an eventual peaceful universe. We must not as individuals whine against the application of God’s favors and disavors which He, alone, can make work out for the good and pleasure of everyone. Some day, Pharaoh will exclaim, “Isn’t it wonderful how the Lord used me?!”

9:19 You will say to me then, “Why does He still find fault? For who resists His will?”

This is not the first time the Apostle has asked this kind of question. He is ever-mindful of the tendencies of our human reasoning. So he here asks, “Why does God impute blame since everything simply is fulfilling His will?”

Paul already has dealt with the questions of sin and its imputation and its eventual eradication. In short, he says that blame is imputed BECAUSE SIN MUST BE SEEN IN ITS TRUE LIGHT. The entire philosophy of the permission of evil is behind this question.

The fictitious questioner in verse 19 feels a PERSONAL HURT. But Paul, in context, is pointing out that all of this is not about personal free moral agency. It is about PLAN DEVELOPMENT or PLAN EXECUTION.

9:20 On the contrary, who are you, O man, who answers back to God? The thing molded will not say to the molder, “”Why did you make me like this,” will it?

9:21 Or does not the potter have a right over the clay, to make from the same lump one vessel for honorable use and another for common use?

Paul does not cite Jeremiah 18:1-6, but it seems it must have been in his thoughts as he continues. (Isaiah 45:8-13 also parallels these thoughts.) It is clear from these texts that NATIONAL MANIPULATION (not individual development or destiny) is Paul's topic.

Paul is being direct, not hurtful. He wants us to gain and maintain a correct perspective. Actually, these verses probably are more directed at natural Israel than to the saints. But we all can learn from them.

Verse 20 simply tells us that we all are bricks in an edifice. Does a brick complain to the architect because it's one layer too low? This is not to say that we all are UNIMPORTANT parts of something important. It is, rather, to say that we must know that we ARE important, but that our current perspective is warped because we don't see the whole picture. Israel's rejection HURT! But it hurt because they don't yet understand what a blessed people they are to be once their true place in the Divine Plan is manifest.

In verse 21, Paul brings the question (by implication) back to the 9:12, 13 context. Paul has the two Israels in mind. Rewording this verse with Paul's seeming intent results in this:

“Does not God have a right in His plans to make of some men a “new creation,” and of other men a ‘type’ from which all can learn?”

Or, if we return to pottery, “Cannot God furnish the home with some vases for aesthetic use, and other pitchers for water-pouring?” The complete home must be furnished with both kinds of vessels.

In the end, all of Paul's questioning says one thing loudly: God's use of each and all of us will result in the most splendid and satisfying eternities for every individual. And, in the end, we all will see this and be CONTENT and REJOICING.

9:22 What if God, although willing to demonstrate His wrath and to make His power known, endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction?
9:23 And He did so to make known the riches of His glory upon vessels of mercy, which He prepared beforehand for glory,
9:24 even us, whom He also called, not from among Jews only, but also from among Gentiles.

To catch the flow of thought in these three verses, let's reword them:
What if God — who very well could have used a demonstration of power and wrath against Israel's failings

— DIDN'T DO SO! Instead, He demonstrated great patience in enduring this typical arrangement which He knew was only temporary.

And He did this because it was for the benefit of the Church which He prepared in His plan before there ever was an Israel. His enduring of the type benefited those who, receiving His mercy, will receive a glorious position.

We, from among Jews and Gentiles, We who had been all kinds of vessels, are the ones He called for this special “vessels-unto-honor” position!

Does this not put an entirely different perspective on the place of natural Israel during the Jewish Age? In short, it is saying that Fleshly Israel's history makes known to the Church “the riches of His glory.” How this elevates the Old Testament and the Law! How this elevates the importance of Israel's type-making! Israel, just like Abraham and Isaac, becomes something SO MUCH LARGER. So, should Israel “murmur” that it is a vessel of less honor? Paul's point is that it ALREADY is a vessel which helps to bestow much honor — even before its Millennial Age assignment.

* * * * *

— **NOTE** —

Before considering verses 25-33, it will be profitable to have a synopsis of the rest of Chapter 9.

Verses 25-29 constitute a list of scriptures given by Paul to establish two elements of his argument:

- (1) The prophecies show that the seed of promise will contain GENTILES.
- (2) The prophecies show that faithful Jews are not excluded from the seed of promise.

In both cases, it will be faith which defines the seed.

There are additional points in these verses. It is shown, for example, that even the “rejected” part of Israel does not fall into a class with other nations.

* * * * *

Seeing the elements of Paul's argument with the EYE is key to understanding his argument in IDEAS. Thus, NOTE CAREFULLY (and mark the words in your text):

- 9:24 shows that the PROMISED SEED is both Jews and Gentiles. CIRCLE these words; they form the basis of much that follows.
- 9:25 begins with “AS.” DRAW a connective line from “AS” back to “GENTILES” in 9:24. Why? Because 9:25 and 26 are there to PROVE Paul's point that GENTILES are included.

- In 9:27, CIRCLE the word “ISRAEL.” Why? Because verses 27-29 are there to prove Paul’s point (back in 9:24) that JEWS are part of the seed even though the nation is cast off.

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9:30-33 are the verses in which Paul establishes the REASON that SOME JEWS & GENTILES are part of the seed, but the majority of ISRAEL (and of Gentiles) are not.

- Again, CIRCLE “Gentiles” in 9:30 and “Israel” in 9:31 to see Paul’s contrast.

9:32, 33 bring Paul back to his principal theme in most of Romans: JUSTIFICATION (of anyone) is by FAITH, not WORKS. He finally (verse 33) quotes Isaiah in order to say conclusively that there is no way of recognizing, understanding, or being accepted by Messiah except BY BELIEF.

* * * * *

The sources of the numerous quotations in this section are not immediately clear.

- 9:25, 26 is a quote from Hosea 2:23 — but not quite entirely! (It is amazing the liberties the Apostles take in quoting and COMBINING texts! But that is both their right and their appointed duty.) The last part of 9:26 comes from Hosea 1:10.
- 9:27, 28. These two verses are from Isaiah 10: 22 and 23. As is nearly always the case, the Apostle quotes the Septuagint translation of the Old Testament — virtually the KJV Bible of the Greek-speaking Jewish world of Paul’s day.
- 9:29. Paul again uses the Septuagint, but it differs little from the KJV. The KJV in this passage (Isaiah 1:9) does have a legitimate and helpful modifier: “a very small remnant.”
- 9:33. It appears that (once again!) Paul is COMBINING quotations for our benefit. Some suggest that Isaiah 28:16 is the passage which Paul is quoting. But that is ONLY PARTLY correct. From Isaiah 28:16, he is quoting: “He that believeth shall not make haste” (KJV). (Septuagint = “shall by no means be ashamed;” NAS = “disappointed.”)

But the first part of 9:33 clearly is not from Isaiah 28:16. It is from Isaiah 28:16 PLUS Isaiah 8:14. If any of us would PATCH Scripture together like that, we would be condemned immediately. Thank God He allowed the Apostles to make these connections for us!

* * * * *

9:25 As He says also in Hosea,
“I WILL CALL THOSE WHO WERE NOT MY
PEOPLE, ‘MY PEOPLE,’ AND HER WHO WAS NOT
BELOVED, ‘BELOVED.’”
9:26 “AND IT SHALL BE THAT IN THE PLACE
WHERE IT WAS SAID TO THEM, ‘YOU ARE NOT
MY PEOPLE,’ THERE THEY SHALL BE CALLED
SONS OF THE LIVING GOD.”

The intent of these verses and of those following is described in the “NOTE” above. (p. 213)

Verse 25 makes it factual that we Gentiles are now HIS People. Now when we hear “The Jews are God’s people,” we truly can object that the restriction no longer exists! But past the factual, we must surely rejoice that we Gentiles can now be “beloved.”

Verse 26 reaches the zenith of joys. It gives us something Israel never had. While we were not even His people, we are now “THE SONS OF THE LIVING GOD.” The unspeakable heights of Romans 8 are here refreshed for our minds.

9:27 Isaiah cries out concerning Israel,
“THOUGH THE NUMBER OF THE SONS OF
ISRAEL BE LIKE THE SAND OF THE SEA, IT IS
THE REMNANT THAT WILL BE SAVED;
9:28 FOR THE LORD WILL EXECUTE HIS
WORD ON THE EARTH, THOROUGHLY AND
QUICKLY.”
9:29 And just as Isaiah foretold,
“UNLESS THE LORD OF SABAOth HAD LEFT TO
US A POSTERITY, WE WOULD HAVE BECOME
LIKE SODOM, AND WOULD HAVE RESEMBLED
GOMORRAH.”

Verses 25 and 26 were about Gentiles. Verses 27-29 are about Jews.

Reading Isaiah 10:22, 23 will be important. Paul’s use of the Septuagint obscures most of the power from his reasoning. The KJV version of Isaiah reads:

“For though Thy People Israel be as the sand of the sea, yet a remnant of them shall return: the consumption [= consummation] decreed shall overflow with [in] righteousness. For the Lord God of Hosts shall make a consumption [= consummation] even determined [= decreed] in the midst of all [all is possibly spurious] the land.”

With this clearer version of Paul’s quote, note the power of 9:27 and 28:

- (1) Even though Israel is large (sand of the sea), only a remnant (a small number) will be valuable.

- (2) Paul clearly (with Isaiah) wants to confine the large part of Israel to an earthly salvation: hence, “sand of the sea.” (The remnant will be a part of “the stars of heaven.”)
- (3) Obviously, if only a remnant remains, something has to happen to the majority. A consummation (an end) has been decreed for it. In other words, the end of the Jewish Age, the end of Jewish polity, the end of the typical arrangement has been prophesied (decreed)! (See Daniel 9:27.)
- (4) But, when that “end” comes, there will be an “OVERFLOW OF JUSTIFICATION (righteousness).” This will not be on the majority, but on the “remnant.” We have LIFE-JUSTIFICATION for the remnant.
- (5) The Lord will make the consummation prophesied “IN THE MIDST OF THE LAND.” How wonderful. The remnant will be a product of the SPIRIT. The majority were — and will be — a product of the “land” — the earthly salvation.

The Septuagint has genuinely HIDDEN THE BEAUTIES OF PAUL’S THOUGHTS. But with our turning to the original text, what wonders of truth bloom! We must suppose that Paul wanted us to actually LOOK AT THE OLD TESTAMENT.

Verse 29 is important.

“Unless the Lord of Hosts had left us a remnant, we would have disappeared like Sodom and Gomorrah.”

Paul’s addition of these words implies much. The “Lord of Hosts” — i.e., the Lord of THE MASSES or MULTITUDES — shows that everything God will do will ultimately be for the good of the masses, even though he has here just rejected the masses of Israel in favor of only a remnant.

The word “posterity” (NAS) is nice. It is the equivalent of “seed.” Thus the prophet is saying that the remnant will be part of the spiritual seed, inheritors of the Abrahamic promise, which will bless the masses. And if it were not for the “posterity,” the masses would go to oblivion.

Among other things, verse 29 guarantees that Israel’s casting off is not an oblivion, but a temporary rejection for the time necessary to develop the “seed.”

We can see clearly how Paul in Romans 9:15, using prophecy, sealed all of his points about the place of the two Israels in God’s plan.

Paul will now use the remainder of this chapter to summarize the underlying difference between the two Israels: WORKS versus FAITH.

<p>9:30 What shall we say then? That Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, attained righteousness, even the righteousness which is by faith;</p> <p>9:31 but Israel pursuing a law of righteousness, did not arrive at that law.</p>
--

9:32 Why? Because they did not pursue it by faith, but as though it were by works. They stumbled over the stumbling stone,
 9:33 just as it is written,
 “BEHOLD, I LAY IN ZION A STONE OF STUMBLING AND A ROCK OF OFFENSE, AND HE WHO BELIEVES IN HIM WILL NOT BE DISAPPOINTED.”

So Paul asks, “What conclusion are we to draw?” He gives two conclusions:

- (1) The Gentiles didn’t pursue, but did attain justification — which comes from faith (verse 30).
- (2) Israel did pursue, but didn’t attain justification — because they thought works were the means to it (verses 31, 32).

And it all was prophesied by Isaiah in 28:16 and 8:14.

Thus, Paul’s lesson is this: Justification now is not a function of man’s desire or efforts; it is a function of BELIEF. The Gentiles didn’t pursue it. It is not available by the WORK of chasing it! But that is why some of them actually can get it — because when they HEARD, they SIMPLY BELIEVED.

But Israel did pursue justification, thinking that pursuit was the secret. They pursued honestly thinking that it was available that way: “as though it were by works.”

They stumbled over the stumbling stone. Someone stumbles because he doesn’t see. And, frequently, he doesn’t see because either he is in the dark, or the object is not expected, or he is not looking. All three problems applied to Israel.

Israel not only stumbled, but they, instead of getting up and examining the problem, got offended because someone dared to point to their darkness, ignorance, and blindness. But the words of total import in these prophetic sentences are “HE WHO BELIEVES.” It is solely faith that will develop the promised seed.

The following words (after BELIEVES) have numerous translations — all of which make sense: HE WHO BELIEVES:

- (1) “shall not make haste” (KJV; Isaiah 28:16.) — He won’t flee away; he will be constant and steady; he won’t be in a flurry of activity to justify himself.
- (2) “shall not be ashamed” (Septuagint; Isaiah 28:16.) — He will have no need to fear his imperfect state which works cannot cure.
- (3) “will not be disappointed” (NAS; Romans 9:33.) — Faith never disappoints; only works fail us.

UNIT # 2, Why Israel Failed, and
How the Remnant and the Gentiles
Come into Spiritual Israel
(10:1-21)

This Chapter is complicated in that it covers many little ideas. It is difficult to summarize it in that it is not so plain as having a single objective as do the chapters before and after it.

Chapter 9 dealt with supplanting Fleshly Israel with Spiritual Israel during the Gospel Age. Chapter 10 is yet concerned with justification as the reason why this supplanting occurred. In the effort to do this, it was necessary to explain how the remnant and the Gentiles THOUGHT DIFFERENTLY from the bulk of Israel. This different way of thinking allowed the faithful to “hear the call” and to make an appropriate response to it. Thus Paul enters into the SEQUENCE of steps the Lord uses in creating Spiritual Israel.

A workable outline of Chapter 10 has these sections:

- Verses 1-4. Israel’s ignorant zeal has works seemingly inextricable from their thinking.
- Verses 5-11. How FAITH-JUSTIFICATION does and does not reason.
- Verses 12-17. The meaning of “CALLING ON HIM” — i.e., how Spiritual Israel (remnant and Gentile) receive justification.
- Verses 18-21. Hearing and Reacting as shown by the faithful and by Fleshly Israel —
 - verse 18. Have the GENTILES heard? —
 - verse 19. Has ISRAEL heard? —
 - verse 20. How did the GENTILES react? —
 - verse 21. How did ISRAEL react?

Once Paul has gone through the exercise of this chapter, he will be ready to conclude with a look at how BOTH ISRAELS will fare now and later.

VERSE-BY-VERSE OBSERVATIONS

10:1 Brethren, my heart’s desire and my prayer to God for them is for their salvation.
10:2 For I testify about them that they have a zeal for God, but not in accordance with knowledge.

10:3 For not knowing about God's righteousness and seeking to establish their own, they did not subject themselves to the righteousness of God.
10:4 For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.

(Remember that "righteousness" and "justification" are the same word. For our purpose, "justification" works best in these verses.)

In the first verse, Paul makes it plain that Israel's rejection is not the end of the story. Too many Christians have lost the true doctrine regarding Israel. Would Paul's heart desire something that cannot happen? The fact is here established that Israel WILL BE A PART OF SALVATION.

Israel as a nation is set aside until the Millennium concerning its "salvation" — a point which Chapter 11 will stress. They are only being set aside, not being abandoned as part of God's plan.

In verse 2, Paul "testifies" that Israel (despite its obstinacy) IS ZEALOUS for God. However, they are (because of "hardness" — see 11:25) bereft of the knowledge they need in order to reform. Their ZEAL, according to Paul, is justification enough to look forward to their later salvation.

In verse 3, Paul addresses their lack of KNOWLEDGE. He specifies: They don't know about GOD'S JUSTIFICATION ARRANGEMENTS. So, they go on "seeking" (working) to establish their own. Hence, they have not subjected themselves to Gospel Age justification which is God's gift now.

In summary, and as Paul has previously stated, Christ is the end of the Law as even a typical justifier — IF YOU CAN BELIEVE IT!

10:5 For Moses writes that the man who practices the righteousness which is based on the law shall live by that righteousness.

This is one of those verses which Paul uses to end one section and begin another.

As an end to verse 4, it functions like this:

(10:4) — "Christ ends the Law

(10:5) — BECAUSE Moses points out that the Law is useless for salvation UNLESS ONE PRACTICES IT PERFECTLY."

Jesus, on the other hand, provides justification for the imperfect — thus ending the need for the Law.

(The NAS does not credit this verse as being an Old Testament quote. But it is a quote from Leviticus 18:5.)

As a beginning to the next verses, verse 5 functions like this:

(10:5) — “Moses writes that justification is based on DOING,

(10:6-9) — BUT faith-justification thinks THIS WAY:”

10:6 But the righteousness based on faith speaks as follows: “DO NOT SAY IN YOUR HEART, ‘WHO WILL ASCEND INTO HEAVEN?’ (that is, to bring Christ down),
10:7 or ‘WHO WILL DESCEND INTO THE ABYSS?’ (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead).”
10:8 But what does it say? “THE WORD IS NEAR YOU, IN YOUR MOUTH AND IN YOUR HEART” — (that is, the word of faith which we are preaching.)

Before considering meanings here, note some language items. Note that in all three verses we have the words “that is.” (We have added the parenthesis marks in verse 8 for consistency. They are not in the NAS. We have also added underscorings to help the eye.)

Note also that verses 6 and 7 are what our faith DOES NOT SAY. So, in verse 8, Paul logically questions, “WHAT DOES IT SAY?”

Noticing these items will help in detangling what Paul is writing.

Deuteronomy 30:11-14 is the source for Paul’s quotes in these three verses. He once again looks at Moses’ words to make his point. The passage is not easy to comprehend at first, but a careful examination of Deuteronomy and then of Romans will bear fruitage.

Deuteronomy 30:11-14.

We must look at these verses in the light of Moses as A PROPHET and as A TYPE OF CHRIST. When we read 30:11, it SOUNDS as if Moses is saying, “The Law is a SNAP! Anyone can keep it!” We know that is not his meaning, nor is it true. So, what DOES he mean? He is prophetically saying what Paul is saying: Justification will come by the SPIRIT of the Law, not the LETTER. Hence, verse 14 puts the Law “in the heart,” not in the DOING. Those few Israelites during the Jewish Age who got Moses’ point, we call “Ancient Worthies.” (Hebrews 11)

In verses 12 and 13, Moses actually cautions Israel against STRIVING to keep the Law. He says the Jews SHOULDNT SAY “We’ve got to send out seekers to heaven or to the people (sea) to get us answers” — to make us hear it!” Moses, despite mediating a law of works, is cautioning against works!

Now, let us return to Romans 10:6-8. Paul opens the section with “BUT.” This word connects us to verse 5. So, again paraphrasing, “Law justification is impossible, BUT,

faith-justification cautions against the works of the Law. Faith-justification will never plan to think it can seek things in heaven and earth for it to do in order to save itself.”

NOTE: Paul (in the parentheses of verses 6 and 7 [NAS] comments on a MODERN (Gospel Age) application of Moses’ words. Paul says, in essence, “Do you really think you had something to do with bringing Messiah down to earth or with resurrecting him?” Moses never included these words; but the new-age application is important for all Christians: Do we really think we have anything to do with affecting the work of Jesus in the earth or in getting men to heaven?”

In 10:6 Paul shows what our faith approach WILL NOT SAY. In 10:8 he shows that our faith approach WILL SAY: The WORD (the conviction of faith) is reflected in our speech and lodged in our hearts. Then Paul stresses it in his own words: “THAT is the word of faith which we are preaching.” Paul says that he wants us to KNOW OURSELVES. If we have found true BELIEF, we will talk about it, and we will have it motivate our lives (our hearts — our innermost convictions).

10:9 that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved; 10:10 for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation.

In these 2 verses, Paul grabs the two words from Moses found in verse 8 (“mouth” and “heart”) and interprets what Moses meant. His points are these:

- (1) TRUE BELIEF will express itself.
- (2) That expression will be centered around the fact that Jesus is the one whom God has placed as head over all.
- (3) TRUE BELIEF will not be head-centered, but “in the heart” — in the very depths of beings, motivating the very purpose of our lives.
- (4) That “in-heart” belief will be centered on the successful sacrifice and exaltation of Jesus (the ransom and resurrection).
- (5) THESE items are the GUARANTEE lodged inside us that OUR SALVATION is now, ahead of the world.
- (6) (REPEATING:) It is not the head (the works of reasoning), but the heart (the warm and real acceptance of faith) that results in our justification.
- (7) The fact that we are convinced on the INTERIOR is made manifest by the EXTERIOR witness from our mouths.

Note that Paul has two parallel phrases in 10:10. They both end with “RESULTING IN...”

- (1) Our heart-belief RESULTS IN JUSTIFICATION.
- (2) Our expression RESULTS IN SALVATION. “Salvation” here is likely a reference to the SANCTIFICATION PROCESS which follows.

In other words, our initial justification sets us on a life-long course of SPEAKING about the Lord. This SPEAKING is, and results in, our being DIFFERENT, being SET ASIDE, being SANCTIFIED by the work of the Holy Spirit in us.

10:11 For the Scripture says, "WHOEVER BELIEVES IN HIM WILL NOT BE DISAPPOINTED."

The previous verse told us that we will be justified and saved. Paul again turns to the Old Testament (Isaiah 28:16) to anchor his point: The BELIEVER will not be disappointed. Who could be disappointed with justification and salvation!

But Paul is dealing with the subject of the Two Israels. We must not let this greater concept escape us. He uses verses 6-11 to swing into the means of entrance into Spiritual Israel. FAITH or BELIEF clearly is the pathway. Verse 11 pins it down. But Paul must make it clear that Spiritual Israel does not exclude natural Israelites. Hence verse 12 begins the PROCESS that will affect all in Spiritual Israel — regardless of ethnic origin:

10:12 For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord is Lord of all, abounding in riches for all who call on Him;

"Whoever believes" (10:11) — that is the criterion, whether it be Jew or Gentile. God no longer can be thought of only as the "God of Jacob." But, in a larger sense, all true believers (in Jewish, Gospel, and Millennial Ages) are called "Israel." In that sense, He will always be the "God of Israel."

That lack of disappointment mentioned in verse 11 is echoed in verse 12. Who could be disappointed when "abounding in riches for all who call on Him"?

The final three words of this verse launch Paul into a wonderful sermon on the meaning of those words.

10:13 for "WHOEVER WILL CALL ON THE NAME OF THE LORD WILL BE SAVED."

First Paul tells us where he gets his material. He quotes Joel 2:32.

The claim of this verse is too grand for us to take its words lightly. To "call on the name" has immense implications. "Name," of course, means "character," but with us it also means "family." Thus one implication of "call on the name" is to claim the family relationship and to trust the character of the head of the family. In Scriptural lingo, we do not take the name of the Lord in vain. We take it as a way of life.

Thus, another implication is consistency. We are not to suppose that we "call" only when we are in trouble. "Call on the name of the Lord" represents a lifetime and a lifestyle of perpetual reliance on — of continually looking to — our Father and His Son for

all we do in everything at all times. In other words, it is TOTAL RELIANCE, TOTAL TRUST.

Thus, to “call on the name of the Lord” is the equivalent of having a sonship relationship with the Almighty whereby we can “ask anything according to His will, (and) He heareth us. And if we know that He hears us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him. (See John 14:13,14; 15:7,16; 16:23, 24, 26, 27.) This unrestricted communication with God is the unimaginable exclusive privilege, delight, and sustenance of saints.

We might miss a subtlety here. CALLING ON HIM is part of the formula of Romans 10:10: “With the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation.” Asking of God, and confessing TO HIM our needs, our concerns, and our failings — these things will, if faithfully pursued, lead to (= “resulting in”) salvation (our SUCCESS)!

<p>10:14 How then will they call on Him in whom they have not believed? How will they believe in Him whom they have not heard? And how will they hear without a preacher? 10:15 How will they preach unless they are sent? Just as it is written, “HOW BEAUTIFUL ARE THE FEET OF THOSE WHO BRING GOOD NEWS OF GOOD THINGS!”</p>

While Paul acknowledges that “CALLING ON HIM” is the objective and the secret, he must ask the logical question: “How do you get to the point where you can do that?” He answers with the sequence of steps which GOD HAS DESIGNED to get us into Spiritual Israel.

Paul shows step-by-step how we get where we are. BEFORE we could “call on Him” we had to BELIEVE, because there is no justification without FAITH (belief). But how did we come to believe? We had to hear something believable! And how did we come to hear? Someone had to TELL US (“preach” to us).

But, as we all well know (!), there are many spurious and foolish preachings out there. The only ones with authority, legitimacy and truth are SENT. Thus, God sends into our hearing range someone upon whom He has bestowed the commission to preach.

It is a beautiful sequence. We all have experienced it. Paul, once again to inculcate reliance on the Old Testament, cites either (or both) Isaiah 52:7 and Nahum 1:15 to show from where the preaching comes. It comes from the saints who go everywhere to tell the story. Clearly this has a link to the “confessing with the mouth” of verses 9 and 10. Saints LIKE to preach!

A SIDE NOTE:

Brethren consistently apply Isaiah 52:7 to the END OF THE GOSPEL AGE — and, considering its context, they do so justifiably. Because of that application, “feet of him” refers to the LAST MEMBERS of the Christ on earth. But Paul, obviously without guilt, quotes the Septuagint: “feet of them” — and Paul uses it to mean the travels (usually by foot) of the saints to spread the message.

The point is this: It is THE CHRIST which is commissioned or sent to spread the “good news” throughout the age — up to and including the time when, as Isaiah says, “Thy God Reigneth.” In other words, the CONCEPT of this prophecy is that the PREACHING (of Paul’s list) is age-long, and Isaiah 52 has, therefore, more than one application. (Paul excludes from his quote the part of the prophecy which is end-of-the-age specific.)

This is very much parallel to what Peter does in Acts 2:16-21. He points out that Joel’s prophecy about pouring out the Holy Spirit “ON ALL FLESH” had its beginning at Pentecost. We normally use Joel’s prophecy as a Millennial Age text. But Peter assures us that it has more applicability than that. The pouring-out begins with the anointing limited to the few who will become spiritual sons. Note that Peter’s quote ends with “whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved” — the same words Paul uses in Romans 10:13. Thus, in the Mediation, the rest of the world will gain the privilege we now have. They, too, will become sons.

* * * * *

Reading Paul’s list backwards (as we did in 8:29, 30) is helpful:

- 5 — God SENT out preachers.
- 4 — The PREACHERS broadcast the message.
- 3 — Some HEARD and were fascinated.
- 2 — Their fascination turned into HEART-BELIEF.
- 1 — God justified them due to their total belief; and He gave them the ultimate privilege of CALLING ON HIM anytime, anywhere, any reason. And they will “never be disappointed.”

10:16 However, they did not all heed the good news; for Isaiah says, “LORD, WHO HAS BELIEVED OUR REPORT?” 10:17 So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.
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As usual, everyone wasn’t listening! Perhaps the single most important reason for verse 16 is for our not being discouraged as we “preach.” Isaiah (53:1) makes it known in only six words that we will be mostly ignored!

Then, in verse 17, Paul summarizes:

FAITH is ours because we LISTENED when we HEARD.
And REAL HEARING is hearing the word (the message).

This is important. Prior to the Gospel Age, friendship justification was possible without Christ. (Although, it certainly seems that faith in THE PROMISE of a savior was always implicit for justification.) There are no friends of God at present outside of a Christ-oriented foundation. This is hurting no one. It simply magnifies and defines the purpose and focus of the present age.

10:18 But I say, surely they have never heard, have they? Indeed they have;
“THEIR VOICE HAS GONE OUT INTO ALL THE EARTH, AND THEIR WORDS TO THE ENDS OF THE WORLD.”

10:19 But I say, surely Israel did not know, did they? First Moses says,
“I WILL MAKE YOU JEALOUS BY THAT WHICH IS NOT A NATION, BY A NATION WITHOUT UNDERSTANDING WILL I ANGER YOU.”

With the above Christ-oriented stipulation made, Paul must ask the question: “Well! Can you guarantee that those who need to hear DO hear?”

It was earlier noted that verses 18 and 19 are about HEARING. Verse 18 is about the Gentiles; verse 19 is about the Jews. (Verses 20 and 21 will be about RESPONSES to that hearing by the same two groups.)

So, in verse 18 Paul proves that HEARING has and will be made available to all the Gentiles whom God might wish to call. Paul is not speaking in a local sense, nor is he limiting his answer to the time in which he lives. He quotes Psalm 19 and applies it to all of the earth throughout the entire Gospel Age.

Psalm 19 is a stunningly revealing choice of a prophecy. Anyone reading Psalm 19:1 would assume it to be about the stars. But Paul is assuring us that it is about that part of Abraham’s Seed known as “the stars of heaven.” It is about true Christians: “The heavens declare the glory of God!” Thus, in essence, Paul is saying, “By the time the age has ended, the only way one can say he’s never heard the message, is to say something like, “I’ve never seen the stars!”

Thus Paul concludes, “Has the preaching been insufficient? Indeed, it has not! The message will have gone out over the whole planet — to all of its nooks and crannies — via the collective voice of the ‘star’ class.”

But what about Israel? (verse 19) Do they know? After all, of all people (“God’s people”!), would not they take the offer?

Paul will quote more than one text to make his point. Thus he begins by saying, “FIRST there is Moses who says...”

Paul quotes Deuteronomy 32:21. By doing so he is implying that the Jews started getting the message as far back as Moses’ day! In Galatians 3:8 he does the same by saying that the Gospel goes back to Abraham!

Paul will assure us that Israel will not be free of the witness in the Gospel Age, but that they were actually prepared for it long before. When Moses warned Israel that God would turn to the Gentiles, it was an explicit revealing to Israel that THEY WEREN’T LISTENING (or hearing).

The quote from Moses accomplishes several things:

- (1) Making Israel “jealous” means that God does care about Israel.
- (2) It also means that He expects that they will (as a result of the jealousy) return to Him.
- (3) It shows how lovingly exclusive God was of Israel, because He says the Gentiles are “not a nation” (— not even a recognizable group!); or, if you consider them a nation (which Israel does not), they are devoid of understanding. Israel to this day considers all Gentiles to be devoid of understanding. We can only imagine what kind of jealousy this will elicit!
- (4) God will make Israel ANGRY — not with Him, but with themselves. THAT is the essence of true godly sorrow and repentance. (The words of this verse contain so many implications!) Paul is thus demonstrating that Israel will not only return to God, but with vehemence!
(II Corinthians 7:10, 11)

<p>10:20 And Isaiah is very bold and says, “I WAS FOUND BY THOSE WHO DID NOT SEEK ME, I BECAME MANIFEST TO THOSE WHO DID NOT ASK FOR ME.”</p> <p>10:21 But as for Israel He says, “ALL THE DAY LONG I HAVE STRETCHED OUT MY HANDS TO A DISOBEDIENT AND OBSTINATE PEOPLE.”</p>

As was mentioned, these two verses show the results of hearing by (verse 20) Gentiles and by (verse 21) Jews. But, as he frequently does, Paul uses verse 20 for a dual purpose. When he asked in verse 19 if Israel knew (heard), he called on Scripture as a witness to the answer. But he intended to use more than one text because he said, “FIRST, Moses says...” So, in the Isaiah 65:1 citation in verse 20, we have a SECOND witness regarding the Jews. But Paul clearly uses Isaiah additionally in an application toward Gentiles, because in contrast he says, “BUT, as for ISRAEL...” (verse 21)

Therefore, first look at verse 20 as a second witness regarding Israel. The Isaiah text, just like Moses, shows Jews from their own prophet that **SOMEBODY ELSE** (somebody other than Israel) would be accepted by God. The inference that Israel was TOLD but didn't "HEAR" is obvious. They had to be supplanted.

The use of verse 20 as applicable to the RESPONSE OF GENTILES is clear. Paul and Isaiah are telling us that when Gentiles were offered the message, **THEY HEARD IT** — they "found" God. He became "MANIFEST" to the Gentiles. They understood Him, whereas Israel did not.

Verse 21 is devoted to the RESPONSE of Israel when the message was presented to them — and this applies also throughout the Gospel Age. Despite the many ways God has witnessed to Israel, their obstinacy remains. They don't or won't hear. Fortunately, they are (deep down) experiencing the "jealousy" (verse 19) that will bring them back.

* * * * *

Paul has used Chapter 10 to define clearly what separates Fleshly Israel from Spiritual Israel. As Jesus summarized it in the Rich Man and Lazarus parable, there is "a great gulf" between them.

UNIT # 3, The Relationship of the Two Seeds of the Abrahamic Promise (11:1-36)

This chapter is the third and final installment in Paul's three-chapter summary of the relationship of FLESHLY versus SPIRITUAL ISRAEL — the JEWISH AGE versus the GOSPEL AGE. In these three chapters (9-11), Paul basically has three sub-topics:

Chapter 9

THE CHANGE OF AGE

- ◆ Spiritual supplants Fleshly Seed of Abraham
- ◆ Sonship supplants servants
- ◆ Younger supplants elder
- ◆ But NO INJUSTICE!
 - Every change is part of a BIG PLAN
 - Each age or group is a VITAL PART this plan.
- ◆ FAITH (BELIEF), not works, is the key to the new age.

Chapter 10

WHY ISRAEL FAILED & HOW THE NEW AGE WORKS

- ◆ Their failure is not to their ultimate hurt.
- ◆ How God brings individual Jews and Gentiles under the new-age arrangement (by FAITH in a message)
- ◆ Israel's failure will be instructive for them and lead them to ultimate success.

CHAPTER 11

THE RELATIONSHIP (Present & Future) OF THE TWO SEEDS OF THE ABRAHAMIC PROMISE

- ◆ Rejection of the Jewish system is not a rejection of Jews as individuals, nor of the nation ultimately.
- ◆ Israel is merely being placed “on hold” until the time for its prophesied later use and glory.
- ◆ The transfer of a faithful remnant and the induction of Gentiles form the spiritual seed.
- ◆ There is an all-inclusive, unquestionable magnificence in every detail of the Divine planning!

* * * * *

VERSE-BY-VERSE OBSERVATIONS

11:1 I say then, God has not rejected His people, has He? May it never be! For I too am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin.
11:2 God has not rejected His people whom He foreknew. Or do you not know what the Scripture says in the passage about Elijah, how he pleads with God against Israel?

The last chapter ended with the condemnatory words of Isaiah 65:2 — a perfect lead-in to Romans 11:1. Paul's point all along, though not always as clearly stated as in Chapter 11, is that Israel has not suffered a rejection — merely a setting aside during the “double” (Isaiah 40:1), a furlough, or a period of being ignored. In Chapter 11, Paul will carefully caution that BOTH houses of Israel have definite and irrevocable places in God's plan.

Paul addresses anti-“rejection” in two parts in this Chapter. His first approach is that it is abundantly clear that God IS YET dealing with PART of Fleshly Israel — “the remnant.” Paul is part of that remnant, and he confidently says, “I'm not rejected and I'm Israel — a descendant of Abraham and Benjamin.” In other words, part of the original “sand of the seashore” class can, indeed, become a part of the “stars of heaven” class. Some from Fleshly Israel can, indeed, become part of Spiritual Israel.

In verse 2, “foreknew” is an important word. ALL of Israel (Fleshly and Spiritual) were “foreknown” of God when He crafted His plan. Paul cautions against the “Elijah syndrome.” Paraphrased: “Don't be like Elijah who tried to convince God that Israel was hopeless!” In Paul's words, “...how he (Elijah) pleads with God AGAINST Israel.”

Paul is trying so hard to get the balance in our heads. He is rejecting the Law as a justifier; but he is not rejecting the “spirit of the Law.” He is rejecting the Law Covenant; but he is not rejecting the Old Testament Scriptures. He is rejecting the old Israel polity including its typical Judaism. But he is not rejecting the people of Israel — the Jew — even though he is teaching that most of them are being “set aside” for a while.

11:3 “Lord, THEY HAVE KILLED YOUR PROPHETS, THEY HAVE TORN DOWN YOUR ALTARS, AND I ALONE AM LEFT, AND THEY ARE SEEKING MY LIFE.”
11:4 But what is the divine response to him? “I HAVE KEPT for Myself SEVEN THOUSAND MEN WHO HAVE NOT BOWED THE KNEE TO BAAL.”
11:5 In the same way then, there has also come to be at the present time a remnant according to God's gracious choice.

11:6 But if it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works, otherwise grace is no longer grace.

Following his plea not to be like Elijah, Paul offers the historical text and God's historical answer.

11:3 — Paul quotes I Kings 19:10 to show Elijah's reasoning — which sounds much like Christendom's anti-Jewish claims: "Lord, they crucified Messiah. They're incorrigible. Get rid of them!"

