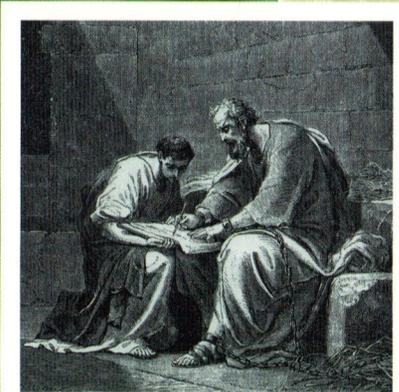


“THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD”

AN IN-DEPTH STUDY OF ROMANS



LARRY DEASON

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Preface

“If you get Romans, God gets you.”

It has been almost twenty years since I first heard this statement. Since then, I have shared it with all of my students to emphasize to them the crucial importance of this great book in God’s Word.

A correct understanding and proper appreciation of this letter from Paul to the saints at Rome will greatly assist the Bible student in interpreting both Old and New Testaments. The righteousness of God, which is the theme of the Book of Romans, is also the heart of the entire Bible. God alone is righteous, and unrighteous mankind must enter into His righteousness by faith. Saving faith, obedient faith in God, must be focused on the crucified and risen Christ, who was foreknown before the foundation of the world and spoken of by the Law and the Prophets.

In our age of moral confusion and intellectual delusion, men and women desperately need to understand what the Bible teaches about such things as sin, judgment, the cross, and righteousness that can be lived with meaning and purpose. No other book, ancient or modern, meets this need as Romans does.

I pray that this study guide will lead the reader to a greater knowledge of Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord, to the end that more and more people will hear the Good News of Jesus and become “the righteousness of God” in Him.

Larry Deason

Acknowledgements

As in all my previous books, I have been blessed in this effort with the loving cooperation of many beloved brothers and sisters in Christ. I owe a special debt of gratitude to my secretary, the late Norma West, who typed the original manuscript into word processing. Her faithful service to me and to many others in the cause of Christ will always be remembered.

My sincere appreciation also goes to Steve Singleton, whose tireless efforts in refining, documenting, and laying out my work have greatly enhanced its usefulness. I also gratefully acknowledge the contributions of Susan Ziomek and Bill Bean, who edited and proofread the manuscript through many stages of development and revision.

Larry Deason

**The Book of Romans:
“The Righteousness
of God”**

Part I

Introduction

Lesson One

Introduction to Romans

The Epistle to the Romans is the fullest and most coherent manifesto of the Christian Gospel in the New Testament. In it the apostle Paul unfolds 'the whole counsel of God.' . . . There is a grandeur, a comprehensiveness, a logic about his exposition which has commanded the admiration and compelled the study of all succeeding generations.

—John R. W. Stott

The Righteousness of God

(Outline of Romans)

- I. *Introduction (Rom. 1:1-17)*
 - A. The address (Rom. 1:1-7)
 - B. The occasion (Rom. 1:8-15)
 - C. The theme (Rom. 1:16-17)
- II. *Exposition: The righteousness of God (justification by faith) (Rom. 1:18-11:36)*
 - A. The righteousness of God proclaimed: “All under sin” (Rom. 1:18-3:20)
 - B. The righteousness of God presented: “Being justified freely by His grace” (Rom. 3:21-5:21)
 - C. The righteousness of God perfected: “Fruit unto sanctification” (Rom. 6:1-8:39)
 - D. The righteousness of God purposed: “The remnant shall be saved” (Rom. 9:1-11:36)
- III. *Exhortation: The righteousness of God in life—a living sacrifice (Rom. 12:1-15:13)*
 - A. The righteous man and his spiritual relationship (Rom. 12:1-2)
 - B. The righteous man and his social relationships (Rom. 12:3-8)
 - C. The righteous man and his personal relationships (Rom. 12:9-21)
 - D. The righteous man and his civil relationships (Rom. 13:1-7)
 - E. The righteous man and his public relationships (Rom. 13:8-14)
 - F. The righteous man and his fraternal relationships (Rom. 14:1-15:13)
- IV. *Conclusion (Rom. 15:14-16:27)*
 - A. Paul’s personal plans (Rom. 15:14-29)
 - B. Paul’s plea for prayers (Rom. 15:30-33)
 - C. Paul’s particular greetings (Rom. 16:1-23)
 - D. Paul’s praise and glory (Rom. 16:25-27)

Mental Preparation for the Study of Romans

- I. In many ways, Romans is the pivotal book of the whole Bible.
 - A. The theme of all Scripture is found here (read Rom. 1:16-17).
 - B. The logical appeal of Romans has long been recognized.
 - C. The more this writing is handled, the more precious it becomes.
 - D. It is impossible to properly understand and employ the revealed Word of God if one misuses Romans; hence, its importance.
 - E. Romans is the most profound of Pauline writings, with the possible exception of his Epistle to the Ephesians.
 - F. To know and truly believe the content of this great book is to be grounded and settled in the Christian faith.
- II. It has been said: *"If you get Romans, God gets you"*; that is, its message captures the *whole person* for Christ (heart, soul, mind, and strength).

NOTE: Misinterpretation and misapplication of certain passages in the Book of Romans form the basis for much false teaching and unbalanced theology, including such errors as

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the doctrines of “faith only” (Rom. 1:16-17), Calvin’s understanding of “original sin” (Rom. 5:12-21), and popular “dispensationalism” (Rom. 9:1-11:36).

It is not the intention of the author to emphasize the refutation of error in this study, but rather to give exposition of the truth revealed by the Spirit of God through Paul in this epistle.

Historical Perspective of Romans

- I. *Authorship* of this epistle is indisputable.
 - A. The apostle Paul and his scribe, Tertius, are named in the text as the source of this document (read Rom. 1:1; 16:22).
 - B. Paul, as the “Apostle to the Gentiles,” would have the ministry and motivation necessary to write such a work (read Rom. 11:13; 15:16 and compare Gal. 1:15-16; 2:7-9; Eph. 3:8-11; Acts 9:15; 26:20; Col. 1:24-27).
 - C. The historical situation was that of Paul (read Rom. 15:15-32).
- II. The *date and place* of the writing are generally acknowledged.
 - A. The date is usually established as A.D. 58-59.
 1. Paul was nearing the end of his third missionary journey when he wrote this epistle (see Rom. 15:19-32; compare Acts 24:17; 1 Cor. 16:3-5).
 2. There can be little doubt as to this date.
 - B. The place of composition was the city of Corinth.
 1. Paul apparently visited Corinth after

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- passing through Macedonia (see Acts 20:1-3 and compare 1 Cor. 16:5-6).
2. The names of Phoebe and Gaius link Romans to the Greek province of Achaia (see Rom. 16:1, 23 and 1 Cor. 1:14).
 3. Paul's reference to Erastus and Luke's record of those who were traveling with Paul from Ephesus through Macedonia to Greece also connect this letter with Corinth (see Rom. 16:21-23 and compare Acts 20:4; 2 Tim. 4:20).
- III. The *purpose* of the writing may be deduced from the text.
- A. *With respect to Paul*, its purpose was
1. *To strengthen* "the tie that binds" Christians of all sociological and cultural backgrounds into *one body* (see Rom. 1:8-15; 15:15-16)
 2. *To prepare* the Roman Christians for his coming, for he had not planted the church in Rome and had not yet made his first visit to them (see Rom. 1:8-15; 15:20-32)
 3. *To enlist* their support of his missionary program, perhaps thinking to make Rome a base for his proposed Spanish mission (see Rom. 15:24, 30)

- B. *With respect to the church at Rome, its purpose was*
1. *To strengthen* them in the Christian faith (read Rom. 1:11)
 2. *To explain* the problem of Jewish national unbelief (read Rom. 9:1-11:36)
 3. *To instruct* the church in practical Christian discipleship on the basis of their standing in *God's righteousness* (see Rom. 1:16-11:36; 15:1-7, 14-16)
- C. *With respect to us today, it outlines the doctrine and practice of Christianity for all ages* (see Rom. 1:16-17; 16:25-27).

NOTE: Probably the greatest issue confronting the church prior to A.D. 70 was the problem of Jew-Gentile relationships within the Christian community. Paul's divinely inspired concept of Jewish and Gentile believers dwelling together in unity within the one body (church) of Christ is most clearly explained in his Epistle to the Ephesians.

The large Christian population dwelling in first-century Rome was not a truly united community, as we shall see. It therefore represented a crucial challenge to Paul's vision and God's will concerning the church. As the "apostle to the Gentiles," Paul's concern was to *commend* his ministry to Jewish Christians, as well as to *contend* for the rights of Gentile Christians within the *one* body of Christ.

