

THE
EPISTLE TO
THE
ROMANS
BY THE
APOSTLE PAUL

TAUGHT BY Pastor W. Jack Casey

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How to Study Your Bible

1. Begin in Prayer 1 Cor 2: 9-14
2. Read the Bible Neh. 8: 1-3
3. Study the Bible Neh. 8:8
4. Meditate upon it Deut. 6:6-9; Ps. 1
5. Pass the Bible on to others Heb. 5: 12

How to Study Each Chapter

1. The Theme
2. The most important verse
3. The most prominent word
4. The teaching about Christ
5. The command to obey
6. The promise to claim
7. The new truth learned Psalm 119:18

Also every verse or passage has at least 3 applications

1. Past: this is the historical application
2. Present: This is a devotional or spiritual application
3. Future: This is a doctrinal or prophetic application

Introduction

The writer is the Apostle Paul. The letter was written to the church that was meeting in the capitol of the empire. Exactly when this church was founded is not known, and the founder is not known.

The false teaching of the Catholic Church that the church was founded by Peter is taken from the writing of Eusebius in his Ecclesiastical History book chapter 14. He states that Peter was there in A.D. 42 in the second year of Claudius' reign. However, all Bible references to Peter have him working in the church of Jerusalem. We know from Acts 9, 15 that he was a pillar of the church and part of the first council of Jerusalem which occurred in A.D. 49; therefore, he certainly did not leave prior to that. The most important piece of information regarding Peter not being in Rome is two-fold: one, Paul was commanded by the Lord to go to the gentiles, and Peter was given no such orders. Also, Paul closes this letter by sending greetings to 27 individuals whom he called by name, and had Peter been there, Paul would have certainly have saluted him.

So if neither Paul or Peter founded this church who did? Well, there are two possibilities: one is that some of those present at Pentecost (Acts 2:9-11), or secondly, some of the families from the churches Paul had already founded went to Rome and started it there among the Jews living there.

This city had at least 4.1 million citizens and there was a large congregation firmly established there. This church was made up of both Jews and Greeks. In A.D. 19, Tiberius expelled the Jews again under Claudius (41-54 A.D.). This expulsion caused Aquilla and Priscilla to move to Corinth, where they met Paul and disciples Apollos. At the time of the writing, there was again a large number of Jews in Rome.

This letter was written while Paul was working in Corinth during his 3rd missionary journey. The purposes of the writing were (1) to enlist the support of the Roman church in his journey to the west; (2) to gain their prayer support for this journey and rightly so (15:30-33); (3) as the Apostle to the gentiles, he had a pressing desire to go to the capital of these gentiles; (4) Paul knew the church was established without apostolic authority or leadership, and he wanted to validate this church and give them instruction.

The importance of this letter cannot be understated. In A.D. 386, Aurelius Augustinus, professor of rhetoric in Milan, read one sentence in 13:13-14 and said "he would read no farther as a clear light flooding my heart and all darkness and doubt vanished away." The same can be said of Martin Luther in 1515, and in 1738 John Wesley's life was changed at the reading of Luther's preface to Romans, as was that of John Calvin and countless others.

Chapter One

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

Paul opens this great letter to the Roman church by calling himself a bond servant of Jesus. He does this since the Romans knew all about slaves of all types, and this helped him identify with both slave and free. Paul said he was "called" to be an apostle for four reasons. First he was a chosen vessel of God; second, he was personally called by Christ; third, he had seen the risen Lord and fourth, he was the recipient of divine revelation. Paul says he was specifically set apart to the ministry of the gospel!

2-3 (Which he had promised afore by his prophets in the holy scriptures,) Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh;

Paul now describes the person of this gospel. The first sentence of Romans has 126 words and covers the first seven verses. Paul will quote the Old Testament 61 times to indicate to the Jews that Jesus was the Messiah spoken of in the Old Testament. You see, the gospel is not about Jesus, it IS Jesus -- Jesus coming from the line of David, just as had been promised in 2 Sam. 7:13 and Jer. 33:17.

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

Notice carefully that Jesus was made of the seed of David but He was not made the Son of God but declared. The word "declared" has the meaning of "appointed" or "marked out by unmistakable signs." So Jesus was declared the Son by the Holy Spirit when He arose from the dead.

5-6 By whom we have received grace and apostleship, for obedience to the faith among all nations, for his name: Among whom are ye also the called of Jesus Christ:

Paul tells them he views his apostleship as a gift from God. Why? So that by Paul's obedience to the faith he might bring both Jew and Gentile into a right relationship to God. The phrase "the called" is one of Paul's favorite phrases for those who have accepted Christ.

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

Paul sends his greetings to all the saints (those set apart) at Rome. Paul calls them the "beloved of God," meaning they were recipients of God's love though they did not deserve it. Paul, as is his style, opens with "grace," which is God's unmerited favor, and was the typical greeting for Greeks, and he adds "peace" which was the typical Hebrew greeting. Paul never separates the two of them.

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

From here to verse fifteen Paul gives his personal feelings: he gives God praise and glory for the faith that the Romans had. It had been spoken of every where in the Roman Empire. It would be good if our faith was spoken of in the same way.

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

Paul says that God was his witness to the fact of his continuous service in intercessory prayer for not only the Roman church but all the churches. We are told to pray without ceasing, and Paul did just that.

10-13 Making request, if by any means now at length I might have a prosperous journey by the will of God to come unto you. For I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established; That is, that I may be comforted together with you by the mutual faith both of you and me. Now I would not have you ignorant, brethren, that oftentimes I purposed to come unto you, (but was let hitherto,) that I might have some fruit among you also, even as among other Gentiles.

Paul gives his purpose in wanting to come to the Roman church: he starts verse eleven by saying "I long to see you"; to put it in our terms, "I am homesick for you." You may ask why, since he had never been there. Three reasons: first, Paul wants to build them up, as seen in the second phrase in eleven teaching them more fully about being in Christ! The second reason is in verse twelve in that they would provide lodging, food and fellowship while there with them and then as he moved on toward his final goal of Spain. The third reason is in the last part of thirteen; Paul makes it clear he is looking to evangelize people while he is with them, and not only the Jews but the Gentiles as well.

14 I am debtor both to the Greeks, and to the
Barbarians; both to the wise, and to the unwise.

Paul always saw himself as one in debt to all those around him, placed that way by the love of Christ. This concept of debt may well have motivated Isaac Watts to pen those great words in the song "At the Cross": "But drops of grief can ne'er repay the debt of love I owe. Here Lord I give myself away 'tis all that I can do." Paul felt that kind of responsibility: to give nothing less than all of him for the gospel's sake. To the Jew it was Jew and heathen; to the Greek, it was Greek and barbarian; and to God, it is just saved and lost. To Paul, Greeks took in the Greco Roman or Hellenes, and the barbarians encompassed all others.

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

This verse has the second of three first person statements that form a trilogy for a Christian. The first is "I am a debtor" the second is here and the third is "I am not ashamed." Now all of us are debtors and all of us should be unashamed of the gospel but not all are ready and willing to preach. Each of us need to be as the old preacher who was asked about his sermon preparation, his answer was "I read myself full, think myself clear pray myself hot and let myself go." Many believers are not ready to be let go because they are not read full and clear minded about Christ and His doctrine nor are they prayed up.

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

Paul sets the theme by saying very boldly "I am not ashamed" why use that word ashamed well first because of his fierce persecution of this gospel, second because the Jew saw it as a subverting of the law and third because the wise Greek thought it was foolish and to the pagan the gospel was atheistic because it denied many gods! Why he felt no shame because the gospel is God's explosive power of salvation. God's dynamite if you will it is a power that brings men to the reality of their sin and the judgment that comes with that sin. Paul says it was given to the Jew first and it is to the Jew who should receive it first and then to the gentiles and this was Paul's method wherever he went.

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

This verse starts with "therein" and this ties us back to verse sixteen because in the gospel is the rightness of God revealed to men. Righteousness

is how God treats us Jesus is His righteousness and He was given to mankind who was unlovely, unholy, and unrighteous yet Christ died for us. "faith to faith" is that righteousness which is received by faith in Jesus and is revealed in faithful living. In answer to how the righteous should live Paul quotes Habakkuk 2:4. The faith in this quote is more than faith for salvation but a lifestyle of living by faith.

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

From here to the end of the chapter Paul deals with the need of the heathen for salvation from their sin. God has not hidden his wrath or judgment against evil and sinfulness. "Ungodliness" has to do with religion or our relationship to our fellowman. Also with men who "keeps back or holds or suppresses" the truth of God's righteousness knowing in their hearts the truth.

19-20 Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse:

Paul here gives two reasons for the condemnation of the sinner in that it is not the amount of knowledge he does have. First reason any man is lost is because they refuse to acknowledge the truth of God in nature. There is sufficient evidence of a divine creator of this universe to make us responsible to God. Paul quotes Psalm 19:1 showing us that man's mind is capable of drawing the right conclusion from effect to cause in creation. Nature itself awakes a wonder an awe of God as He is not an abstract principle but a real person a Supreme Person leaving man without excuse.

21-23 Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things.

Paul now gives his second argument that God's revelation to man's conscience. Not only does nature reveal God but God has planted in each of us that there is a righteous God. Though the heathen knew He was God they

willfully refused to worship Him. To add to this the heathen accepted the bounty of nature but refuse to thank God for it.

To keep from acknowledging God they created a reasoning process that removed God from His place and replaced Him with vanity or emptiness and brought darkness to their heart. Once this was done the next step was to create their own image of what they call divine. They made gods that looked like men and animals of all types creating a pantheon of gods instead of accepting the one true God!

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

Because the heathen chose a path of ungodliness God gave them over to what they wanted. The uncleanness is sexual immorality by which they disgraced themselves before one another.

25 Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and
worshipped and served the creature more than the
Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen.

The more the heathen suppressed the truth the easier it is to begin to worship the creation as we do today and to forget the creator!

26-27 For this cause God gave them up unto vile
affections: for even their women did change the
natural use into that which is against nature: And
likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of
the woman, burned in their lust one toward
another; men with men working that which is
unseemly, and receiving in themselves that
recompence of their error which was meet.

These "vile affections" were infamous passions of sexual perversion which always accompanies idolatry. The increased occurrence of homosexuality which no matter how it is popularized is despicable to God and will see an increase as the age draws to a close! They will receive a just payment (recompense) for what they have done.

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

Since the heathen did not want God or to recognize Him in any fashion He gave them over to an undiscerning mind which is what they wanted. The resulting effect was and is disastrous and cannot be blamed on God as He only allowed them what they wanted!

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

Paul says that the heathen was not just tainted by the sins that follow but were consumed by them. These include injustice, sexual immorality, grasping for more than needed, intending evil toward others and the list goes on and could be found in any newspaper or newscast today!

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

The heathen is not unaware of God's displeasure or hatred of these sins yet they continue to do them and even have great joy in doing so. So the heathen will never be able to stand before God and say they did not know.

Chapter Two

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

Thou art without excuse ...is the same condemnation Paul hurled at the Gentile , and here it is applied likewise to the Jew, "O man," as used in this passage, being more fully identified as bearing "the name of a Jew" , and as having the characteristic of judging other people.

Thou dost practice the same things ... This is a reference to the long list of abominations catalogued as the shame of the Gentiles in the last chapter ; and those persons here addressed are condemned as guilty of "the same things." They have reformed, they see all this horrible wickedness of men, they turn against it, do it seriously, the Jewish moralist even with God's own perfect law, and they deem this the way of escape for themselves as well as for others.

Absolutely not! The people here mentioned were non-Christian Jews who had refused to accept the Saviour, had projected their hatred of Christianity into the second generation, and at that very moment were intent on hunting Paul down and killing him, and who were declared by this apostle a little later in this very chapter to have been profaners of sacred things, they were thieves, adulterers, impenitent and hardhearted Romans. Paul was affirming here that God's conclusion of Jews under sin was upon exactly the same basis of his having so included the Gentiles, that is, upon the basis of their wickedness. They certainly had not reformed and seriously turned away from wickedness.

The question of why, under the circumstances of their wickedness, Paul should have addressed any words at all to them is answered by the fact of the great influence those evil men were having upon Christians, especially those of Jewish background. No one besides Paul could have so appreciated the fact and power of that influence as did he; for he had been brought up a Pharisee, and was a noble Pharisee himself; and no person of that day could have better understood the Jewish syndrome than he. Paul was here concerned with destroying the hope of any person who ever thought or thinks that justification can ever come from anything except acceptance of and obedience to the gospel.

Wherein thou judgest another ...It was the peculiar guilt of those persons here spoken of that, despite their wickedness, they imagined themselves to

have been the heirs of eternal life because of descent from Abraham, membership in the chosen race, circumcision, etc. Having so long experienced God's goodness and mercy, they had come to suppose themselves entitled to it, and assumed that they would be saved regardless of their conduct. Yet, strangely enough, their own sins did not prevent them from looking upon those identical actions, when visible in others, as reprehensible and damnable. To any person, especially those of Jewish heritage, in the first century, this false sanctuary of the Jewish people (false because: (1) they had not lived up to its holy requirements, and (2) because when Christ came, the old covenant itself had been abrogated) was indeed a temptation, for it advocated a cheap and easy salvation unrelated to any requirements of righteous living. The same temptation exists today when people think to be saved through membership in some group, or the acceptance of some theological doctrine, as for example, salvation by faith alone, or because they have been baptized, or because they attend church, or partake of the Lord's supper - or upon any grounds whatever apart from obedient faith in Christ's teaching and that holiness invariably identified with membership in the body of Christ.

Thou condemnest thyself ...Here is the first of the ten principles of eternal judgment outlined by Paul in this passage. The well-known position of the adherent to Jewish privilege as the basis of hope was something like this: "Oh yes, of course, we deplore such sins as you mention; but you cannot put us in the class with that riff-raff, for we are the children of Abraham, heirs of the promises of God to the patriarchs, and members of the chosen people. God always looks after us; and we shall be judged upon the basis of who we are, rather than upon what we do!" So strong was the feeling on circumcision that Paul devoted a special section to it a little later. A whole generation earlier, John the Baptist had warned the Jews against trusting in any such thoughts, but his warning had not been taken to heart. Paul proceeded to refute this type of spiritual arrogance by outlining the true basis upon which God's judgment rests; and the very first of ten principles laid down is: I. People are self-condemned when they practice what they condemn in others. This proposition, like all the others Paul outlined, is corroborated and backed up by the other sacred writers. Thus, "If our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart and knoweth all things".

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

In this verse, as in the preceding, it is the CONDUCT of people which is condemned, a fact reiterated throughout this section. Paul was not speaking of "moralists," either Jewish or Christian, but of bold and arrogant sinners. Paul's "we know" was his method of stating an axiom of truth relative to God,

namely, that God's judgments are righteous, and according to truth itself; and therefore God's judgments, especially his condemnation of gross sinners, derive from the abhorrent character of their deeds, and will not be averted by any claimed exemptions on their part. According to truth ...Here is the second proposition of ten principles in God's judgment of man. It will be "according to truth," that is, according to what God's word in the Bible teaches, for this is a plain reference to the Sacred Scriptures which will form the grounds of man's eternal judgment in the last day. Such passages as "Thy word is truth," etc., show this is true. Also, Christ said, He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my sayings, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I spake, the same shall judge him in the last day. Thus the second of the ten principles is People will be judged according to the Bible.

3-4 And thinkest thou this, O man, that judgest them which do such things, and doest the same, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God? Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?

This verse makes it clear that Paul's real subject in this paragraph is the judgment of God and the basis upon which same will be executed. Those persons who thought that God's Judgment would ever be exercised upon partial and unequal judgments were fantastically wrong. Paul here exclaimed in utter astonishment at the foolishness of persons who fancied that they might escape the judgment of God when they were condemned even by their own consciences, a self-condemnation just mentioned in verse 1. If a man cannot escape his own judgment against himself, how could he ever hope to stand before the holy God? It was for the purpose of refuting such widespread errors regarding God's judgment that Paul sternly propounded the true principles of it in these verses.

Here is the third great principle of divine judgment: God's goodness to sinners is not a sign that he approves of sin but that he looks to their repentance. The goodness, forbearance and longsuffering, called here "the riches" of God, have reference to the special privileges of the covenant people, the Jews, who again were answered by Paul in the form of a diatribe. The argument which was refused is: "God has been very good to us, and therefore we shall continue to expect goodness and favor at his hands." The argument is false because it is founded on a misunderstanding of the purpose of God's goodness, which is not to show approval of people's sins, but to extend to them further opportunities of repentance, and to persuade them by means of such goodness.

The word Despise means "to look down upon," or "to place a low estimate upon" something of far greater value than is recognized by the despiser. This is exactly what was done by those people, who treated the goodness and longsuffering of God as if it had been a tacit approval of their wickedness, and made it the basis of presumption that they would not finally be condemned.

Of special interest is the revelation here that God's goodness is designed to lead people to repentance, it being apparent that if God's goodness cannot lead people to repentance, nothing else can. The response of the soul to all the mercies of heaven, the response of the human individual to all the joys, benefits, and privileges of life, as given to men by the heavenly Father that response is the God-implanted instinct of gratitude to the Creator, to the end that people should seek after God, draw near to him, and serve him with joy, and certainly not for the purpose of allowing people to feel presumptuously secure in their sins.

Thus, in this verse there is continued emphasis upon the master theme, of Romans, that of the righteousness of God, his righteous JUDGMENT being the particular aspect of it considered here. Note that this is also true of the next verse.

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

Thus Paul followed the teaching of the Saviour who made repeated reference to "the day of judgment," etc.). Impenitent heart shows the wrong response to God's goodness, the purpose of which was to lead men to repent, but which had been perverted by some who had accepted it as tacit approval of THEIR wickedness, and with the result of hardness and impenitence in their hearts. How paradoxical that the very goodness of God which should have produced penitence, as intended, produced instead an arrogant, hard-hearted impenitent, who by such misuse of God's goodness had treasured up for himself a terrible weight of wrath in the last day. The same paradox is evident in the influence of the gospel, as Paul said, for we are a sweet savor of Christ unto God, in them that are saved, and in them that perish; to the one a savor from death unto death; and to the other a savor from life unto life.