11:4 — But Paul, who had already said that any reasoning against Israel's continuance with God is faulty, now jumps down to I Kings 19:18 in order to make his second point in these verses: Even though Israel is in its "jealousy period isolation," there IS a part of that nation which God will transfer into the "star" class of the Gospel Age — that "remnant" of the nation which, because of FAITH, has not fallen into the traps that the multitudes have fallen into.

With the words "in the same way" (verse 5), Paul explains the transition from Jewish to Gospel Ages — and, while doing so, again stresses his anti-works basis as the primary difference between the two Israels.

11:5, 6 — Just as the Israel of Elijah's day wasn't all corrupt (even though Elijah couldn't see that!) — even so, even though God was setting Israel aside to make them jealous for future good, there was, as the Gospel Age opened, a good representation from that nation of individuals who, by GRACE, not by their relationship to the works of the Law, were invited ("called") to be part of the "star" class.

11:7 What then? What Israel is seeking, it has not obtained, but those who were chosen obtained it, and the rest were hardened;
11:8 just as it is written,
"GOD GAVE THEM A SPIRIT OF STUPOR, EYES TO SEE NOT AND EARS TO HEAR NOT, DOWN TO THIS VERY DAY."
11:9 And David says,
"LET THEIR TABLE BECOME A SNARE AND A TRAP, AND A STUMBLING BLOCK AND A RETRIBUTION TO THEM."
11:10 "LET THEIR EYES BE DARKENED TO SEE NOT, AND BEND THEIR BACKS FOREVER."

So Paul's logical question is, "So what has happened?" And his answer is plain: Israel is seeking to be justified in God's sight and to be the promised seed of Abraham; but it has not obtained those objectives. BUT: Some, "the chosen," have obtained it! The bulk of the nation, however, has been hardened or blinded to the truth of the matter.

In verse 8, Paul quotes Isaiah 29:10 and Deuteronomy 29:4. The implication is that by giving Israel its exclusive relationship with God, and by giving them a fixed law which

encouraged the fleshly mind to look no further than the rules, God provided the circumstances for Israel to be in a state of suspended animation as far as true learning was concerned. (Compare Hebrews 9:8.)

Then Paul turns to Psalm 69:22, 23 to show that the very food the Lord had prepared, the feasting on the Law, became their TRAP. Eating is for the purpose of growth and sustenance, not for flavor and indulgence. But for the Jew, the Law became the objective rather than the means.

In verse 10, (still from Psalm 69), Paul shows how the law kept them from looking for something else. Bent backs implies looking downward — the inability to stand up straight to see the horizon of the future (the spiritual matters). Instead, they could only look DOWN to focus on the earth — the temporal things.

11:11 I say then, they did not stumble so as to fall, did they? May it never be! But by their transgression salvation has come to the Gentiles, to make them jealous.

Paul keeps struggling in order to maintain balance. He had just spoken of Israel's stumbling. But immediately he asks if this stumbling is "irretrievable." The Greek contains this thought: "They did not stumble so as to fall IRRETRIEVABLY, did they?" Paul assures us that this is not the case. And he explains the benefits of their stumble: (1) The Gentiles gain an opportunity. (2) The acceptance of Gentiles by God will make Israel jealous — put them in a frame of mind that makes them hunger for that day when God surely will regain direct dealings with them.

11:12 Now if their transgression is riches for the world and their failure is riches for the Gentiles, how much more will their fulfillment be!

Looking to the future, Paul wants all to think about Israel's reinstatement. He covers the beginning and end of the Gospel Age in this verse.

Paul says that Israel's stumble ("their transgression") does two things:

- (1) It supplies riches for the world. In the Gospel Age, the spread of Scripture (Old and New Testaments) gave the world which received them riches of thought never before available. "Christendom" may be a failure, but it has prospered because of its possession of the Bible.
- (2) Israel's failure also gave the Gentiles the OPPORTUNITY to become the "promised seed" — true inheritors of the Abrahamic promise. What riches!

Then Paul goes to the end of the Gospel Age — when Israel will be received back as a blessing nation: "THEIR FULFILLMENT." When he says "how much more," he is

speaking about the reality over the hope, the blessings over the promises. BOTH ISRAELS have awesome riches in this verse!

The word “fulfillment” is worthy of extra thought. In order to fulfill, something has had to have been promised. In one word (fulfillment) we have the Divine testimony that Israel has always had a promised place in God’s plan, and that that place comes into being AFTER the promised seed is developed. This verse clearly teaches that the Jewish Age WAS NOT the golden age of Israel. The Millennium is!

11:13 But I am speaking to you who are Gentiles.
Inasmuch then as I am an apostle of Gentiles, I
magnify my ministry,
11:14 if somehow I might move to jealousy my
fellow countrymen and save some of them.

These two verses actually form a single thought. To paraphrase:
‘By my spreading the Word to you Gentiles (which is my assignment), I am also doing these two things for my Jewish countrymen:

- (1) I am making most of them jealous (11:1) — thus providing for their eventual reinstatement, and
- (2) I am possibly harvesting some of the remnant to be a part of the “stars” (i.e., save some of the Jews now).

Paul is “magnifying his ministry” in that serving the Gentiles does have as one of its secondary objectives a service to the Jews. God’s economy is always worthy of note.

11:15 For if their rejection is the reconciliation of
the world, what will their acceptance be but life
from the dead?

It is not easy here to be consistent with verse 12. In verse 12, “world” [*cosmos*] seems to refer to the Christian world which, while “Christian” in name, is not the same as the part of them termed “Gentiles” whom God has engrafted into the “star” class.

But here in verse 15, at least on the surface, it looks like the comparison with verse 12 is parallel. But we know that “Christendom” (“the world”) is not reconciled to God in the Gospel Age. Perhaps the verses are not parallel. Perhaps Paul means that the rejection of Israel (in A.D. 33) provides the circumstances for the “reconciliation of the world” in the Millennium.

If the verses are parallel, verse 15 would have to change the meaning of “world” and have it mean the Gentiles — the non-Jewish population. If that be the case, Paul is saying (actually repeating) that Jewish Age failure allows Gentile incorporation into the body.

Either way works. It would be nice, of course, to know which meaning the Apostle intended.

The end of the verse is the exciting part. First of all, it again states and PROVES that Israel's casting off is only temporary. Otherwise, Paul could not look forward to the time of their "acceptance."

Secondly, "life from the dead" could have several meanings. It could mean that the nation of Israel comes back from the dead. It is a nice thought, and it is true. But it is not likely the meaning since "acceptance" has the same implication and the two phrases would be a redundancy.

It has been noticed that IN ONE SENSE Israel's "acceptance" dates from 1878. This verse thus takes on the additional meaning that at the end of the "Jewish Double" (Isaiah 40:1, 2), "life from the dead" (in this case, the FIRST RESURRECTION) will occur. This seems perfectly legitimate. But, in the more general, larger, and contextual sense, the NEW COVENANT with them will be their ACCEPTANCE. THAT will begin the "life from the dead" for the world as individuals. Both applications seem appropriate and logical. However, the second interpretation takes on more weight as we consider the next half-verse.

11:16 If the first piece of dough is holy, the lump is also;

We have divided verse 16 into two parts because it contains two very distinct pictures.

To understand the first part of this verse, we must connect it to verse 15. Verse 15 ends with the promise of resurrection and restitution. How does this happen? It happens by the "acceptance" of Israel under the New Covenant. Israel, therefore, is the "first fruit" of the Millennial Age.

Unfortunately, the NAS does not translate this verse well. "First fruit" is in the Greek text and refers to the FLOUR from which the bread was made which was given to God as a consecrated offering. See Numbers 15:20,21 and Leviticus 23:10. Both Phillips' translation and the NIV translate this verse well. NIV says:

"If the part of the dough offered as first-fruits is holy, then the whole batch is holy."

Paul's thought is that RESTORED ISRAEL (the first-fruits of the Millennium and the Covenant) will be "holy" — consecrated. Thus ALL who come into that covenant after Israel (the "after fruits" — the world) will also become holy.

Verse 16 should end there. The second half of it begins an entirely new thought. YET, in another, and a very important sense, the two thoughts and illustrations are there TO MAKE ONE POINT.

11:16 (second half) — and if the root is holy, the branches are too.

A long dissertation on the “olive tree” begins here. The olive tree represents the masterpiece of the Holy Spirit’s functioning: The Abrahamic Covenant.

Some of what Paul later presents will be made clearer if we don’t lose the connection of the olive tree illustration to the restoration of Israel.

Clearly, the first part of verse 16 (the first-fruits offering) IS ABOUT RESTORED ISRAEL. The second sentence HAS TO BE about that too! “And, if the root is holy, the branches are too.” Same story; different illustration.

The “root” of the tree is the Abrahamic Promise which was to develop two kinds of seed: sand and stars, Paul’s point is that ALL branches (sand and stars) will end up being “holy” — consecrated, perfect parts of the Divine plan. But he, in this verse, will focus on Israel as earthly branches.

Paul is stressing that Israel is only set aside during the Gospel Age, but it is DESTINED to be first-fruits and first-branches of the new order — the earthly Kingdom. (Read verse 1 again with this in mind!)

11:17 But if some of the branches were broken off, and you, being a wild olive, were grafted in among them and became partaker with them of the rich root of the olive tree, 11:18 do not be arrogant toward the branches; but if you are arrogant, remember that it is not you who supports the root, but the root supports you.
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In Paul’s system of logic, this is the perfect opportunity to return to a discussion of THE GOSPEL AGE, still using the same Olive Tree illustration.

Just as Paul had shown from prophecy that “the elder shall serve the younger,” Fleshly Israel (the elder — the first developed) will serve the Church (the younger — the later developed). Thus when Paul says “branches were broken off,” he means that the root, the Abraham Promise, had to “break off” Fleshly Israel as branches TEMPORARILY from its functioning as the visible part of the Abrahamic Covenant during the Gospel Age. And, during the Gospel Age, we are grafted in.

We can see why he calls us a “wild olive.” We are not genealogically Israel. We are olive branches in that we are WITHOUT QUESTION part of the Abrahamic arrangement — but only so by ENGRAFTING, by being brought in from the outside.

Thus we, by engrafting, “became partaker with them of the rich root (the promises to Abraham) of the Olive Tree.”

In verse 18, the Apostle readdresses his question from verse 1. Paul knew that in his day, as well as in the entire ensuing age, it would be only natural to blame, persecute, and dismiss Fleshly Israel. All of Christianity (and even a good part of the heathen

world!) has done this. And, to our shame, even a few in the Laodicean period of the Church have leaned toward this tendency.

Paul warns STRONGLY that there is GREAT DANGER in dismissing Israel from God's purposes. We must not DEFY God's plan. "Arrogance" to any degree regarding Fleshly Israel, according to Paul, means that we are likely to lose the support of the root. A branch without root-support DIES!

11:19 You will say then, "Branches were broken off so that I might be grafted in."
11:20 Quite right, they were broken off for their unbelief, but you stand by your faith. Do not be conceited, but fear;
11:21 for if God did not spare the natural branches, He will not spare you, either.

Paul shows the root of incorrect thinking. It is fleshly thinking rather than Biblical thinking. Just because a statement is RIGHT, just because a statement is Biblical, does not automatically make it Biblical thinking. This is why we have the old proverb about the Bible's being an old fiddle upon which any tune can be played.

Paul demonstrates that we can be Bible-quoting and wrong. So we say (in worldly reasoning), "Well, Israel was broken off so that we Gentiles can gain the favor." It is as if we have just made it right to dismiss Israel.

Paul's response: "QUITE RIGHT!" However, he corrects the ATTITUDE rather than the statement: "BUT, you stand by your faith; and CONCEIT is not faith. You have reason to FEAR with this attitude. The natural branches didn't fit in now because of their attitude. You can be cut off for the same reason."

11:22 Behold then the kindness and severity of God; to those who fell, severity, but to you, God's kindness, if you continue in His kindness; otherwise you also will be cut off.
11:23 And they also, if they do not continue in their unbelief, will be grafted in, for God is able to graft them in again.
11:24 For if you were cut off from what is by nature a wild olive tree, and were grafted contrary to nature into a cultivated olive tree, how much more will these who are the natural branches be grafted into their own olive tree?
11:25 For I do not want you, brethren, to be uninformed of this mystery — so that you will not be wise in your own estimation — that a partial hardening has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in;

In previous verses the Apostle has applied the Olive Tree picture to both Millennial and Gospel Ages. In verses 22-25 he will conclude the analogy — AGAIN with application to both ages.

The “kindness and severity of God” was treated by Paul back in Romans 9:18. By the time he gets to 11:26, we will have been convinced that “kindness and severity” and “mercy and hardening” will ultimately have been the experience of ALL (11:32). That is part of the Divine Plan and the Permission of Evil to prepare ALL for the ultimate blessings.

Verses 22 and 23 should be seen as a small unit as they provide a comparison. Paul explains that origin doesn’t count when the Gospel Age branches are being dealt with. (“There is neither Jew nor Gentile” in the Body of Christ.) Humility of attitude and faith will be the success factors. So Paul’s summary is this:

1. To the Gentiles: IF you continue in His kindness, you will remain a branch; otherwise you will easily be cut off.
2. To the Jew: IF you give up your unbelief and stiff-necked attitude, you will have the opportunity of being put right back as a branch.

Verse 24 shows that the national cutting off as branches does not preclude individuals from being part of the tree. Paul suggests the Jew (with the requisite changes) will actually function better — because of his heritage.

But Paul uses verse 24 for an additional purpose. With its last sentence, he is beginning to look toward the Millennium. When he says, “How much more will these who are NATURAL BRANCHES be grafted into their own olive tree.” We know that Paul is using this sentence as a precursor to ISRAEL’S RESTORATION because the next verse says so. But let’s remember both lessons:

1. Jewish individuals in the Gospel Age can easily be part of the spiritual branching.
2. Jews in the Millennial Age will fit NATURALLY into their part of the Abrahamic Covenant.

When verse 25 arrives, Paul has prepared us for it. Paraphrased, he is saying:

“Brethren, I want you to hold in your heart what others cannot see. It will help you to fight against conceit and misapprehension regarding natural Israel. Israel understands more about God and His plan than most of the world (including Christendom) understands. Their blindness is only PARTIAL. They are blind only to the high calling. Their hearts are hardened to it and its principles. But all of this is temporary. Once the Body of Christ has been completed — comprised mostly of Gentiles — they will see again and be re-engrafted into their true place in the Olive Tree.”

11:26 and so all Israel will be saved; just as it is written,
“THE DELIVERER WILL COME FROM ZION, HE WILL REMOVE UNGODLINESS FROM JACOB.”
11:27 “THIS IS MY COVENANT WITH THEM, WHEN I TAKE AWAY THEIR SINS.”

When Paul says “ALL ISRAEL” he most certainly means BOTH Israels — the natural seed and the spiritual seed, the sand and the stars, and genetic and engrafted branches. He once again — as he ALWAYS wants us to do — turns to Scripture to make his point. (Isaiah 59:20, 21; Jeremiah 31:31)

The DELIVERER — the spiritual seed — will come from ZION — the spiritual realm;

and

He (The Christ) will remove ungodliness from JACOB — the earthly seed.

Then in verse 27, Paul shows that this event is COVENANTED, and it will remove sin from Israel. (They will, through the Mediator, receive ACTUAL JUSTIFICATION — perfection.)

It is a very nice side item to note the etymology of “Zion.” The name means “sunny.” What a lovely vision this promotes. All darkness will be dispelled. The sun of righteousness (justification) will arise with healing in his beams.

11:28 From the standpoint of the gospel they are enemies for your sake, but from the standpoint of God’s choice they are beloved for the sake of the fathers;
11:29 for the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable.
11:30 For just as you once were disobedient to God, but now have been shown mercy because of their disobedience,
11:31 so these also now have been disobedient, that because of the mercy shown to you they also may now be shown mercy.
11:32 For God has shut up all in disobedience so that He may show mercy to all.

In these verses the Apostle is bringing to a close the subject of Chapters 9 — 11. He is letting us know how very important it is for us to accept God’s arrangements — not dismissing individuals or groups just because God has set them aside for a while. It is a grand and broad perspective. It concludes Part One of Romans — Paul’s masterful treatise on the various kinds, timings, reasons for, and perspectives of JUSTIFICATION. It has been a view of the very foundation of Christian doctrine.

11:28 — Paul shows the advantages of Israel’s temporary failure while he cautions against dismissing Israel. The word “but” in the middle of the verse is the fulcrum of his argument:

Israel (as far as the completion of the Gospel preached to Abraham is concerned) have become enemies of God — but this works for good to you Gentiles.

BUT,

Never lose grasp of the truth that God has ELECTED them to be the sand class of the Covenant. He PROMISED that the descendants of Abraham would be beloved. (See also Deuteronomy 7:6-9.)

11:29 — For all practical purposes, this verse should be incorporated into verse 28. Paul adds two more words to “election” (or “choice”) which he introduced in verse 28:

The three words form the “IRREVOCABLE” (= cannot have message reversed) promises of God:

— ELECTION (or choice) — God CHOSE to do it that way. Therefore, no contrary arguments can be made.

— GIFTS — Whatever God gives is ours to cherish and to use — no matter how long it is before it becomes useable.

— CALLING — While it always remains for us to ACCEPT a call, once it is accepted, we cannot be excluded (except by self-forfeiture). In this case, Israel cannot be excluded from its calling as a blesser nation — although individual Jews, if they wish, can exempt themselves from the privilege — to their detriment.

11:30-32 — In these three verses Paul echoes 9:18. His concluding argument for Chapters 9 — 11 is in these verses. In essence he says, “Everyone will have been on the outside; everyone will end up on the inside — but all in God’s perfect sequence.” Verse 32 uses “ALL” twice. In our day, Paul may just have said, “Just what is it about ‘ALL’ that you don’t get?!” And, thus he leaves his subject of reconciling the places of Jews and Gentiles and will turn, in Chapter 12, to helping the star class make its ELECTION sure.

<p>11:33 Oh, the depths of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways! 11:34 For WHO HAS KNOWN THE MIND OF THE LORD, OR WHO BECAME HIS COUNSELOR? 11:35 OR WHO HAS FIRST GIVEN TO HIM THAT IT MIGHT BE PAID BACK TO HIM AGAIN? 11:36 For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever. Amen.</p>

These verses are virtually a BENEDICTION. They are appropriate at this point in Romans because, without question, we have reached the end of the doctrinal and are

ready to begin the practical. Functionally, Romans is two books. We have just reached the end of Book One.

THE BENEDICTION

11:33 — Paul cautions that, while we are privileged to catch a GLIMPSE of God’s plans, the totality is all BEYOND us. Thus in one verse Paul exalts God beyond us and at the same time cautions us that any pride of understanding is unseemly — actually INSANE!

Paul approaches four things about God that leave us in awe: WISDOM, KNOWLEDGE, JUDGMENTS, WAYS.

Of the first two, Paul refers to their RICHES — things that, in the end, give us the ULTIMATE WEALTH in our lives. But he cautions that these are DEEP — we are only scanning the surface.

Of JUDGMENTS, Paul says we are incapable of SEARCHING them out. We should not, therefore, in our humble state, suppose that we can discern fully the reasons for His decisions.

Concerning His WAYS, they cannot be FATHOMED. We may be able to see a good come out of any of His actions; but we cannot possibly see all of the collective good that comes from them. We cannot know how many things are affected by one small turn of events. (This is a gentle warning to some of us against any prophetic dogmatism!)

Paul is not mourning these inabilities on our parts. He is reveling in the complexities of God! To show this, he turns in verses 34 and 35 to Isaiah 40:13,14 and Job 41:11. (See also Job 35:7.)

11:34 — The question here (and in the next verse) is rhetorical. Paul simply is quoting Scripture to substantiate his point in verse 33. Again, it has two functions: It revels in God’s greatness while it keeps His creation in the humility it needs.

11:35 — This verse is clearer in some translations than in others. See the NIV as a good example. Its point: “To whom does God owe anything?” But this text also well summarizes Paul’s earlier points against the Law. This is an ANTI-WORKS text. To paraphrase it: “What exactly do you think you can *DO* for God that you think deserves repayment?!”

11:36 — It is FROM, THROUGH, and TO (for) God that all things exist. And once this is well-discerned by all, His glory will shine in hearts forever.

As has been noted, this is the end of the INTRODUCTORY, LEGAL, or PRELUDE section of Romans. PRACTICALITY follows beginning in Chapter 12. It seems appropriate that both this BENEDICTION and this half of Romans end with AMEN.

Part Two of Romans
(Chapters 12-16)

THE WORKS of SANCTIFICATION

SECTION XIII
(12:1—15:13)

How the New Creation
Must Sanctify Itself

OVERVIEW of SECTION XIII:
How the New Creation
Must Sanctify Itself
(12:1—15:13)

This is a long section, but all of it has one purpose: the development or sanctification of the new creature which was begotten as part of the life-justification process covered by Paul in the first eleven chapters.

The two halves of Romans might well be summarized as CALL and DEVELOPMENT of the body of Christ. It is vitally important for us to understand the philosophy, the legality, and the details of the doctrine Paul has presented. It gives foundation for our faith. It gives us the understanding necessary to ward off the faith-deceiving attacks of error — particularly at this end of the age. It would be hard to believe that any one of us is not stronger for having considered Paul’s arguments in the first part of Romans.

But understanding is only a protection. It is not a goal. The goal for a Christian is to attain a character-likeness of Jesus. Paul told us that when he pointed out that God predestined that the saints would “be conformed to the image of His Son.” What a goal! And it does not even suggest that this means understanding! It means SANCTIFICATION. And that is our goal. The question is, how do we attain it?

In I Thessalonians 4:3, Paul says, “This is the will of God concerning you, even your sanctification.” But we need a guidebook to sanctification. We can’t just say, “Fine! I’ll get sanctified.” Much of the New Testament is a guide to sanctification. But perhaps we have missed the fact that Romans 12 — 15 is specifically penned to be a guidebook to sanctification. Once Paul has explained for our understanding, he virtually says, “Now, here are the things you do in order to apply your faith to growth.”

Romans is a FAITH and WORKS book. It usually is touted for its emphasis on faith-justification. But it is more. Once Paul has hammered home the point that our justification is BY FAITH, he hammers home the point that, while faith has justified, IT IS WORKS that SANCTIFY.

Paul then proceeds to list, point-by-point, a truly amazing list of sanctifying objectives which cover nearly every conceivable item of character growth. Paul doesn’t leave us with a general admonition: “Go and be sanctified.” He says, “DO THESE THINGS.” How thankful we must be to him. We need this kind of “how to” listing. It is how we learn. The “do’s and don’ts” of the Law were good in that respect. But they didn’t justify. But who will argue that they didn’t sanctify?

As Paul’s checklist for sanctification is studied and meditated upon, most of us will find it helpful to PERSONALIZE Paul’s suggestions. By doing so, we will be better enabled to work on each objective as it applies to our own personal experiences. We might even make a literal checklist on a clipboard and carry it around with us. Such a personalized checklist is given as a sample in an appendix of this book.

* * * * *

Paul's dissertation on sanctification is divided like this:

- 12:1, 2 — The transition verses that take us from Part One of Romans into Part Two.
- 12:3-21 — General sanctification items dealing with our individual strengths and challenges.
- 13:1-14 — Social responsibilities: dealing with the present order of things, including governments and neighbors.
- 14:1 — Brotherhood responsibilities: dealing with respect for each other and with the place of conscience in this interchange.
- 15:13 —

SECTION XIII:
VERSE-BY-VERSE OBSERVATIONS
(12:1—15:13)

12:1 Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship.

This is a much-quoted verse. But in a serious study of Romans — in a contextually intensive consideration — there are many things needing clarification and intensification in this verse.

* * * * *

AN ASIDE:

Before a detailed examination and explanation of the verse, we offer a rather detailed look at one word in the verse: “PRESENT.”

Is this verse about CONSECRATION or about SANCTIFICATION? The answer to that question is based partly on the word “PRESENT.”

The conclusion (before the evidence!) is that the verb, “present,” is used by Paul EXCLUSIVELY throughout Romans NOT in the sense of making an offering, but in the sense of cooperation. If this be true, and if Paul’s use in 12:1 is consistent with all of his other uses of the word, then 12:1 is about WORKS coming out of Faith — i.e., SANCTIFICATION, not JUSTIFICATION or CONSECRATION (as an act).

There are TWO Greek words with apparently the same meaning — so much so that Strong lists them BOTH WITH THE SAME NUMBER: 3936. They are *PARISTEMI* and *PARISTANO*. Their ROOT words are (3844) *para* = alongside, and (2476) *histemi* = to stand. Even in English, the language HINT is this: What we have said, we stand by: in other words, our works follow our promises.

The word has many definitions: to exhibit; to proffer; to recommend; to substantiate; to be at hand (i.e., ready); to aid. In the KJV it has many translations: assist; bring before; command; give presently; present; prove; shew; stand (before, by, here, up, with); yield.

IN ROMANS: Paul uses the word in 6:13 twice; in 6:16; 6:19 (x2); 12:1; 14:10; and 16:2. In summary of these uses:

- 6:13 presenting members of your body as instruments of unrighteousness OR to God as instruments of righteousness. (SOUNDS very much like the idea of 12:1.)
- 6:16 Same thought
- 6:19 Same thought — BUT adds “resulting in sanctification” (which is likely exactly what Paul describes in 12:1)
- 12:1 The text we are questioning
- 14:10 The idea is: We all shall be presented before God’s judgment seat to determine if our works have matched our professions.
- 16:2 Assist or help Phoebe — i.e., DO things for her.

CONCLUSION RESTATED:

The word (even in the meaning of its root parts) does not mean “to present” in the sense of making an offering, but in the sense of bolstering profession by appropriate works. Learning HOW to do these works is what we call sanctification — the life-time carrying out of our consecration vows. Thus, 12:1 is saying (paraphrased), “Let your vitalized flesh give life to the profession of your sacrifice.” Or, as James would put it, “I will show you my faith by my works.”

* * * * *

Look now at the various concepts present in this verse.

The “THEREFORE” of this verse is BIG. It is a word Paul likes and uses frequently to sum up each of his arguments. But here, “therefore” covers eleven chapters of arguments. In other words, Paul is saying, “Based on all I have just taught you in eleven chapters, here is what I hope it will do for you and in you.” That the “THEREFORE” is really that big is somewhat substantiated by the fact that the end of Chapter 11 is an “Amen.” It is a close to all that Romans Part One had offered.

The Apostle then says, “I urge you, brethren...” To get the full impact of the words, it is helpful to skip to the end of the verse: “I urge you, brethren...” to do this “kind of worship appropriate for you.” (God’s Word translation. See also Barclay.)

Why is it “appropriate”? It is appropriate or “rational” because “brethren” here are spirit-begotten saints who must sanctify themselves in order to be spirit-born. Saints MUST “WORSHIP.”

Back to the verse and its progressive thought:

- THEREFORE — Based on your vitalized justification explained in eleven chapters
- I URGE YOU — take the next needed step
- BROTHERS — in Christ
- BY THE MERCIES OF GOD — based on the GIFT to you of life-justification just explained
- PRESENT — Harness as servants

- YOUR BODIES — your justified flesh — all of your human strengths, talents, and opportunities. This verse is STRESSING “bodies” because our “minds” already are “presented.” This is exactly Paul’s point as he begins the second part of Romans. “Here is what you can DO TO GO ALONG WITH WHAT YOU ALREADY THINK.”
- A LIVING — Your flesh is dead, BUT God “shall quicken (= make alive) your mortal bodies” so that you can serve Him with them. (See 6:11 and 8:11.)
- AND HOLY — It HAS been justified!
- SACRIFICE — Our consecration gave our humanity in sacrifice. That part is dead. Our sanctification “presents” what is “quickened” (made alive) as a living part of our sacrifice.
- ACCEPTABLE TO GOD — Even though our works are imperfect, God, as Paul has preached, accepts “the spirit of the Law.”
- WHICH IS YOUR SPIRITUAL SERVICE OF WORSHIP — (Not a clear translation.) In the vernacular, Paul’s thought is, “What else could we possibly do?”

12:2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.

The CHANGES that sanctification will make in us are summarized in this verse. “Conformed” is a word only applicable outwardly. (see Vine’s.) “Transformed” (metamorphosis) is a word only applicable inwardly. So, Paul is saying, “Don’t look like the world. But, and far beyond that, allow an inward change to be taking place.” Not looking like the world is a logical follow-up on “presenting our bodies.” When we see actions in the world, they do not show service to God. Paul is saying, “USE your bodies; but be sure they don’t look like the actions of everyone around you.”

The word “renewing” contains the thought implied in metamorphosis — a change away from what something was. Hence, mind renewal is learning to think very much not as a human thinks. Our “bodies” will be “transformed” (not appearing to have the same actions as the world) BECAUSE the new mind controls them.

Then Paul’s objective in this non-conformity, transforming, and renewing is stated: “So that you may PROVE...” This is an awkward translation. The CONCEPT in this phrase is: “So that you can EXPLORE or UNDERSTAND what it is INSIDE of you that God’s will is INDIVIDUALLY and PERSONALLY working.” This concept is very important. Paul is not stating the obvious, that God’s will in general is good, acceptable, and perfect. That is not only obvious, but stating it in this context would be absurd. Paul is saying that our TRANSFORMATION will allow us to see everything in our lives (8:28) as PERSONALLY “good” for us, “acceptable” (= pleasing) for us, and “perfect” (maturing) for us. THIS is the state to which sanctification must take us. It is saying, “I ACCEPT with joy what He is doing IN ME!”

So, verse 2 would well be translated something like:

And, be not a reflection of this age; rather, by submitting your thought processes to change, become something unearthly new, allowing yourselves to explore God's will working in you, with the expectation of finding it good for you, pleasing to you, and maturing for you as new creatures.

* * * * *

With this verse, Paul's Part Two thesis statement ends. He now goes into the "HOW TO" of accomplishing these things.

Before examining the "how to," it is important to stress Bro. Russell's observation of Paul's wording. In verse 2, Paul does not say, "Don't conform yourself;" neither does he say, "Transform yourself." He says, "Be not conformed" and "Be ye transformed." As he preached in Chapters 1—11, Paul has no faith in WORKS! To the contrary, he says, "Let God do this in you." Christian faith is in large part SUBMISSION. While sanctification IS works, Paul wants it clear that we don't decide what we need when. God will direct the process.

* * * * *

Now we arrive at the beginning of Paul's checklist for us. It will be an exciting journey and will probe deeply into our souls to see if we are willing to be sanctified. We are certainly willing to have the truth; but are we willing to live the truth?

12:3 For through the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think; but to think so as to have sound judgment, as God has allotted to each a measure of faith.

As Paul opens this consideration, he says that grace given to him prompts him to begin with a very basic foundation. No sanctification process will be of any value unless it is based on HUMILITY.

Analyze for a moment the words, "grace given unto me." They seem to be important to Paul; yet we can read over them without thought. One thing is clear: Paul indicates that WHAT HE SAYS in this verse comes "THROUGH THE GRACE GIVEN" to him. We know that the Apostle's message is inspired; but it is almost as if he says, "The Lord emphasized it to me that this is the first thing I must tell you about your sanctification."

Note, then, that this is not just for “those who need it,” but “to everyone among you.” We are dealing with an inviolate standard. It is for all of us, and it apparently is the building block for all of the sanctification items that follow.

Then the verse provides a CONTRAST: (1) Don't think MORE HIGHLY than is appropriate; (2) Do have a sound estimate of your abilities.

The second item is of vital importance since many of us (with an improper “humility”) relegate ourselves to a condition of near uselessness. This is not right. God doesn't call useless individuals. Paul's message is that true humility IS accurate assessment. He affirms this as the verse closes: “...as God has allotted to each a measure of faith.”

God gives us faith that if we had nothing to offer, He would not use us. So, Paul implies, Find out what you do have to offer. That will be an “accurate assessment” (humility), and then we can believe fully (faith) that God can and will use us. After all, why call someone who has nothing to contribute? What this verse accomplishes is that it says, in no uncertain terms, YOU CAN SUCCEED!

12:4 For just as we have many members in one body and all the members do not have the same function, 12:5 so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.
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These verses are an appropriate follow-up to the previous verse. It is as if Paul is saying: “OF COURSE each of us can't do everything! THAT'S the point of accurate assessment.”

Once “accurate assessment” (“sound judgment”) is achieved as the basis of sanctification, the second step in sanctification is elaborated upon in these verses. That step is: SUPPORT THE CAUSE/CORPORATE RESPONSIBILITY. As much as we are individuals, we are not separate from the Body. We are DEPENDENT and we are CHAINED to the others of “the way.”

Paul is not preaching CONFORMITY. He is preaching COOPERATION. Thus he says the parts of a body “do not have the same function.” But, then, verse 5 cautions that while functions differ, they all are CONTRIBUTORY to a working whole. So, we are “individuals,” but we are inescapably connected to others. Paul's lesson? Sanctification will never occur if we don't work well with each other.

12:6 Since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, each of us is to exercise them accordingly: if prophecy, according to the proportion of his faith; 12:7 if service, in his serving; or he who teaches, in his teaching;

12:8 or he who exhorts, in his exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness.

Once we have assessed our abilities, we can begin to look for avenues of service consistent with them. Keep remembering that this all is a part of SANCTIFICATION. Sanctification is taking what we have and what we can do and then DEVOTING those things to Divine service — harnessing them to the new mind.

Paul wants us also to realize that our abilities — while in a sense genetic — are GIFTS. They may be inherited gifts, but that is immaterial. What is material is that God gives us the grace to be able to use them in a sanctified way. That is the meaning of the opening of this verse. It is a thought harmonious with the “BE ye transformed” thought of verse 2. Our natural talents are of no use to God unless His Grace enlists them!

Now Paul begins doing us a huge favor. He starts listing for us the things we can actually use in the development of the new creature. Sanctification now ceases being abstract; it starts to be concrete.

In verses 6-8 Paul suggests seven categories of “gifts” (talents) that we can find in our midst and in our personal experience. His point is: USE THEM.

- 12:6 — 1. If faith has allowed us to be confident in certain Scriptures which foretell events, SPEAK OUT THESE EVENTS — both as a public witness and as faith strengtheners for the saints.
- 12:7 — 2. If we can do ANYTHING that is helpful to the ecclesia or to individual saints, BY ALL MEANS, DO IT!
3. If we can present concepts clearly, by all means, HELP OTHERS UNDERSTAND!
- 12:8 — 4. If we can STIMULATE FAITH in others, DO IT! “Exhortation” (NAS) = *parakaleo* in the Greek = “to call near.” This clearly is referring to sitting down individually with those who are for any reason hesitant or fearful, and helping them to reason on and to overcome their problems. (See Barclay.)
5. If we can be generous with temporal needs, give with the spirit of free joy in doing so, not expecting return, but with the expectant joy of being helpful.
6. If we can organize an effort amongst the brethren, let us do so with the care necessary to indicate our willingness without any desire to be manipulative.
7. If we can enter into sympathy with any of the body who need it, let us never do so as a sense of duty, or do so grudgingly, but with that internal cheer that considers it a privilege to do so, not a duty to do so.

12:9 Let love be without hypocrisy, Abhor what is evil; cling to what is good.

Paul turns now to a more ethereal sanctification. He is dealing with our gut reactions. He wants us to EXAMINE our agape — examine to see if our love truly is PRINCIPLED. So he says that it must not be hypocritical; it must be the epitome of sincerity. It must not vary regardless of the individuals involved. Paul (in anticipation of what he says of Jesus in Hebrews 1:9) says that TRUE AGAPE will hate evil, and it will defend and preserve good. This is a major indicator of sanctified thinking.

12:10 Be devoted to one another in brotherly love;
give preference to one another in honor;

Now Paul turns to the lesser love, PHILADELPHIA — the “other love” that we need for sanctification. Interestingly, he not only uses this familiar Greek word, but he also uses “*PHILOSTORGOS*” — which means to cherish as one’s kindred (“devoted to one another”). The ecclesia concept, as being a cherished and uncompromising defense of family members, is his point. Only sanctification can make this work. Barclay captures the thought: “Your brotherly love must make you one loving family.” Then Paul (via Barclay) explains: “You must lead the way in honoring each other.” Only people with sanctified thinking will accomplish this. The New American Bible translates the end of this verse: “Anticipate each other in showing respect.” Jesus (Matthew 5:21ff) points out the dangers in not following this course.

12:11 not lagging behind in diligence, fervent in
spirit, serving the Lord;

The remainder of this chapter is a point-by-point listing of sanctification objectives. These items, unlike those in verses 6-8, seem not to be talent-specific. These seem to be items we all can develop.

The sanctification item in this verse has to do with ATTITUDE. It suggests that our service to Him (both in mind and heart) should not be in “fits and starts” (as some people pursue hobbies). We must have that inner excitement (or “first love,” as in Revelation 2:4) that keeps us on the cutting edge of pursuing spiritual interests. As Phillips puts it, “Keep the fires of the spirit burning.” At the close of our lives, when sanctification is finished, we should be able to confess to the Lord something like, “No matter how poorly I did things, I did them with sincere enthusiasm!” (Compare Revelation 3:15.)

