

Notes on Romans

Part I: The Prologue

I. The Salutation (1:1–7)

A. Paul Identifies Himself (vv. 1–6)

1. *Paul.* The given name of the apostle was *Saul*, after his famous forbearer and the first king of Israel (Acts 13:9; Philippians 3:5; Acts 13:21). This nickname is derived from the Latin and means “small” or “little”. The occasion when Paul received this name is not mentioned in Scripture. However, it is not unlikely that he received it much the same way the other disciples were given their surnames (cf. Mark 3:16–17). Paul suggests to us how he may have come by the name in II Corinthians 12:7. The name makes sense when the history of the first Saul is remembered (I Samuel 15:17).
2. *A servant of Jesus Christ.* The word for servant denotes a “bondservant” or “slave” (Philemon 16; Titus 2:9; I Timothy 6:1). It is possible that Paul is using the term in a manner unique to his office of apostle (Jude 1; James 1:1; 2 Corinthians 4:5), but there is no consistent pattern of that in the NT (Colossians 4:12; Philippians 1:1; II Timothy 2:24). I imagine that the idea of subjection and subservience is what is in view (Galatians 1:10; Revelation 2:20).
3. *Called an apostle.* Literally, the expression is “a called apostle.” Paul asserts his authority as one called by Christ to the Apostolic office (cf. Galatians 1:11–20). Jesus appeared to Saul on the road to Damascus and called him to that work (Acts 26:15–18). He was not sent by a church (Acts 13:1–3; cf. 14:14), neither was he sent by the other apostles (2 Corinthians 11:5; 12:11).
4. *Separated unto the Gospel.* The word “separate” indicates exclusivity or segregation (Matthew 13:49; 25:32; Luke 6:22; Acts 19:9). Paul was separated by the Father and the Holy Spirit to evangelize the Gentiles (Acts 13:2; Galatians 1:15). This was Paul’s life’s work (I Corinthians 9:17; Colossians 1:25; cf. Romans 1:15); he recognized that he had a ministry as an apostle of Christ to reveal Jesus to the world (Galatians 1:16; 2 Corinthians 4:1; 5:18).
 - a. *The Gospel*, that is, the “good news.” Originally, the word signified a reward for good tidings; later, the idea of reward dropped, and the word stood for the good news itself [Vine’s Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words]. The term is often used to express collectively the Gospel doctrines; and “preaching the Gospel” is often used to include not only the proclaiming of the good tidings, but teaching men how to avail themselves of the offer of salvation, the declaring of all the truths, precepts, promises, and threats of Christianity. It is termed “the Gospel of the grace of God” (Acts 20:24), “the Gospel of the kingdom” (Matthew 4:23), “the Gospel of Christ” (Romans 1:16), “the Gospel of peace” (Ephesians 6:15), “the glorious Gospel,” “the everlasting Gospel,” “the Gospel of salvation” (Ephesians 1:13) [Easton’s Bible Dictionary].
 - b. *The Gospel of God.* The genitive here is of source. The Gospel is not “about” God; rather, it is “from” God. However, even more than that, it was effected by God (Acts 2:23; 4:28; 10:42; Luke 22:22; Ephesians 1:11). He is its source in plan, purpose, execution and revelation (II Timothy 3:15–17).
 - c. *Which He had promised afore through His prophets in the Holy Scriptures.* The prophets by the Holy Spirit revealed both the general message of the Gospel plan (Genesis 15:6; Exodus 14:30–31; Psalm 106:1–12; Isaiah 53:1; Daniel 6:23; Jonah 3:5; Habakkuk 2:4) and specific

details of the eternal plan which would unfold (Luke 24:25–27, 44–48). However, this promise of Christ which was first announced in the garden (Genesis 3:14–19) and last reiterated by the bright promise of the rising Sun of Righteousness (Malachi 4:2) was so revealed that it could not be fully comprehended until fully delineated by the Holy Spirit in the Apostles of Christ (1 Peter 1:7–12; Ephesians 3:1–5).

- d. *Concerning His Son.* The Gospel is concerned about Jesus of Nazareth the Son of the Living God (Acts 8:37). There is no “good news” respecting the remission of sins apart from Jesus of Nazareth (John 14:6; 8:21–24). The preaching of Paul was in this respect circumscribed to “Christ and Him crucified” (I Corinthians 1:23; 2:2) as the agent and means of access to the grace of God (Romans 3:24; 5:15–21; Galatians 2:21; 5:4; Ephesians 2:5–10; cf. John 1:17; Acts 15:11). To preach that salvation may be had by any other means or in another person is not the Gospel (2 Corinthians 11:3–4; Galatians 1:6–7; 3:1).

- (1) *Jesus*, the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew *Yeshua* or *Joshua* which means Saviour or Deliverer. This is the name which Gabriel announced would be given to Immanuel (Matthew 1:21; Luke 1:26–31). While the Word was with God and was God in the beginning (John 1:1–3, 14), Jesus was born in a stable in Bethlehem (Luke 2:1–22). *Jesus* is the name of “the man” (I Timothy 2:5) who offered Himself for our sins (Hebrews 10:12) and entered into heaven as our high priest (Hebrews 2:17–18; 4:14–16; 7:25–26).
- (2) *Christ* is the Greek term adopted to convey the OT significance of the Hebrew title *Messiah* which means “anointed one.” It refers to the special servant of God whom He anointed to be Prophet, Priest and King (Psalms 2; 45; 89; 132; Isaiah 61:1ff, cf. Luke 4:18; Daniel 9:25–26; John 1:35–51). It was He that would establish the Kingdom of Heaven and redeem Israel (Romans 11:26; cf. Isaiah 59:20; Psalms 14:7; 110:2; cf. Hebrews 1:8; I Thessalonians 1:10).
- (3) *Our Lord*, this is the word for “Master” and it is intended to convey a sense of the authority with which Jesus has been vested (Matthew 28:18–20; 1 Corinthians 15:27; Ephesians 1:20–23). When Peter preached the first sermon he urged that the Jews must recognize that Jesus was not only their Saviour but also their Sovereign (Acts 2:36). The Scriptures are emphatic that Christ is the Saviour of all that obey Him (Hebrews 5:9); therefore, saving faith is *obedient* faith (Galatians 5:4). If one truly loves Jesus, as he must, he will be obedient in all things (John 14:15, 23; 15:10; I John 5:1–2; cf. Exodus 20:6; Deuteronomy 5:10).
- (4) *Which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh.* There are two genealogies of Christ recorded in the N.T. These have presented no small amount of trouble for commentators. It seems that the simplest solution is to accept that of Matthew as recording Jesus’ legal claim to the throne of David through His legal father Joseph, and that of Luke as recording His physical claim to the throne through His mother Mary. The significance of this fact is revealed in the O.T. in II Samuel 7:13; Psalm 89:1–4; Psalm 16:8–11; Psalm 132:11.
- (5) *And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.* I do not, as many others, see the necessity of demanding an antithesis between “according to the flesh” and “according to the Spirit of holiness.” It is this assumed antithesis which introduces the difficulty to the passage. Therefore, the idea that “Spirit of holiness” designates the “inner, divine man of Christ” and is equivalent with the LOGOS of John is rejected. Without going into detail, the whole approach is demanded by the Calvinistic assumption regarding the sinfulness of flesh.

I prefer the obvious interpretation of “Spirit of holiness” which is the third person of the trinity the Holy Spirit. The question then becomes: “How did the Holy Spirit declare the Sonship of Christ by the resurrection?” The key is that this declaration was “with power.” Now, the only power associated with the Holy Spirit is that promised by Christ attendant with the inauguration of the Messianic kingdom on Pentecost (Mark 9:1; Luke 24:49; Acts 1:8). Thus, when Christ assumed His place as high priest on David’s throne He sent forth the Holy Spirit which signified His having received His authority over all things to the church (Acts 2:33; Acts 5:31, 32). No clearer declaration of His Sonship could be made (See: *Tyndale N.T. Commentary, An Introduction and Commentary* by FF Bruce, pp. 72–73).

- (6) *“By whom we have received grace and apostleship.”* Here Paul refers to his separation to the Gospel by the Lord Jesus Christ (Acts 26:16–18). He uses the editorial “we” of himself and the other apostles. The grace which they received from Christ is not justification through grace which has appeared to all (Titus 2:11), but the favor of God upon them in making them apostles (cf., Ephesians 3:8; Galatians 2:9; I Corinthians 3:10; Romans 12:6; 15:15)
- (7) *“For obedience to the faith.”* Paul’s apostleship had as its objective the obedience of the Gentiles to the Gospel of Christ. The definite article, “the” is not present in the M text or NU text; however, some believe it is implied, if not present, as in the KJV. Thus, “faith” is understood objectively and must refer to the Gospel (cf. Acts 6:7; Ephesians 4:5, 13; I Timothy 3:9; 5:8; II Timothy 4:7; Revelation 14:12). However, the “obedience of faith” is also the desired object of all preaching seeing “faith without works is dead” (James 2:26; cf. Galatians 5:6). Thus, either interpretation is consistent with the entire epistle, as well as, the whole N.T.
- (8) *“Among all nations.”* Paul continues to express his special authority in the Gospel to the Gentiles (Acts 26:15–18; Galatians 1:16; 3:8). IN asserting this authority Paul is laying the groundwork for the principle theme of this epistle (Romans 1:16–17; 2:11; 3:21–30).
- (9) *“For His name,”* that is, for the sake of His name (cf., ASV). “Name” does not refer to the appellative “Jesus” but rather to all that is signified by that “name.” It is the person Christ Jesus in His deeds and His offices. In this expression “the name” is the cause for the activity described: obedience (cf., Matthew 10:22; 19:29; 24:9; Mark 13:13; Luke 21:12; 21:17; John 15:21; Acts 9:16; I John 2:12; 3 John 1:7; Revelation 2:3). Paul affirms that God’s choice of Him to be an apostle to the Gentiles was certainly not for his own glory, but rather the glory of the Son whose sacrifice made their salvation possible (II Corinthians 10:13).
- (10) *“Among whom are ye also the called of Jesus Christ.”* The Christians in Rome are identified as being included as “among all nations;” therefore, the church obviously had a significant Gentile component

B. Paul Identifies His Audience (1:7a)

1. *“To all that be in Rome,”* the capital of the then known world. The letter is not addressed to very citizen of Rome, but to the “to all” that are “called saints.” Some of these saints are mentioned by name in chapter 16 verses three through 15. It is interesting to note that there is absolutely no mention of the apostle Peter in this letter, thereby depriving the Roman Catholic Church of any biblical or historical foundation for their pretensions concerning the Primacy of Peter and the See of Rome.

2. *"Beloved of God."* Remember, Paul speaks of saints not sinners. Therefore, here the love of God describes those who have availed themselves to it. That is, Paul does not speak to them as the beloved as all men are objects of God's love (John 3:15–18), but rather, as those who have been affected by God's love (Romans 2:4; Ephesians 3:14–21; Jude 21; II Corinthians 7:1; 12:19; Colossians 3:12; 1 Thessalonians 1:4; 2 Thessalonians 2:13; I John 4:11).
3. *"Called to be saints,"* as noted above in (1:1), these are not "to be" saints, rather, they are saints, holy ones. KLETOS is from the same word KALEO from which EKKLESIA comes. Christians are called out of sin into righteous and are holy, set apart unto God for service.

C. Paul Invokes a Blessing (1:7b)

1. *"Grace and peace..."* This is the usual greeting of Paul to the churches (I Corinthians 1:3; II Corinthians 1:2; Galatians 1:3; Ephesians 1:2; etc.). It is a combination of the common Hebrew (Matthew 10:13) and Greek salutations (Luke 6:32–34; 17:9) which are naturally intensified by the spiritual significance of the words (e.g., Ephesians 2:5–18). "Grace" properly signifies favor. Thus Paul prays that all the mercies and favors of God be conferred upon the Roman saints (cf. Romans 5:2). "Peace" as a Hebrew blessing desired wholeness or soundness. Here it signifies a desire for spiritual health (Romans 5:1; cf. 3 John 2).
2. *"From God our Father,"* Paul recognizes God the Father as the source of our spiritual blessings. Throughout this salutation Paul has consistently attributed the origin of our redemption to the Father. It is the "Gospel of God," "the promise of God," "the Son of God," "the love of God," "the favor and peace of God." Salvation is of God (Luke 3:6; Acts 28:28; Philippians 1:28; etc.).
3. *"And the Lord Jesus Christ,"* Yet, the activity of the Son cannot be relegated to the sideline or diminished because it is not attributed to Him as the originator. He is the one who freely offered Himself as the sacrifice for sin (Philippians 2:5–11; II Corinthians 8:9; Romans 5:6–11).

II. The Introduction (1:8–15)

A. Paul Expresses His Gratitude for the Roman Saints (1:8–10)

1. *"I thank my God ... without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers."* Paul prayed often and seems to have maintained a regular "prayer list" of those for whom he prayed (I Corinthians 1:4; Philippians 1:3, 4; Colossians 1:3, 4; 1 Thessalonians 1:2; II Thessalonians 1:3; II Timothy 1:3–7; Philemon 4–6).
 - a. *"I thank my God through Jesus Christ."* Paul, incidental to his main point, affirms that the proper address of prayer to God is "through Jesus Christ." This is on account of the role which the Son now occupies at "the right hand of the Father" as our Great High Priest and Advocate in Heaven (Ephesians 5:20; Acts 2:33; I John 2:1–2; Hebrews 7:26; Romans 8:34).
 - b. *"For God is my witness,"* an oath of affirmation which is common for Paul (I Thessalonians 2:5; II Corinthians 11:11, 31; 12:2–3). This is not to be confused with the foreswearing done by the Pharisees (Matthew 5:33–37; 23:15–22; James 5:12).
 - c. *"Whom I serve with my spirit in the Gospel of His Son,"* Paul does not elaborate upon serving God in the spirit (cf. Luke 10:21; I Corinthians 7:34; I Timothy 4:12). However, it calls to mind Jesus' statement in John 4:24. When placed against the background of the controversy over circumcision and the law Paul seems to be condemning the Pharisaical approach of serving God (Matthew 5:3; 23:1–36). Paul will thoroughly consider the consequences of seeking justification before God through the Law in the flesh as opposed through the Faith in the spirit (Romans 7:6, 25).

2. *"I thank my God...for you all..."* Notice here that Paul makes his letter personal. The genuine and tender nature of this expression of thanksgiving is born out in the closing chapter where Paul names many of the saints and speaks of their faith and sacrifice for Christ, His church and, in particular, for himself. When Paul writes this letter there are many at Rome whom he has known elsewhere—some were family, others were saints who had worked selflessly by his side. Paul recognizes that a good local church is something for which to be truly thankful.
3. *"I thank my God...that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world."* Paul was grateful to God for their faith which was of such a character that it enabled them to be an influence for good throughout the world. Every preacher should be grateful for those who upon accepting the Gospel are motivated to share it with others. It is this statement of Paul which leads me to believe that the church was established by those visitors from Rome on Pentecost (Acts 2:10).
2. *"Making request ... to come unto you."* Paul had for some time desired to come to Rome and preach the Gospel. Yet, we see that certain things, we know not what, hindered him (1: 13; cf. 1 Thessalonians 2:18). He sought the removal of these impediments through prayer unto God. Great lessons are to be learned here. First, what one undertakes to do as service to God should be attended with prayer and not undertaken lightly. Second, often times there are things which hinder us in our service to God. These obstacles can be removed by prayer.

B. Paul States His Purpose for Coming to Rome (1:11–13)

1. *"That I may impart unto you some spiritual gift..."* Paul had great affection for these saints whom he had never seen. That which bound them together was their mutual faith and love for Christ (cf., 1 Peter 1:1). He hoped to come and bestow upon them spiritual gifts (cf. I Corinthians 12:4–11). These gifts would result in their being established or confirmed. This seems to have been the procedure followed by the apostles in Acts 8:14–17. Once a church was established certain individuals were miraculously endowed with spiritual gifts for the purpose of strengthening the saints (Ephesians 4:7–16). However, it was not the gift which established them, but the ministry of the gift in the Word of God (II Peter 1:12; I Thessalonians 3:1–10). Up until Paul's arrival in Rome there is no record of an Apostle of Christ ever having been among them. While there may have been saints that possessed gifts (Romans 16:3, 5, 7, 12, 13), none of these would have been able to bestow these gifts to others (Acts 8:13–18; II Corinthians 12:12).
2. *"That I may be comforted together with you."* Paul speaks here of a joint or mutual comforting. It is a comfort that comes from the knowledge that one has the forgiveness of sins (Matthew 5:4; I John 5:13–16). It is the result of exhortation and teaching (Romans 12:8; I Corinthians 14:31). Paul found this comfort in the knowledge of the salvation and success of those for whom he suffered in Christ and their great deeds of faith and courage on behalf of other saints whether Jew or Gentile (II Corinthians 1:4–11). They could know that comfort through a genuine love of one another in Christ (Colossians 2:2).
3. *"That I may have some fruit among you also."* The "fruit" which Paul desires to have among them is their fellowship with him in extending the Kingdom of Heaven to Gaul (Romans 15:24; cf. Philippians 4:10–18). Paul does not presume to question their salvation or zeal for Christ (cf. 1:5–6, 8); rather he seeks to enlist their aid in the further spread of the Kingdom into Europe. What Paul had done at Antioch, Philippi, Corinth and Ephesus, he now wished to accomplish in Rome (15:17–24).

C. Paul Expresses His Sense of Obligation to the Gentiles (1:14–15)

1. *"I am debtor."* Paul's debt or obligation was to Christ who had saved him from sin and elevated him to apostle (Acts 26:14–19). Yet, it could only be discharged in his ministry to the Gentiles,

which Paul classes here as Greek (Hellenic) and non-Greek, learned and unlearned. This expression reveals Paul's consciousness of his obligation to preach the Gospel literally to every creature for there is no respect of persons with God (cf. Romans 2:11; Ephesians 6:9; Colossians 3:25; James 2:1, 9; 1 Peter 1:17). However, Paul does not pretend to discharge this duty at Rome, but rather where Christ has not been named (Romans 15:20).

2. *"So as much as in me is..."* Paul was willing to give all that he had and was in order to preach the Gospel of Christ (II Corinthians 12:15; Romans 9:3; II Timothy 4:6; Philippians 2:17; 4:11–13).
3. *"I am ready."* "Ready" indicates a forward mind, one that is willingly disposed toward some object. Here Paul lets the Romans know that as soon as the Lord wills that he should come to them He will be on his way. It might seem strange that a preacher might be anything other than willing; but, numerous prophets have been called by God to go and preach only to manifest a lack of readiness (e.g., Aaron, Moses, Jonah, cf. Ezekiel 33:6–7). Therefore, readiness is an essential character for the evangelist.
 - (a) *"I am ready to preach the Gospel."* Paul was not coming to preach politics, social reform, philosophy or any thing other than "the Gospel." This is the duty of the evangelist to herald the message of Christ (Galatians 1:6–9; II Corinthians 11:4; II Timothy 4:1–4).
 - (b) *"To you that are in Rome also."* Paul is not desirous of coming to Rome to preach the first principles (I Corinthians 15:1–4; Romans 6:17). Nor does he indicate that they are in need of being set in order (Titus 1:5; Romans 12:8). Rather, Paul desires to expand their understanding of the great system of justification by grace through faith in the context of the Jew–Gentile problem that existed in the early church as a result of the influence of those who taught circumcision and the Law (Acts 15:1–5). His goal is to mature the church and enlist them in the service of broadening the borders of the kingdom in Europe. This is one of many instances which demonstrates that the Apostles made no distinctions between Gospel and doctrine (Romans 6:17; 16:17; cf. I Timothy 1:8–10).
4. *"I am not ashamed."* If anyone might have reason to be ashamed of the Gospel it was Paul (Acts 18:9, 10; II Corinthians 11:22–33). This word does not connote shame arising from what one has done, which was preach the Gospel in Paul's case, but fear or shame which prevents one from doing a thing, namely in this case, preach the Gospel. Here, Paul identifies the greatest hindrance to preaching the Gospel that is known. The consequences of such a sense of shame are grave (Revelation 21:8).