Treasurest up ...God will reward iniquity. As Hodge noted, "To treasure up" is to lay up little by little, a store of anything whether good or evil. The abusers of God's goodness accumulate a store of wrath for themselves.

6 Who will render to every man according to his deeds:

Those who say that Paul's special brand of salvation was by faith without any works at all find here an insurmountable denial that he taught any such thing. On the other hand, it is plainly stated in this passage of holy writ that one of the great principles of eternal judgment is, God will judge people according to their works. Paul's reason for so emphatically stating this principle in the beginning of Romans is apparent. Its inspired author was about to write the great dissertation which would stress salvation by faith in Christ, and was about to include many things in it that are capable of being misunderstood and abused; accordingly, he took caution here at the very outset to guard against those very misapplications of his words which he doubtless foresaw, and which misapplications have become in these present times the basic platform of a so-called "gospel" utterly unknown to Paul, at variance with practically the entire New Testament, and contradictory of Rom. 2:6, above. We do not refer to the gospel of salvation by faith, or faith in Christ, or by grace, or by the grace of God, salvation in those terms being Pauline indeed; but reference is made to salvation by "faith alone," "faith only," or by "faith and nothing else." The great Protestant heresy founded upon the theory of an "imputed righteousness" solely as a result of faith alone contradicts Rom. 2:6 in this place as well as countless other plain words of scripture. Rom. 2:6 makes it clear that on the judgment day every man will be rewarded according to his deeds. Only the good will be saved; and only the bad will be lost. This was the same doctrine Paul wrote the Corinthians:

For we must all be made manifest before the judgment seat of Christ; that each one may receive the things done in the body, whether it be good or bad. Also, if Paul's teaching with reference to salvation by faith in Christ had been intended to negate the teaching of this verse, it is inconceivable that he would have put this statement into such prominence here.

7-9 To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life: But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, Tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile;

Here is another unequivocal declaration of a master principle underlying God's judgment, the fifth in this passage: God will reward well-doing and punish disobedience. These verses connect closely with Rom. 2:6 and show the manner of God's judging people according to their works. Together, these

verses declare dogmatically that well-doers shall inherit eternal life and that the disobedient shall receive wrath and tribulation.

So far as this text shows, eternal life consists of glory, honor, and incorruption - a happy existence in the heavenly kingdom. Eternal life is conditional, for eternal life must be sought by patience and well-doing. In the 8th and 9th verses, Paul affirms that tribulation and anguish will be visited upon those who do evil. If damnation is conditional, then salvation also must be conditional. One cannot be conditional and the other unconditional, if doing wrong causes a person to be lost, then to be saved, he must leave off the wrong and do right. If being lost is conditional, so is being saved.

"Doing" and "obeying" are made to be the basis of being saved, and "obeying not" is established as the basis of being lost; and this was not a new concept with the apostle Paul. It invariably entered into all his letters. Rest with us at the revelation of the Lord Jesus from heaven with the angels of his power in flaming fire, rendering vengeance to them that know not God, and to them that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus, who shall suffer punishment, even eternal destruction from the face of the Lord and from the glory of his might. It should be noticed in the above reference that Paul did not set up a special category for "disobedient believers," who through faith and nothing but faith would be saved anyway! Nor yet was there provision made for another class of disobedient who had had God's forensic righteousness transferred to them through faith only.

"To him that worketh not," which Paul was to write in Rom. 4:5, must be understood in conjunction with these verses where "worketh evil" and "worketh good" dogmatically are affirmed to be the basis of being saved or being lost. They cover exactly the same ground, but in the reverse order. In the previous two verses, the patient seekers of eternal life are contrasted with them that obey unrighteousness; and in these two verses, the soul that worketh evil is mentioned first and contrasted with him that worketh good. It is as though Paul had written: "Take it either going or coming, the judgment will be based upon what people do, whether or not they obey the Lord." But more appears here in the repeated mention of "the Jew first." This established the sixth principle of judgment, thus: Greater privilege will only entail greater responsibility. Far from having any kind of exemption, the Jew, due to his greater blessings, will actually receive priority in judgment, making either their damnation more severe, or their redemption more glorious than that of others. The same principle was enunciated by the apostle Peter thus: For the time is come for judgment to begin at the house of God: and if it begins first at us, what shall be the end of them that obey not the gospel? And if the righteous is scarcely saved, where shall the ungodly and sinner appear?

10-11 But glory, honour, and peace, to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile: For there is no respect of persons with God.

This, of course, is the seventh principle of judgment: VII. There is no respect of persons with God. This crystal-clear statement of God's impartiality hardly needs an interpretation. It simply means that God will judge people on the basis outlined in these verses, upon the basis of their deeds, whether good or bad, and not upon the basis of any fancied exemptions. The Jew will not be able to claim exemption on the basis of his descent from Abraham; and the Christian will be unable to claim exemption because he was a member of "good old Mother Church"! As in all the scriptures, the writings of the apostles complement each other and corroborate the doctrines taught. Thus, Peter's comment on this same principle is just what one should have expected. He wrote: Of a truth, I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: but in every nation, he that feareth him and worketh righteousness, is acceptable to him.

Respect of persons means: Partiality, the fault of one who is called on to requite or to give judgment, has respect to the outward circumstances of men, and not to their intrinsic merits, and so prefers as the more worthy, one who is rich, high born, or powerful, to another who is destitute of such gifts." How reassuring it is to know that God will give just judgment, not after the prejudices of people, but according to truth and righteousness; and, although there is ground here for great assurance, there is likewise the basis of dreadful apprehension, when the essential unworthiness of all flesh in God's sight is contemplated.

12-13 For as many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law: and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law; (For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified.

In these verses, Paul began to deal with a dramatic difference between Jews and Gentiles. In the preceding verses, he had shown that God was no respecter of persons, and that he would judge Jew and Gentile alike upon the basis of their deeds, whether good or bad; but until these verses Paul had taken no account of the fact that the Jews had been the custodians of God's divine revelation "the law," here and throughout Romans. The Gentiles had possessed no such advantage; and Paul, to continue his great argument relative to God's intrinsic righteousness, was here concerned with showing

how, under those diverse circumstances, God's judgments would still be fair and impartial. The two great facts with regard to the Gentiles were, first that they had sinned, and second that they had not received the Law of Moses. For good and righteous reasons, already set forth in chapter 1, the Gentiles perished anyway because of their dreadful rebellion against God. The Jews, on the other hand, did have God's law; but they never kept it. However, they were still to be judged upon the basis of the law they never kept, the mere fact of their having had it being in no sense a guarantee of a favorable judgment; "For not the hearers of the law, but the doers of the law shall be justified."

Not the hearers ...is of interest and contrasts with "readers of the law," which might have been expected; but Paul's terminology was correct because most of the Jews, every Sabbath day in the synagogues, heard the scriptures read, very few, if any of them, having copies of God's word in their homes. Again, the words of an apostle confirm Paul's declaration (rather they confirm each other), thus: "But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deluding your own selves. For if any one is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a mirror: for he beholdeth himself and goeth away, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. But he that looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and so continueth, being not a hearer that forgetteth, but a doer that worketh, this man shall be blessed in his doing." That the actual doing of God's law, whether the Old Testament law as it concerned the Jews or the perfect law of liberty as it concerns Christians (for James was talking about the latter), is required of those who would be saved is thus taught both by Paul and by James; and significantly, the very first reference to justification in the whole Roman letter is right here! There is no intimation in these words that any true justification, in the absolute sense, was ever achieved by any under the law of Moses; but, inasmuch as there were countless persons under that system who were saved, a justification sufficient to that Paul's meaning is therefore to the effect that whoever was saved under the law of Moses was of the class called "doers" of God's commandments, rather than mere hearers.

14-16 For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves: Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another;) In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel.

These verses reveal the eighth principle of divine judgment, namely, That God's righteous judgment will take into account the light people had or did not have. Paul never implied in these verses that the ancient Gentiles were all saved, because they had lived up to all the light they had; for he repeatedly made it clear that they did not do that. This parenthesis, therefore, would best be viewed; it seems, as setting forth the basis of judgment. Those who believe that they find some basis for what is called Paul's universalism in this passage must go beyond what is written in order to do so.

Paul's intimation that Gentiles might do by nature the things of the law shows that the eternally righteous God will certainly take into account all of the good conduct of any Gentiles whose lives might warrant doing so, even though they were not under a specific law like the Jews; but the practical verdict had already been stated in verse 12, "that as many as sinned without law shall also perish without law." From this, and the whole tenor of Paul's letter, it is clear that Paul's great proposition is that both Jews and Gentiles have failed to achieve any true righteousness, or to be justified in any adequate sense. This was due to the failure of the Jews, who, having the law, treated it as a charm or a talisman rather than honoring it by their obedience; and it was also due to the failure of the Gentiles who were not any more proficient in living up to the light they had than were the Jews. Thus, these two verses are an apostolic enunciation of the great truth that God will judge every man according to the light he has, and not according to the light he has not. If there were, in antiquity, any Gentiles who truly lived up to the light they had, one may rest assured that God will reward them. In speaking of these things, so utterly beyond the unaided knowledge of man, it should always be assumed as an axiom that "God This concluding statement of the paragraph shows that the theme of the general judgment on the last day was under discussion; and two more propositions relative to that final scene are added here, as follows: The final judgment will be according to the New Testament. The judgment will be by Christ as Judge.

According to my gospel. Since Paul was the principal author of the New Testament, the extended meaning of the world's being judged by Paul's gospel is that it will be judged by the New Testament, there being no disunity whatever between Peter's Gospel, Paul's Gospel, and Matthew's Gospel, etc. It is the entire New Testament that shall confront people in judgment. Jesus Christ declared of his word, that the same should judge men in the last day; and there is no other authentic source than the New Testament for either the words of the Master or the gospel of Paul.

By Jesus Christ The fact of the judgment's being "by Jesus Christ" is comprehensive: (1) Christ is to be the judge. (2) Christ's word is the basis of

judgment. (3) The word of the apostles is also part of the platform of eternal judgment. (4) All authority in heaven and upon earth belongs to Christ..

My gospel does not imply any difference between Paul and other New Testament authors. It is simply a term of endearment, such as "my God". Paul's use of this expression in the context could also be his way of emphasizing the truth that the doctrine of eternal judgment was indeed a valid and prominent element in his teaching. When Paul says, "my gospel," he is reminding his readers that the gospel committed to him, unto which he is separated, and with which he was identified, though it was truly the gospel of grace, was also one that incorporated the proclamation of judgment for all, just and unjust. Grace does not dispense with judgment. Only in the gospel does this proclamation come to full fruition. Thus, right down to the very last word of this section, the final judgment of all mankind is the theme, with special emphasis on the principles upon which that judgment will be executed.

The secrets of men include the inner thoughts, hidden motives, all actions concealed or hidden from others. In fact, the judgment will be of the whole man, as only God sees, knows, and understands him.

17-20 Behold, thou art called a Jew, and retest in the law, and makest thy boast of God, And knowest his will, and approvest the things that are more excellent, being instructed out of the law; And art confident that thou thyself art a guide of the blind, a light of them which are in darkness, An instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes, which hast the form of knowledge and of the truth in the law.

The name "Jew" first occurs in 2 Kings 16:6; but after the Babylonian exile, it was used frequently. It is thought to be derived from "Judah," the name of the principal tribe of Israel, especially of the southern kingdom, after the division. It was an honored and sacred name. Murray said, "It was a name associated in the mind of the Jew with all upon which he prided himself. "

"Judah" means "praised," being the name given by Leah to her fourth son, because, as she said, "Now will I praise the Lord". The same meaning of "praise" is therefore attached to the name Jew. The name had the highest status among the Hebrews. Even upon his death-bed, Jacob said, "Judah, thou art he whom thy brethren shall praise, which is an evident reference to the glorious name of the fourth son, which came, in time, to be adopted by all the Hebrews in the abbreviated form. This is an appropriate place to note that the noblest of those who wore that name deserved it in every sense of the

word. Antiquity reveals no more noble persons than those great Jews whose names adorn the pages of the Old Testament. All of the patriarchs and prophets, some of the kings, and many God-fearing members of this chosen nation must be reckoned among the noblest ever to live on earth and surely met Paul's specifications for persons worthy to be called Jews. To be sure, none of those ancient worthies was perfect; but their lives as a whole established new bench-marks of character in an age when virtue itself had been almost banished from the earth. Thus, it is clear that Paul thought that some who called themselves Jews were utterly unworthy to wear the name.

And retest upon the law ...Here Paul began to list the prerogatives that surely pertained to the honorable but were falsely claimed by those whom Paul addressed. They rested in the law, not by keeping its teachings but by glorying in it as a national possession ministering to their pride and conceit, and as having nothing at all to do with their behavior.

And gloriest in God ...Paul did not mean that any of the things in this list were wrong in themselves, but that they were, like a jewel in a swine's snout, wrong by circumstance, that circumstance being the wickedness of those glorying in God, etc. Of course, they were not actually glorying in God in the sense that it was lawful and commendable to do so. True glorying in God is right and proper, as the scriptures teach:

He that glorieth let him glory in the Lord. Thus saith the Lord, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might; let not the rich man glory in his riches: but let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the Lord which exercises lovingkindness, judgment, righteousness in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the Lord .

What kind of glorying was it then which Paul enumerated here as reprehensible? It was a vain and empty glorying of wicked men whom nourished their conceit that they were something special in God's sight, and in which they attributed to God an attitude of indifference, or even approval of their sins.

And knowest his will ...Just as above, knowing God's will is very well indeed; and it is the solemn duty of every man ever born to know God's will as perfectly as possible; but it is a mark of honor to know God's will, only if the knowledge is accompanied by a sincere intention to do it. On the other hand, when mere knowledge is made to support human conceit and causes the possessor to fancy that such knowledge endows him with some kind of superiority over his fellow man, or when it may be supposed that the mere possession of the knowledge of God, apart from the true obedience to God's will, conveys any eternal merit - then occurs the condition reprov'd here.

Approvest the things that are excellent ... The idea of both clauses taken together is this: "You have the ability to make accurate moral judgments and to distinguish and appreciate moral values." That ability was derived from God's law in which those people had been instructed. Every Jew, through parental training and weekly attendance of the Sabbath worship, was instructed in the law, at least to the extent of hearing it repeatedly read, and of hearing the public discussion of it.

And art confident that thou thyself art a guide of the blind ... These men were precisely the same kind of persons of whom Jesus said they are blind guides. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into a pit. There was a certain superficial sense in which those people might indeed have led the blind and served as the light of the world; but the moral cancer within them negated such ability completely. Moreover, their minds had already been darkened in the manner Paul described in Rom. 1:21; and the mere fact of their clinging to the external and superficial glories of the old covenant and conceitedly glorying in it could not take away their essential blindness in spiritual things.

A corrector of the foolish, a teacher of babes ... Here Paul completed the list of Jewish prerogatives begun in Rom. 2:17. The things listed here are synonymous with some already mentioned. Collectively, the expressions listed provide an excellent picture of the way Gentiles were regarded by the enlightened Jews of Paul's day. Tragically, the picture is accurate. The Gentiles were indeed blind, ignorant, babes, walking in darkness, an extremely foolish people who desperately needed the wisdom and guidance which properly instructed Jews might have given them. These covenant people detested the ridiculous idolatry of the Gentiles and were in full possession of the most wonderful revelation that ever came from God until Christ appeared upon Calvary.

Having in the law the form of knowledge ... identifies the source of all Jewish knowledge and superiority as the Law of Moses. The words strongly suggest Paul's words to Timothy, "For men shall be lovers of self, holding a form of godliness, but having denied the power thereof: from these also turn away". Jesus said of the temple itself, "Behold, your house is left unto you desolate" "The same principle holds with regard to the gospel itself, wherein is mighty power to save; but when sin corrodes the life of Christians, they are invariably left holding to a mere form, a feeble shadow of reality.

21-24 Thou therefore which teachest another,
teachest thou not thyself? thou that preachest a
man should not steal, dost thou steal? Thou that
sayest a man should not commit adultery, dost

thou commit adultery? thou that abhorrest idols,
dost thou commit sacrilege? Thou that makest thy
boast of the law, through breaking the law
dishonourest thou God? For the name of God is
blasphemed among the Gentiles through you, as
it is written.

This devastating blast is a charge of hypocrisy, immorality, dishonesty, and general wickedness leveled against the persons Paul addresses. Paul evidently selected the very sins which were most repugnant to the Jews, for, of all the sins of the pagans around them, the Jews particularly detested their idol worship and the abominable sexual excesses. Theft and blasphemy were also regarded similarly. Therefore, it is amazing that Paul charged them with guilt in all these areas. Although there were doubtless many personal exceptions to the gross wickedness Paul charged against the Jews, the tragedy lies in the fact of its being so generally true of that particular generation. Christ himself supported Paul's charge of theft: "**And he saith unto them, it is written, 'My house shall be called a house of prayer: but ye make it a den of robbers'**". The persons charged in Jesus' indictment were none other than the social, religious, and political leaders of the nation. Paul's charge of adultery was supported by all the Old Testament prophets, especially Jeremiah, who wrote, (They) assembled themselves by troops in the harlots' houses. They were as fed horses in the morning: every one neighed after his neighbor's wife." Jeremiah even went so far as to say that the Israelites had committed adultery "**under every green tree.**" The charge of robbing temples is more difficult to understand because, it is like "**profaning sacred things**" or robbing God through non-payment of tithes; but there is no need of any attempt to soften this. Those addressed were guilty as charged. True, we are unable to cite specific examples, as of adultery and theft; but, what is more important; their reputation for doing just that is established in the word of God.