12:12 rejoicing in hope, persevering in tribulation,
devoted to prayer,

This verse uses three verbs to describe our seeking of sanctification: REJOICE, PERSEVERE, and DEVOTE. The verbs form the FOUNDATIONS of our handling of three sanctifying elements: HOPE, TRIBULATION, and PRAYER.

So, Phillips says, “Base your happiness on your HOPE.” As it was “for the joy that was set before him” that Jesus went through his sanctifying experiences, it must for us be the kingdom vision which makes us find joy on a daily basis.

Because TRIBULATION knocks off the extraneous parts of our imaginations, it is to be endured (or persevered in), knowing, as Chapter 8:28 told us, that ALL of these things are God’s tools in preparing us to be part of His intimate family. This makes PERSEVERING not only tolerable, but a wonderful fulfillment of 12:2 — “prove” (or, know within us) that God’s ways in us are good for us, actually pleasing for us, and helping us to mature. Perseverance contains the additional truth that we CONTINUE to BELIEVE. Our faith in Him never lags; otherwise we would not persevere.

The devoting of ourselves to PRAYER is our innermost realization that we need help, and we need to express thankfulness. To put it simply, we need an “Abba” (8:15). And He needs us to acknowledge Him as such before we can be fully and finally accepted into His personal, intimate family.

The verb DEVOTE is important. It is a strong verb. When we are devoted to something, we are CONSECRATED to it. It is our objective — one of the PRIMARY forces in our lives. Paul is telling us that prayer is our heartfelt NEED, LOVE, and PURSUIT. It is our moment with “Abba.”

12:13 contributing to the needs of the saints, practicing hospitality.

As Paul’s sanctification suggestions continue, he brings up two items of GENEROSITY. The first, “contributing to the needs of the saints” should seem obvious. A family supports its members. These “needs” can be temporal or spiritual. But the attitude of “contributing” has the sanctifying effect of getting our minds off of self and on to the needs of others. THAT is God’s mind; it is the true meaning of AGAPE; and it must be ours if we will be His family.

Then Paul adds, “practicing hospitality.” This may be another way of expressing the first thought, because contributing to the needs of others IS hospitality. But there is a subtle difference which makes the second item of this verse a deeper thought. A very good definition of hospitality comes from a worldly magazine. A woman named Kathleen Norris says: “True hospitality is marked by an open response to the dignity of each and every person.” Since hospitality literally means “to make someone feel at home,” this definition is superior and catches the spiritual concept which Paul probably had in mind. (See I Peter 4:9 also.) Thus, hospitality, here, is more than supplying needs; it is searching out in everyone that which lets that person know that we are listening, probing, and actually CARING about how he feels and what we can do to make him comfortable in spirit.

The word “practicing” (NAS) is better translated “pursuing.” True hospitality is not natural to most of humanity. We must “chase” it. Developing it is thus a part of our sanctification change.

12:14 Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse.

In this verse (and in verses 17, 19, and 20) we have sanctification aimed at us in terms of how we respond to persons outside of the body (enemies). In short, we must respond, but not react.

“Bless” occurs twice in this verse. In many languages (such as Latin = *benedictus*), the word means “*to speak well of.*” That cannot be the Apostle’s meaning since speaking well of some persons would be a bit hypocritical, and we don’t want to be dishonest. The verse does indicate one of the Apostle’s intentions to be that we do not speak evil of them — “...do not curse.” But the “bless” word apparently refers to ACTION rather than words. Paul is admonishing that we find something nice to do for “those who persecute you.”

If, indeed, “bless” contains the thought of “speaking well of,” we certainly could interpret the Apostle’s message as meaning that we can make excuses for the poor behaviors of our detractors. That, at least, is honest. God does it for us all the time!

One more item in this verse is worthy of attention. The word “*practicing*” (NAS) in verse 13, and the word “*persecute*” (NAS) in verse 14, are the same Greek word which means “*pursue.*” Obviously, the word can have both good and bad meanings. Seeing this helps us to understand better the meanings in both verses. The same way that misinformed men can “pursue us” (nag, irritate, or persecute) in a seemingly unending way, it is for us to “pursue” (chase, insist upon, don’t give up on) hospitality (comfort) for our brethren.

12:15 Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep.

Sanctification here takes the form of sympathy and compassion. It is not far removed from “hospitality” in verse 13, but it is a suggestion as to how we can show that hospitality. If we get to the point that we can enter into the responses that others have to their experiences, we are not only understanding them, but we are participating with them. It is easy to weep over our own losses, but much harder to do so for the losses of others. It is easy to be happy about our own blessings, but less easy to enter into the inner gratification which others experience from their blessings. But Paul would have us understand that reaching this condition is a SIGN of sanctification in us.

12:16 Be of the same mind toward one another; do not be haughty in mind, but associate with the lowly. Do not be wise in your own estimation.

Almost certainly the first phrase of this verse belongs to verse 15. It is a summary statement of the above concepts. After all, once we have reached the Mediation, will it not be so that all 144,000 will have the same good responses to the growing-experiences of mankind? This is why verse 15 and the beginning of verse 16 are here. It is saying that we all must prepare ourselves to love everything in our hearts and minds that we see in the growth-experiences of others BECAUSE that will be our Millennial assignment as we resurrect the world. Thus this is a very PRIMARY sanctifying rule!

The rest of verse 16 begins new items in Paul's colorful parade of sanctification objectives.

There seem to be three items here:

- (1) Don't think a good mind makes us better.
 - (2) Learn from those who have had less in life and education.
 - (3) Don't be locked into your conclusions.
- (1) It is often that we think we are better because we have what is better. This is a dangerous flaw. Earlier (e.g., 3:10) Paul has forced to our attention that we all are the same: imperfect and dying. Any attempt to say we can THINK ourselves out of that is foolishness. A "haughty mind" is spiritual insanity.
 - (2) "Associate with the lowly." It was the NAZARETH COMPLEX that thwarted Israel's rulers from seeing the obvious. "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" One of the FIRST THINGS every consecrated saint must be convinced of is the value of every saint — and that God often chooses the "foolish things" to confound the wise! Paul doesn't admonish that we just acknowledge or put up with those who have less of this world's advantages — that we pat them on the head like a puppy — but that we "ASSOCIATE WITH" them. The camaraderie of the body recognizes NO DISTINCTIONS!
 - (3) Finally, the third sanctification of this verse, "Do not be wise in your own estimation," must mean something in distinction from "Do not be haughty in mind." This third point probably means something like, "Don't be set in your own opinions." It is very easy to become a dogmatist. This is not sanctification. The sanctified mind will always be open to new Scriptural information and subtleties — always REFINING its understanding of the Lord's words and ways. It will not have set formulae for determining truth; it will have flexibility as it "associates" with the lowly or the privileged. It will always know that its ESTIMATION of its own wisdom is not a factor!

12:17 Never pay back evil for evil to anyone. Respect what is right in the sight of all men.

Some of Paul's expressions are so clear and concise in their presentation that little or no comment is needed to clarify them. This does not mean, of course, that each of us cannot profit from meditating on these admonitions regarding whether or not our own sanctification process is fulfilling Paul's suggestions.

This verse contains two separate items — both very clear. (1) “Tit-for-tat” is not permissible for us. (2) A general honesty of character in the world’s eyes is expected of us. Paul echoes this in II Corinthians 8:21.

The NAS, however, indicates a possible alternative meaning for the second sentence. “Respect what is right in the sight of all men” does not necessarily mean that the item IS RIGHT. Just because “all men” see it as right, it may not be so. If this is Paul’s thought, he is asking us to have a respect for what the world sees as right, even though we know it not to be right. Is this an abrogation of conscience? No. It is saying that if we show an arrogant disrespect for what all others cherish, we will be poor witnesses. The verse does not indicate that we can’t dissent; we just must dissent with respect. As is said in a courtroom by careful lawyers, “With all due respect, your honor, we wish to state otherwise.”

12:18 If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men.

It is as though thought-association with the end of verse 17 prompts this verse. Verse 17 (perhaps) told us to respect even that with which we disagree. That is a real attempt to live peaceably with all men. Paul states our ideal relationship with all men to be PEACE. This a matter of GRAVE importance. In Hebrews 12:14 Paul makes it clear that without this sanctification rule (which is a part of “holiness”), “no man shall see the Lord.” Sobering! Paul qualifies this, not for us to find a way out(!), but for us not to be discouraged when attempts fail:

- (1) “If possible” means that some men will make it impossible for us to deal peaceably with them.
- (2) “So far as it depends on you” means that OUR part in the relationship is not negotiable: WE will do our part.

12:19 Never take your own revenge, beloved, but leave room for the wrath of God, for it is written, “VENGEANCE IS MINE, I WILL REPAY,” says the Lord.

The march of sanctification pursuits continues.

“Getting even” is out of the question for a saint. But Paul adds, “Leave room for the wrath of God.” In other words, God values all of the experiences of His saints (8:28), and if He feels that payback is warranted and wise, HE will take care of the matter. Paul quotes Deuteronomy 32:35, 36 to bolster his point. This does not admonish that we take GLEE in God’s revenge, but that, if we see it, it is a witness of the spirit for us that He knows best how to weigh our experiences for our development.

12:20 “BUT IF YOUR ENEMY IS HUNGRY, FEED HIM, AND IF HE IS THIRSTY, GIVE HIM A DRINK;”

FOR IN SO DOING YOU WILL HEAP BURNING
COALS ON HIS HEAD.”

12:21 Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome
evil with good.

This is a follow-up to verse 19. That verse told us what not to do. Verse 20 tells us what to do.

12:20 — This verse begins with “But...” (“Therefore” in the KJV.) Paul teaches us that a SANCTIFIED ATTITUDE will find an alternative for revenge (verse 19). He quotes Proverbs 25:21, 22 to teach us to have sympathy for the true needs of this dying world — even if they persecute us. Paul knows that these same people who now hate us will soon pray to and serve the same God we now know ahead of them. Their RESTANDING is our objective ultimately — but why not get started now?

The “burning coals” analogy has at least three explanations.

- (1) Barclay suggests: In doing so, you will make him feel the pangs of burning shame. In other words, SOFTENING UP HIS CONSCIENCE can start in the “here and now.”
(Less work later!)
- (2) Another explanation is rooted in the old Middle-Eastern custom of giving a clay pot with burning coals to your guests when they depart (which pot they carried on their heads), so that, when they arrived at home, they would not need to begin the process of starting a new fire. In other words, we anticipate their future needs — a concept in harmony with Barclay.
- (3) A third explanation, offered by Clarke, is that one step in metal purification is to place hot coals over the metal to begin its softening process for refining. Again, the concept harmonizes with Barclay’s treatment.

One thing is certain from what Paul had already said: Heaping coals of fire on someone’s head is NOT an act of revenge!

12:21 — This could be another sanctification admonition. But its content is so much an extension of verses 19 and 20 that it seems to be a SUMMARY of those verses: “DON’T LET your experiences with evil harden you to where you use evil as one of your own tools. Instead, BURY evil as a concept by heaping good on top of it!”

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— AN INTRODUCTION TO CHAPTER 13 —

In one sense, Paul, as this chapter begins, is merely continuing his enlightened list of sanctification challenges. What is different about Chapter 13 is that, instead of little one-line or two-line objectives, Paul devotes a number of verses to one objective.

Chapter 13 is focused on sanctification as regards our responsibilities to government (verses 1-7) and to neighbors (verses 8-10). Then (verses 11-14) he summarizes our attitude goals — which will affect us regarding verses 1-10 as well as regarding the next chapter. Chapter, 13, then, might well be considered Sanctification in our Social Surroundings.

The first seven verses of this chapter tell us that we (unlike the world) must have a SANCTIFIED ATTITUDE regarding the political systems under which we live. (Paul lived under Nero!)

It is an interesting fact that most of us seem INCAPABLE of discussing these verses without bringing up the EXCEPTIONS which come to mind regarding Paul's words. Thus, we tend to say: "Yes. But what if....?" Or, "But we know that under certain circumstances..." or "But if God and government differ..." etc., etc.! While these "exceptions" are true, we will NEVER GET PAUL'S SANCTIFICATION POINT if we don't dismiss the exceptions from our minds and focus on what Paul is saying, rather than what he is not saying — all of the "what ifs" that pop into our minds. Suffice it to say that Paul in this chapter — without stating it — is relying on the same kind of "exception" he used in I Corinthians 15:27. Only here he would say, "It is manifest that violations of the Divine Law are excepted."

It is quite possible that THIS sanctification admonition is one in which nearly all of us fall short. Thus we may not want to get Paul's points! (Lord forbid!) His points here are hardly ever stressed by brethren in studies or in discourses. Let us rectify this in ourselves so that we will not have a blindness here!

The epitome of 13:1-7 is this:

- (1) Obey the laws. (13:1)
- (2) God ordained ORDER — for our good! (13:1)
- (3) If we have disdain for this concept, we condemn (not sanctify) ourselves. (13:2)
- (4) Rulers exist to promote order and to punish lawlessness. They are God's DEACONS in this respect. (13:3, 4)
- (5) If you obey laws, you need not fear; you may actually be praised. (13:3, 4)
- (6) Obedience to law not only removes fears, but it relieves conscience! (13:5)
- (7) You are obligated not only to obey, but to give monetary support for the preservation of peace and order. (13:6, 7)

One possible reason that it is difficult to focus on Paul's lesson in these verses is that we tend, as a group, to think of governments ONLY IN TERMS OF PROPHECY. We

think of “Gentile Times” ending; we think of the “Kings who have had their day;” we think of cooperations between civil and religious powers, and how it all will end; we think of the “dragons” as being one of the primary enemies of the saints.

BUT:

Those all are PROPHETIC matters. Paul is NOT on that spectrum in this SANCTIFICATION lesson. Paul is on a PRACTICAL (not prophetic) spectrum. He is trying to tell us of our RESPONSIBILITY as humans living in a human society and trying to be ambassadors for the heavenly kingdom. He is trying to tell us what SANCTIFICATION means when we live under imperfect rulerships. He is trying to tell us that governments (despite their flaws) were conceived BY GOD in order to keep tranquility. THAT is something we should be IN HARMONY WITH!

Paul is trying to tell us what is good about governments. We must be open to see good when we have usually focused on what is bad. This is an important sanctification.

13:1 Every person is to be in subjection to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those which exist are established by God.

Paul’s basic rule for this particular item of sanctification is:

“Every person is to be in subjection to the governing authorities.”

Everything that follows is expansion on this clear statement. Paul is not implying QUALITY in the governments. Nor is he admonishing anything more than obedience to established laws. Paul, like Peter in Acts 4:18, 19, and 5:28, 29, would be among the first to prioritize the hierarchy of God’s law over man’s. But that is not his subject here. His subject is the attainment of that sanctified state of mind that allows us to live righteously under current governments, showing RESPECT FOR ORDER. Peter has a very fine parallel passage in I Peter 2:13-23 which includes a few remarks about the acceptance of injustices toward us. Paul uses the same kind of reasoning when he admonishes slaves to be good slaves. It is not that Paul condones slavery! It is that he recognizes it as a fact. He is saying, deal with the facts. Only in the Kingdom will there be a change of facts. These verses are not about APPROVING; they are about SUBMITTING.

When Paul says, “For there is no authority except from God,” he is echoing Jesus’ statement to Pilate in John 19:11. God did put Rome in place. He even PROPHESED it in Daniel. Jesus doesn’t deny Pilate’s authority! He confirms it. The ransom even depended on it! Paul continues that “...those which exist are established by God.” It IS a part of God’s plan, prior to His Kingdom, to set in place such rulers and governments as will FURTHER His purposes and maintain some sort of order until the Peaceable Kingdom. Their quality is not our concern.

13:2 Therefore whoever resists authority has opposed the ordinance of God; and they who have opposed will receive condemnation upon themselves.

Paul cautions (paraphrased), “If WE try to reform or object to the established order, we are opposed to what God has ordained!” It’s a simple conclusion which we must TRAIN our minds to accept BECAUSE those who love perfection are NATURALLY opposed to its violations. Good men of all persuasions want to reform their governments. But Paul says to us, LET IT ALONE! This is a BIG sanctification order!

Then Paul adds that if we do enter into opposition, we will be condemned! What does he mean? Because his topic is SANCTIFICATION, he means that our claim to sanctification in this area will be fraudulent. It will be condemned as a failure in this particular endeavor. The NEB puts a slightly different construction on the idea, but one of merit: “And those who so resist have themselves to thank for the punishment they will receive” — suggesting that meddling in government affairs may get us slapped with fines or jail time, and that we deserve it!

13:3 For rulers are not a cause of fear for good behavior, but for evil. Do you want to have no fear of authority? Do what is good and you will have praise from the same;

Paul now explains WHY God wanted governments (any governments!) to exist until the Kingdom. He explains that governments don’t exist to frighten those who behave well, but to resist or to discourage evildoers. He asks the logical question: “Do you want to be free of fear of the authorities? Just do what is right. The authorities will even PRAISE that!”

13:4 for it is a minister of God to you for good. But if you do what is evil, be afraid; for it does not bear the sword for nothing; for it is a minister of God, an avenger who brings wrath on the one who practices evil.

This verse continues Paul’s reasoning from verse 3. Paul says that the authority is “God’s minister” (Greek = DEACON). In other words, IT IS SERVING GOD’S PURPOSES. Paul continues that it is a minister “TO YOU FOR GOOD.” He doesn’t explain; but he does explain it in I Timothy 2:1-3 where he points out that government’s order-keeping is “that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty.” Remember that the “night wherein no man can work” will be due to the BREAKDOWN of law and order. (John 9:4) Current order allows us to work on our sanctification and witnessing.

So, again, Paul draws the simple conclusion: If you are a law breaker, YOU OUGHT TO FEAR, because government has been given the sword by God to quell law breaking; it is God's general societal DEACON for that very service.

13:5 Therefore it is necessary to be in subjection, not only because of wrath, but also for conscience' sake.

Here is one of Paul's favorite words: "Therefore." He says that, based on all he has argued, "it is NECESSARY" — a VITAL part of sanctification — that we PRACTICE SUBMISSION. And he gives TWO reasons — the second being the far more important:

- (1) because you don't want to live in a constant state of apprehension that you may have stretched the boundaries of "legal," and consequently might be FOUND OUT!
- (2) but mostly because, to a Christian, a pure conscience is of prime concern. KNOWING that we have done all that we can do to be good, law-abiding citizens will help us to maintain that peace with God which we need for success.

13:6 For because of this you also pay taxes, for *rulers* are servants of God, devoting themselves to this very thing.

The "this" and "this very thing" of this verse apparently are references to the services rendered by the government as listed in verses 3-5. Jesus, in Matthew 22:17-22, stated the matter clearly. We have no concern regarding what government does with the tax money once we pay it. Its use (or misuse) becomes a part of their stewardship, not ours. Just as our employers have no say in how we use our paychecks, we have no say in how government uses taxes.

13:7 Render to all what is due them: tax to whom tax is *due*; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honor to whom honor.

Paul lists four things which are DUE to others. Because they are DUE, we are INDEBTED to pay them. Again, our approval is not a factor, but our debt is.

The definitions of Paul's four words are not abundantly clear. But they are likely as follows:

- TAX — That which is levied on the population on a regular basis.
CUSTOM — Probably a specialized tax, like a toll. The Greek word (*telos*) seems inappropriate here, as its usual meaning is "end."

Examples of its KJV translation are:

Matthew 10:22 — “end”

17:25 — “custom”

I Thessalonians 2:16 — “utmost”

I Peter 3:8 — “finally”

How does “custom” get in the mix?

Vine explains that it is because it is a tax collected for PUBLIC ENDS (i.e., dedicated to a certain “end” or conclusion), such as a toll for the “end” of paving the road. Consequently, a derivative word (*telonion*) is a CUSTOMS-HOUSE — a place to collect specific taxes.

FEAR — We often justifiably substitute REVERENCE for this word. There does exist “good fear” — that condition of heart which thinks so highly of someone that it “fears” to do anything that would hurt that being. Thus, this might refer to respect of the INDIVIDUAL.

HONOR — This is not far removed from “fear,” but seems more aimed at respect of POSITION than of the person holding it.

Possibly this verse is best understood without the above-detailed analysis. In other words, Paul may simply be saying, “It is not for us to be altering the earthly protocols. Learn to live comfortably with them.”

13:8 Owe nothing to anyone except to love one another; for he who loves his neighbor has fulfilled *the law.*

Verse 8 is a swing verse. Paul is leaving his sermon on our sanctified responsibilities toward government, and he is opening a little sermon on our sanctified responsibility TO EVERYONE. It all is in the one word AGAPE. This little sermon goes through 13:10.

Paul had pointed out that we have debts (13:7). In verses 7 and 8 he says, PAY THEM! Don't leave them outstanding. DON'T OWE what you can pay. But then he tells us we have a PERPETUAL DEBT. We will FOREVER OWE IT and we must be FOREVER PAYING IT. That debt is AGAPE, not just for one another (in the body), but for our neighbor (the rest of the race). Jesus also taught this in Matthew 22:37-40. Paul reminds us that THIS debt FULFILLS the LAW — not just the Jewish Law, but the eternal and universal law of God.

The Apostle John tells us that “GOD IS AGAPE.” God's name means “He is becoming” — that is, He is ever-expanding. Thus, AGAPE also is ever-expanding, and can never be finished. Thus this debt is eternal — not eternally “just there” as a nagging, unpaid debt, but “there” as something we WANT to and take joy in always paying — a debt we never want to have cancelled or paid off! We never want to stop fulfilling THE law. (See also James 2:8.)

AGAPE, of course, is that “love” or quality which is, in a totally unbiased way, *concerned with the eternal best of all concerned*. Paul will conclude this in 13:10.

13:9 For this, “YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT ADULTERY, YOU SHALL NOT MURDER, YOU SHALL NOT STEAL, YOU SHALL NOT COVET,” and if there is any other commandment, it is summed up in this saying: “YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.”

This verse quotes from Exodus 20:13-17; Deuteronomy 5:17-21; and Leviticus 19:18. Paul quotes the Jewish Law in order to POINT TO ITS OBJECTIVE. The phrases he quotes are somewhat immaterial — a point he makes by saying, “...and if there is any other commandment...” In other words, he is merely grabbing commandments out of the air, and then saying that they ALL have one objective:

“YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.”

This is the so-called “Golden Rule.” The “as yourself” part of the rule is important. Unless we are insane, we will never purposely hurt ourselves, and we will always do what we think will help ourselves. Doing that FOR OTHERS is the universal AGAPE objective. This is the VERY KERNEL OF SANCTIFICATION.

13:10 Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is *the* fulfillment of *the* law.

This is Paul’s summary — clear and concise. The NEB says “Love CANNOT wrong a neighbor.” This is eminently correct! A total sanctification is a New Creature’s having the ability to fulfill the spirit of the law by being innocent of harm toward anyone.

13:11 Do this, knowing the time, that it is already the hour for you to awaken from sleep; for now salvation is nearer to us than when we believed.

Beginning in this verse, Paul counsels APPLICATION! His first words: “DO THIS!” Then he proceeds to tell us that reaching that goal is time-consuming. Verse 11 focuses on INDIVIDUAL shortness of time. (See Reprint 3830.) His instructions: Don’t be lethargic. Your personal salvation’s conclusion is every moment closer than when you first consecrated. Don’t miss a moment or an opportunity TO APPLY these many lessons in sanctification.

13:12 The night is almost gone, and the day is near. Therefore let us lay aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light.

Verse 12 focuses on the GOSPEL AGE'S opportunities to usher out darkness in self, and implant Millennial-day light in our actions. His point: THIS is the last opportunity for the High Calling. The nighttime of the permission of evil is in its last age. A world of darkness is on its way out. The prayed-for Millennial morning is next! It is ONLY RATIONAL that we put aside everything we can of the old world's dark ways, and ARM ourselves with LIGHT — not only to protect ourselves, but to be ready for the new age. This is what Paul meant when he began Chapter 12: TRANSFORM by NEW THINKING.

13:13 Let us behave properly as in the day, not in carousing and drunkenness, not in sexual promiscuity and sensuality, not in strife and jealousy.

So, Paul says, “You know the Millennial standards. PRETEND you live in that day, and exercise those standards in your character daily.” He then lists six extremes of “dark behavior” into which human flesh descends when it does not know and value what we have. It is sad to think it, but it is clear that Paul thinks some of us could fall into these extremes of fleshly behavior. That would not only be the opposite of sanctification, but it would be a very real threat to our justification.

13:14 But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh in regard to its lusts.

To “put on” Jesus is to be CLOTHED or JUSTIFIED by our belief in him, and to be SANCTIFIED by the behavior that should result from that relationship. If we have “put on” Jesus, people should see his character when they look at us. Paul states that this means we will have no taste for the LUSTS (verse 13) of the flesh, and we will never “provide” an opportunity or excuse for those lusts to be entertained by us in mind or body. If a being is deprived of provisions, it dies. Thus Paul is counseling to starve out the unholy things of our nature. The flesh should be as dead as possible.

— AN INTRODUCTION TO CHAPTER 14 —

Chapter 14 both begins in verse 1 and ends in verse 23 by mentioning FAITH. (Actually, the subject matter of Chapter 14 carries over into Chapter 15.) The Apostle Paul’s topic STILL is sanctification — the topic he introduced at the beginning of Chapter 12. But here in Chapter 14, he introduces a fact about sanctification which may not have been so obvious. Paul had made it ABUNDANTLY clear that faith was the very basis of justification. Now, he wants us to understand that WHILE WE WORK HARD, and must work hard, at sanctification, the doctrine of sanctification ALSO is reliant on the element of FAITH. In short, Paul is proclaiming that our own sanctification is inseparably linked to our faith that God also is sanctifying our brethren in ways which are not comprehensible to us! We must have faith that there are many paths to sanctification, and the paths others take may seem wrong to us. But our faith must accept that their sanctification courses are as much directed of God as are our own, and it is not our place to evaluate the matter. It is a difficult but imperative lesson to learn.

One more large item in Chapter 14 is important to note. Paul utilizes the then-current controversy of eating meat offered to idols. The Jews had a more difficult time “swallowing” the dietary liberties offered to Christians than did the Gentiles. Paul USES this controversy as AN EXAMPLE for his points about sanctification. We would be mistaken, however, to think that this chapter is about the SUBJECT of dietary liberties. It is not. It is about sanctification liberties.

This large section ends Paul’s checklist of sanctification items for us. He saved the best and perhaps the most important consideration for last. In it he COMBINES FAITH-JUSTIFICATION WITH WORK-SANCTIFICATION in one topic. How appropriate! It is as if ALL OF ROMANS comes together in these verses.

14:1 Now accept the one who is weak in faith, <i>but not for the purpose of passing judgment on his opinions.</i>
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“Accept” is the first concept presented. Paul echoes this toward the end of his argument in 15:7. Indeed, this entire chapter is about our faith’s having the strength to accept as brethren all whom the Lord has called. Thus this first plea to us is that we accept without reservation as part of the ecclesia ALL who are the consecrated sons of God, even with their noticeable weaknesses. Paul REFUSES to EXCLUDE any because of their relative inhibitions in the sanctification process. The fellowship of saints is too precious to be hampered by individual growth rates or by contrasting consciences.

The next concept words are “weak in faith.” We are not to understand this phrase as applying to one’s faith-relationship to God. Instead, it is referring to one’s faith structure’s being at a point where a reticence or fear of change (based on conscience) has made it difficult to enter fully the liberties of the sons of God. This is about

sanctification, NOT about details of doctrinal understanding, not about faithfulness, not about faith in God.

Paul's third point in this verse is: "Don't accept the person only then to be critical of his opinions." In other words, we don't have fellowship for the purpose of categorizing a saint; nor do we do it in order to criticize or change the person. "Opinions" is an important word. Again, Paul is not talking about doctrine; he is talking about conscience and how it relates to the sanctification process. We cannot stress too strongly the import of remembering that ever since 12:1, Paul is talking about personal SANCTIFICATION. We must not let our focus stray from that topic or we will misinterpret the letter to the Romans.

14:2 One person has faith that he may eat all things, but he who is weak eats vegetables *only*.

In this verse Paul introduces the "meat" controversy — not to resolve it, but to use it as a tool to teach that one saint's sanctification must coexist and cooperate with the seemingly different sanctification in another saint. This is subtle but gigantic in its import for us all.

In this verse, and in all others, Paul never condemns the "weak" for his tender conscience. He is saying that behavior is FAITH-BASED, and that faith (in the sense of what a person can or cannot do) is CONSCIENCE-BASED. Paul never criticizes conscience. We know he wants us to regulate it continually so that we can enjoy our liberties in Christ more, but he never wants us to deny conscience.

The POINT of verse 2 is this: Two concepts of a sanctified life can (and must) live alongside each other. A strong "sanctification faith" will allow conscience in some to have more liberties than others. A weaker "sanctification faith" will cause conscience to be more restricted. But BOTH are acceptable and to be expected.

14:3 The one who eats is not to regard with contempt the one who does not eat, and the one who does not eat is not to judge the one who eats, for God has accepted him.

This verse is here to point to TWO MAJOR ERRORS of faith — both based on spiritual PRIDE.

- (1) If the one who recognizes more liberties has CONTEMPT for the one who does not, he has spiritual pride.
- (2) If the one whose "sanctification faith" is smaller has CONTEMPT (or, judgment) against the one whose "sanctification faith" is larger, he also has spiritual pride.

Note with care: Paul is not here to pat the "strong" on the back and to scorn the "weak." He is, rather, critical of both if they view their contrasting positions as superior! He proclaims, "If God has accepted both, who are we to do otherwise? And

the implication is SURE: God does accept both! But He will not accept prideful attitudes from either!”

14:4 Who are you to judge the servant of another? To his own master he stands or falls; and he will stand, for the Lord is able to make him stand.

So, Paul now wants us to contemplate the IMPROPRIETY of the judgmental course of both the “weak” and the “strong.” His conclusion is this: We were not called to judge the works of God! Do we really think that we can evaluate God’s work in others? Our personal responsibilities are simple: we individually stand or fall before God, not before each other.

And Paul’s assurances as the verse closes are full of wonder. He says that BOTH the “weak” and the “strong” WILL STAND because God so works things to MAKE THEM STAND. (Compare 8:28.) It is by their consciences that their sanctifications will succeed, not by their appreciation of all of their liberties.

14:5 One person regards one day above another, another regards every day *alike*. Each person must be fully convinced in his own mind.

Lest we think Paul is speaking about dietary laws, he introduces another conscience-sensitive dispute of his day: observing some days as being more important than others. He is using both of these controversies to teach us to have patience and understanding with each other though our consciences have not all arrived at the same level of liberty. In Galatians 4:10, 11, Paul states the ideal: to the liberated Christian conscience, days are not special. Additionally, a conscience that doesn’t at least gradually grow to understand this is in danger of falling captive to erroneous teachings of law-bondage. But here in Romans, his point is not about the ideal; it is about tolerance with understanding. In other words, it is about attaining that sanctified state that will happily let God handle such variances. So, Paul teaches that each “must be fully convinced in his own mind;” that is, each must let truth, not external pressure, regulate conscience. Paul does not admonish fighting it out to see who is right!

14:6 He who observes the day, observes it for the Lord, and he who eats, does so for the Lord, for he gives thanks to God; and he who eats not, for the Lord he does not eat, and gives thanks to God.
14:7 For not one of us lives for himself, and not one dies for himself;

Paul wants us to understand and accept the HONESTY of each other. He says those who DO something, do it because they believe it pleases God; and those who DONT, don't do it because they believe that course pleases God. (WHO could argue against that motive?)

The lesson of verse 7 is that EVERYTHING a sincere Christian does, he does not for self, but for God. We CANNOT argue against this motivation!

— AN ASIDE —

In verses 7 through 9, a subtle use of the words LIVE and DIE needs to be seen for their contextual significance.

“LIVES” seems to apply to our daily, mundane, temporal existences. “DIES” seems to apply to our daily, spiritual, consecrated, new-creature existences. As Paul elsewhere states it: “I die daily.” (It may be argued successfully that the words can be reversed in their application. But in either case, it is this TWO-FOLD part of our existences that are meant.)

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Thus, the second lesson of verse 7 is this:

In our temporal decisions (“lives”), not one of us decides matters for self.

In our spiritual decisions (“dies”), not one of us decides matters for self.

Connecting this with verse 6, Paul is saying that whether we live with restrictions or liberties, we do so for God. (See Galatians 2:20.)

14:8 for if we live, we live for the Lord, or if we die, we die for the Lord; therefore whether we live or die, we are the Lord's.

Paul repeats with clarification: (1) Our temporal lives (living) we conduct in a way that will serve the Lord. (2) Our spiritual lives (dying) we conduct in a way that will serve the Lord. (3) THEREFORE, whether we are engaged in temporal or spiritual matters (conducting the necessities of LIVING, or expending our energies DYING for the Lord and the brethren) — in both cases, we are SANCTIFIED for the LORD.

14:9 For to this end Christ died and lived *again*, that He might be Lord both of the dead and of the living.

In the context we have been considering, the traditional explanations of this verse fall flat and have no seeming connection to the context. In the flow of the context we have been considering, this verse becomes a marvelous confirmation of 12:2: “BE YE

transformed.” In other words, Jesus’ death and resurrection allow HIM to be the active agent in our metamorphosis. Thus, verse 9 becomes a powerful summary of the preceding verses:

“To this end — the end of managing our temporal and spiritual sanctification — Christ died (to provide our new spiritual existence) and rose (to be our head in all matters). Thus he is Lord of our dying (our spiritual pursuits) and our living (our necessary temporal experiences).” — He is Lord of the dead (our flesh) and the living (the new creature).

14:10 But you, why do you judge your brother?
Or you again, why do you regard your brother with
contempt? For we will all stand before the
judgment seat of God.

Paul’s question here is so logical. “If verse 9 is true — if Jesus is Lord of our temporal and spiritual sanctification — how is it that you are usurping that authority?”

Paul refers BACK to verse 3 in order to bring his points together. Verse 3 mentioned both “contempt” and “to judge” referring to attitudes possible in both the “strong” and the “weak.” Verse 10 refers to the same two groups. Obviously, these attitudes constitute BOTH classes very weak (weak in the sense of not trusting the Lord to handle these variances). Paul reminds: We will not stand for judgment before each other, but before God.

A NOTE: The KJV says “the judgment seat of Christ.” But the MSS read, “the judgment seat of God”. Verse 4 demonstrates this focus: We are God’s servants, not Christ’s. God (verse 3) has accepted all. God receives our thanks (verse 6).

Because verse 9 refers to Jesus, the KJV may seem more logical. But it is not. Christ (verse 9) is our transformer. He is DIRECTOR (Lord) of our temporal and spiritual lives. But the JUDGMENT is God’s.

14:11 For it is written,
“AS I LIVE, SAYS THE LORD, EVERY KNEE
SHALL BOW TO ME, AND EVERY TONGUE
SHALL GIVE PRAISE TO GOD.”

As is Paul’s habit, he nails his point down with Scripture. In this case, it is Isaiah 45:23. The Isaiah context shows the ultimate need for the WHOLE WORLD (Church included) to learn that God’s judgment is supreme and final. God is rightfully jealous of this right.

Interestingly, we might see in this quote our living and dying functions — our flesh and our minds. The knee (obviously a symbol of worship) is a body part (= flesh). The tongue (also a body part, but representative of our thoughts) represents our

confessions — the state of our minds. Thus all creation will use body and mind ultimately in the praise of God.

14:12 So then each one of us will give an account of himself to God.
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Paul admonishes, then, that we explain our own actions and attitudes to God — not to each other.

* * * * *

— AN ASIDE —

Romans 14:13 is a big verse conceptually. A few words regarding its place in this chapter will be helpful before looking at it specifically. Romans 14:13 is a one-verse focus on the precepts of all of Romans 14 which came before it.

Perhaps it is difficult to ISOLATE the NARROW FOCUS which Paul uses in Romans 14. What Romans 14 is not about might be a good beginning.

- (1) Romans 14 is not about food or holidays.
- (2) Romans 14 is not about doctrine or prophecy differences.
- (3) Romans 14 is not about moral issues.
- (4) Romans 14 is not about our training our own consciences — although doing so will make the concepts of Romans 14 work better for us.

So, the question is, “What is Romans 14 about?”

- (1) Romans 14 is about sanctification — training ourselves to respect the conscientious differences among us.
- (2) Romans 14 is about having enough FAITH to accept graciously and willingly that God is working with training each of us differently BECAUSE we are different and because we come from different backgrounds.
- (3) Romans 14 is strongly about the sanctity of CONSCIENCE — our own, and that of others. We must never toy with a brother’s deeply-held sensitivities.
- (4) Romans 14 is about the restraint of our own liberties for the edification of those who do not yet realize those liberties. As has been well said, “The greatest manifestation of power is its restraint.”

As Bro. Russell so well put it: “...the advantages connected with our membership in the embryo Kingdom of God consist not in the greater privileges and liberties we have...but consist rather in the righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.” (Reprint 5323)

An example was given which helps to identify a practical application of Romans 14 lessons.

One sister in the ecclesia had no qualms about attending a Bible study in her retirement home conducted by a minister of a denomination. She attended, of course to be a witness, not to find truth in collective errors.