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- IV. The *recipients* of the writing are specifically named.
- A. Paul does not address the Christian community in Rome as a single congregation, but intends for the entire “church” in Rome to receive the letter (see Rom. 1:7).
 - B. All disciples were meeting in their various “local” houses, and there is evidence (both inside and outside the text) that these “house churches” sometimes regarded one another with suspicion and non-acceptance (see Rom. 16:5, 14-15 and compare Rom. 14:1-15:9).
 - C. The “saints” included
 1. Jewish Christians (read Rom. 2:17-29; 3:9; 4:1; 7:1, 5-6)
 2. Gentile Christians (read Rom. 1:13-15; 11:13-32; 15:15-16)

NOTE: The first Christians in Rome were Jews. In fact, the gospel may have been brought to Rome first by those Roman Jews who responded to Peter’s Pentecost proclamation of Jesus as Israel’s Messiah and Savior (read Acts 2:10). These Jewish Christians of Rome apparently continued to live according to their national heritage and to interact with other Jews in the Jewish community, which numbered some fifty thousand in first-century Rome.¹ Historical evidence strongly suggests that it was the controversy surrounding the proclamation of Jesus which eventually resulted in such hostility within the Jewish community that Emperor Claudius expelled

them all (including Jewish Christians) from Rome in A.D. 49 (see Acts 18:2).² Upon their return to Rome under Emperor Nero in A.D. 55-56, these Jewish believers probably found a radically changed Christian movement, no longer rooted in the synagogue, but flourishing among Gentiles who paid little or no attention to Jewish law.³

- V. The *theme* of the writing must be understood in light of its historical background (read Rom. 1:16-17).
- A. The *righteousness of God* is revealed in the gospel of Jesus Christ (God's power to save mankind) and becomes effective in men on the ground of *faith*; that is, the *obedience* that faith motivates (read carefully Rom. 1:5; 16:26).
- B. *Justification by faith* apart from works of law was the means by which God would show Himself to be the God of both the Jews and the Gentiles, and this was Paul's solution to the problem of unity (read Rom. 3:28-30).
1. Man is dead in sin and cannot *justify* himself.
 2. The *gospel* (not human works of merit or legal requirement) is the means by which men and women must be saved.
 3. People are made righteous by the Cross

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of Jesus Christ through *faith* in that preached message.

NOTE: To Paul, “faith” was a *way of life*. It was the affirmative response of the *whole person* to a relationship of *trust* and *commitment*. Its power resided not in itself, but in its Object, and its Object was ultimately not a proposition, but a Person (read carefully Gal. 2:20; Phil. 3:8-10; 2 Tim. 1:12).

- VI. Paul’s *thesis* can be expressed in the following three principles:
 - A. God alone is *righteous*, in and of Himself, and is therefore the Source of all righteousness (read Rom. 3:5-6, 26).
 - B. We may enter into God’s *righteousness by faith* (read Rom. 1:17; 4:3, 5; 5:1; 9:30-32).
 - C. *Faith* must be directed to Christ and Him alone (read Rom. 1:16-17; 3:21-26; 5:1-2; 10:3-13).⁴
- VII. The *great words* of the writing reveal something of its emphasis and scope.

Word or Phrase	Frequency in Romans	Frequency in Paul's Other Epistles	Frequency in Rest of N.T.
righteousness and other related words	66	49	131
law	75	47	74
faith, believe	61	135	293
sin, sinner, sinful	58	33	173
death, die, kill	48	47	221
in Christ	10	66	5
flesh, fleshly, carnal	30	68	60
grace	25	77	54
holy (and related words)	24	76	191
credit (=impute)	19	15	7
God forbid (=Certainly not!, etc.)	10	4	1

For the transparency version of this chart, see p. 363

Analytical Outlines of Romans

I. OUTLINE OF THE THEOLOGICAL CONCEPTS

SIN, GUILT, CONDEMNATION (CHAPS. 1-3)

**PROPITIATION, GRACE, FAITH, JUSTIFICATION
(CHAPS. 4-5)**

SANCTIFICATION (CHAPS. 6-8)

GLORIFICATION (CHAP. 8)

ELECTION (CHAPS. 9-11)

EXHORTATION (CHAPS. 12-16)

For the transparency version of this chart, see p. 364

II. THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD OUTLINE

INTRODUCTION (1:1-17)

**RIGHTEOUSNESS
OF GOD
(1:18-15:13)**

IN RELATION TO SINS AND SIN (1:18-8:39)

IN RELATION TO THE SAVING OF ISRAEL (9:1-11:36)

IN RELATION TO SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS (12:1-15:13)

CONCLUSION (15:14-16:27)

For the transparency version of this chart, see p. 365

III. OUTLINE OF THE OVERVIEW OF PAUL'S THOUGHT

Introduction (1:1-17)

Presentation of Righteousness (1:18 - 11:36)

Considered objectively (1:18-5:21)

How can the guilty be made righteous?

Righteousness and man's spiritual nature

Righteousness and man's circumstance

Righteousness in the course of history

Considered subjectively (6 - 8)

How can the justified be righteous in daily conduct?

Position and practice of the justified

The relation of sin and law to the justified

Considered nationally (9 - 11)

How can Israel experience true righteousness and the covenant blessings?

Israel and God's messiah

Israel and God's covenant

Practice of Righteousness (12:1 - 15:13)

What is so different about being a Christian?

Fruit of righteousness—manifested in the justified

Practice of righteousness—the response of the justified

Conclusion (15:14 - 16:27)

For the transparency version of this chart, see p. 366

NOTES

¹F. F. Bruce, *New Testament History* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Co., 1972), p. 137.

²Luke's reference to the Jews' expulsion from Rome by Claudius is confirmed by Suetonius (*Claudius* 25:4): "Because the Jews of Rome were indulging in constant riots at the instigation of Chrestus, he expelled them from the city." Many scholars believe the name "Chrestus" in this passage refers to Christ and that the riots were caused by quarrelling among the Jews over Jesus' messianic claims (see F. F. Bruce, *New Testament History*, pp. 295-299).

³See R. C. H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans* (Lutheran Book Concern, 1936; reprint edition: Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Publ. House, 1961), pp. 14-16. (Hereafter cited as Lenski, *Romans*.)

⁴For an excellent discussion of Paul's concept of saving faith, see "Paul's Conception of Faith," pp. 133-153 in William Barclay, *The Mind of Saint Paul* (New York: Harper & Row, 1958).

Lesson Two

'Righteousness' in Romans

The righteousness of God is God's alone; man is taken up into it and set in it. The δικαιοσυνη θεου [righteousness of God] is God's righteousness as a conjunction of judgment and grace which He enjoys and demonstrates by showing righteousness, by imparting it as His pardoning sentence, but which draws into His kingdom as new life and thereby pledges service. It will be fully manifested at the last judgment.

— Gottlob Schrenk

Definition of 'Righteousness'

- I. 'Righteousness' (Gr: *dikaiosunē*) translates the Hebrew term for 'justice' (Heb: *tsedekhah*): God's righteousness is not to be set against His justice.
- II. Basically, the word describes
 - A. "The character or quality of being right or just; rightwiseness"
 - B. One's state of being 'justified' (Gr: *dikaiōō*), meaning "acquitted, pronounced and treated as righteous"¹
 1. The English language uses two words (*righteousness* and *justice*) to convey what the Old Testament communicated in the one word (Heb: *tsadiq*) meaning "justice."
 2. For many modern people, the term 'righteousness' conveys false impressions of "churchiness" and "other-worldliness" which were not in the mind of Paul and the Old Testament prophets.
 3. If the reader finds the term 'justice' to be more practical, concrete, and relevant to his or her understanding, it may be substituted for 'righteousness' without any loss of content (see Rom. 3:21-26, NIV).

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4. Both 'righteousness' and 'justice' are equally applicable to God's character, conduct, and requirement of His people.
- III. Specifically, 'righteousness' means, by definition and usage
- A. "The quality of being which fulfills the claims of *right* and makes a moral being what he ought to be" (The word deals with proper fulfillment of *relationships*, and with God's intended "order of things.")
 - B. Certain qualities of character and conduct which can apply only to a *moral being* (either God or man)
 1. *With reference to God*, it describes His absolute moral perfection: He is the absolute fulfillment and personification of *righteousness*.
 - a. He is the standard and source of *righteousness* (see 1 Peter 1:15).
 - b. He demands this *righteousness* of all moral beings who are His and who are made in His image (see 1 Peter 1:15-16 and compare 2 Cor. 6:14-7:1; Eph. 4:17-24).
 2. *With reference to man*, it is represented in two aspects in the New Testament.

- a. It is God's standard for human character and conduct which answers to God's own character and conduct and is thus expressive of 'worship' (see Matt. 5:48-6:18).
- b. It is God's gift to man by grace and is received through faith: This demonstrates man's utter inability to achieve (on his own) "*God's righteousness*" (see Rom. 3:10, 20-22 and compare Rom. 10:3-10; also read Gal. 2:21; Eph. 2:8-9; Titus 3:4-7; James 1:19).