Thou who gloriest in the law ... This and the following clause constitute a summary of what Paul wrote in Rom. 2:17-20, and the second part of Rom. 2:23, is a pronouncement of guilt upon those people in all points as charged, namely, theft, profanation, adultery, etc.

For the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you this is the pinnacle of Paul's indictment, taken out of Isa. 52:5, which reads, "And my name continually every day is blasphemed." It is worth noting that the blaspheming of God's name mentioned by Isaiah was due to the captivity of Israel, it being the view of the pagans that any god who could not protect his people from captivity could be blasphemed with impunity; but this circumstance does not invalidate Paul's appeal to this verse for support of what he said, because the captivity itself was due to the sins of Israel, thus making their sin to be the originating cause of the blasphemy.

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

Beginning here, and to the end of the chapter, Paul discussed circumcision, which was to the Jew, and especially to them here addressed, a refuge of last resort, wherein, if all else failed, he still might claim eternal life as his just inheritance. It is obvious that the Jews regarded circumcision as in some way securing their salvation. That they did so regard it may be proved, not only from such passages of the New Testament where the sentiment is implied, but also by the direct assertion of their own writers. Circumcision, as Paul discussed it here, refers to the rite itself, not to the whole law of which that rite was a covenant seal. The fact that Paul began with a declaration that circumcision was profitable for them that kept the law was apparently in anticipation of the advantages pertaining to the Jew which he discussed immediately afterwards in Romans 3. But, while allowing the validity of the rite when used as God intended it, Paul did not hesitate to blast this last refuge of apostates by showing that not even circumcision could do a man any good eternally, if he did not keep the law. To transgressors of the law (not occasional and inadvertent transgressors, but the hardened and impenitent) circumcision became uncircumcision. Every Israelite should have known that already. Historically, circumcision had never been alleged as any reason why the death penalty should not have been executed upon Sabbath breakers and such men as Achan, nor as any impediment to their Rabbi's casting out of their synagogues persons they judged unworthy. From these well-known facts, they should have been able to deduce the great law that no such thing as circumcision could possibly prevent the judgment of God upon apostates.

26-27 Therefore if the uncircumcision keep the righteousness of the law, shall not his uncircumcision be counted for circumcision? And shall not uncircumcision which is by nature, if it fulfil the law, judge thee, who by the letter and circumcision dost transgress the law?

In Rom. 2:18, the alternative translation of a key clause was noted: "distinguish the things that differ"; and the crying need to do just that becomes apparent in the study of a verse like this.. The above raises the question at once of who were those uncircumcised people keeping the ordinances of the law; and which law and which ordinances are meant?

Here then is the instance where uncircumcision had become circumcision, and here is the case where uncircumcision could not invalidate the claims of the righteous; Hodge's statement noted above does not take into account this distinction and is not correct. Many of the Christians of Jewish descent in the

early church insisted upon circumcision for Gentile converts, a requirement Paul fought vigorously and never allowed; and it is the shadow of that old controversy that looms here. The law required circumcision; and, therefore, any person credited with "keeping the ordinances of the law" would positively have to be a person of whom God had never required circumcision in the first place, and who was fulfilling the law, not in the shadow of its old ordinances, but in the realities of the new life in Christ. Every Christian, though literally uncircumcised, is nevertheless circumcised "in Christ;" in the same sense that he has paid the penalty of death due to sin, "in Christ." All who are truly "in Christ" thus fulfill the law. The words "by nature" in this verse are made the basis of referring this statement to pagans, or Gentiles, of the nobler variety, who were presumably living up to all the light they had; and, in that vein of thought,

Judge thee refers to the same thing Jesus mentioned when he declared that the people of Nineveh should rise in judgment and condemn that (the Lord's) generation.

28-29 For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly;
neither is that circumcision, which is outward in
the flesh: But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly;
and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit,
and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men,
but of God.

In these two verses, the principle is stated both negatively and positively that the rite of circumcision is useless unless the moral values of the law, which were pledged and symbolized by that circumcision, are also maintained. The false circumcision would therefore be the circumcision of one whose life showed no regard for the moral values of God's law; and the true circumcision would be the case of the circumcised person who regarded and honored such values. To make Paul's statement in this context mean that every external rite, such as baptism, which was commanded by the Lord himself, may be dispensed with, and that some vague inward experience or strong emotional commitment may be substituted for it, is to make it speak a falsehood. There is not a particle of evidence that Paul here had in mind Christian baptism, or that these words may be forced into an application to that rite. Paul was only declaring that the only circumcision that could avail the Jew anything was a circumcision honored by a life consistent with the rite.

In the spirit not in the letter ...does not mean that the external rite of circumcision, as commanded by the law, might have been dispensed with by the Jew and replaced by some "spiritual" experience, but simply that the

external rite ALONE, without the God-honoring life that was supposed to accompany it, was worthless.

Chapter Three

1 What advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit is there of circumcision?

What advantage, then, hath the Jew? Or what profit is there of circumcision? As if he had said: You lately allowed, that circumcision verily profited; but if circumcision, or our being in covenant with God, raises us no higher in the Divine favour than the Gentiles; if the virtuous among them are as acceptable as any of us; nay, and condemn our nation too, as no longer deserving the Divine regards; wherein lies the superior honour of the Jew; and what benefit can arise to him from his circumcision, and being vested in the privileges of God's peculiar people?

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

Much every way: the Jews, in reference to the means and motives of obedience, enjoyed many advantages not available to the Gentiles. Primarily, they possessed the oracles of God -- that revelation of His will to Moses and the prophets, containing a treasure of excellencies, with which no other part of the world has been favored, though they have abused these privileges.

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

For what, what then, if some did not believe, and acted contrary to their obligations, shall their wickedness annul the PROMISE which God made to Abraham, which he would, by an everlasting covenant, be a God to him and to his seed after him? Genesis 17:7. Shall God, therefore, by stripping the Jews of their peculiar honour, as you intimate he will, falsify his promise to the nation, because some of the Jews are bad men?

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

God forbid, Let it not be, far from it, by no means. Yes, let God be true, but every man a liar, in case, his promise appears to fail, it is because the condition on which it was given has not been complied with; which is the sense of what is written in Psalms 51:4: I acknowledge my sin, and condemn myself that the truth of thy promise to establish my house and throne for ever, may be vindicated when thou shalt execute that dreadful threatening, that the sword shall never depart from my house, which I own I have brought upon myself by my own iniquity." Should any man say that the promise of God had failed toward him, let him examine his heart and his ways, and he

will find that he has departed out of that way in which alone God could, consistently with his holiness and truth, fulfill the promise.

5-6 But if our unrighteousness commend the righteousness of God, what shall we say? Is God unrighteous who taketh vengeance? (I speak as a man) God forbid: for then how shall God judge the world?

“But if our unrighteousness commend the righteousness of God.” May we never think that our unrighteousness may serve to commend and illustrate the mercy of God in keeping and fulfilling the promise which he made to our forefathers? The more wicked we are, the more his faithfulness to his ancient promise is to be admired. And if so, would not God appear unjust in taking vengeance and casting us off? “I speak as a man” I feel for the situation both of myself and my countrymen, and it is natural for me to speak about it as I do.

“God forbid” or we might say by no means. God cannot be unjust; were he unjust, he could not be qualified to judge the world, nor inflict that punishment on the unfaithful Jews, to which Paul refers. If the faithfulness of God in keeping his promise made to our fathers is, through our unfaithfulness, made far more glorious than it otherwise would have been, why should we then be blamed for that which must redound so much to the honour of God?

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

For if the truth of God, if the faithfulness of God in keeping his promise made to our fathers is, through our unfaithfulness, made far more glorious than it otherwise would have been, why should we then be blamed for that which must redound so much to the honour of God?

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

And why do you not say, seeing you assume this ground, that in all cases we should do wickedly, because God, by freely pardoning, can so glorify his own grace? This is a most improper thought, but it follows from the Jews reasoning; it has, indeed, been most injuriously laid to the charge of us apostles, who preach the doctrine of free pardon, through faith, without the merit of works; but this is so manifest a perversion of the truth that a just punishment may be expected to fall on the propagators of such a lie.

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

What then? After all, have not the Jews a better claim to the privileges of the kingdom of God than the Gentiles have? No, the word already proved that both Jews and Gentiles are under the guilt of sin; that they are equally unworthy of the blessings of the Messiah's kingdom; and that they must both, equally, owe their salvation to the mere mercy of God.

10-11 As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God.

As it is written, See Psalms 14:1-3; from which this and the two , following verses are taken. There is none righteous this is true, not only of the Jews, but of the Gentiles; of every soul of man, considered in his natural and practical state, previously to his receiving the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ. There is no righteous principle in them, and, consequently, no righteous act can be expected from them; see on Romans 3:12. God himself is represented as looking down from heaven to see if there were any that feared and sought after him; and yet he, who cannot be deceived, could find none! And therefore we may safely conclude there was none to be found.

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

They are all gone out of the way, they have all diverged from the right way, they have either abandoned or corrupted the worship of God: the Jews, in forsaking the law and the prophets, and the Gentiles, in acting contrary to the law which God had written on their hearts. And the departure of both from the truth proves the sinful propensity of human nature in general. They are together become unprofitable. They are useless, good for nothing; they are putrid: he views the whole mass of mankind as slain and thrown together, to putrefy in heaps. This is what is termed the corruption of human nature; they are infected and infectious. What need of the mercy of God to save from such a state of degeneracy!

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

Their throat is an open sepulcher by their malicious and wicked words they bury, as it were, the reputation of all men. The whole of this verse appears to belong to their habit of lying, defamation, slandering, poisoned the reputation of others.

14-18 Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness: Their feet are swift to shed blood: Destruction and misery are in their ways: And the way of peace have they not known: There is no fear of God before their eyes.

Whose mouth is full of cursing; speak in profane oaths, blasphemies, and malice. Their feet are swift to shed blood they make use of every means in their power to destroy the reputation and lives of the innocent. Destruction and misery are in their ways DESTRUCTION is their work, and MISERY to themselves and to the objects of their malice is the consequence of their murderous conduct. And the way of peace have they not known they neither have peace in themselves, nor do they suffer others to live in quiet: they are brooders and fomenters of discord. There is no fear of God before their eyes. This completes their bad character; they are atheists, for all practical purposes. They fear not God's judgments, although his eye is upon them in their evil ways.

There is not one article of what is charged against the Jews and Gentiles here that may not be found justified by the histories of both, in the most ample manner. And what was true of them in those primitive times is true of them still.

With very little variation, these are the evils in which the vast mass of mankind delight and live. And where did all this come from? From that, whence come all wars and fighting's; the evil desires of men; the lust of dominion; the insatiable thirst for money; and the desire to be sole and independent." This is the sin that ruined our first parents, expelled them from paradise, and which has descended to all their posterity; and proves fully, that we are their legitimate offspring; the fallen progeny of fallen parents; children in whose ways are destruction and misery; in whose heart there is no faith; and before whose eyes there is nothing of the fear of God.

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

That the word law, here, to the former in their own Scriptures; to the latter in that law written in their hearts by his own Spirit, and acknowledged in their written codes, and in their pleadings in every civil case. Now, according to this great law, this rule of moral conduct, whether given in a written revelation, as to the Jews, or by the secret inspiration of his Spirit, as in certain cases to the Gentiles, every mouth must be stopped, and the whole world, both Jews and Gentiles, stand convicted before God: for all mankind have sinned against this law.

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

On the score of obedience to this moral law, there shall no flesh, no human being, be justified; none can be accepted in the sight of God why? Because by the law is the knowledge of sin: it is that which ascertains what sin is; shows how men have deviated from its righteous demands; and sentences them to death because they have broken it. Thus the law is properly considered as the rule of right; and, unless God had given some means of discovering what SIN is, the darkened heart of man could never have formed an adequate conception of it. For, as an acknowledged straight edge is the only way in which the straightness or crookedness of a line can be determined, so the moral actions of human can only be determined by the law of God; that rule of right which proceeds from his own immaculate holiness.

21 But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets;

But now the righteousness of God, God's method of saving sinners is now shown, by the Gospel, to be through his own mere mercy, by Christ Jesus; without the law-without any right or claim which might result from obedience to the law; and is evidently that which was intended by God from the beginning; for it is witnessed by the law and the prophets the rites and ceremonies of the one, and the preaching's and predictions of the others, all bearing testimony to the great design of God, and to the absolute necessity there was for the sacrifice and salvation which God has provided.

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

That method of saving sinners which is not of works, but by faith in Christ Jesus; and it is not restrained to any particular people, as the law and its privileges were, but is unto all mankind in its intention and offer, and becomes effectual to them that believe; for God hath now made no difference between the Jews and the Gentiles.

23 For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;

For all have sinned: And consequently are equally helpless and guilty; and, as God is no respecter of persons, all human creatures being equally his offspring, and there being no reason why one should be preferred before another, therefore his endless mercy has embraced ALL.

And come short of the glory of God. These words have been variously translated. Failed of attaining the glory of God: Have not been able to bring

glory to God: Stand in need of the glory, that is, the mercy of God. The simple meaning seems to be this: that all have sinned, and none can enjoy God's glory but they that are holy; consequently both Jews and Gentiles have failed in their endeavors to attain it, as, by the works of any law, no human being can be justified.

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

Being justified freely by his grace, So far from being able to attain the glory of God by their obedience, they are all guilty and, to be saved, must be freely pardoned by God's grace; which is shown to them who believe, through the redemption, the ransom price, which is in the sacrifice of Christ Jesus. This redemption of Christ comprehends whatsoever he taught, did, or suffered, in order to free men from evil; especially to free them from sin, the source of evils; that they might attain true felicity. And that it here means the liberation purchased by the blood-shedding of Christ, is evident from Ephesians 1:7: We have REDEMPTION, THROUGH HIS BLOOD, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace. See also Colossians 1:14, where the same words are found.

No man certainly can deny that this word properly means the redemption of a captive, (whether he may have been taken in war or in any other way,) which is procured by the payment of a price. That the word also means any deliverance, even where no price is paid down, nobody will dispute; but that it means redemption by a price laid down, and the redemption of the soul by the price of the death of Christ, the above scriptures sufficiently prove.

25-26 Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.

Whom God hath set forth, Appointed and published to be a propitiation, the mercy-seat, or place of atonement; because the blood of the sacrifice was sprinkled on and before that, in order to obtain remission of sin, punishment, The mercy-seat was the lid or cover of the ark of the covenant, where God was manifest in the symbol of his presence, between the cherubim; therefore the atonement that was made in this place was properly made to God himself. Through faith in his blood this shows what we are to understand both by the redemption, and the propitiation; that they refer to the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ, as the atonement made, and the price paid down, for the redemption of the souls of men.

To declare his righteousness, for the manifestation of his righteous-ness; his mercy in saving sinners, by sending Jesus Christ to make an atonement for them; thereby declaring his readiness to remit all past transgressions committed both by Jews and Gentiles, during the time in which his merciful forbearance was exercised towards the world; and this applies to all who hear the Gospel now: to them is freely offered remission of all past sins.

To manifest now, by the dispensation of the Gospel, his righteousness, his infinite mercy; and to manifest it in such a way, that he might still appear to be the just God, and yet the justifier, the pardoner, of him who believeth in Jesus. Here we learn that God designed to give the most evident displays both of his justice and mercy. Of his justice in requiring a sacrifice and absolutely refusing to give salvation to a lost world in any other way; and of his mercy, in providing THE sacrifice which his justice required.

Thus, because Jesus was the atonement, the ransom price, for the sin of the world, therefore God can, pardon every soul that believeth in Jesus. This is the full discovery of God's righteousness, of his wonderful method of magnifying his law and making it honorable; of showing the infinite purity of his justice, and of saving a lost world.

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

Have we nothing in which we can trust for our acceptance with God? No merit of our own? Nothing it is excluded it is shut out; the door of heaven is shut against every thing of this kind.

By what rule, doctrine, or reason is it shut out? Nay not by the law of works; glorying is not cut off or shut out by that; it stands in full force as the rule of life; but you have sinned and need pardon. The law of works grants no pardon, it requires obedience, and threatens the disobedient with death. But all glorying in the expectation of salvation, through your own obedience, is excluded by the law, the doctrine of faith: faith alone, in the mercy of God, through the propitiation made by the blood of Jesus, is that by which you can be justified, pardoned, and taken into the Divine favour .

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

Therefore it cannot be denied, that all have sinned: that all are guilty, that all are helpless: that none can deliver his own soul, and that God, in his endless mercy, has opened a new and living way to the holiest by the blood of Jesus, Hebrews 10:19,20, we, apostles and Christian teachers, conclude, prove by fair, rational consequence, that a man-any man, is justified-or has his sins blotted out, and is received into the Divine favour, by faith in Christ's blood, without the deeds of the law, which never could afford, either to Jew or

Gentile, a ground for justification, because both have sinned against the law which God has given them, and, consequently, forfeited all right and title to the blessings which the obedient might claim.

29-30 Is he the God of the Jews only? is he not also of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also: Seeing it is one God, which shall justify the circumcision by faith, and uncircumcision through faith.

Is he the God of the Jews only? Do not begin to suppose that because you cannot be justified by the works of the law and God has in his mercy found a new method of saving you that therefore this mercy shall apply to the Jews exclusively. Is not God the maker, preserver, and redeemer, also of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also, as much as of the Jews; for all have equally sinned and there is no reason, if God be disposed to show mercy at all, that he should prefer the one to the other; since they are all equally guilty, sinful, and necessitous.

In verse 30 we read "Seeing it is one God." This has been rendered, Seeing God is one. It however makes little difference in the sense: the apostle's meaning most evidently is, it is one and the same God who made both Jews and Gentiles, who shall justify-pardon, the circumcision-the believing Jews, by faith; and the uncircumcision-the believing Gentiles, by the same faith; as there is but one Saviour and one atonement provided for the whole.