Another sister in the ecclesia has conscientious restrictions about attending nominal-church meetings based on the concept that we “touch not the unclean thing.” Nevertheless (in accord with Romans 14), this sister never criticized the other sister for her actions. The result in the end was that BOTH profited greatly from the “hands-off” admonitions contained in Romans 14.

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14:13 Therefore let us not judge one another any more, but rather determine this — not to put an obstacle or a stumbling block in a brother’s way.
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The verse begins with one of Paul’s favorite words: “Therefore.” The verse is Paul’s summary of what he had taught in the previous verses — most particularly in 14:11 and 12: We are not called to answer to anyone but God. We are not called to do any judging about the un sinful progress of our brethren. That is God’s judgment.

So, the conclusion in OBVIOUS: “Therefore, let us not judge one another any more.” The wording is curious! “Any more” means it has been going on. In other words, the sanctification process NEEDS WORK! But this is why Paul is writing the second part of Romans — he’s teaching us how we are DEFYING sanctification, and then he shows us how to reverse the wrongs.

Paul gives us THE ALTERNATIVE to judging each other: DETERMINE (or “judge” in yourselves) that the RIGHT thing to do is to concentrate on not placing obstacles or stumbling blocks in the paths of our brethren. It implies that judging or criticizing their conscientious position is the obstacle or stumbling block. That will make them uneasy.

Bro. Russell suggests that the concept of placing a stumbling block is the concept of discouraging. He says “not to do anything that would stumble...not to do anything that would discourage” resulting in a falling away of faith. (Reprint 5323)

So, 14:13 is a verse which stands by itself. It condemns judging; it admonishes concentration on never discouraging. The verse well summarizes Romans 14 up to this point.

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— ANOTHER ASIDE —

The remainder of this chapter poses a number of questions among our fellowship. Before the examination of each of the remaining verses, an overview of stated and implied ingredients of these verses may be helpful.

Two of the main components of Chapter 14 are LOVE (14:15) and FAITH (14:22).

(1) LOVE, in this context, seems to be defined as an effort not to hinder our brother's growth by insisting on the flaunting of our own liberties.

(2) FAITH, in this context, seems to be defined as a conviction of how much liberty we have.

Thus, love and faith (in this context) are very closely related.

The difficulty for us seems to be in defining where we do or do not have compromise. This is an important question, but its discussion should never blur Paul's primary points: We have the opportunity to be NON-INSISTENT on a regular basis. We have the opportunity to HIDE those liberties we have when we discern that they are troublesome for some saints. With that said, and with it FOREVER IN MIND as a sanctification goal, we can discuss the more practical questions which this chapter begets.

— CONSCIENCE —

It might be good at the outset to note that this chapter does not mention the word "conscience." Yet it is implied in many places as, for instance, in verses 2, 5, 10, 14, 20, 22, and 23. There is no question that it IS a topic here even though the word never occurs.

The thing about conscience is this: violating it is a sin. And this is true whether or not a scripture can be found to establish the position which the conscience holds. Thus, conscience becomes more important in our being judged than do right and wrong! As Bro. Russell encourages, however, conscience must be REGULATED. Paul does not cover this, but BEHIND his words seems to be the IDEA that, if we don't PUSH a brother's conscience, he may find it easier to regulate it.

See Romans 13:5; I Corinthians 8:7-13; I Corinthians 10:25-29.

— SIN —

When Paul says "nothing is unclean in itself" (verse 14), SIN IS EXCLUDED from the statement. We have already noted that violation of conscience is a KIND OF SIN (14:23). But there is another kind of sin — VIOLATION OF SCRIPTURE. We must then conclude that if our brother sins against moral or behavioral rules laid down by Jesus and the Apostles — even if that brother's conscience thinks it is not a sin — we have EVERY OBLIGATION to tell him that his conscience is sick. A conscience NOT

bothered is a wholly different matter from a conscience INCORRECTLY bothered. The first is subject to sin; the other is merely poorly regulated in regard to liberties. But, is lack of Scriptural comprehension in non-moral questions to be tolerated? This is a definite yes-and-no-matter! Let's consider the matter of head coverings. It is a Scripturally-defined matter which, unfortunately, many do not understand.

- (1) Are we violating Romans 14 if we don't wear head coverings just to be nice to those who don't get it? (See answer #1 below.)
- (2) Are we violating Romans 14 if we do wear head coverings despite the position of objectors? (See answer to #2 below.)
- (3) Are we violating Romans 14 if we nag the non-wearers about it? (See answer #3 below.)
- (4) Are we violating Romans 14 if we insist that all comply? (See answer #4 below.)
- (5) Are we violating Romans 14 if we, when elders, don't call on non-wearers to pray? (See answer #5 below.)

The answers seem to be:

- (1) Yes. Romans 14 does not ask us to violate our consciences for the benefit of others.
- (2) No — for the same reason as #1.
- (3) Yes. The point of Romans 14 is to help the weak, not to nag them. But one extra point must be made here: non-wearers are not non-wearers due to CONSCIENCE, but due to preferences.
- (4) Yes — for the same reason as #3.
- (5) No. Elders have the responsibility to act Scripturally. Their consciences (by the time they are elders) should be well-tuned and exemplary to the flock.

— PREFERENCE —

Is Romans 14 about preferences? Not really! Romans 14 is about toying with someone's conscience. This rises in importance far above someone's preferences. Nevertheless, we know from Scripture that "preferring one another in love" IS a sign of a well-sanctified new creature. So, while Romans 14 is not about catering to preferences, if we are well-developed in doing such catering, we will find it far easier to understand and comply with Romans 14.

— CUSTOM —

Custom is closely related to preference except that it is less of an individual thing and more of a communal thing. Custom is frequently so strong in certain ethnic, religious, or geographical communities that its violation BORDERS ON a violation of conscience. In other words, "My family (or my background, or my country) has always considered this the right way to do something" is tantamount to saying "It's the RIGHT thing to do." Therefore, if it's RIGHT, it IS CONSCIENCE! Custom may, indeed, be the most important background element in Romans 14.

In this category of custom, we may find how we “must” dress for a meeting, or how we “must” or “must not” observe certain days, or how we “must not” drink beer, or any other such cultural “norm.”

— COMFORT —

Sometimes we mistake COMFORT for preference or custom. And, surely, anything which violates our traditions or preferences makes us uncomfortable. Comfort, however, can also be one of those “symptoms” of conscience. It is almost the same, sometimes, to say “I am uncomfortable with that” as it is to say, “That violates my conscience.” Unfortunately, comfort is sometimes just “I like it that way” — which is just another preference.

— SUMMARY —

Where does all of this leave us? Obviously, there are gray areas. But the well-sanctified saint will always lean to the side of giving preference to the weaknesses of others so long as doing so will not violate his conscience, not hinder the best interests of the ecclesia, nor violate clear Scripture.

Romans 14 is, above all, about not cheapening conscience. But we have seen that the questions of preference, custom, and comfortability can sometimes come precariously close to questions of conscience. We can see why this particular area of sanctification is for the mature in spirit. Its details are challenging. But Paul’s question rings loudly: “Do we have the FAITH and the LOVE to reach this kind of sanctification?”

* * * * *

14:14 I know and am convinced in the Lord Jesus that nothing is unclean in itself; but to him who thinks anything to be unclean, to him it is unclean.
--

This verse could be called REALITY versus PERCEPTION. Paul concluded that PERCEPTION is the important part in the purity of our souls. In other words, the only thing we can give to God is honesty of heart.

Paul both “knows” (factually) and is “convinced” by his experience in Christ, that IN CHRIST all things are holy (not common or unclean) — except, of course, for sin. If we use ANYTHING to serve God, it becomes holy. Then Paul adds the caveat: “HOWEVER, if someone sees something as unholy, it IS unholy to him.” Here Paul introduces the importance and ascendancy of conscience.

Keeping with Paul's earlier dismissal of the bondages of the Law, he is here assuring all that "unclean" things under the Law are not unclean for Christians when used in the pursuit of glorifying God. At the same time, he is teaching that conscience, while inviolable, is teachable.

(Read I Corinthians 8.)

14:15 For if because of food your brother is hurt, you are no longer walking according to love. Do not destroy with your food him for whom Christ died.

14:16 Therefore do not let what is for you a good thing be spoken of as evil;

Now Paul expands the rule of verse 14 to include the practice of verse 15: If you use something PERCEIVED as unholy by your brother, and you know he perceives it that way, you are failing the most basic of all Divine attributes: love. His conclusion: Your brother is as much a part of the Body as are you. Would you destroy the Body for some triflingly better perception you have? Of course not! Therefore, don't subject what you know to be good to failure. It will be if you force it on those who can't receive it.

14:17 for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.

This verse points out the fundamental truth about HAVING TRUTH: Your information is not your sanctification; your sanctification is the application of truth which best demonstrates righteousness, best creates and maintains peace, and which best gives widespread joy to as many as possible by sharing those things of the spirit which all can enjoy.

14:18 For he who in this *way* serves Christ is acceptable to God and approved by men.

If we get the POINT of verse 17, we will find acceptance from God for our actions (something we all crave); and, we will be the best witnesses to all men because they will APPROVE of our grace.

14:19 So then we pursue the things which make for peace and the building up of one another.

Paul's "So, then..." (or conclusion) is this: "Obviously we will pursue this BETTER WAY of peace with edification of the Body."

14:20 Do not tear down the work of God for the sake of food. All things indeed are clean, but they are evil for the man who eats and gives offense.

What Paul admonishes might well be expressed as a question: “Should we interrupt God’s work of developing the Church just so that we can make an unimportant point? What’s more, just because we can do most anything we want in His service, should we insist that others do it also if they feel threatened by it?” Paul answers in the next verse:

14:21 It is good not to eat meat or to drink wine, or to do *anything* by which your brother stumbles.

Abstain from any liberty which discourages or compromises your brother. (See I Corinthians 10:23, 24.) It is important to remember, this is not saying that our brother dictates our liberties of service. It is saying that we do not flaunt in front of him such liberties as he does not understand.

14:22 The faith *which* you have, have as your own conviction before God. Happy is he who does not condemn himself in what he approves.

This verse is classic. It is electric in its power. It is extremely SANCTIFYING to those who can receive it.

The KJV opens this verse with the most astounding request: “Hast thou faith? Have it to thyself.” It is a searching admonition. It says that no matter how wide our convictions are about the wondrous liberties we have in Christ, HIDE THEM if they seem too advanced for the brethren around you. Don’t flaunt them for judgment by the weaker. It will waste the time of many who could be studying things that would draw these liberties to their own hearts.

Paul continues: Our happiness in the Body will be great if we don’t let our knowledge act against us! (See I Corinthians 9:19-23.) Deal with our brethren from THEIR PERSPECTIVES, not from ours.

14:23 But he who doubts is condemned if he eats, because *his eating* is not from faith; and whatever is not from faith is sin.

This is Paul’s reminder of how we stunt our own growth: If we base our actions on the approval of others rather than on our inner convictions, we CONDEMN our own character strength. We are not acting from faith in what we believe, but from the

desire for or pressure for approval of others. This is sin! Sin certainly is not sanctifying.

— A BRIEF ASIDE —

Chapter 15:1-13 is the actual conclusion of the message of Chapter 14. These verses divide thusly:

15:1-7 — a summary, expansion, and encouragement regarding the lesson of Chapter 14.

15:8-13 — a demonstration of how Jesus served all (Jew and Gentile) regardless of their individual foibles (i.e., the spirit of Chapter 14.)

It is interesting to note in 15:8-13 that Paul strongly suggests that the “conscience” matters of Chapter 14 are due primarily to the Jewish heritage — something Gentiles could not appreciate, but with which they must willingly deal.

* * * * *

15:1 Now we who are strong ought to bear the weaknesses of those without strength and not *just* please ourselves.

This statement is a total summary of Chapter 14. The word “bear” is important. Its functional meaning is well-expressed by Phillips.

“We who have strong faith ought to shoulder the burden of the doubts and qualms of the weak and not just go on our own sweet way.” (The dictionary says of qualms, “pangs of conscience.”)

15:2 Each of us is to please his neighbor for his good, to his edification.

Here Paul repeats with augmented meaning. We are not just to “put up with” our neighbor, but to “PLEASE” him “for his good and to his edification.” Paul is inculcating true sympathy and camaraderie, not just tolerance. Paul will now fortify his meaning by using an unexpected citation:

15:3 For even Christ did not please Himself; but as it is written,
“THE REPROACHES OF THOSE WHO
REPROACHED YOU FELL ON ME.”

Paul uses Jesus as our example and standard, and he quotes Psalm 69:9 to demonstrate his point. At first it might be obscure as to why Paul chose this text. The text says that Jesus experienced reproaches because he defended God. Of course, defending God is a “no brainer”! But that’s not Paul’s point. Paul’s point is that we

must be, as was Jesus, willing to experience rebuffs (even from brethren!) because we defend the courses of our brethren even when we don't concur with them. THAT was the essence of Chapter 14. So, if we exercise the camaraderie suggested in 15:2, we can expect and be willing to suffer criticism for it. Thus Paul's quote can be paraphrased as: "Jesus was willing to take criticism aimed at another member of his family." That is the meaning of Christian camaraderie. It shows us a deeper dimension of Chapter 14. (Compare Hebrews 10:32, 33.)

15:4 For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction, so that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.

15:5 Now may the God who gives perseverance and encouragement grant you to be of the same mind with one another according to Christ Jesus,
15:6 so that with one accord you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

In these verses Paul extols the virtues of Old Testament study — thus defending his use of the text in verse 3. He is thus also prodding his Gentile brethren to get to know the Old Testament as well as their Jewish brethren knew it — probably suggesting that the Gentiles cannot be “whole” Christians without it. He also suggests that our hope depends on it.

In verses 4 and 5 we see our need for “perseverance” (continuing reliance and trust — faith), and for “encouragement” (inner strength that gives us impetus). These clearly come from the Old Testament (verse 4) and from God (verse 5). Verse 5 strongly implies that these two items come about from that “family spirit” — being “of the same mind with one another according to Christ Jesus.” These last four words show that it is not our own thinking that brings about “the same mind.” It also brings us back to verse 3 — “the same mind” implies suffering for those of our family. THAT is the “one accord” and the “one voice” that glorifies God (verse 6).

15:7 Therefore, accept one another, just as Christ also accepted us to the glory of God.

With the lessons of verses 3-6, Paul concludes: THEREFORE, accept (in the fullest of senses — not just tolerate!) each other. After all (!), look at what pathetic creatures Jesus accepted — and he will make it glorify God! Jesus' perfection willingly accepts our weaknesses. Can we do less for each other?

15:8 For I say that Christ has become a servant to the circumcision on behalf of the truth of God to confirm the promises *given* to the fathers,

15:9 and for the Gentiles to glorify God for His mercy; as it is written, “THEREFORE I WILL GIVE PRAISE TO YOU AMONG THE GENTILES, AND I WILL SING TO YOUR NAME.”

Here Paul shows that Jesus served both Jew (verse 8) and Gentile (verse 9) — a formerly unmixable combination! The suggestion is that we, too, can serve and love saints of disparate backgrounds. Paul adds that, in doing this, Jesus served two objectives:

- (1) He confirmed God’s promises to the fathers of Faith (by dealing with Jews — verse 8).
- (2) He glorified God’s quality of Mercy (by dealing with Gentiles — verse 9).

Then, beginning at the end of verse 9, and going all the way through verse 12, Paul helps both Jew and Gentile saints know that the inclusion of the Gentiles was PROPHESED throughout the Old Testament:

15:9 — Psalm 18:49 and II Samuel 22:50
 15:10 — Deuteronomy 32:43
 15:11 — Psalm 117:1
 15:12 — Isaiah 11:1, 10

In other words, the kind of “one accord” and “one voice” (15:6) that Paul wants us to have, has been prophesied by saying that God would arrange for some Jews and some Gentiles to have this relationship. Unheard of (!) — but prophesied:

- 15:10 Again he says,
 “REJOICE, O GENTILES, WITH HIS PEOPLE.”
- 15:11 And again,
 “PRAISE THE LORD ALL YOU GENTILES,
 AND LET ALL THE PEOPLES PRAISE HIM.”
- 15:12 Again Isaiah says,
 “THERE SHALL COME THE ROOT OF JESSE, AND
 HE WHO ARISES TO RULE OVER THE GENTILES,
 IN HIM SHALL THE GENTILES HOPE.”
- 15:13 Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you will abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

There seems no question that verse 13 is a conclusion to a major portion of Paul’s writing. It concludes everything since 12:1. It concludes the SANCTIFICATION lecture and checklist. And that our sanctification will require FAITH — even though it involves much in the way of WORKS — is evidenced by the words “IN BELIEVING.” We cannot succeed in this sanctification process without trusting in His help. We must humble

ourselves into the submission which will allow Paul's admonition: "BE YE transformed."

Finally, Paul says that this entire process will make our hope "ABOUND." It does! If we work on Romans 12-15, if we implore His help, we find ourselves feeling more like our Master. And it is "the power of the Holy Spirit" witnessing with our spirit what we are the Sons of God.

SECTION XIV
(15:14 — 16:27)

Personal Items and a Benediction

OVERVIEW of SECTION XIV:
Personal Items and a Benediction
(15:14 — 16:27)

Paul has finished his great epistle. He wraps up loose ends in this section.

Verses 15:14-21 commend the brethren in Rome and explain why Paul wrote as he did.

Verses 22-33 explain Paul's tentative itinerary and ask the brethren's prayers on his efforts.

Chapter 16:1-23 give Paul's personal greetings and those of his secretary.
(The 24th verse is spurious.)

Verses 25-27 are Paul's closing benediction.

SECTION XIV:
VERSE-BY-VERSE OBSERVATIONS
(15:14 — 16:27)

15:14 And concerning you, my brethren, I myself also am convinced that you yourselves are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, and able also to admonish one another.

Here we begin that final section of Romans which we can categorize as PERSONAL MATTERS. The book truly is finished except for a series of mostly-personal postscripts.

In 15:14 Paul, knowing that he had been quite pointed at times, expresses his admiration for the Christian character of the Roman brethren: their GOODNESS, their accumulation of KNOWLEDGE, and their ability to ADMONISH each other. It is an admirable collection of traits. However....

15:15 But I have written very boldly to you on some points, so as to remind you again, because of the grace that was given me from God,
15:16 to be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles, ministering as a priest the gospel of God, so that *my* offering of the Gentiles may become acceptable, sanctified by the Holy Spirit.

Paul now throws in his “BUT...” His point is this (and likely centered much on Chapter 14): “You do need to be reminded of the things of which I wrote POINTEDLY. And since God gave me a special grace to minister to the Gentile Church, I want to be certain that you Gentiles not lose your acceptability as part of the sin offering because you failed the sanctification test of accepting the WHOLE BODY of saints — regardless of their weaknesses of conscience.”

15:17 Therefore in Christ Jesus I have found reason for boasting in things pertaining to God.

Weymouth renders this verse: “I have therefore my reason to boast of my relation to God in Christ Jesus.” The thought seems to be: “I therefore exult in the privilege of serving you Gentiles — a special relationship with God which He gave me as a service in Christ.”

15:18 For I will not presume to speak of anything except what Christ has accomplished through me,

resulting in the obedience of the Gentiles by word and deed,
 15:19 in the power of signs and wonders, In the power of the Spirit; so that from Jerusalem and round about as far as Illyricum I have fully preached the gospel of Christ.

The presence or absence of negative words in verse 18 varies dramatically in various translations.

- The KJV: “not dare...hath not wrought”
- The NAS: “not presume...has accomplished”
- The NEB: “will venture...have been:
- Weymouth: “not venture...has done”

Early Weymouth editions contain a lengthy and complicated footnote regarding this. (It is included in the Appendices.) The question is not whether or not the Greek has the negative words; the question is how the negative words function in different languages. How we understand this verse is at stake.

Two of the possible meanings seem to be:

- (1) Paul will not speak of what Christ has effected through other Apostles;
- or
- (2) (in the sense of amazement) “What has Christ not done through me!”
 Or, “I can hardly dare to tell what Christ has not done through me:
 (meaning that the wonder of the manifold display of Christ’s power through him was unspeakably great.)

It APPEARS that (according to context) the most satisfying translation of 15:18, 19 would be something like:

15:18 — “I can hardly dare to express the power which Christ has used through me by words and actions in bringing the Gentiles into Christ;
 15:19 — “He has used the power of signs and wonders and of various manifestations of the Holy Spirit.”

Paul then shows how much he has travelled in his search for Gentile converts — beginning at Jerusalem and extending into east-central Europe.

15:20 And thus I aspired to preach the gospel, not where Christ was *already* named, so that I would not build on another man’s foundation;

And that was his assignment — to give the Gospel where it had not been heard. Other Apostles had other assignments; but Paul was given a unique foundation for his “building” up of the Gentile part of the Church.

15:21 but as it is written,
“THEY WHO HAD NO NEWS OF HIM SHALL SEE,
AND THEY WHO HAVE NOT HEARD SHALL
UNDERSTAND.”

So, again, as he loves to do, Paul supports his assignment by prophecy (Isaiah 52:15):
“THEY WHO HAD NO NEWS OF HIM SHALL SEE, AND
THEY WHO HAVE NOT HEARD SHALL UNDERSTAND.”

Hopefully we have learned convincingly to do as Paul does — SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES. If we have missed that admonition from him, he will surely be disappointed in us!

With the exception of 16:17-20, nearly everything past 15:21 seems more like Paul’s speaking as the angel to Ephesus rather than as a Gospel Age Apostle. After 15:21, most items are local and specific to the time.

15:22 For this reason I have often been prevented
from coming to you;

“Now you know why I’ve not yet visited you!”

15:23 but now, with no further place for me in
these regions, and since I have had for many years
a longing to come to you
15:24 whenever I go to Spain — for I hope to see
you in passing, and to be helped on my way there
by you, when I have first enjoyed your company
for a while —

Paul indicates that his work in Corinth (from whence he apparently was writing) was concluded. He, therefore, looks forward to a visit to Rome on his way to Spain — a destination he apparently never achieved.

It is interesting that Paul expects the brethren in Rome to help him with his Spanish journey. It was, of course, appropriate; but it is not something we often find Apostles requesting. Paul’s request is closely tied to the point he will make in verse 27.

15:25 but now, I am going to Jerusalem serving
the saints.
15:26 For Macedonia and Achaia have been
pleased to make a contribution for the poor among
the saints in Jerusalem.
15:27 Yes, they were pleased *to do so*, and they
are indebted to them. For if the Gentiles have

shared in their spiritual things, they are indebted to minister to them also in material things.
15:28 Therefore, when I have finished this, and have put my seal on this fruit of theirs, I will go on by way of you to Spain.

15:25-28 — Paul’s first destination was Jerusalem because the saints in Macedonia and Achaia were sending temporal aid to the needy saints in Jerusalem.

15:27, 28 — Paul uses this occasion to teach the Romans (and us all) that we have a DEBT to give temporal aid toward our brethren who have given us spiritual aid if they have a genuine need of material help. This is a lesson Paul inculcates in many of his writings — with I Corinthians 9:11 and Galatians 6:6 being examples. In 15:28 he calls this aid “fruit” to the credit of the Gentiles. He means SPIRITUAL FRUITAGE even though the actions are temporal.

15:29 I know that when I come to you, I will come in the fullness of the blessing of Christ.
15:30 Now I urge you, brethren, by our Lord Jesus Christ and by the love of the Spirit, to strive together with me in your prayers to God for me,
15:31 that I may be rescued from those who are disobedient in Judea, and *that* my service for Jerusalem may prove acceptable to the saints;
15:32 so that I may come to you in joy by the will of God and find *refreshing* rest in your company.
15:33 Now the God of peace be with you all.
Amen.

15:29-32 — Paul asks the prayers of the Rome Ecclesia before he comes to them — which he knows will be “in the fullness of the blessing of Christ” (i.e., not just a visit, but a pastoral event which will bring edification.)

15:30-32 — Paul wants prayers so that his journey to Jerusalem, a journey of good works, will not be marred by the opposition of those in Jerusalem who are against him. Even then, good works could be spoiled by selfish disputations! When he leaves Jerusalem, he desires not to carry a heritage of strife, but of joy and of restful fellowship to Rome.

15:33 — Verse 33 concludes the book — EXCEPT that Paul obviously later ADDS POSTSCRIPTS before sending it on to the Roman brethren.

16:1 I commend to you our sister Phoebe, who is a servant of the church which is at Cenchrea;
16:2 that you receive her in the Lord in a manner worthy of the saints, and that you help

her in whatever matter she may have need of you;
for she herself has also been a helper of many,
and of myself as well.

(See Reprint 1720.) Phoebe is apparently the sister who will serve as the mail carrier for Paul's letter. It is only appropriate that the Romans do for her what they can as appreciation for this service which had to involve personal sacrifice.

16:3 Greet Prisca and Aquila, my fellow-workers in Christ Jesus,
16:4 who for my life risked their own necks, to whom not only do I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles;
16:5 also *greet* the church that is in their house. Greet Epaenetus, my beloved, who is the first convert to Christ from Asia.
16:6 Greet Mary, who has worked hard for you.
16:7 Greet Andronicus and Junias, my kinsmen and my fellow prisoners, who are outstanding among the apostles, who also were in Christ before me.
16:8 Greet Ampliatus, my beloved in the Lord.
16:9 Greet Urbanus, our fellow-worker in Christ, and Stachys my beloved.
16:10 Greet Apelles, the approved in Christ. Greet those who are of the *household* of Aristobulus.
16:11 Greet Herodion, my kinsman. Greet those of the household of Narcissus, who are in the Lord.
16:12 Greet Tryphaena and Tryphosa, workers in the Lord. Greet Persis the beloved, who has worked hard in the Lord.
16:13 Greet Rufus, a choice man in the Lord, also his mother and mine.
16:14 Greet Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermes, Patrobas, Hermas and the brethren with them.
16:15 Greet Philologus and Julia, Nereus and his sister, and Olympas, and all the saints who are with them.
16:16 Greet one another with a holy kiss. All the churches of Christ greet you.

16:3-16 — Paul remembers a number of the Roman brethren by name. He also remembers their services and that they are from other parts of the empire from whence Paul knew them. Epaenetus (16:5), for instance, came from Asia. Some apparently were the heads of entire households of saints (e.g., 16:10, 11). Several (16:7, 11) may have been Paul's relatives in the flesh who had relocated to Rome.

Paul here sets a standard for us which has come down to our day. Communication among brethren in varying localities is strengthening. Remembering each other with greetings by name — and even by little descriptive remembrances — is more valuable than we might assume. It promotes prayer for each other. It also promotes that camaraderie which lets us all know that our little ecclesia is not isolated, but it is a part of something worldwide in scope and in importance.

16:16 — The “holy (innocent) kiss” of this verse apparently is a reference to affectionate greetings which at that time and place (and in a few regions even now) were the common form of greeting those who were of importance to the greeter.

The handshake has replaced the kiss now in most venues. In the American South, it is yet customary to say, “Hug him for me.” However, the point seems to be this: It is important to show acceptance from the outset for all of our brethren — even of one ecclesia to another. Hence, “All the Churches of Christ greet you.”

16:17 Now I urge you, brethren, keep your eye on those who cause dissensions and hindrances contrary to the teaching which you learned, and turn away from them.

16:18 For such men are slaves not of our Lord Christ but of their own appetites; and by their smooth and flattering speech they deceive the hearts of the unsuspecting.

16:19 For the report of your obedience has reached to all; therefore I am rejoicing over you, but I want you to be wise in what is good, and innocent in what is evil.

16:20 The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet. The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you.

Verses 17-20 are a rather special postscript. It is as if the Apostle had forgotten — or wasn't quite sure where to put this item — about which he is clearly concerned.

Before considering its detail, a few things might well be kept in mind:

- Seemingly, the two possible interpretations of verse 17 are:
 - (1) Verse 17 is talking about the promotion of doctrinal error.
 - (2) Verse 17 is talking about the behavior of promoting factions.
- Because these verses are a postscript, they should be viewed as commentary on ideas previously presented, not as a new thoughts.
- We should keep in mind an important principle: God defends the truth; we don't; we can only be certain that our attitudes are correct. In other words,

truth sanctifies (John 17:17), but sanctification is not the defense of truth. Sanctification is a new attitude created by truth.

- Agreement comes out of mutual respect by individuals who are honestly comparing scripture with scripture.
- In 16:17-20, Paul is presenting a FOUNDATION for maintaining unity. He is not discussing SOLVING problems which have gotten out of hand. We must learn the FOUNDATION principle; then we will be sanctified and “wise in what is good, and innocent in what is evil.” (16:19)

16:17 — “Keep your eye on...” The OVERSIGHT of what happens in a congregation is the job of ALL, not just the OVERSEERS. Vigilance will help to prevent any growth of dangerous attitudes or practices.

Watch “those who cause dissensions and hindrances.” The word “hindrances” (NAS) here is the word Paul uses in 14:13 where it is translated “stumblingblock” (NAS). The Greek word is *SCANDAL*. This comparison should aid interpretation. Paul says to watch for “scandalous” behavior. A scandal is not misinformation! A scandal is a DISGRACEFUL ACTION. The Greek word is not quite so definitive as it has become in English, but the Greek word (according to the lexicons) does mean “*a cause of MORAL stumbling.*” In other words, as we pursue the true meaning of these verses, we must (because it is a postscript) acknowledge its connection to 14:3 (which is not about doctrine).

So the pervading question is this:

Is this verse against spreading doctrinal error which might cause division?

OR

Is this verse against causing division — a MORAL deviancy against the doctrine of UNITY which we have just learned?

It almost certainly is the latter. If it were the former, Paul would better have written:

Watch those who teach doctrines contrary to those you have learned because this will cause divisions.

Or, the very slightest change could have been:

Watch those who cause divisions BY teaching doctrines contrary to those you have learned.

Neither is what Paul wrote.

“Dissensions and hindrances (scandals) contrary to the teaching which you have learned” — The true meaning of this verse is almost certainly (paraphrased):

“Scandals are contrary to the Christian attitude of unity which you have learned about.”

“Turn away from them” is a phrase laden with possible interpretations. The most charitable interpretation is that it means we should clearly manifest that we will not exhibit closeness to the perpetrators of such actions in order to MANIFEST TO THEM that their behavior is totally unacceptable. Nor will we warmly share fellowship while

they are engaged in such disreputable behavior. Certainly it is also implied that we will not honor them with ecclesia service opportunities.

16:18 — Here Paul analyzes the character weaknesses of those who do such unsanctified things.

- (1) They are yet SLAVES — captives yet of their old humanity, not of the New Creature’s thinking processes.
- (2) The “appetites” of the flesh are power, pride, influence, domination, superiority, etc. It is these which make the humanity in us DIVIDE the saints into factions.
- (3) These things are done not by open defiance, but by “smooth and flattering speech.” These carnal-minded brethren are masters at JUSTIFYING division.
- (4) It must also be noted that this is almost certainly NOT doctrinal deviation, but behavioral deviation because it is not the minds that are deceived, but the hearts. These spiritual deviants appeal to the loyal hearts of saints who would never suspect that they are being DECEIVED into improper actions. They are, on the contrary, made comfortable in the deception by being told things like “We must defend the truth!”

16:19 — In this verse Paul commends the obedient attitude of the Rome Ecclesia — much as he had done in 15:14 (where he continues by adding a caveat in verse 15). He adds, likewise, a caveat in 16:19: “BUT...” So, Paul’s message in this verse seems linked to 16:17 and 18. Paul is rejoicing in their spirituality, but he doesn’t want them to lose two important ingredients for their sanctification:

- (1) Goodness is a wonderful trait, but it must be accompanied by the wisdom of watching in this case (16:17).
- (2) Evil is terrible, but it affects us all. Paul’s caveat is that when we fall into an evil, it is by INNOCENCE, not by giving in to the flesh as in 16:18.

Romans 16:20 marks the end of the first postscript. He begins by giving the brethren the assurance that, while they will always be the target of Satan’s attacks, faithfulness will soon allow us to be a part of the seed which will bruise his head. (Genesis 3:15)

Then, probably thinking that this will be his only postscript, Paul leaves them with the blessing, “The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you” — a closing which is common to all of his epistles (including Hebrews, the authorship of which some dispute).

16:21 Timothy my fellow-worker greets you, and <i>so do</i> Lucius and Jason and Sosipater, my kinsmen. 16:22 I, Tertius, who write this letter, greet you in the Lord.

16:23 Gaius, host to me and to the whole church, greets you. Erastus, the city treasurer greets you, and Quartus, the brother.

Since 16:20 closes with “The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you,” which seems to be the conclusion of the first lengthy postscript (16:1-20), it seems that:

16:21-23 — is a second postscript — but not by Paul. It is as if Paul, having concluded his postscript, leans over to Tertius and says, “Do you want to add anything?” So, even though Tertius doesn’t identify himself until verse 22, he seems to be the instigator of verse 21 — and he has his message continuing through verse 23.

Verse 24 is acknowledged as being spurious. Someone added it possibly because he thought Tertius’ postscript should look like it’s over!

Paul seems suddenly to realize that, even though he has used his traditional closing in verse 20, he would like to add a closing benediction after Tertius’ postscript — which would have, after all, made a very clumsy end to a very elegant epistle.

16:25 Now to Him who is able to establish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery which has been kept secret for long ages past, 16:26 but now is manifested, and by the Scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the eternal God, has been made known to all the nations, *leading* to obedience of faith; 16:27 to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, be the glory forever. Amen.

16:25-27 — These verses constitute Paul’s second postscript (the third postscript of Romans) — a BENEDICTION.

Paul’s benediction is not a haphazard collection of nice words, but a wonderful summary of Paul’s teachings in the whole letter. Note and rejoice to see how this conclusion is reflected in the opening of the book.

16:25 — It all returns to God. HE is able to establish the brethren. (Compare 1:10.) He will do so by using Paul’s Gospel (“my Gospel”). It is, of course, God’s Gospel (1:1) and Jesus’ Gospel (1:9). But Paul knows that Paul has a part in the service of the Gospel uniquely his own. So, “my Gospel” has a double application: (1) It is his in that he has absorbed and cherished it to where it is personally a part of him (HIS); but (2) it is also his in the sense that he has a personal commission to adapt the Gospel in a way most suited for Gentiles. (1:5)

So, God will establish you (the Roman Gentile Ecclesia), by Paul’s specially-commissioned Gospel, as well as by the all-inclusive “preaching of Jesus Christ.” Then

Paul explains that this Gospel reveals the true mystery of the Body of Christ — that it is Gentile as well as Jew (Colossians 1:16, 27), and that this entire mystery of this body was never made clear before.

The words (16:26), “but now is manifested,” should be the last part of verse 25. Thus, verse 26 would begin (NAS), “and by the Scriptures....”

16:26 — “and by the Scriptures” is the THIRD part of a sequence. It all began in verse 25. Thus Paul (16:25 and 26) is saying that God would establish the Church using THREE items:

- (1) Paul’s Gentile-integrating message (verse 25);
- (2) the “preaching of Jesus Christ” (verse 25);
- (3) “and by” the Old Testament Scriptures (verse 26).

This third point is important. Only the Jews had and were familiar with the Old Testament. Paul wants the Gentiles to learn the Old Testament; and he wants us all to know that our Christianity depends on our doing so. (Revelation 12:1) “New Testament Christians” is a term with which Paul would have had strong and zealous disagreement!

By these three, the manifestation of the mystery has been shown “to all the nations (Gentiles).” It is not that it had travelled to all nations; it is that it is open to all the Gentiles. Paul thus, in this simple benediction, summarizes the entire Book of Romans! Then he adds the point which Martin Luther saw so clearly:

“...leading to obedience of faith.”

In other words, the above three items lead to our obedience NOT BY WORKS of the Law, but by FAITH — the doctrinal focus of the first part of Romans.

16:27 — The appropriate priority.

APPENDICES

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Appendix A

Sanctification Checklist (Romans 12:1 through 15:13)

These verses are examined in careful detail in the main body of this study. Since, however, sanctification is a very personalized process, there is wisdom in PERSONALIZING the Apostle's list of sanctification objectives - each of us for his own needs, experiences, and understanding. This appendix is a SAMPLE of such a list. It will be obvious that it is ONE PERSON'S introspective take on the Apostle's admonitions. It is offered here ONLY as a sample in order to stimulate each saint to MAKE HIS OWN list IN HIS OWN words.

It is rare in Scripture to find SPECIFICS such as the Apostle here enunciates. Since sanctification is "the will of God concerning us," we will each and all want to pay regular attention to our progress in it. The Apostle's "checklist" is a marvel of completeness along this line. We urge EVERY saint to write in his own words his own checklist — explaining to HIMSELF what the Apostle's words mean in his own life.

PERSONAL SPECIFIC CHECKLIST OF SANCTIFICATION GOALS (Verbs [actions] are underlined.)

1. (12:1) Determine to use your flesh in service of your new mind. ("Worship" is by the mind; "service" is by the body.)
2. (12:2) Try not to look like you are shaped by worldly standards.
3. (12:2) Work to think differently. (It is the mechanism for nature change.)
4. (12:3) Accurately assess your abilities.
5. (12:4) Learn "team work." (= being part of a body.)
6. (12:5) Accept the corporate concept. (Value the part of others.)
7. (12:6-8) Use the abilities you have:
 - If you understand prophecy, help others to do so.
 - If you can do temporal things, help the body with those necessities.
 - If you are a clear-thinking explainer, work to help others clarify their thinking.
 - If you are a faith-stimulator, build that strength in your brethren.
 - If you can stimulate group activity, do so with care and earnestness.
 - If you are particularly compassionate, consider it a privilege to heap your sincere feelings toward others.