III. The Thesis of Paul's Letter (1:16–17)

A. The Statement of the Thesis (1:16)

1. *"The Gospel...is the power of God unto salvation."* Paul had a genuine conviction that the Gospel and the Gospel only would make Christians and Christians only. Unlike many today, Paul was willing to call men to Christ solely by preaching (Romans 10:17). The word for "power" in this text is the same word from which we derive "dynamite" and "dynamo." The word signifies more than a powerful means of God; rather it is itself the divine power or energy which effects salvation (Hebrews 4:12–13). The words of the Gospel are the beginning place of salvation for all men (Acts 11:14; 15:7–9; Romans 10:8–17).
2. *"For everyone who believes."* Faith or belief is the condition upon which salvation is offered to sinful man. However, it is not faith alone (James 2:14–26; Galatians 5:6; Hebrews 5:8–9). The faith which Paul declared would save is an obedient faith (Romans 1:5; Romans 6:16–18; 10:16; 16:19, 26). It is meaningless to speak of trust apart from obedience. There is no trust that will

not act or obey what is believed. The Gospel is what is to be believed and. that which it requires obeyed.

3. "*For everyone...*" This Gospel of salvation is for *everyone* who believes, that is, every creature without regard to his lineage, gender or social position (Galatians 3:26–29; Mark 16:15–16; Matthew 28:18–19). There is no respect of persons with God (Romans 2:11; Ephesians 6:9; Colossians 3:25; James 2:1, 3, 9; I Peter 1:17). This is the great truth of the Gospel that all mankind may receive the grace of salvation through faith.
4. "*For the Jew first and also for the Greek.*" The priority of the Jew in the Great Commission (Acts 1:8) was not a display of respect of persons upon God's part. The Jew had the greater advantages under the promise, and therefore, the greater responsibility (Matthew 20:16; Mark 9:35; Luke 12:48). Their being first was due to their 2,000 years of preparation (Genesis 12:1–3; Galatians 3:15–19; I Peter 1:9–12; Hebrews 11:39–40). However, they had no advantage as far as the means and conditions of salvation are concerned (Habakkuk 2:4; Genesis 15:6; Hebrews 9:14–15). God put no difference between Jew and Gentile justifying both by faith (Acts 15:7–9).

B. The Proof of the Thesis (1:17)

1. "*For in it the righteousness of God is revealed.*" The Gospel does not reveal the personal righteousness of God seeing that was revealed long ago in the OT. This is apparent when the next phrase—*by faith*—is considered. How could *faith* possibly reveal God's personal righteousness? Looking back to verse five, Paul declares the purpose of his apostolic ministry was to secure the obedience of faith. Now, for what purpose or to what end was that obedience sought? Was it not to obtain the righteousness that is the result of the forgiveness of sins? Thus, in the Gospel, it is revealed how God makes men righteous upon the grounds of obedient faith (cf. Romans 3:22; 10:3; Philippians 3:9; II Peter 1:1). Paul is setting forth a system of righteousness or justification that has God as its author and source (cf. Romans 3:21; 10:3–4; Philippians 3:9). In the Gospel God's plan for making men righteous through faith is revealed.
2. "*From faith to faith,*" literally, "*by faith in order to faith.*" The Gospel of justification by faith is preached in order to produce saving faith (cf., Galatians 2:15–16; Romans 3:21–22; 9:30–31). Faith is not the result of any immediate activity of the Godhead on the human heart (Romans 10:17). God has appointed the preaching of the Gospel as the means by which men are brought to faith unto salvation (I Corinthians 1:18, 21). All the evidence, testimony, persuasion and power necessary to bring the unbelieving sinner to obedient faith are contained in the Gospel message of Jesus Christ.
3. "*As it is written, the just shall live by faith.*" This is a quotation from Habakkuk 2:4. It is proof of the witness of the Holy Scriptures to the doctrine of justification by faith and not by the works of the law (cf. Romans 1:2; 3:10–19; 4:23–25; 8:36; 9:15, 17, 25, 2, 29, 33; 10:16; 15:3–4; etc.). Paul will make his case over and over from the prophets as upholding the doctrine of justification by grace through faith in Christ.

4. Further Analysis of Romans 1:17

a. Translation—

- (1) King James Version: "*For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, the just shall live by faith.*"

- (2) *The Interlinear Literal Translation of the Greek New Testament* (Berry): "For righteousness of God in it is revealed by faith to faith; according as it is written, but the just by faith shall live."
- (3) Goodspeed: "In it God's way of uprightness is disclosed through faith and for faith just as the Scripture says, 'the upright will have life because of his faith.'"
- (4) American Standard Version: "For therein is revealed a righteousness of God from faith unto faith: as it is written, 'But, the righteous shall live by faith.'"

b. Definitions–

- (1) The preposition "from" or EK:
 - (a) "From" is only one of at least three possible renderings of the original word EK, which after passive verbs means "by," "of," or "from," marking the agent, cause or means, by which something is accomplished or obtained.
 - (b) In this verse (Rom. 1:17), the verb, "is revealed," which precedes the preposition "from" is in the passive voice.
 - (c) Therefore, the preposition EK may be rendered "by," "of," or "from."
- (2) The preposition "to" or EIS:
 - (a) The original here is eis and denotes entrance into, or direction and limit, and may be translated by "into, to, towards, for, unto, in order to, with a view to."
 - (b) "To" is here used to denote the end or object for which a thing is done, or which one has in view; that is, its object or purpose, as in v.16: "for (unto) salvation." As a power the Gospel is for an end; and that end is salvation. See Ac2:38; Rom. 1:5; 16:26 for the same use of "for".
 - (c) In this verse (v.17) "to faith," as it is used in association with "by faith," means "in order to produce faith," or "in order to induce faith" - faith is the thing or end in view.
- (3) The phrase "righteousness of God":
 - (a) It may be translated "justification of God."
 - (b) It does not express an attribute of God, but a justification of which He is the author, or the source (Romans 3:21–22; Philippians 3:9).

c. Grammatical Analysis–

- (1) Dividing the first part of v.17 into its three distinct parts brings out clearly the truths taught therein.
 - (a) "Therein is revealed"
 - (b) "The righteousness (justification) of God by faith"
 - (c) "In order to faith"
- (2) First, we have the verb as modified in the text; second, the subject with its modification; third, the object sought to be accomplished by the action of the verb.
- (3) Arranged in their natural or regular order we have: "For the righteousness (justification) of God by faith therein is revealed in order to faith."

d. Summary and Conclusion—

- (1) In the Gospel there is revealed not only the fact of the righteousness (justification) which is of God as to its source, but also the means of obtaining it—the fact that it comes to men by faith as a condition; and this is revealed in order to faith, to produce faith—the end in view: to induce men to believe.
- (2) In short, that revealed is of God; it is obtained by faith; and it is revealed to induce men to believe, for it is by faith that men are saved and not by the works of the law.
- (3) Or, we might state it like this: The righteousness (justification) of God revealed in the Gospel is effected by faith and is thus revealed in order to produce faith or to induce men to believe.
- (4) Or, as a motive to induce men to believe, God reveals to them that if they will believe he will justify them.
- (5) This is precisely Paul's point in Galatians 2:16, which is his own inspired commentary on Romans 1:17. Cf. Galatians 3:5–12.

Part II: The Body of the Letter

I. The Gentiles Need the Salvation which Is through the Gospel (1:18–32)

A. God Revealed Himself to the Gentiles (1:18–20)

1. *"For God had showed it unto them"* Paul clearly affirms that the gross immorality of the Gentiles was inexcusable because they had sufficient revelation from God to know right and wrong on these matters. He is not affirming man is endowed at birth with an innate knowledge of right and wrong, but, that God revealed Himself sufficiently to guide man into righteousness.
2. Proof that God was revealing Himself to the Gentiles throughout history:
 - a. Before Abraham
 - (1) Adam (Genesis 1–3)
 - (2) Enoch (Genesis 5:24; Jude 14, 15)
 - (3) Noah (Genesis 6:1–8; 2 Peter 2:5)
 - b. After Abraham
 - (1) Abraham (Genesis 18:16–33; 20:7)
 - (2) Melchizedek (Genesis 14:18–24; Hebrews 7:1–10)
 - (3) Joseph (Genesis 39–50)
 - c. After Moses
 - (1) Jethro (Exodus 2:16–18; 3:1; 18:1–24)
 - (2) Balaam (Numbers 22:1–35)
 - (3) Philistine Diviners (1 Samuel 6:1–9)

d. After David before Christ

- (1) Solomon (1 Kings 10:1–13)
- (2) Elijah (1 Kings 17:8–24; 19:15)
- (3) Elisha (2 Kings 5:1–19)
- (4) Isaiah (45:1)
- (5) Daniel (Daniel 2, 4, 5, 7–12)
- (6) Amos (1–2)
- (7) Obadiah
- (8) Jonah
- (9) Nahum
- (10) The Wise (Matthew 2:1–12)

3. *“They are without excuse.”*

- a. As demonstrated above, there was a time when men had revealed to them God’s moral law and requirements for acceptable worship and praise (1:32)
- b. Periodically, God sent them prophets to stir them up to repentance
- c. However, in general, the Gentiles willfully progressed in their wickedness to the point that they lost their knowledge of God, they forgot God (cf. 1:28; Acts 14:12–17; 17:22–31)
 - (1) “Who hold the truth in unrighteousness,” or as the NKJ says, “Who suppress (m. hold down) the truth in unrighteousness
 - (2) Paul affirms that some men “held down” the truth. How could they do that? This they did by wicked living and opposition to righteousness. (The “heathen” are present day examples).
 - (3) However, God was not without a witness in the world even after men forgot Him. His tracks were evident even in the Creation (Acts 17:27, 28; 14:17; Psalm 19:1–3)
 - (4) Nature does not reveal the wrath of God (1:18), nor His righteous judgment (1:32), but rather confirms His existence and deity which should have turned them to searching for God Whom they would have found.

B. The Gentiles’ Progress toward Depravity (1:21–23)

1. *“They did not glorify Him as God”* (1:21)

- a. DOXAZO, “to magnify, extol, praise, or ascribe honor.” When used of God to means to acknowledge Him as to His Being, attributes and acts.
- b. The Gentiles did not glorify God by failing to do what they knew they should do (John 17:14). They did less than they at one time knew to do, and this was the basis of their condemnation.
- c. These conditions among the Gentiles are illustrated by the parable of the Sower (Luke 8:4–8, 11–15).

2. *“They were not thankful to God”* (1:21).

- a. Men who fail to be thankful to God for his blessings tend to put Him further and further from their hearts.
 - b. This lack of gratitude contributed to their rebellious spirit seeing they had no sense of obligation to Jehovah.
 - c. This condition is subtly revealed in the narrative of the miraculous cure of the ten lepers (Luke 17:11–19), and the parable of the rich fool (Luke 12:16–21)
3. *"They reasoned without God"* (1:21)
- a. MATAIDO, expresses vanity in the sense of the absence of any useful or effect.
 - b. Thus, the Gentile by the exclusion of God from all of his assumptions about man and the universe produced a wisdom and knowledge that could not effect anything good upon the human condition. Thus, man spiraled downward.
 - c. It is interesting to note that societies where the knowledge of God is greatest are themselves the greatest societies.
4. *"Their hearts became dark"* (1:21).
- a. Their morally worthless minds were stupefied.
 - b. Being insensitive to truth, they were ready for the strong delusion (II Thessalonians 2:11–12).
 - c. Thus, they were governed by lust and human reasoning.
5. *"They became fools"* [i.e., idolaters] (1:22).
- a. When passion and human wisdom became their God, they personified these in myth and fashioned them in gold, silver, stone and wood.
 - b. Their images and altars reflected the depravity to which they sank.
 - c. Idolatry was a replacement of the God who made man with a manmade god (1:23)

C. Therefore, God Gave Them Up (1:24-31)

1. *"To uncleanness"* (1:24).
- a. This refers to the lasciviousness and fornication that was associated with idolatry.
 - b. Erotic dance, orgy, prostitution, incest, phallic ritual (Revelation 18:1–6 ff, 24 ff., I Corinthians 6:12–18).
 - c. This depth of depravity was not reached until they gave up God and pursued the lies of their own making. Idolatry is often called a "lie" (Jeremiah 16:19–20; Habakkuk 2:18–20).
2. *"To vile passions"* (1:26).
- a. Their depravity did not stop with unlawful desire, but progressed to unnatural desire, i.e., homosexuality and lesbianism.
 - b. Three times Paul uses the word "nature," PHUSIS, in connection with these sins. Yet, not once does he say that homosexuality is natural, rather it is *against nature*.
 - c. These sinners received "*in themselves*" the recompense of their error—the physical, psychological and spiritual consequences of a debauched life.
3. *"To a reprobate mind"* (1:28).

- a. The KJV has “reprobate” whereas the NKJ has “debased.” ADOKIMOS literally signifies something “not standing the test.” What caused their mind to be reprobate was their failure to retain God in their knowledge. By putting God out of their mind they were unrestrained in the pursuit of every immorality.
- b. Thus their acts were “*not convenient*” or “*not fitting*,” KATHEKONTA. This is the only thing a mind empty of God can produce.
 - (1) UNRIGHTEOUSNESS—all manner of injustice, such as cheating, fraud, etc. (Leviticus 19:35, 36).
 - (2) WICKEDNESS—injurious actions.
 - (3) COVETOUSNESS—inordinate greed or desire.
 - (4) MALICIOUSNESS—a vicious disposition.
 - (5) FULL of ENVY—chagrin at another’s good fortune.
 - (6) MURDER—disregard for human life.
 - (7) DEBATE—wrangling and quarrelling.
 - (8) DECEIT—cunning contrivance for deceiving in order to get the advantage.
 - (9) MALIGNITY—a deep-seated desire to injure another.
 - (10) WHISPERERS—cowardly sneaks who secretly pass rumor and innuendo.
 - (11) BACKBITERS—slanderers who delight in destroying another’s good name.
 - (12) HATERS of GOD—the sower of seeds of discord by false information and witness.
 - (13) DESPITEFUL—bolder than a backbiter, one given to brutal insults.
 - (14) PROUD—arrogance, conceit.
 - (15) BOASTERS—a lying show of oneself
 - (16) INVENTORS of EVIL THINGS—one who is always seeking some new way to gratify lust and have pleasure.
 - (17) DISOBEDIENT to PARENTS—disregard for parental authority.
 - (18) WITHOUT UNDERSTANDING—willful ignorance of what is right.
 - (19) COVENANTBREAKERS—those who violate the solemn obligations of covenants and contracts.
 - (20) WITHOUT NATURAL AFFECTION—the lack of tender feelings in the family circle.
 - (21) IMPLACABLE—unforgiving.
 - (22) UNMERCIFUL—harsh, unfeeling, having no sympathy or compassion.

D. However, God Will Bring Them into Judgment (1:32)

1. “*They which commit such things are worthy of death.*”

- a. This is the sentence of God on sinners. Not just physical death, if at all, but spiritual death (Ezekiel 18:4, 20-32; Romans 6:23)
- b. There is a punishment of the wicked which they must meet, if they do not turn away from their wickedness

2. *"Not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them."*
 - a. Paul's thought seems to be directed at showing the depth to which man had fallen.
 - b. Many were hardened beyond repentance and would surely be lost.
 - c. His purpose, of course, is to touch those who will yet repent.

II. The Jews Being as Guilty as the Gentiles Need the Salvation which is through the Gospel (Romans 2:1-16)

A. The Jews as Guilty of Sin as the Gentiles (2:1-5)

1. *"You who judge practice the same things."*
 - a. The Jew in his contempt for the Gentiles set himself up above him as his judge (cf. 2:19-20).
 - b. However, the Jew was guilty of the very sins for which they condemned the Gentiles worthy of the eternal wrath of God.
 - c. For example: idolatry (Ex. 32:1-6; 1 Kings 11:7-10; 12:25-33), homosexuality (Judges 19:22-25; I Kings 14:24; 15:12; 22:46; II Kings 23:7), covetousness and murder (I Kings 21:1-10); etc.
2. *"And do you think... you will escape the Judgment of God..."*
 - a. The Jew had come to think of his relationship to God through the Abrahamic promise and the covenant of circumcision (Genesis 17:1-14) as being unconditional (Matthew 3:5-12; John 8:30-47).
 - b. This they demonstrated in their arrogance before God (Matthew 6:2, 5, 16; Luke 18:9-14; Mark 7:5-13; Matthew 23:1-3).
 - c. God had repeatedly warned them of the impossibility of escaping His Just retribution (Amos 4:11, 12; 9:1-4; Matthew 23:33; Hebrews 2:3; 12:25-29; Jeremiah 11:1-14; Deuteronomy 27:26; 28:15).
3. *"Do you despise ...the goodness of God?"*
 - a. God had been abundantly good to the Jews in keeping His promise to Abraham. He brought them into the rich land of Canaan and established them there in houses they did not build and vineyards they did not plant (Deuteronomy 7:12-15; 8:2-10; 9:1-29; 18:8-17).
 - b. He bore with the wickedness and idolatry of each succeeding generation sending them His servants the prophets to call them to repentance (Matthew 5:12; 23:29-37; Luke 6:23; 11:47-50; 13:34; Acts 7:52; Romans 11:33; I Thessalonians 2:15).
 - c. God had been patient with them desiring that they be saved (II Peter 3:9; Ezekiel 18:23, 32; 33:11).
 - d. Yet, Israel was lifted up with pride and regarded their blessings and God's forbearance as an indication of their being above God's Judgment.
4. *"Your hardness and your impenitent heart."*
 - a. SKLEROTES signifies that which is "hard" or "dry." It is always used in the N.T. as a term of reproach. This word is akin to SKLEROTRACHELOS which is "stiff-necked" (Acts 7:51). The word describes the moral and spiritual insensibility of the Jews.

- b. "Impenitent" would be better translated "unrepentant." AMETANOETOS literally means "without a change of mind." Thus, the Jews were willfully in rebellion against God (much like Jezebel in Revelation 2:20–21).
- c. As a result of their stubborn rebellion, God determined that they too should be the objects of His divine wrath. This because His Judgment is according to truth (2:2), that is, God's judgment was pronounced upon all those who practice such things mentioned above; the Jews practiced them; they were condemned. The judgment of God was based upon the realities of the case and not any personal considerations. God's judgment knew nothing of their relation to Abraham or their circumcision, only their sins.

B. Therefore, God's Judgment Came upon Them Both Alike (2:5)

1. Recall that Paul has already said:
 - a. *"The wrath of God is revealed from heaven"* (1:18)
 - b. *"Knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death"* (1:32).
 - c. *"We are sure that the Judgment of God is according to truth against them which commit such things"* (2:1).
2. *"Treasuring up for yourself wrath in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous Judgment of God"* (2:5)
 - a. ORGE, "wrath," identifies the just retribution of God upon sinners as the penalty for their rebellion.
 - b. The "day of wrath" identifies the eventual consummation of all things when God punishes the wicked and rewards the righteous (cf. 2:16).
 - c. The phrase the "revelation of the righteous judgment of God" signifies that the wrath of God is not like that of men in revenge, but is the judicial wrath of the Eternal Judge of all the earth (Acts 17:31) avenging the righteous over the wicked (cf. Revelation 6:9–11).

C. The Nature of the Judgment of God (2:6–11)

1. *"To every man according to his deeds"* (2:6)
 - a. The basis of the judgment of God is the way in which we behave ourselves while in the flesh (Ecclesiastes 12:14; Matthew 12:36–37; I Corinthians 4:5; II Corinthians 5:10; Romans 14:10, 12; Galatians 6:7; Ephesians 6:7; I Peter 1:17).
 - b. However, let us not be mistaken and think that one is justified from sin on the basis of works (Romans 4:1–4; 11:6; Galatians 3:10–12).
 - c. The fact is that all whom Paul has described thus far are sinners worthy of death. Thus, there are none Just before God.
2. *"There is no partiality with God"* (2:11)
 - a. Here, I prefer, the KJV which reads, "There is no respect of persons with God," (literally "lifting up the face").
 - b. God does not consider who we are in the judgment, but what we are. The Jew who was everything the Gentile was, as far as depravity was concerned, thought God was going to regard his circumcision and kinship to Abraham while passing over his sins. Not so!
 - c. God regards all sin and sinners alike (Romans 2:11; Ephesians 6:9; Colossians 3:25; James 2:1; I Peter 1:17; Acts 10:34).