IV. The *Old Testament background* of the term 'justice' (righteousness) must be considered, since Paul's inspired presentation of "the justice (righteousness) of God revealed in the gospel of Jesus Christ" is in accordance with the Old Testament revelation (read carefully Rom. 1:1-5, 16-17; 3:21; 4:1-25; 9:1-11:36; 16:25-27).

- A. In the Old Testament, God's *justice* means His concrete, historical *actions of mercy, forgiveness, salvation, and deliverance on behalf of His oppressed people*.
- B. These acts of salvation were not done on the basis of what His people deserved—human justice—but on the basis of who He is and what He has purposed and promised (*the righteousness of God*).

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- C. The righteousness of God is "biased" in favor of His oppressed people (whether the oppressor is Egypt, Babylon, or sin and death).
- D. God, the Righteous Judge, does not simply hand down a verdict in their favor, but personally acts to restore their well-being (read carefully Judges 5:11; 1 Sam. 12:7-11; Pss. 9:7-9; 31:1; 33:4-5; 51:14; 71:15-24; 103:6; 145:3-7; Isa. 46:13; 51:5; 61:10).

'Righteousness' in Romans: Its Various Greek Forms

- I. The adjective and adverb forms of 'righteousness' (Gr: *dikaios* and *dikaiōs*) are often translated: "upright, just, righteous"² and "justly, uprightly."³ These forms appear seven times in Romans (read Rom. 1:17; 2:13; 3:10, 26; 5:7, 19; 7:12 and compare Luke 14:14; John 17:25; 1 Tim. 1:9; Titus 1:8; Heb. 12:23; 1 Peter 4:18).
- II. The verb form of 'righteousness' (Gr: *dikaioō*) means "be acquitted, be pronounced and treated as righteous."⁴ It occurs fourteen times in Romans (read Rom. 2:13; 3:4, 20, 24, 26, 28; 4:2, 5; 5:1, 9; 6:7; 8:30 [twice], 33 and compare Gal. 2:16-17; 3:8, 11, 24; 5:4; Titus 3:7).
- III. One noun form of 'righteousness' (Gr: *dikaiōsis*) is translated "justification, vindication, acquittal."⁵ It occurs only twice in Romans (read Rom. 4:25; 5:18).
- IV. Most often used is the other noun form of 'righteousness' (Gr: *dikaioσunē*), which is translated "righteousness, uprightness."⁶ It is used thirty-six times in Romans (read Rom. 1:17; 3:5, 21, 22, 25, 26; 4:3, 5, 6, 9, 11 [twice], 13, 22; 5:17, 21; 6:13, 16, 18, 19, 20; 8:10; 9:30 [thrice], 31 [twice]; 10:3, 4, 5, 6, 10; 14:17).

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NOTE: The form *dikaionē* appears some ninety-four times in the New Testament. For the broad scope of its usages outside of Romans, the reader may note its occurrences in Matt. 3:15; 5:6, 10, 20; 6:33; 21:32; Luke 1:75; John 16:8, 10; Acts 10:35; 13:10; 17:31; 24:25; 1 Cor. 1:30; 2 Cor. 3:9; 5:21; 6:7, 14; 9:9-10; 11:15; Gal. 2:21; 3:6, 21; 5:5; Eph. 4:24; 5:9; 6:14; Phil. 1:11; 3:6, 9 (twice); 1 Tim. 6:11; 2 Tim. 2:22; 3:16; 4:8; Titus 3:5; Heb. 1:9; 5:13; 7:2; 11:7, 33; 12:11; James 1:20; 2:23; 3:18; 1 Peter 2:24; 2 Peter 1:1; 2:5, 21; 3:13; 1 John 2:29; 3:7, 10; Rev. 19:11.

Usages of 'Righteousness' in Romans

- I. The *righteousness of God*⁷ is “revealed” righteousness (read Rom. 1:16-17).
 - A. God once revealed His righteousness by His historical deliverance of His people from slavery in Egypt during the Exodus, but His eternal purpose encompassed a *greater* deliverance (read Rom. 4:25).
 - B. The Good News of God’s deliverance of Jesus from the power of death, and of His people “in Him,” is the ultimate “revealed righteousness,” attested by the Law and the Prophets and purposed by the Godhead in eternity (read Rom. 1:1-4, 16-17; 3:21-26; 16:25-27 and compare 1 Cor. 15:1-4; Gal. 1:1-6).
- II. The *righteousness of God* is “apart from law” (read Rom. 3:20-21).
 - A. It goes far beyond the requirements of “legal justice.”
 - B. It cannot be attained by law-keeping (read Rom. 3:21; 6:14-15; 7:6; 8:3; 9:31-32; 10:1-6 and compare 2 Cor. 3:9; Gal. 3:21).
- III. The *righteousness of God* is the “gift of righteousness” (read Rom. 5:17).
 - A. In chapter 4 alone, there are eleven occurrences of the word translated ‘credit’ or

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'impute' (Gr: *logizomai*), meaning "to place to one's account, to credit"⁸ (see especially Rom. 4:3-9 and compare James 2:23).

B. The usage of the term 'free gift' also speaks of the relationship between God's grace and His righteousness (read Rom. 5:17, 21 and compare Rom. 3:23-24; 6:23; Gal. 2:20-21; Eph. 2:8-9; Titus 3:4-7).

IV. The *righteousness of God* is received "through faith in Jesus Christ" (read Rom. 3:22).

A. The *object* of this faith is the crucified and exalted Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ (read Rom. 3:21-26; 4:24-25 and compare 1 Cor. 1:30; Heb. 1:9; 7:2, 17).

B. The *principle* of faith excludes boasting (read Rom. 3:27-31; 4:4-5; 9:30-33 and compare Eph. 2:8-10; Titus 3:4-8; Phil. 3:7-9).

C. The *nature* of faith is an abandonment of all self-sufficiency and self-reliance in favor of a whole-hearted commitment to the revealed word of the invisible God (read Rom. 10:4, 9-10 and compare Heb. 11:7).

NOTE: See Luke 1:67-79 in which Zechariah's description of the work of Israel's Messiah included redemption, salvation, mercy, forgiveness, and peace *in accordance with that which-God had promised to David and to Abraham* (compare Rom. 1:3).

- V. The *righteousness of God* is “unto eternal life” (read Rom. 5:21).
- A. Without “the righteousness of God” which is received by faith in Jesus Christ, man remains *lost* (separated from life with God; spiritually dead in sin) (read Rom. 2:1-16; 9:1-5, 30-33; 10:1-4; Gal. 5:4; 2 Thess. 1:7-9).
 - B. “Righteousness” is related to salvation, forgiveness of sin, and eternal life (read Rom. 1:16-17; 6:23; 8:1-2, 10; 10:1).
- VI. The *righteousness of God* must be exhibited (lived) in the believer’s life (read Rom. 6:15-16).
- A. *Why is this so?*
 - 1. “In Christ,” Christians are given a *new position*, which must now define and motivate their *new practice*.
 - 2. In being united with Jesus in His death and resurrection, we have been made all that God requires us to be.
 - 3. The nature of *faith* demands that our way of life conform with the meaning of the gospel (see Rom. 12:1-2; 2 Cor. 5:21).
 - a. We *died* to the power and practice of sin by entering into the death of Jesus by faith (read Rom. 6:1-14 and compare 2 Tim. 2:19; 1 John 3:1-10).
 - b. We are *alive* to the presence of God

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and the practice of obedient righteousness, because we participate by faith in the risen life of Christ (read Rom. 6:16-19 and compare Matt. 5:6, 10; 1 Cor. 15:34; 2 Cor. 6:14; 1 Thess. 2:10-12; Gal. 2:20; Col. 3:1-4:6; 1 Peter 2:24).

B. *How is this so?*

1. It is to be realized by faithfully choosing to fix the mind on the "spiritual things."
2. "Spiritual things" are the things of God that are revealed in the gospel of Christ (read Rom. 8:1-13; 1 Cor. 2:6-16; Eph. 4:17-5:2; Titus 2:11-14).
 - a. *Righteousness* is attained "in Christ" (see Rom. 8:1-4).
 - b. *Righteousness* is maintained by the Holy Spirit (see Rom. 8:5-11).
 - c. *Righteousness* is the central characteristic in the kingdom of God (see Rom. 14:17 and compare Ps. 89:14; Matt. 6:33; Acts 24:25).
3. The "fruit of righteousness" is borne through a moment-by-moment commitment to the Good News concerning Jesus Christ (see Matt. 5:20, 48; John 15:1-17; 16:8, 10; Rom. 7:4; 2 Cor. 6:14-7:1; 1 Peter 1:13-16; 1 John 1:9).