The apostle has one meaning when he says, BY faith, and a different meaning when he says, THROUGH faith. Both the prepositions are to be understood in precisely the same sense; only the addition of the article in the last case extends and more pointedly ascertains the meaning. It is one and the same God who shall justify the believing Jews by faith; and the believing Gentiles by THAT SAME faith.

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

Do we then make void the law through faith?

First by the word law here we may understand the whole of the Mosaic law, in its rites and ceremonies; of which Jesus Christ was the subject and the end. All that law had respect to him; and the doctrine of faith in Christ Jesus, which the Christian religion proclaimed, established the very claims and demands of that law, by showing that all was accomplished in the passion and death of Christ, for, without shedding of blood, the law would allow of no remission; and Jesus was that Lamb of God which was slain from the foundation of the world, in whose blood we have redemption, even the remission of sins.

Second we may understand, also, the moral law, that which relates to the regulation of the manners or conduct of men. This law also was established

by the doctrine of salvation by faith; because this faith works by love, and love is the principle of obedience: and whosoever receives salvation through faith in Christ, receives power to live in holy obedience to every moral precept; for such are God's workmanship, created anew in Christ Jesus, unto good works; in which they find it their duty and their interest incessantly to live.

Chapter Four

Here in chapter four Paul will go back to the Old Testament to illustrate how those Old Testament saints were justified.

1-2 What shall we say then that Abraham our father, as pertaining to the flesh, hath found? For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory; but not before God.

Abraham did not and could not claim anything of the flesh as his means of justification. He might before man but not before God.

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

Paul turns to the scripture to prove his argument instead of just arguing. Here he uses Genesis 15:6 And he believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness.

4-5 Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.

Paul continues to expand on the principle of Gen.15:6. In verse four, Paul says that men count earnings as a means of salvation. If it were true, that what we do could save us; salvation would cease to be a gift. In verse five, he says that the principle of justification by faith rests on God. Imputing, or the placing to one's account, is a free gift. Salvation is then not of works but on faith in the blood.

6-8 Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, Saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin.

Paul, having used Abraham as a witness to justification by faith, now turns to another Old Testament personage to strengthen his argument. His reasoning was no doubt based on the Jewish law of two witnesses (Deut. 19:15 used by Jesus in Matt. 18:16). Paul will use it again in 2 Corinthians 13:1 and 1 Timothy 5:19. David backed up what Abraham had said and gave witness that justification by faith was clearly at work in the Old Testament. Verse 6 is from Psalm 32:1-2; as believers our sin is forgiven and covered. The

reason for this is that they have been imputed to Jesus (Isaiah 53 and 1 Peter 2:24-25).

9-12 Cometh this blessedness then upon the circumcision only, or upon the uncircumcision also? for we say that faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness. How was it then reckoned? when he was in circumcision, or in uncircumcision? Not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision. And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised: that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised; that righteousness might be imputed unto them also: And the father of circumcision to them who are not of the circumcision only, but who also walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham, which he had being yet uncircumcised.

The Jew would have a hard time accepting that the gentile was going to be saved the same way as Abraham before the law and David under the law. Yet they would argue they were both circumcised, which is the sign of the covenant.

So in verse 11 Paul makes it clear Abraham was justified before he was circumcised. If you read Genesis chapters 15-17, you will see he was given justification some 14 years before he was circumcised. Nothing is to be taken from his circumcision or its importance to the Jew. It is an outward sign declaring God's seal of approval on His people. So too is baptism for us it; does not save us, but it declares the work of salvation in our hearts.

13-16 For the promise, that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith. For if they which are of the law be heirs, faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect: Because the law worketh wrath: for where no law is, there is no transgression. Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham; who is the father of us all,

Every descendant of Abraham expected to receive this inheritance: that is, this earthly world. The promise is found in Genesis 12:3 also in 18:18 and

22:18. Abraham's heritage was geographically limited to the area between the Euphrates River on the east and the Nile on the west.

Now this promise was "to his seed." In Galatians 3:16, we see that this seed is none other than Jesus Christ, so the promise must be understood in relationship to Messiah and the Kingdom. This will be fulfilled when Jesus sits on David's throne in the Millennium. So you can see it is impossible for the inheritance to be obtained by the law. Why you ask? Because no one has ever kept the law except Jesus.

Paul adds that where there is no law, there can be "no transgression" -- the law declares what is right and demands conformity, but gives no power to do what is required. Paul adds "therefore it is of faith" given by the grace of God. Paul adds force to this by saying that not only the natural born Jew who must come by faith like Abraham, it is also the same for any of Abraham's spiritual seed -- the gentiles -- as they must come by faith also.

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

Paul here quotes from Gen. 17:5, at a time when Abraham was childless. He promised to give Abraham and Sarah a child. You see, God's promises are better than money in the bank. We see the same kind of promise in Joshua 6:2 See, I have given into thine hand Jericho, and the king thereof, and the mighty men of valour the wall was still standing but to God it was already down.

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

Abraham, who by his standard was beyond being able to have children, still believed what God said.

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

Abraham had amazing faith, seeing that he was 100 and Sarah 90, which would appear as adverse circumstances, but still he obeyed God continually.

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

To stagger means to "separate or dispute" so in regard to God's promise, his mind was not divided. Now in Gen. 17:17, Abraham is said to have laughed; this was not mocking, rather it was a laugh of amazement or wonder. He gave God glory for what was done for him.

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

Abraham did not have a wistful hope but was fully persuaded that God's promise would come to pass. This is so very important for us to know that what God has promised us will happen we need to be fully (completely) persuaded.

22 And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness.

Because Abraham believed God when He gave the promise though it seemed unbelievable, God "imputed" or placed righteousness to Abram's account.

23-25 Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him; But for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.

Now Paul's use of Abraham to illustrate salvation faith was not just for Abraham's sake alone but for all who have been and will be saved "if" they believe what God the Father did through the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus. He brought life out of a dead womb and he brought eternal life out of a dead tomb.

Jesus atoned for our sins (2 Cor. 5:21) on the cross. Then He was raised for our justification. "Believe and faith" or believing faith is found 16 times in Chapter four. The words count, reckon, and impute occurs 11 times and all mean to charge to one's account. Righteousness occurs in one form or other 8 times (8 being the number of new beginnings).

Chapter Five

Now Paul has shown all of mankind guilty of sin, and that God's method of justifying us is seen in Old Testament examples. Paul then writes this amazing chapter on not only what justification does at the moment of salvation but the fact blessings continue throughout our lives as a result.

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

Paul starts with the word "Therefore," linking us back to the first four chapters. He then adds "being justified" this indicates an action occurring in the past; it also clearly indicates that the recipient had no part in initiating this justification. Because of this action being done for us, we gain some important benefits. First, one is at "peace with God": this is a state of being at peace rather than at war. See Is. 48:22; James 4:4. We gain this peace only through faith in Jesus the Saviour, our mediator, as seen in 1 Tim. 2:5-6; Eph. 2:13-18.

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

The second benefit is "access." To illustrate this, have you ever tried to call the president? If you have, or if you try to, you will find it nearly impossible. To the lost, God is even more inaccessible. He cannot be reached because there is no common ground, but for the believer, there is access to God because of the atoning death of Jesus. He will do the same for any who will take Him as Saviour.

The third benefit is "wherein we stand." There is an age old problem with humanity how can we stand before a holy God? (Ps. 130:3). In Rev. 6:16-17, we see men still wrestling with this problem as seen also in Ps. 1:5 Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous.

As the old saying goes, "we do not have a leg to stand on" when it comes to defending our sinfulness. Robert Haldane, the great Swiss reformer, said "and it is by Him they enter into the state of grace, so by Him they stand in it, accepted before God; secured, according to His everlasting covenant, that they shall not be cast down".

The fourth benefit is "hope of the glory of God"; this hope is concrete in its action. The glory of God is perfect, and we have fallen short of it (John 17: 32-33). We have hope today that whatever we are today, we have the benefit of knowing one day we will be like Him (1 John 3:2-3).

3-4 And not only so, but we glory in tribulations
also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience;
And patience, experience; and experience, hope:

The fifth benefit is that we not only glory in being justified but we can glory because we are in tribulation. Paul shows a progression in that tribulation -> brings patience -> then experience -> hope (1 Cor. 5:9-13). This is not a passive quality, but rather the ability to remain strong through tribulations. The test of endurance then results in experience or proof of the Spirit of God in our lives. The end result is hope: that is, certain knowledge that we will be glorified with Jesus.

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

Having been justified, we have a hope that cannot be humiliated. This hope is in the glory of God. Even though it may well be tested in the fiery furnace of tribulation, it will be seen as genuine by the love that is shed abroad in our lives, not by any means of our own but rather by the power and leading of the Holy Spirit that has been given to us. This then is the sixth benefit.

The seventh benefit -- "He is given to us": "is given" means to impart or put into the heart. The clear implication is that at the moment of salvation, we have the Holy Spirit imparted or poured into our Spirit. In salvation, Christ's righteousness is ours, His love is ours and the Holy Spirit's presence is ours; they are bound together in the salvation experience.

6-8 For when we were yet without strength, in
due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely
for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure
for a good man some would even dare to die. But
God commendeth his love toward us, in that,
while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

The eighth "without strength" here Paul is saying that we are helpless in the face of our sin. Paul restates this in verse eight as "we were yet sinners." It was not circumstance that brought Jesus to the cross, rather the divine plan of God (Gal. 4:1-5). The just man does not need anyone to die for him. But Jesus died for the sins of the whole world. Not only do we receive these blessings at salvation, there are some future blessings for the justified person.

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

By nature we are deserving of wrath (John 3:36). The prophet Nahum says that God has reserved His wrath for His enemies (1:2) It is both good news and a great comfort to know we will not face it (1 Thess. 5:9)

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

This verse is important. Notice that while we were His enemy He provided the means of being reconciled to Himself by the death of His only Son Jesus. Since He loved us that much, His love for His children will not allow them to face His wrath because of the life He has given. Christ's death effects our salvation, but His life sustains it . His death removed the penalty of sin, and His life gives victory over the power of sin.

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

The word "joy" here is the same as rejoice and glory previously seen in this chapter. We have this joy through and by Jesus, so we owe all we have and will have to Him. Paul will now enhance the teaching of these first chapters that is "condemnation and justification" by the use of contrasts. As we go into the verses from here to the end of the chapter, there are three truths that will be shown. First one offense by one man brought sin on all; Second the guilt of these sins is imputed to all, and third Adam acted as the representative of all mankind when he chose to go against God.

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

Because of one man and one sin, sin and its ally, death, entered into mankind. All of Adam's sins after this one came from that original sin of disobedience, not just eating the fruit, but defying God's command not to eat it.

13-14 (For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law. Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come.

Sin filled the world and was in it from Adam and Eve down through the generations. Paul says "sin is not imputed"; however, even before the law was given, death attested to the presence of sin. Adam is here contrasted with Jesus. The first Adam sinned the second Adam paid for all the sin of all mankind being sinless.

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

Paul continues the contrast between Adam and Christ. Here he says through Adam's offense, the many (all of us) incurred the penalty of death. In contrast, the many (all of the redeemed) have incurred the gift of eternal life. In Adam we get what we deserve, but grace being greater, we have received more of what we do not deserve.

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

Here, Paul makes it clear it is not for "offenses" but for one offense was condemnation (judgment) given to man. However the righteousness which is imputed to us by Christ covers not one by grace but many.

17-18 For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.) Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life.

Death had reigned for four thousand years because of Adam. But much more now since Jesus has come into society there is victory over death (1 Cor. 15). The sad part is all are born into the society of Adam but not all are born into Jesus' society of life. When anyone calls on Jesus, they are born again and in the birth experience, we move out of our old relationship and into a new living relationship with Jesus.

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

Again Paul goes back to the fact it is by one man that sin is in the world. This contrast is between the blatant disobedience of Adam and the willful obedience of Jesus. God had said in Gen. 2:17 "thou shalt not eat of it"; it did not take long for the first Adam to disobey that command. In stark contrast the second Adam (Jesus) totally and willingly obeyed the will of God. In the garden Jesus prayed "not my will but thine be done". In John 17:4 Jesus said

"I have glorified thee on earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do".

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

Some may have been wondering what the law was for, and Paul readily answers this question. The law is "God's yardstick of holiness which served to bring out into sharp relief the guilt of man." The law did not cause more sin; it simply defined sin and exposed it for all to see. The law came not to make a person a sinner but to show how much a sinner that person is.

Grace did not then or now set aside the law of God, rather grace completely satisfied the law's demand. No matter the worst sinner and the lowest of persons grace can bring them into the light of Jesus.

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

From that first moment that Adam disobeyed, sin has reigned, bringing both physical and spiritual death. Sin's principle of ruler ship is to separate man from God and allow only a short mortal life. But through the blood of Jesus, grace has taken reign over all who are under the blood through His righteousness. This is a great contrast between man's sin and Christ's obedience, between the wages of sin and the gift of life from Jesus.

Chapter Six

From verse one of this chapter to chapter seven verse twenty five Paul will deal with the provision of Sanctification and its contrast with the doctrine of Justification which he has just laid out in chapter five. There is a contrast between the two great doctrines in that Justification deals with the penalty of sin, sanctification deals with the power of sin. Justification is a declared act of God and Sanctification is a progressive work of God. One deals with the lost person's sins the other with the saved sinner. The end result of justification is salvation the end result of sanctification is obedience.

1-2 What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?

In every generation, there are those who denounce the teaching of justification by faith based on the incorrect supposition that "if we are declared right by God, and good works do not save, then evil works will not condemn either why live then a Godly life why not just live as you please." Here in these two verses Paul anticipates this attitude. This attitude technically is called "Antinomianism": Paul makes a very clear answer. Just because where sin abounded and grace super-abounded, the believer is not automatically granted license or liberty to sin in his or her life.

When a mature Christian understands the doctrine of justification, the end result is obedience to God out of a heart filled with gratitude for the grace of God in their lives. We cannot continue to practice sin because we have, through our faith in Jesus, been declared dead to sin: that is, to the guilt and penalty of sin. Sin no longer has claim to our souls because in Christ, we died at Calvary.

3-5 Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection:

Now Paul will start relating the secret of living a holy and sanctified life, a life characterized as being dead to the power of sin. The real secret to a sanctified life is not in some formula or mystical experience; the real secret is in three words. First Reckon, the second is Know, and the third is Yield. There is a need to be vitally aware of these as we learn to understand the relationship between justification and sanctification.

To show the immaturity of anyone who would continue in sin after being justified so more grace would abound, Paul goes to baptism as evidence that life in sin cannot co-exist with death to sin. Baptism into Jesus is to become a member of his body (1 Cor. 12:13) and to share vicariously with His experience the crucifixion, death, burial, and resurrection. Being buried with Christ signifies that sin no longer has a legal hold on us. In baptism we see the old order of life come to an end and the new order of life which is controlled by Christ begins.

Having been justified, the believer tells the world that this has happened through obedience to baptism. When an individual comes up out of that water, it is a picture of Christ coming out of the grave. The purpose or resurrection from the dead is so we can begin to walk in a new way of life. This should put to rest the foolish idea of continuing in sin so grace may be displayed. Just as we were buried in the likeness of His death, we enter His life by spiritual resurrection yielding to Him our desires, wishes, and ourselves completely.

6-8 Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin. Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him:

Paul continues his exposition of the first principle of sanctification, that is, we are dead. Paul repeats the word "know" -- "knowing" our old man, or our old sinful self, was crucified is in the past tense. The person we were before was put to death in Christ. Because we are dead, we should no longer be able to serve sin. Let me illustrate it this way: when a convicted murderer is executed, the sentence of guilt is no longer of any effect over him the judgment has been satisfied. In the same way, when we accept Christ, we die to the old self, and the judgment or wrath is no longer in effect on us. Death wipes the slate clean, I am new and alive in Christ, I shall live with Him -- this precludes living in the carnality of sin.

9-10 Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him. For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God.

For the third time, Paul uses the word "know," and each use teaches us. First, we have been baptized into Jesus Christ. Second, our old man is crucified with Christ third that Jesus died unto sin once never to die again. Third, Death is a finished deal where we have once and for all passed into the resurrected life of Jesus. When Jesus died for sin once, He can never die for sin again. When we died with Him to sin, we can never die to sin again;

“death hath no more” when Jesus went to the cross and paid the debt in full for our sin, death could no longer claim Jesus or those who died with Him. Sanctification, then, is not just about trying to live a holy life, but knowing that we are holy in Jesus.

11-12 Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof.

Knowing what has been accomplished, we have the first principle of sanctification. Now in these two verses, Paul adds a second principle in 11a: the word “reckon” means to know beyond doubt something in true, and you and you know it every moment of every day. So not only do we know we are justified, but we continue to live every day as if we had already entered into the resurrection presence of Jesus. We live daily unto the glory of God! When we daily count ourselves dead to the penalty of sin, alive unto God, there will be no temptation to continue in sin, for we will refuse it out of thankfulness to God for counting us as if we were righteous!

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

Here is the third and last principle in living a sanctified life, this one is a negative and then a positive. As some one who has been justified, we are not to allow our bodies or any part thereof (eyes, hands, feet, tongues, etc.) to be an instrument or tool of unrighteousness. Paul says “neither yield,” which means a continuous non-yielding, so we are to continually keep from yielding to sin. We are to once and for all yield to God our total being. So even though we may well commit a sin we will not succumb or be trapped by it.

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

Paul’s concept of sanctification is not just dying to self; it is being mature enough to rest wholly on the finished work of Calvary, knowing we were justified there, and daily reckoning the work finished, continually yielding ourselves to be used of God. When one is obedient to these principles, they will find themselves progressing toward the resurrection life of Jesus and have a definite promise.