D. The Determinations of God's Righteous Judgment (2:7–10).

1. *"To those who by patient continuance in doing good."*
 - a. These are described as seeking, ZETEO, that is, endeavoring, desiring, striving, coveting earnestly.
 - (1) "Glory," DOXA, the state of blessedness into which believers enter.
 - (2) "Honor," TIME, the esteem in which they will be held (1 Peter 1:7; II Timothy 2:21)
 - (3) "Immortality," (better "incorruption"), APHTHARSIA, used here in a moral sense of their absolute exemption from sin and impurity (cf. II Timothy 1:10); not to be confused with ATHANASIA in I Corinthians 15:53–54 which describes the quality of life in the resurrection.
 - b. "Eternal life" is given those who seek glory, honor, and immortality. Thus, this life which Christ gives is the object of our seeking,
2. Special note on "eternal life," Sometimes it is argued that believers have "eternal life" right now, that they do not go to the judgment. However, Romans 2:5–7 teaches the "eternal life" is "rendered" or given in the day of the revelation of the righteous judgment of God, that is, the day of judgment (Romans 2:16; Matthew 25:31; Acts 10:42; 17:31, etc.).
3. *"To those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth."*
 - a. The KJV translates HOI EX ERITHEIAS as "contentious." However, literally, it may be rendered "those of strife." The ASV translates the phrase as "factious" (cf. Philippians 1:17). The NKJV interpolates and gives us "self-seeking." This makes good sense, seeing that one could not seek self if seeking glory, honor, and incorruption (Gal. 6:7–9).
 - b. Their self-seeking ways are revealed in their disobedience to the truth and obedience to unrighteousness (cf. Romans 6:17). The "truth" is the Gospel Paul preached (cf. I Peter 1:21–25; John 8:32; 17:17; II Timothy 4:1–4).
 - c. They shall receive:
 - (1) "Indignation," THUMOS, this is the outburst which results from God's wrath.
 - (2) "Wrath," ORGE, same as in 2:5 signifying God's displeasure with sin and sinner.
 - (3) "Tribulation," THLIPSIS, primarily anything which burdens the spirit, the affliction of the future retribution (cf. II Thessalonians 1:6).
 - (4) "Anguish," STENOCHORIA, literally "narrowness of place," metaphorically of the distress which results from that condition (II Corinthians 6:4; 12:10; cf. the opposite PLATUSMOS in Psalm 118:5).

E. Why the Jew and Gentile Were Lost (2:12–16)

1. *"For as many as sinned without law shall also perish without law" (2:12a).*
 - a. Paul does not affirm the Gentiles were without law to God (cf. Romans 4:15), but that they had not been the recipients of a codified law as had the Jews.
 - b. The Gentiles kept "by nature," PHUSIS, that is, the long established practices of society engrained, in them by the norms of their cultures and the moral law they observed which originated with God (e.g., Gen. 9:4–6; 14:9; 20:1–16).
 - c. Thus, the Gentiles were governed by conscience rather than written law from God. However, they were not righteous before God on the basis of following their conscience

since God condemned them for it when their conscience led them astray (see: Romans 1:21–28).

2. *“As many as sinned in the law shall be judged by the law”* (2:12b).

a. The doers of the law are justified (Romans 2:13; James 1:21–25; Luke 6:46–49; Matthew 7:21–28; Gal. 3:10–14).

b. Therefore, justification before God under law (i.e., any divine law such as Moses’ law), was obtainable only on the grounds of sinlessness

III. Paul Considers Whether Or Not Kinship to Abraham and Circumcision Were Any Advantage to the (Romans 2:17–3:8)

A. The Jews’ Attitude toward the Law (2:17–24)

1. *“Rest on the law.”* With Lard I concur, “The Jew rested upon the mere fact of having the law, as a ground of safety; in his estimation its bare bestowment on him proved him to be favored of God above all others” (John 5:31–47).

2. *“Make your boast in God.”* To boast in God or Christ is correct when such reflects our sense of weakness and worthlessness in self. However, to boast as if one merited God’s favor is bigotry and conceit (John 8:37–47).

3. *“Approve the things that are excellent.”* Mere knowledge and, thus, discernment of what is best as a result of instruction in religion is meaningless if the heart remains perverted and corrupt (Matthew 23:25–26).

4. *“Confident.”* Because of their knowledge they were confident that they were capable of giving instruction and even enhancing the law by tradition (Mt. 23:1–10, 15).

5. *“Having the form of knowledge and truth in the law.”* These Jews gave the appearance of having knowledge and truth, but fell far from it (cf. II Timothy 3:5; Matthew 23:5–7; 6:1–18).

6. *“You who...do you...”* Paul condemns their failure to practice what they preach.

a. *“Do you steal?”* They regularly defrauded one another (Matthew 23:16–22; 5:33–37; 15:1–11; Malachi 1:13; 3:5).

b. *“Do you commit adultery?”* Another common sin among the Jews (Matthew 5:32; 19:1–11; Malachi 2:15–16).

c. *“Do you commit sacrilege?”* Or, *“do you rob temples?”* They robbed God regularly (Malachi 3:8–12; 1:2–8) and committed sacrilege (John 2:13–17; Mark 11:15–19).

d. *“Do you dishonor God through breaking the law?”* Here Paul charges them directly with professing to be guardians of, supporters of, and obedient to the law while guilty of the very things they condemned in others.

7. Consequently, *“the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you”* (Isaiah 52:5; Ezekiel 36:18–24). God’s name was reproached and blasphemed by the greed, deceit, violence, lust and hypocrisy of the Jews, His chosen people.

a. We would do well to remember that the name of God is blasphemed among the denominations because of ungodly disciples who return to their former corruption having loved this present world.

- b. Never, let us become so conceited that the false charge which is often leveled becomes true, "You think you're better than everyone else, that only you and your little bunch is going to heaven, and you aren't any different than these other churches, if as good!"

B. Circumcision Is of No Profit to a Lawbreaker (2: 25–29)

1. "Circumcision is indeed profitable if you keep the law."

- a. This is a disastrous blow to the Jew. If the law is not kept then descent from Abraham, having the law and circumcision are worthless. Everything depends on keeping the law perfectly.
- b. Thus, Paul argues if one practices the same sins as an uncircumcised man, though circumcised, God will regard him worthy of death for his sins.
- c. Paul introduces the hypothetical possibility of a Gentile keeping the law (we are talking about sinless perfection) and suggests that his uncircumcision is no disadvantage to his justification.
- d. Paul in these verses has only proved that circumcision, the outward mark that distinguished the Jew from the heathen and showed that he was a descendant of Abraham, has no merit before God. He has not affirmed that there were Gentiles who were justified without circumcision by works (Galatians 5:6; 6:15; Colossians 3:11; I Corinthians 7:19).

2. "He is a Jew ..."

- a. Who is not one outwardly whose circumcision is outward in the flesh. That is, the true servant of God who keeps the law and walks in the steps of Abraham does more than conform to the external rites and ceremonies embracing tradition and yet remaining unchanged in heart.
- b. Who is a Jew inwardly having the circumcision which is of the heart (Deuteronomy 10:12–16; 30:1–8; Jeremiah 4:1–4; Colossians 2:11, 12). "Circumcision was a seal and pledge of God's blessings to those who kept the law. It was a seal of unfaithfulness to those who did not keep the law...The outward circumcision, without this circumcision of the heart, goes for nothing" (David Lipscomb).
- c. This circumcision of the heart is "in the spirit not in the letter." Spirit, PNUEMA may refer to the inner man as opposed to the outer man, the flesh. However, it more likely that Paul is contrasting again the two systems of justification—faith and works. Thus, justification by the Gospel is represented as in or by the Spirit (cf. Romans 7:6) and justification by the works of the law is represented by the phrase "in the letter" signifying the requirement of the law (II Corinthians 3:6–7).
- d. "Whose praise is not of men, but of God" (Matthew 6:1–18; 23:5–12; Luke 11:43; 20:45, 47).

C. What Is The Profit of Circumcision to the Jew Who Sinned? (3:1–8)

1. "What advantage then...or what is the profit of circumcision?" (3:1).

- a. Paul anticipates the objections of his Jewish detractors in response to his argument that justification before God under the law is only possible on the basis of sinless perfection and that the Jew has no standing on the basis of circumcision or having received the law.
- b. When Paul poses this objection it is understood that he is answering concerning the Jew who sinned. The Jew was seeking acceptance with God while in his sins, this is the whole

purpose of this dialectic series of questions. Paul will reveal the fallacy of their argumentation.

2. *"Much in every way..."*

- a. The Jews had innumerable blessings from God which had given them great advantage in obtaining to justification (e.g. the temple, the priesthood, the sacrifices, the feasts, etc.)
- b. However, Paul is concerned only with the greatest of these "the oracles of God," literally, "the sayings." God had made them the caretakers of the Scriptures which revealed, up until the Gospel, all God's plan for the redemption of the human race. These were to have been to the Jew a "schoolmaster to bring them to Christ" (Galatians 3:19–25; II Corinthians 3:7–4:6).

3. *"For what if some did not believe? Will their unbelief make the faithfulness of God without effect?"*

- a. Now, the Jew responds with a bold assent to the fact that many Jews had not accepted Christ, "the end of the law for righteousness" (Romans 10:4), thereby seeking to establish that somehow God had not kept or would by their unbelief be unable to keep, His promises. (NOTE: This is essentially the same argument Premillennialism makes concerning the establishment of the kingdom.)
- b. However, Paul responds that such cannot be done. Should it be the case that every Jew disobeyed God and was lost, it would be the fault of the Jews sins and not the fault of God not keeping faith with His promise.
- c. The Jew willfully ignored the conditional nature of the covenants and promises. They chose only to know God's promise of blessing while ignoring His promise of retribution.
- d. Verse four is a quotation from Psalm 51:4. Here David testifies to God's faithfulness and affirms that wherever men fail to obtain God's promise it is on account of man's faithlessness and not upon any reluctance of God to keep His word.

3. *"If our unrighteousness demonstrates the righteousness of God...is God unjust who inflicts wrath?"*

- a. The Jew was seeking a means of establishing that they could sin with impunity. Having reasoned that their sins and condemnation were an occasion for the demonstration of God's just character, they now reason that God would become unjust in punishing them for disobedience when the same was an occasion for His praise and glory.
- b. We must admit that this seems a bit ludicrous. But the Jews were deeply conceited and proud. It would seem they could see the injustice, and illogic of their view, but they did not.
- c. Thus, the Jew reasoned that God could not punish sin when the same was an occasion for glorification since it would be unjust to punish those who glorify God.
- d. However, Paul answers their argument negatively with three responses.
 - (1) If God cannot punish the Jews because their sin is an occasion of glorifying God, then neither can he punish the Gentiles since their sin is the same.
 - (2) Further, if your reasoning is true you are inconsistent in condemning me a sinner since by my perversion and abandonment of Judaism (as you say) God is glorified.
 - (3) Finally, your logic proves the very doctrine you use against me, namely, "Let us do evil that good may come."

IV. Paul Establishes His Conclusion From The OT Scriptures (Romans 3:9–4:25)

A. The Old Testament Condemns Jew and Gentile Alike (3:9–20)

1. *"Are we better than they?"* That is, are we Jews to be preferred over the Gentiles while being guilty of the same sins? Certainly not! Why? Because it is written, that is, the Scriptures condemn the sins of the Jewish people. You can't argue with Scripture (John 5:39).
2. *"As it is written."* Paul's argument is based upon quoting ten texts from the Old Testament. The significance of these quotations is that they are clearly directed at Jews about their sins, not Gentiles about their sins. Paul had proven it by appealing to the righteous character of God (Romans 2:6–11), and now he backs up his conclusion with Scripture citation:
 - a. Psalm 14:1–3
 - b. Psalm 53:1–3
 - c. Ecclesiastes 7:20
 - d. Psalm 5:9
 - e. Psalms 140:3
 - f. Psalm 10:7
 - g. Isaiah 59:7–8
4. **NOTE:** The Hyper-Calvinist will use Romans 3:9–20 to establish the doctrine of inherited total depravity, that is, that men are born into this world guilty of Adam's sin and are from birth wholly inclined toward evil unable to think a good thought or do a good deed, "dead" in sin to the extent that they are even unable to believe without a direct operation of the Holy Spirit. A careful consideration of the verses will reveal that the writers do not have infant depravity under consideration. Rather, than proving infant depravity these verses disprove it. See in particular vv. 12–17 and consider whether or not those texts describe a newborn infant.
4. *"Whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law..."* Paul affirms that the things contained in the OT were directed toward the Jews and proved their condemnation before God. Thus, the law eliminated all cause of boasting before God. The Gentile not having the Law was condemned for sin. The Jew having the Law was also condemned. The purpose of the law was not to justify but give knowledge of sin (Galatians 3:19).

B. Righteousness Is Through Faith & Not of Works, So None Can Boast (3:21–31)

1. *"But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed...which is through faith...by His grace..."*. The expression "righteousness of God" in verses 21 and 22 continues to designate the righteousness or justification which God grants the sinner through obedience to the Gospel. However, "His righteousness" which appears in verses 25 and 26 refers to the personal character of God. In verse 26 you have the sense of both of these expressed in the phrase "that He might be just [righteous in all his character] and the justifier [the one who declares righteous] the one who has faith in Jesus." Paul affirms that God makes sinners righteous through the means of faith rather than the works of the Law of Moses (Ephesians 2:8–10; Galatians 3:10–14; Hebrews 10:38).
 - a. The NT uses "faith" in two senses, subjectively with Christ as the object (Rom. 1:8, 12, 17: 3:22, 25, 28, 30, 31; 4:5, 9, 13, 14, 16, 19, 20; 5:1, 2; 9:30, 32; 10:6, 17; 11:20; 12:3, 6; 16:26) and

objectively, meaning God's plan to make man righteous, i.e., the Gospel (Rom. 1:5; 3:27; 4:11, 12; 10:8; 14:1; 16:26*). However, Calvinists use "faith" in a third sense which is foreign to the Scriptures. They use faith in the sense of what is called "the object to faith" (See: *Neo-Calvinism in the Church of Christ*, pp. 19–22).

- b. This view is expressed on Romans 3:21–31 by Arnold Hardin in *The Persuader*: "Brethren everywhere are turning faith into a work (under a law system) and making it not the instrument, but the ground of justification. But, faith being imputed for righteousness is not an Act (dependence upon perfect law keeping) which is imputed, but rather the object of faith—Christ and His Merits. Righteousness [is] apart from a law system; righteousness [is] through 'faith of Christ' (his perfect life and death)."
2. "For all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). The verse states the condition of the both the Jews and the Gentiles ("all" is unlimited in its context but limited by its context, cf. 3:9, 19). Sin is the universal experience of the human race (Ecclesiastes 7:20; I John 1:8, 10; James 3:2).
- a. However, the passage does not teach universal condemnation on account of Adam's transgression. The argument has been consistently that the Gentiles did not "retain" God in their knowledge and neither had the Jews (1:21–23; 2:1–12).
 - b. Some have tried to argue that the verse teaches the inevitability of sin in the life of the believer these are the so-called "sins of weakness, ignorance and inadvertence." However, the verse does not affirm such, but rather the impossibility of one ever being justified by works of the law after having transgressed the law.
 - c. A.T. Robertson indicates that "sinned" is aorist tense while "fall short" is present tense. We note that "sin" is not in the present tense and, thus, none can affirm that the tense argues that believers "keep on sinning." Rather, the text affirms, that because of some sin at some time men are continually short of God's standard for justification under law which is sinlessness. We find a parallel in I John 1:8, 10. In verse 8 John says we all "have...sin" (present tense). This could not mean that believers were at that moment sinning (I John 3:8); neither did it refer to some sins to be inevitably committed in the future (I John 2:1). Therefore, it must have referred to the fact that believers "have ... sinned" (past tense) at some time (I John 1:10). Thus, as in the words of R.L. Whiteside, "The law would justify a man, if he kept it perfectly; but, it could not justify one after he had transgressed the law." Therefore, all have sin, but are not necessarily sinning at this moment, neither will they inevitably sin at some time in the future.
3. The word "grace" simply means "favor." Paul affirms that the justification of sinners being impossible to accomplish by their own merit under law of necessity becomes a matter of favor. No man having lived sinlessly, save Jesus, there are none who can merit justification from God as a matter of debt. Therefore, if any are saved it must be that God does it as a matter of grace, that is, even though none deserve it God will bestow it upon some anyway as a gift. But, this gift is conditioned upon belief "to all and on all who believe."
4. "Through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus...to demonstrate His righteousness...that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus." There are two key words in these verses "redemption," ΑΠΟΛΥΤΩΣΙΣ and "propitiation," ΗΙΛΑΣΤΗΡΙΟΝ. The first refers to the price given for a slave. The death of Christ is that which purchases believers from bondage to sin (Romans 6:17; I Peter 1:18, 19; Acts 20:28; Ephesians 1:14). [See Note in Vine's EDNTW on REDEEM.] The latter word means to appease or render favorable. That which appeased God's wrath (Romans 2:5) was Jesus' blood—His death (Colossians 1:20; Ephesians 2:16; cf. Isaiah

53:11–12). At once there is a dilemma created by God extending grace, namely, how can God remain just in condemning some sinners while passing over the sins of others? All are equally guilty and God is “no respecter of persons” (Romans 2:11). However, the fact that some believe and others do not does not impugn God (3:3). The death of Christ satisfies the requirement of law (cf. Romans 5:8–10, 17–19).

5. “Where is boasting then? It is excluded.” Those who are justified by faith are unable to boast before God. The Jew thought that he could boast under the Law. Paul showed that he could not. But how can he be saved, if there is no room for boasting? Justification by faith eliminates boasting since the ground of justification is not our personal righteousness, but the death of Christ on our behalf.
 - a. We might note here that the Calvinist relies upon the perfect life of Christ to be imputed to him. However, Paul makes it clear that it is not the doing of Jesus that justifies sinners but the death of Jesus (Hebrews 2:17; 5:9).
 - b. The antithesis between the Mosaic Law, the “law of works,” and the Gospel, the “law of faith,” is to be recognized in the fact that while both are law from God, there is a different basis of justification relative to each one. In the case of the former it is works; in the case of the other it is faith. The believer remains under law to Christ (I Corinthians 9:21), but the grounds of his justification is no longer his own sinless perfection, but the death of Jesus in which he trusts.
6. “Do we then make void the law through faith?” I understand “the law” here to be the Mosaic Law which the Jew understood to be for justification. Since justification is revealed to be through the faith (by the Gospel) does that nullify the Law of Moses? No, Paul says we “establish” the law, but, how? We establish it by now having properly understood its purpose and function with respect to sin (Galatians 3:24; Matthew 5:17–21), and acknowledging its just and fair condemnation of our sins (Romans 7:7).

C. The Old Testament Affirms that Justification Is by Grace through Faith in the Example of Abraham (4:1–25)

1. “What does the Scripture say? Abraham believed God and it was accounted to him for righteousness.” Paul begins by asking a question which is expressed awkwardly in the English. That which is “according to the flesh” is Abraham’s fatherhood, not that which he found (see: NKJV). Paul asks this question in possible anticipation of the objection of the Judaizers who would respond that faith was credited for righteousness only to Abraham and his circumcised offspring (cf. 4:9).
 - a. The word “father,” PROPATOR, is nowhere else used of Abraham and can be translated “ancestor” (*Vine EDNTW*). Thus, Paul is considering the Jewish physical connection and not the spiritual connection when he writes “Abraham our father” in 4:1 (notice the pronouns in chapters two and three). Paul always uses PATER when speaking of the spiritual connection of Christians to Abraham (4:11, 12, 16, 17 and 18).
 - b. Abraham did not “find” or “obtain” justification “according to the flesh” since Paul has been denying this in chapters two and three. He specifically denies Abraham’s justification by works in 4:2 which would be “according to the flesh.” If Paul meant Abraham found something “according to the flesh,” then he should have answered “nothing.”
 - c. Paul is pointing up the Jew’s contention that the only connection to Abraham was “according to the flesh” through birth and circumcision (Genesis 17:9–14). Whereas, he intends to show that the spiritual fatherhood of Abraham was the intent of the Abrahamic

promise, and if they are Abraham's descendants, or heirs of the promise, it is because they walk in the steps of the faith of Abraham (Romans 2:28–29; 4:16, 18; Galatians 3:7–9).