- VII. The *righteousness of God* is the basis of His judgment upon the “unrighteous” (read Rom. 2:5).
- A. ‘Unrighteous’ (Gr: *adikos*) denotes “unjust, dishonest, untrustworthy” (read Rom. 1:18, 29; 2:5, 8; 3:5; 6:13; 9:14).
- B. The “righteousness of God” stands eternally distinct from and opposed to the unrighteousness of man (read Rom. 1:32 and compare John 3:36; 1 Cor. 6:9-10; Gal. 5:19-21; Eph. 5:5-6; Col. 3:5-6; 2 Thess. 2:10-12; 2 Peter 2:9).
- C. The *wrath* of God is “righteous judgment.”
1. God’s justice, while *more than fair*, is never *less than fair*; it will not leave those who are impenitently guilty “unpunished” (see Exod. 33:5-7; Rom. 12:19; 2 Thess. 1:7-9).
 2. The justice of God is not *primarily* concerned with punishment or wrath, but with deliverance and salvation; nevertheless, God will righteously give what He has promised to those who refuse His salvation (see Heb. 2:1-4; 3:12-19; 6:4-12; 10:26-31; 12:15-17, 25).
- D. The judgment of God is executed in righteousness (see Rom. 2:1-11).
- E. The judgment of God will be carried out according to the righteousness revealed in the gospel of Jesus Christ (see Rom. 2:16 and compare Acts 17:31; Rev. 19:11-16).

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- F. Summarizing, God's righteousness is the basis for
1. The revelation of God
 2. The working of divine justice (justification)
 3. The undeserved kindnesses of God (grace)
 4. The Christian's faith (in Jesus, our righteousness)
 5. The hope of life eternal
 6. The fruit of sanctification (Christlike character and conduct)
 7. The alternative—divine judgment (condemnation)

The Righteousness of God in Relationship to the Believer

1. God's righteousness is the foundation of our faith (read 2 Peter 1:1).
2. It is the characteristic of the new creation (read 2 Cor. 5:17; Eph. 4:24; 1 John 2:29 and compare 2 Peter 3:13).
3. It is the direction of Christian discipleship (read James 1:20; 3:18; 1 Peter 2:23-24; 3:14; 1 John 2:29).
4. It is the prize of our pursuit (read 1 Tim. 6:11 and compare Gal. 5:5).
5. It is the sustenance of our souls (see Matt. 5:6; Heb. 5:13).
6. It is the fruit of fellowship with God (see Eph. 5:9; Phil.1:9-11; Heb. 12:11).
7. It is our message to mankind (see 1 Cor. 1:28-31; 2 Peter 2:5).
8. It is our way of life in a corrupted world (see 2 Peter 2:20-21).
9. It is the germ of divine generosity which yields a harvest of openhanded hospitality (see 2 Cor. 9:9-10).
10. It is both armor and artillery in spiritual warfare (see 2 Cor. 6:7 and compare Eph. 6:14).
11. It is our hope (see Gal. 5:5 and compare Rom. 5:1-5).

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12. It is our assurance of identity (see 1 John 3:7, 10).
13. It is the crown of our contest (see 2 Tim. 4:8).
14. It is the substance of the kingdom of God (see Rom. 14:17).

NOTE: Sin, while practiced or unconfessed (unrepented), destroys righteousness in the heart of the believer.

The Development of the Theme Throughout Romans

- I. The theme is stated (Rom. 1:16-17).
- II. The theme is developed (Rom. 1:18-15:13).
 - A. He who is of faith is reckoned righteous (Rom. 1:18-4:25).
 1. The wrath of God is revealed against
 - a. The “unrighteous” (those without the law) (Rom. 1:18-32)
 - b. The “self-righteous” (those with the law) (Rom. 2:1-3:20)
 2. The righteousness of God is revealed as
 - a. Attested by the Law and the Prophets and manifested in “Jesus Christ” (Rom. 3:21-31)
 - b. Typified in Abraham “for our sake also” (Rom. 4:1-25)
 - B. “He who through faith is righteous shall live” because he is free from
 1. Wrath (Rom. 5:1-11; compare Eph. 2:1-8)
 - a. The elements of life “in Christ” include grace, peace, hope, and perseverance (Rom. 5:1-4).
 - b. The basis of life “in Christ” is the love of God, as demonstrated in the cross of Christ on behalf of unworthy sinners (Rom. 5:5-11).

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- c. The reign of righteousness and life "in Christ" is contrasted with the reign of sin and death "in Adam" (Rom. 5:12-21).
2. The power of sin (Rom. 6:1-23)
 - a. Sin stands between death and life (Rom. 6:10-11).
 - b. Sin belongs to the reign of Adam in absolute opposition to righteousness and life (Rom. 6:23).
3. Law (sin's power) (Rom. 7:1-25)
4. Death (Rom. 8:1-39)

NOTE: This deliverance from law, sin, death, and wrath is what it means to "live" righteously, and it is only "in Christ" that this life is an absolute reality.

- C. "He who is righteous by faith shall live" does not violate God's promise to Israel (Rom. 9:1-11:36).
 1. God is not at fault; He will keep His promise (Rom. 9:1-29).
 2. Israel is at fault for rejecting God's righteousness (Rom. 9:30-10:31).
 3. Israel shall be saved like all others: "by faith" (Rom. 11:1-36).
- D. "He who through faith is righteous" is distinguished by his behavior (Rom. 12:1-15:13).

1. He is transformed, not conformed: "To live in Christ is to live in love" (Rom. 12:1-13:14).
2. He lives no longer according to the "pattern of this world," but is changed in the *behavior of righteousness*
 - a. "In Christ" as a member of His body (Rom. 12:1-8)
 - b. "In love" (Rom. 12:9-21)
 - c. "In reality" (present society) (Rom. 13:1-7)
 - d. "In fulfillment of God's law" (Rom. 13:8-10)
 - e. "In the daytime" by deliberately "clothing" himself with Christ (Rom. 13:11-14)
3. He is not opinionated: specifics concerning the "weak" and the "strong" (Rom. 14:1-15:13).

III. The conclusion (Rom. 15:14-16:27).

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¹William F. Arndt and F. Wilbur Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, translated and adapted from the 4th revised and augmented edition of Walter Bauer's *Griechisch-Deutsches Wörterbuch zu den Schriften des Neuen Testaments und der übrigen urchristlichen Literatur* (Berlin: A. Töpelmann, 1949-1952); 2nd English edition, based on Bauer's fifth edition (1957-59), revised by F. Wilbur Gingrich and Frederick W. Danker (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979), p. 197. (Hereafter cited as Bauer-Arndt-Gingrich-Danker.)

²There are about 74 quotations from the Hebrew Scriptures in Romans. This fact demonstrates the importance of understanding the content of Romans in the light of its Old Testament background.

³Bauer-Arndt-Gingrich-Danker, pp. 195-196.

⁴Bauer-Arndt-Gingrich-Danker, pp. 197-198.

⁵Bauer-Arndt-Gingrich-Danker, p. 198.

⁶Bauer-Arndt-Gingrich-Danker, pp. 196-197.

⁷The concept 'the righteousness of God' appears eight times in seven verses (read Rom. 1:17; 3:5, 21-22, 25-26; 10:3 [twice]).

⁸Bauer-Arndt-Gingrich-Danker, p. 476.

⁹Bauer-Arndt-Gingrich-Danker, p. 18.

**The Book of Romans:
“The Righteousness
of God”**

Part II

*Righteousness
Proclaimed*

Lesson Three

Romans Chapter 1

With inconceivable patience God has put up with evil and the wretched impudence of men. The deception of sin has reached its height. Transgression has come to the full. The time has come for Jehovah to arise, to punish rebellion, and to vindicate the authority of His down-trodden law.

— Robert D. Brinsmead

Paul's Introduction —Romans 1:1-17

OUTLINE OF ROMANS		
INTRODUCTION (1:1-17)		
EXPOSITION (1:18 - 11:36)	Righteousness	PROCLAIMED (1:18 - 3:20)
		PRESENTED (3:21 - 5:21)
		PERFECTED (6:1 - 8:39)
		PURPOSED (9:1 - 11:36)
EXHORTATION (12:1 - 15:13)	Relationships	SPIRITUAL (12:1-2)
		SOCIAL (12:3-8)
		PERSONAL (12:9-21)
		CIVIL (13:1-7)
		PUBLIC (13:8-14)
		FRATERNAL (14:1 - 15:13)
CONCLUSION (15:14-16:27)		

Notes:

- I. *The address* introduces the apostle and his message to the Roman Christians (1:1-7).
 - A. The *author* of the letter presents his character, career, and message (1:1-5).
 1. His character is distinctively that of
 - a. “A servant” (Gr: *doulos*, meaning “a bond-slave”)¹
 - 1) A *bond-servant* is not merely an ally!
(Read carefully Phil. 2:5-11.)

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- 2) A *purchased possession* is not merely an assistant! (Carefully consider 1 Cor. 6:19-20.)