15 What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid.

In verse one the question was "shall we continue in sin"? This dealt with continuing in sin after we know we are dead to it. Here it is not a question of life style but rather occasionally committing a sin. The Roman believers thought it might be all right because of God's grace! Paul's response was adamant God forbid or be it far from me! We are to abhor the very thought of it.

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

Paul again uses the word know to further reinforce the point of sanctification. He draws on the analogy of the slave market. What he is saying is that once you fall into a sin once you start to obey sin you are admitting sin's mastery over your life. Jesus said "no man can serve two masters (Mt. 6:24). Yielding to the mastery of sin brings chastisement and death yielding to obedience to God brings righteousness.

17-18 But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness.

Paul gives thanks and praise that some of them had been slaves of sin but had now obeyed from the heart Jesus Christ. Because they had believed they had been freed from the slavery of sin and in turn become the servants of righteousness.

19-22 I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh: for as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness. For when ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness. What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things is death. But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.

Paul uses the analogy of slavery as that even the weakest of human could understand. Paul encourages them that with the same energy they had served sin they should now yield themselves towards holiness they cannot serve two masters.

Paul asks a very pointed question of these believers what fruit or benefit was derived from their serving sin? The answer of course is none. So why would you want to go back into slavery to something that brings no lasting benefit and would have ended in death. Now they were free and serving God and the fruit of that is blessing and in the end everlasting life!

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

This is one of the verses in the Romans road to salvation and this Paul now brings into sharp contrast. The pay at the end of a life of sin is death. However the direct opposite is a life given to Christ is given the greatest and most costly gift eternal life through Christ. So death is earned but life is a gift from God!

Chapter Seven

Paul now continues his exposition on that great doctrine of sanctification. He is going to go from slavery as an analogy to one of marriage. Why? You may ask? The answer is marriage is a response of the heart. Paul uses it to show the relationship of a sanctified believer to Christ with a wife's relationship to her husband.

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

Paul starts with "Know ye not" because he knows they do not know however he is about to tell them. Paul says that the law of God (Mosaic) and the law of the Roman state both have a hold on a man as long as he lives.

2-3 For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband. So then if, while her husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man.

Both Roman and Jewish law said a woman was to remain with her husband until death. For her to desert her husband for another she would be branded an adulteress the word "called" means "to be known as" it is used in Acts 11:26 where it is applies to believers as "Christians." If her husband died she was free to marry another.

4-6 Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God. For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death. But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter.

Paul having made his analogy now draws the intended conclusion that is the law confirms and seals our bondage to sin. As long as we are controlled by the law there is no possibility of being released from that bondage. The only way to be free is to die.

However when Christ died at Calvary we died to the law sin has no more dominion over us and neither does the law. The purpose of being dead to the law and alive in the risen Christ is so we may produce fruit unto God! Since this is an analogy of marriage the fruit then would be the progeny of marriage (spiritually this is in souls won to Christ). Having been set free by justification we are expected to produce fruit the sanctified life with its inherent "good works" Eph. 2:10

The law is not just a series of do's and don'ts but rather a love letter written on our hearts. We do not obey out of fear as the Israelites but because we love the Lord. Now in Christ we seek to be all we can be for Christ to demonstrate our love for.

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

Paul gives another question concerning our relationship of the law to sin. Paul shows abhorrence in his words "is the law sin?" Paul says he would not know he had sin if the law had not told him "thou shalt not covet."

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

Not only does God's law reveal sin it also provokes it as well. Law does not cause sin but sin operates (occasion) from it. Paul says when he attempted to keep the law and could not the very law provoke him to sinful acts. Sin has no existence apart from the law since by definition sin is a violation of God's law.

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

This is a record of the arising of conscience in Paul. He had been complacent, self righteous a life free of conviction of sin. No one knows for sure when this took place in Paul's life some have suggested it was at his bar mitzvah ceremony. It could have been suggested that he was that rich young ruler who came to Jesus and had Jesus put the commandments to him as questions. For those referring to his relationship to God Paul all right with however when Jesus put the ones dealing with man to man relations Paul was not all right. Paul said at the revealing of the law "I died" this is in regard to his complacent attitude he was no longer alive.

10-11 And the commandment, which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death. For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew me.

This is a reference to the law's original purpose. God said "this do and thou shalt live." The law was given to promote life but man could not do it. Paul discovered that unheeded the law brings death.

The deception Paul is referring to is here in verse eleven. Since Paul knew that the law was to bring life Paul expected it to yield life. But instead it became occasion for sin and death. Since that is the opposite of his expectation he felt deceived however the perpetrator was not the law but sin. The law was just the tool which sin used to deceive.

12-14 Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good. Was then that which is good appear sin, working death in me by that which is good; that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful. For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin.

Paul's conclusion now is that the law is Holy , just and good. Paul now expands on this principle did the law which is holy and good bring death "God forbid." It is sin working death by the law and the purpose is that sin might be seen as sin. Finally Paul says that we know the law is spiritual finding its root in the Holy Spirit but Paul was carnal or fleshly and sold in bondage to sin.

From verse 15 to 25 put forth the anguish of Paul's soul.

15-17 For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I. If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good. Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.

Paul knowing the law is spiritual seeing it is from God Paul must admit he is carnal a slave to the power of sin. The things that he wanted to do he could not do but those things he knows were wrong he found that is what he did. Horace wrote "I pursue the things that have done me wrong; I shun the things I believe will do me good." Paul draws a different conclusion in verse 17 here Paul is not attempting to shun the responsibility for his sin rather he is aware that there are two wills at work in his life the one his flesh (sinful nature) the other the spirit born of God which does not commit sin as seen in 1 John 3:9.

18-20 For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. For the good that I would I do not: but the

evil which I would not, that I do. Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.

Paul acknowledges that in and of his self there is no ability to do good. He desires to do good but how to accomplish it he does not know ho. By himself he cannot do God's will because sin holds dominion it is his master and by himself he cannot break it. He is a defeated Christian when sin I sin control. It is not the spirit who carries on this life of defeat but the sin principle engendered by unyielding flesh occupying the Lord's temple as a squatter like Tobiah when Nehemiah threw our Nehemiah 13:7-9.

21-23 I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.

Paul says I found a law that is the law of sin that hindered him from doing good. It was Paul's desire as should be every Christians to love and obey the law of God. The law of sin opposes this and captivates his members i.e. his hands, feet, tongue etc. Paul concludes that as long as he lives there is going to be constant warfare between the old sinful nature and the spirit which delights in God's law.

24 O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?

Paul in his helplessness throws up his hands and cries out that he is wretched "o wretched man" comes from Greek drama and was used to express tragic misfortune and woe. Paul sees he is hopeless in ridding himself of his bent toward sin. Paul knew there was hanging over him this dark cloud of guilt and death which is imputed sin. The main point in this verse is Paul's questioning cry "who shall deliver me" he knows if he is to be delivered it must come from outside and the same is true of all of us. To live a Godly life will require a power outside our own ability.

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

Paul rejoices in knowing experientially that though he is powerless Jesus is able to give to is the power to live a sanctified life. This chapter is not hypothetical it is an actual picture of the internal struggle caused by the law of sin against the law of God in Paul's own life and it is no different for any of us. To live a sanctified life we must know well what Christ has accomplished

for us in our justification then daily reckon that we have died with Him and are alive unto His righteousness and yield ourselves completely to Him.

CHAPTER EIGHT

This is considered to be the crown jewel of the New Testament. It contains a vast amount of comfort for the Christian. Paul has just given us an inside look at the struggle that went on in his life, bringing us to the stark realization that in and of ourselves, no matter how hard we try to follow the law of God, this sinful body isn't going to do it. Here in this chapter, Paul will tell the Roman believers what their life is like once Christ is allowed to take control. Let's see then what we can learn to make our lives more Christ-like.

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

The word "condemnation" means more than just being the opposite of justification. It is that we are not servants to the penalty of our sins, but that the guilt and penalty have been removed at the cross. Therefore, to those who are "in Christ Jesus," we do not live under the threat of judicial punishment by God. This is Paul's closing argument concerning the depravity of man and the righteousness of God. Though liberals say that the last phrase should be omitted, it makes perfect sense as you read it. No condemnation to those who do not live after the flesh but after the Spirit. Those who allow the Spirit to take total control of their lives have no condemnation.

2-4 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

Here in verse two we have words comparable to those in 2 Corinthians 3:17: "Spirit of life" is the principle upon which the Holy Spirit works. In this chapter, Paul will mention the Holy Spirit some 19 times. One of the first things you will see on cursory reading is that the Holy Spirit and an absence of the attitude of defeat go hand in hand. Life in the Spirit gives us the ability to live free from the principle of sin and death. It is not that sin and death no longer exist, but they have no dominion over us; we can have a life that is not inundated with sin.

The Law of Moses could not justify us nor sanctify us because it is weak through our flesh. The law is good and holy, but because of our flesh we are unable to keep it, so the law cannot justify. However the good news is what the law could not do the Lord Jesus could. Notice Paul said Jesus came in the "likeness of sinful flesh"; had he said "sinful flesh," he would be guilty of heresy. Paul, in 2 Cor. 5:21 said that Jesus "knew no sin." The first word "sin"

is the same as the one used for "sin offering" in the Old Testament. Jesus came to be our sin offering because the law could not be our atonement God sent His own Son to be it. The reason is in verse four: God fulfills the law in us when we walk after the Spirit of God.

5-6 For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.

The word "mind" means to have something as a habit in ones thoughts, something which takes total interest. Those who place their interest in the things of the flesh cannot have their interest in the things of God. To have our mind on the carnal things of life brings symptoms of spiritual death. However, to have our minds stayed on Christ is to have a life and peace that passes understanding.

7-8: Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.

To have one's mind centered on the carnal (fleshly) things causes that person to become an enemy of God (James 4:4). The carnal mind will not submit to the law of God. Paul is not here speaking of two types of Christians but the contrast between unbelievers (carnal) and believers (spiritual) as we will see in verse 9. Until one places their faith in Jesus they can not be spiritually pleasing to God the Father (Heb. 11:6).

9-10 But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.

We see here the decisive factor in salvation is the Holy Spirit. If anyone does not have the Spirit, they do not have Christ. No one receives atonement unless the Spirit dwells within. These two verses refute the teaching that after salvation, one must have a second work of grace to have the Holy Spirit, or they do not have salvation. Now there may be a time when the Holy Spirit gains control of our lives, but there is never a time when we receive more of the Holy Spirit.

This does not say that we die physically, but rather that life that was dead in sin when Jesus came in at salvation; that which was (old, dead, sinful life)

is given new life, one of righteousness. This physical body will die one day, but the spirit will live forever with Jesus.

11-13 But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you. Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh . For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.

Paul puts an "if" here because salvation is personal so if one has the Holy Spirit, it is that same Spirit that raised up Jesus. Then on that resurrection day He will raise that person also 2 Cor. 6:14; 4:14 & 1 Thess. 4:14. Plus, this same Holy Spirit will energize or make alive (quicken) our physical bodies to live in a new way with new desires. Because of this, we are not debtor to the flesh (the carnal), but rather we are under His control or management and are debtor to Him instead.

We should not allow ourselves to live a life style of carnality or pleasing the flesh because we do not owe anyone allegiance to it. Paul says when we mortify or embalm the deeds of the flesh we are to count them as dead. When we do that and our mind is centered on the things of Christ, we will develop a born again behavior pattern which will let others know that the Holy Spirit resides in us.

14 For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.

Here is one characteristic of all who are truly born again: that is, in their thoughts and actions, they are habitually led by the Spirit (Matt. 7:20; John 13:35).

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

There is a contrast here between a slave and a son. Paul says when the Spirit of God indwells us, God no longer treats us as slaves but as sons (1 Cor. 2:12); 2Tim. 1:7). We no longer fear Him as a slave fears his master but rather we love Him as a son loves his father. The slave does his master's bidding out of fear of punishment; to one who is indwelt by the Spirit, there is no fear that intrudes into his service to the Lord. A son stands on a different footing; the Spirit of adoption enters us into a relationship with the Father that a lost person can never know. In the first century, an adopted son was one deliberately chosen to perpetuate the family line and inherit the estate. This son had all the rights and privileges of a natural son. This is why we can

call Him Abba (this is an Aramaic word that is personal for father, equivalent to our saying "daddy"). The Jews wouldn't use it, but with the indwelling Spirit we can freely address our Father.

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

How can we be sure we are a child of God? The ever present Holy Spirit confirms it to our spirit. As the Father's child, we no longer look at the world the same as we respond to His commands!

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

Since we are no longer servants but sons (Gal. 4:7) we are rightfully heirs of God, and we will share the inheritance that is Jesus' by birthright John 17: 22-24. Now the privilege of inheritance also has the responsibility of suffering. I wonder how many today listening to the false teachers who only talk about prosperity (inheritance) ever read this about suffering which they say only comes from the devil.

18-19 For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God.

Paul counted (reckon) that any suffering done here in this physical life, whether it be hardship, cruel and unusual punishment, this is one our brothers and sisters in India and the rest of Asia face and they have grasped this verse fully. Severe persecution or even death -- none of these even begin to compare to the glory that awaits us for those in Christ.

20-23 For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope, Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.

The preacher Solomon in Ecclesiastes recorded that outside of Christ, nothing in life has any lasting significance. If God removed His hand from

creation, all would be seen as a road leading to total frustration. Creation does not suffer from this vanity by its own design; (20b) this can only mean that God allowed it, as he is the only one who can subject His creation.

Because is the connecting word between bondage and vanity. You see, without God all of creation is meaningless it is plunging into decay and death. We do have a promise that even creation is going to be liberated from this bondage.

Just as there is a time of distress in labor before a child is born, this creation around us is in its birth pain before being delivered into the time of the Messianic Kingdom. Just as this earth groans for the coming Messiah, so do all who are believers. The first fruit is the Holy Spirit, our down payment or earnest on our redemption. We await the adoption which is our redemption. Here today we may be faced with financial stress, physical pain, failing health; nevertheless God is going to redeem this body, just as He has already redeemed our souls 1 Cor. 15: 5-55; 2 Cor. 5:2-3; Phil. 3:21.

24-25: For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it.

Now, do not think Paul is suddenly changing the means of salvation, for he is not. However, hope cannot be separated from our salvation, because salvation is the bedrock of our hope. Now as we look for the adoption of the body which is our redemption, we have opportunity for our faith to grow and mature we develop patience in waiting the return of our Lord.

26-27: Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.

Paul gives us another promise: that where we are weak, the Spirit helps us along. When one does not know what he or she should be praying for, then the Spirit goes to the throne for us. Undoubtedly, the greatest weakness of man is in the area of prayer. Prayer is what the disciples asked for, not anything else. We should be glad and thankful that the Holy Spirit knows what we need and how to ask the Father for it when we do not. God is the one who searches the hearts of men (Ps. 139:1, 23; 1 Chr. 28:9; 1 Cor. 4:5; Heb. 4:12-13). Even as the omniscient eye of God searches the unspeakable groans of our heart, the Spirit intercedes.

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

Paul given to is the promise of the redemption of our bodies and that our strength is in the Holy Spirit. Now he adds another promise for our encouragement and that is this our heavenly Father is using all the circumstances of life to accomplish His eternal plan for our life. "The called" is not the same as "many are called but few are chosen" but rather those who have accepted Christ and become part of God's family by adoption. So God is only working on those who are His for His own purpose.

29-30 For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.

Paul ended the last verse with the word "purpose"; he will now expand on this purpose. Our salvation provided by God is linked from eternity past to the present into eternity future. Included in this link are these great words which are to bring about God's purpose. Now the doctrine of "Foreknowledge" has been interpreted in a variety of ways. Foreknowledge means to know beforehand; however, that is an over simplification of the word. The truest explanation would be that of a father for his child. God knows us in an intimate knowledge which has resulted in an abiding love which draws us to Him in salvation.

Paul further explains that God's purpose is to conform each of us to the image or likeness of His Son Jesus. To fulfill this, the Father has made a determinate end for those who are the "called." We are being sanctified toward that end that we may be that brethren of Jesus the first born 1 Cro. 15:44; 2 Cor. 3:18; 1 John 3:2.

God calls us through the wooing power of the Holy Spirit. He does not force us, but rather beseeches us to receive His offer of salvation. When that offer is accepted, then we are justified, i.e., He reckons or counts us as righteous because of Jesus' atoning death. The final step is to be glorified, which is complete conformity to the image of His son Jesus (Col. 3:4). So from God's view, foreknowledge and foreordination belong to the eternal past. Calling and justification is the believer's present, and the glory that starts at salvation will find its ultimate end in the future. All of this is based not on our merit or our works or the law but in God's purpose. Nothing can be more heartening to our weary souls than that everything that is happening will end for our good.

31 What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?

Paul here brings a conclusion to the first 8 chapters by asking what our answer is to all that's been said. He then answers the question with a question. Paul's response is his complete surety that what God has determined for us will come to pass because God is God. Now at the last phrase he is not saying we have no enemies, but that there is no enemy that can stop God's eternal purpose.

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

Paul gives as evidence that God will bring His eternal plan to its conclusion; He did not withhold His Son as is pictured for us in Gen. 22:12. The Father loved us so much that He gave His Son to be atonement for us. Paul argues from the greater to the lesser since God did not spare Jesus from the cross He will not fail to bring to completion the purpose Jesus was sacrificed for. Because of His faithfulness all the gifts and blessings that come with salvation are ours.

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

Paul gives a third rhetorical question in asking if there is any man, demon, angel or anyone in the universe who can lay a charge at the feet of one of the elect let him do so. His answer is that it is God who justifies so there is no one to appeal God's verdict.

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

Paul makes a fourth and last question who then can condemn us once God has justified us only one could have condemned us and that is Jesus. Only God could have made a plan where the only one who could condemn instead dies for our salvation. But more than His death He is raised again and not only did He arise but He is sitting at the right (power) hand of God and interceding on our behalf.