8. (12:9) Apply Agape as was intended:
 - (1) It must never have partiality;
 - (2) It must hate evil.
 - (3) It must embrace good wherever it is found.
9. (12:10) Cherish your kindred in Christ. Exult in the variety! Be prone to arrange that others have credit heaped on them!
10. (12:11) Don't allow yourself an attitude of fits and starts; stay fervent in your desire for spiritual service.
11. (12:12) Let HOPE (over reality) keep you rejoicing. Be determined to ENDURE whatever pressures the Lord's providence permits by keeping the life-line of prayer your constant communication.
12. (12:13) Analyze your brethren's needs so that you can fill them as you have opportunity. Remember that hospitality is not an occasional entertaining, but "true hospitality is marked by an open response to the dignity of each and every person." (Kathleen Norris)
13. (12:14) Instead of reacting negatively toward any who try to make your life miserable, attempt a nice deed toward them.
14. (12:15;16) Enter into the emotional responses of those who are joyful or who are weeping. Try to understand how others feel.
15. (12:16) Do not have intellectual standards for fellowship.
16. (12:16) Don't think your own opinions are the standard for wisdom.
17. (12:17) Make "getting even" a thought that will never enter your mind.
18. (12:17) Let your public behaviors be such as society will find honorable.
19. (12:18) Within that which is under your control, live peaceably among all.*
20. (12:19) Never plan making right of it when you are wronged. If God is angry about the injustice, He will take care of the matter as it pleases Him.
21. (12:20) Instead, devise ways of filling the honest needs of your enemy.
22. (12:21) Avoid being crushed by evil by practicing the opposite.
23. (13:1-7) Perform your civic duties. Obey earthly laws, fees, reverences, and honors.
24. (13:8) Pay whatever you owe.
25. (13:8) But never consider your debt of love paid!
26. (13:10) Meditate on the vastness of agape.
27. (13:12) Your armor is bright light. Therefore, do nothing that begets the shame of secrecy.
28. (13:14) Do not compromise your spirituality for the preferences of your flesh.
29. (14:1-12) Respect the consciences of all in the body and do not judge the sanctification standing of other servants.
30. (14:13-23) Deny the liberties for self when those liberties challenge the consciences of others.
31. (15: 1,2) Make the edification of others a primary objective.
32. (15:3-13) Be joyfully willing to suffer guilt by association.

* See Reprint 2946, "God's Message on Peace." (= 28 texts on the subject)

Appendix B

Martin Luther's Preface to Romans

Because Romans was the Biblical catalyst for the Protestant Reformation, and because Martin Luther was the wielder of this sword, his observations on Romans are of vital importance — not only historically, but also because of his position as the Angel to the Church of Philadelphia (Revelation 3).

In the Laodicean period, our understanding of Romans has been enhanced beyond Luther's. Thus we do not now put the stamp of approval upon all of his observations. Nevertheless, his enlightenment in the early Sixteenth Century is remarkable and is worthy of consideration by us all.

(Note: Underlinings and boxings have been added.)

Preface to the Letter of Paul to the Romans By Martin Luther

Translated by Adolph Spaeth.

Translator's Note: The material between square brackets is explanatory in nature and is not part of Luther's preface. The terms "just, justice, justify" in this piece are synonymous with the terms "righteous, righteousness, make righteous." Both sets of English words are common translations of German "gerecht" and related words. A similar situation exists with the word "faith"; it is synonymous with "belief." Both words can be used to translate German "Glaube." Thus, "We are justified by faith" translates the same original German sentence as does "We are made righteous by belief."

This letter is truly the most important piece in the New Testament. It is purest Gospel. It is well worth a Christian's while not only to memorize it word for word but also to occupy himself with it daily, as though it were the daily bread of the soul. It is impossible to read or meditate on this letter too much or too well. The more one deals with it, the more precious it becomes and the better it tastes. Therefore I want to carry

out my service, and with this preface, provide an introduction to the letter, insofar as God gives me the ability, so that everyone can gain the fullest possible understanding of it. Up to now it has been darkened with glosses [explanatory notes and comments which accompany a text] and by many a useless comment, but it is in itself a bright light, almost bright enough to illumine the entire Scripture.

To begin with, we have to become familiar with the vocabulary of the letter and know what St. Paul means by the words law, sin, grace, faith, justice, flesh, spirit, etc. Otherwise there is no use in reading it.

You must not understand the word law here in human fashion, i.e., a regulation about what sort of works must be done or must not be done. That's the way it is with human laws: you satisfy the demands of the law with works, whether your heart is in it or not. God judges what is in the depths of the heart. Therefore his law also makes demands on the depths of the heart and doesn't let the heart rest content in works; rather it punishes as hypocrisy and lies all works done apart from the depths of the heart. All human beings are called liars (Psalm 116), since none of them keeps or can keep God's law from the depths of the heart. Everyone finds inside himself an aversion to good and a craving for evil. Where there is no free desire for good, there the heart has not set itself on God's law. There also sin is surely to be found and the deserved wrath of God, whether a lot of good works and an honorable life appear outwardly or not.

Therefore in chapter 2, St. Paul adds that the Jews are all sinners and says that only the doers of the law are justified in the sight of God. What he is saying is that no one is a doer of the law by works. On the contrary, he says to them, "You teach that one should not commit adultery, and you commit adultery. You judge another in a certain matter and condemn yourselves in that same matter, because you do the very same thing that you judged in another." It is as if he were saying, "Outwardly you live quite properly in the works of the law and judge those who do not live the same way; you know how to teach everybody. You see the speck in another's eye but do not notice the beam in your own."

Outwardly you keep the law with works out of fear of punishment or love of gain. Likewise you do everything without free desire or love of the law; you act out of aversion and force. You'd rather act otherwise if the law didn't exist. It follows, then, that you, in the depths of your heart, are an enemy of the law. What do you mean, therefore, by teaching another not to steal, when you, in the depths of your heart, are a thief and would be one outwardly too, if you dared. (Of course, outward work doesn't last long with such hypocrites.) So then, you teach others but not yourself; you don't even know what you're teaching. You've never understood the law rightly. Furthermore, the law increases sin, as St. Paul says in chapter 5. That is because a person becomes more and more an enemy of the law the more it demands of him what he can't possibly do.

In chapter 7, St. Paul says, "The law is spiritual." What does that mean? If the law were physical, then it could be satisfied by works, but since it is spiritual, no one can satisfy it unless everything he does springs from the depths of the heart. But no one can give such a heart except the Spirit of God, who makes the person be like the law, so that he actually conceives a heartfelt longing for the law and henceforward does everything, not through fear or coercion, but from a free heart. Such a law is spiritual since it can only be loved and fulfilled by such a heart and such a spirit. If the Spirit is

not in the heart, then there remain sin, aversion and enmity against the law, which in itself is good, just and holy.

You must get used to the idea that it is one thing to do the works of the law and quite another to fulfill it. The works of the law are everything that a person does or can do of his own free will and by his own powers to obey the law. But because in doing such works the heart abhors the law and yet is forced to obey it, the works are a total loss and are completely useless. That is what St. Paul means in chapter 3 when he says, "No human being is justified before God through the works of the law." From this you can see that the schoolmasters [i.e., the scholastic theologians] and sophists are seducers when they teach that you can prepare yourself for grace by means of works. How can anybody prepare himself for good by means of works if he does no good work except with aversion and constraint in his heart? How can such a work please God, if it proceeds from an averse and unwilling heart?

But to fulfill the law means to do its work eagerly, lovingly and freely, without the constraint of the law; it means to live well and in a manner pleasing to God, as though there were no law or punishment. It is the Holy Spirit, however, who puts such eagerness of unconstrained love into the heart, as Paul says in chapter 5. But the Spirit is given only in, with, and through faith in Jesus Christ, as Paul says in his introduction. So, too, faith comes only through the word of God, the Gospel, that preaches Christ: how he is both Son of God and man, how he died and rose for our sake. Paul says all this in chapters 3, 4 and 10.

That is why faith alone makes someone just and fulfills the law; faith it is that brings the Holy Spirit through the merits of Christ. The Spirit, in turn, renders the heart glad and free, as the law demands. Then good works proceed from faith itself. That is what Paul means in chapter 3 when, after he has thrown out the works of the law, he sounds as though he wants to abolish the law by faith. No, he says, we uphold the law through faith, i.e. we fulfill it through faith.

Sin in the Scriptures means not only external works of the body but also all those movements within us which bestir themselves and move us to do the external works, namely, the depth of the heart with all its powers. Therefore the word "do" should refer to a person's completely falling into sin. No external work of sin happens, after all, unless a person commit himself to it completely, body and soul. In particular, the Scriptures see into the heart, to the root and main source of all sin: unbelief in the depth of the heart. Thus, even as faith alone makes just and brings the Spirit and the desire to do good external works, so it is only unbelief which sins and exalts the flesh and brings desire to do evil external works. That's what happened to Adam and Eve in Paradise (cf. Genesis 3).

That is why only unbelief is called sin by Christ, as he says in John, chapter 16, "The Spirit will punish the world because of sin, because it does not believe in me." Furthermore, before good or bad works happen, which are the good or bad fruits of the heart, there has to be present in the heart either faith or unbelief, the root, sap and chief power of all sin. That is why, in the Scriptures, unbelief is called the head of the serpent and of the ancient dragon which the offspring of the woman, i.e. Christ, must crush, as was promised to Adam (cf. Genesis 3).

Grace and gift differ in that grace actually denotes God's kindness or favor which he has toward us and by which he is disposed to pour Christ and the Spirit with his gifts into us, as becomes clear from chapter 5, where Paul says, "Grace and gift are in

Christ, etc.” The gifts and the Spirit increase daily in us, yet they are not complete, since evil desires and sins remain in us which war against the Spirit, as Paul says in chapter 7, and in Galatian chapter 5. And Genesis, chapter 3, proclaims the enmity between the offspring of the woman and that of the serpent. But grace does do this much: that we are accounted completely just before God. God’s grace is not divided into bits and pieces, as are the gifts, but grace takes us up completely into God’s favor for the sake of Christ, our intercessor and mediator, so that the gifts may begin their work in us.

In this way, then, you should understand chapter 7, where St. Paul portrays himself as still a sinner, while in chapter 8 he says that, because of the incomplete gifts and because of the Spirit, there is nothing damnable in those who are in Christ. Because our flesh has not been killed, we are still sinners, but because we believe in Christ and have the beginnings of the Spirit, God so shows us his favor and mercy, that he neither notices nor judges such sins. Rather he deals with us according to our belief in Christ until sin is killed.

Faith is not that human illusion and dream that some people think it is. When they hear and talk a lot about faith and yet see that no moral improvement and no good works result from it, they fall into error and say, “Faith is not enough. You must do works if you want to be virtuous and get to heaven.” The result is that, when they hear the Gospel, they stumble and make for themselves with their own powers a concept in their hearts which says, “I believe.” This concept they hold to be true faith. But since it is a human fabrication and thought and not an experience of the heart, it accomplishes nothing, and there follows no improvement.

Faith is a work of God in us, which changes us and brings us to birth anew from God (cf. John 1). It kills the old Adam, makes us completely different people in heart, mind, senses, and all our powers, and brings the Holy Spirit with it. What a living, creative, active powerful thing is faith! It is impossible that faith ever stop doing good. Faith doesn’t ask whether good works are to be done, but, before it is asked, it has done them. It is always active. Whoever doesn’t do such works is without faith; he gropes and searches about him for faith and good works but doesn’t know what faith and good works are. Even so, he chatters on with a great many words about faith and good works.

Faith is a living, unshakeable confidence in God’s grace; it is so certain, that someone would die a thousand times for it. This kind of trust in and knowledge of God’s grace makes a person joyful, confident, and happy with regard to God and all creatures. This is what the Holy Spirit does by faith. Through faith, a person will do good to everyone without coercion, willingly and happily; he will serve everyone, suffer everything for the love and praise of God, who has shown him such grace. It is as impossible to separate works from faith as burning and shining from fire. Therefore be on guard against your own false ideas and against the chatterers who think they are clever enough to make judgements about faith and good works but who are in reality the biggest fools. Ask God to work faith in you; otherwise you will remain eternally without faith, no matter what you try to do or fabricate.

Now **justice** is just such a faith. It is called God’s justice, or that justice which is valid in God’s sight, because it is God who gives it and reckons it as justice for the sake of Christ our Mediator. It influences a person to give to everyone what he owes him. Through faith a person becomes sinless and eager for God’s commands. Thus he gives God the honor due him and pays him what he owes him. He serves people willingly

with the means available to him. In this way he pays everyone his due. Neither nature nor free will nor our own powers can bring about such justice, for even as no one can give himself faith, so too he cannot remove unbelief. How can he then take away even the smallest sin? Therefore everything which takes place outside of faith or in unbelief is a lie, hypocrisy and sin (Romans 14), no matter how smoothly it may seem to go.

You must not understand flesh here as denoting only unchastity or spirit as denoting only the inner heart. Here St. Paul calls flesh (as does Christ in John 3) everything born of the flesh, i.e. the whole human being with body and soul, reason and senses, since everything in him tends toward the flesh. That is why you should know enough to call that person “fleshly” who, without grace, fabricates, teaches and chatters about high spiritual matters. You can learn the same thing from Galatians, Chapter 5, where St. Paul calls heresy and hatred works of the flesh. And in Romans, chapter 8, he says that, through the flesh, the law is weakened. He says this, not of unchastity, but of all sins, most of all of unbelief, which is the most spiritual of vices.

On the other hand, you should know enough to call that person “spiritual” who is occupied with the most outward of works as was Christ, when he washed the feet of the disciples, and Peter, when he steered his boat and fished. So then, a person is “flesh” who, inwardly and outwardly, lives only to do those things which are of use to the flesh and to temporal existence. A person is “spirit” who, inwardly and outwardly, lives only those things which are of use to the spirit and to the life to come.

Unless you understand these words in this way, you will never understand either this letter of St. Paul or any book of the Scriptures. Be on guard, therefore, against any teacher who uses these words differently, no matter who he be, whether Jerome, Augustine, Ambrose, Origen or anyone else as great as or greater than they. Now let us turn to the letter itself.

* * * * *

The first duty of a preacher of the Gospel is, through his revealing of the law and of sin, to rebuke and to turn into sin everything in life that does not have the Spirit and faith in Christ as its base. [Here and elsewhere in Luther’s preface, as indeed in Romans itself, it is not clear whether “spirit” has the meaning “Holy Spirit” or “spiritual person,” as Luther has previously defined it.] Thereby he will lead people to a recognition of their miserable condition, and thus they will become humble and yearn for help. This is what St. Paul does.

He begins in chapter 1 by rebuking the gross sins and unbelief which are in plain view, as were (and still are) the sins of the pagans, who live without God’s grace. He says that, through the Gospel, God is revealing his wrath from heaven upon all mankind because of the godless and unjust lives they live. For, although they know and recognize day by day that there is a God, yet human nature in itself, without grace, is so evil that it neither thanks nor honors God. This nature blinds itself and continually falls into wickedness, even going so far as to commit idolatry and other

horrible sins and vices. It is unashamed of itself and leaves such things unpunished in others.

In [chapter 2](#), St. Paul extends his rebuke to those who appear outwardly pious or who sin secretly. Such were the Jews, and such are all hypocrites still, who live virtuous lives but without eagerness and love; in their heart they are enemies of God's law and like to judge other people. That's the way with hypocrites: they think that they are pure but are actually full of greed, hate, pride and all sorts of filth (cf. Matthew 23). These are they who despise God's goodness and, by their hardness of heart, heap wrath upon themselves. Thus Paul explains the law rightly when he lets no one remain without sin but proclaims the wrath of God to all who want to live virtuously by nature or by free will. He makes them out to be no better than public sinners; he says they are hard of heart and unrepentant.

In [chapter 3](#), Paul lumps both secret and public sinners together: the one, he says, is like the other; all are sinners in the sight of God. Besides, the Jews had God's word, even though many did not believe in it. But still God's truth and faith in him are not thereby rendered useless. St. Paul introduces, as an aside, the saying from Psalm 51, that God remains true to his words. Then he returns to his topic and proves from the Scripture that they are all sinners and that no one becomes just through the works of the law but that God gave the law only so that sin might be perceived.

Next St. Paul teaches the right way to be virtuous and to be saved; he says that they are all sinners, unable to glory in God. They must, however, be justified through faith in Christ, who has merited this for us by his blood and has become for us a mercy seat [cf. Exodus 25:17, Leviticus 16:14ff, and John 2:2] in the presence of God, who forgives us all our previous sins. In so doing, God proves that it is his justice alone, which he gives through faith, that helps us, the justice which was at the appointed time revealed through the Gospel and, previous to that, was witnessed to by the Law and the Prophets. Therefore, the law is set up by faith, but the works of the law, along with the glory taken in them, are knocked down by faith. [As with the term "spirit," the word "law" seems to have for Luther, and for St. Paul, two meanings. Sometimes it means "the Torah," as in the previous sentence. And sometimes it seems to have both meanings, as in what follows.]

In chapters 1 to 3, St. Paul has revealed sin for what it is and has taught the way of faith which leads to justice.

Now in [chapter 4](#) he deals with some objections and criticisms. He takes up first the one that people raise who, on hearing that faith make just without works, say, "What? Shouldn't we do any good works?" Here St. Paul holds up Abraham as an example. He says, "What did Abraham accomplish with his good works? Were they all good for nothing and useless?" He concludes that Abraham was made righteous apart from all his works by faith alone. Even before the "work" of his circumcision, Scripture praises him as being just on account of faith alone (cf. Genesis 15). Now if the work of his circumcision did nothing to make him just, a work that God had commanded him to do and hence a work of obedience, then surely no other good work can do anything to make a person just. Even as Abraham's circumcision was an outward sign with which he proved his justice based on faith, so too all good works are only outward signs which flow from faith and are the fruits of faith; they prove that the person is already inwardly just in the sight of God.

St. Paul verifies his teaching on faith in chapter 3 with a powerful example from Scripture. He calls a s witness David, who says in Psalm 32 that a person becomes just without works but doesn't remain without works once he has become just. Then Paul extends this example and applies it against all other works of the law. He concludes that the Jews cannot be Abraham's heirs just because of their blood relationship to him and still less because of the works of the law. Rather, they have to inherit Abraham's faith if they want to be his real heirs, since it was prior to the Law of Moses and the law of circumcision that Abraham became just through faith and was called a father of all believers. St. Paul adds that the law brings about more wrath than grace, because no one obeys it with love and eagerness. More disgrace than grace come from the works of the law. Therefore faith alone can obtain the grace promised to Abraham. Examples like these are written for our sake, that we also should have faith.

In [chapter 5](#), St. Paul comes to the fruits and works of faith, namely: joy, peace, love for God and for all people; in addition: assurance, steadfastness, confidence, courage, and hope in sorrow and suffering. All of these follow where faith is genuine, because of the overflowing good will that God has shown in Christ: he had him die for us before we could ask him for it, yes, even while we were still his enemies. Thus we have established that faith, without any good works, makes just. It does not follow from that, however, that we should not do good works; rather it means that morally upright works do not remain lacking. About such works the "works-holy" people know nothing; they invent for themselves their own works in which are neither peace nor joy nor assurance nor love nor hope nor steadfastness nor any kind of genuine Christian works or faith.

Next St. Paul makes a digression, a pleasant little side-trip, and relates where both sin justice, death and life come from. He opposes these two: Adam and Christ. What he wants to say is That Christ, a second Adam, had to come in order to make us heirs of his justice through a new spiritual birth in faith, just as the old Adam made us heirs of sin through the old fleshy birth.

St. Paul proves, by this reasoning, that a person cannot help himself by his works to get from sin to justice any more than he can prevent his own physical birth. St. Paul also proves that the divine law, which should have been well suited, if anything was, for helping people obtain justice, not only was no help at all when it did come, but it even increased sin. Evil human nature, consequently, becomes more hostile to it; the more the law forbids it to indulge its own desires, the more it wants to. Thus the law makes Christ all the more necessary and demands more grace to help human nature.

In [chapter 6](#), St. Paul takes up the special work of faith, the struggle which the spirit wages against the flesh to kill off those sins and desires that remain after a person has been made just. He teaches us that faith doesn't so free us from sin that we can be idle, lazy, and self-assured, as though there were no more sin in us. Sin is there, but, because of faith that struggles against it, God does not reckon sin as deserving damnation. Therefore we have in our own selves a lifetime of work cut out for us; we have to tame our body, kill its lusts, force its members to obey the spirit and not the lusts. We must do this so that we may conform to the death and resurrection of Christ and complete our Baptism, which signifies a death to sin and a new life of grace. Our aim is to be completely clean from sin and then to rise bodily with Christ and live forever.

St. Paul says that we can accomplish all this because we are in grace and not in the law. He explains that to be “outside the law” is not the same as having no law and being able to do what you please. No, being “under the law” means living without grace, surrounded by the works of the law. Then surely sin reigns by means of the law, since no one is naturally well-disposed toward the law. That very condition, however, is the greatest sin. But grace makes the law lovable to us, so there is no sin any more, and the law is no longer against us but one with us.

This is true freedom from sin and from the law; St. Paul writes about this for the rest of the chapter. He says it is a freedom only to do good with eagerness and to live a good life without the coercion of the law. This freedom is, therefore, a spiritual freedom which does not suspend the law but which supplies what the law demands, namely eagerness and love. These silence the law so that it has no further cause to drive people on and make demands of them. It's as though you owed money to a moneylender and couldn't pay him. You could be rid of him in one of two ways: either he would take nothing from you and would tear up his account book, or a pious man would pay for you and give you what you needed to satisfy your debt. That's exactly how Christ freed us from the law. Therefore our freedom is not wild, fleshly freedom that has no obligation to do anything. On the contrary, it is a freedom that does a great deal, indeed everything, yet is free of the law's demands and debts.

In [chapter 7](#), St. Paul confirms the foregoing by an analogy drawn from married life. When a man dies, the wife is free; the one is free and clear of the other. It is not the case that the woman may not or should not marry another man; rather she is now for the first time free to marry someone else. She could not do this before she was free of her first husband. In the same way, our conscience is bound to the law so long as our condition is that of the sinful old man. But when the old man is killed by the spirit, then the conscience is free, and conscience and law are quit of each other. Not that conscience should now do nothing; rather, it should now for the first time truly cling to its second husband, Christ, and bring forth the fruit of life.

Next St. Paul sketches further the nature of sin and the law. It is the law that makes sin really active and powerful, because the old man gets more and more hostile to the law since he can't pay the debt demanded by the law. Sin is his very nature; of himself he can't do otherwise. And so the law is his death and torture. Now the law is not itself evil; it is our evil nature that cannot tolerate that the good law should demand good from it. It's like the case of a sick person, who cannot tolerate that you demand that he run and jump around and do other things that a healthy person does.

St. Paul concludes here that, if we understand the law properly and comprehend it in the best possible way, then we will see that its sole function is to remind us of our sins, to kill us by our sins, and to make us deserving of eternal wrath. Conscience learns and experiences all this in detail when it comes face to face with the law. It follows, then, that we must have something else, over and above the law, which can make a person virtuous and cause him to be saved. Those, however, who do not understand the law rightly are blind; they go their way boldly and think they are satisfying the law with works. They don't know how much the law demands, namely, a free, willing, eager heart. That is the reason that they don't see Moses rightly before their eyes. [In both Jewish and Christian teaching, Moses was commonly held to be the author of the Pentateuch, the first five books of the Bible. Cf. the involved imagery of Moses' face and the veil over it in 2 Corinthians 3:7-18.] For them he is covered and concealed by the veil.

Then St. Paul shows how spirit and flesh struggle with each other in one person. He gives himself as an example, so that we may learn how to kill sin in ourselves. He gives both spirit and flesh the name "law," so that, just as it is in the nature of divine law to drive a person on and make demands of him, so too the flesh drives and demands and rages against the spirit and wants to have its own way. Likewise the spirit drives and demands against the flesh and wants to have its own way. This feud lasts in us for as long as we live, in one person more, in another less, depending on whether spirit or flesh is stronger. Yet the whole human being is both spirit and flesh. The human being fights with himself until he becomes completely spiritual.

In [chapter 8](#), St. Paul comforts fighters such as these and tells them that this flesh will not bring them condemnation. He goes on to show what the nature of flesh and spirit are. Spirit, he says, comes from Christ, who has given us his Holy Spirit; the Holy Spirit makes us spiritual and restrains the flesh. The Holy Spirit assures us that we are God's children no matter how furiously sin may rage within us, so long as we follow the Spirit and struggle against sin in order to kill it. Because nothing is so effective in deadening the flesh as the cross and suffering, Paul comforts us in our suffering. He says that the Spirit, [cf. previous note about the meaning of "spirit,"] love and all creatures will stand by us; the Spirit in us groans and all creatures long with us that we be freed from the flesh and from sin. Thus we see that these three chapters, 6, 7, and 8, all deal with the one work of faith, which is to kill the old Adam and to constrain the flesh.

In [chapters 9, 10, and 11](#), St. Paul teaches us about the eternal providence of God. It is the original source which determines who would believe and who wouldn't, who can be set free from sin and who cannot. Such matters have been taken out of our hands and are put into God's hands so that we might become virtuous. It is absolutely necessary that it be so, for we are so weak and unsure of ourselves that, if it depended on us, no human being would be saved. The devil would overpower all of us. But God is steadfast; his providence will not fail, and no one can prevent its realization. Therefore we have hope against sin.

But here we must shut the mouths of those sacrilegious and arrogant spirits who, mere beginners that they are, bring their reason to bear on this matter and commence, from their exalted position, to probe the abyss of divine providence and uselessly trouble themselves about whether they are predestined or not. These people must surely plunge to their ruin, since they will either despair or abandon themselves to a life of chance.

You, however, follow the reasoning of this letter in the order in which it is presented. Fix your attention first of all on Christ and the Gospel, so that you may recognize your sin and his grace. Then struggle against sin, as chapters 1-8 have taught you to. Finally, when you have come, in chapter 8, under the shadow of the cross and suffering, they will teach you, in chapters 9-11, about providence and what a comfort it is. [The context here and in St. Paul's letter makes it clear that this is the cross and passion, not only of Christ, but of each Christian.] Apart from suffering, the cross and the pangs of death, you cannot come to grips with providence without harm to yourself and secret anger against God. The old Adam must be quite dead before you can endure this matter and drink this strong wine. Therefore make sure you don't drink wine while you are still a babe at the breast. There is a proper measure, time and age for understanding every doctrine.

In [chapter 12](#), St. Paul teaches the true liturgy and makes all Christians priests, so that they may offer, not money or cattle, as priests do in the Law, but their own bodies, by putting their desires to death. Next he describes the outward conduct of Christians whose lives are governed by the Spirit; he tells how they teach, preach, rule, serve, give, suffer, love, live and act toward friend, foe and everyone. These are the works that a Christian does, for, as I have said, faith is not idle.

In [chapter 13](#), St. Paul teaches that one should honor and obey the secular authorities. He includes this, not because it makes people virtuous in the sight of God, but because it does insure that the virtuous have outward peace and protection and that the wicked cannot do evil without fear and in undisturbed peace. Therefore it is the duty of virtuous people to honor secular authority, even though they do not, strictly speaking, need it. Finally, St. Paul sums up everything in love and gathers it all into the example of Christ: what he has done for us, we must also do and follow after him.

In [chapter 14](#), St. Paul teaches that one should carefully guide those with weak conscience and spare them. One shouldn't use Christian freedom to harm but rather to help the weak. Where that isn't done, there follow dissention and despising of the Gospel, on which everything else depends. It is better to give way a little to the weak in faith until they become stronger than to have the teaching of the Gospel perish completely. This work is a particularly necessary work of love especially now when people other freedoms, are brashly, boldly and unnecessarily shaking weak consciences which have not yet come to know the truth.

In [chapter 15](#), St. Paul cites Christ as an example to show that we must also have patience with the weak, even those who fail by sinning publicly or by their disgusting morals. We must not cast them aside but must bear with them until they become better. That is the way Christ treated us and still treats us every day; he puts up with our vices, our wicked morals and all our imperfection, and he helps us ceaselessly. Finally Paul prays for the Christians at Rome; he praises them and commends them to God. He points out his own office and the message that he preaches. He makes an unobtrusive plea for a contribution for the poor in Jerusalem. Unalloyed love is the basis of all he says and does.

The [last chapter](#) consists of greetings. But Paul also includes a salutary warning against human doctrines which are preached alongside the Gospel and which do a great deal of harm. It's as though he had clearly seen that out of Rome and through the Romans would come the deceitful, harmful Canons and Decretals along with the entire brood and swarm of human laws and commands that is now drowning the whole world and has blotted out this letter and the whole of the Scriptures, along with the Spirit and faith. Nothing remains but the idol Belly, and St. Paul depicts those people here as its servants. God deliver us from them. Amen.

We find in this letter, then, the richest possible teaching about what a Christian should know: the meaning of the law, Gospel, sin, punishment, grace, faith, justice, Christ, God, good works, love, hope and the cross. We learn how we are to act toward everyone, toward the virtuous and sinful, toward the strong and the weak, friend and foe, and toward ourselves. Paul bases everything firmly on Scripture and proves his points with examples from his own experience and from the Prophets, so that nothing more could be desired. Therefore it seems that St. Paul, in writing this letter, wanted to compose a summary of the whole of Christian and evangelical teaching which would

also be an introduction to the whole Old Testament. Without doubt, whoever takes this letter to heart possesses the light and power of the Old Testament. Therefore each and every Christian should make this letter the habitual and constant object of his study. God grant us his grace to do so. Amen.

Appendix C

Tower Reprints

These articles were selected during our study because they focused in relative detail on the verses under consideration. Some of them cover large portions of Romans, some cover much smaller sections. But put together, these articles cover much of the Epistle of Romans.

(Note: In a few instances, underlinings and clarifying punctuations have been added. Very few bracketed [] comments also occur — not distinguishable from the few which are original.)

TOWER REPRINTS

C1	– R.1223, 24;	Chapters 1:1-8:5,	Page 317
C2	– R.929-31;	Chapters 1-6,	Page 322
C3	– R.3654, 55;	Chapter 5:12-21,	Page 328
C4	– R.1729, 30;	Chapter 7	Page 331
C5	– R.4961;	Chapter 7:7-25	Page 334
C6	– R.1969-71;	Chapters 9:30-11:36	Page 336
C7	– R.3179;	Chapter 13:7-14	Page 343
C8	– R.1734;	Chapters 14:1-15:7	Page 348
C9	– R.5323;	Chapter 14:7-21	Page 351

Appendix C-1

R. 1223, 24
(Romans 1:1 – 8:15)

THE REAL MEANING.

(Only part of the article is reprinted here.)

As we have suggested, the translation of the verse already cited (Rom. 8:6) is faulty. But while this is true, the poor translation is not so much to blame for the error based upon the verse as the wrong condition of the hearts (wills) of those who, to find support for a theory, so readily seized upon half of Paul's sentence and hastened to apply it in opposition to the known general sentiment of Scripture, without noting either the faulty translation or the opposition of the context to the theory which they sought to build upon it.

The faulty translation [Rom. 8:6] reads: "To be carnally minded is death;" and remember that the inference drawn is that the death which is the wages of sin consists, solely and only, in being carnally minded. The Greek word sarx, here rendered carnal, occurs one hundred and thirty-nine times in the New Testament, and only twice it is blindly rendered carnal (in the above text and in (Heb. 9:10). It is generally rendered flesh, as in other verses of this same chapter. (See verses 1,3,4,5,8,9,12,13.) The word sarx does not mean sinful at all, nor sinful flesh; it means flesh, simply and only, and is used in reference to Adam and Eve before they sinned (1 Cor. 6:16) as well as after; and twenty-five times it is used in referring to our Lord's flesh, which was perfect, spotless without blemish. (See John 1:14, and 6:51-56, and Heb. 10:2 and 1 Tim. 3:16.)

The expression "carnally minded," in Rom. 8:6, therefore signifies merely the mind or will of the flesh. Since the Apostle well knew, and had long taught, that all mankind had fallen from perfection through Adam's disobedience, and that all as a consequence were unsound, not only morally but mentally and physically as well, he did not need to distinguish between the will of the flesh as it would be if perfect and the will or preference of the flesh in its fallen condition; for he had already instructed them that he and they and all the fallen race had tastes, appetites and desires of the (depraved) flesh, which, if gratified, would lead to further degradation.

The sense of the passage is not difficult to discern if it be read in connection with the chain of discourse of which it forms a part, at least from Chap. 7:18 to 8:15. Other translations may assist (Rotherham's, the Diaglott, or the Revised Version); but the common version is simple enough when it is known and remembered that the phrase, "the carnal mind," should be rendered "the mind of the flesh" or "the will of the flesh."

For the sake of making clear the Apostle's argument, let us paraphrase briefly the epistle to the Romans, down to 8:15, amplifying as we reach the eighth chapter. First, Paul would have the believers at Rome know that the reason for his not having visited

Rome to preach the gospel was not because of any shame, or any feeling that the gospel of Christ would not stand the light and criticism of Rome, then the capital city of the world, as well as that of the less notable cities of Asia Minor, which he had visited and evangelized. He declares himself not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, but ready, when the way should open, to preach it boldly in Rome also.

Next, he proceeded to answer objections and doubts liable to be raised by Jewish converts among the Romans. He shows that the ignorance, superstition and degradation prevailing were not the result of imperfect work on God's part in creating the people so. He declares that no such excuse can be allowed (Chap. 1:21 to 2:11); he shows that men are themselves to blame for their degradation, and that the Jews, too, are involved in sin under God's perfect law and would be condemned as unfit for lasting life as surely as the Gentiles. For as the Gentiles, without the law given at Sinai, were sinners and degraded, and died (punished) under sentence of some law aside from Sinai's law, so they (the Jews) who had received the law of Moses had been condemned by that law and had not escaped death nor obtained any right to further life.

He argues (Chap. 3) that though no Jew got life under Moses' law, and therefore all were in a state of condemnation as complete and hopeless as Gentiles, yet the Jew got some blessings through that Law Covenant — though lasting life was not one of them. He got a clearer idea of God's will from the Law, as well as a knowledge of his further gracious purposes from the testimonies of the prophets; yet all that he then learned, instead of justifying or proving him worthy of God's favor, only showed more and more how firm a hold sin had gotten and how impossible it is for anyone with an imperfect organism and its depraved tastes and desires to live an absolutely perfect life, and thereby to commend himself to God. The more they learned of God's law the less they felt like saying — "Lord, I am perfect in thought, word and deed; there is nothing whatever unholy or selfish in me; I am therefore just such a one as thy law declares shall have lasting life." On the contrary, the law revealed most clearly the fact that all are sinners, that all are unworthy of divine recognition and favor; for all have sinned and come short of what would glorify God. So then the Law given to Israel, and under which they were condemned, served to prove to all men, what God already knew, that no man in his fallen condition is worthy or could make himself worthy of lasting life under the only conditions upon which God will give that blessing.

Then the Apostle shows (Chap. 3:21-26) how God provided in Christ a propitiatory-covering [See Rotherham's translation and foot note.] for all who exercise faith in the blood of the New Covenant — declaring to such the remission of sins past, and at the same time showing God's righteousness in the entire procedure — his justice in sentencing all the fallen ones as unworthy of life, and his justice, too, in the reversal of that sentence and the granting of life to some through the redemption provided.

He proceeds to show that though Israel had expected every blessing and advantage through their law, God had the larger plan of favor through Christ all along; and this fact he shows by references to the promises.

Next he discusses the standing of all who accept of Christ, and shows how they are cleansed in Christ from all the defilement brought upon them through Adam's transgression. — Chap. 5.

Chapter 6 shows that in thus justifying us, or imputing to us a righteousness not actually ours, God's intention is not to have us continue in sin, but rather to set us free from its condemnation in order that we may now begin to use ourselves in God's service and to strive against all things in us opposed to his perfect will. This setting free from sins past and from their just penalty, and making continual allowance for the weaknesses of the flesh which we have inherited, is not to be construed as a change of God's attitude toward sin and wilful sinners, but as an opportunity for those desiring harmony with God to show by their strivings against sin and for righteousness that in heart they fully approve his perfect law and delight in it, and that if they could do so, they would rejoice to have every word and thought and act obedient thereto. Such desire not to follow the will of the flesh but to follow the Spirit or will of God. For those who live in accord [and have no battles] with their flesh [which is depraved] indicate their preference, while they who live in accord with the spirit show their preference. Therefore, the preference of the flesh means death [the just sentence of the law], but the preference of the spirit means life and peace [the reward of obedience to the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus, which relieves such from condemnation on account of weaknesses of the flesh inherited from Adam]. For the preferences of our [depraved] flesh are in opposition to God; for the flesh is not in harmony with his law, and indeed it cannot be; and hence those whose existence is fleshly cannot please God.