NOTE: Historians date the conversion of Saul of Tarsus at about A.D. 36.² Since that time, Paul was not “his own man,” but a bond-slave of the Lord Jesus (see Acts 9:1-31).

- b. “An apostle” (Gr: *apostolos*), meaning “a delegate, envoy, messenger”³ (see Gal. 1:1, 11-24)
- 1) The order: *first* a “servant,” *then* an “apostle” (Paul was a great apostle *because he first sought to serve Jesus*; read 1 Cor. 9:19-27; 15:7-10; 1 Thess. 2:7-13; 1 Tim. 1:12.)
- 2) Paul discusses his apostleship at length in Galatians and Second Corinthians (see Gal. 1:1-2:21; 2 Cor. 10:1-13:10).
2. His career is distinguished in that he was
- a. “Called” (Gr: *klētos*, which means “called, invited”⁴): here are the credentials which validate Paul’s service (see word usage in Rom. 1:6-7; 8:28; 1 Cor. 1:1-2)
- 1) Paul is an apostle by *divine appointment* (read Gal. 1:1; 1 Cor. 15:9).

- 2) Paul's *commission*: He was "called an apostle" (see Greek text).
- b. "Separated" (Gr: *aphorizō*), which means "to set apart, appoint"⁵
 - 1) Paul was determined to preach Christ: He was a "chosen vessel" (read Acts 9:15; 13:2).
 - 2) Paul was "separated" at birth for service to God (read Gal. 1:15-16).
3. His message is defined in terms of
 - a. *Promise* (1:1-2): The "gospel of God" is the fulfillment of God's covenants, not the accomplishment of man, nor of angels, nor even of Paul or Peter (see Gal. 1:6-9; 1 Cor. 1:10-2:5; 1 Peter 1:10-12).
 - b. *Prophecy* (1:2): In this connection, *prophecy* includes temple ritual, typology, and inspired oracles (see also Luke 24:44-46; John 5:39, 46; 2 Tim. 3:14; 1 Peter 1:10-12; 2 Peter 1:20-21).
 - c. *Personification* (1:3-4): In Jesus Christ, promise became a Person, Scripture became a Character, and prophecy became a Personality.
 - 1) *Jesus was human* (1:3): He was born of true flesh and of royal blood (read

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carefully Matt. 1:1-25; John 1:1-18; Gal. 4:4; Heb. 2:14-17; 1 John 1:1-4).

- 2) *Jesus was Deity* (1:4): He was divinely *born* (begotten in a virgin womb) and divinely *raised* (“reborn” out of a virgin tomb) (read 1 Cor. 15:1-4; Eph. 1:19-21; Heb. 1:1-5).

NOTE: This concept is vital in Christian teaching: Christ’s resurrection by the power of the Spirit was a “rebirth.” By the Spirit, Deity was born into the world, and by the Spirit He was reborn *from out of* the community of the dead (see Greek: *ek tōn nekron*).

Much of the evangelical world seems to miss the power of this truth by failing to see the significance of *baptism into Christ*. This baptism (commanded by Jesus in His “Great Commission” and faithfully required by the apostles and other early proclaimers of the gospel) *embodies* the central truth of the Christian faith (read 1 Cor. 15:1-4). It is at the point of baptism that *God meets us* in the forgiveness of our sins, the bestowal of the Spirit of divine sonship, the sealing of the covenant relationship, and the incorporation of the individual into the New Humanity “in Christ” (see Rom. 6:1-11; 8:9-17; 1 Peter 3:18-22 and compare 1 Cor. 12:13; Gal. 3:26-4:7; Eph. 1:11-14; Col. 2:11-13; 3:1-11; 1 Peter 1:3).

- d. *Power* (1:5-7): The authority of the risen Christ is the source of Paul’s apostleship and the foundation of the Christian’s

standing in the love and grace of God.

NOTE: Paul's usage of the preposition "through" (Gr: *dia*) in this context points to Jesus as the one Mediator in whom we may find ready access to the manifold grace of God, and by whom God makes Himself available to us (see Rom. 5:1-5 and compare John 15:1-10; Heb. 2:14-16; 1 Peter 5:7). *Obedience* is always required of man in his relationship with God, and the obedience must be motivated by *faith* "working through love," not by mere legalism. He whose spiritual position is that of a "saint" practices the obedience of a "disciple" (see 1 Thess. 1:3; Gal. 5:6; 1 Cor. 13:1-3; Rom. 13:8-10 and compare 1 Cor. 1:1-3; Titus 2:11-14).

B. The *destination* of the letter is a testimony to the exalted status of those who *belong to Christ* (1:6-7).

1. The epistle was not sent to
 - a. *The emperor* (for the agency of Rome's salvation was not the civil government)
 - b. *The magistrates* (for the agency of Rome's salvation was not the courts)
 - c. *The teachers* (for the agency of Rome's salvation was not in the schools)
 - d. *The philosophers* (for the agency of Rome's salvation was not in man's wisdom)
2. The letter was sent to
 - a. The church (the body of Christ, indwelt

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and animated by His Spirit) which was the agency of Rome's salvation (read Eph. 3:10-21)

b. Those who are

- 1) "Called to be saints"; that is, "separated; holy ones" (see 1 Cor. 1:1-2; Col. 1:13-14; 2 Thess. 2:13-14)
- 2) "Loved by God" (see 1 Thess. 1:4; Rom. 5:5; 8:32-39)
- 3) "Renowned for their faith" (1:8; see 1 Thess. 1:8-10)

C. The *greeting* of the letter names "God our Father" and "the Lord Jesus Christ" as the one source of

1. Grace (see James 4:6; Rom. 5:1-5)
2. Peace (see Phil. 4:6-7; Luke 10:5; John 14:22; 16:33)

NOTE: "Grace" and "peace" appear frequently in the greetings of Paul's epistles. They are two important Hebrew concepts that have their root in the revealed character of God Himself. John referred to Jesus as the full and ultimate revelation of the character of God when he wrote that the incarnate Word was "full of grace and truth" (see John 1:14). God revealed Himself to Moses as One who is "abounding in love and faithfulness" (see Exod. 34:7).

The word "love" (or "lovingkindness") in the Old Testament (Heb: *khesedh*) was translated "grace" in the New Testament (Gr: *kharis*) and means "that which one grants to another, the action of one who volunteers to do something to which he

is not bound."⁶ Since God is the "God of Peace," His grace is always accompanied by true "peace" (Gr: *eirēnē*, corresponding to the Heb: *shalōm*, meaning "'soundness,' 'health,' but coming also to signify 'prosperity,' well-being in general, all good in relation to both man and God."⁷)

- II. *The occasion* of this letter enables Paul to express his appreciation for the faith of the Roman Christians and his anticipation of visiting them soon (1:8-15).
- A. The apostle's prayers in this section are expressive of
1. *Thanksgiving*: for those whom he did not know ("all of you") because of their widely known *faith* (not "works") (1:8; compare Eph. 6:18; 1 Tim. 2:1)
 2. *Intercession*: "Constantly I remember you in my prayers" (1:9; compare 1 Thess. 5:17)
 3. *Request*: "That now at last by God's will the way may be opened for me to come to you" (1:10)
- B. The apostle's purpose in his intended visit involved
1. *Fortification* of the church: "That I may impart to you some spiritual gift to make you strong" (1:11; compare Col. 2:6-7)
 2. *Fellowship* with the church: "That you and I may be mutually encouraged" (1:12)

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3. *Faith* interchanged with the church: “Encouraged by each other’s faith” (1:12)
4. *Fruit* among Christians of Rome: “In order that I may have a harvest among you” (1:13; compare Col. 1:3-8; 1 Cor. 3:5-9)

NOTE: A life of fellowship in faith will result in the bearing of fruit (read carefully John 15:1-16). Paul’s desire to preach the gospel in Rome now becomes a springboard into the body of the letter, in which he fully expounds his gospel.

C. The apostle’s proclamation of the gospel is driven by three “I am’s” (1:14-16; see also 1 Cor. 9:16-17; 2 Cor. 5:13-21; Jer. 20:9).

1. “I am obligated” (1:14).
 - a. This is a life-changing idea! The word “obligated” (Gr: *opheiletēs*) means “a debtor; a person who is under an obligation”⁸ (see Rom. 8:12; 15:27; Gal. 5:3).
 - 1) The church of God loses its identity when it loses its “debtor convictions” (see Ezek. 33:8-9).
 - 2) Evangelism fails when evangelists cease to see themselves as “debtors” (see Acts 20:24-31).
 - b. When our concerns become those of the Lord Jesus Christ (rather than of “Lord Self”), we will become truly convinced

that we are “debtors” in the service of Christ (see Phil. 2:21).

- c. Paul was debtor (for the sake of Jesus Christ) to “both Greeks and non-Greeks, both to the wise and the foolish”; that is, he was conscious of an inescapable duty toward *all people* because of his calling, and he spoke to *all kinds of people* (read again Rom. 1:1).
2. “I am eager” (1:15).
 - a. He was ready to the fullest extent: “As much as in me is.”
 - b. He was ready to meet the most urgent need of all mankind: “To preach the gospel.”