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

In the last five verses Paul will amplify what he has already asked in the previous two verses by asking if it is possible that any of these seven external

circumstances can come into our lives and undo what Christ has done for each of the believers.

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

Before Paul answers his question he quotes Psalm 44:22 to show us that the persecution and tribulation that enters our lives is not sufficient to separate us from God's love why is this? The answer is all of God's children should expect to face these in our lives even to death.

37 Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.

Now we have Paul's answer nay or no in that in the midst of all these afflictions i. e. illness, suffering, afflictions we have God's word that He is eternally present and His presence in our lives makes us more than conquerors. We do not just hold our own but are drawn closer to Jesus by these afflictions and become more conformed to His image. Notice also that we conquer not through our power but through the work of the one who loved us.

38-39 For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Paul covers everything in the universe to see if there is anything that can separate us from God's eternal presence. He looks in the realm of death and finds nothing then to the realm of Satan (principalities and powers) and finds nothing. He moves to the present things going on and there is nothing there then to the future things that have not even happened to us yet and again nothing.

Paul moves to the expanse of space he looked high and low and found nothing Paul just in case he missed some thing or area of life he concludes that no other creature or creation of God can remove God's love from us. The song "Blessed assurance Jesus is mine" is a great song based on these verses. Paul is not just saying words he is fully totally experientially persuaded that all of these great and precious promises are ours because we belong to Him.

CHAPTER NINE

Introduction

These next three chapters are somewhat parenthetical however Paul will use this as part of his argument for justification by faith alone. It is thought that the Jewish believers had accused Paul of being too dedicated to the gentiles and forgotten them. The Roman Jews needed Paul's reassurance of their place in God's kingdom.

If Paul's message of salvation by faith alone was true, why didn't his own people receive the message? Paul will deal with this in a daring manner. The Jewish nation had rejected the gospel, but he remains firm in his stand that God is not yet through with His chosen people. Paul views all of this as part of God's eternal plan.

1-3 I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost, That I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart. For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh:

Paul starts by capturing his readers' attention by stating the truthfulness in what he is going to say and adds an emphatic "I lie not" for strength of his statement (read also 2 Cor. 11:31 and 1 Tim. 2:7). He ends this verse by telling them what he says his conscience will affirm.

Paul tells them that in the midst of his joy. He has a very heavy heart full of sorrow and pain for his brethren. He adds that if it would cause them to believe, he himself would become anathema, or cursed of God. This is very much like Moses' words in Exodus 32:30-33. Paul knows that he will not be accursed as his life is not his own. What he is saying is that he would accept everlasting destruction in exchange for Israel's salvation.

4-5 Who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises; Whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen.

Paul speaks now, not with the racial name but their theocratic name because of their son ship (read Exodus 4: 22-23). There are eight things that define what a Jew is: (1) their adoption as in the referenced passage; (2) the glory that appeared at Mt. Sinai and the tabernacle (Ex. 40:35; (3) the covenants that they were given to Abraham, Moses and David; (4) the law of Moses (Ex.14: 19:5); (5) their service in the tabernacle and temple (Ex.19:6); (6) the Promises of God (Josh. 1:2); (7) their lineage through Abraham, Isaac,

Jacob, and (8) the message given to them for the world (John 4:9; 2Cor. 5:16; Heb. 2:16). Paul does not say Christ belonged to them, but that he came from them in the flesh.

6-8 Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect. For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel: Neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children: but, In Isaac shall thy seed be called. That is, They which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed.

Paul says every one born a Jew isn't necessarily a Jew. Jesus in John 1:4-7 called Nathanael an Israelite indeed in whom was no guile also we see a similar passage in John 8: 30-32. Paul says in Gal. 4:29 that one is a true Israelite when they are born of the Spirit.

Being a descendant of Abraham does not make one an Israelite as he had two sons Ishmael and Isaac.

In Paul's understanding the children are those who believe in the God of Abraham and that faith is imputed to them for righteousness. All the others fall into a category as denoted by Jesus Himself in John 8:39, and 44.

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

Isaac did not believe before he was born. God made the promise and he carried the promise out. Though Isaac was not the first born he was God's choice or chosen one through whom the promised line would continue. Paul uses Isaac to show that God deals on the principle of His sovereignty.

10-13 And not only this; but when Rebecca also had conceived by one, even by our father Isaac; (For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth;) It was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger. As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated.

Paul will now add a second example so that no one can bring up the fact that Isaac and Ishmael had different mothers. He moves to Rebecca and Isaac and their children Esau and Jacob. There is no doubt that these 2 boys have the same mother and father. Not only that but God chose Jacob while he was still in the womb. This was to show that no work is involved in God's working out His purpose. Salvation then is never upon the basis of human

merit. It is however always on the basis of divine grace arising out of His sovereign eternal purpose.

The phrase "Esau have I hated" is not merely loving less but in the context of Malachi 1:1-5 God has directed His wrath toward Esau and all his descendants. God in Malachi states that His judgment is not the absence of blessing but Holy wrath in righteous judgment. He will also deal the same with individuals!

14 What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid.

Paul's assertion of election by grace apart from nationality or merit knew that there would be objection. This objection is the second question in this verse. Wouldn't God be unjust to pick one man over another? From a human view it would seem that he is arbitrary and unjust. This is only because we see things on a limited knowledge. Paul's response is familiar "God forbid" or may it never be so.

15-16 For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy.

This is from Exodus 33:19 and is God's answer to Moses question in 33:18. this is a quote with no explanation to show that even Moses had no special favor with God He operates on His principle of eternal purpose.

In verse 16 Paul reemphasizes that God's mercy finds its cause in Himself not in any man's activity "running" is a symbolic statement of activity and has no effect on mercy!

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

Pharaoh of the Exodus illustrates the principle well. Pharaoh was raised up by God to show the world that even Pharaoh's mighty power could not thwart or change god's eternal purpose for His people! Paul takes this from Exodus 9:16.

18 Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth.

The first phrase is from Exodus 33:19; the second is from each time Pharaoh refused to let Israel go. Now Pharaoh actually hardened his own heart by deliberate opposition to the will of God! Pharaoh's initial indifference eventually became hardened cement.

19-20 Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth he yet find fault? For who hath resisted his will? Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus?

Paul knows that any unbelievers would object to his teaching using human philosophy saying God cannot fault him because God made him that way. If God is sovereign it is impossible to resist his will therefore man is not accountable for his lost condition.

This is flawed theology so Paul maintains that the creature is not capable of judging the creator. To judge His validity would make man more righteous than God. To judge His wisdom would make man wiser than God! God is certainly not answerable to man for what He does He is true to His character. If we trust the character of God we can trust the wisdom of His sovereign acts.

21-24 Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour? What if God, willing to shew his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction: And that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory, Even us, whom he hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles?

These verses are a philosophical argument of Paul. He says that God like the potter does not make one evil and one good. Neither does he make some people fit for judgement and one for mercy. Paul does say that God endures the unbelievers who is under wrath while at the same time displays His glory on those who by faith in Jesus been fitted for glory. For this all believers Jew and gentile alike should be very thankful.

25-26 As he saith also in Osee, I will call them my people, which were not my people; and her beloved, which was not beloved. And it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people; there shall they be called the children of the living God.

Paul will now turn to the Old Testament prophecies to reinforce what He has been teaching. The first is Hosea 2:23 in Hosea's tragic life this Old Testament man of God could see the parallel between God and Israel by looking at his life with Gomer. They had one child together named Jezreel

and Gomer had two by others. One is Lo-ammi or no kin of mine and the other is Lo-Ruhamah which is one for whom no natural affection is felt.

These two names describe god's attitude toward His people when they brake their covenant and left His commandments. Paul does not directly make application but given the divine election what he says is that a great number of people who are gentiles could now lay claim to the same relationship that Israel had with God.

27-28 Esaias also crieth concerning Israel,
Though the number of the children of Israel be as
the sand of the sea, a remnant shall be saved: For
he will finish the work, and cut it short in
righteousness: because a short work will the Lord
make upon the earth.

Paul goes to Isaiah 10: 22-23 this prophecy deals with the coming judgment of God by the hand of the Assyrians. These would be a remnant left, Paul applies this to his day and it can be applied to our day as well. There will be a remnant left after God's swift and terrible judgment. It will be shortened so that some will remain.

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

Paul now adds Isaiah 1:9 here Isaih places on God's grace that a remnant a seed would always survive or they would have been wiped out like Sodom and Gomorrah.

30-31 What shall we say then? That the Gentiles,
which followed not after righteousness, have
attained to righteousness, even the righteousness
which is of faith. But Israel, which followed after
the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the
law of righteousness.

This is Paul's summary question the same as he has used in Chapters 3,4,6,7,8, and 9. Paul here says even the gentiles born without the privileges of being born Jewish can by faith receive the same salvation. However natural born Jews who had the scriptures attempted to build their righteousness by works. So God, in His sovereignty was allowing those who were afar off to be brought nigh by faith.

32-33: Wherefore? Because they sought it not by
faith, but as it were by the works of the law. For
they stumbled at that stumblingstone; As it is
written, Behold, I lay in Sion a stumblingstone

and rock of offence: and whosoever believeth on
him shall not be ashamed.

How can do what has just been said of Paul's kinsmen happen? Because the Messiah they had so hoped for was rejected and because for them He was a stumbling block. This prophecy is set in the time Israel was putting her trust in Egypt which is a picture of the world to fight the Assyrians instead of God. Anyone who puts their trust in Jesus need never fear that this trust has been misplaced.

Chapter Ten

Paul laid the grounds for this chapter in 9:30-33. This chapter will deal with righteousness and Israel's lack of it. Paul places responsibility on each individual.

1-3 Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved. For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.

Paul as in chapter 9 states his strong desire to see all his kinsmen be saved. Paul has no satisfaction in the national rejection of God and His salvation. Paul acknowledges the fact that Israel had a passion for keeping the law, but not for being what God would have her be. They read it, memorized it, internalized it but failed to apply it to themselves and live by faith choosing rather to try and reach God's righteousness by works.

4 For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.

First Christ is the end of the law in that the law brings us to Christ (Is. 42:21; Mt. 5:17). Second it may well mean that Christ is the terminal point of the law as He fulfilled the whole law, doing away with the old and bringing the new order of the Holy Spirit. He is this end only to those who believe.

5 -8 For Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, That the man which doeth those things shall live by them. But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise, Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down from above:)Or, Who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead.) But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach;

Paul refers to Moses words in Deut. 30: 12 where he states it is righteousness of faith and not of law. The first said do and live the second said believe and live. The Pentateuch showed that the change was to be on the heart and not something external. The Jews as personified in the religious leaders were doing something outward with the wrong heart attitude.

Paul uses the Jews idea that no one can get to heaven to find out about God's righteousness because Jesus is alive. In putting an end to foolish questions Paul quotes Deut. 30:12-14. Paul went to the synagogue first and preached the gospel and left the Jew to discuss it.

9-10 That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

Paul said the gospel was in their mouth, what they needed only to do was confess that Jesus is Lord. The Lordship that Jesus exercises as the exalted Christ. Before you can do that one must believe that Jesus arose. New life is contingent on a living Lord! Belief in Jesus saving power must come from the innermost part of one's being. Confession from the mouth is evident proof of genuine faith in the heart.

11-13 For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed. For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him. For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.

Just as the gospel is near all, it is offered to all. The word "whosoever" denotes the universal offer of salvation Paul wants the Jews to know that nationality is not a prerequisite for salvation the heathen gentile had just as much opportunity.

The Lord God is equally rich toward every sinner and ready to receive all who calls on Jesus for salvation. Paul now quotes Joel 2:32 "call upon the name" is a common Old Testament phrase that Paul without qualifications applies to Christ.

14-15 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? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!

People cannot call upon someone they have never heard about you see you cannot believe with out being told and you cannot call unless you believe. They cannot hear about Jesus unless the good news is brought to them and that will not happen unless God sends them. Isaiah in Isaiah 6:8 was asked the double question. All of us have been sent by the Lord Jesus according in John 20:21. "How beautiful" are words that were originally used for these who carried news back to Jerusalem that the exile was over? For us all who carry the gospel to a sinner who receives it the carrier's feet will be beautiful.

16 -17 But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report? So

then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

Here is the point of human responsibility and salvation where the Jew is concerned. They have the gospel close, it had has been offered but it has not been believed as proof Paul uses Isaiah 53:1. Hearing alone does not bring salvation but faith in the message of the gospel that is heard!

18 -20 But I say, Have they not heard? Yes verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world. But I say, Did not Israel know? First Moses saith, I will provoke you to jealousy by them that are no people, and by a foolish nation I will anger you. But Esaias is very bold, and saith, I was found of them that sought me not; I was made manifest unto them that asked not after me.

Paul anticipates the objective question that some Jews had not heard the gospel. Paul goes to Psalm 19 to remind them of the stars and heavens. Paul then goes to the greatest of prophets Isaiah in Isaiah 65:1 here he rules out merit or privilege of being a Jew by acknowledging even then that the totally indifferent gentiles would come to God.

21 But to Israel he saith, All day long I have stretched forth my hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people.

Paul concludes by putting the blame on men. God had dealt with Israel very patiently even through all her disobedience so her failure is her own!

Chapter Eleven

Righteousness in Israel's future is the subject of this chapter. Paul has presented Israel's past with God in chapter 9 and her present condition in chapter 10 and now he takes up her future with God here in chapter 11 that is the believing remnant. There are somewhat more than 20 million Jews in the world and the percentage of saved Jews compared to the saved out of the 6 billion gentiles is quite high. There are right now some 7 million of these Jews living in modern Israel.

1 I say then, Hath God cast away his people? God forbid. For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin.

In anticipation of his readers next question; that of has God closed His dealings with Israel and cast them away? There are those even today who teach this to be true and that all that belonged to Israel now is the churches. Paul's answer here to the Roman Jew is equally good today God forbid or may it not be so.

Paul will now present several exhibits to prove that God is not finished with Israel. He begins by using himself as proof that God is not through. The biographical background information is here given to show them that he is a Jew and that from one of the two loyal tribes. Paul was enjoying the blessings and promises of God and he was living proof of God's continual relationship with the Jew. He said he was one born out of due time or one born prematurely.

2 God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew. Wot ye not what the scripture saith of Elias? how he maketh intercession to God against Israel saying,

Paul moves now to exhibit b, god's unwavering faithfulness. God's foreknowledge is the guarantee that he has not cast off His people. If He had done so it would mean that God who changes not revoked His promises to Abraham, Moses, and David which guaranteed total restoration. For exhibit c Paul brings an Old Testament quote from 1st Kings 19: 10 and 14 with Elijah addressing God!

3-4 Lord, they have killed thy prophets, and digged down thine altars; and I am left alone, and they seek my life. But what saith the answer of God unto him? I have reserved to myself seven thousand men, who have not bowed the knee to the image of Baal.

Apostasy had raised its ugly head repeatedly in Israel and God faithfully preserved a remnant of true believers. In Elijah's day the northern kingdom had broken her covenant with God and killed all the prophets they could find. So hard was the times and polluted the religion that Elijah believed he was

the only one left. Many is the Christian worker who has at one time or other felt this way some have referred to it as the Elijah syndrome.

What was God's answer to Elijah's prayer it was to tell him he was not alone there were 7,000 men who were still faithful to God and if percentages were like they are today twice as many women. So God had a remnant that would preserve the northern kingdom He did so for 130 more years and even after the Assyrian's there were still a few who returned who were faithful. These formed the Jewish population in Galilee in Jesus day.

5-6 Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace. And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then it is no more grace: otherwise work is no more work.

Paul has presented three exhibits and now draws the conclusion to the question of "hath god cast away His people?". To Paul it was an incredibly ridiculous idea to think that God had totally rejected Israel. There was a remnant still by the election or choosing of Grace and not of national descent just as gentiles are. Paul adds that grace cannot include works as they are mutually exclusive. The Jew through works were to be added to grace which in reality cancelled out grace from the occasion.

7 What then? Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded.

What was Israel seeking? Righteousness according to chapter 10; the problem was they were trying to create their own righteousness failing to recognize that true righteousness is divinely imputed by faith. it was their fault they failed to receive what they sought in sincerity.

Some however like Paul had received it and they were God's remnant the rest of national Israel has been blinded. The word for blinded is to "render insensitive". This was the moral penalty put upon them for refusing God's word!

8 (According as it is written, God hath given them the spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear;) unto this day.

Paul inserts a quote from Deut. 29:4 and Is. 29:10 it is referring to the inability to see or hear of those who refuse to recognize the truth of God. Each writer of the gospel's used these to refer to the Jews inability to recognize Jesus the promised Messiah (Mt. 13:14; Mk. 4:12; Lu. 8:10; John 12: 40). Slumber here means a stupor or torpor or the "spirit of stinging" it is used for the numbness which results from the bite or sting of something venomous. Israel had refused God so he gave them a blinding stupor and insensitivity toward the truth of God.

9 -10 And David saith, Let their table be made a snare, and a trap, and a stumblingblock, and a recompence unto them: Let their eyes be darkened, that they may not see, and bow down their back alway.

The table was a reference to God's bountiful mercy and blessings to Israel. Israel had not taken advantage of this table therefore it had become a "snare, trap a stumblingblock" to them. Those who seek after their own righteousness will be blind and in bondage of sin. Those who seek Christ will receive grace and His righteousness they will receive it!

11 -12 I say then, Have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid: but rather through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy. Now if the fall of them be the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles; how much more their fulness?

Paul introduces this next section and thought with a question and a strong negative reply. One of the most important purposes of Israel fall in the eyes of God was so that the Gentile nations may receive salvation and begin feasting at God's table. This would then provoke the Jews to jealousy as suggested in 10:14 which is a quote from Deut. 32:21. This provoking would then cause them to realize their apostasy and rejection of Jesus as Messiah.