- (1) This line of reasoning is a further proof that the Gentiles are heirs of the promise through faith and not through the Law of Moses and circumcision.
 - (2) Note: See Lenski on Romans 4:1 for comments concerning the phrase "according to the flesh;" also F.F. Bruce for an interesting summary of 4:1–25 in the *Tyndale NT Commentaries*.
2. Concerning verse 4:2, I favor Lard's translation: "For had Abraham been justified by deeds, he has ground for boasting. But, he has none before God." Expressed as a conditional syllogism the sense of the verse is readily evident: If Abraham had been justified by deeds, then he has ground for boasting; but he has no ground before God; therefore, Abraham was not justified by deeds. This is exactly what Paul has been arguing all along: justification is not by works. But the translation in almost every version makes Paul contradict himself. Among the modern translations we find only two that give the sense as intended. *Alford*: "For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath ground of boasting. But he has none before God." *NEB*: "If Abraham was justified by anything he had done, then he has a ground for pride. But he has no such ground before God."
 3. Paul proves from Scripture that Abraham has no such ground before God. "What does the Scripture say? Abraham believed God and it was accounted to him for righteousness." Men have often erred in regard to this quotation assuming Paul refers to the moment of Abraham's justification from alien sins. Yet, this cannot be the case since God first appeared to Abraham in Ur (Acts 7:2; Genesis 12:7). And, Paul characterizes him as a man of faith at that time (Hebrews 11:8). Rather, the expression "Abraham believed God" is used to refer to Abraham's whole life before God. The quotation from Genesis is used by the NT writers to apply to specific incidents in his life to which the statement was not applied by Moses (James 2:23; Romans 4:1–25; Galatians 3:6; cf. Genesis 12, 17, 18, 22). Abraham believed God from the day he left Ur in the Chaldees and that faith continued until the day that he died (Hebrews 11:13). Therefore, that Abraham was justified from alien sins by mere assent to the truth to this promise in Genesis 15 is without foundation (for a complete argument, see: *Whiteside*; pp. 89–91).
 4. Now, "faith was accounted (counted, reckoned, credited, imputed) for righteousness." DIKAIOSUNE means acquittal from sin, with subsequent recognition and treatment as just. LOGIZOMAI means to reckon, take into account, to consider or count. Paul does not say: Abraham was reckoned righteous because of his faith in God (that is, faith is the basis rather than the condition). Neither does he say that faith was counted as equivalent to righteousness. Nor does he regard Abraham's faith was a substitute to be reckoned instead of righteousness. He does not say that the merits of the perfect life of Christ were transferred to Abraham, that is, the object of his faith was counted. Rather Paul says: Abraham's faith was counted to him in order to (EIS, into unto, in order to) righteousness. Faith was the condition upon which God forgave Abraham of whatever sins he may have committed. God considers as righteous those whose sins are forgiven.
 5. "But to him who does not work but believes God imputes righteousness apart from works." The "works" under consideration here are "works of the Law of Moses" executed perfectly. Paul returns to his "hypothetical" sinless, perfect man. Whatever this man receives of God is a matter of debt. It cannot be "grace," that is, favor, since it is that which is owed (Galatians 3:10–12). "Him who does not work but believes" must necessarily refer to that Jew who sinned. If he was saved at all it is a matter of grace. Context will not allow the exclusion of the obedience of faith. There is

often an attempt to circumvent a conditional salvation by grace upon the contention: "It is not of works!" However, if salvation is unconditional, in order to be "not of works," then it must be universal, unless one is willing to accept Hyper-Calvinism's unconditional election and reprobation. If one admits salvation can be conditional and still be by grace, it is illogical to dismiss the obedience of faith as "works," it simply becomes a matter of what are the conditions.

6. *"Does this blessedness then come upon the circumcised only, or upon the uncircumcised also?"* (4:9–12) Paul has introduced three equivalent terms for forgiveness of sins: (a) "faith accounted for righteousness," (b) "God imputes righteousness apart from works," (c) "The man to whom the Lord shall not impute sin." This is the "blessedness to which he refers. Paul anticipates the answer of the Judaizer, "Yes, faith is reckoned for righteousness only to Abraham and his circumcised offspring" (cf. Acts 15:5, 6–11; 11:1–3). However, Paul shows them that Abraham was regarded righteous without circumcision. His conclusion then is that justification by faith is equally applicable to the uncircumcised, as well as, the circumcised. Paul calls Abraham "father," PATER, of the circumcised in both the spiritual and physical sense (4:12). He is their spiritual father when they emulate his faith. He is father to all the nations by reason of the same (cf. 4:17).
7. *"The promise that he would be heir of the world was no ...through the law...for if those who are of the law are heirs...the promise is made of no effect because the law brings about wrath."* Paul now counters the objection raised earlier by the Jew in 3:3 and again in 3:31 by turning it around on them and showing that their contention that justification comes through the law is what "voids" the promise. Why does justification by the law void the promise of God? First, it excludes faith (Galatians 3:11, 12; Romans 4:14). It makes them debtors to keep the whole law (Galatians 5:3; 3:12; Romans 4:15). They become the objects of God's wrath under the curse of the law (Galatians 3:10; Romans 4:15). They are estranged from Christ (Galatians 5:4–6; 3:13; Romans 4:16).
8. *"The faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all..."* In 4:16–22 Paul recounts the story of Abraham receiving the promise of God relating it to his faith. God promised to Abraham countless posterity. But at the time, both his own body and that of Sarah were dead for purposes of procreation. In the midst of these violently conflicting facts, he had to make up his mind. He had to decide whether to believe God against nature, or believe nature against God. A decision was the very act called for. Abraham believed the promise of a son which at his age was what one would not expect, but he having faith expected confidently, that is, he hoped. "Therefore, it [Abraham's faith] was accounted to him for [in order to] righteousness."
9. *"It shall be imputed to us who believe in Him who raised up Jesus or Lord from the dead."* Righteousness is what is imputed [set down to our account] when we, like Abraham, believe (cf. 4:6–8).
10. *"Jesus our Lord...delivered up because of our offenses"* (Isaiah 53:1–12, the death of Christ atones for sin, not his "doing" imputed to us)...*"raised because of our justification"* (cf. Hebrews 2:14–18; 5:9–11; 7:11–25; Romans 8:34).

V. Paul Examines the Greatness of Justification by Faith as Revealed in the Gospel (5:1–8:39).

A. The Blessings of Justification Enumerated (5:1–5)

1. *"Therefore having been justified by faith, we have peace with God."* Here Paul reiterates what has already been affirmed repeatedly that justification (or righteousness, or salvation, or remission of sins, or reconciliation, or redemption) is by faith. I do not agree with Cogdill that Paul

means here “the faith.” This seems to me to be out of harmony with Paul’s comparison between the two systems by which men may approach God. This is especially apparent to me when 4:3 and 22 are considered. Abraham was not justified by “the faith,” meaning the Gospel as preached by Paul, but by “the faith that he had while still uncircumcised.” Granted it is difficult to express, but we have Paul using “faith” or belief in both an objective and subjective sense. Thus, Paul wrote, “Knowing that a man is not justified by works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed” (Galatians 2:16). It is important to note here that only a prejudiced mind would read 5:1 as “having been justified by faith only.” It is a poor argument indeed seeing that 4:17–21 are affirming obedience of faith as that which made Abraham’s faith perfect unto righteousness. What, but a closed mind, would argue that with regard to the promise of 4:21, Abraham didn’t have to do anything in order to receive it (cf. Genesis 18:9–15; 21:1–7; Hebrews 11:11–12).

2. *“We have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.”* Peace, EIRENE, generally denotes a cessation of hostilities, a resumption of amiable relations between two or more parties. This of course is accomplished by removing whatever it was that caused the enmity to exist in the first place (see: Isaiah 59:12; Ephesians 2:14–16; Colossians 1:19–22). This Paul calls “the reconciliation” in 5:11. Please note that our Lord Jesus Christ is the person by whom reconciliation was made possible. He became our propitiation before God by his death on the cross as an atonement for sin (Romans 3:25; II Corinthians 5:18, 21). Therefore, as a result of having obtained righteousness by faith, we are no longer God’s enemies but His friends as Abraham of old (II Chronicles 20:7; Isaiah 41:8).
3. *“We have access by faith into this grace in which we stand.”* It is correct to say that believers are in a “state of grace” (I Peter 5:12). However, this is not to be confused with the Calvinistic/Protestant idea of an “umbrella of grace” which exists by an “imputation” of the personal righteousness of Christ to the believer. Such is not the NT concept of grace. Christians are in favor with God because the enmity that once existed has been removed by the death of Christ. We now enjoy certain blessings we did not have while we were guilty sinners. This state of grace is co-extensive with the realm of the kingdom or church.
4. *“[We] rejoice in hope of the glory of God.”* One of the blessings of justification is rejoicing. The Eunuch upon baptism into Christ rejoiced (Acts 8:39). Paul commanded Christians to continue in rejoicing (Philippians 4:4; cf. 1:25; 2:18). That over which they rejoiced was their hope, confident expectation, of the glory of God, that is, their ultimate glorification in the resurrection (cf. 2:7; I Peter 1:13; II Corinthians 4:14, 15; 15:43; II Corinthians 4:17, 18; Colossians 1:27; II Thessalonians 2:14; Hebrews 2:10).
5. *“We also glory in tribulations”* We have boasting in trials just as Paul did (II Corinthians 12:7–10), whether these trials are physical oppressions, hardships, misfortunes or spiritual conflicts. We have by them opportunity to glory for in them we are strengthened. In trials there is a development of our character that approves us before God (James 1:2–5, 12; I Peter 1:6, 7; 4:12–16). Those who cannot endure the trials will not be approved (I Corinthians 3:11–15). As a result of matured faith hope is resolute. We have steadfast confidence and assurance. This hope is not misplaced nor will it disappoint the believer (meaning a failure to receive what is expected). Now, the reason given that hope will not be disappointed is that the Holy Spirit has poured out the love of God in our hearts. The common concept of this pouring out of God’s love in our hearts is the “better–felt–than–told experience.” However, such is not affirmed in this passage or any other passage. The work of the Holy Spirit was that of the revelation of the mind of God (John 14:26; 15:26, 27; 16:7–15; I Corinthians 2:6–16). Miracles, signs, wonders were appointed for the purpose of confirming the revelation (Mark 16:17–20; Hebrews 2:1–4; II Peter 1:16–21). It was in this capacity that the Holy Spirit was given (Acts 2:38; 5:32; Galatians

3:1–7). These believers were assured of God’s love for them by the fact that their faith rested in a miraculously confirmed Gospel (I John 4:9–11).

B. God’s Love for Man the Impetus behind Justification by Faith (Romans 5:6–11)

1. *“For when we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.”* The absence of strength is to be equated with our “ungodliness,” that is, our unrighteousness. The idea being man in sin was wholly incapable of doing anything by himself and of himself to save himself. “In due time” expresses that the redemption of humanity was gradual in its process of development (Ephesians 3:1–7; 2:9; Romans 11:25; 16:25, 26; I Corinthians 2:7; 4:1). “Christ died for the ungodly” in the sense that he was a sacrifice who by death satisfied the just requirements of God in atoning for sin and by his death became a propitiation for our sins (Romans 14:15; I Corinthians 8:11; 15:3; II Corinthians 5:4; I Peter 3:18).
2. *“For scarcely for a...man someone would even dare to die.”* The “righteous man” of whom Paul speaks is the self righteous (Romans 10:3; Luke 18:9; 10:29; 16:15), like the rich young ruler even (Mark 10:21). The “good man” is he who was like Barnabas (Acts 11:24). Paul is using human standards of worthiness to demonstrate the greatness God’s love. Men love the loveable and favor the faultless (Matthew 9:10–13; 11:16–19; Mark 2:16–17). However, God is not a man; He loves sinners (Psalm 25:6–11)!
3. *“Having been justified by His blood ... we shall be saved from wrath”* (see: Colossians 1:19–22; Ephesians 2:14–18; Romans 3:21–25; etc.). The wrath from which we are saved is the just judgment upon impenitent sinners (Romans 1:18; 2:3–9, 16; II Thessalonians 1:8–10).
4. *“We shall be saved by his life.”* This “life” is the resurrection life as evidenced by the context (4:25; 8:34). This is the “life” he lives in order to make intercession for the believers at God’s right hand as our high priest and advocate (Hebrews 7:25–28; 9:24–28; I John 2:1–2).
5. *“We rejoice ... received the reconciliation.”* The “reconciliation” is the effect of the death of Christ when appropriated to the sinner. The word means “to make friends again.” This Jesus did through death by removing the cause of enmity between man and God, viz. sin (Isaiah 59:1–2). On this account man can rejoice in God, that is, He is happy, back in fellowship with the Almighty.

C. The Death of Christ the Basis upon Which God Can Justify Man by Faith (5:12–21)

1. *“Through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned.”* The “one man” by whom sin entered is Adam (Genesis 3:17–19; I Timothy 2:13–14). He is responsible since he was head over the woman and he chose to sin not being deceived. The death that spread to all men is spiritual death. This is the only death that comes upon men as a result of their own personal transgressions (Genesis 2:17; Ezekiel 18:20–24; I Timothy 5:6). Physical death is a consequence upon Adam’s posterity without regard to our individual actions (I Corinthians 15:45–46). As a consequence physical death is not intended as a punishment, but as a means to the remedy (Genesis 3:22–24; cf. Romans 8:20).
2. *“Through one man’s offence judgment came to all men, resulting in condemnation, even so through one man’s righteous act the free gift came to all men, resulting in justification of life.”* The reason for the condemnation of “all men” was stated above in verse twelve, “because all sinned.” This is not a universal unconditional condemnation of humanity by a transfer of the guilt of Adam to his posterity. “Even so” means “in like manner,” that is, just as Adam’s transgression introduced sin into the world and made the condemnation of the human family possible, even so, the death of Christ on the cross made the reconciliation of the human family possible. If verses 12 and 18 are teaching universal condemnation by the unconditional imputation of Adam’s guilt,

then these verses are also teaching the unconditional justification of all mankind by the imputation of Christ's righteousness, which is UNIVERSALISM.

3. Special Notes on the Parenthesis of Romans 5:13–17.

- a. *"For until the law..."* Paul affirms the law's original purpose "added because of transgressions" (Galatians 3:19; cf. Romans 5:20, lit. "to come in alongside," that is, to supervene). Since men had not retained God in their knowledge the Law was given to help remedy that problem with respect to the Jews acting as a schoolmaster to bring them to Christ (Galatians 3:24; Hebrews 10:1–4).
 - b. *"Death reigned from Adam to Moses."* This is spiritual death since physical death still reigns (I Corinthians 15:26; Revelation 20:14). Adam sinned presumptuously, not being deceived (I Timothy 2:14). Thus indicating ignorance and deception do not absolve men of guilt (Eve was "in the transgression;" cf. II Corinthians 11:3).
 - c. *"Who is a type of Him who was to come..."* The typology between Adam and Jesus is found in the fact that each one by one act affected man's relationship to God. These effects are at once opposites but similar. "The free gift" is the "one righteous act" of 5:18 which effects "the reconciliation" of 5:11.
4. *"By one man's disobedience...by one man's obedience."* Adam's disobedience admitted sin into the world and from that moment all men have been subject to temptation and sin, but their own not Adam's. The obedience here attributed to Christ is that of the "one righteous act," His death on the cross (Philippians 2:8; Hebrews 10:5–10). This verse says nothing about "the deeds and doing" of Jesus. The Lord's perfect obedience to the Law, i.e., His sinlessness, qualified Him as the sacrifice for sin, making Him the "just" offered for the "unjust" (Hebrews 2:9–11; I Peter 3:18). The merits of His righteousness are never said to be attributed or transferred to anyone other than Himself.
5. *"The offense might abound."* Not that law was responsible for an increase in sinning, but that sin was magnified in the law (see: Galatians 3:19; Romans 3:20; 7:7, 13; Hebrews 8:7–13). As a result of man's helpless and hopeless condition being revealed to him grace was magnified. Men were compelled to turn to Christ for help (II Corinthians 5:14–17).
6. *"Sin reigned in death; even so grace might reign through righteousness to eternal life."* Sin has dominion over every man dead in sins (Ephesians 2:1–10). However, grace is made the victor and reigns through righteousness, that is, justification by faith. Note: Romans 6:1–9 which makes it clear that it is spiritual death under consideration in 5:21.

D. The Character of Life Which Results from Justification by Faith (6:1–23)

1. *"Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it?"* Paul is anticipating the false charge and objection often raised by the Judaizers, "If justification is by grace, and grace abounds where sin is, then the logical conclusion demands the more we sin the more grace we have and the more God is glorified" (cf. Romans 3:8).
 - a. **NOTE:** Paul may be anticipating the antinomian perversion of this concept which arose among the Gnostics. these false teachers among other things contended that flesh was inherently sinful and being such sin in the life of the believer abounded unto grace.)
 - b. However, Paul answers the false charge by responding that those who have received grace no longer live in sin having died to it. It is important to emphasize that Christians do not live sinful lives (I John 1:1–10; 2:1–2; 3:8; I Corinthians 15:34; Galatians 5:24).

2. *"Do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death...Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord."* Christians do not live in sin because we were baptized into Christ's death (cf. Romans 3:25; 5:9–10, 19; Colossians 1:20–22; Ephesians 1:7; Hebrews 9:11–28). Therefore, we have been cleansed of sin (Acts 2:38; 22:16; Colossians 2:11, 12). We were buried into death to sin (Ephesians 2:1; Hebrews 6:1; Colossians 2:11; Galatians 5:24). We were united with Christ (Galatians 3:26, 27; I Corinthians 12:13; I John 1:1–10). Our old man is crucified (I Corinthians 6:9–11; Galatians 5:24; Colossians 3:1–4; Ephesians 4:17–24). We have been raised to be alive unto God (Romans 6:8–11; II Corinthians 5:14–17; Galatians 6:15; 2:19–20; Ephesians 2:4–6). The body of sin is inoperative (Galatians 2:19–20; II Corinthians 5:15; Colossians 3:9–10). We are no longer slaves to sin, but freed from it (I Peter 4:1–3; I Corinthians 6:9–11; Colossians 3:1–4; Ephesians 4:25–5:7). It is important to note that the common view of these verses that baptism pictures what is already actualized in the candidate by faith cannot be sustained by a fair treatment of the context. Neither can the idea that baptism symbolically pictures the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus. In baptism there is a visual representation of what the Holy Spirit actually accomplishes at the time of our immersion.
3. *"Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal bodies...you are not under law but under grace."* Sin reigns when we obey the desires of the flesh which are contrary to righteousness. The members of our body become the instruments of sin when we do not develop self-control (II Peter 1:6; Matthew 23:25, 26; I Corinthians 7:1–5; Acts 24:25; Galatians 5:23). This text is often misunderstood, being interpreted to mean just the opposite of what Paul has so far affirmed. Being under grace does not release us from law and, therefore, give us license (Jude 4). Rather, Paul affirms sin cannot have dominion when God's grace is accepted. We are no longer in bondage to a system that cannot free us from sin. Remission of sins through grace has empowered us to live for God. To continue in sin is to cheapen grace and trivialize the death of Christ making Him the minister of sin (Galatians 2:17).
4. *"Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace?"* Paul is not stating another objection, but restating the objection he has already raised (6:1) in order to draw a conclusion. Observe his argument: [a] Baptism into Christ accomplishes a complete death to sin (6:1–7); [b] furthermore, it accomplished a quickening unto God (6:8–11); [c] therefore, the members of the mortal body are under the power of the new man and are become the instruments of righteousness (6:12–14). In order to establish his conclusion that we cannot sin in order that grace may abound Paul reasons concerning slavery. He draws his analogy from human illustrations of bond service (6:19). He applies the analogy to "sin" and, thus, makes him a tyrant master. Likewise, he pictures "obedience" (a metonymy of effect for the cause indicating "faith") as another master who offers justification which is of life (Romans 5:18). [There is an excellent comment in Lard (p. 212) concerning phrase "obedience to righteousness."] Thus, he shows that one cannot render service to sin by yielding to the lusts of the flesh and be a servant of righteousness and vice versa. "No man can serve two masters" (Mt. 6:24). It was their obedience to the Gospel that released them from the one master, sin, and made them slaves of righteousness (6:17). The "bondservant" analogy" does not reveal all the details of their "redemption" or "ransom" by the blood of Christ. However, the verse does reveal that their obedience was essential as a condition to appropriate the means of their redemption which was the death of Christ (Romans 3:23–25; I Peter 1:18–19; Matthew 20:28; et.al.).
5. The *"form of doctrine"* to which Paul refers is not baptism. I believe that baptism is surely involved in that obedience, but he is not describing baptism as a picture of the death, burial and resurrection of Christ. Surely there is a relationship between the death burial and

resurrection of Christ and our baptism (see above on Romans 6:8–11). But, baptism is not a “form” of the Gospel teaching on that subject. Rather the doctrine is the form. TUPOS signifies “a mold,” unto which these Christians had been delivered or “cast” by their obedience. The Gospel of Christ became a transforming power and molding influence upon them. As a result of their obedience they were free from their former works or “fruits” which were unto death, just as they had been free from the fruits of holiness when they were slaves to sin.