NOTE: To have this “eagerness” one must first realize the debt! It is no wonder that “ready” (Gr: *prothumia*) means “willingness, readiness, good will.”⁹

- c. He was ready to put his message to the severest of tests: the worldly metropolis of Rome.
 - 1) In Rome, the gospel would face its greatest *religious* test: the countless varieties of *paganism*.
 - 2) In Rome, the gospel would face its greatest *political* test: the power of stern Roman *imperialism*.

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- 3) In Rome, the gospel would face its greatest *social* test: the lawless *mobs* of the city.
- 4) In Rome, the gospel would face its greatest *moral* test: a veritable cesspool of *immorality*.
- d. Yet, in the face of these tremendous challenges, Paul was willing and eager; he was ready! (God help us to *get* ready, *be* ready, and *stay* ready!)
3. "I am not ashamed" (1:16).
 - a. Paul uses a word of sobering strength when he writes that he is not "ashamed" (Gr: *epaiskhunomai*, meaning "a feeling of fear or shame which prevents a person from doing something").¹⁰ It is the opposite of courage or boldness (see its usage in Rom. 6:21; Heb. 2:11; 11:16; 2 Tim. 1:8, 12, 16; Mark 8:38).
 - b. Paul gives a two-fold reason for his confidence in the message he preached:
 - 1) "Because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes." (Educational, political, intellectual, and cultural considerations cannot challenge this power.)

- 2) "For in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed." (Paul's gospel reveals the God-given means of man's deliverance from sin and acceptance by God.)
- c. The boldness of Paul's three "I am's" is effective because
 - 1) He linked his "I am" to the great "I Am" (read 1 Cor. 15:10 and compare Gal. 2:20)
 - 2) Without Christ, you may want to be, you may pretend to be, you may intend to be; but with Him, you *are* (read Phil. 3:7-9; 4:13)

III. *The theme* of Paul's letter is stated clearly and concisely (1:16-17).

A. The gospel is the proclamation of "the power of God."

NOTE: "Gospel" is both deeds *and* words; both act *and* interpretation; both power *and* proclamation. Historical facts cannot become "good news" unless their significance is explained.

The failure of some biblical scholars to appreciate the importance of the *interpretation* of God's saving acts in history has helped to produce the overreaction of the denial of the historical foundations of Christianity. The gospel accounts then become nothing more than a collection of subjective impressions written by men of a common era, the explanations of which must remain forever mysterious. While this "solution"

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relieves us of the necessity of studying the Bible as a serious historical work, it leaves us with a collection of merely interesting writings for which there is no final explanation and in which there is no real meaning.

1. The gospel's *cause* is "God."
2. The gospel's *character* is "power."
 - a. It is powerful to save both "Jews and Greeks"—that is, all mankind (read 1 Cor. 1:23).
 - b. It is effective to save only those who believe (read 1 Cor. 1:24).
3. The gospel's *commodity* is "salvation."
 - a. First-century Rome, despite the power of its militant legions and iron chariots, needed the power of salvation from ruin.
 - b. Twentieth-century civilization, despite the power of its jet engines and nuclear reactors, desperately needs God's power of salvation from ruin.
4. The gospel's *compass* includes "everyone."
 - a. There is no nationalistic prejudice (read Col. 3:11).
 - b. There is no "color barrier" (read Gal. 3:28).
 - c. There is no personal or political favoritism (read Rom. 2:5-11).

5. The gospel's *client* is the "believer."
 - a. Faith is the empty hand of the hungry soul.
 - b. Faith, not works of merit, is the means of receiving the gospel (read Rom. 4:4-5; 6:23; 11:6; Gal. 2:21; Eph. 2:8-9; Titus 3:5).
 6. The gospel's *competence* is the "righteousness of God revealed."
 - a. The gospel reveals "God's righteousness," not man's self-righteousness (read Matt. 5:20; Phil. 3:3-11).
 - b. The gospel reveals God's means of delivering people from sin and death as it negates man's self-centered approach to righteousness (read Rom. 10:3).
 7. The gospel's *consequence* is: "The righteous man will live by faith."
- B. The gospel is the "righteousness of God" revealed (1:17).
1. God's righteousness as revealed in the gospel includes both *salvation* (for those "of faith") and *wrath* (against the unbelieving impenitent).
 2. God's righteousness has been made manifest in the doing, dying, and rising again of

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Jesus, and may be appropriated through faith in Him (read Rom. 3:21-22).

3. God's righteousness is "revealed" and "manifested"; it cannot be "discovered" and claimed by man's own right but is received as a gracious gift (read Rom. 6:17-18; 10:1-4 and compare 1 Cor. 1:18-25; Phil. 3:9).

NOTE: Christ "achieves" justification (righteousness), and man "receives" it by faith.

4. God's righteousness is "by faith from first to last" (literally, "*from* faith, *unto* faith").
 - a. "From" (Gr: *ek*) means "out of; from the midst of":¹¹ God's way of saving man has its source in God's own unchanging character (see Rom. 3:1-8 and compare 1 Cor. 1:9; 1 Thess. 5:24; 2 Tim. 2:13; Titus 1:1-3; Heb. 6:18).
 - b. "Unto" (Gr: *eis*) indicates "into (to indicate the goal)."¹²

NOTE: God's righteousness begins in, continues in, and finishes in *faith!* God, who cannot lie, freely commits Himself to our salvation (even at the cost of His own Son), that we might freely respond by committing our lives to His service "in Christ Jesus" (read Heb. 12:1-2).

5. God's righteousness is
 - a. "Grace-righteousness" (see Rom. 3:24)
 - b. "Faith-righteousness" (see Rom. 10:1-5)

- c. Contrasted to man's righteousness (see Rom. 4:5; Rom. 10:9; Phil. 3:9)
- C. The righteous shall live "by faith" (1:17).
 - 1. "It is written" (read Hab. 2:4 and compare Gal. 3:11; Heb. 10:38-39).
 - 2. Man cannot *work* himself into a state of "life": It is "from faith" (from "first to last";¹³ beginning to end; Alpha to Omega).
 - 3. Literally, "Now the just man out of faith will live" (1:17; compare Eph. 2:1-10).

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Righteousness Needed by Gentiles —Romans 1:18-32

OUTLINE OF ROMANS		
INTRODUCTION (1:1-17)		
EXPOSITION (1:18 - 11:36)	Righteousness	PROCLAIMED (1:18 - 3:20)
		PRESENTED (3:21 - 5:21)
		PERFECTED (6:1 - 8:39)
		PURPOSED (9:1 - 11:36)
EXHORTATION (12:1 - 15:13)	Relationships	SPIRITUAL (12:1-2)
		SOCIAL (12:3-8)
		PERSONAL (12:9-21)
		CIVIL (13:1-7)
		PUBLIC (13:8-14)
		FRATERNAL (14:1 - 15:13)
CONCLUSION (15:14-16:27)		

Notes:

- I. Paul's portrait of the Gentile world is that of man giving up God: *Their guilt is exposed* (1:18-23).
 - A. God's wrath is revealed against
 1. All *ungodliness* of men (1:18)
 2. All *unrighteousness* of men (1:18)

NOTE: The "wrath of God" against all human character and conduct which "falls short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23) is clearly revealed throughout human history. This is especially

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seen in the record of God's dealings with man, preserved and interpreted in "the oracles of God."

The reader has only to reflect on such judgments as the great flood of Noah's day, the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, the plagues of Egypt, the conquest of Canaan, captivity of Israel, and Exile of Judah. *God still rules* the nations of the world (see Rom. 13:1-7), and the books of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Daniel, and Revelation are most instructive concerning the principles of His dealings with them (read carefully Jude 5, 7-8, 14-15; 1 Cor. 10:1-11; Acts 17:29-31).

- B. Men, in their unrighteousness, "suppress [hinder] the truth by their wickedness" (1:18).
 - 1. Ungodliness and unrighteousness are opposed to law, conscience, and the truth concerning man's existence in the world.
 - 2. Unrighteousness and ungodliness are opposed to love for God and love for man; man devises systems of thought and ways of life that exclude God, love, and moral responsibility.
- C. God's wrath against that which opposes His Being and His revelation is justified (see Rom. 3:5-6 and compare Isa. 9:19; 13:9; Rom. 12:19; 13:5; Eph. 5:6; Col. 3:6; 1 Thess. 1:10).
- D. Sin is negative: It is antagonistic to God.
 - 1. Sin is a *personal* offense against the only God who is holy (see 1 Peter 1:14-16).
 - 2. "The mind of the flesh is enmity against God" (see Rom. 8:7).