If the fall brought us the fullness of salvation how many more blessings will come with their large scale conversion. Paul is laying the groundwork for the proof of Israel's restoration.

13-14 For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office: If by any means I may provoke to emulation them which are my flesh, and might save some of them.

Paul turns to the gentiles to answer the question he anticipated from and that was, if you are the apostle to the gentiles why are you so concerned for the jews? His answer shows both his conviction for his office and his compassion for his kinsman. When he says "magnify mine office" it is in regard to provoking the Jew to salvation and vice versa that is the more Jews who accept Christ the more gentiles and the more his ministry opportunities will increase.

15 For if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead?

When the Jew cast away Jesus and put Him on the cross, not knowing that there He reconciled the world to Himself. So if Israel's blindness brought salvation to us what will her reception bring? It will bring revival on an

unprecedented scale. As we see the last days coming into focus we will see an increase in the number of Jews receiving Christ.

16 -17 For if the firstfruit be holy, the lump is also holy: and if the root be holy, so are the branches. And if some of the branches be broken off, and thou, being a wild olive tree, wert grafted in among them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive tree;

Verse 16 is from Numbers 15: 20-21 about the first fruits. The first fruit was always dedicated to the Lord and made Holy. If the wheat first fruit was holy then the lamb would be holy. Paul changes his analogy to that of a tree if its roots are holy (Jesus) then the branches (Israel) should be holy. Some of the branches had been broken off because of unbelief and some wild ones (gentiles) grafted into the Abrahamic root to replace those natural branches. Gentiles must always remember that not all the branches have been discarded. The life is not gone as the natural and wild branches that remain receive nourishment from the root.

18-24 Boast not against the branches. But if thou boast, thou bearest not the root, but the root thee. Thou wilt say then, The branches were broken off, that I might be grafted in. Well; because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith. Be not highminded, but fear: For if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee. Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off. And they also, if they abide not still in unbelief, shall be grafted in: for God is able to graff them in again. For if thou wert cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature, and wert grafted contrary to nature into a good olive tree: how much more shall these, which be the natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree?

Paul issues a warning to all Gentile believers about what has happened to the unbelieving Jew.

The great teaching of this passage is that just as the Old Testament Jew became proud assuming that they were the only ones who could know God the same thing could happen to Gentile believers also. Gentile believers must not be led to disrespect the Jew. If not for the grace of God gentiles would not have been grafted in.

The process of being grafted in is based on the grace of god. therefore we must remember that it is always easier to put the natural branches back

than put different ones in their place. We must test totally on the grace of God for own salvation.

Israel's restoration in prophecy 25-32

25 For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in.

When Paul uses this phrase (1:13; 1 Cor. 10:1; 12:1; 2 Cor. 1:8; 1 Thess. 4:13) he is about to tell them something very important. He is going to reveal a mystery now a mystery is a previously unrevealed truth there are 12 such mysteries in the New Testament.

Now the phrase "spiritual blindness" this is the mystery it is that the blindness is partial not total also it is temporal and not eternal. It will last until the "fulness of the gentiles" is come. Over in Acts 15:14 we read that God is visiting the Gentiles to call out a people. Jesus in Lk. 21:24 said "Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the gentiles, until the times of the gentiles be fulfilled" when all the gentiles has been saved that will be saved God will remove their blindness.

26 And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob:

The phrase "and so" this phrase links back to what Paul has been saying that Israel is contrasted with the gentiles. The "all" here is not meant to imply that every natural Jew will suddenly be saved because he is a Jew much the rather it is that Israel as a nation not individual Jews. The Mishnah Sanhedrin x.1 says "all Israel has a portion in the age to come" it then proceeds to name the Israelites who have no portion in that age. The last phrase is from Isaiah 59:20 and it is about the deliverer.

27 For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins.

This is Isaiah 59:21 and Jeremiah 31:33 both indicating that God will not fail His covenant promise to Israel.

28-29 As concerning the gospel, they are enemies for your sakes: but as touching the election, they are beloved for the father's sakes. For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance.

Since Israel is alienated from God they are said to be enemies of the gospel. However they are still beloved of God because they are His chosen people. Those privileges and prerogatives of 9:4-5 have not been abrogated what God promises He performs.

30-32 For as ye in times past have not believed God, yet have now obtained mercy through their unbelief: Even so have these also now not believed, that through your mercy they also may obtain mercy. For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all.

Verse 30 is a repetition of 11, 12, 15, and 28 that the gentiles have received God's mercy because of Israel's unbelief. In verse 31 we see this relationship which gentiles through salvation has with the restoration of Israel. Lastly in verse 32 we see that this relationship of God's mercy to all Jew and Gentile alike are both undeserving sinners and receive mercy because of God's great love.

33 O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!

God's revelation of Israel's national restoration brings forth great praise from Paul. He starts by praising God for His wisdom which is so much higher than any man's. No mortal could devise a plan to punish sin and still save the sinner but God did. So deep is His wisdom that man could never get to the bottom of it to search for it or even to track it through history.

34 For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor?

Who can know the mind of God; Isaiah said His ways are higher than our ways His thoughts higher than our thoughts. Who at anytime in history has been able to give God any counsel or help with the plan of salvation.

35-36 Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen.

Paul echoes Job 41:11 the salvation that we and Christian Jews enjoy is based not on what God must give to them for what they gave to Him but on grace alone. God is the reason we exist.

Chapter Twelve

We have spent the last eleven chapters in some very serious doctrinal discussion. But doctrine is never taught as an end in and of itself. It is taught to be put into practice as Jesus said in John 13: 17 "if ye know these things happy are ye if ye do them." So Paul as he always has will now finish this book by putting the doctrine he has just taught down where the rubber meets the road.

1-2 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. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

The word "brethren" here identifies who he is talking to as his fellow believers. The phrase "mercies of God" are all those good things we have because we are in Christ. Paul has moved smoothly from chapter eight right into chapter 12 here as Paul is again dealing with our responsibility to those who have received God's righteousness.

The second part of verse one uses the word "present" which goes back to 6:13 and 19 where Paul uses the word "yield." Paul is now going into some more detail on how to present your body. The Lord wants the sacrifice of our whole lives not our deaths. We are to be "living" sacrifices as opposed to the Old Testament sacrifices which were put to death on the altar.

Not only is presenting ourselves a living sacrifice it is also a "holy" and "acceptable sacrifice". More than this it is a "reasonable" thing to do as we serve God as royal priest. To Paul being spiritual is not some mindless flitting of the heart but a presentation of one's entire life to God!

Paul goes on in verse 2 that we are not to allow ourselves to be shaped and molded by this world 2 Cor. 4:4. As new creations we are to live according to 2 Cor. 5:17 and as such our hearts (emotions) and minds are to be governed by heavenly things not this evil world system.

We do this by constantly renewing our minds with the "transforming" power of the word of God. As the mind is changed we begin to see what the will of God is. The word "prove" is to test or scrutinize something; God's will is "good" in that it is never mistaken. God's will is "acceptable" in that as it is realized it will be endorsed by the believer. God's will is "perfect" in that it always achieves its desired end.

3 For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly,

according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.

Paul speaks more by the special dispensation of grace given by God. The transformed life which comes by the imputed righteousness of Christ to all equally it should then be exhorted first by humility. Each of us must guard against being above minded or having an attitude of superiority. We are to have a more serious assessment of ourselves based in Gal. 2:20. God gives to every man equal faith to be saved and to live.

4 -5 For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.

To prove his point of equal faith and equal place he turns to the body. Each part of the body is fitted for it's task fingers, thumbs, toes, etc. We as Christians are all part of one body and as such each of us has been given a gift by God and it is not based on education or station of life but on His grace. We are all distinct and yet one in Christ and joined to each other to contribute to the whole.

6-8 Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith; Or ministry, let us wait on our ministering: or he that teacheth, on teaching; Or he that exhorteth, on exhortation: he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness.

What do we do with this gift? We do not use it for selfish purposes but rather how god intends that is for the benefit of others and the whole.

Prophecy- inspired utterance- it is always to be in harmony with what already has been spoken by God!

Ministry-- a broad gift covering almost any service in the local church.

Teaching-- making God's unchangeable message understandable to the unlearned.

Exhortation—The gift of one who appeals to another's heart in consolation.

Giving—simplicity every believer can give both liberally 2 Cor. 8:2; 9:11-13 and of singleness of heart

Ruleth— Gift of making responsible and diligent decisions based on God's word.

Mercy—doing practical deeds of kindness

Each of these is necessary for the proper functioning of the body of Christ. If this is the case and it is then no one can exalt their gift over any of the other.

9 Let love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good.

From here to verse 16 Paul will show us that our transformation is to be exhibited in our love for the brethren. He will give several injunctions that are a practical outworking of the Sermon on the Mount as believers are to have a natural love for each other. The phrase "without dissimulation" means to be without hypocrisy or insincerity. Next Paul says we are to "abhor" or hate sin, one cannot expect God to remove sin from his or her life until they hate it as he does. The opposite of that is to "cleave" to what God calls good not what man calls good.

10 Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another;

Next he adds that we are to have a tender regard for each other with true brotherly love which disregards ones financial or heritage status. Since we are all made equal by grace then we should never consider ourselves better than another of the household of faith Phil. 2:3. We need to devalue our opinion of ourselves of our own worth before the Lord and yet increase our opinion of what He can do through someone who has done that and yielded themselves to Him.

11 Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord;

Another injunction is that we are to be enthusiastic about the business of Church. Now that business is not making money but seeing souls saved and saved souls growing.

We are to do this with a bubbling, energetic spirit one that is afire with the Spirit of God. We are His slaves but we are to be excited about the priviledge (Eccl. 9:10; Col. 3:23)

12 Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer;

Love among the brethren will not allow bad circumstances to hold back the joy of the congregation. Everyone must learn to bear up steadfastly when under the great weight of troubles that the Chruch will go through. The way a congregation does this is to be continuous in prayer for comfort and Strength.

13 Distributing to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality.

One who has their life transformed will exhibit a love towards the brethren in that they will be tangibly moved to help their fellow Christian who is in financial distress. We must maintain a real concern for the poor and needy

and show them equal hospitality just as you would anyone else as Abraham greeting the three strangers in Gen. 18:2-3

14-15 Bless them which persecute you: bless, and curse not. Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep.

This is a difficult injunction however Paul is not asking something of us he had never done before look at 1 Cor. 4: 12-13; Acts 28:19. This second part in verse 15 is not just stoic philosophy as did both. He rejoiced at the marriage feast of Cana in John 2: 1-12 and He wept over Lazarus in John 11: 1-44. The point for us is that we are to be so involved others lives that we know both their joys and their sorrows and identify with them.

16 Be of the same mind one toward another. Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceits.

This is not seeing eye to eye all the time but a unity of belief and practice which characterized the 1st century church! Paul goes back to the base of humility of the transformed believer will not just make friends with those who are financially secure and socially acceptable but will equally befriend the ones left friendless. This last phrase is from Proverbs 3:7

17 Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men.

These last five verses show us the transformed man before the world. The transformed life is not lived just around other believers but before a lost world. Paul starts by going after one of the most natural reactions of the flesh retaliation. In a transformed life there is to be no place for such an attitude.

The last phrase is from Pro. 3:4 and basically says live with human before the world just as you would before the Lord!

18 If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.

Paul now adds that as much as possible the transformed person is to labor in harmony with the lost. We should try and not be offensive or obnoxious toward them unless it is because of a stand for the Lord or our refusal to partake in their activities which are clearly prohibited by God's word,

19-21 Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.

Taking vengeance on someone is not our place but to just make room for divine judgment as God brings it as evidenced in Deut. 32:35 and Pro. 25:21. We are to be kind to those who hurt us so much so that if he is hungry feed him or give him a glass of water.

The last phrase of verse 20 is from Pro. 25: 22 there are two lines of interpretation the first is from an Egyptian ritual where a repentant person would put a pan of hot coals on his or her head. This then would indicate that food and water will bring about a change of attitude.

The other and more prevalent view is that the coals symbolize the shame and punishment brought on the one we show kindness to.

Lastly in 21 Paul concludes with the thought that as believers we must resist the impulse to retaliate but instead to promote our sanctified lives by doing well to those who use and abuse you.

Chapter Thirteen

When one is the righteousness of Christ and begins to live it out it is a life of transforming and of subjection. Paul could not write to the capitol of the empire without dealing with the relationship of the believer to the state. Even in the 1st century the question of religion versus the state was very much on the minds of these believers

1 Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God.

Then and now government is generally carried on by non believers. However the teaching of Jesus in Mark 12:17 along with Paul's teaching here and the historic position of the church such as the Westminster Confession of Faith Ch. XXIII, section IV has always been that believers live under the law.

There are no governments except those that are ordained by God. God sets up thrones and kings as in Daniel 4 also in Pro. 21:1; look also at John 19: 10-11 as Jesus strikingly illustrates this with Pilate. So since all power comes from God we then should be subject to it.

2 Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation.

Every believer needs to be aware that civil disobedience towards the government is condemned by God and those who would riot are in opposition to God. However the obedience given to the government is never absolute and must be weighed in light of their subjection to God. to act unlawfully toward government brings judgment (damnation) of God on the believer.

3 For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same:

When god started human government in the days of Noah it was to restrain evil and promote virtue and we should be in subjection to that type of government. Now by illustration the Declaration of Independence was written against King George III for punishing virtue and rewarding evil. We are never under subjection to injustice and wickedness. Rulers are to bring fear on evil doers and to promote the greater good.

4 For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil.

Basically Paul is saying that a mayor or any official is a servant of God as much as any Pastor only in a different way and a good one should be respected just as a Pastor should be respected.

Now this second part is a statement that unquestionably supports capitol punishment when carried out by the government. Capitol punishment was enacted by God in Gen. 9:6 so good government should never have it's hands so tied that they cannot carry out this mandate!

5 Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake.

Paul reiterates that we are to be subject not just because of wrath but for our conscience. We will always have a tension in us to obey government and to obey God. the state has a right to be respected and obeyed and we should to have a good conscious before God. we are not to blindly bow to the state if our conscience is offended by it's wickedness. There may be times when we like Peter must cry out "we ought to obey God rather than men" Acts 5:29; 4:19. the state is not infallible and there are times we must object.

6 -7 For this cause pay ye tribute also: for they are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing. Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour.

To be a good citizen we must discharge our obligation to all men. Tribute is taxes; customs are taxes on imported goods. Fear here is both concern and reverence; honor is to be respectful of the office.

Some rationalize their actions against the state by saying Paul in these verses did know what it was like to live in a corrupt society. Beloved Paul knew all to well as he lived under the reign of Nero who was the son of Agrippina sister of Caligula who was a very wicked man. He had thousands tortured and killed for his personal pleasure. She had Nero's step father murdered, Nero killed his step brother Britannicus at age 14. Then he killed his mother followed by the murders of his 1st wife Octavia and his 2nd Pappoca. Yet Paul said obey the ruler.

8-10 Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law. For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.

Love is the key word in determining our relationship to others. We should learn to not get ourselves too deep in debt. It is obvious to buy a home or vehicle it would be necessary to incur debt. However there are things we do not have to have to live a perfectly satisfying life.

Good citizenship brings Paul to quote the 6th thru 10th commandments. To these he adds the chief commandment in which the law is fulfilled. Love shows that we do not conform to the law out of duty but from a right heart attitude.

11 And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed.

Eleven thru fourteen tells of subjecting ourselves to God's timetable. The urgent nature of these days in the end of our age makes it necessary for us to wake up from our lethargy our complacency and pursue our calling to evangelize. The salvation he is talking about is found in ch 8:23. We are closer to that day than we may know.

12 The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light.

Each Christian must recognize that he is engaged in a warfare for the souls of men and we are at that time just before daylight so we need now more than ever to rid ourselves of anything dark in our life and put on the armor of light Eph. 6

13 Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying.

Those who have received the light have an obligation to live like it. Any manner of life which has riotous living, drunkenness, sexual orgies, and all other wild revelry is not one of those who walk in the light this person either needs to change their life or change their name.

14 But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.

Paul urges his readers to put on Christian virtues in the same way they would put on clothes (Col. 3:12) put on the new man Eph. 4:24; Gal. 3:27 "put on Christ." putting on Christ is to allow Him to envelop us so others only see His righteousness He is to live in us, through us, and on us as well. When that happens we will not have to be concerned about fulfilling our lusts.

Chapter Fourteen

This chapter deals with how one who has been transformed lives a life of consideration for those who are weaker in the church.

1 Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations.

The nature of the Roman believers weakness is not stated whatever the particular religious differences were between them the basic problem was that some believers had not grasped some of the great truth's Paul had given them. Those weak in the faith were those believers who had not grasped salvation as a free gift from God; and no longer faced condemnation because of Christ atonement.

Paul enjoyed his Christian liberty to it's fullest and was set free from foolish superstitions and unbiblical taboos. Some of the Romans were still clinging to the taboos and not understanding justification by faith alone. So Paul addresses both those living freshly in Christ and those in Christ still bound by the flesh and legalism. Paul encourages the strong those who had internalized the Bible doctrine were to receive the weak that is not yet fully resting in the grace of God. they were not to argue over secondary points of difference.

2-3 For one believeth that he may eat all things: another, who is weak, eateth herbs. Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not; and let not him which eateth not judge him that eateth: for God hath received him.

So Paul easily understood he puts forth two concrete examples of the weak verses the strong of faith. What is the proper diet for Christians, some who Paul sets as weak in faith in order to not eat any meat that may have been offered to pagan gods ate only vegetables. Those converted from these pagan gods would be sensitive to eating such meat. Paul's argument is that the meat did not lose its food value because it was offered to a dumb idol. However he admonishes those who do eat to not look down on those who do not. The reason is God has received this brother who is weak and we must as well.

4 Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be holden up: for God is able to make him stand.