E. Paul Demonstrates the Dilemma of the Jew under the Law Thus Establishing the Need for Grace (7:1–25)

1. *“Or do you not know brethren...that the law has dominion over a man as long as he lived? For the woman who has a husband is bound by the law to her husband as long as he lives...Therefore, my brethren, you alone have become dead to the law through the body of Christ.”* Paul uses God’s law concerning marriage as a basis for an analogy by which he is able to show Jewish Christians, as well as, Gentiles, their relationship to the law in Christ. Paul states the divine intention of the marriage law as being: “One man and one woman until death should separate them both (cf. Matthew 5:32; 19:6–9; Mark 10:11–12; Luke 16:18; I Corinthians 7:1–12; etc.). Now, the Jews, in particular, had been freed from their former “marriage” to the law by the death of Christ which in effect “nailed the law to the cross” (Colossians 2:11–14; Ephesians 2:14–16). Thus, they had been set free from the former partner and were “married” to Christ. The peculiar problem with the Judaizers was their desire to remain under the law while married to Christ. Paul affirms such was spiritual “adultery;” by the same token, Gentiles, who being deceived and brought under the law by circumcision, would find themselves in the same predicament. Thus, Paul wrote to them, “You have become estranged from Christ, you who attempt to be justified by law; you have fallen from grace.” (Galatians 5:4). Thus, Paul’s objective is not only to establish the “abolition” of the law, but also to affirm the sanctity of their covenant with Christ which they made by their death to sin and union with Him (Romans 6:20–22).
2. *“For when we were in the flesh, the passions of sins which were aroused by the law were a work in our members...But now we have been delivered from the law, having died to what we were held by, so that we should serve in the newness of the spirit and not in the oldness of the letter.”* First, “in the flesh” refers to their condition without the Gospel, specifically their deadness in sin when their members were the instruments of unrighteousness (6:6, 12–14, 18; 5:21). Paul refers to being in the flesh as “when the commandments came” (7:9), “carnal, sold under sin” (7:14), “sin that dwells within me” (7:17, 21), “wretched” (7:24), “serve the law of sin” (7:25), “set their minds on things of the flesh” (8:5), “carnally minded” (8:6), “the carnal mind” (8:7). This condition existed for these Jews under the law. However, “flesh” does not concern the human body or racial distinctions, the Gentiles were as much “in the flesh” as were the Jews (Gal. 5:19–21; Romans 1:18–31). Being “in the flesh” as having the “carnal mind” describes the condition of the man blinded by sin and under the power of its deception. “Flesh” is not to be construed as an inherently sinful nature, i.e., an inborn drive or proclivity for sin. Romans 7:9 establishes that men are not born dead in sin as a result of the sin nature. Ephesians 2:1–3 makes it clear that the carnal mind is the result of long time practice and not “environmentally acquired.” The “passions of sins” neither indicates that our desires are sinful or that it is the fault of the commandment that men desire sinful things. Rather, Paul simply affirms that the law identifies sin to our mind. With this new cognizance of sin we realize that our members are bearing fruit unto spiritual death, condemnation. Verse six introduces the beauty of grace extended to believers under the Gospel.
3. Seeing that we stand in grace (5:1, 2) the following is true: *“We have been delivered from the law.”* This is true in two senses. First, we are delivered from it as a system of justification, righteousness by faith having come in. Second, we are delivered from it as the reason for our

condemnation, the propitiation of Christ having appeased God's wrath against us. *"Having died to what we were held by."* That by which we were held was sin (6:14–22). It is this to which we have died (6:2, 7). Those who are in God's grace are dead to sin! However, the law died in Paul's analogy (7:1–4). Yet, in this verse we are said to die. I am not sure that Paul is actually turning the figure around or simply expressing the fact that we are in a dead relationship as far as the Law is concerned. This makes more sense to me than trying to read Romans 6:2 and 7 back into the text. It is evident that we are alive to be married to the risen Christ. Simplicity, is always my preference. *"We should serve in the newness of the Spirit and not in the oldness of the letter."* Now, Paul introduces the covenant under which we have the grace in which we stand and by which we serve Him. "The Spirit" designates the Gospel, "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus" (Romans 8:1, cf. II Corinthians 3:4–6). "The letter" designates the Law of Moses which was a "ministry of death." It is the "new man" who walks after the Spirit and serves the Spirit, whereas, it was the "old man of sin" that served through the letter, or the Law (Romans 2:27–29).

3. *"What shalt we say then? Is the law sin? Certainly not! ... Therefore, the law is holy, and the commandment holy and just and good."* Paul in these verses establishes that the existence of sin is not the fault of the law, but rather that law was added because of transgression (Galatians 3:19). It was through the law that men in the flesh came to the knowledge of their sins (cf. 3:20; Psa. 119:11; Psa. 37:31). It was the purpose of God through the law to reveal His disposition toward sin and by it establish their need for a Savior. Paul personifies sin and shows how Satan by temptation, deception, and lies uses the commandment of God as an opportunity for man's stumbling. Eve is a perfect example of what Paul is illustrating here (Genesis 3:1–6). There would have been no opportunity for Satan with Eve had God not said "Of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat." But, Satan deceived her by lies and there was produced in her "evil desire." There was nothing highhanded or presumptuous in it. Yet, it was evil (I Timothy 2:14; II Corinthians 11:3). Had there been no law there had been no opportunity for sin (Romans 3:20; 4:15).
4. *"I was alive without the law once."* That time at which Paul was alive without the commandment could only have been during his youth. At what actual moment that was Paul does not say, but he can conceive a time in his mind when he was free without the law. The growth and development of children and the importance of the parental role is indirectly affirmed here (Exodus 20:12; Ephesians 6:1–4). Total hereditary depravity is set at nought by this verse since if Paul were born a sinner there could have been no time when he was alive. Sin's "revival" does not mean "made alive again." ANAZAO signifies a springing to life or activity. Prior to the coming of the command Paul was alive and sin was dead. However with the arrival of the command sin came to life and Paul died (cf. James 1:14–15). Thus, sin (personified) used the commandment as an opportunity for his fall by deception and, thus, killed Paul who in those verses represents the entire human family. His conclusion then regarding the law is that it was intended to bring spiritual life and would if obeyed (Galatians 3:12) but because he sinned it, in reality, only brought death.
5. *"Had then what is good become death to me? Certainly not! But sin that it might appear sin, was producing death in me through what is good, so that sin through the commandment might become exceedingly sinful."* Paul's affirmation in no wise diminishes the righteous character of the law for the fault of sin ties in the sinner and not in the law (Heb. 8:11–13). Therefore, Paul's concluding statement regarding the purpose of the Law is this: (a) the commandment was designed to point out sin; (b) however, the consequence of that for the sinner was condemnation. The beauty of it was that those who realized their fate were pointed to search for another means of justification other than by deeds of the law.

6. Paul demonstrates this conclusion by transferring it to himself in a figure in Romans 7:14–25:

- (a) Romans 7:14 affirms the condition of the man “in the flesh” deceived by sin. He is carnal and sold under sin. (This cannot be a description of the believer as described in Romans 6:2, 7.)
 - (b) The word “doing” which is KATERGAZOMAI is better rendered “worketh” or “accomplish” in 7:15. Also the word “allow” GINOSKO ought to be rendered as “understand.” Thus, Paul affirms that the sinner does not fully grasp the consequences of what he accomplished by his transgression. It is not what he wills to accomplish but having been deceived he does that which he “wills” not.
 - (c) In 7:16 Paul shows that the deceived sinner is actually in agreement with the Law when confronted by it and smitten in his conscience.
 - (d) Now, Paul continues his personification of sin and attributes transgression of the commandments to the hold that sin, by deception and despair, has over the mind and the members, this is being in the flesh.
 - (e) Nothing is good “in my flesh,” that is, the deceived mind under the power of sin. Thus, 7:18–20 present the conflict that results from desiring to do God’s will and the dominion of sin over the members.
 - (f) Thus, Paul realizes that evil or sin bears rule over him while “in the flesh” and unable to find justification having become a sinner (7:21). His true desire or purpose is to serve God (7:22), but the rule of sin having deceived his mind (7:23) brings him into condemnation.
 - (g) NOTE: The NKJV is very helpful in understanding these verses.
7. “O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from the body of this death?” Paul’s wretchedness is that of the sinner not the saint. It is the wretchedness of condemnation in sin. He desires deliverance from the body of death which is not the literal human body but the body of sin which is cut off in baptism. Of course, the answer to the question is Jesus Christ our Lord.
8. “With the mind I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin.” Now, Paul identifies the two conditions in which a man might find himself. There is the mind with which we serve God (cf. Romans 2:9) and there is the flesh with which we serve sin (8:5–8).

F. The Believer Is Free From Sin in Christ (8:1–11)

1. “There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.” KATAKRINA means “to give judgment against, pass sentence upon; hence to condemn implying the fact of a crime and the imputation of a crime” (*Vine’s EDONTW*). The verse has been used erroneously to affirm that believers do not stand in judgment at the end of the age (but see: II Corinthians 5:9–11; Romans 14:10, 12; Matthew 25:31–46). Paul is affirming that the believer in Christ who is “walking after the Spirit” is free from the guilt of sin, this is the case because he has been justified by faith, and, therefore, he stands before God just and unworthy of the sentence of eternal death. Another point to consider here is that some Calvinists use this verse to teach that the sins of the believer are not imputed to him. The “classic Calvinist” would affirm that no sin from adultery to murder is charged to the child of God. “Modified Calvinists,” teach that only certain sins, such as, those committed in weakness, through ignorance, or lack of circumspection, are not imputed. Some will argue for the righteous life of Christ imputed while others affirm a “blood cover” or “constant washing of the blood of Jesus.” Still others pervert the passage to affirm that some sins are not even charged, but held in abeyance until growth and opportunity make such an one aware that his practice is sin.

2. *"Walking according to the flesh"* has been partially defined in chapter seven and is defined further in the subsequent verses:
 - a. *"When we were in the flesh, the passions of sins ... were at work in our members"* (7:5).
 - b. *"Sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it killed me"* (7:8, 11).
 - c. *"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"* (7:23).
 - d. *"With the mind I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin"* (7:25).
 - e. *"Those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh"* (8:5).
 - f. *"To be carnally minded"* (8:6).
 - g. *"The carnal mind is enmity against God; for It is not subject to the law of God"* (8:7).
3. *"Walking according to the Spirit"* can be similarly defined by an examination of these chapters:
 - a. *"We should serve in the newness of the Spirit and not in the oldness of the letter"* (7:6).
 - b. *"I agree with the law that it is good"* (7:16).
 - c. *"I delight in the law of God according to the inward man"* (7:22).
 - d. *"With the mind I myself serve the law of God"* (7:25).
 - e. *"The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free"* (8:2).
 - f. *"But those who live according to the Spirit, [set their minds on] the things of the Spirit"* (8:5).
 - g. *"Spiritually minded"* (8:6).
4. *"For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death."* The "law of the Spirit of life" is another name for the Gospel which Paul has consistently affirmed is the power of God unto salvation (Romans 1:16; 3:21). However, its ability to release from sin is realized only through obedient faith (Romans 1:5; 4:12; 6:16–18; 16:26). No NT writer ever contemplates a faith which is devoid of obedience (James 2:24; Hebrews 11:1 ff; Romans 10:16, 17). It is the Gospel that makes us free in Christ (John 8:32; Romans 6:3, 4; Titus 3:5; John 3:3–5; Acts 2:47; I Corinthians 4:14–15). This is a relationship effected by the obedience of faith to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The "law of sin and death" is the dominion sin has over men through their obedience to the "passions of sins aroused by the law" (7:5).
5. *"For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin; He condemned sin in the flesh that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit."* The weakness of the law was "through the flesh" (Heb. 8:7, 8; Jer. 31:31–33). The weakness lay not in the law, in any sense, but in the men who covenanted to keep the law (Deuteronomy 31:16; Judges 2:20). What the law was unable to do once sin entered was justify (7:13; 3:19, 20; cf. Gal. 3:10–12). The law gave life only to the sinlessly perfect (7:10). However, God was able to give life by sending Christ (Galatians 4:4–7) in the likeness of sinful flesh. Paul does not affirm flesh is sinful or that man has a sinful nature. If he does, he denies the incarnation (I John 2:22, 23; 4:2, 3; II John 7–11). Rather, Paul is affirming man's free moral agency and the fact that all have given themselves up to the law of sin in their members. He necessarily affirms the full humanity of Christ and his temptation in all points (Hebrews 2:14–18; 4:14–16; 7:25–28). It was his sinlessness while "in the likeness of sinful flesh" that condemned sin in the flesh (8:3). By this he becomes our example in all things (I Peter 2:21–24). To deny the humanity of Jesus, either wholly or by modification, is to rob the believer of the hope and comfort of the

Scriptures. The “righteous requirement” is the just satisfaction of the demands of violated law. The death of Christ “fulfills” that requirement for those of us who are justified by faith (cf. Romans 3:21–26; I John 2:1–2; John 1:29).

6. “For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh...to be carnally minded is death...it is not subject to the law of God...those in the flesh cannot please God.” Essentially in vv. 5–8 we have a comparison and contrast of the carnal mind and the spiritual mind.

a. The “Carnal mind:

- (1) Minds “things of the flesh”—sin
- (2) Inherits spiritual death as a consequence of its walk.
- (3) Is in rebellion against God.
- (4) Is impenitent
- (5) Is abhorred by God

b. The spiritual mind:

- (1) Minds the things of the Spirit
- (2) Inherits eternal life and accepts reconciliation
- (3) Is subject to God’s law
- (4) Pleases God.

7. “But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you.” Paul affirms Christians are not in the flesh and the spirit at the same time. There is no duality as a result of a residual sin nature after regeneration. Paul affirms that the Holy Spirit indwells the Christian and that without that indwelling we are lost. I have often wondered how Pentecostals, Charismatics and Holiness folk could demand a literal bodily indwelling and still affirm that one can be a Christian without it. If this is what Paul meant, then if you don’t have it you are still in the flesh and condemned to hell. The same thing applies to my brethren who affirm a bodily indwelling of the Holy Spirit. Yet, they do not sever fellowship. Why? It is important to note that Paul does not affirm in this verse how the Spirit of Christ indwells, but has already done so above.

a. The key to understanding this verse is recognizing that “in the spirit” and “the Spirit of God dwells in you” designate two different things, one being dependant upon the other respectively. “In the spirit” refers to being spiritually minded (8:6) which is accomplished by walking according to the Spirit, which is serving the law of God with the mind, being the law of the Spirit of life which is the Gospel. Now, if we are “in the spirit” then the Spirit of God dwells in us and we are His. Paul affirms that the Spirit of God dwells in the Christian through the word.

b. Verse 11 states another conditional clause which makes the resurrection dependent upon the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. Reasoning as above we conclude obedient faith to be the means by which the Holy Spirit indwells the Christian and comforts his heart with the hope of glory.

G. Being Free the Believer Mortifies His Members and Endures Suffering (8:12–39)

1. “Therefore, brethren, we are debtors—not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh...if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.” Proceeding from the fact that believers are freed from the guilt of sin, there is now a “debt” or obligation to live according to the Spirit (cf. 8:5;

6:11, 19, 22). Those who live according to the Spirit put to death the deeds of the body, that is, they mortify their members by extinguishing the rule of sin there in (6:12; Colossians 3:5–7; Ephesians 5:1–7; I Corinthians 6:9–11).

2. *"For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are the sons of God."* In connection with the context, we have already learned that to "walk according to the spirit" is to have "the Spirit of God dwell n you," (8:9) but to "walk according to the spirit" is to set our minds upon "the things of the Spirit" (8:5) and "the things of the Spirit" are revealed in the "law of the Spirit of life" (8:2). Thus, we conclude if one is "led by the Spirit" (8:14) he is obeying "the law of the Spirit of life" and having obeyed is a "son of God" (Galatians 3:26–27). Some err in assuming a direct operation of the Holy Spirit apart from the Gospel upon the sinner to regenerate the heart so that such a one can have faith. However, if their contention is true then this verse teaches such a one is a son of God without faith, therefore the Gospel is not the power of God unto salvation which is contrary to the very premise upon which this entire epistle is based. (There are some who accept this consequence, yet, there are many more who are inconsistent on this point. Particularly the Baptists, who try and patch this doctrine up with their contention that repentance and faith are inseparable, that doesn't help, the Scriptures prove otherwise in the many examples of unsaved believers. Brethren also err in their contention for a personal, bodily indwelling of the Holy Spirit. This verse affirms that the Spirit leads. It is inconsistent to insist that the Spirit personally indwells believers and at the same time insist that he doesn't do anything for us apart from the word. Again, the Spirit leads through the instrumentality of the word, and this being true, He indwells us, and we are the sons of God.
3. *"For you did not receive the Spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by which we cry out, Abba, Father."* The word "spirit" in this verse does not refer to an individual personal intelligence, but to disposition or attitude. This is obvious from the context. "Spirit" is used in a parallel in verse 15. Whatever it means with regard to "bondage" it means in regard to "adoption." In what sense can the Holy Spirit be referred to as a "spirit of bondage?" If not the Holy Spirit, what "spirit" is it? Is it a human spirit or a demonic spirit? In no sense can we assign the idea of an individual personal intelligence to "spirit of bondage." Thus, we cannot consistently assign it to "spirit of adoption." Whiteside's explanation seems to me to be the best: "Spirit as used in this verse does not refer to an individual personal intelligence, but to disposition or attitude. Instead of being moved by fear as slaves, the child of God renders trusting obedience to God, and confidently calls upon Him as Father. The spirit of fear is displaced by a spirit of reverence, trust and worship." A word of further explanation is in order. Notice Paul says, "You have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear." The Jew under the law was all their lifetime in subjection to the bondage of sin and served God out of the fear of death (Hebrews 2:14–15). However, by the coming in of justification by faith through the Gospel, we no longer serve God in fear, but in the assurance that we are sons who may come to His throne of grace for help in time of need (Hebrews 4:14–16). The personal pronoun "whom" which appears in NKJV does not appear in the ASV ("whereby") and is a matter of interpretation based upon the assumption that "Spirit of adoption" is to be understood as Holy Spirit (see: interlinear for pronoun "whom" in vs. 15).
4. *"The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together."* Now, Paul gives the evidence of our relationship as sons of God. It is by this evidence that we know we are sons and have the assurance of the "spirit of adoption." The "Spirit Himself" refers here to the Holy Spirit (cf. 8:26) who bears witness with "our spirit" which is the human spirit (cf. 7:25; 8:4, 5). Notice that this is a concurrent witness of two "spirits" as opposed to a unilateral witness of one "Spirit" to another "spirit." To contend for the latter is to violate the

meaning of “with,” and make our spirits a subjective judge of our salvation (cf. John 5:31). It is this verse that is often used to establish the veracity of a “religious experience” as proof of salvation over the teaching of Scripture. However, consider that the Holy Spirit has revealed what one must do to be saved in the “law of the Spirit of life” and our spirits bear witness that we have obeyed the Gospel, thus, the two together confirm that we are the children of God (cf. I Peter 1:22; Titus 3:5; Ephesians 5:26; John 3:3, 5). Therefore, being children we have the assurance that we are heirs of God (cf. 4:9–16; Acts 26:18; Ephesians 1:11–14). Our inheritance is our ultimate glorification with Christ (8:23). However, this glorification is conditioned upon our continued faithfulness in whatever suffering comes upon us (II Corinthians 4:17; II Timothy 2:11–12).