3. Therefore, “the wrath of God” is *against sin!*
- E. Where *sin* and *law* reign, *death* is the consequence and *wrath* is inevitable: the four great forces of human bondage and destruction are law, sin, death, and wrath.
- F. God’s existence is revealed (1:19-20).
1. The existence of God is manifested in creation:

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Revelation declares (1 Cor. 1:21):	Nature declares (Ps. 19:1-6):
<p>The nature of God</p> <p>He is one, Eternal God. He is Father, Son, and Spirit. He is omnipotent. He is personal.</p> <p>He is Creator and Sustainer.</p> <p>He is Love.</p> <p>He may be known by faith.</p>	<p>The existence of God(s)</p> <p>God(s) may be he, she, it, or they. God is beyond creation. God is powerful. God may be personal or nonpersonal. One god may design, another may create, and still another may sustain. God may be cruel or benevolent. The true, infinite God is beyond man’s finite knowledge.</p>

For the transparency version of this chart, see p. 367

NOTE: The above table shows both the *necessity* of special revelation and the *limitations* of God’s “witness” in nature. The testimony of nature is a *confirming* testimony: It *agrees with* God’s special revelation, but cannot (of itself) establish anything that is distinctively “Christian.”

Nature is like one half of a puzzle which fits with the other half (God’s revealed Word) and makes *one* picture when the two are joined together. God’s revealed Word answers the

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questions posed by the existence and orderliness of the creation, and the existence and orderliness of the creation should cause the honest heart to seek the "other half of the puzzle" (read carefully Acts 14:8-18; 17:22-31).

2. God is "clearly seen being understood from what has been made."
 - a. Paul's claim presupposes that all mankind (Adam, Noah, Melchizedek, Abram, Jethro, and so on) have at some time possessed revealed knowledge of the one true God.
 - b. The nations gave up this revelation and descended into idolatry, but God's handiwork continues to testify against them, leaving them "*without excuse.*"
3. The knowledge "of God" is revealed in nature. *General* revelation in nature complements and confirms the *special* revelation of God's Word which the nations had thrown away.
4. Man is "without excuse" because God's "witnesses" testify against him.
 - a. Knowing this, he should seek God.
 - b. Instead, he suppresses the clear testimony of creation and throws away the revealed truth of God's Word.

NOTE: The nations discarded the revealed truth of God in favor of worshipping created things, but the created “gods” themselves testify against such idolatry and pantheism (the belief that nature is itself divine). Man *must worship* because he is man, but creation cries out against the folly of idolatry (see Isa. 44:9-20; Jer. 10:1-16) (1: 19-20).

G. Paul speaks of the resulting *degradation of true religion*: “For although they knew God, they neither glorified Him as God nor gave thanks to Him” (1:21).

NOTE: Man began in monotheism, but ended in polytheism. All of this resulted from failing to give glory and thanks to the true God, and so men’s thinking “became futile, and their foolish hearts were darkened.” Modern man, refusing God’s revealed answers, has proclaimed the “gospel” of Darwin’s theory of evolution and worships himself as the crowning achievement of billions of years of mindless energy and blind chance. *When man refuses to acknowledge God in whose image he is made, he inevitably falls into self-degradation.* “And their foolish hearts were darkened” (read carefully Eph. 4:17-19).

H. Paul exposes man’s *destruction of intelligence*: “Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools” (1:22).

NOTE: When God is denied, man himself is the highest source of knowledge. Man’s unaided intellect, having rejected God’s revelation, is foolish! Nothing could be so foolish as man’s “alternative explanations” of himself and his world (atheism, idolatry, pantheism) (read Ps. 14:1 and compare Hosea 4:6; 1 Cor. 1:20; 3:18-20).

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- I. Paul laments the *debasement of Deity*: “And [they] exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images” (1:23).
1. God made man in His image, but man set out immediately to make God in his own image!
 - a. Paul makes a strong contrast here between the *glory* of God and the *foolishness* of idols.
 - b. He also contrasts the *incorruptible* nature of God and the *corruptible* nature of created things.
 2. The order of his words indicates a definite *descent* of concepts:
 - a. “Man” (lord *over* the earth)
 - b. “Birds” (things *above* the earth)
 - c. “Animals” (literally, “four-footed ones,” things *on* the earth)
 - d. “Reptiles” (or, “creeping things,” things *under* the earth)
 3. When men “know God” but “glorify Him not as God,” this is the ultimate outcome. The Bible addresses the needs of modern man, who seeks to find meaning without God (1:21-23).

- II. Paul's portrait of God's response to idolatry is that of God giving man up to his own choices: *Their guilt is explicit* (1:24-32).

NOTE: By the recurring usage of the phrase, "God gave them over" (1:24, 26, 28), Paul emphasizes that God not only gives man the *right* to choose his own moral and spiritual direction, but He also holds man *responsible* for those choices.

- A. "Therefore God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity" (1:24-25): The fruit of idolatry was *wrong loving*.
1. "They exchanged the truth of God for a lie" (see also 1 Cor. 8:4).
 2. When anyone turns from "the Creator and His revelation" to "the creature and his speculation," he turns from the *truth* to a *lie* (idolatry) (see also James 1:15-16).
- B. "God gave them over to shameful lusts" (1:26-27): The fruit of idolatry was sensuality, or *wrong living*.

NOTE: Paul is not theorizing; he is describing the situation *as it was!* The degeneracy of morals in first-century Roman society is without historical parallel (as the following quotations demonstrate)!

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MORALS IN FIRST-CENTURY ROME¹⁴

"Right and wrong are confounded."—Virgil

"All was one delirium of hate and terror."—Tacitus

"No day passed but someone was executed."—Suetonius, of the reign of Tiberius

"I see Rome, proud Rome, perishing, the victim of her own prosperity."
—Propertius

"The earth no longer brings forth any but bad men and cowards."—Juvenal

It was an age "stricken with the agitation of a soul no longer master of itself."—Seneca

"No guilt or deed of lust is wanting since Roman poverty disappeared."
—Juvenal

"The greater the infamy, the wilder the delight."—Tacitus

"Women were married to be divorced and divorced to be married."—Seneca

"Is one husband enough for Iberina? Sooner will you prevail upon her to be content with one eye."—Juvenal

Juvenal also tells of one woman who had eight husbands in five years, and cites the case of Agrippina (wife of Emperor Claudius) who gave herself nightly to unbridled lust in prostitution.

For the transparency version of this chart, see p. 368

- C. "Even their women exchanged natural relations for unnatural ones" (1:26-27): Vice did not stop with the crude and "natural" vices. The society was "riddled from top to bottom" with *wanton lusting*.
1. Pornography was flaunted.
 2. Prostitution was rampant.
 3. Homosexuality and lesbianism were popular life-styles. (Fourteen of the first fifteen Roman Emperors were professed homosexuals.)¹⁵

4. Promiscuity was widespread.

NOTE: It was here, in first-century Roman society, that Paul was *eager* to preach “the power of the gospel.” How it was needed then! How it is needed *now*! (See 1 Cor. 6:9-11.)

- D. “God gave them up to a depraved mind” (1:28-32): The fruit of idolatry was *wrong thinking*.
1. God gives rebels up to their own choosing: The judgment of God consists partially in the degeneration and deception of sin itself!
 - a. Sin disgraces man (1:24-27).
 - b. Sin destroys society (1:28-32; see also 2 Thess. 2:10-12).
 2. Paul uses the word “depraved” (Gr: *adokimos*), which means “unqualified, worthless, base”¹⁶
- E. The *depraved mind* is “filled [literally, filled to full measure] with every kind of...”
1. Wickedness (Gr: *adikia*: “wrongdoing, misdeeds, unrighteousness, wickedness, injustice”)¹⁷
 2. Evil (Gr: *ponēria*: “wickedness, baseness, maliciousness, sinfulness”)¹⁸
 3. Greed (Gr: *pleonexia*: “greediness, insatiableness, avarice, covetousness”)¹⁹
 4. Depravity (Gr: *kakia*: “badness, faultiness, wickedness, vice”)²⁰
 5. Envy (Gr: *phthonos*: “feeling of displeasure

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- produced by witnessing or hearing of the advantage or prosperity of others; a desire to deprive another of what he has”²¹
6. Murder (Gr: *phonos*: “conceived as a thought which has filled the man”)²²
 7. Strife (Gr: *eris*: “discord, contention”)²³
 8. Deceit (Gr: *dolos*: “cunning, treachery”)²⁴
 9. Malice (Gr: *kakoētheia*: “bad manner or character; evil disposition, malevolence, craftiness”)²⁵
 10. Gossips (Gr: *psithuristēs*: “whisperer, tale-bearer”)²⁶
 11. Slanderers (Gr: *katalalos*: “backbiting,” from a word meaning “to speak against”)²⁷
 12. God-haters (Gr: *theostugēs*: opposed to all that God is and stands for)²⁸
 13. Insolent (Gr: *hubristēs*: “injurious; violent”)²⁹
 14. Arrogant (Gr: *huperēphanos*: “showing oneself above others; proud; disdainful”)³⁰
 15. Boastful (Gr: *alazōn*: “boaster, braggart”)³¹
 16. Inventing ways of doing evil (Gr. for ‘inventor’—*epheuretēs*: “contriver”)³²
 17. Disobedient to parents (Gr. for ‘disobedient’—*apeithēs*: “unwilling to be persuaded; spurning belief”)³³
 18. Senselessness (Gr: *asunetos*: “without

- discernment or understanding; foolish”)³⁴
19. Faithlessness (Gr: *asunthetos*: “faithless,” literally “covenant-breaking”)³⁵
 20. Heartlessness (Gr: *astorgos*: “without natural affection; having no love of kindred”)³⁶
 21. Ruthlessness (Gr: *aneleēmōn*: “without mercy”)³⁷

NOTE: The only fruit that can be borne by those whom God “gives up” is the fruit of their own ways: corruption, perversion, and depravity.