But you [the consecrated] have not your existence in the flesh, but in the spirit, if truly the spirit of God dwells in you. And whoever has not Christ's spirit [disposition or mind] is not his. But if Christ is in you, the body is indeed dead as to sin [not reckoned of God in considering your case] but the spirit [intention or new will] has life [reckoned to it] because of its righteousness.

Moreover, if the spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also make alive even your mortal bodies, by the dwelling of his spirit within you. In a word, it will take far less of God's power to quicken your mortal bodies [reckoned dead] to activity in his service, than it took to raise Jesus from the dead; and as surely it will have an increasing influence upon your body, bringing it more and more into a course of righteousness.

So then, brethren, you see we do not owe anything to the flesh [it brings us no advantage, present or future], that we should desire to follow its leadings and be its servants. Quite the contrary, indeed, we see that if we live according to the will and leading of our flesh, which is depraved, we shall die, but if we live according to the spirit, according to the renewed mind or spirit of Christ, we shall thereby obtain a great blessing — we shall live. Because as many as are guided by the spirit of God, the same are God's sons. — Rom. 8:14.

Following thus the Apostle's argument, we see that the sentiment expressed in verse 6 is reiterated in verse 14, and that the thought of giving a new definition to death — that the death which results from sin is a carnal mind — is an absurd as well as a false interpretation. Quite to the contrary, it teaches that if we live after the flesh, i.e., if we obey the will of our sin-depraved and death-condemned flesh, even after we have come to a knowledge of Christ, and after we have come under the new arrangement of the law of the spirit of life through Christ, we shall die the second death, the result of

our preference or choice of the things that are contrary to the law of God. But as many as accept of Christ and partake of his spirit of obedience, and whose minds or spirits prefer the things of God, and seek to overcome and put an end to the depraved desires and weaknesses of the flesh, and to bring every thought into subjection to the will of God — these, under the Law of God which now judges only the spirit or intention of those in Christ, will receive lasting life.

But, the Apostle urges (Chap. 7), do not get a wrong impression of the Law given at Sinai. Do not think of it as an imperfect or unjust law which God found would not serve its purpose and from which, therefore, he released you. On the contrary, it was a good, just, perfect law; and only because of your inability to keep it, has God in his mercy released you from its obligation and placed you for a time under conditions suited to your infirmities. It has ceased to be over you through God's favor, he having all along intended the plan of justifying all sinners freely, through faith in Christ. When you begin to think of how the Law failed to be a blessing, you should realize that the fault was in yourselves and not in the Law. It demanded righteousness and you were unable to fill the requirement actually. Thus by the law comes the appreciation of what sin is, and of how our race has become enslaved to that terrible master, Sin, whose commands we are unable to fully resist, even though we despise them. (v. 15.) Then, in this very fact that we see and desire a perfection that we are unable to live up to, we attest that God's law, which demands perfection, is a proper, good law, and that the fault lies in ourselves.

But this very fact, that we desire to do better than we are able to do, proves that the fault is not in our wills, but the result of Sin's enslavement of our members. This is very evident, for the will represents us as individuals, and the will desires righteousness and approves God's perfect law. But it is frustrated often, and cannot control the Sin-enslaved body. And as a result of the mind or will being subjected to God's law, and the body being weak through the fall and enslaved to Sin, those things which our minds and God's law disapprove are constant snares and besetments. As a result, we often do those things which we disapprove, and leave undone many things which we approve of. — Verses 16-23 [of Chapter 7].

Thus, if we come back to look at God's law given to Israel, we find it was just and right in condemning us, since we are constantly condemning ourselves as imperfect, in its light. Is there then no hope? Must we perish because we cannot obey God's law, when we really desire to do so but are prevented by this poor body over which Sin and death gained control through the fall? Surely this is a wretched condition to be in, desiring righteousness and its reward of lasting life, but unable to grasp the prize because the will is fettered to the sin-degraded body? O! is there no help? Must we die?

Ah! yes, there is help: God foresaw this very state and desires to rescue and bring to everlasting life all who thus hate sin and despise and strive against it in themselves. Thank God, this very deliverance has been provided. Our Lord Jesus died, and rose, and lives, to bring about this very result for all who are thus minded. It was the transgression of God's law by Adam that brought separation from Eden and from God's favor, and a sentence of death, resulting in the mental, moral and physical decay and death of himself and his race, under Sin, his new master. And God's way, by which his love operated to rescue us from the control of Sin and death, was, first, by payment of the legal penalty or sentence against Adam and his race, under which Sin and death held power or authority; and secondly, as a result of this redemption

from the dominion of Sin and death by the Lord Jesus' death, he shall restore to physical perfection all of the class described, who with their minds serve the law of God, and who desire full deliverance from the control of Sin and death.

Thus accepting of Christ Jesus as the Redeemer, and trusting him for the new bodies promised in God's due time, we see God's way out of the difficulty from which we could never extricate ourselves. Thanks be to God for this way of salvation provided through Jesus Christ our Lord. So, then, we can realize that while with our minds (our wills, our hearts) we serve the law of God, even though with our flesh we to some extent obey the laws of Sin, yet for the reasons stated (God's grace in Christ's redemption) there is no longer any condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus. All who have this new standing come under new conditions. As all in Adam were, under his sentence, brought under the control of sin and death, so all who now are in Christ Jesus, the Redeemer, are in God's reckoning brought under a new arrangement and judged according to their spirit, mind or intention, and thereby declared worthy of life. — Rom. 8:2.

Thus we see that though God's just, good law could not acquit sinners, no matter how much they abhorred their sins, nor grant lasting life to imperfect, erring beings, yet, without violating that law, but on the contrary upholding it, God has accomplished the work in another way, namely, by the sending of his own Son, in the same form (or nature) as the flesh which Sin had gotten control of, and on account of Sin. He with (or by) his flesh sentenced Sin, the great enslaver, to an overthrow; that thus the just requirement of the Law might be fully met by us who are in Christ Jesus.

Thus seen, Rom. 8:6 not only does not teach what some, out of all harmony with its context and in great violence to itself, attempt to make it prove, but it proves the very reverse — that only such of mankind will be everlastingly saved as receive of Christ's spirit, mind or disposition; only such as become sons of God.

But it must be borne in mind that only the few yet know of the ransom given by our Redeemer and Lord; only the few therefore know that now, in the strength of that atonement, they may have peace with God; that God will accept of them according to their spirit or intention, and that coming into their willing hearts by his power and truth, he will work in them mightily and use even their sin-depraved bodies in his service. The great mass of mankind as yet knows not of God's gracious plan. And since such could neither reject nor accept what they did not know of, God's gracious provision is that they all shall hear and appreciate the case fully. He will pour out his spirit [his power, his influence] upon all flesh; all shall be brought to a knowledge of the truth, and all shall have fullest opportunity to make a choice between the law of God which leads to life, and the law of sin which leads to death. 1 Tim. 2: 4-6

Appendix C-2

R. 929-31 (Romans 1-6)

(Only part of the article is reprinted here)

To pick up a fragment of a discourse on any deep subject and attempt to apply it, without being aware of the underlying principle and fact upon which it is based, would more than likely lead to a false interpretation of it; and so with the apostle Paul's deep reasoning on the greatest of all sciences. We must first get his bearings and understand something of what he discourses upon, before we can know assuredly his meaning when he uses figures of speech as in this discourse.

That the epistle to the Romans was written to all the Church of believers in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints, and was intended as a vindication of the plan of God and his dealings with the world, Israel, and the gospel Church, past, present and future, is evident from the first chapter. In its conclusion [the first chapter's conclusion] he shows that God cannot be held responsible for the ignorance and degradation of the world, especially the heathen, for they had degraded themselves, and blotting out the image of God, had come to resemble more the beasts. God simply gave them over, or did not interfere with them. Paul shows that God is not guilty of producing the sin and degradation, but that the entire responsibility rests upon man: upon Adam the representative first, and upon all since who wilfully departed further and further from God. He lays this broad premise in order to show afterward that God was just, and that man has no claim upon him for recovery (salvation or restitution) from this fallen and degraded state of condemnation and death.

Having shown up thus the state of the heathen world, Paul turns to the Jews, and in chapter 2, shows that they have no ground for claiming anything from God, — they could no more claim that they had a right to life everlasting, and salvation (restitution) to original perfection than the heathen. The giving of a perfect law to a man does not justify him — if he would be justified to life under the law given him he must keep it perfectly (ver. 13). And if he violated but one of its precepts he could claim nothing under it, but must be condemned as a violator, unworthy of life. (Jas. 2:10.) Hence the Apostle argues that while the Jew had a special Law on stones given him, which the heathen world did not have, yet they were not so much advantaged thereby as they had supposed; for if a man, not a Jew, could do perfectly the will of God, he would be acceptable with God (v. 26), and this and no more the Law offered to the Jew. God knew from the first what experience has since demonstrated to all men, namely, that because of our weakness and fallen dispositions inherited, none can live up to God's perfect law, no, nor even up to his own warped idea of RIGHT.

Chapter 3 shows how the Law given to the Jew, though of no advantage in the way of justifying them to salvation (restitution) from death, was of great benefit as an educator to show them their own weakness and their need of salvation, by grace (favor) and not by law and merit. He on the other hand shows that the Jew is in no worse case than the Gentile, for all are under sin, all are condemned, all are unworthy

of life; as it is expressed by the prophet, "There is none righteous, no, not one." — See Rom. 3:9,10.

So then he argues, the Law, written to the Jew and unwritten to the heathen, condemns all the world as guilty and unworthy of life, and silences them from any reply as appeal from this eminently just verdict. — Verses 19 and 20.

The Apostle then introduces faith in Christ as a door of hope for all, both Jews and Gentiles. He says, But now, aside from the Law [though in perfect harmony with it], God has provided a plan [for man's recovery] in perfect harmony with justice; and under this plan it is, that favor and recovery is offered, conditioned on faith in Jesus Christ — to all that believe; for there is no distinction, all are fallen sinners. And this plan which God has adopted and put into operation, aside from the Law, but in perfect harmony with its spirit, is this: He will justify, clear from guilt, freely, by his divine favor [not because of their merit, but] THROUGH THE REDEMPTION accomplished in Christ Jesus; whom he set forth as the one in whom satisfaction was made, for all who exercise faith in his blood (verses 24-26). Thus God not only exhibits his love for his condemned creatures, but He makes it at the same time an exhibition of his own unswerving justice, while enabling him justly to forgive sins that are past as well as those that are present. This plan was so arranged that in releasing the sinner from the penalty justly upon him, and giving him another, an individual trial for life or death, God might still be just, and his law be manifested to all as unchangeable and perfect, even when pardoning the sinners he had once condemned, who by faith laid hold of Jesus as their justifier from their guilt and condemnation.

Ah! who can boast now? (ver. 27.) All boasting of works of charity, all boasting of the slaying of sin in one's self, is shut out; for by the terms of this plan of God, each must confess at the outstart that he is a sinner and POWERLESS to justify himself before God, in any sense, or by any works: he must fling from him, all hope of self-justification in order to grasp with both hands, life, favor, forgiveness and reconciliation as an unmerited favor of God, obtainable through faith in the merit and sacrifice of Christ, and in no other way.

In Chapter 4 Paul shows that favor in response to faith and not as a reward for works, has in all the past been foreshadowed as being God's plan for reconciling the world to himself. David attests this when he says, "Happy are they whose iniquities are forgiven and whose sins are covered; happy the man to whom the Lord shall not impute his sins." Our sins by the arrangement of God are imputed to the Lamb of God, who "bore our sins in his own body on the tree" — "died for our sins."

Nor is there ground for supposing that this favor of forgiveness was to come only to those under the Law (Israel) whose sign was circumcision, for Abraham himself received the promise of a blessing to all nations through his posterity before he was circumcised. No; the plan of God embraces all who believe, for Jesus our Lord was delivered to death for our trespasses and raised from it for our justification (ver. 25).

Having proved the justification (clearing from guilt and condemnation) of all believers, in chapter 4, the Apostle in chapter 5 exhorts all believers to rest upon Christ's finished work on our behalf. Realizing our forgiveness and acceptance through him, let us cease from picking our own characters and those of our fellow saints to pieces by

the Law, which we could not keep, but which Christ kept for us. It is our hearts' intentions and best endeavors that we must look to now, and not expect absolute perfection of thought, word and deed. If we grasp God's free favor and forgiveness through Christ, we must let go of the Law entirely and abandon all hope of self-justification, else we will not have full peace with God. Therefore having been justified (cleared, forgiven) by faith, we may have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. (verse 1.) And in addition to the peace we obtain through being justified or cleared of guilt before God, we have more; we also then gain access into the additional favor (wherein we now are rejoicing) of hope and opportunity for gaining a share with Christ in the glory soon to be bestowed upon our Lord and Redeemer (verse 2). In other words, we are granted the privilege of walking in his footsteps, following our Lord and being associated with him as joint-sacrifices and joint-sufferers in the present, as well as joint-heirs of future glory.

And this enables us to rejoice even in present tribulations. — Verse 3. This favor of God is so great that we might reasonably doubt it, but reflect, says Paul, how much he loved us and did for us while we were yet sinners: It was while we were enemies that he gave the price of our reconciliation and opened the door to our acceptance with God — much more now that WE ARE RECONCILED we may readily believe and accept of all the marvelous favors promised us as followers of the Lamb who justified us. — Verses 6-11.

In order to see clearly the firm foundation upon which our reconciliation rests, consider the philosophy of the plan of God. Note that all were condemned in one man, Adam, and see now the same principle operating for our release, for all are justified through the obedient sacrifice of Christ, as all were condemned through the disobedient act of Adam (verses 12-20). The law covenant given to the Jew has nothing whatever to do with this plan of free favor extended to all, on condition of their acceptance of Christ as the satisfaction for sin. That law was given (ver. 20, 21) that the sin and weakness of the race might be more fully recognized; it did not cure sin, but exposed it, showed it up. But where sin was greatest, because of greatest light to see it, there God's favor was great in proportion, and the light to recognize it was fullest.

Romans 6

What then, shall we say, seeing that God's favor is thus bountiful, and covers sins past and weaknesses present and future? Shall we feel indifferent on the subject, and transgress when we please, trusting to God's provision for our forgiveness in Christ? No, God forbid. Rather, seeing the evil of sin, seeing that it cost the death of our Lord as our substitute, our ransom, we should regard that substitute's death "for our sins" as though it was our former sinful selves that had died. In that Christ has paid our penalty for us, we should regard the sin which caused his death, as though it had caused our death once and we had gotten free from it. We should repulse and oppose sin as our great enemy, which had once caused our death. How could we, under such circumstances, take pleasure in sinning, and thus attempt to take advantage of the favor and forgiveness provided us in Christ, to continue in sin?

While this is a good reason why all believers should abstain from (willful) sinning, some of us have another and still more powerful reason for abstaining from sin, says Paul (verse 5): I refer to those of us who after being justified from sin by our Lord's sacrifice, advanced another step and consecrated ourselves to walk in his footsteps, to drink of his cup of ignominy, reproach and dishonor; and to be baptized [immersed] into his death, that thus sharing with him his sufferings and death, we might according to God's promise be reckoned overcomers and joint-heirs with him, and granted a share with him in the "divine nature" in his future glory and kingdom. "Know ye not that so many of us as are baptized [immersed] into Jesus Christ [as members of his body] are immersed into his death?" It is by consecrating ourselves entirely to him, [after being cleansed from sin by his blood], reckoning ourselves dead to the world and alive in God's service even unto death, as he did, that we gain a place in his "body" and become joint-heirs with him. And in thus becoming dead with him, we trust the Father's promise of also having a share in his resurrection (see Phil. 3:8-15); a resurrection not to human nature, such as others will enjoy, but to the fullness of the divine nature, "like him" and "with him." And this is illustrated in our water immersion, which to us thus symbolizes our death with Christ: our rising from the water symbolizing our coming resurrection as new creatures. For if we are sharers in his sacrifice, his death, we shall unquestionably share also in his resurrection. — Verses 3-5.

Realizing the matter thus, — that our former selves as justified human beings are delivered up to die (be crucified) with Christ, as the condition upon which we may be associated with him, in the great work of utterly rooting out and destroying Sin, the great Monarch, at present ruling the world, we must see that we can no longer, in any sense, serve Sin, the Destroyer, whom we are pledged to help overthrow. (ver. 6.)* We once were sin's slaves, but we were justified or released from his dominion [by Christ] before we consecrated ourselves to die with Christ [consecrated to death as our baptism showed, v. 4], because we believed we should be granted life with him. — Verse 8.

For Christ, though he had our sins reckoned to him, or "laid upon him," and though he died for our sins, is no longer subject to death since his resurrection. For the death which he died was because of sin [our sins] once for all, while his life since resurrection, as a spiritual being, is a gift of God. And so we must reckon ourselves, though [after being first justified by his sacrifice] we be joined with our Lord in the great sacrifice for the sins of the whole world, like him, our sin-bearing and suffering,

*Sin is here represented in figure as the great oppressive Monarch whose reign with his servant death has brought so much distress on the world, all of whom he has enslaved, but from whose power we have been delivered by Christ's ransom, and regaining our liberty we have become associated with the Redeemer of all the slaves of sin and death, offering to suffer with him now and share his ignominy for the joy of future association in the next age in the great work of destroying the usurping ruler Sin, and setting at liberty his captives. — See Rom. 5:21; Isa. 42:7; 61:1; Psa. 102:19,20; Luke4:18.

The "Body of Sin" which is to be overthrown is here contrasted with the "Body of Christ" which is to overthrow it. As once we were slaves to this monarch, Sin, opposing God, now as soldiers under Christ, our chief Captain, we have become bondservants [slaves] to God, to carry out his plan in the overthrow of Sin.

is not *for* our own sins [which were blotted out by his sacrifice] but *for* the sins of others, even as was his death. And, let us thus keep on reckoning ourselves in our entire course, as represented and illustrated by our Leader, in whose footprints we are walking. Let us reckon ourselves dead to all things earthly, hopes, ambitions, and often comforts; cut off from them all, crucified to them all, by or because of Sin. Thus we will hate Sin, and do our utmost to destroy it.

And reckon your life as a new gift of God, as a life not subject to Sin, and not under bondage to Sin in any sense, but wholly subject to the will of God. And thus viewing Sin as the foe you are dying to destroy, and God as the new Master who promises life, let not Sin REIGN in your mortal body, let it not control you. True, sometimes it may overtake you and stumble you through the weakness of the flesh, but see that you encourage it not. Let not your mortal body, nor any talent or power you possess come into the service of this your enemy, but bring your talents more and more into the active service of the new master — God. — Verses 11-14.

What then shall we say to the original question (verses 1, and 15), Shall we sin because we are not under the Law but under favor through Christ? By no means; for though we claim to have changed over from being the servants of Sin, our former master, to be the servants of God, yet if we are really and willingly serving Sin and forwarding it, we are really its servants, no matter what profession we have made of a change. His servants we are to whom we render service. But, thank God, your change is not merely a change in name or profession, but a change indeed. You obeyed the doctrine delivered to you [laying hold by faith upon Christ's sacrifice for your sins], and were thus set free from sin, and then by consecration ye became the servants of righteousness. Now, remember to be as faithful to your new service, to your new master, as you were formerly to your old master, Sin. As formerly you disregarded the claims of God upon your time and talents, now disregard and ignore the claims of Sin.

You know how much evil fruit you bore while in Sin's service, for the reward of death; see, now, how much fruit you can bring forth in your new service whose end is lasting life. The wages of Sin is death, but God's free gift through the anointed one is lasting life. — Verses 17-23.

Carefully compare the above with the first six chapters of Romans, and then note the gross error of the exposition of Rom. 6 by our Exchange quoted in the beginning of this article. To one who is wholly ignorant of the plan of salvation revealed in the Scriptures, or who forgets all the other testimony of the preceding five chapters, our Exchange's theory might be delusive. To such, its claim that the plan of salvation is, that each sinner shall slay his own sinful nature as Christ slew his sinful nature, and that thus each should commend himself to God or justify himself, might seem to find support in Rom. 6. Such erroneous teaching would indeed be delusive to the worldly, for their ideas always have run in that direction. They always have desired to justify themselves by works of their own, or what they term the sacrificing of their sins, and have disdained or ignored God's favor as a free gift secured to them by Christ's sacrifice. Thus it has ever been — the cross, the sacrifice of Christ for our sins, has been from the first what it is to-day, — "To the Jew a stumblingblock and to the Greek [worldly-wise] foolishness." But to us it still is, what it was to the apostles — "The power of God and the wisdom of God." — 1 Cor. 1:24.

The idea of a sinner sacrificing his sins to God, as our Exchange claims, is too foolish for a heathen mind to entertain. The Bible everywhere declares, in types as well as literal statements, that blemished or imperfect sacrifices are not acceptable to God. Over and over again the Israelites were told that their sacrifices for sin must be without spot or blemish, to typify the perfect sacrifice for our sins

Cannot all see, then, that we could have no share in Christ's sacrifice as members of his "body," until first we had been cleansed or justified by his sacrifice — by his blood, shed for the remission of our sins?

Who is so blinded with prejudice that he cannot see that the apostle, in Romans, sixth chapter, is not addressing sinners, but saints? He is not, therefore, telling them how they should justify themselves by crucifying their sins, but he is telling those who are already justified by faith in the sacrifice of Christ, how they have consecrated to death in God's service their former selves — the "old" or former manhood which Christ had justified fully and freely and made acceptable as a sacrifice. Remembering that our former selves (as human beings — justified) are crucified with Christ, and remembering why we so consecrated — that we as new creatures in Christ might be members of the "body of Christ," whose great work is to destroy the adversary — "the body of Sin," we therefore cannot consent to serve or obey, in any sense, the great enemy, from whose control Christ's redemption has delivered us, and whose empire we are pledged with Christ to destroy.

Thus seen, "our old man" which is crucified (consecrated to death) with Christ is not the "body of Sin" (verse 6). Far from it, the "Body of Sin" is a figurative personification of Evil or Sin, the great enslaver and destroyer of our race, while our old man represents our justified manhood, which we consecrated to death, in order that thus sharing with Christ in his death as a ransom for all, (to deliver all from Sin, the Destroyer) we might share also with Christ as the great Deliverer and Restorer of the race. Such should no longer be slaves of Sin (ver. 2); for he that hath died with Christ (as symbolized in baptism, verses 4 and 5) was first released or justified from Sin by Christ, and should now seek life with Christ, and not again to Sin for its wages of death. He that hath an ear to hear, let him hear.

Appendix C-3

R. 3654, 55
(Romans 5:12-21)

THE REMEDY CO-EXTENSIVE WITH THE CURSE.

IN READING this scripture, some who are unable to follow the Apostle's argument have become somewhat confused and therefore request assistance.

The difficulty with such probably arises from the fact that they have failed to notice that verses 13-17 are parenthetical, and that the main line of the Apostle's argument passes from verse 12 to verse 18, irrespective of the parenthesis, which is merely incidental, being introduced to offset a misapprehension on the part of the Jews to the effect that their Law Covenant conflicted with the New Covenant in Christ, of which Paul was a minister. It was difficult for the Jews to accept the fact that under the New Covenant there was no difference made between Jew and Gentile, but that "the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him." — Rom. 10:12.

In verses 12,18-21, the Apostle is showing that by one man sin entered into the world, and death as the penalty for sin; and that this sentence of death passed upon all men because all had sinned — not all individually, but as represented in Adam, in whose loins we all were. "Therefore," he adds, verse 18, "as by the offense of one [Adam] sentence came upon all men to condemnation; even so [by the same law of heredity] by the righteousness of one [of the one who gave his life a ransom] the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life: for as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many [all of the race who will accept it] be made righteous." In other words, Adam, the head or progenitor of the entire human race, could only bequeath to his posterity the remainder of the ever-declining inheritance which he himself possessed, viz., a spark of life under condemnation to death; but our Lord Jesus, by the payment of the penalty upon Adam, thereby gained the legal right to restore him to life, and in so doing gained the right also to restore all his posterity. And when the "appointed time" for thus restoring life to all the race has come, he instead of Adam, will be the father, life-giver, or head of the new race, as it is written, "He shall be called... the everlasting Father." (Isa. 9:6.) And the birthright of the race under this head, Christ, unlike that under the first head, Adam, will be life instead of death. And that birthright can never be taken away unless forfeited by individual willful transgression against the known righteous law of God, with full ability to keep it.

Thus we see that the gist of the Apostle's argument is to prove that by the law of legal heredity the race which, by the working of this law, inherited death from its first head, Adam, will, by the same law inherit life from its second head or re-generator, Christ, and that the remedy is co-extensive with the curse. This being the substance of his argument, it is, of course, presumable that his parenthetical remarks are not in opposition to, but in harmony with it. Thus we read —

Verse 13 — "For until [previous to] the law [of Moses and the Law Covenant with Israel] sin was in the world; but sin is not imputed when there is no law." Consequently there must have been a law, and a covenant based upon that law, previous to the law of Moses. What law was that? It was the Law of God originally inscribed, not upon tables of stone, but upon the heart of the first perfect man, and which was gradually more or less effaced in his posterity, because they did not like to retain a knowledge of it. (Rom. 1:28.) That law, whether ignored or recognized, has always been in the world, and sin against that law has always been imputed to men.

Verse 14. "Nevertheless [although the Mosaic law had not yet come, to revive in the Jews the knowledge of God], death reigned from Adam to Moses [just the same], even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression [i.e., willfully; for it reigned over infants as well as over those capable of personal sin], who is the figure [type] of him that was to come [of Christ, the second head of the race]." Thus it is manifest that all mankind were born under the original law, the authority of which was never annulled, and under which all were condemned representatively in Adam, the first head of the race, but who, thank God, in this office of headship was a type of a second head, through which our deliverance should come.

Verse 15. "But not as the offense, so also is the free gift. [The results of the offense and the free gift are entirely different.] For if through the offense of one [Adam, the] many be dead [under the condemnation to death], much more the grace [favor] of God, and the gift [of life] by grace [by the divine favor], hath abounded unto many." From the one head we inherit death: from the other, the re-generator, we shall inherit life.

Verse 16. "And not as it was by one that sinned, so is the gift: for the sentence was by one [offense] to condemnation, but the free gift is [the forgiveness] of many offenses unto justification." Note the contrast of the one and the many here, the object of which is to increase our estimation of the value of the free gift.

Verse 17. "For if by one man's offense death reigned by [that] one [Adam], much more they which receive abundance of grace [of divine favor] and of the gift of [imputed] righteousness [the righteousness of Christ imputed to us by faith] shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ [who has not only purchased us and covered us with the robe of his own imputed righteousness, but who will also completely eliminate sin from our nature so that men shall have an actual righteousness of their own, entitling them to reign in life as kings of the earthly dominion which God at first gave to Adam]."

Thus by these parenthetic remarks, which are seen to be in perfect harmony with the main argument, the Jews were shown that their Law Covenant did not in the least interfere with the original sentence to death of the entire race (all in Adam), nor with the consequent gracious provision of life for all mankind, through Christ, and not for the Jews alone.

Verse 20. After clearly announcing that the remedy for sin was co-extensive with the penalty (verses 18,19), the Apostle — reading the inquiry in the Jewish mind as to the object of the Mosaic law, if it were not intended to give life — further adds, "Moreover the law [the Mosaic law] entered that the offense might abound. [It brought with it a clearer knowledge of the will of God, and therefore an increased sense of sin, and an increased responsibility which made transgressions even more blameworthy. But what

of it? Did God mean only to afflict Israel more heavily than the rest of the world? By no means.] But where sin abounded [where the clearer knowledge of the Law of God was given, which enabled them also the more fully to see their short-comings and brought upon them the greater responsibility], grace did much more abound [Israel had many special favors, as well as chastisements, from God]: that as sin hath reigned unto death [both in Israel and in the world], even so [both in Israel and in the world] might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord."

Appendix C-4

R. 1729, 30
(Romans 7)

ALIVE WITHOUT THE LAW ONCE.

In his letter to the Romans (chapter 7), the Apostle reasons to Jewish converts to Christianity; "For," he says, "I speak to them that know the Law."

He then represents the Law Covenant as a husband, and Israelites bound by it as a wife to a husband. He shows that as it would be a sin for the woman to unite with another man while her husband lives, so it would be wrong for Israel to leave Moses and his Covenant of the Law, and to unite with Christ and his New Covenant of grace, unless released by death; — either the death of the Law Covenant or their death to the Law Covenant.

It is a common mistake to suppose the Scriptures to teach that the Law Covenant died, or was destroyed by our Lord. It still lives; and all the children of Jacob are still bound by it, unless they have died to it. Only those who realize that they could not gain everlasting life through their union with Moses (the Law Covenant) are ready to abandon all hope of saving their life by that union with Moses, to become dead to all such expectations, and to accept the death of Christ, the ransom for Adam and all his race, as the basis of a new hope of a new life. Hence, only such Israelites as by faith reckoned themselves hopelessly dead under the Law Covenant, and as risen with Christ to a new life secured by his sacrifice, and who in will are dead to sin, — only such could be united to Christ as the new husband, under his New Covenant. Thus, according to the Apostle's reasoning, the thought of blending the two covenants, and being united to both Moses and Christ, was wholly out of the question. — Compare Rom. 6:2.

The text, "Christ is the end [or fulfilment] of the Law [Covenant] for righteousness to everyone [under it] that believeth" (Rom. 10:4), does not conflict with the above, because only believers are specified. (Compare Rom. 3:31; Gal. 2:19.) Eph. 2:15 should be read: "Having abolished in his flesh the enmity of the law of commandments contained in ordinances," etc. Col. 2:13,14 refers to "quickenened"

Jewish believers for whom the handwriting of ordinances is blotted out. Verse 20 refers to the Gentile converts who had to become dead to the "rudiments of the world," before entering the New Covenant, even as the Jews must become dead to the rudiments of their Law Covenant.

That the Law Covenant with Israel is still binding upon that nation is further evident from the fact that upon their national rejection of Christ, they were nationally blinded until the end of the Gospel age (Rom. 11:7,25), and that God declares that he has "not cast away his people" of that Covenant, but that under that Covenant he will yet open

their eyes to see Christ as the only door of hope, and that of a new life purchased with his own. (Rom. 11:2, 27,29; compare Deut. 30:1-9.) Meanwhile, we have the evidence that their Covenant continues in force in the fact that, as a nation, they have for centuries been receiving the very "curses" specified under their Covenant. — See Deut. 28:15-67. Verses 49-53 describe the Roman siege, etc.; verses 64-67 describe the condition of Israel since. (Isa. 59:21.) As heretofore shown, (Vol.2, pp.88-95), the Lord in Leviticus (26:18-34-45) declared the symbolical "seven times," 2520 years, of Israel's subjection to the Gentiles; and their deliverance — A.D. 1914. Thus their present experience was foretold as a part of their covenant.

Rom. 7:6 is not out of harmony with this explanation (that the Israelite who would unite with Christ must die to his nation's Covenant, and that the Law Covenant is not yet dead); for, properly rendered,* it reads, "But now we are delivered from the Law [Covenant], being dead to that wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit [with our minds, our wills]," and not [be required to serve] the very letter of the old, Law Covenant, which has passed away [for us].

What was defective in the old or Law Covenant? Was it sinful or bad? No. How came it, then, that under that Covenant we learned so much about sin?

Because, previous to receiving the Law, Israelites were like the remainder of the world — dead in trespasses and sins; and, being already under sentence of death, we were like the remainder, unrecognized of God, and without any special commands; and hence we could not disobey or increase our sin by disobedience, until the Law Covenant began to command us.

But, notwithstanding that death sentence under which we and all the world rested, we Israelites were "alive" before the Law Covenant came, because God had promised our father Abraham that somehow and at some time he would bless his seed, and through it all the families of earth. Thus, in God's promise to Abraham, a future life was assured to us all, before the Mosaic Covenant was made; but just as soon as that Law Covenant went into force, and required that we must obey its every command in order to secure life, that soon we found that we could not absolutely control our poor, fallen bodies, however much we willed to do so with our minds. And, as sin developed, we died — our hopes of life expired, because we could not keep that Law Covenant. I [Paul] speak for, or as representing, our whole nation. Thus we found that the Law Covenant, promising life to the obedient, really sentenced us to death, because we could not obey its requirements.

Thus we acknowledge that the Law and the Covenant were good in themselves, but not helpful to us, because we were fallen beings. But God intended that it should show us how imperfect we really are. (Verse 13.) For the Law is adapted to all who are in full harmony with God's spirit — perfect beings — and this we Israelites were not; we were and are by nature carnal, depraved, even as others. And if our hearts be right, we can and will admit that we are unable to obey God's perfect law, and that perfection is not to be found in our fallen flesh, even though in our mind we approve God's law and would gladly obey it.

* See marginal reading, Revised Version and Diaglott.

This is the wretched condition in which we find ourselves (verse 24), wanting to obey God's Law, and to have his favor and the everlasting life promised to them that love and obey him, and yet unable to do so because of our dead bodies — fallen and sentenced through Adam's transgression. Oh! How can we get release from this, our difficulty? We cannot obey God's law, and God cannot give us an imperfect Law to suit our fallen condition. Oh, wretched hopeless condition!

But no, brethren, there is hope in Christ! Not a hope of our fulfilling the Law Covenant — no hope of doing those things commanded, and living as a result; nor any hope of saving anything out of the wreck of Adam's fall and sentence. That must all be abandoned. We Israelites must die under the Law Covenant, as unsaved by it as we were before it was made, as unsaved as the Gentiles who never had a share in it. But as we realize ourselves dead under the terms of the Law Covenant, we see that Christ has died for Adam's sin, paid his penalty and thus redeemed him and all — lost through his disobedience — Jew and Gentile, bond and free, male and female. And this relieves us Jews, because Christ was a Jew, "born under the Law" Covenant, that he might redeem those who were under it. (Gal. 4:4,5.) In consequence, therefore, God can be just and accept all who serve his law in their minds and wills, and whose only hindrance from perfect obedience is the weakness of the fallen flesh.

Thanks be unto God for this unspeakable gift; a new life, purchased by the precious blood. This we can obtain under the terms of the *New Covenant, even though we could never justify the Adamic life by obedience to any law that God could give.

[* CTR's later clarification would probably substitute "Sarah" for "New."]

Appendix C-5

R. 4961
(Romans 7:7 – 25)

THE SEED AND THE COVENANTS

Question. — Kindly explain briefly the Apostle's meaning in Romans 7:7-25.

Answer. — The Apostle's thought is this: At the time of Abraham, God said: "Abraham, I intend to bless the world, and I will tell you about it in advance. Through your posterity I will do it, for I have found you faithful as a servant." St. Paul was one of those who was included in that promise. (See Heb. 7:9,10.) Abraham was not under the sentence of the Law; but he had the promise that a blessing would come to him and to all others.

Several hundred years after this, God entered into a special Covenant with the nation of Israel. They bound themselves by the Law Covenant that they would do certain things; and God promised that the reward would be eternal life. But they could not fulfil the conditions, and consequently they came under the sentence of death. Therefore, they were worse off in that respect than if they had never come under the Law Covenant, for they had already received, prospectively, the forgiveness of sin; but now, being unable to keep the Law Covenant, they came again under condemnation to death.

The remainder of the world of mankind was condemned once. God had said that He would bless all those who kept the Law; and the Jews had their opportunity but failed because of inherent weakness. So the Law, St. Paul states, brought them death instead of blessing. How did this awaken in them what he says here? "I had not known sin but by the Law." Suppose that before the Law was given, a man did not know that it was wrong to steal or to kill. Not knowing it, and not having come under any law telling about it, he had not sinned against the law. But before that Law Covenant came, says the Apostle, not having the Law specified to me, I was not under it. But now I know; and sin came upon me because I could not keep what I saw and what I had agreed to do.

Sin lives. What sin? Original sin, Adamic sin, which passed from Adam through heredity upon all his children. God said to Abraham, I intend to bless all the families of the earth. I intend to remove the curse. Those who had failed to keep the Law had come under the curse of the Law as well as under Adam's curse, so that in addition to the curse which came upon all of Adam's children the Jew came under the curse of the Law. That which the Jew thought to be unto life, he found to be unto death. The Law Covenant promised that if the Jew would do these things he would live. But he found that he could not do them, and the Covenant brought condemnation and death upon him. The Apostle does not say that the Law Covenant was just and good, but that the Law was good, the Law was just — not the Covenant. God's Law is always the

same, and always will be the same; but He will make a better Covenant; for finding fault with the Law Covenant, He said, "I will make a New Covenant." If God was not finding fault with the Old Covenant, why make a new one? — Heb. 8:8-13.

The unsatisfactory feature of the Covenant was that it could not give life to Israel. God knew this beforehand, but they did not. God wished them to learn this great lesson, that because of their own deficiency they needed the merit of the sacrifice of the Redeemer. The whole world must learn this lesson. Whoever will not learn it will not make progress; but God's promise is that in due time all the blind eyes shall be opened and all the deaf ears shall be unstopped, and that all shall understand clearly the conditions of God's arrangements and the provision He has made.

Appendix C-6

R. 1969 – 71
(Romans 9:30 — 11:36)

"HAVE THEY NOT HEARD?"

"But I say, Have they not heard? Yes, verily their sound went into all the earth, and their words to the ends of the world." — Rom. 10:18.