5. *“For I consider the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us...we ourselves groan within ourselves eagerly awaiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body.”* At this point Paul considers the sufferings that are inflicted upon believers and gives three reasons for the believer to be encouraged in these sufferings: (a) the hope of redemption, (b) the intercession of the spirit, (c) the irrevocability of God’s eternal purpose. The “creation” that waits for the revealing of the Sons of God must be the church. All references to the “creation” in this passage are to intelligent beings. There is no comfort or sense in knowing that the lower creation expects the revealing of the sons of God. The whole human family neither expects nor desires this revelation. The church is often referred to as God’s creation (II Corinthians 5:17; Ephesians 2:15). The “whole creation” may well be the entire human family. It is indeed subject to death, but Paul does not ascribe to it any desire for or expectation of the revelation of the sons of God. In verse 23, Paul compares the apostles with their first fruits (Acts 1:4–5; 2:14–21, 38, 39; 11:15) as also being subject in everyway to the same sufferings and desires for the adoption, the redemption of the body (Philippians 1:21–23). Thus, Paul assures Christians that they all endure the same sufferings until the day of visitation (I Peter 2:11–12; Ephesians 1:14).
6. *“For we were saved in this hope...we eagerly await for it with perseverance...the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses...because He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God.”* The hope in which we were saved is that of “the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God” (8:20–21). “A person does not hope for what he sees—that is, for what he already has or experiences. If our redemption was already complete, if there was nothing yet to be desired or expected, there would be no hope” (Whiteside). Having this hope, we are stimulated on in patient endurance of suffering. If there were no hope, we would not endure or strive. “Hope anchors our soul to the eternal world.”
7. Verse twenty-six has been the source of no little difficulty in the explanation of this chapter. Various explanations have been offered none of which seem adequate:
 - a. The indwelling Spirit intercedes on behalf of believers by interpreting their prayers to God (Ephesians 6:18).
 - b. It is not the Holy Spirit making intercession, but the human spirit who groans in such a way that God only can interpret. (II Corinthians 5:4; Romans 8:23).
 - c. One must have the direct leadings of the spirit in order to pray as one ought (Luke 11:13).
 - d. Even though we reject these explanations, we believe that it is the Holy Spirit which Paul has in mind here making intercession. What may be known from other passages concerning prayer (Matthew 6:5–15; Luke 11:1–13; I John 5:14, 15; Matthew 21:22).
 - e. How the Holy Spirit intercedes:

- (1) Believers are led by the Spirit through the word (8:14).
 - (2) Whatever hopes, desires, yearnings, etc., these we have through the leading of the Holy Spirit.
 - (3) The “groanings” of 8:26 are the “groanings” of 8:23 (cf. II Corinthians 5:4). We would not have these except for the leading of the Spirit.
 - (4) Christ is the heart-searcher (Revelation 2:23) who knows the “mind of the Spirit.” This is not the Holy Spirit’s mind, but the spiritual mind (cf. 8:6 ASV “the mind of the Spirit is life and peace”).
 - (5) Christ intercedes for the children of God before the Throne of Heaven (I Timothy 2:5; Hebrews 4:14–16; 9:11–15).
8. *“And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose...foreknew...predestined...called...justified...glorified...if God is for us who can be against us?”* The “all things” of this verse must be limited by the context. Paul certainly does not mean that the works of devil, our lust, and infirmities, etc. “work together for good.” It seems that the “all things” include the ministry of the Spirit and the intercession of Christ on behalf of the saints in the sufferings of the present time. Only a mind prejudiced by the doctrine of eternal security would force from this verse the idea that no matter what a child of God does he cannot lose his salvation. Men often err on this passage by interpreting the “all things” as the vicissitudes of life which come upon us. It is “unjust” to suggest that such things are according to “His purpose.” We do not deny that God helps us in our trials and Christ is sympathetic. However, this is not the point of this verse. Thus, the “good” which is according to the purpose of God is the ultimate redemption of the saved which Christ and the Holy Spirit are accomplishing by their leading, helping, interceding and searching.
9. Now, Paul explains how God through Christ and the Holy Spirit are working good according to His purpose (8:29–30). *“For whom He foreknew,”* means that the called (the saved) of our context were “known before” by God. Now, the question is, in what sense were they foreknown? The word *PROEGNOO* could consistently be rendered “afore approved” (Psalm 1:6; Matthew 7:23; I Corinthians 8:3; II Timothy 2:19). Now, the passage teaches that certain ones and these only were approved by God before being called. What did God approve in them (Matthew 5:3, 6; Isaiah 55:1; Revelation 21:6, 22:17)? Thus, God has approved certain characters before they are actually called, but though approved they are not yet justified. “He also predestined” or better “foreordained” those whom He foreknew. The meaning of “foreordination” is an appointment or guarantee. The idea is that those who are of the approved character shall receive that which for which they are appointed (Acts 13:48). “These He also called.” Now, those of this character are appointed to eternal life and these are called. Now, this call is through the Gospel (Romans 10:14; II Thessalonians 2:14; Matthew 20:16). It is not a “call” by a direct operation of the Holy Spirit apart from the Gospel. “These He also justified.” Now, those justified, that is, the saved, are those who answer the call. Justification is not to those to whom the call has merely been issued (Acts 13:46). This is consistent with Paul’s beginning premise that the Gospel is God’s power to save all those who believe. “These He also glorified.” If we understand Paul to be viewing the whole process of redemption through Christ, we should be able to understand that this phrase refers to the reward of the just in the judgment (Romans 8:17; II Thessalonians 1:10; Acts 3:13).
10. At this point Paul draws a conclusion concerning the intercession of Christ and the Holy Spirit on behalf of the saved in the present sufferings by asking the question, *“If God be for us who can be against us?”* (8:31–39). Paul establishes the fact that God and Christ are for us from the gift of

Christ on the cross (Jno. 3:16). Who could doubt it when they understand it? Next, Paul establishes the impossibility of any justly charging the saved with sin. He uses two proofs. First, God has declared us just, who will contend with Him? Second, Christ is reigning at God's right hand as an eternal high priest, thus, who can contend that salvation is not secure for the elect. Therefore, who can overthrow the salvation of the elect? Paul answers with a series of rhetorical questions concerning the trials which we suffer. None of these things can separate us (e.g., Job). Of course, this conclusion is conditioned upon our being more than conquerors through or "in" Christ. Paul reaffirms that there is nothing outside of ourselves that can overthrow our salvation while we remain in Christ.

VI. The Gospel Is God's Power to Save the Jews for Everyone that Believes (Romans 9:1–11:36)

A. The Promises of God Have Not Failed Even Though Israel Has Stumbled (9:1–33)

1. Paul's concern for his fallen kinsmen, Israel (9:1–5)

- a. *"I tell the truth In Christ."* There is disagreement upon whether or not Paul is affirming here with an oath (cf., Whiteside). Whether or not this is an example of Christians taking an oath matters not, since other obvious examples can be found (II Corinthians 1:23; Galatians 1:20; Philippians 1:8). Calling God to witness a solemn truth is not what is forbidden in John 5:12 and Matthew 5:34 (See: Leviticus 19:12; Deuteronomy 6:13; 10:20). Paul does affirm that he has a great burden of sorrow in his heart on account of his kinsmen's rejection of Christ and the Gospel.
- b. *"For I could wish that I myself were accursed from Christ."* Paul does not wish himself accursed; seeing, first, such could not effect the Jew's salvation, and, second, if it could they would have no desire for it on account of their hatred of him, Christ and the Gospel being so complete. However, Paul does reveal the depth of his love for them in that he is willing to sacrifice his own soul on their behalf. Amazing indeed when one considers the hatred they had shown toward him.
- c. *"Who are Israelites..."* Paul appears to be identifying his kin for the sake of his Gentile audience; however, his identification is an expansion of the blessings to which he alluded earlier in 3:1–2. It seems his description is as much for the Jews by way of reminding them who they are as it is for the Gentiles.
 - (1) *"Israelites"*. This is the name the nation bore from Jacob who received it from God after having wrestled with an angel (Genesis 32:22–32). The name "Israel" means "Prince with God."
 - (2) *"To whom pertains the adoption."* The "adoption" under consideration here is the adoption of the nation as God's chosen people (Exodus 4:22; Deuteronomy 7:6–8). The adoption of them as a nation proceeded directly from God's covenant with Abraham (Galatians 3:15–18).
 - (3) *"The glory."* This is a reference to God's "presence" with the nation from the time they left Egypt till they came into the land of Canaan. God's glory was manifested in the pillar of cloud/fire (Exodus 13:21–22) and later filled the tabernacle (Exodus 40:34–38). It was regarded by the Jews as being represented between the two cherubim over the mercy seat above the Ark of the Covenant (I Samuel 4:31; 2 Kings 19:15).
 - (4) *"The Covenants."* Notice the plural of the word. God made several covenants with the Jews regarding not only Christ but also the land of Canaan, etc.

- (5) *"The giving of the Law."* Paul observes this as being in addition to the covenants. The law was 430 years after and does not annul the former covenants (Galatians 3:14–17).
- (6) *"The service of God."* Here Paul must have in mind the priesthood and their ministry, first, at the tabernacle, and later, in the temple.
- (7) *"The promises."* Acts 3:25–26 and 13:32–33 would indicate that this is the promise of salvation the forgiveness of sins (Jeremiah 31:31–33) to be realized under the New Covenant.
- (8) *"Of whom are the fathers."* Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, the twelve patriarchs, etc. The nation was descended of these patriarchs in fulfillment of the promise (cf., Luke 1:55, 72; Acts 3:25; 13:17).
- (9) *"From whom, according to the flesh, Christ came."* Here Paul affirms that Jesus was the fulfillment of the Messianic hope being both the seed of Abraham and the seed of David (Romans 1:3; Galatians 3:16; Matthew 1:1), of Him, Paul says, "Who is over all." This should immediately render any millennial calculations void. There is no future exaltation of Christ expected.

2. Paul answers the first anticipated objection concerning Israel's fall (9:6–13)

- a. *"It is not that the word of God has taken no effect."* Care must be used here lest we misunderstand Paul. The expression "word of God" does not refer to the Gospel or the Scriptures. It is obvious that Paul's Gospel had "not taken effect." Rather, Paul assures his audience that the promises and covenants were steadfast and sure (Hebrews 6:16–17). The object of this "word" was the redemption of "Israel." However, the rejection by God of the nation would seem to indicate that the "word" had not taken effect. But, Paul explains the apparent failure by affirming, "For they are not all Israel, that are of Israel." The statement introduces a concept of "Israel" that the Jews formerly did not hold. Paul indicates that citizenship in "Israel" is not dependent upon ancestral lineage. Therefore, the Scriptures teach that not all Jews are citizens of the kingdom of God and the fact that some Jews are lost does not mean that God has failed to keep his promise to them (see notes on Romans 3:3–60). The promise of God to Abraham was fulfilled in all those that believed (Romans 4:9–15; Galatians 3:26–29). Verse seven confirms this thought when Paul writes, "Neither, because they are Abraham's seed, are they all children." Fleshly descent is not the issue.
- b. At this point Paul introduces a line of reasoning which is difficult to understand. As proof of his contention that fleshly descent is not the basis upon which God promised to reckon Jews in the kingdom of God, Paul quotes Genesis 21:12, *"In Isaac shall your seed be called."* The quotation establishes that the children of God are after the likeness and similitude of Isaac in their "call" or "election." The basis of Isaac's choice as Abraham's heir was determined by promise, Genesis 18:14, "According to this season will I come ..." He calls this a "word of promise." Thus, Paul is establishing a parallel from Scripture and revealing that the call of spiritual Israel was in kind the same as the call of fleshly Israel a matter of promise and not descent (i.e., grace not works). In anticipation of a quibble, Paul proceeds to show that election is a matter of grace and not works or inherent merit by consideration of the choice of the nation which proceeded from Jacob over the one which proceeded from Esau. Whereas, it might conceivably be argued that Isaac was chosen due to the fact that of all of Abraham's offspring, he was legitimately the only son of Abraham, thus, he was chosen out of merit rather than promise. Yet, Paul also considers Jacob and Esau, twins, of whom it is said, "Rebekah also having conceived by one, even by our father Isaac." Thus, the legitimacy of sonship is not in question, neither the order of heirship

because Esau came first (Genesis 25:25–26). Yet, God chose the nation that came from Jacob before these facts were known and without consideration of them (Genesis 25: 23). Thus, God verified that election is not according to works but of grace (Romans 4:4).

- c. Calvinism, as is usual with any false doctrine, relies on the difficulties of this passage in order to establish the doctrine of particular redemption or unconditional election. Indeed, election is. Consider again the statement quoted by Paul which was delivered to Rebekah, “The elder shall serve the younger.” These words were not spoken of Jacob and Esau personally but rather of the two nations which would proceed from them. Notice the context of Genesis 25:23, “And Jehovah said unto her, two nations are in your womb, and two peoples shall be separated from your bowels: and the one people shall be stronger than the other people and the elder shall serve the younger.” Thus, the choice God made was of the nation Israel to fulfill his purpose not of Jacob personally unto eternal salvation. If one should argue that the election here is unto eternal salvation then all of the nation Israel was elect unto salvation. However, that involves one in an irreconcilable difference with Paul who has affirmed that “they are not all Israel that are of Israel.” Further proof that Paul is considering the selection of the nation without regard to works (Deuteronomy 7:1–7) is provided by the statement “Jacob I have loved, but Esau I hated.” This statement does not come from Genesis but from Malachi 1:2–4. This statement was made by the prophet centuries after the births of Jacob and Esau and the nations which came from them (cf. Ezekiel 35:3–9). The expression using “love” and “hate” is similar to that used by the Lord expressing a preference of one thing or person over another thing or person (Luke 14:26). The idea is simply that God preferred the nation Israel over the nation Edom.
 - d. Therefore, in this Paul argues not for unconditional election before the foundation of the world, but rather for an election that is according to grace received as promise not according to the flesh lest it be a matter of works and not faith.
3. Paul answers the second anticipated objection (9:14–18).
- a. “*Is there unrighteousness with God?*” Paul anticipates a charge against God that He has been unrighteous in His rejection of the nation Israel for salvation (cf. 3:5). This objection would proceed from the assumption that God was for some reason obligated to save Israel, but it has already been shown that His election of them was not to eternal salvation, but the use in His service to accomplish His eternal purpose in Christ.
 - b. Paul absolves God of any unrighteousness by quoting Exodus 33:19 establishing God’s mercy is a matter of grace and not of works. Neither the quotation nor Paul develops the question of the conditionality of God’s grace; however, that matter is dealt with in other passages both in Old and New Testaments (Proverbs 28:13; Isaiah 55:7; Exodus 20:5–6; Revelation 22:17).
 - c. We must not confuse the previous illustration paralleling the choice of the nation to our salvation and what has been said here. Indeed the former has illustrated God’s grace in choosing, but we are not to suppose as some erroneously do that God exercises that choice in regard to our salvation contrary to our free will.
 - d. The freeness of God’s grace is illustrated by the example of Pharaoh. The words “raise up” are defined by Liddell and Scott to mean “arouse, stir up.” The idea that God foreordained Pharaoh to stumble at His commands cannot be sustained from this definition or the context. Thus, “raise up” has nothing to do with an irresistible foreordination to rebel against God, but to the fact that God through His demands to let Israel go stirred Pharaoh up to rebellion. His heart became harder and harder with each succeeding plague. An

examination of Exodus 7–14 will reveal that every time it is said that Jehovah hardened Pharaoh's heart (9:12; 10:1, 20, 27; 14:8), it is also said that Pharaoh hardened his own heart (7:13, 22; 8:15, 19, 32; 9:7, 34). Furthermore, it is not said that God had hardened his heart until after the demonstrations of the first six plagues (9:15). In 7:3 God said I will do it and multiply signs. In response to the signs, Pharaoh hardened his own heart. Therefore, we conclude that God did it through the signs. The same sun that melts ice also hardens clay. There is no difference in the sun, but in that upon which it shines.

- e. Paul's point then is not to demonstrate Calvinistic "foreordination" and "predestination," but to show that mercy from God is dependent upon our trusting Him and rendering faithful obedience to Him. On this point J.W. Shepherd observes, "From this example is deduced the principle that no man can say, 'I am, whatever I may do, safe from the judgment of God, or such another, whatever he may do, is unworthy of the divine favor.' The Israelites thought that in no case they could be abandoned by God, and in no case could the Gentiles be received by Him. Paul here shows they are grievously mistaken." Therefore, Paul concluded God was not unrighteous in rejecting Israel seeing that election is by grace upon whatever conditions He establishes. Israel having failed, as did Pharaoh, to turn to God by His demonstrations is fit for destruction as was he.
4. Paul meets the third anticipated objection raised by the quibbling Jews (9:19–29).
- a. *"Why does He still find fault? For who had resisted His will?"* This reply surely reveals the Jews conceit and their hardness. The question suggests that if they by their own hardness are being hardened by God, then they must be doing God's will. Therefore, they cannot be subject to rejection because their disobedience is actually obedience.
 - b. Paul answers this contemptible logic by asserting the authority of God as Creator over the creature (9:20). Paul condemns their logic on the grounds that it makes God appear unfair and capricious. Pharaoh was what he was because he made himself so. Therefore, God used him as an object upon which to display His wrath. He had the right to do so and Pharaoh had no right to complain against Him. Likewise, Israel was what they were by their own spiritual adulteries. Having thus become a vessel fit for destruction they were in no place to complain against God and charge Him with unrighteousness in His treatment of them.
 - c. Verse 21 is not to be twisted and perverted beyond reasonable application in order to teach total depravity. Ample evidence has already been supplied to show that Pharaoh, as well as, all men exercise free will in connection with their election. To affirm total depravity from this verse, charges God with reprobating certain souls by His eternal decree to damnation. The verse says the "potter" (God) makes one vessel for "honor" and another for "dishonor." Therefore, the conclusion is inescapable, it is not the sins of man which damned his soul but God's eternal decree. Whoever can believe it? Whiteside observes correctly, "Paul is speaking of the use God makes of men and of nations; and whether God makes of a man or a nation a vessel unto honor or unto dishonor depends on the man or nation (see: 2 Timothy 2:20, 21). Therefore, whether we are vessels unto honor or dishonor is our own responsibility.
 - d. In verses 22 and 23 Paul exonerates God's methods in dealing with such individuals as we have described. The fact that God was and is longsuffering with the same in no wise suggests that He is either indifferent toward their sins or has accepted them in their sins. Rather, it is an overt expression of God's love and mercy and an indication that the greater glory redounds to God by the salvation of sinners than by their destruction.

- e. Verse 24 affirms that this is exactly the case with Paul and all who have been called by the Gospel, even the Gentiles. This fact he proves in quoting the OT prophets. Paul cites Hosea 2:23 which deals with the unfaithfulness of Israel and God's promise to choose a people for Himself even from among those not formerly known as His people. Paul next cites Isaiah 10:22–23 as proof that this chosen people of God did not include "all Israel" but only the remnant. Finally, Paul cites Isaiah 1:9 to show that Israel was a vessel fit for destruction just like Sodom and Gomorrah.
5. Paul now draws his conclusion concerning the then present condition of the nation Israel in relation to their salvation (9:30–33). He affirms that the Gentiles have attained righteousness not by the works of the law but by the hearing of the Gospel, i.e., faith. (9:30). Contrariwise, the Jews were seeking righteousness by the Law of Moses and failed to obtain it (9:31). Why? Because they sought it by works of the Law and not by faith. They rejected Christ (cf. 3:23–25). He was a stumbling block to them (1 Peter 2:6–8; 1 Corinthians 1:18–23; cf. Matthew 21:42).

B. The Jews Are Fallen Because They Have Rejected The Gospel; However, the Gentiles Have Believed Unto Righteousness (10:1–21).

1. Paul affirms the cause of Israel's rejection to be their zeal for their traditions above the Gospel (10:1–3). *"They have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge."* That is, Israel was ignorant of God's plan and purpose through the Law and n Christ. However, the basis of their ignorance was their own pride and prejudice (Acts 13:27). It was not that God had concealed it from them that they were ignorant. *"For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, they did not subject themselves to the righteousness of God."* Now, they were not ignorant of God's righteous character but of His plan for making men righteous (cf. Romans 1:16–17). And being ignorant of this plan, they set about by their traditions too establish their own way of being made righteous through Moses' Law, a thing which could not be done. Furthermore, by seeking to establish their own they were not in subjection to, that is, obedient to the Gospel. Thus, that which both they and Paul desired for them, salvation, they had forfeited. Therefore, they were in a lost condition.
2. Paul gives an explanation for their condemnation (10:4–11).
 - a. *"For Christ is the end of the law unto righteousness to everyone that believes."* Here Paul affirms Christ to be the means by which the purpose of the law, righteousness, is obtained and that upon the condition of faith. This is evident since Moses declared that "the man that does the righteousness which is of the law shall live thereby" (cf. Leviticus 18:5). Righteousness would have been of the law if there had been perfect obedience to the law. This the Jew failed to do. However, this end, righteousness, can be realized in Christ.
 - b. Verses 6–8 are somewhat difficult. They are a quotation from Deuteronomy 30:12–14 with Paul's parenthetical expressions added. The sense seems to be a contrast between what was said just above indicating righteousness was obtainable through the Law by perfect obedience and the obtainability of righteousness through Christ. That is, the work of Christ one time on the cross is sufficient to reconcile all men unto God if they will believe the Gospel. The fact that the Jews had previously stumbled at the Christ does not necessitate His being "brought down from heaven" or "brought up from the dead" again. Rather, the word of the Gospel by which the righteousness of faith comes is "nigh," not in proximity, but in ease of attainability. Whereas before, the Jew could not obtain righteousness, he could now do so by the obedience of faith.
 - c. The conditions upon which this righteousness is obtained are revealed as belief and confession. That which is believed is the Gospel, the preaching of a crucified, resurrected

and glorified Jesus. This is not just the fact of the resurrection, but the consequences of that resurrection (cf. Romans 8:30). The mouth confesses this belief. However, this is more than lip confession (Matthew 15:9); it is the declaration of the acceptance of the word which is now "In the heart." It is tantamount to a pledge of allegiance, a verbalized commitment to obedience.