Paul draws a principle that is found elsewhere (Matt. 7:1; Luke 6:37; 1 Cor. 4:3). Each of us is the property of God and we are not in a position to see the inner motives of others. God's jurisdiction over all believers is not to be infringed upon by either those who are weak or those who are strong God is judge and not we ourselves.

5-6 One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind. He that regardeth the day, regardeth it unto the Lord; and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it. He that eateth, eateth to the Lord, for he giveth God thanks; and he that eateth not, to the Lord he eateth not, and giveth God thanks.

Now he moves to a second example between those strong in the word and those who through weakness cling to same legalistic practice making certain days holy days more holy than others. Those who are strong like Paul understood their liberty and do not observe days but serve consistently seven days a week. Even though believers disagree with regard to this issue they must respect the opinion of others for the motive of both is to know God with giving of thanks.

7-9 For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's. For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living.

The old adage "no man is an island unto himself" is really an outgrowth of this paragraph however this is not the central truth being taught. The basic truth is that each of us lives our lives in full view of the Lord. We do this as servant to master and as such this affects our relationship to all other brethren. We are to interact with others in a means that is pleasing to the Lord not in judging the strong or looking down on the weak. The basis of this is the absolute Lordship of Jesus from His position of authority He bids us to live in harmony.

10-13 But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God. Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in his brother's way.

So on the basis of these 9 verses Paul addresses the question "why dost thou judge" the weak in faith and then "or why doest thou set at nought" addressed to the strong.

Paul says like him we each live with the judgment seat in our view. All we do will be judged at that Bema or award seat in 2 Cor. 5:10 on this day all that is meaningless between Christians will fade away and we will not be concerned about what others have done. The weaker will not defend the stronger and the stronger will not answer for the weaker. Paul quotes Isaiah 49:18; 45: 23 to indicate the certainty of this event. Under Jesus Lordship we must live with our convictions and not those of others. This should naturally drive us to take inventory of our religious scruples and convictions to make sure they are based on the Word and not tradition of men.

14-15 I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that there is nothing unclean of itself: but to him that esteemeth any thing to be unclean, to him it is unclean. But if thy brother be grieved with thy meat, now walkest thou not charitably. Destroy not him with thy meat, for whom Christ died.

Martin Luther wrote "a Christian man is a most free lord of all subject to none. A Christian man is a most dutiful servant of all, subject to all" by this he is saying that an individual Christian may through their liberty engage in a certain activity but it may be unwise in doing so.

Paul tells them that there is nothing unclean by itself but the weaker brother may be affected by it. There is no virtue in flaunting ones liberty. We must not insist on our liberty in the presence of others and cause them to stumble and fall. If we are giving to live around other believers then we must not just flaunt our ability to eat or go sometimes it would be better not to go!

16-19 Let not then your good be evil spoken of: For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. For he that in these things serveth Christ is acceptable to God, and approved of men. Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another.

Do not let what you knew is right because the object of misunderstanding. The real kingdom is not made of days or feasts or other secondary issues. No it is "righteousness" (perfect, uprightness in daily walk) peace (peace with God and a consistent affect to be a peacemaker) and joy (perfect union and intimate love through the Holy Spirit). Paul cautions us not to ride moral and theological hobby horses but go after building blocks of common faith between weak and strong.

20 -21 For meat destroy not the work of God. All things indeed are pure; but it is evil for that man who eateth with offence. It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink

wine, nor any thing whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak.

Convictions are fine but not at the expense of the work of God. If something bothers your conscience then do not partake of it. In verse 21 we have a beautiful picture that of a Christian who knows he is at liberty to do something but doesn't for the sake of another. The very best thing that one who is strong in the faith could do would be to help one who is weak become stronger. You cannot do this if you flaunt your doctrinal strength in such a way as to harm them.

22 -23 Hast thou faith? have it to thyself before God. Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth. And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith: for whatsoever is not of faith is sin.

Faith here is a firm conviction before god and it is proper to have it and cherish it. You can be happy in your conviction. The word damned here is not talking about suddenly going to hell for eating something that your conscience says is wrong. No it is saying our consciences will convict us of it when we do. If you cannot eat in good faith or a good conscience then what you eat you are eating in sin.

Chapter Fifteen

Paul now gives instructions to be considerate since we have been transformed by Christ and have Him for our example in these first 13 verses. In the rest of the chapter Paul uses to pass along some personal feelings.

1- 3 We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves. Let every one of us please his neighbour for his good to edification. For even Christ pleased not himself; but, as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me.

Paul lists himself as one of the strong ones who have grasped the principle of Christian liberty and freedom from man made tradition and taboos. Now Paul does not glory in this strength but rather he uses that strength to help the weak in doctrine.

Paul uses as his prime example of one strong of faith living in light of those weak in faith that being Jesus Himself. He above all had the right to please Himself yet He chose to set aside His desire and follow the directive of the Father. The last sentence is from Ps. 69:9. Paul applies it to Jesus in that even though he might have found an easier way HE chose the path of reproach to fulfill His task of salvation of man.

4 For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.

This verse matches 2 Tim. 3;16 to show the profitableness of the scripture. A through study of the Word of God will make the weak strong and enable us to bear the weakness of others. This type of study brings patience (steadfastness) and comfort (encouragement) these two end in a confidence that all will be well.

5-7 Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be likeminded one toward another according to Christ Jesus: That ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Wherefore receive ye one another, as Christ also received us to the glory of God.

the reference to the God of patience and consolation indicates that behind these virtues is a God who energizes them through the scriptures.

Paul appeals to God to bring together the strong believer and the weak believer. In the same manner that Christ received us we are to receive each other as believers. The point to see is this if Christ can receive us even over the great chasm between us should we not be able to receive each other even

if there are minor differences! The result of this action would be harmonious praise (vs. 6)

Since Jesus found it possible to embrace us and reconcile us to Himself it should be easy for us to do the same to each other (vs. 7)

8 -13 Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers: And that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy; as it is written, For this cause I will confess to thee among the Gentiles, and sing unto thy name. And again he saith, Rejoice, ye Gentiles, with his people. And again, Praise the Lord, all ye Gentiles; and laud him, all ye people. And again, Esaias saith, There shall be a root of Jesse, and he that shall rise to reign over the Gentiles; in him shall the Gentiles trust. Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost.

Paul now makes a pointed statement on Jew and Gentile relations and acceptance of each other. With Christ as our example the Jew must except the Gentile and the Gentile must accept the Jew. Jesus came to minister to the Jew as He stated in Mark 10:45 "THE SON OF MAN CAME NOT TO BE MINISTERED UNTO BUT TO MINISTER"

Jesus ministry is a configuration of the promise to the patriarchs and seeing the fulfilling of these promises brings praise from the gentiles Ps. 18: 49 is quoted by Paul where David included the gentile nations in God's heritage to Israel.

Paul continues with a series of quotes the first is from Deut. 32:43 the song of Moses, the next is from Ps. 117:1, then Is. 11: 10. Paul's purpose is to show that gentile as well as Jew will be included in God's family.

The gentile will put their trust in the root of Jesus the same as Jews. There are differences between gentiles and Jewish believes they have their common bond in Jesus. In verse 13 we have Paul's prayer as a result of that common bond!

14-16 And I myself also am persuaded of you, my brethren, that ye also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another. Nevertheless, brethren, I have written the more boldly unto you in some sort, as putting you in mind, because of the grace that is given to me of God, That I should be the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God, that the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Ghost.

Paul begins his concluding remarks by reminding his readers then and for all time that within the Roman church hearts full of goodness and there were those that were knowledgeable in doctrine enough to teach others. You see they were growing and that is the goal of every Pastor.

Paul does remind them that these were places in this letter where he had to stress some points such as in 6:12; 8:9; 11:17; 12:3; 13:3; 14:3,10,15. Paul asserts in verse 16 wrote this way because God's grace has made him a officiating priest to present the gentiles as an acceptable thank offering to God. the gentile is sanctified not by circumcision but by the better thing the Holy Spirit.

17-19 I have therefore whereof I may glory through Jesus Christ in those things which pertain to God. For I will not dare to speak of any of those things which Christ hath not wrought by me, to make the Gentiles obedient, by word and deed, Through mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God; so that from Jerusalem, and round about unto Illyricum, I have fully preached the gospel of Christ.

Paul had seen many triumphs during his ministry but he gives all the glory to Jesus which is where it all belongs for any of us. Paul acknowledges that through the grace of God he has preached the gospel with signs and wonders over a wide area of the eastern Roman Empire. What god had done with Paul was his proof for authority to write this letter.

20-21 Yea, so have I strived to preach the gospel, not where Christ was named, lest I should build upon another man's foundation: But as it is written, To whom he was not spoken of, they shall see: and they that have not heard shall understand.

Paul says here that he always made a point to travel to a place where no other apostle had been to and started a work. Paul desired to lay the foundation and build on it. So it was that the Lord led him to those places.

22-24 For which cause also I have been much hindered from coming to you. But now having no more place in these parts, and having a great desire these many years to come unto you; Whensoever I take my journey into Spain, I will come to you: for I trust to see you in my journey, and to be brought on my way thitherward by you, if first I be somewhat filled with your company.

Paul had longed to visit this existing work and could not. Now his impending trip to Spain and all the new territory there would necessitate a

lay over in Rome. While there Paul desired the time to be fruitful for the Romans and Paul.

25-29 But now I go unto Jerusalem to minister unto the saints. For it hath pleased them of Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor saints which are at Jerusalem. It hath pleased them verily; and their debtors they are. For if the Gentiles have been made partakers of their spiritual things, their duty is also to minister unto them in carnal things. When therefore I have performed this, and have sealed to them this fruit, I will come by you into Spain. And I am sure that, when I come unto you, I shall come in the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ.

Paul is going to Jerusalem first to minister there and to deliver a special financial collection from two Northern provinces. These were gentile churches giving the Jewish church further cementing this relationship. This gift was given as recognition of the debt owed to the Jewish church and to Jesus.

When he finished this task he would sail for Spain and stop at Rome for a time of fellowship and discipleship. He thought he would be coming by way of full blessing of Jesus. He had no idea what would happen between the writing of this letter and his arrival in Rome!

30-33 Now I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, and for the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with me in your prayers to God for me; That I may be delivered from them that do not believe in Judaea; and that my service which I have for Jerusalem may be accepted of the saints; That I may come unto you with joy by the will of God, and may with you be refreshed. Now the God of peace be with you all. Amen.

Paul calls on all the believers in Rome to pray for his safety and that he would fulfill his task at Jerusalem. His concern was for those who had branded him a traitor and the mistrust of him for bringing an offering from the gentiles.

He says he wants to come with "joy" by the will of God what he is saying is he only wants to come if it is God's will.

Chapter Sixteen

Paul uses this last chapter to pass along personal greetings some personal warnings and commendations. In the first 16 verses he mentions 25 people by name. There is one missing that if you were to believe some church traditions should have been first and that is Peter!

1-2 I commend unto you Phebe our sister, which is a servant of the church which is at Cenchrea: That ye receive her in the Lord, as becometh saints, and that ye assist her in whatsoever business she hath need of you: for she hath been a succourer of many, and of myself also.

Paul starts by recommending "Phoebe" or sister radiant she is a business woman traveling from this port city where she served the local church in some capacity. She is called "sister" to convey her endearment to Paul. This is the way all of us should conduct ourselves with such endearment!

Paul says she is one who "succors" or befriend. Paul advises the church to take her in and help her take care of whatever business she needed to carry out.

3 -5 Greet Priscilla and Aquila my helpers in Christ Jesus: Who have for my life laid down their own necks: unto whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles. Likewise greet the church that is in their house. Salute my well-beloved Epaenetus, who is the firstfruits of Achaia unto Christ.

Paul moves to his dear friends and co-workers who had been forced out of Rome to Corinth, then to Ephesus and now back in Rome. They were two excellent teachers and leaders.

Paul lets them know that at some point they had risked their lives to protect Paul when is not known. They were holding services in their house, no church buildings existed until the 3rd century. Epaenetus which means "praised" was one of Paul's first converts in Asia Minor.

6 Greet Mary, who bestowed much labour on us.

Mary is a Jewish name akin to Miriam and means "rebelliousness." So before her being saved she was rebellious and afterwards she was one who worked for the Lord to near exhaustion. She is one of six Mary's that are named in the New Testament.

7 Salute Andronicus and Junia, my kinsmen, and my fellow-prisoners, who are of note among the apostles, who also were in Christ before me.

Andronicus is Greek and Junia is a Roman they are both Jews "kinsmen" and both had been in prison somewhere where Paul ended up. They also were known by the eleven Apostles and were led to Christ by then not Paul. However they and Aquilla and Priscilla helped form the care of the church at Rome.

8-9 Greet Amplias my beloved in the Lord. Salute Urbane, our helper in Christ, and Stachys my beloved.

Here is a slave "Amplias" who Paul loved in the Lord his name has been found in the catacombs of Rome in a place of honor. Then there is "Urbanus" or "City Bred" he was a city born slave, then 'Stachys" this name has been found in the list of the royal household his sole testimony was that he was loved by Paul and the Church.

10 Salute Apelles approved in Christ. Salute them which are of Aristobulus' household.

"Apelles" his witness is that somewhat in his Christian life he had stood the test. Then there is "Aristobulus" author J. B. Lightfoot suggests that this is the grandson of Herod the Great and brother of Herod Agrippa I if so he was living in Rome as a Citizen and a Christian.

11 Salute Herodion my kinsman. Greet them that be of the household of Narcissus, which are in the Lord.

This man "Herodion" by his name suggests he was of Herod's household and a fellow Jew. This next name is probably a reference to the family and slaves of a man by the name of Tiberius Claudius Narcissus who was executed by order of Agrippa Nero's mother when he took the throne.

12 Salute Tryphena and Tryphosa, who labour in the Lord. Salute the beloved Persis, which laboured much in the Lord.

These first 2 are probably sisters and possible twins as their names come from the same root word which was a common practice in the 1st century. They obviously were strong workers in the church. Persis means Persian woman Paul calls her beloved and a zealous worker for the Lord (much). Her name has been found on Latin inscriptions.

13 Salute Rufus chosen in the Lord, and his mother and mine.

This man Rufus has been suggested by some to be the son of Simon of Cyrene (Mark 15:21). To have a man's sons named generally meant they were men of some renown. As to Rufus mother being Paul's mother the plausible explanation is that Paul makes a statement of loving care for a woman that quite probably took him and Barnabus in at the beginning of their ministry.

14 Salute Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermas, Patrobas,
Hermes, and the brethren which are with them.

These men are thought to be of one neighborhood and with their fellow believers probably formed one of the many house churches common to that time.

15 Salute Philologus, and Julia, Nereus, and his sister,
and Olympas, and all the saints which are with them.

The first two are thought to be married and their names are fund connected to the imperial house of Rome. Of these next two Nereus was an associate of Flavia Donitilla the niece of emperor Domitian in 95 AD she was released after his death. Olympas and this entire list of people were of one community of faith going from slaves all the way to the royal house.

16 Salute one another with an holy kiss. The churches of
Christ salute you.

The holy kiss was a common part of Christian greeting as seen in 1 Cor. 16:20; 2Cor. 13:12; 1 Thess. 5:26; 1 Peter 5: 14. Justin Martyr wrote of it as being part of early Christian worship. It is still a part of the Eastern Orthodox Church but is obviously absent in the western churches.

Now from 17 to 20 Paul gives warnings to his fiends in Rome.

17 Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause
divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye
have learned; and avoid them.

Paul's first admonition to his friend is to mark out those who were causing division and then avoid them. This included any group or person who brought in teachings contrary to the scripture.

18 For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus
Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair
speeches deceive the hearts of the simple.

Those who bring these divisive teachings as to not really being servants of the Lord Jesus but only out to satisfy their carnal fleshly desires (belly) Paul mentions this in Phil 3:19. Notice the last part of this verse carefully as Paul calls them smooth talking teachers they trap immature believers just like a Venus fly trap!

19 For your obedience is come abroad unto all men. I am
glad therefore on your behalf: but yet I would have you
wise unto that which is good, and simple concerning
evil.

Paul lets them know he has heard of their obedience and that he was thankful for it but he cautions as Jesus did in matt. 10:16 to be both alert and discerning where false doctrine is concerned as stated in 1 Cor.14:20.

20 And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen.

Paul reminds them of the promise of Gen. 3:15 that of ultimate victory and that it will be shortly a reality God will crush Satan under our feet. Paul now includes greetings from friends

21 Timotheus my workfellow, and Lucius, and Jason, and Sosipater, my kinsmen, salute you.

Paul calls Timothy his co-laborer he was of special relationship to Paul. These others are fellow Jewish Christians and have helped Paul in his ministry. All of us will have those who hold special relationships and others who have helped them along the way.

22 I Tertius, who wrote this epistle, salute you in the Lord.

This man Tertius was Paul's secretary or stenographer. Most of Paul's letters were written this way except for Galatians

23 Gaius mine host, and of the whole church, saluteth you. Erastus the chamberlain of the city saluteth you, and Quartus a brother.

Gaius owned the house Paul was staying in. His full name was Gaius Titus Justus as Romans used three names for its citizens. Erastus was the city treasurer of Corinth and Quartus of whom nothing is known except that which is most important a "brother" in Christ.

Now verses 24 to 27 is the Doxology

24 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.

This is Paul's usual closing as he always asks for the Lord's grace to be in this church! Would to God we would all be the same!

25 Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began,

Paul commends all who will read these words to God the only one with the power to keep them from falling. Paul's gospel of course is that of Jesus.

Paul's preaching of Jesus was not an innovation but a revealing of what God had held closed until now of His great plan.

26 But now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith:

Paul preaching was the clear proclamation of the Old Testament messianic scripture being preached to all nations known at that time to become obedient to faith in Jesus as Saviour.

27 To God only wise, be glory through Jesus Christ for ever. Amen.

The great praise here ends with the glory of our salvation being given to God through Jesus! So be it.