BY many this scripture is understood to mean that in Paul's day the gospel had been universally proclaimed and heard; but it requires only a little reflection and observation to see that this view is not correct. For instance, it would be contrary to the reasoning of verses 12-15. — "How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? and how shall they preach except they be sent?" Besides, it could not have reached the portions of the earth then almost or entirely unknown, — e.g., America, Lower Africa, Eastern Asia or Australia. Nor had it gone in a full, clear sense to all even of the then known world.

The Apostle's meaning is clear, however, when his discourse is considered as a whole, and when it is remembered that he is addressing Israelites — those who had been under the bondage of the Law Covenant. The ninth, tenth and eleventh chapters should be taken together and studied as one subject. Then it will be seen that the Apostle, reasoning from the Old Testament Scriptures, is showing that the gospel is to be preached to all the world, and not to Israel only, as some had imagined. To support this argument he repeatedly quotes from the prophets.

It should also be borne in mind that the prophets seldom spoke of things as future, but instead, they took a future standpoint and spoke of things future as though they were present, or accomplished in the past. Thus Isaiah, in referring to the birth of Jesus, a thing then future, spoke of it as though already accomplished, saying, "Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given." (Isa. 9:6.) Thus also "went," in the above text, should be understood; and the real meaning of the passage is seen to be, Verily, their sound goeth, or shall go into all the earth. The statement of Colossians 1:23, properly understood, is in harmony with this: the gospel which the Colossians heard was not to them exclusively, nor to be confined as heretofore to Israel, but was to be preached, declared or made known, irrespective of birth or nationality, to every creature who has ears to hear it.

To make clear Paul's argument, we will briefly paraphrase Romans 9:30 to 11:36, as follows, calling special attention to Paul's quotations from the prophets: —

Rom. 9:30-33. — What must we conclude, then, concerning God's dealings with Israel and the Gentiles? We conclude that though Israel has been seeking to be right and

justified before God, for over 1600 years, and the heathen nations were indifferent to and ignorant of needed justification, yet now that it is offered, Israel will reject, and the heathen will accept, the gospel of justification and reconciliation. Why? Because Israel, as a nation, vainly expect it by works, while the heathen will accept it by faith in Christ's finished work. Israel, feeling so confident that she can approve herself to God by works of obedience, stumbles at the simplicity of the gospel and will not believe that Jesus was the propitiation (satisfaction) for the sins of the whole world. Therefore, instead of accepting of redemption through Christ, they have stumbled over and rejected the only way to God. This was foreshown by the prophet Isaiah (8:14). "Behold, I lay in Sion a stumbling stone, and rock of offence; and whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed."

Chap. 10:1-4. — Though I speak thus plainly about Israel and their stumbling, do not understand me to rejoice in their fall, for I desire and pray that they might be saved. I do not accuse them of indifference and willful unbelief; nay, they have a zeal for God, but they have a plan and way of their own, and are thus blinded to God's way and plan of justifying through a ransom. They hope for salvation through the keeping of the Law in every particular, which in their degenerate condition is an impossibility; and they reject Christ, who before the tribunal of justice became the ransom, the substitute for all who will accept his service; and for all such he met and fulfilled the penalty of the Law, which is death.

Vss. 5-10. — Moses explains (Lev. 18:5) that the man who does right according to the Law shall continue to live, and not die; but in all the time since Moses thus wrote, none has succeeded in meriting life; death claimed all. It is therefore useless longer to look to works. We are proclaiming that Christ is the end of the Law for righteousness to every one that believeth. Jesus' death settled the claims of the Law upon all under it who accept of his ransom; and this is the good tidings which we now proclaim — that a right to life may be had by accepting of the redemption provided through Christ's sacrifice for our sins.

But, my brethren, as Moses also said (Deut. 30:11-14), this thing is not hidden from them, neither is it far off, difficult to understand. And those who banish prejudice and exercise faith will not say, Who ascended into heaven to bring Christ down from above, or who descended into the grave to bring Christ back from the dead? But what will faith say? Faith will say just what Moses said (Deut. 30:14). The word (that is, the truth we preach) is nigh thee, even in thy mouth and in thy heart — it is reasonable and plain, that you may understand. Faith, finding abundant foundation in the teaching and mighty works of Jesus and his apostles and in the testimony of the prophets (unimpeachable witnesses), accepts the facts of the coming of Christ from above, of his death, his resurrection and ascension. Unless you believe this, you of course cannot accept of his sacrifice as being the end of the law and the cancelling of its death-penalty against you as violators of it.

But if you would lay hold of this great salvation, you must publicly and openly confess that Jesus is Lord — your Master; that by his death he purchased you, and thus became your owner; for "To this end Christ both died and rose and revived, that he might be LORD [owner, master] both of the dead and living." (Rom. 14:9.) And you must not only own and believe that he is your purchaser, your Redeemer and Lord, but also that he is a living Lord, that God raised him from death and highly exalted him to a higher nature than that which he gave as our Ransom. To believe and thus

confess is acceptable with God, and to such believers it will be plain that Christ settled all the condemnation of the Law against them, and such may have joy and peace in thus believing. After all, it is with the heart that men believe. No matter how much their minds may be convinced of the truth, if their hearts be stubborn they will not believe. Brethren, get your hearts right, and then you will be able both to believe on and to confess Jesus as your Lord.

Vss. 11-13. — This general principle, that faith is the condition of release from condemnation before God, is proved by the Prophet's words to apply, not only to Israel, but to all mankind, for the Prophet declared, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed. (Isa. 28:16.) This shows that, no matter how much preference was shown the Jew under the Law, there is to be no preference shown under the gospel, for the same Lord over all is rich enough to settle the claims of all that come unto him and ask for a share in the benefits of his ransom sacrifice. We have proof of this also in the prophecy which says, "Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." — Joel 2:32.

Vss. 14-17. — This brings us to another question, namely: Is it not very proper to preach the good tidings of ransom and salvation through Christ to the Gentiles, as well as to Israel? Certainly; the quotation last made implies this; for how could they call on Christ as Lord without believing? and how could they believe on him except they should hear? and how could they hear without a preacher? and how can preachers go forth with this message unless authorized of God? Hence it is evident that God meant this good news to be preached to all the Gentiles as well as to Israel — to every creature. Not only can we reason it out logically thus, but we find a positive statement that the good tidings will be preached, which implies that the Law Covenant will be at an end to everyone who hears and believes. The prophets Isaiah and Nahum testify of this preaching, saying: "How beautiful the feet of him that bringeth good tidings of peace [reconciliation through his blood — the remission of sins], and bringeth good tidings of good [things which come as a result]." — Isa. 52:7; Nahum 1:15.

But we must not hastily suppose that when preached all will receive the good tidings; for the Prophet, speaking of things future as though they were past, again testifies of the result of the preaching, saying, "Who hath believed our report [our preaching], and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?" (Isa. 53:1.) This implies that the real believers and confessors would be few, at least for a while. But this proves that faith is to be the result of hearing — of hearing God's truth — and not a result of keeping perfectly the Law.

Vss. 18-21. — Now we inquire, Will the fact that few will believe prove that the testimony will reach only a few? No, it is bound to reach all, in proof of which I again quote from the Prophet. He says, speaking from a future standpoint: Their sound went into all the earth, and their words to the ends of the world. This proves that all the Gentiles shall yet have this gospel preached to them. But what about Israel? Shall not they as a people come to know — understand and appreciate — the good tidings? Yes, but not for a long time; they are yet a stiffnecked, stubborn people. As Moses said (Deut. 32:21), God will [have to] provoke you to jealousy by them that are no people, and by a foolish nation will he anger you. Isaiah speaks yet more pointedly of Israel's rejection of the message, and of the acceptance of it by the heathen, saying: I was

found of them that sought me not, I was made manifest unto them that asked not after me. And, speaking of Israel, he says, "All day long I have stretched out my hands to a disobedient and gainsaying [self-willed] people." — Isa. 65:1,2.

Chap. 11:1-5. — In view of these declarations of the prophets, showing that Israel will have to be thus dealt with and disciplined, I ask: Hath God utterly cast away his people Israel? God forbid; for I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin. God hath not utterly cast away his people whom he formerly recognized and favored. Call to mind Elijah's prayer against Israel, saying: Lord, they have killed thy prophets and digged down thine altars, and I am left alone, and they seek my life. But mark God's answer: I have reserved to myself seven thousand men who have not bowed the knee to Baal. (1 Kings 19:10,18.) Even so at this present time there is a remnant who through God's favor will accept the good tidings and will not stumble. I, Paul, rejoice, that I am of that favored remnant.

Vss. 6-8. — But now another point: This remnant is not saved by works of the Law, nor because they almost kept it, but by accepting of salvation as God's free favor through Christ. While Israel as a nation fails to receive the blessing sought by works of the Law, the chosen ones, the remnant of Israel, and those of the heathen who receive the gospel, will obtain a special blessing far higher than Israel ever dreamed of. These being justified, not by works, but by faith in Christ as their Redeemer (substitute), thereby gain the privilege of becoming sons of God on the divine plane and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ, the Redeemer, in the coming kingdom. The rest, both of Israel and the nations, will be blinded to this privilege. The God of this world will blind all except those who, by faithfulness, make their calling and election sure — a "little flock."

Vss. 9,10. — David also foretold Israel's stumbling, saying, "Let their table be made a snare and a trap and a stumbling-block and a recompense unto them [i.e., their downfall shall be over the very blessings which God gave them; over their blessings they shall stumble. God had given them food such as he gave to no other people. To them God had committed the oracles of truth, the prophecies and the types which foreshadowed the sacrifice for sin and the blessings following that atoning sacrifice; yet, becoming proud and vain of the honors conferred, they thereby stumbled over the very graciousness of God's plan shown to them in types]." (Psa. 69:22,23.) Thus their eyes were darkened, and they were bowed down to see only the earthly promises.

Vss. 11-14. — But now we come to another question: Admitting that Israel will stumble, and is stumbling, as foretold, I ask, Have they stumbled to fall irrecoverably? will they never again come into fellowship with God? God forbid that they should forever remain cast off. The significance of their fall is rather to be a blessing to the Gentiles than a permanent injury to Israel. And we may reason that if their fall from favor results in riches to the world (the Gentiles), then their restoration to favor, which God's promises guarantee, will imply an abundance of divine favor both to Jews and Gentiles. I speak to you Gentiles thus, because, being the apostle to the Gentiles, I desire to show the importance of the Gentiles in God's plan, and to stimulate my countrymen to emulation, and thus recover some of them from blindness.

Vss. 15-21. — Thus is seen the breadth of God's plans. We know that there are certain promises made to Israel which must yet be fulfilled; and if they would be temporarily postponed and a blessing unexpectedly given to the Gentiles, it argues that God's

plans, as we now see them, are broader than we had at first supposed, and include Gentiles as well as Jews; for if the casting away of them opens a door of favor to the Gentiles, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead? that is to say, God's promises to Israel are such as imply their resurrection from death, their restitution; and now that we learn that the world in general may be reconciled to God because their sin was atoned for by the ransom, we may reasonably conclude that "life from the dead," restitution, will be offered to all the heathen, as well as to Israel. We see Israel to be merely a first-fruit of the world, the first favored; and if God has a blessing for them, as promised, it follows that he has the same blessing for other nations; for if the first-fruit, or sample, be holy — acceptable and blessed of God — so also the mass which it represents (the world in general) will be holy.

The covenant promise of God out of which the kingdom classes are being developed is the root, and Fleshly Israel as branches were first developed. But, because of unbelief and pride, most of these were broken off, and wild, heathen branches were grafted in instead, with them to partake of the life of the root, yea, the very fatness of the promise; yet they should not be puffed up against the broken-off branches, but humbly and thankfully remember that they are occupying the place originally belonging to the natural descendants. Walk humbly, for if because of pride and unbelief they failed and were cast off, God would be as likely to cut off the wild branches under similar circumstances. [How we see this fulfilling in the breaking off of many of the Gentile branches — now blinded and being cast off. They are no more respected than were the natural branches, and are broken off for the same cause. (Rev. 3:15-17.) Only the elect few branches, the "little flock," will remain.]

Vss. 22-24. — Here we find two prominent characteristics of our Heavenly Father illustrated — his love and his justice — his goodness and severity. He is abundant in mercy and goodness, but will by no means clear the guilty. His goodness is manifested by the promise and the blessings it contains, and his just severity in the cutting off from those favors of all the unfaithful. But even in cutting Israel off, God is merciful and kind; for even though cut off as a people from the chief favor, they still have every advantage as individuals, and as such, any may be re-engrafted, if they exercise the needful faith, though, as we have already seen, their hearts are hardened by the past favors of God, so that most of them are less ready than the Gentiles to accept of the gospel

"THIS MYSTERY."

Vss. 25-27. — Here is a fact not generally known; it is a secret as yet — a mystery — and will show you that God's plan is more comprehensive than you have yet appreciated; and by showing you that you have not all wisdom, it will enable you to keep humble and to search for the further unfoldings of God's plans. The mystery is this: The blindness and breaking off of Israel will not continue forever, it will last only until the choicest, fittest branches from the Gentiles have been properly engrafted on the root — the Abrahamic promise. Then the broken-off branches shall be reunited to the root. The fact is, the root of promise contains a double set of branches; first, the select branches, natural and engrafted, the spiritual seed of Abraham, the Christ which is to bless all nations; and, secondly, a lower order

of engrafted branches — Israel restored — the natural seed of Abraham through which the spiritual seed will principally operate in blessing all nations.

Thus seen, Israel as a whole will be saved from their blindness in due time, and will yet share in the very blessings they expected when they were broken off; viz., the natural or earthly part of the blessings — the better or spiritual part of the Abrahamic blessing being conferred upon the elect, then chosen, who through much tribulation and crucifixion of the flesh and following of the Master are counted worthy of the chief honor, the spiritual blessings. What I state as to the recovery of Israel from her cast-off condition is already stated, but obscurely, by Isaiah the prophet (59:20,21), and I will throw light upon it by stating it clearly, as follows: "There shall come out of Zion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: For this is my covenant unto them when I shall take away their sins."

Vss. 27-30. — This prophetic statement shows us that though the natural branches are treated as enemies for the present, for your exaltation, yet really they are still beloved of God, and he has blessings yet in store for them, as promised to their fathers; for any free gift and promise which God makes is sure of fulfillment. He fully foreknew this temporary lopping off before he made his promises concerning them, and, knowing the end from the beginning, it is unnecessary for him ever to repent of a promise.

Let us now analyze this prophecy and see that it implies what we have before suggested to be God's plan; viz., to bring the natural branches again into God's favor. "Jacob" clearly means Fleshly Israel, and from these ungodliness is to be turned away — but not until God himself shall "take away," or "put away," or "blot out" their sins. As elsewhere shown, the sins of the world will not be put away, until the close of the Gospel age, until the sufferings of the body of Christ are ended. During this age, only the sins of those who now believe are cancelled or put out of sight by God. But he who now justifies believers, will then justify them also, when they become believers in the ransom. He will thus take away their sin through the same ransom which he gave for our sin — even his Son.

In turning away ungodliness a Deliverer is required. This is none other than Christ, the great Deliverer whom Moses promised. He shall deliver from all evil, from death, from pain and sickness, from ignorance and blindness, from every oppression of the devil. He shall bind Satan and set free his captives. This Deliverer is the complete Christ, the members of the body with the head united, complete, no more twain, but one. This Deliverer comes out of Zion, the heavenly Jerusalem, which is the mother of us all. (Gal. 4:26.) He is the first-born of Zion, the overcomer and heir of all things. Hence, before the promised blessings come to Jacob (Fleshly Israel), the heir of the spiritual blessings must first be developed.

Nor should we suppose that the blessings and deliverances will stop with Jacob; for, as already shown, they are but a first-fruits of restored mankind; and when they are turned to God, they shall become a channel through which the Deliverer will bless and release "all the families of the earth."

Vs. 31. Lift up your eyes and take now a comprehensive view of God's dealings with Israel — both spiritual Israel and Israel after the flesh — and see how grand and large

is the plan of God, which as yet is only budding. As for a long while you (Gentiles) were strangers and aliens from God, and seemingly unloved and uncared for, yet now you have obtained mercy and favor, while Fleshly Israel is cut off, even so these of the fleshly house are now unbelievers and cut off that by and by they may obtain mercy and find favor through you. That is to say, God is blessing them at the very time he is cutting them off; for in blessing you and preparing the spiritual seed and Deliverer, he is making ready to bless them through you, when you as the body of Christ are complete. (Gal. 3:29.) Thus through the mercy which God now shows you, he is also providing mercy for them, to be manifested in his due time.

Vss. 32-36. — God treated Israel as a nation of unbelievers, and cast them aside nationally, in order that he might have mercy upon them nationally, and bring them as a people to inherit the earthly promises made to them.

Looking at the deep workings of God's plan thus, in the light of what he tells us is future, as well as of what is past, how wonderful it is! Oh, the rich depths of God's wisdom and knowledge! How useless for us to try to discover his dealings except as he is pleased to reveal his plans to us. His doings are all mysteries to us except as we are enlightened by his Spirit. Who knew this gracious plan, so much beyond human conception? Who helped the Lord to arrange such a plan, think you? This is not human wisdom. God only could be its author. A Jew never would have planned to graft in Gentiles to share the chief blessings of the promise! A Gentile never would have arranged the original stock and branches Jewish and himself a favored graft. No, the plan is clearly of God, and well illustrates both his goodness and his just severity. Of him is all the plan; through his power it is all brought to pass; and to him be the glory forever.

When the spirit of Paul's argument is caught, it can be clearly seen that he quotes the words, "Their sound went into all the earth and their words to the end of the world," AS PROPHECY yet to be fulfilled, and not to prove that the gospel had been universally published, but that it would be in due time.

Appendix C-7

R. 3179
(Romans 13:7-14)

OBLIGATIONS OF A CHRISTIAN.

"Love worketh no ill to his neighbor; therefore,
love is the fulfilling of the law."

SOME one has well denominated this 13th chapter of Romans "The Christian Citizen's Chapter." We might consider it remarkable, almost to the extent of amazement, that every feature of Christian life, duty and character is set forth somewhere in the apostolic writings, did we not remember that the apostles, as the stars, or bright ones, of the Church, were specially held in the hand of the Lord; specially guided in their utterances, that they should set forth the whole counsel of God, that the man of God might be thoroughly furnished unto every good word and work.

There is a vast difference between the governmental conditions of the present time and those which prevailed at about the time of the writing of this epistle. Monarchs are no longer absolute; and it is difficult for us to conceive the condition of things in which an emperor had authority not only to set apart culprits as victims for death in public spectacles, but after these had been destroyed, had the authority also to instruct his servants to select further victims from amongst the audience. It is when we get before our minds this view of atrocious government which prevailed in the Apostle's day that we get the full scope of his injunction, "Let every soul be subject to the higher powers; for the powers that be are ordained of God." It is comparatively easy to be subject to the higher powers in civilized lands today, for although absolute justice might not be meted out in every instance, there is at least an endeavor to render a show of justice, such as the world has never before known.

We should be very thankful that our lot has been favorably cast in this respect. In declaring that "the powers that be are ordained of God," we are not to understand the Apostle to mean that they are endorsed by God, nor that their decisions, rules, etc., are approved by him or are in harmony with his rules and laws. The Apostle's intimation means simply that in divine providence things are as they are, and our God, who knows all the circumstances and conditions, permits them to be as they are, though he could overthrow and overturn and substitute his own Kingdom of righteousness. Nevertheless, this is not his plan; but rather for the time being he permits the kingdoms of this world, whose rulers are under the prince of this world, and largely blinded by his deceptions, to take much their own course — subject only to certain limitations by which the Lord hinders Satan and any of his misguided dupes from doing real injury to the best interests of the Lord's people or to the thwarting of the divine plan. His divine power overrules the wrath of man and makes it to praise him, and the remainder, which will not accomplish anything of good, but which would be subversive of the divine arrangements, he will restrain. — Psa. 76:10.

"Render, therefore, to all their dues" — to all men as well as to all rulers — in financial as well as political matters. A great mistake, we believe, is being made along these lines today. The general sentiment amongst Christian people is that Christian citizenship implies engaging in political strife — and endeavoring to determine who shall be the rulers, striving to better the laws and have them obeyed, and putting forth efforts to oppose and rebuke bad laws. It will be noticed that the Apostle gives no such advice. On the contrary, he elsewhere declares, "Your citizenship is in heaven." (Phil. 3:20, R.V.) We are strangers and foreigners in the kingdoms of this world. Our Kingdom is yet to come; it is promised, and we are praying for it, "Thy Kingdom come; thy will be done on earth," and we are expecting it; but meantime, as foreigners, "not of this world" (John 18:36), it is our business to render obedience to the laws, customs, usages, of this world, in so far as these do not infringe upon our conscientious obligations to the Lord and the truth; but this does not mean that we are to become partizans in political strifes, and contentions amongst men. Let the world elect its own rulers in whatever way it sees best; we put up with whatever it provides with thankfulness, with gratitude to God for whatever may come, with the realization that he will guide and care for us under all circumstances, and that in any event our highest interests are being conserved. Obedience to the laws of the land might at some time oblige us to bear arms, and in such event it would be our duty to go into the army, if unable in any legal and proper manner to obtain exemption, but it would not be our duty to volunteer. We are soldiers in another army, which battles not with carnal weapons, and whose contests are from an entirely different standpoint and in an entirely different spirit. There could be nothing against our consciences in going into the army. Wherever we would go we could take the Lord with us, the Captain of our salvation, and wherever we would go we could find opportunities to serve him and his cause. If it came to the point of battling we above all others need have no fear of death, but we, assuredly, would be obliged to draw the line when commanded to fire, and we could not, in harmony with the divine program, fire upon a fellow-creature with the intention of taking his life. If we fired we should be obliged to fire either into the air or into the ground. All this army service would come in under this heading, "Render to all their dues." The governor of the state has the right, under the laws, to call for and to conscript, if necessary, soldiers for the defense of the state and of the nation; and if such requisition be enforced upon us we must render our dues and take our share in the trials and difficulties of the service, whatever they may be. The Apostle, however, stipulates more particularly what he means by dues, showing that he does not mean that we owe it to others to vote, to participate in political strifes. He had particularly in mind the paying of tribute, custom, fear, honor, to whom these are due. Tribute was the tax payable by a subject nation to the principal power, as, for instance, by the Jewish nation to the Roman Empire while its vassal. Custom is a tariff duty, or tax, levied in one form or another for the support of government, by a tax upon imports or exports or by direct taxation. Fear, or reverence, is differentiated from honor, or respect, in the sense that it may be the duty to salute an officer or representative of the government, by baring the head or bowing the knee, or otherwise, thus showing him honor or respect, not necessarily as a man, but as an officer, regardless of his personal character. The fear that is to be rendered is in the sense of obedience, as we elsewhere read, "Fear the judge." The commands of the judge or court are to be obeyed — whatever others might be disposed to do, Christians are never to be found in contempt of court, but are to obey its rules to the very letter, whether they consider them just or unjust, because the judge is the representative of the law, and God permits the law and the judge, and commands us to be subject to

whatever he permits. If, therefore, as our Lord explained, some one shall sue us at the law, and take away our coat, or if it include our cloak also, all that we had, we are not to resist; we are to be obedient to the powers that be. This does not mean, however, that we shall willingly submit to the coat or cloak or other articles being taken from us illegally or unjustly without process of law.

Having thus considered the Christian's obligation to the government, the Apostle next passes to the consideration of the Christian's obligation to his neighbors. He is to owe no man anything. This does not necessarily mean that he must not, under any circumstances, borrow, but that if he borrows with a specific understanding respecting the time of return of the money or goods, he shall be prompt to meet the obligation. And unless he is absolutely certain of his ability to meet the obligation, or can give security such as a mortgage, he should not borrow. There is, however, the standing advice of the Word of God that the children of the great King should be lenders, and not borrowers. "Do good and lend." Indeed, we believe that it would be to the advantage of every child of God if he would put in practice the Apostle's words in this lesson in the most absolute sense, and never borrow anything; never owe anything; paying for what he needs at the time of purchase, or else waiting for it until, in the Lord's providence, he is able to pay for it in advance. There is one thing, however, the Apostle implies we are continually owing to our fellow-creatures, not only to the members of our own family and our own neighborhood, but to all men; viz., love. We owe them this, under the divine law, and it is a part of Christian duty to discharge this obligation daily. A parent or member of the family is to see that he does his part in support of the home and its comforts and privileges and quiet and harmony, that his influence in his neighborhood amongst his friends and acquaintances shall be for good and not for evil, for peace and not for strife. And as the Apostle elsewhere remarks, if he is to do good unto all men, as he has opportunity, and because he loves all and desires their welfare, much more especially is he to have such sentiments and conduct toward those of the household of faith. (Gal. 6:10.) He is to be ready to do good at the expense of his own time and convenience, to all men, but he is to be ready to lay down his life for the brethren — he is to seek opportunities for laying down his life day after day, in the sense of giving his time to the communication of the truth, or helping the Lord's brethren in any manner, to put on the whole armor of God, and to stand in the evil day.

The Apostle calls attention to the comprehensive statement of the Law set forth by our Lord; viz., that love is the fulfilling of the law, and that, therefore, love for the neighbor signifies that the law of God is fulfilled toward our neighbor. It will be remembered, however, that the law of love is divided into two parts; first, love to God; second, love to our fellows; and the loving of our neighbor would, therefore, be only a part of the fulfilling of the entire love to God. After loving our neighbor, and even laying down our life for him, we would need to see to it that we do not neglect the first feature of this law; viz., that we should love God more than our neighbor and more than ourselves, so that every human interest and matter would be sacrificed gladly in response to our conviction of the divine will.

Going on to speak of the fulfilment of this second part of the Law of Love — the duty toward the neighbor, — the Apostle enumerates the essence of some of the commandments respecting murder, adultery, false witness, theft, covetousness, and all other commandments that relate to our fellow-creatures — they are all met by the

Law of Love to our neighbor. The commandments of the Decalogue were all of a negative character, "Thou shalt not" do this or that which would be injurious to thy neighbor. But the new Law of Love is positive, and declares, upon the other side of the question, "Thou shalt love" thy neighbor. Love, therefore, meets all the requirements of the "shalt nots" of the Ten Commandments and much more. For whosoever, in obedience to this Law of Love, is seeking to do good to his neighbor, will surely not slander him nor murder him nor steal from him nor covet his goods, nor otherwise do, or wish to do him injury, or even to think of him with unkindness.

Having considered these two points; viz., duty to rulers and duty to neighbors, the Apostle next turns to the Christian's duty toward himself, declaring, "Knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep." The Christian is to realize that he, and in general the whole world, has been asleep in a sort of stupor, in respect to the highest and best and noblest things. Now having gotten the eyes of his understanding opened, and being, at least, partially awake to righteousness, he begins to weigh and measure matters after a fashion different from his previous course. He begins to estimate rightly the things of this present life, as not worthy to be compared with the glorious things which belong to the eternal life. He begins to realize that the world has now been six days (a thousand years each — 2 Pet. 3:8) under the reign of sin and death, and that the morning of the great Sabbath of refreshment and blessing and rest is at hand. As he realizes this he should feel disposed to arouse himself and shake himself thoroughly from the dust of ignorance, superstition, blindness and sordidness, and to live in harmony with the glorious hopes he now entertains — living for the new era, the new dispensation, which he sees is approaching, realizing that day by day since first he believed, his salvation is drawing nearer. Instructed by the Word of God, he will not expect his salvation except in connection with the second coming of our Lord Jesus and the establishment of his Kingdom; as the Apostle in another place declares, "The grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." — 1 Pet. 1:13.

The thought of the second coming of the Lord was continually before the Apostles; and our Lord evidently designed that it should be constantly an incentive to all the members of his Church throughout the age. This, undoubtedly, was one reason why he did not particularly explain the length of time that would intervene — it would be a short time, from God's standpoint, and even from the human standpoint it would be a short time to each individual who would have only the few remaining years of life wherein to make ready for the glorious things of the future; since "in death there is no remembrance of thee; in the grave who can give thee thanks?" — Psa. 6:5.

Looking back, and perceiving that about 4178 years had already passed in sin and gross darkness upon the world, the Apostle realized that the night was surely far spent, and the day not far distant. And now we, living eighteen centuries nearer to the day, are highly favored by the Lord in this due time, in that we are permitted to see the particulars that were obscure to some extent in the Apostle's day. We believe that the day is actually at hand; that we are now living in the early dawn of the new dispensation, and that as soon as the harvest of this Gospel age shall be gathered, the work of change, or transformation, by which the kingdoms of this world shall, in a great time of trouble, become the kingdom of our Lord and his Christ, is nigh, even at the door.

What is the force of the Apostle's argument to those who see as he did the approaching Kingdom of light that shall banish all the darkness of sin, ignorance, superstition, etc.? It is expressed in his words, "Let us, therefore, cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light." The works of darkness would be any works whatsoever that would not stand the fullest investigation; that would not stand approval in the light of the new dispensation, if it were already fully ushered in. Let us remember that we belong to the new dispensation, and not to the old, and should, therefore, live in accordance with our citizenship and our responsibilities toward the Prince of light and in opposition to the prince of darkness, his works and his ways.

We have elsewhere considered this matter of putting on the armor of light; and the necessity, as expressed in the Apostle's statement, that the particular period of time in which the change from the dominion of the prince of this world to the Kingdom of God's dear Son will be a specially evil day — a day, a period, in which all the children of light will be crucially tested; such a day as will try every man's work and faith what they are; a day and a fiery trial through which only the gold, silver and precious stones will pass unscathed, and in which all the hay, wood and stubble of error and sin and human tradition and falsehood will be entirely destroyed. No wonder, then, that the Apostle repeatedly urges us to put on the armor of light — preparation by the Lord's people for the trials of this particular time, which we perceive is now just upon us — in fact, we are already passing into these very fires of this day of trial. We are already in the time when the wood, hay and stubble is being consumed, and when Higher Criticism, Evolutionary theory, Christian Science, Hypnotism, under its own name and known as Mind Cures, etc., are devouring as a flame all that are not fully devoted to the Lord, and, therefore, specially kept by his power through his Word and providence.

Let us walk honestly, as in the day. We are not yet fully in the day, but we belong to the new era, and are, therefore, to live even in this present time as nearly as possible up to the perfect standards of the future. So to live will signify self-denial — will imply that we will be misunderstood by the world; will imply that we will be thought foolish, and that we will be considered enemies, not only by those who are in gross darkness, but particularly by those who profess to be the Lord's people, children of the light, but who really prefer darkness and error rather than light and truth. We are inclined to lay special stress on this word "honestly," and to believe that the Apostle used it advisedly and in a particular sense.

As we look all about us we find that dishonesty is very prevalent; not merely in the world, where we expect a certain amount of duplicity and misrepresentation and deception, and people passing for what they are not, but we find this kind of dishonesty very prevalent amongst professing Christians; yea, we have known ministers to boast of their dishonesty — to declare that they never did believe the creed which they had professed to believe and vowed they would teach to others. Intelligent ministers are today preaching in all denominations what they do not believe, standing for creeds and theories which misrepresent their true sentiments. They are acting dishonestly; they are searing their own consciences; they are putting themselves into a condition where they cannot make progress into the light of the truth; for surely God does not want dishonest people in his elect Church. Surely, unless they become honest, they will have their portion with the hypocrites, for the hypocrites are the dishonest. "Let us walk honestly," appeals to every true child of God.

Appendix C-8

R. 1734
(Romans 14:1 — 15:7)

"STAND FAST IN THE LIBERTY."

We that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves. — Rom. 15:1.

Our liberty in Christ, under the terms of the New Covenant, must take care that others are not injured by our use of liberty; for this would be condemned by our law of Love. The Apostle clearly emphasizes this in his letter to the Romans. — Chap. 14:1 to 15:7.

He there points out that all are not alike strong in the faith. Some, weak in the faith, can see that Christ is our Redeemer, but cannot as yet realize the liberty we have in Christ; for one realizes his liberty to eat whatever agrees with him, while another one, who is weak (in bondage), eats vegetables only, lest he should violate some law under which he thinks himself. Each should learn to grant the other full liberty of conscience: the stronger should not despise the weaker, nor should the weaker judge others by himself. It should be sufficient to know that God accepts even the weakest ones. So it is also with reference to the observance of days: One man esteems one day above another, while another esteems all days alike. Let each carry out fully the conviction of his own mind.

The Apostle does not here teach, as so many suppose from the common translation, that each should make up his mind and stick to it, whether right or wrong; nor does he teach that one is as right as the other. On the contrary, he urges growth into the full liberty of Christ, but counsels patience and consideration on the part of the stronger for the weaker. He approves the stronger, and plainly states that the brother who thinks himself under a bondage regarding meat, or Sabbath days, fast days, etc., is the weak brother. But he urges that if such a weak brother observes such a bondage, not as an attempt to "keep the Law" and to justify himself before God, ignoring Christ's redemption sacrifice, but because he thinks that our Redeemer wishes him to be bound by such ordinances, then the stronger ones should not rail at, or make light of, his conscientious weakness, but rather receive him fully as a brother, trusting that discipline and experience and growth in grace and knowledge will gradually bring him to the liberty which others reach more quickly.

And those strong ones who enter fully into the spirit of the Apostle's remark, "It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor anything whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak," and deny themselves what their own consciences permit, have the greater blessing. They can realize in an additional degree that they are following in the Master's steps; for "Even Christ pleased not himself." — Rom. 14:21; 15:2,3.

For if the stronger brethren by sarcasm and influence were to force the weaker ones to use a liberty they did not realize, it would be forcing them into sin; for any violation of conscience is sin. (Rom. 14:23.) Therefore the weaker brethren should be left to the liberty of their consciences. They should be received as brethren, the influences of love and truth alone being brought to bear upon them, in the hope of gradually educating them to an appreciation of their full privileges as free men in Christ. Thus the body may be full of charity and unity, each one carrying out the convictions of his own mind as to the Lord's will, and each seeking to grow in grace and knowledge, out of childhood's weakness into manhood's strength, as rapidly as possible; being developed as he feeds upon God's Word.

The Apostle again refers specially to the observance of days as a sign of weakness, childishness and lack of development, saying (Gal. 4:10,11): "Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years. I am anxious on your behalf, lest my labor for you has been in vain." He here addresses those who had once known the liberty of the sons of God, but who were now getting into bondage through false teaching. He recognized by these weaknesses for the things commanded by the Law Covenant, an evidence that they were not growing into the liberty of sons of God, but going backward toward the servant condition (see verses 6-9; 19-31); and he was even fearful that this weakness and failure to maintain the liberty of sonship, and this subservience to the Law Covenant might lead them to reject the true gospel, that Christ gave himself for our sins, and accept as a gospel a hopeless substitute — that Christ would save them if they kept the Law. — Gal. 1:4-8; 5:2.

In Col. 2:14-17, the Apostle declares the same truth with reference to the liberty of all who are in Christ, in respect to the Law: especially singling out the festivals, new moons and Sabbaths. He pointedly declares (verse 13) that those believers who had been Gentiles were pardoned fully and freely from all condemnation, while concerning those who had been Jews he says (verse 14), Christ blotted out the written Law which was against us [believing Israelites], removed it from our way, nailing it to his cross; having stripped away from the original [law] and its authorities [all obscurities], he made a public illustration of them [in his life of obedience to them], triumphing over them by it [in obedience even unto death, even the death of the cross]. "Therefore," reasons the apostle, because our Lord has made both you Gentiles and us Jews free, "permit no man to judge you in meat or drink, or in respect to a holyday, or of the new moon, or of the Sabbaths, which are shadows of future things, the substance [or antitypes] of which appertain to the Anointed [Head and Body]."

Glorious is the liberty of the sons of God! Let us stand fast in it! And let us enjoy to the full our rest of faith; for we can rest (enjoy Sabbath) whether the world has a Sabbath or not: whether any day or no day is commanded by human law, our rest abides. It lasts seven days in each week and twenty-four hours in each day, and is not broken by physical labor, nor is it dependent on physical ease. It is a deep and lasting rest, and can be broken only by doubt — by a rejection of the basis on which it must abide, the ransom, — or by living after the flesh, and thus disturbing conscience and our relationship toward God.

How blessed is the state of all in Christ, as mature sons of God under favor, not servants nor infants under Laws! (John 15:15; Rom. 8:15; Gal. 4:1-6.) How blessed to

us is the true rest of faith in Christ's finished work, which rest neither the world nor the Law could give, and which, from us that are free, they cannot take away. We realize that Israel's Sabbath (not only their weekly Sabbath, but also their yearly Sabbath and their Jubilee) was as far inferior to the real as was their Passover inferior to our Passover, and their sacrifices to our sacrifices, and their altar and candle-stick and table of shew-bread to ours. The realities, in all these, are a thousand times grander than their shadows.

Appendix C-9

R. 5323
(Romans 14:7-21)

CONSIDER ONE ANOTHER

"It is good not to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor to do anything whereby thy brother stumbleth." — Romans 14:21 — Diaglott.

THIS lesson makes, perhaps, the strongest appeal of anything in the Bible in favor of total abstinence from the use of intoxicating liquors. True, it is addressed only to Christians, as is the entire New Testament. Nevertheless, many who have not become followers of Jesus can appreciate the argument here, and to many such it will appeal — not along the highest Christian lines, but along the lines of the Golden Rule.