- d. Belief unto righteousness and confession unto salvation have the same end in view. To be righteous is to be declared free of guilt before Law. Salvation is deliverance from the penalty for sin. Salvation is not one thing and righteousness something else. They are different aspects, viewpoints, of the same spiritual condition.
4. Paul affirms once more the universality of the offer of salvation upon the condition of faith, and this for the benefit of the Jews (10:11–13). Paul quotes Isaiah 28:16 In order to establish the scripturalness of his contentions. He makes it clear that the prophet was arguing that God was no respecter of persons toward the Gentiles regarding salvation (cf. Romans 2:8–11). There is a slight but significant difference between 10:11 and 10:13, "*Whosoever shall believe...whosoever shall call.*" The significance lies in the fact that "calling" necessitates an active obedience proceeding from faith (Acts 22:16). This verse will not admit the popular sectarian view of a passive faith (cf. James 2:14–26).
5. "*Calling on the name of the Lord*" is one of the most abused phrases in Scripture. Often used by Calvinists to establish the efficacy of the "altar call" or "mourner's bench," the verse has absolutely nothing to do with "praying through for salvation." This is demonstrated from: the example of Paul as related in Acts 8, 22, 26 as one who called upon the name of the Lord; an examination of the context which defines the phrase; and the testimony of other passages such as John 9 and Acts 8.
6. Finally in 10:14–21 Paul reveals that the salvation universally and freely offered in the Gospel if rejected leaves the disobedient, whether Jew or Gentile, without excuse.
 - a. "*How shall they call.*" God made the Gospel accessible to all men by sending forth his apostles and prophets with the message.
 - b. "*But they did not all hearken to the glad tidings.*" Here Paul establishes the guilt of the Jews. It was not that they did not hear but rather that they did not obey.
 - c. "*Faith comes by hearing.*" Two things are here evident the process of faith and the source of faith.
 - d. The next four verses (18–21) are a series of quotations which Paul introduces to establish the scripturalness of his condemnation of the Jews and their obvious hardness of heart toward the prophets.
 - (1) The first is quoted from Psalm 19:4. Paul's argument here is a parallel and is not intended to be set forth as a prophecy or a proof text of the claim. The fact that the Gospel was universally declared is undeniable.
 - (2) The next quote is Deuteronomy 32:21. Any Jew with a discerning heart should have understood the intention of Jehovah to turn away from Israel to the Gentiles (cf. Acts 13:44–48).
 - (3) Third, Paul quotes Isaiah 65:1–2 to establish God's intention to embrace the Gentiles through the Gospel and to reject Israel on account of disobedience (cf. I Thessalonians 2:13–16; Acts 13:38–52).

C. Though Israel Has Stumbled at Christ They Still May Obtain Mercy (11:1–36)

1. *"Has God cast away his people? Certainly not!"* Paul proves that God has not cast away, irrevocably condemned, the nation Israel. In the first place Paul was a Jew and a saved person (v. 1). In the second place, the Scriptures affirm that when Israel had rebelled in times past God preserved a remnant (v. 2; cf., I Kings 19:10–18). "Even so then, at this present time there is a remnant according to the election of grace" (cf., Micah 4:6–8; Zephaniah 2:9; Isaiah 1:9; Ezekiel 14:21–23; Joel 2:32; Zechariah 8:9–13).
 - a. *"There is a remnant according to the election of grace."* This remnant are those whom God "fore knew" (see notes on 8:29). In chapter 9 Paul explained that election was not on the basis of merit but on the basis of grace or promise (9:8). The selection of the nation Israel for the accomplishment of God's purpose was on account of the promise to Abraham (Deuteronomy 7:6–11). The election of the nation by grace parallels the election of the remnant by grace (Rom. 9:11; cf. Galatians 3:16).
 - b. *"If by grace, then it is no longer of works; otherwise grace is no longer grace. But if it is of works, it is no longer grace; otherwise work is no longer work."* This is a simple restatement of Paul's argument in 4:1–8. The principle expressed here is that grace and "works" are mutually exclusive of one another. Salvation cannot be of grace, if it is of works. However, the Calvinist errs by not recognizing a distinction between works of merit and works of faith (James 2:14–26).
2. *"What then? Israel has not obtained what it seeks."* That which the nation sought was that which the elect found—righteousness (9:31; 8:29, 30). The elect of 11:7 are the remnant of 11:5; therefore, the "rest," are those among the Jews who did not believe. Paul says God hardened them. In proof of this he quotes Isaiah 29:10; Deuteronomy 29:3–4 and Psalm 69:23, 24. He hardened Israel by the same means he hardened Pharaoh (cf. 9:14–18, 30–33). That is, the means God employed by which Israel could obtain righteousness, a crucified Christ, was that which Israel was unwilling to accept; therefore, rather than yield, they were hardened.
3. *"Have they stumbled that they should fall? Certainly not!"* The question is, "Can Israel be saved?" The answer is, "Yes!" (11:26). The blessing of Israel's rejection is that the Gospel has gone to the Gentiles (11:11–12). Paul reasons that if their defeat is a blessing then surely their fulness would be a greater blessing (11:12–15). However, to what does he refer? It is assumed that the preservation and salvation of the entire nation is what in view; but that is contrary to the context (11:5, 7, 9–10). Paul does not have in view the re-gathering of Israel, but their destruction (cf. Matthew 24; Luke 21:20; Mark 13:14). By their removal as a nation one of the greatest hindering causes to the advancement of Christianity would be removed (I Thessalonians 2:16).
4. Paul now warns the Gentiles against being lifted up with pride on account of Israel's fall. This he does in the figure of the olive tree (11:16–24; Jeremiah 11:14–16).
 - a. *"For if the first fruit (the remnant of the elect) is holy, the lump (the rest, Israel) is also holy; and if the root (the faithful fathers) is holy, so are the branches (Israel)."* The branches broken off are the Jews who rejected Christ. The wild olive branches grafted in are the believing Gentiles. The root and fatness of the olive tree seem to be those who walked in the faith of our father Abraham (Romans 4:1, 13–16).
 - b. *"Branches were broken off that I might be grafted in."* Yes, on account of their unbelief and your belief. Therefore, fear; He may not spare you either (11:19–22).
 - c. *"If they do not continue in unbelief, will be grafted in"* (11:23–25). Why? They shall be grafted in because God is able to do it. It is "natural" (according to His purpose) for Israel to be saved

(cf. Galatians 3:24, 25). Their hardening has resulted in the Gentiles' salvation to the end that they might be provoked to jealousy.

5. *"And so all Israel will be saved."* Is this an affirmation that Israel has been unconditionally elected to salvation and that as a nation? NO! The verse says, "And so," that is, after this manner (Romans 11:23). The "all" that will be saved are the all that believe. This is proven by the OT quotes Paul submits (Psalm 14:7; Isaiah 59:20, 21; 27:9). Thus, Paul concludes that the Jews by virtue of their rejecting the Gospels have declared their continued enmity toward the Gentiles; however, they are still beloved of God whose purpose is their salvation (11:28, 29).
6. Paul extols the abundance of God's grace and mercy (11:30–36). Paul reiterates the principle of Romans 2:11 in 11:30, 31. His statement in Romans 11:32 is parallel to Romans 3:23 and Galatians 3:22. The closing verses of chapter 11 praise God for His wisdom in accomplishing the salvation of the race. The quotations are from Isaiah 40:13; Jeremiah 23:18; Job 36:22; 41:11. Verse 36 is a doxology of praise.

VII. The Practical Challenges Of Serving God (Romans 12:1–15:13)

A. All Christians Are To Be Transformed in Life (12:1–21)

1. *"I beseech you therefore brethren by the mercies of God that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God which is your reasonable service...do not be conformed...be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove...will of God."* "The mercies of God" is the salvation of which Paul has been writing throughout this entire letter. The manifold grace of God toward us in Christ should be a powerful inducement to render unto God the service which he desires. "Present your bodies a living sacrifice." This is not in contrast to OT sacrifices which were themselves alive at presentation, but our bodies as being alive to righteousness (I Corinthians 6:19, 20; Romans 6:13, 19; 8:11). That which is "Holy" is that which is devoted or set apart. Our bodies are set apart for the worship and service of God. We cannot serve God otherwise. "Reasonable service" or better following the ASV "spiritual service" meaning it is by this means the spirit of man ministers or serves, of course this service is that of the spiritual mind (Romans 8:5–6, 27). However, Lipscomb and Lard make a convincing argument that the service is reasonable since it proceeds from the salvation wrought by Christ. "Do not be conformed to this world" (1 Peter 1:14, 15; 4:1–3). "Be transformed." This Greek word is rendered "transfigured" in Matthew 17:2; Luke 9:2. This transformation is accomplished by the renewing of the mind (cf. II Corinthians 4:16). This of course refers to the spiritual of Romans 8. 7. "That you may prove." Follow Lard here, "that you may judge of what God's will is—of what is good, and well-pleasing, and perfect." Thus, our minds are renewed that we might discern from God's will those things which are right and acceptable unto Him.
2. At this point Paul introduces the attributes of the transformed life he has enjoined upon us.
 - a. *"Not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly."* (I Corinthians 4:6–8; Proverbs 10:17; 14:21; 15:10, 32; 27:2; Matthew 23:11, 12; Romans 11:25; 12:16; I Corinthians 10:12; II Corinthians 10:12; Philippians 2:3; I Timothy 6:17; II Timothy 3:2, 4; James 4:6).
 - b. *"So we being many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another"* The individual properly considers himself and his place in the body doing his part and all others do their part thus edifying the body (Ephesians 4:11–16). The "measure of faith" is the standard by which we judge ourselves in the relationship with other believers. This is a practical application of the principle of Romans 2:11.

- c. *"Serving the Lord."* This expression captures the many general duties Paul includes here. All these things characterize our continual service to God.
 - (1) Love (I Corinthians 13; I John 3:16–18)
 - (2) Abhor what is evil (Amos 5:15; Psalm 119:104)
 - (3) Cling to what is good (I Thessalonians 5:22; Titus 2:14).
 - (4) Brotherly love (affection, II Peter 1:7)
 - (5) Give preference to one another seeking opportunities to confer honor upon another (I Corinthians 12:23–24).
 - (6) Not lagging in diligence (not indifferent, II Corinthians 7:11)
 - (7) Fervent in Spirit (seething, James 5:16; I Peter 4:8)
- d. *"Patient in tribulation."* The next group of instructions is intended to direct the transformed life through trials.
 - 1. Rejoicing in hope (Romans 5:2; Hebrews 3:6).
 - 2. Patient (endurance, Romans 5:3–4; 8:25; Hebrews 6:12)
 - 3. Steadfast in prayer (not anxious, cf. Romans 13:6 "continually," Colossians 4:2)
 - 4. Distributing (benevolent; I Timothy 6:18; Romans 15:27; Philippians 4:15)
 - 5. Hospitable (entertain strangers, Hebrews 13:1–2; I Peter 4:9; Titus 1:8)
 - 6. Blessing (I Corinthians 4:12; I Peter 3:9)
 - 7. Compassionate (I Peter 3:8; Jude 22; Matthew 9:36; 14:14).
- e. *"Do not set your mind on high things."* Here Paul warns against seeking after or being conceited in the prominent stations in life generally afforded by riches (cf. I Timothy 6:17–19; James 2:1–13).
- f. *"Be at peace with all men."* Paul instructs us in how to live a tranquil life.
 - 1. Return not evil for evil (Matthew 7:12; I Peter 2:23;)
 - 2. Take thought for things honorable (II Corinthians 8:18–21; Hebrews 13:18).
 - 3. Do not avenge yourselves (Matthew 5:38–42; Luke 6:27–31).
 - 4. Give place to wrath ("stand aside for" or "withdraw from," cf. Deuteronomy 32:35; Ephesians 4:26, 31; Matthew 5:22; Colossians 3:8)
 - 5. Return good for evil (Luke 6:31–38; Matthew 5:44–45; cf. Romans 3:8).

B. All Christians Are To Be Subject To Civil Government

- 1. The origin of civil government (13:1)
 - a. *"There is no authority except from God."* Paul recognizes God as having all authority (Psalm 22:28; Dan 2:2—21, 37; 4:17). Whatever authority governments have over men they derive from God (Acts 17:24–28; John 19:11; Daniel 5:18–21).
 - b. *"And the authorities that exist are appointed by God."* Some have understood this to mean that government has some sort of "divine right." The verse only affirms that powers exist because God allows them to stand (cf. Jeremiah 18:6–10; 25:12–17; Daniel 4:17). The

existence of a government is not a divine endorsement either of the governmental form or the men in office.

- c. *"Therefore whoever resists the authority resists the ordinance of God."* Thus, anarchy and revolution are contrary to God's purpose for men on the earth. To oppose government, that is, to be a law breaker is to violate God's law. This is not talking about moral law as "religious" law because government is not to legislate either morals or religion contrary to divine law (Acts 5:29). Rather, civil government is authorized to legislate to preserve order, tranquility, protect citizens and uphold morals. The believer is commanded to submit to these ordinances and pay taxes to support the government (Titus 3:1; I Peter 2:13–15).

2. The function of civil government (13:4).

- a. *"Rulers are not a terror to good works."* Civil government is in place not to terrorize those who do well. Such is counter-productive to the ends and aims of governments. Governments that desire to stand will encourage and praise thrift and productivity; support the family unit, make laws consistent with good morals, solicit benevolence and promote religion.
- b. *"For he is God's minister."* In chapter twelve Christians are admonished not to avenge themselves (12:19–21). Here, we have identified one agent whom God uses to execute justice upon the wicked. This verse empowers civil government with the power to punish evil men. This includes the death penalty which is consistent with all the teaching of Scripture (Genesis 8:5, 6; Exodus 21:12, 14, 29; Leviticus 24:17; Numbers 35:16–19; 30–31; Deuteronomy 17:6; 19:11–13; 27:24, 25).

c. Objections to capital punishment:

- (1) It violates the "golden rule"
- (2) The Bible says, "Thou shalt not kill."
- (3) It is contrary to the beatitude, "Blessed are the merciful for they shall obtain mercy."
- (4) The passages used to establish authority for capital punishment are from the Old Testament and we are living under the New Testament.
- (5) Under the Old Testament capital punishment was determined by God and not fallible men.

3. The Christian's Obligations to Civil Government:

- a. *"You must be subject."* The first reason given for being subject is fear. Paul simply warns that evil doers will be punished, therefore, the best way to escape punishment is not to get in trouble. (cf. Ecclesiastes 8:11). The second is for consciences' sake, i.e., our greater obligation to God who has set these powers in authority over us compels us to be in subjection (I Peter 2:13–15).
- b. *"You also pay taxes."* (cf. Matthew 22:17–21; Luke 20:25).
- c. *"Render therefore to all there due"* (Titus 3:1; I Peter 2:13–17).

C. All Christians Are to Love Each Other (13:8–10).

1. The obligation to love (13:8).

- a. *"Owe no one anything except to love one another"* The obligation or debt, OPHEILO, of love is contrasted with that which is due, OPHEILE, in verse seven. Paul's point is the only outstanding obligation a believer has is that of love. He may fulfill his obligation to civil

government by paying tax and keeping law, but he has never satisfied the requirements of love.

- b. This verse is often misapplied in application to indebtedness. The Bible certainly addresses that issue. However, I find no prohibition against debts which we service according to the terms of our pledge.
 - c. Prudent warnings and suggestions of restraint are issued even though there is no prohibition (Proverbs 11:15; 22:7, 26–27).
2. Love is the basis and motivation for keeping God's Law (13:9)
- a. *"He who loves another has fulfilled the law."* This verse suggests to us not a substitute for law but the basis and motivation for keeping God's law. God is love (1 John 4:7, 8), that is, every act of God proceeds from His eternal love nature. His laws and commandments are expressions of and consistent with that nature. Adultery is wrong because it is contrary to love. Murder is wrong because it is contrary to love; theft is wrong because it is contrary to love. Therefore, those who truly love as God loves have fulfilled the law, that is, have kept it. They have not fulfilled it by "loving" and at the same time being disobedient (1 John 4:20–5:5).
 - b. *"For the commandments...are all summed up in this saying (namely, 'you shall love your neighbor as yourselves')."* See the following: Leviticus 19:17, 18; Matthew 19:16–22; 22:34–40; Mark 12:28–34; Luke 10:25–37).

3. The Practical expression of law (13:19).

- a. *"Love does no harm to a neighbor."* The essence of God's law was to teach love. Furthermore, it removed love from the realm of the theoretical and abstract to that of the practical and concrete. It is important to note that here love is active, doing something. Here, it is stated negatively. Paul spoke of it positively in 1 Corinthians 13:1–8. John in 1 John 3: 14–18.
- b. *"Therefore love is the fulfillment of the law."* Here Paul reaffirms that law is fulfilled by doing the law. Sin cannot be justified in the name of love (cf. 1 Corinthians 13:1–8).

D. All Christians Are To Be Watchful (13:11–14)

1. The season in which to be watchful.

- a. *"Knowing the time."* This evidently refers to the then present time and their knowledge of its wickedness. It is implied that Christians ought to be alert to the perversity of their own generation.
- b. *"Now it is high-time to awake out of sleep."* And knowing the condition of our age, it will be evident that now is the time to be awake or watchful (1 Peter 5:1–8; James 4:7; 1:12–15; 1 Corinthians 16:13). Too often Christians are uninformed about the dangers all about them, they "sleep" and are of the "night."
- c. *"For now..."* Simply, it is later than you think. We are each one closer to eternity than we were yesterday (1 Thessalonians 5:1–10).

2. The reason for being watchful.

- a. *"For now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed."* Paul has in mind here our ultimate redemption from the grave—the certainty of which is nearer every day (1 Peter 1:4–5; 1 Corinthians 15:52; 1 Thessalonians 4:17).

- b. *"The night is far spent and the day is at hand"* (cf. Matthew 25, et.al.). Not as Whiteside suggests complete revelation, but the coming of Christ and the day of deliverance when the "Daystar" dawns.
- 3. The preparation necessary for the watchful.
 - a. *"Therefore cast off the works of darkness"* (Ephesians 5:11; II Corinthians 6:14; I Thessalonians 5:4-5)
 - b. *"Put on the armor of light"* (II Corinthians 6:7; Ephesians 6:11ff; I Thessalonians 5:8).
 - c. *"Walk properly"* (Ephesians 5:15-16; Galatians 5:16, 25; Romans 8:1-4).
 - d. *"Put on the Lord Jesus Christ"* (Galatians 4:19; II Corinthians 11:2; I John 2:6).
 - e. *"Make not provision for the flesh"* (Galatians 5:24; Matthew 6:8, 33; Philippians 4:19; Luke 12:30-31).

E. All Christians Are to Uphold Their Weaker Brethren (Romans 14:1-15:14).

- 1. *"Let us not judge one another"* (14:1-13).
 - a. In these verses, Paul is considering what we might call "Christian liberty." By this term we mean those things which are authorized or allowed by God but not required. Paul does not have under consideration those things which are matters of doctrine or faith. We cannot apply the principles of this passage to anything other than that to which it is applied here.
 - 2. Paul uses the word "faith" in a special sense in this context. Sometimes "faith" denotes the Gospel (Jude 3). Sometimes "faith" denotes one's belief of the Gospel (Romans 1:16, 17). Here it denotes one's personal conviction regarding the areas of liberty (cf. 14:1, 5, 23).
 - a. There were some in the church at Rome who either because of their former connection with Judaism or paganism would not eat certain meats. This is certainly understandable of the devout Jew, who all his lifetime regarded many meats as "unclean" (Leviticus 11; cf. I Corinthians 6, 8, 10).
 - b. The death of Christ abrogated the Law of Moses and granted the Jew liberty from the former restrictions. Yet, some were uncomfortable and chose rather to continue their observance of the law on this point and others. They violated no law or commandment by not accepting their liberty (cf. Acts 21:24).
 - 3. The problem in the church was that those who were enjoying their liberty were being "judged" by those who were not and vice versa. Thus, strife was introduced into the body (14:3). Paul says concerning a man and his liberty, *"God has received him,"* that is, whether he eats or not is a matter of no consequence to God. He has been accepted.. That being the case, we cannot reject him (Acts 9:26). This point is illustrated from the case of a servant and his master (14:4). What is important in this diversity of opinion regarding our liberties is that each one is doing what he is convicted is right. We must not offend and weaken the conscience (14:23). Whether one eats or not and observes or not is in order to please the Lord (14:6). We do not live to please ourselves.
 - 4. Romans 14:7 has not been given enough consideration by those who insist on their liberties. They should ask, "Who am I seeking to please. Most often the truthful answer would be "self." What we do, we must do for the Lord. To do otherwise is to what is right a sin (14:8). Romans 14:9 states how this relationship between the believer and the Lord was established.