To make a distinction between the Golden Rule, the acknowledged standard for all mankind, and a Christian's rule of life will be considered by many, doubtless, as a distinction without a difference. But this is not true.

The Golden Rule, that one should do to others as he would be done by, is a simple rule of justice. All should recognize it. All should follow it, as none will dispute it.

The rule for Christian living, as taught by the Master and exemplified by Him, is far more exacting than the Golden Rule, which is applicable to all men. Those who become followers of Christ are, of course, subject to the Golden Rule, but they voluntarily place themselves under a far more stringent rule. Their Covenant with the Lord is that in the doing of His will — the doing of righteousness — they will ever stand ready to sacrifice everything, even life itself. This is what the Apostle meant when he declared that Christ pleased not Himself. Even though His will was a perfect one, He renounced His rights, privileges, liberties, that He might serve humanity, and thus lay the foundation for carrying out the Heavenly Father's glorious purposes respecting our race. The present call of the Church is for those who have the "same mind which was also in Christ Jesus." It is a call for sacrificers. As St. Paul declares, "I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service." (Romans 12:1.) This sacrificing is not to be done in a foolish or aimless way. We are not to sacrifice the things that are right and proper, simply that we may suffer. Right and proper things we may enjoy, except as God shall open our eyes to see privileges and opportunities for self-denial which would enable us to forward His cause, and to minister grace and truth to those for whom Christ died.

"NONE OF US LIVETH TO HIMSELF"

Let us first consider our lesson from the standpoint of the consecrated people of God, and afterwards from the standpoint of others who love righteousness, but who have not, as yet, joined the Lord and His faithful, self-sacrificing band of followers.

As for the world, they do live to themselves and die to themselves. That is to say, their own personal interests stand first with them. Only to Christ and the Church could these words apply; for none others than these have entered into such a Covenant of self-renunciation, giving up the present with all of its privileges and interests in exchange for a promise of a spiritual life hereafter, in the resurrection.

All these, by the terms of their Covenant, are to live unto the Lord — to do His will and not their own will, to serve Him and not to serve self, to lay down their lives in fighting a good fight against sin. All these, when they die, will be dying unto the Lord, in the sense that they are counted as members of the Body of Christ, every member of which must die to the flesh before the entire Body complete can be glorified beyond the veil. To these, therefore, apply the words, "Whether we live or die, we are the Lord's."

This being true, the Christian is to have no will of his own as respects his living or his dying, or any of his affairs. Everything is to be fully committed and submitted to the great Head of the Church. Christ's death on behalf of all is efficacious, not only for the dead, but also for the living. All who recognize Him, and are fully consecrated to His service, trust Him fully, in life and in death.

The Apostle proceeds to show that we who constitute the Church which is the Body of Christ are not judges one of another, that all judgment is vested in the Head, the Redeemer of all. Each one now accepted as a member of the Church must ultimately stand the inspection of the Head of the Church; for our present membership in His Body is a probationary one. Loyalty, faithfulness to the Head of the Church now, will bring to us eventually membership in His glorious Body, the Church beyond the veil — His joint-heirs in the Kingdom — His Bride.

The Apostle's argument, then, is that we should avoid condemning one another, and content ourselves with encouraging each other in the good way. Since it is written that every knee shall bow and every tongue confess to God, this proves that our final accounting as members of the Church of Christ will be to God, or to our Lord Jesus as His Representative.

LET US, THEN, JUDGE OURSELVES

The Apostle's argument also is that, instead of judging, condemning, fellow-members of the consecrated Body, we should be full of sympathy for them. We should realize that we do not know thoroughly their trials, their difficulties, their environments, their heredities. This should make us very sympathetic towards all the brethren. Our keen sense of justice, our love of righteousness, our hatred of iniquity, should find its principal exercise in self-criticism, and in watchfulness not to do anything that would stumble a brother — not to do anything that would discourage a brother or cause him to fall away from the faith and the works which the Lord requires.

What a wonderful lesson is this in battling against self, rather than against enemies! How many find it easy to excuse their own weaknesses while they are very captious and critical as respects the shortcomings of others! How the Lord warned His people against such an attitude saying, "With what [so ever kind of] judgment ye judge [a brother], ye shall be judged" [yourself of the Lord]. — Matthew 7:2.

If you are hypercritical and wish to measure others up to the full standard of perfection, you are thus recognizing a high standard, and that recognition on your part will make it proper for the Lord to measure you by that high standard. If we could but remember this — that the merciful will obtain mercy — how glad we all would be to be extremely merciful to others, extremely lenient in our judgments and reproofs, hoping that the Lord would be correspondingly lenient with us! — James 2:13.

The Lord is not in this establishing a low standard, and wishing His people to think lightly of their own weaknesses and failures, and those of others. He is, on the contrary, setting up a high standard of love, sympathy, and kindness. Love is the principal thing, in God's sight. Whoever, therefore, has love and sympathy most highly developed, the Lord may well esteem as highly developed along the lines most essential in His sight, most essential for a place in His Mediatorial Kingdom.

NOTHING UNCLEAN OF ITSELF

"I know and am persuaded of the Lord Jesus, that nothing is unclean [unholy] of itself," writes the Apostle. The Apostle is referring not to filthiness of clothing or person, but to foods which were to the Jew made improper, ceremonially unclean. In other words, while the Jew was forbidden the use of swine, rabbits, oysters, etc., it was not that these foods would make him actually impure or evil in God's sight, but that the restrictions were imposed as tests of his loyalty and obedience to God, just as the forbidden fruit of Eden was thereafter unclean to Adam and Eve.

The Apostle's argument is that to the Jew who died to all hope of attaining eternal life through keeping the Law Covenant, and who became united to Christ, the restrictions of the Law Covenant would no longer be binding. And, of course, to the Gentile, who never was under the Law Covenant, its restrictions would have no application when he accepted Christ.

Having stated this broad ground, the Apostle admits that if any man had his reasoning faculties so twisted on the subject that he thought himself under obligations, he would be responsible according to his mind or judgment on the subject. If, for instance, a Christian thought that he was obliged to avoid eating pork, that thought in his mind would constitute an obligation; for him to violate his conscience would mean that he had willingly, knowingly, committed sin; for he would be wrong in doing what he thought was wrong, however harmless the matter might be in itself.

But now comes the final argument: Anybody realizing his own liberty, as the Apostle did, might eat freely, according to his convenience, without any reproof from his conscience or in the sight of God. But the brother still in the dark respecting his liberty should have consideration — should not be urged to violate his conscience. Rather, the brother of enlightened mind should yield to the other, and abstain from using his liberty, lest he should tempt his brother to violate his conscience.

This question of eating ceremonially unclean meat, or meat theoretically unclean because it had been first waved before an idol, is a question which no longer is a live

issue among Christians; for general intelligence on the subject has gained the mastery everywhere.

The special application of this lesson to Christians is along a still different line. For instance, suppose that one brother had from childhood been accustomed to drinking beer, ale, etc., and that in his estimation it did him no injury. But suppose a number of brethren, less strong than he, physically and mentally, could not touch intoxicants without harming themselves; and suppose that the example of the drinking brother would continue to be a temptation to the others. What should be his course?

The argument of the Apostle would seem to be that the brother who is strong, mentally, morally and physically, should gladly abstain from anything that would stumble his brother, or anybody else upon whom he exercised an influence. "Destroy not him with thy meat, for whom Christ died." (Romans 14:15.) If Christ loved the world so much as to leave His Heavenly riches and glory to die for sinners, should not we, in proportion as we have His Spirit, be glad to lay down our lives for the brethren, as the Apostle elsewhere exhorts us? And if so, should we not be much more ready to abstain from the use of comparatively trifling liberties for the sake of our weaker brother, for whom Christ died? This is a strong argument. Who can deny it? "Let not then your good be evil spoken of." Your knowledge, your appreciation, of your liberties is a good thing, a desirable thing; nevertheless, you should so govern your exercise of that liberty that none will misunderstand it, and think you an evil-doer. Rather restrain yourself of your liberties, preserve others from the temptation too strong for them, and increase your own influence by faithfully abstaining from everything that might appear to be an evil in the sight of others, however right it might be in your own sight, and however correct your own judgment of the Divine Law on the subject might be.

"NOT MEAT AND DRINK"

The Apostle adds another argument (v.17). He remarks, For the advantages connected with our membership in the embryo Kingdom of God consist not in the greater privileges and liberties we have in eating and drinking, but consist rather in the righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit which are ours because we are probationary members of this Kingdom Class. He who thus serves Christ is well pleasing to God and is approved of men. "Let us, therefore, follow after the things which make for peace and things whereby we may edify one another. Overthrow not for meat's sake the work of God. All things indeed are clean; but evil for that man who eateth with offense. It is good not to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor to do anything whereby thy brother stumbleth."

The application of the Golden Rule on the part of the world would seem to be a settlement of many questions of the present time. Do unto others weaker than yourself, in precept and example, what you would have them do for you in precept and example, if you were the weaker and they the stronger.

Appendix D

An Article
on
Romans 12
by
Bro. Ernie Kuenzli

Extracted from **THE HERALD OF CHRIST'S KINGDOM**,
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(Note: Underscoring and boxing have been added.)

Overpowering Evil Formula for Consecrated Living

“Take the offensive — overpower evil by good!” (Romans 12:21 Phillips)

The Apostle Paul’s statement above is actually a conclusion based on what he had written before. In Romans 12, Paul gives us pertinent advice on how to live a consecrated life, concluding with his statement to overpower evil by good. We review Romans 12 from the Phillips translation because we think it captures some important thoughts concerning Paul’s advice.

Paul begins his advice in Romans 12:1-2: “With eyes wide open to the mercies of God, I beg you, my brothers, as an act of intelligent worship, to give him your bodies, as a living sacrifice, consecrated to him and acceptable by him. Don’t let the world around you squeeze you into its own mold, but let God re-mold your minds from within, so that you may prove in practice that the plan of God for you is good, meets all his demands, and moves towards the goal of true maturity” (Phillips).

These verses describe our entire walk in Christ. Verse 1 describes the sacrifice of our justified flesh, justified by our faith in the ransom sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Ours is a living sacrifice, laying down our lives in obedience to God and in service to the Truth and the brethren, just as Jesus did. It is shown in the Tabernacle by the burning of the choice parts of the sin-offering on the copper altar in the Court and the burning of the rest of the animal outside the camp.

Verse 2 describes the development and walk of the New Creation. It describes the work of sanctification in our lives, the molding or development of the new mind in the likeness of Christ. It is shown in the Holy of the tabernacle by the priests (1) feeding at the table of showbread, (2) dwelling in the light of the lampstand, and (3) burning sweet incense upon the golden incense altar.

However, Paul does not stop in Romans 12 with his high-level description of our consecration. He goes on through the rest of the chapter to explain what he means by his statement, “give him your bodies, as a living sacrifice” and “let God re-make you.”

Paul wrote in verse 3, “As your spiritual teacher I give this advice to each one of you. Don’t cherish exaggerated ideas of yourself or your importance, but try to have a sane estimate of your capabilities by the light of the faith that God has given to you all” (Phillips). Paul started his advice by talking about humility. There was an essential reason why Paul did this. Humility is not just the foundation for making a consecration; it is the foundation for living a consecrated life. The prophet Micah wrote, “What doth the Lord require of thee... and to humble thyself to walk with thy God” (Micah 6:8 KJV margin). We cannot carry out our living sacrifice nor allow God to mold us in the image of His son unless we have humility.

Jesus emphasized the critical nature of humility by telling us that it was a requirement for entering the kingdom of heaven. “Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 5:3). The Apostle Peter confirmed the importance of acquiring and maintaining humility in I Peter 5:5: “All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, for God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble” (NAS).

Next, Paul reminded us that the body of Christ has many members — not just us. “For just as you have many members in one physical body and those members differ in their functions, so we, though many in number, compose one body in Christ and are all members of one another” (Romans 12: 4-5 Phillips).

The apostle also compared the body of Christ to the human body in 1 Corinthians 12. “For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit. ...But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him. ...But now are they many members, yet one body. ...That there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another. And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it. Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular” (1 Corinthians 12:12, 13, 18, 20, 25-27).

In both passages, Paul speaks about the diversity of the body of Christ. God has called the members of the body from all nations, peoples and languages. He has called them from all socio-economic levels and all ethnic backgrounds. In Christ, “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus” (Galatians 3:28). God has set every member in the body as it pleased him. It is our responsibility to accept each member of the body as fellow members of God’s spiritual family. Our successful walk as a member of the church depends on it.

Paul continues in verse 6: “Through the grace of God we have different gifts. If our gift is preaching, let us preach to the limit of our vision” (Phillips). The diversity of the body has led to the members having different gifts or abilities. The word “gifts” is

translated from Strong's number 5486, charisma, which means a (divine) gratuity; a (spiritual) endowment. The gifts Paul describes are talents or abilities that we have that can be used in the service of the Truth and the brethren, such as preaching, teaching, service, encouraging, sympathy, etc. Paul exhorts us to use whatever talent or ability we have, to its very limit.

Paul begins with the gift of preaching. Preaching is translated from Strong's number 4394, propheteia, which means ("prophecy") or prediction (scriptural or other). Paul writes that prophecy is intended for believers and not unbelievers (1 Corinthians 14:22). Prophecy was designed by God to alert the brethren about what was going to happen and how they should respond when it did. During the Gospel Age, prophecies alerted brethren to:

- Rise of false leaders (Acts 20:29-31)
- Rise of the false system (2 Thessalonians 2:3-4)
- 7 different phases of the church and what the church should do and be on guard against during each phase (Revelation 2-3)
- Signs marking our Lord's return (Matthew 24:30-33).
- Events marking the end of the age (2 Timothy 3:1-5; 2 Peter 3:3, 4, 10-13; Revelation 18:1-6).

Prophecy was never designed for the brethren to use to intimidate one another or lord over the other brethren. Understanding prophecy was never intended as a measurement of our level of spiritual development or understanding. Instead, prophecy was designed to forewarn brethren, so that they might not be taken in a snare. Today, prophecy does not refer to the development of new spiritual predictions but the review and understanding of those predictions already in the Scriptures. Just as prophecies about Timothy were provided that he might "war a good warfare" (1 Timothy 1:18), this principle is true for the church throughout the Gospel Age and especially during the harvest. Therefore, if the understanding of prophecy is one of the skills we possess, let us use it to benefit all our brethren that they might war a good warfare.

Paul continues in verse 7, mentioning two more gifts: "If it is serving others let us concentrate on our service; if it is teaching let us give all we have to our teaching" (Phillips). Serving, or ministry (KJV), is translated from Strong's 1248, diakonia, which among other things means (official) service (especially of the Christian teacher). Paul used the same Greek word, diakonia, to describe all that he did for the truth (1 Timothy 1:12).

Scriptures indicate that service is not restricted to just apostles, elders, or even brothers. The church at Thyatira was praised for their service (Revelation 2:19). The disciples at Antioch provided service to the brethren in Judea in anticipation of a coming famine (Acts 11:29). Zealous service by those in Achaia toward their brethren provoked many to copy it (2 Corinthians 9:1-2). Everyone can participate in some way, large or small, in the service of the truth and the brethren. All it takes is a willing heart and a desire to work.

One of the most important gifts for building up the church is the gift of teaching. Jesus is the best example we have of teaching others about God and his plan. "He

taught them in their synagogue, insomuch that they were astonished, and they said, Whence hath this man this wisdom, and these mighty works?” (Matthew 13:54). He taught the multitudes and he taught them in the temple (Mark 2:13, Luke 19:47). He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes (Matthew 7:29). What did Jesus teach?

- The gospel of the kingdom (Matthew 4:23, 9:35).
- The kingdom of heaven (Matthew 5:3, 7:21).
- Terms and conditions of discipleship (Matthew 5:3-11, 7:21).
- How to pray to God (Luke 11:1).
- Signs of his return (Matthew 24:3, 14, 21-22, 27, 30-33).

These are the same things that we should teach. We all have the responsibility to teach as Paul wrote in Colossians 3:16: “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching [in all wisdom teaching, ASV] and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.”

Paul mentions the next gift in verse 8: “and if our gift be the stimulating of the faith of others let us set ourselves to it” (Phillips). Stimulating the faith of others is translated from Strong’s 3870, *parakaleo*, which means to call near, invite, or invoke (by imploration, exhortation, or consolation). Stimulating or exhorting is such an important responsibility, we find this Greek word used 107 times in the New Testament. Exhortation begins with God. God “comforteth [exhorts] us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort [exhort] them which are in any trouble” (2 Corinthians 1:4). We are expected to pass on to others the exhortation and stimulation that we receive from God.

We exhort or stimulate through conversation and communication with our fellow brethren. We exhort (1) through cards, letters, phone calls, and e-mail — brethren that are far away and (2) through meetings and fellowship — brethren that are near. We cannot exhort those with whom we do not meet or do not communicate. Paul exhorted the brethren in his day to:

- Present their bodies a living sacrifice. (Romans 12:1)
- Be followers of him. (1 Corinthians 11:1)
- Avoid those who cause divisions. (Romans 16:17)
- Walk and please God as Paul had taught them. (1 Thessalonians 4:1)

We should do the same. “Exhort one another daily, while it is called Today; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin” (Hebrews 3:13).

Paul continues in verse 8: “Let the man who is called to give, give freely” (Phillips). Our giving is to be done freely, with sincerity, without self-seeking or ulterior motives. Paul tells us in Ephesians 4:32: “Let him that stole steal no more; but rather let him labor, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth” (Ephesians 4:28).

Our giving is to be not just physical but also spiritual. Paul desired to give the brethren at Rome a spiritual gift that they might be established in the faith. “For I long

to see you so that I may impart some spiritual gift to you, that you may be established” (Romans 1:11 NASB). Paul explains that this giving is based on our love for one another. “Having so fond an affection for you, we were well-pleased to impart [give] to you not only the gospel of God but also our own lives, because ye had become very dear to us” (1 Thessalonians 2:8 NASB). We should follow Paul’s example and give to each other not only the Gospel but our own lives.

Paul continues in verse 8: “Let the man who wields authority think of his responsibility” (Phillips). Those in authority are not just the elders and deacons but those who are great examples because they are spiritually mature and wise. They stand before the ecclesia as examples to the flock. All these are to work with diligence and enthusiasm for the benefit of the entire ecclesia, especially the younger and less mature. This is what Paul meant when he wrote: “We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves” (Romans 15:1). Paul adds in 1 Thessalonians 5:14 (RSV): “And we exhort you, brethren ... encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with them all.”

The last gift that Paul mentions is sympathy or compassion. Verse 8 says, “and let the man who feels sympathy for his fellows in distress help them cheerfully” (Phillips). We find the same Greek word translated sympathy and frequently used when individuals approached Jesus and asked to be healed.

- Two blind men asked Jesus as the son of David to have compassion on them (Matthew 9:27)
- The woman of Canaan asked Jesus as the son of David to have compassion on her and heal her daughter who was vexed with a fallen angel (Matthew 15:22).

Sympathy or compassion, should be one of the easiest gifts for us to demonstrate. We all have received God’s sympathy [or compassion] being forgiven our sins and invited into the divine family. We are “now the people of God” because we “have obtained [God’s] mercy [sympathy]” (2 Peter 2:10). In the parable, the Lord tells the unmerciful servant, “Should you not also have had mercy on your fellow slave, in the same way that I had mercy on you?” (Matthew 18:33 NASB). As we feel sympathy for our brethren, we should take action and help those in distress, cheerfully. “Blessed are the merciful [sympathetic]: for they shall obtain mercy [sympathy]” (Matthew 5:7).

Think of the 7 gifts that Paul mentioned in Romans 12:6-8: Preaching, service, teaching, stimulating the faith of others, giving, leading enthusiastically, and sympathy. How many of these gifts require special skills on our part? Perhaps just preaching and leading. The rest just require three things for us to possess them as a gift:

- A willingness to look for others who might need help.
- A willingness to do for others what they cannot do for themselves.
- A willingness to share what we have (time, resources) with others to make up for their deficiency.

This is what will be required by the church in Christ’s kingdom. How wise is our heavenly Father to determine how well we would do as a member of the church in

blessing all the families of the earth, by seeing how well we bless our brethren who are in need.

Paul continues in verse 9, “Let us have no imitation Christian love. Let us have a genuine hatred for evil and a real devotion to good” (Phillips). Paul counsels that our love (agape) must be sincere, not an imitation. Then Paul describes what sincere agape love is: It detests evil and is devoted to that which is good. Bro. Russell wrote in Reprint 2213, it is not enough to avoid what is evil. “We should intensely oppose the untrue, the impure, the sinful. Sin and selfishness and the ‘spirit of the world’ should be distressing and repugnant to us.”

Intense opposition to evil should be focused first on ourselves. It is easy to find and oppose the evil, the faults, and flaws we see in others. It is much more difficult to find and then eradicate the evil, the faults, and flaws, in ourselves. But this is where our attention is to be directed — to ourselves.

The word “devotion,” or “cleave,” is translated from Strong’s 2853, kollao, which means to glue, that is, to stick. We are to stick like glue to that which is good. The Apostle John wrote. “Beloved, follow not that which is evil, but that which is good. He that doeth good is of God: but he that doeth evil hath not seen God” (3 John 11). If we would be pleasing to God, we must do good and shun evil. “The one who desires life, to love and see good days ... He must turn away from evil and do good; he must seek peace and pursue it” (1 Peter 3:10-11).

Paul continues to define what true Christian love is in verse 10. “Let us have real warm affection for one another as between brothers, and a willingness to let the other man have the credit” (Phillips). The NASB translates the first part of this verse, “Be devoted to one another in brotherly love.” “Real warm affection” or brotherly love is from Strong’s number 5387, philostorgos, which means cherishing one’s kindred, especially parents or children.

Brotherly love means cherishing our brethren. Paul writes in 1 Thessalonians 4:9: “But as touching brotherly love ye need not that I write unto you: for ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another.” God through His word, His actions, and the example of our Lord, teaches us how important it is to love our brethren. “For he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?” (1 John 4:20).

In 1 Peter 1:22, the apostle adds that brotherly love comes from obeying the truth. “Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren.” Brotherly love is a touchstone. The amount we have tells us how well we are obeying the truth through the spirit.

Affection for our brethren also means a willingness to let the other man have the credit. It is amazing what can be accomplished when we do not care about who gets the credit. Humility is the key to letting others have the credit. If our humility is lacking, it will be hard for us to give others the credit. The Apostle Paul repeats this thought of letting others have the credit in Philippians 2:3: “Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves” (NASB).

We remember how the disciples struggled with this before they were begotten with the holy Spirit. Sometimes the disciples argued about who was greatest among them (Mark 9:34, Luke 22:24). However, once they received the holy Spirit, they obtained the proper perspective on the matter. Let us have the proper perspective on the matter and give our brethren the credit. Let us trust that God knows how much credit we deserve.

In verse 11, Paul focuses on the zeal we should have in carrying out our consecration vow. “Let us not allow slackness to spoil our work and let us keep the fires of the spirit burning, as we do our work for the Lord” (Phillips). The Greek words translated into “slothful in business” mean “tardy in speed.” The Bible in Better English translation reads: “Be not slow in your work, but be quick in spirit, as the Lord’s servants.” We are to be quick about doing the Lord’s will. Procrastination indicates that we do not delight to do the Lord’s will as our Lord did, and we should (Psalm 40:8). In the parable of the talents, the one talent servant, who hid his talent in the earth, is described by his Lord as wicked and slothful, tardy (Matthew 25:26).

To avoid slackness or tardiness, Paul exhorts us to “keep the fires of the spirit burning” (Phillips). The Greek translated “fervent” means to be “hot.” The RSV translates the phrase to “be aglow with the Spirit.” We are told in Acts 18:25 how Apollos: “being fervent in the spirit, he spake and taught diligently the things of the Lord, knowing only the baptism of John.” Fervency comes from the indwelling of God’s holy Spirit in our hearts and minds. Jesus’ fervency was complete because he received the holy Spirit without measure (John 3:34). The greater measure of God’s Spirit we have, the greater will be our fervency.

Paul then tells us in verse 12 how to be happy in our consecrated life. “Base your happiness on your hope in Christ” (Phillips). Our happiness is to be spiritually based. It is not based on the things of this earth “where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through and steal: For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also” (Matthew 6:19-21). Where our treasure is, there is where our happiness will be. Then, when the trials and difficulties of this life impact us, our happiness will not be affected because it is anchored in heaven.

Paul continues in verse 12: “When trials come endure them patiently, steadfastly maintain the habit of prayer” (Phillips). Basing our happiness on Christ will enable us to endure our trials patiently. “Patient in tribulation” means to undergo, bear, and to persevere under the pressure that transforms us into the likeness of Christ. Just like heat and pressure transforms ordinary carbon into a diamond, the heat and pressure of trial will transform our character into that of Christ. This “light affliction [pressure], which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory” (2 Corinthians 4:17). But for the process to reach a successful conclusion, we must persevere under the pressure.

To persevere, we must “steadfastly maintain the habit of prayer” (Phillips). Prayer is our life-line to obtain divine help in every time of need. “Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need” (Hebrews 4:6). The Scriptures abound with exhortations about the importance of

maintaining the habit of prayer — praying for ourselves, for our brethren, for God’s will to be done.

- “Pray without ceasing” (1 Thessalonians 5:17).
- “Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak” (Matthew 26:41)
- “Is any among you afflicted? Let him pray” (James 5:13)
- Paul prayed “that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment” (Philippians 1:9).
- We “do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding” (Colossians 1:9).
- “Pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much” (James 5:16).

Paul adds that it is not enough to just pray for our brethren. We need to back up that prayer with action. Verse 13 reads, “Give freely to fellow-Christians in want, never grudging a meal or a bed to those who need them” (Phillips). We must freely give to our brethren who are in need.

This is consistent with the thought that love for our brethren is manifested by laying down our lives for them. “We ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. But if any one has the world’s goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God’s love abide in him? Little children, let us not love in word or speech but in deed and in truth” (1 John 3:16).

Ministering to our brethren shows how we would minister to Christ if he were in our midst. Sharing what we have with our brethren is appropriate, since all that we have belongs to the Lord. Paul praised the brethren in his day for sharing what they had with those less fortunate. Concerning the churches of Macedonia, Paul said: “they gave according to their means, as I can testify, and beyond their means, of their own free will, begging us earnestly for the favor of taking part in the relief of the saints” (2 Corinthians 8:3-4 RSV). Peter adds that as we have received, we should also give and not selfishly hoard what the Lord has provided to us. “As each has received a gift, employ it for one another, as good stewards of God’s varied grace” (1 Peter 4:10 RSV). Let us be good stewards of what God has put in our hands to the benefit of others.

Then, in verses 14, 17, 19, and 20, Paul makes a series of statements that describe how we should treat our enemies. “And as for those who try to make your life a misery, bless them. Don’t curse, bless ... Don’t pay back a bad turn by a bad turn, to anyone ... Never take vengeance into your own hands, my dear friends: stand back and let God punish if He will. For it is written: ‘Vengeance belongeth unto me: I will recompense, saith the Lord. And it is written: If thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him a drink; for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head’” (Phillips).

First, Paul tells us to bless our enemies. This same thought was expressed by our Lord in Matthew 5:44: “Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you.” Bless

means to speak well of, to bless (thank or invoke benediction upon). All of this is part of loving our enemies. It does not mean we wish their evil course to prosper. It does mean that we do not hate them, nor return evil to them nor seek revenge for their evil course against us.

We recognize that they have been blinded by the adversary and we have sympathy for them. We love not their evil actions but what they will become in Christ's kingdom, earthly sons of God, once that blindness is taken away and they have the opportunity to walk up the way of holiness. We do not return evil for evil or plot vengeance upon them. Instead, we give them food and drink both literally and also spiritually. We give them the message of Truth through our words and through our actions. That will heap coals of fire upon their heads (Proverbs 25:21-22).

According to Adam Clarke, this is a metaphor for the smelting of metals when fire was put both over and under the metal to liquefy it and separate it from the dross. He writes:

“So artists melt the sullen ore of lead,
By heaping coals of fire upon its head.
In the kind warmth the metal learns to glow,
And pure from dross the silver runs below.”

Next, Paul exhorts us to share with our brethren in their experiences. Verse 15 reads, “Share the happiness of those who are happy, and the sorrow of those who are sad” (Phillips). This reminds us of the saying, “happiness shared is happiness multiplied, and sorrow shared is sorrow halved.” It takes agape, unselfish love, to rejoice in the success and bear the sorrow of others. “Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ” (Galatians 6:2). This is the royal law of love.

In verses 16 and 18 Paul exhorts us to “Live in harmony with each other. Don't become snobbish but take a real interest in ordinary people. Don't become set in your own opinions. ... As far as your responsibility goes, live at peace with everyone” (Phillips). Paul doesn't just exhort us to live in harmony and peace. He tells us how to do it. First, he says be humble. “Do not be haughty in mind” (Romans 12:16 NASB). If we are not humble, then our opinions and desires will get in the way of good relations with our brethren. Second, associate with those who are humble. “Let humble ways content you” (Romans 12:16 Weymouth). If we associate with and focus on that which is humble, that will make it easier to live in harmony and peace. Third, do not become fixed, rigid, and arrogant in our opinions. “Don't be proud and feel that you are smarter than others” (Romans 12:16 CEV). We need to recognize that we can come to a wrong conclusion. We need to have an appreciation for what we do not know. When we are rigid in our thinking, we make it very difficult for the Lord to teach us something better.

Paul puts the responsibility of living peaceably on us. Paul does not give us any excuses for creating conflicts, divisions, or disputes with one another. We must do our utmost to live peaceably with one another, regardless of what our brethren do (1 Corinthians 5:1-5 would seem to be an exception). Paul mentioned this responsibility to live in peace with each other in 2 Corinthians 13:11: “Live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you.” If we expect the God of love and peace to be with us, then we must live in peace with one another.

A lack of peace really indicates carnality, for strife comes from the flesh and not the spirit. “For since there is jealousy and strife among you, are you not fleshly, and are you not walking like men?” (1 Corinthians 3:3 NASB). Paul tells us that a lack of peace comes from a lack of humility. “Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves” (Philippians 2:3). “For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work” (James 3:16). It is interesting to note how many times strife is linked in the Scriptures to envy and a lack of humility. Strife and conflict comes from pride, envy and the Adversary. Peace comes from humility, love, and our Heavenly Father.

Paul states in verse 17, “See that your public behavior is above criticism” (Phillips). Paul adds in 1 Timothy 4:12 “In speech, conduct, love, faith, and purity, show yourself an example of those who believe” (1 Timothy 4:12). “Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven” (Matthew 5:16). Let us follow the example of Jesus to the best of our ability, reflecting his Truth and example in all that we think, say and do.

Paul concludes in verse 21, “Don’t allow yourself to be overpowered with evil. Take the offensive — —overpower evil with good!” (Phillips). The world, the flesh and the adversary seek to overpower us with evil. Let us not wait for their assault in 2013. Instead, take the initiative and overpower evil by focusing on and doing good. Paul in Romans 12 tells us how to take the initiative. If we follow his advice to the best of our ability, we will be successful and hear the words “well done, good and faithful servant, enter into the joys of thy Lord.”

“Deal courageously, and Jehovah shall be with the good.” (2 Chronicles 19:11)

Appendix E

Weymouth's Footnote on Romans 15:18

Apparently Romans 15:18 is quite regularly a perplexity to translators. Dr. Weymouth supplies the attached footnote so that his readers will understand the complexity of the problem. We believe Weymouth's solution and conclusion are sound. To the average reader, his footnote may be more complex than the problem! But we present it as he offered it.

Text:

Rom 15:18, "For I will not venture to say a word of what Christ has done through me in converting the Gentiles, by word and by deed,"

18. I will not venture, &c.) Most commentators, in view of the following words 'so that I have preached,' would insert after 'those things which Christ hath not wrought by me' (A.V.) the words 'but only what he hath wrought by me'; and this can be shortened to 'any things save those which Christ wrought through me' (R.V.), meaning, as some interpret it, that he will not speak of what Christ has effected through other apostles; or else, as others commentators suppose, that he will not imitate the pseudo-apostles: in which case there is a touch of irony in his language. There are other renderings of the passage, one of which is, that the apostle, aglow with the thought, 'What has Christ not done through me!' exclaims, 'I can hardly dare to tell what Christ has not done through me,' meaning that the wonder of the manifold display of Christ's power through him was unspeakable. The use of the redundant negative, assumed in this last interpretation, would be more permissible in Greek (see appendix), in French, in Old German, or in Elizabethan English than in correct modern English, which would omit the second negative, as has been done in the translation here adopted in the text.

Appendix F

Weekly Study Summaries

Our weekly study summary sheets are available in pdf format. If you are interested in obtaining these, please email:

nalbs1883@bellsouth.net

These summaries were written at the close of each study session. They are spontaneous and uncorrected. However, they do offer an insight into the step-by-step progress of our examination of Romans. Some of the conclusions were slightly altered when this book was assembled.

CHART OF THE AGES

Write Down the Vision and Make it Plain Upon Tables, That Everyone May Read it Fluently.

— HABAKKUK 2:2

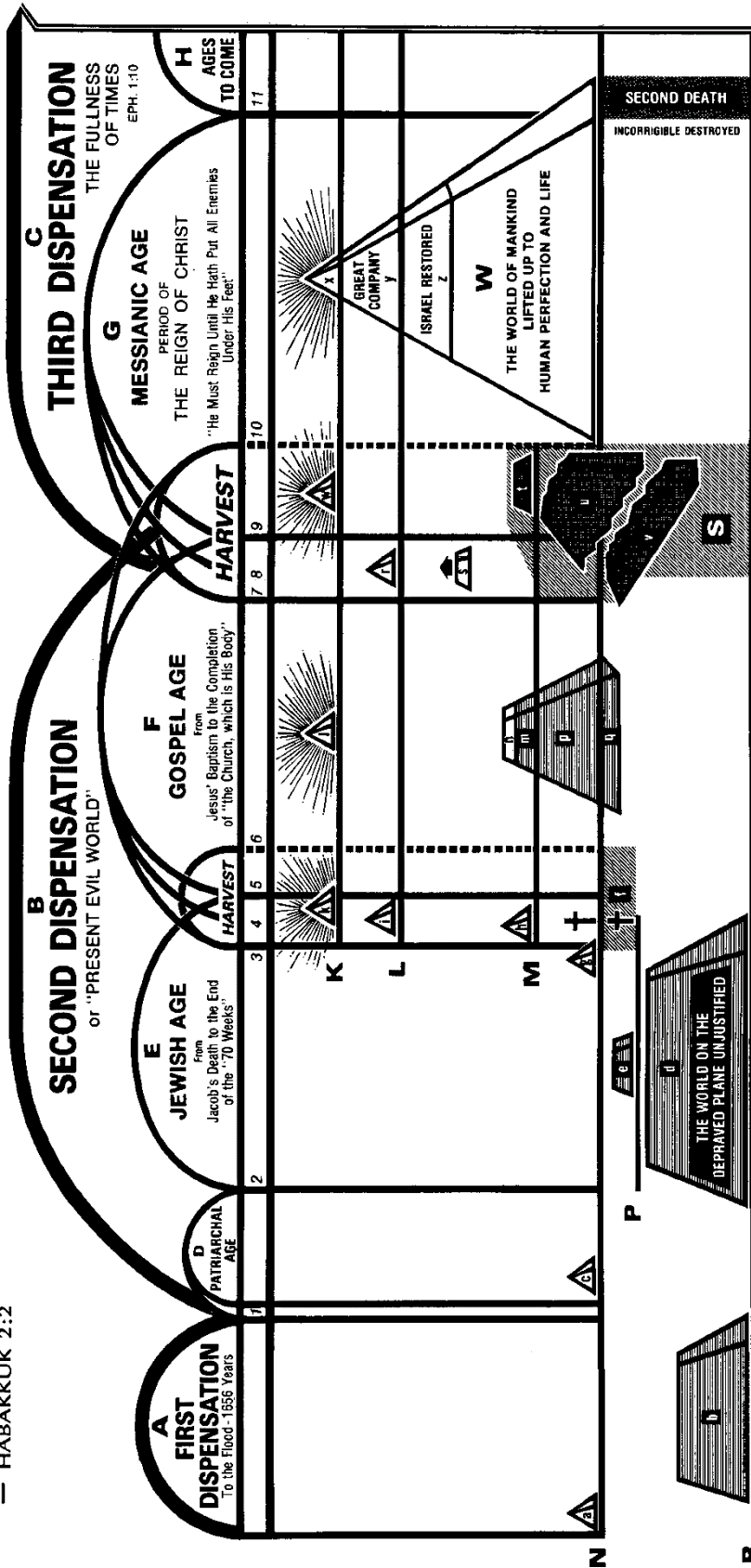


CHART OF THE AGES

ILLUSTRATING THE PLAN OF GOD FOR BRINGING MANY SONS TO GLORY, AND HIS PURPOSE—

"... In Regard to an Administration of the Appointed Times, to Re-unite All Things Under One Head, Even Under the Anointed One: the Things in Heaven and the Things on Earth — Under Him." EPH. 1:10 (Diagram)

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