5. Romans 14:10–12 is introduced in order to remind those who are judging their brethren that this was a matter of individual accountability. Acceptance before God in matters of liberty is between the disciple and the Lord. In the judgment the law of God will not condemn such a man. It is in this sense God is able to make him stand. However, as observed above, this principle does not apply in those matters where God has by precept, example or implication revealed His will. These are not matters which are indifferent to God.
6. Let us illustrate the difference.
 - (1) The matter of fasting (Matthew 6:16–18; I Corinthians 7:5) is one of indifference.
 - (2) The first day of the week observance of the Lord's supper (Acts 20:7) is a matter of faith.
 - (3) The instrument of music is not a matter of indifference, God has authorized only one kind of music.
 - (4) The wearing of certain kinds of apparel.
 - (5) The observance or non-observance of certain days.
- b. *"Therefore let us pursue the things which make for peace and the things by which one may edify another"* (14:13b–23).
 1. It is in these verses that Paul tells us how to maintain peace and unity in the local church where there will inevitably be a diversity of views on these matters of liberty. Paul assigns the burden of responsibility to him who has "faith," that is, conviction regarding the liberty. The responsibility involves the one who has faith in a loving use of his rights. We must never engage in our liberty to the point we cause others to sin by violating their own conscience (I Corinthians 8:1–13).
 2. This principle is illustrated in the matter of eating meat (14:14–18). Meat is a matter of indifference (Acts 10). "Grieving" a brother is to "destroy" him. This would be to cause him to eat without faith, or to eat ignorantly (I Corinthians 10), or to eat in spite of conscience (pressure). This makes an otherwise good thing evil.
 3. If brethren would behave in this fashion the church would experience the blessings of unity, righteousness, peace and joy (14:17, 18).
 4. The advice to them is that they pursue things which make for peace and edify. Brethren need to learn that much trouble can be averted by this wise policy. To act otherwise is to be selfish and do harm to the body. The fact that a thing may be my liberty is no reason for my demanding it (14:21). It may be best for me to have my faith regarding it to myself. This loving use of my liberties prevents my own condemnation on account of self-seeking.
 5. There is in this chapter a great emphasis on personal faith regarding our every action. This principle is stressed in order to preserve our conscience. To disregard this principle is sin itself. We wound our conscience, weaken it. Romans 14:23 is not to be construed to apply to the faith of Jude 3.
- c. *"Therefore, receive ye one another"* (15:1–15).
 1. Paul's final exhortation concerning matters of liberty urges the saints to receive one another, i.e., to accept each other as brothers in Christ.

2. In order to facilitate this desire Paul enjoins the principle of submission upon us using Christ as an example (15:3). Paul quotes Psalm 69:9 and applies it to Jesus. this passage affirms that Christ suffered for us for the remission of our sins (cf. Isaiah 53:4–5, 10–11; I Peter 3:18). Romans 15:4 is parenthetical; it does not enhance Paul’s argument concerning “receive one another.” Rather, it is the justification for the quotation from the Psalm. Here is an example of a general principle specifically applied. The lesson to be learned here is that the possession of a liberty is not justification for its exercise. The mature child of God forgoes what he may do in order to edify his brother.
3. Paul prays that they will emulate Christ by exercising the principle of submission making it possible to receive one another.
4. Paul digresses in 15:8–13 to affirm that Christ has indeed received us, that is, Jew and Gentile in keeping with Old Testament promise and prophecy. Jesus is the realization of the Abrahamic covenant (Genesis 12:1–3; 22:15–18; 26:3, 4; 28:13, 14; cf. Galatians 3:16; Acts 3:25–26; 13:32–34). By such he became a minister through the circumcision for or in behalf of the truth of God. This truth being, “the Gospel is God’s power to save everyone who believes.” That the Gentiles are accepted is affirmed in Psalm 78:49; II Samuel 22:50; Deuteronomy 32:43; Psalm 117:1 and Isaiah 11:10.
5. Romans 15:13 is an interesting benediction, Notice what it affirms.
 - a. Our hope is in God.
 - b. Joy and peace are ours through believing.
 - c. We are able to abound through hope.
 - d. Our abounding in these things is through the power of the Holy Spirit.
 - (1) The power of the Holy Spirit made all of this possible.
 - (b) It is the Spirit that revealed all we know about God, Christ and the plan of salvation. It is his power that put the power in the Gospel (Hebrews 4:12; II Timothy 3:15–17). And, that same Spirit confirmed all that He revealed by His power in the Apostles and prophets with miracles and signs following (Hebrews 2:3–4; Mark 16:17–20).

Part III: The Epilogue (15:15–16:27)

I. Paul’s Future Plans (15:14–33)

A. Paul’s Ministry (15:14–22)

1. Paul explains the design of this epistle in the context of his ministry to the Gentiles (15:14–16).
 - a. He is confident they have knowledge of the truths he affirmed but justifies their inclusion as being intended to remind (v. 15, cf. II Peter 1:13).
 - b. Paul’s reaffirms that he is an Apostle of Christ to the Gentiles in particular (Romans 11:13; I Timothy 2:7; II Timothy 1:11; cf. Acts 26:13–23).
 - c. His remarks were obviously intended to confirm them in the faith, discourage their being entangled with Judaism and dissuade any Judaizers in an attempt to infiltrate the church.

He is also laying the ground for their fellowship in the Gospel with him in his prospective work in Spain (15:24).

- d. Romans 15:16 affirms ministering the Gospel as the means by which sanctification of the Spirit is accomplished (II Thessalonians 2:13–14; I Peter 1:2; I Corinthians 6:11; Hebrews 10:29).
2. Paul boasts (15:17–19a) of what God accomplished through him by preaching the Gospel with signs following (I Corinthians 1:29–31; II Corinthians 10:17; 11:16–12:12; Galatians 6:14, cf. Romans 4:2; 5:3). Miracles were attendant with Paul on his journeys (Acts 13:6; 14:9; 16:18) being proof of his apostleship and the authority of the Gospel he preached (II Corinthians 12:12).
3. Paul describes the geographical extent of his ministry to justify his plans for coming to Rome in order to solicit their fellowship in Spain (15:19b–22).
 - a. His travels extended from Jerusalem (Acts 9:26–29) to Illyricum (Acts 20:2).
 - (1) Illyricum is in the northeastern portion of the Balkan Peninsula near Albania.
 - (2) Its exact boundaries are unknown, but Paul sent Titus there to complete the work he had begun (II Timothy 4:10).
 - b. Paul preached where other men had not gone (15:20).
 - (1) Paul did not enter new fields for the sake of some desire for independence, influence or desire to impress.
 - (2) Paul went where there was the greatest probability of a harvest. Sometimes by revelation (Acts 13:1–4; 16:6–10), sometimes by wise counsel (Acts 18:19–21).
 - c. Paul viewed his ministry as a fulfillment of OT prophecy (15:21).
 - (1) Not that Paul was specifically mentioned in OT prophecy, but that it was always the Divine Intent, as revealed by the prophets, that the Gentiles should have the Gospel preached to them (Isaiah 52:15).
 - (2) If that were the case, then Paul needed to be ever going further and further into the realm of those that had not yet heard. Paul had a divinely guided plan of evangelism that was an ever widening circle around Jerusalem (Acts 1:8; Colossians 1:5–6, 23; cf. Mark 16:15–16).
 - d. Paul's involvement in the work of evangelism going where Christ had not yet been named had hindered him from coming to Rome—to have done so to the neglect of what he had been doing would have been to build on another man's foundation.

B. Paul's Plan to Carry the Gospel to Spain after His Mission to Jerusalem (15:23–24).

1. Paul has exhausted his prospects in Asia, Macedonia and Greece and turns westward (15:23).
 - a. Paul cannot go east or south since others are there (Acts 2:10; 8:1; 11:20; 15:2; Galatians 2:1–9; I Peter 5:13).
 - b. Paul does not intend to stay in Rome (15:24a).
2. Paul is expressing his desire to implement the next phase of his plan for “preaching Christ” where He has not been named—Iberia or Spain.
 - a. Iberia is the western most region of the Roman empire.

- b. This is the last region of the civilized world yet in need of preaching, it is the logical next step.

C. Paul's Assurances Concerning His Visit and a Solicitation of Their Prayers for the Success of His Mission to Jerusalem (15:25–33).

1. *"But now I go unto Jerusalem."* This sets the time of writing at the end of the third journey between the time of picking up the collection at Corinth and arriving in Rome. Paul must have written this letter from Corinth during the three months he stayed there at the end of the third journey (Acts 20:1–3). [An excellent and brief account of the facts establishing this conclusion is given in *The New Unger's Bible Dictionary*.]
2. *"A certain contribution."* This is the contribution which the churches of Macedonia and Achaia made at the request of the Apostle for the poor saints in Jerusalem (see: I Corinthians 16:1–7; II Corinthians 8 and 9; Acts 24:17; Galatians 2:10).
3. *"Their debtors they are."* Paul to the very end is reminding the Jews that they are the chosen of God, but not unconditionally chosen, that they are the conduit of salvation through the promise and not through the Law. The Gentiles surely received the benefit of salvation through the Jews. The promise of salvation was to Abraham and his posterity the Jewish nation (Genesis 12:1–4; et. al.). The Christ was born of that nation (Galatians 4:1–4). The first church was an all Jewish church, and it was these Jews that were persecuted and scattered taking the Gospel to the world (Acts 8:1–4; 11:19–21). It was a Jew that preached the first Gospel sermon to a Gentile (Acts 10–11) and it was Jews that resisted the influence of an apostate element to continue the ministry unto Jews (Acts 15:1–35). It was Jews that had the Gospel into the world and impoverished themselves in order to do it. Yes, the very least the Gentiles could do was help those Jews that believed keep body and soul together. (On debtor see: Romans 1:14; Galatians 5:3; Matthew 6:12).
4. *"This fruit."* Paul refers to the contribution as "the fruit" of the influence of the Gospel among the Gentiles. That which comes as the result of the influence of another may properly be called fruit (John 15:4; I Corinthians 9:7; Acts 2:30; cf. Romans 1:13; 6:21–22; 7:4–5; Galatians 5:22; Ephesians 5:9; Hebrews 12:11). Paul often refers to the work that believers do as fruit (Colossians 1:6; Philippians 4:17; Hebrews 13:15).
5. *"The fulness of the blessing of the Gospel of Christ."* The fulness of the blessings of the Godhead is found in Jesus Christ (Colossians 1:19; 2:9). These blessings are realized by those who have been added to the church (Ephesians 1:22–23). Believers are filled with that fulness when they know the love of Christ (Ephesians 3:19). Paul is assuring the saints at Rome that his expectation is to come to them in the love of Christ for their good. Whiteside suggests that he may be referring to the bringing of spiritual gifts (Romans 1:11; cf. I Corinthians 13:1–13). I think he may be reassuring them that he is not coming as he had found it necessary to come to Corinth (cf. II Corinthians 13:1–10).
6. *"Strive together with me in your prayers...that I may be delivered from them that do not believe in Judea."* Paul is asking for prayers for his own safety (II Thessalonians 3:1–2; II Corinthians 11:26). This trip to Jerusalem proved to be a perilous one for Paul (Acts 21:27–32; 22:22–30; 23:16–24; 24:22–27; 27:9–44; 28:1–5). He may here be referring to the plot to assassinate him on the way (Acts 20:3).
7. *"And that my service which I have for Jerusalem may be accepted of the saints."* Paul's greatest fear was that the Jewish saints would reject the offering of the Gentiles. Had this happened there would have been a rift in the church that would have been nigh to impossible to repair. The rejection of the offering would signal to Paul that all he had labored and prayed for would not

be accomplished (Romans 10:1; 11:5). The Judaizers had worked unrelentingly to destroy Paul's influence and lead the Jewish saints to reject their Gentile brothers. Fortunately, Paul's prayers were answered favorably (Acts 20:17–26; cf. 24:17).

- h. *"That I may come unto with joy...and...be refreshed."* When Paul completed this mission he was looking forward to a pleasant visit with the Roman saints and new opportunities to the west (cf. Romans 15:28). After trials and persecutions it is a wonderful thing to be cared for by one's brethren (Proverbs 27:9, 17, 19). Being with the saints is encouraging (Philemon 7, 20; I Corinthians 16:18; II Corinthians 7:13; II Timothy 1:16). Sadly, Paul did not get to come to Rome in the joy of his triumph at Jerusalem.

II. Paul's Commendations and Personal Greetings (16:1–16)

A. The Commendation of Phebe (16:1–2)

1. This unknown sister was on her way to Rome on business. She probably carried this letter to the church there.
2. Though unknown, she was introduced and Paul expected the church to receive her and help her.
3. *"Succourer of many."* She evidently was another Lydia (Acts 16:14–15) and the female version of Gaius (Romans 16:23) and Philemon.

B. Greetings Addressed to Numerous Saints then Present at Rome, Some of Whom Are Named Elsewhere in Scripture (16:3–16)

1. *Priscilla and Aquila* (16:3–5)
 - a. Their story (Acts 18:1–6; 18–28)
 - b. On several occasions Paul says they risked their life for him. Probably while in Asia at Ephesus (Acts 19:23–41).
 - c. Their presence in Rome may well have been as a result of the threats against them and a part of Paul's overall plan to evangelize Western Europe.
2. *Epaenetus* (16:5)
 - a. One of the first converts in Greece.
 - b. Very likely of the household of Stephanas (I Corinthians 1:16; 16:15–17).
 - c. His family was "addicted" to the work of spreading the Gospel, which may account for his presence in Rome as well. He was likely there waiting on Paul to begin the work in Western Europe.
3. Paul's kinsmen (16:7, 11)
 - a. *Andronicus and Junia* were converted before Paul and close associates of the Apostles.
 - b. *Herodian* about whom nothing else is known.
4. *Rufus* (16:13)
 - a. *"His mother and mine,"* it is doubtful that this was Paul's brother in the flesh (Matthew 12:48–52; Luke 8:21; Mark 3:33–34).
 - b. He may have been the son of Simon of Cyrene (Mark 15:21).
 - c. He was certainly dear to Paul (cf. Philemon 16).

5. Phrases of note in this section:

- a. *"The church that is in their house."* This is a distributive use of the word "church" (cf. Acts 8:3; I Corinthians 16:19; Colossians 4:15; Philemon 2). Not the concept of the modern "house church." However, some saints did host an assembly in their homes (Romans 16:213). Rather this is a metonymy, the whole for the part, signifying those Christians in their household.
- b. *"Salute one another with an holy kiss."* A greeting of the time (I Corinthians 16:20; II Corinthians 13:12; I Thessalonians 5:26). The character of the greeting is what was "holy". Paul expected the saints to demonstrate in their greeting what they felt in their hearts for one another (Romans 12:9–10; Hebrews 13:1; I Thessalonians 4:9).

C. Paul's Final Word of Warning (16:17–20)

- 1. *"Mark them..."* The word SKOPEO means "to look, mark, consider, take heed" (Luke 11:35; II Corinthians 4:18; Galatians 6:1; Philippians 2:4; 3:17). It is the same idea as in II Thessalonians 3:14, "note that man." We are to distinguish them for avoidance.
 - a. *"That cause divisions and offences..."* Those to be so noted or marked are they that cause dissension and sedition, that is, refusal to conform to and urging rebellion against authority.
 - b. *"Contrary to the doctrine which you have learned..."* The Gospel is that standard of authority against which they rebel (Philippians 4:9; II Timothy 3:14; cf. John 6:45; Ephesians 3:1–4).
 - c. *"And avoid them."* Literally, "to decline from" as in Romans 3:12, "gone out of the way." Peter says "Eschew evil." (I Peter 3:11).
 - d. *"They serve not our Lord...but their own belly..."* These teachers fed themselves by causing divisions and gathering a following who in turn would support them (cf. Acts 20:28–38).
 - e. *"Deceive the hearts of the simple..."* To be simple is to be "innocent and unsuspecting." It does not connote the idea of weak minded, ignorant or uneducated. Those who are "simple" tend toward gullibility being trusting. They do so by "good words and fair speeches." They are eloquent and plausible. Oratory is wonderful when joined with truth, but despicable when used to disseminate error. Apollos was an "eloquent man," but he was also "mighty in the Scriptures" (Acts 18:24). Barnabas was "a Son of Encouragement," but he exhorted folks to "cleave unto the Lord" because he was "full of the faith" (Acts 11:22–24).
- 2. *"I would have you wise...and simple..."* The KJV makes a play on the word "simple" in English which may not be clear. The words are different but close in spelling and sound. They both even have a general meaning of "innocent." However, there is more to it than that, the first suggested an unsuspecting nature, and the second indicates innocence from participation, literally, "unmixed." Surely Paul does not want us to be unsuspecting with regard to "evil" (Ephesians 5:15; I Corinthians 16:13; I Thessalonians 5:6; cf. Acts 20:31).
- 3. *"And the God of peace..."* The God who has effected our peace, the Great Reconciler (Ephesians 2:11–22; Colossians 1:19–23; Philippians 4:6–9; cf. Romans 14:19).
- 4. *"Shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly..."* The image is reminiscent of Genesis 3:15. The crushing of the enemies of God's people beneath their feet is a common figure for victory (Micah 4:13; Dan 7:19; Isaiah 26:5–7; 28:1–6; Habakkuk 3:5). God would deliver the saints at Rome from their oppressors. Could this be prophetic language foreshadowing the Neronian persecutions?

D. The Greetings of the Saints in Achaia (16:21–24)

1. *Timothy* (Acts 16:1–5; 1 Corinthians 4:17; 16:10; 2 Corinthians 1:19; Acts 20:4).

2. *Luke*

- a. His association with Paul began in Troas and ended in Rome (Acts 16:10–40; 20:6–21:17).
- b. The “we” and “us” passages in Acts inform us of their travels together.
- c. Acts 20:5 puts Luke in Corinth with Paul when Romans written.

3. *Jason and Sosipater*, Paul’s kinsmen

- a. Only one other Jason mentioned in the NT (Acts 17:5).
- b. Only one other Sopater mentioned as well (Acts 20:4).
- c. It is possible that one or both of these men were related to Paul.

4. *Gaius*

- a. Gaius of Macedonia (Acts 19:29) converted by Paul at Corinth (1 Corinthians 1:14) and became host to the church.
- b. Gaius of Derbe a messenger of the Church (20:4), possibly the same as the above.
- c. Gaius of Asia (3 John 1)

5. *Erastus*

- a. He was the treasurer for the city of Corinth.
- b. He traveled with Paul and ministered to him (Acts 19:22; 2 Timothy 4:20)

E. The Benediction (16:25–27)

1. *“To him that is of power to stablish you according to my Gospel.”* Paul ends the epistle with one last word of praise for the God and affirmation of his thesis statement in Romans 1:16. Paul never doubts that the Gospel is God’s power to save.

- a. *“According to the revelation of the mystery.”* MUSTERION signifies a secret, in the New Testament it is a truth undiscoverable except by revelation, long hid, now made manifest (Matthew 13:11; 1 Corinthians 2:7; Ephesians 3:1–9; Colossians 1:26–27). Paul does not say that the Gospel remains a mystery, but that it had been a mystery, in fact it had been “kept secret since the world began.”
- b. *“But now is made manifest.”* Jesus promised to guide the apostles into “all truth” (John 16:13). This He has done through the Holy Spirit Who has revealed “the scriptures of the prophets” (2 Timothy 3:16–17). The great salvation has been revealed by Jesus through His Spirit in the Apostles and prophets, and He forever preserved it in the written Word (Hebrews 2:3–4; Mark 16:17–20).
- c. *“According to the commandment of the everlasting God.”* God has decreed that men be saved through the “foolishness” of preaching (1 Corinthians 1:18, 21). This is His will for “all nations” so that they might yield “the obedience of faith.”

2. *“To God only wise, be glory through Jesus Christ for ever. Amen.”*