- F. “They know God’s righteous decree” (1:32).
1. They knew right and wrong because God had revealed His truth among them.
 2. They knew that certain crimes were worthy of death because their consciences had been informed.
 3. They willingly and rebelliously practiced such things.
 4. They consented, approved, and encouraged others to “commit suicide”!

NOTE: What people *love* influences their lives more than what they *know* academically. *Knowing* God and His way intellectually is one thing. *Acknowledging* Him and His way practically is quite another (consider carefully John 7:17; 17:3; Phil. 3:7-11 and compare Rom. 2:17-29).

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¹Vincent, *Word Studies in the New Testament*, 4 vols. (Originally publ. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1887), reprint edition: (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publ. Co., 1946), 3:2. (Hereafter cited as Vincent, *Word Studies*.)

²In the two chronologies of Paul's life discussed in Guthrie, one gives the date of his conversion as A.D. 35, the other A.D. 37 (Donald Guthrie, *New Testament Introduction* [Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1970], pp. 662-670).

³Bauer-Arndt-Gingrich-Danker, pp. 99-100.

⁴Bauer-Arndt-Gingrich-Danker, p. 436.

⁵Bauer-Arndt-Gingrich-Danker, p. 127.

⁶Bauer-Arndt-Gingrich-Danker, p. 877.

⁷W. L. Walker, "Peace," 4:2293 in *The International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia*, edited by James Orr et al. (reprint edition: Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publ. Co., 1939). Compare Bauer-Arndt-Gingrich-Danker, p. 227.

⁸W. E. Vine, *An Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*, one-volume edition (Westwood, NJ: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1952), 1:277. Hereafter cited as "Vine."

⁹Bauer-Arndt-Gingrich-Danker, p. 706.

¹⁰Vine, 1:77.

¹¹Vine, 3:149.

¹²Bauer-Arndt-Gingrich-Danker, pp. 228-229.

¹³NIV translation of *ek pisteōs eis pistin* (literally, "out of faith into faith"). Bauer-Arndt-Gingrich-Danker (p. 236) says: "*ek—eis* with the same word repeated gives it special emphasis" and cites Rom. 1:17 as an example.

¹⁴These quotations are from William Barclay, *The Letter of St. Paul to the Romans* (Daily Study Bible), (Phila-

delphia: Westminster Press, 1957), pp. 23-25. (Hereafter cited as Barclay, *Romans*.)

¹⁵Barclay, *Romans*, p. 25.

¹⁶Bauer-Arndt-Gingrich-Danker, p. 18.

¹⁷Bauer-Arndt-Gingrich-Danker, pp. 17-18.

¹⁸Bauer-Arndt-Gingrich-Danker, p. 690.

¹⁹Bauer-Arndt-Gingrich-Danker, p. 667.

²⁰Bauer-Arndt-Gingrich-Danker, p. 397.

²¹Vine, 2:37 (compare Bauer-Arndt-Gingrich-Danker, p. 857).

²²Vincent, 3:23.

²³Bauer-Arndt-Gingrich-Danker, p. 309.

²⁴Bauer-Arndt-Gingrich-Danker, p. 203.

²⁵Vine, 3:32 (compare Bauer-Arndt-Gingrich-Danker, p. 397).

²⁶Bauer-Arndt-Gingrich-Danker, p. 893.

²⁷Vine, 1:94 (compare Bauer-Arndt-Gingrich-Danker, p. 412).

²⁸Barclay, *Romans*, pp. 29-30. Other lexicographers suggest the meaning "hateful to God" (see Vine, 2:198; Bauer-Arndt-Gingrich-Danker, p. 358).

²⁹Vine, 2:263 (compare Bauer-Arndt-Gingrich-Danker, p. 832).

³⁰Vine, 2:198 (compare Bauer-Arndt-Gingrich-Danker, p. 841).

³¹Bauer-Arndt-Gingrich-Danker, p. 34.

³²Bauer-Arndt-Gingrich-Danker, p. 330.

³³Vine, 1:319.

³⁴Vine, 2:114.

³⁵Bauer-Arndt-Gingrich-Danker, p. 118.

³⁶Vine, 1:37.

³⁷Vine, 4:172.

Lesson Four

Romans
2:1 - 3:20

That was the whole tragedy of the Jews. They thought that because they had been circumcised they were of necessity the children of God and had nothing to worry about. . . . Paul has demolished the whole case of the Jew who relied on circumcision. . . . All such reliance upon nationality or some human association is entirely excluded by this argument about circumcision.

—D. M. Lloyd-Jones

Righteousness Needed by Jews —Romans 2:1-29

OUTLINE OF ROMANS		
INTRODUCTION (1:1-17)		
EXPOSITION (1:18 - 11:36)	Righteousness	PROCLAIMED (1:18 - 3:20)
		PRESENTED (3:21 - 5:21)
		PERFECTED (6:1 - 8:39)
		PURPOSED (9:1 - 11:36)
EXHORTATION (12:1 - 15:13)	Relationships	SPIRITUAL (12:1-2)
		SOCIAL (12:3-8)
		PERSONAL (12:9-21)
		CIVIL (13:1-7)
		PUBLIC (13:8-14)
		FRATERNAL (14:1 - 15:13)
CONCLUSION (15:14-16:27)		

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NOTE: The Jews also are “without excuse,” as were the Gentiles (2:1) (see Rom. 1:20). The Jewish moralist “condemned himself” by the same judgment that he pronounced upon those Gentiles whom he despised! He was condemned because he was *guilty*: “because you who pass judgment do the same things” (2:1). He was even *more guilty* than his Gentile contemporaries, for his advantages were greater (see Rom. 3:1-20).

- I. The Jew and Gentile are equally under condemnation: the Jew with the law, the Gentile without the law of Moses. Consider the following ten principles of God’s righteous judgment (2:1-16):

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- A. Judgment considers *personal guilt* (2:1).
 - 1. Although the Jew despised the moral condition of others, he was personally guilty of self-righteousness and pride (2:1; compare Matt. 7:1-2; Luke 16:15; 18:9-14).
 - 2. His practice of sin and failure to “keep the law” placed him under the same condemnation as all others.
 - 3. God’s judgment is against “*practicing sinners.*”
- B. Judgment operates on the *basis of truth* (2:2).
 - 1. Judgment is always according to truth.
 - 2. Judgment demands a standard. Whose will it be: man’s or God’s? (2:1-2)
 - 3. Judgment’s standard is truth because it is based upon the righteousness of God.
- C. Judgment is *inescapable* in its effect (2:3).
 - 1. It is both present and future (read John 3:36).
 - 2. It is both physical and spiritual, temporal and eternal (read Heb. 2:3; Rom. 1:27; 1 Cor. 11:30).
 - 3. It is judicial and penal (read James 4:11-12; Matt. 25:41-46).
 - 4. It is individual in its effect: “O, Man” (see Greek text) (read Rom. 14:11; 2 Cor. 5:10).

- D. Judgment considers God's offered *goodness* (2:4).
1. Goodness causes the postponement of wrath and judgment (read 2 Peter 3:9).
 2. Goodness is for the purpose of "leading to repentance" (read Rom. 11:22).
 3. Goodness "despised" can result in nothing but wrath and condemnation. (The Jew was not approved for his "moral goodness"!)
 4. God "forebears": He is patient in condemnation so that people may have opportunity to repent (read Rev. 2:5, 16; 3:3, 19).
- E. Judgment is *future* as well as *present* (2:5).
1. The one who presumes to judge will be judged (read Rom. 2:1; 3:19).
 2. Judgment is being pronounced even as Paul writes these words of condemnation in his effort to break man's egocentric hardness of heart!
 3. Self-righteous man is *accumulating* ("storing up") this wrath. (Plain preaching is a necessity in breaking through a hard heart!)
- F. Judgment is based upon *divine justice* (2:6).
1. Every man will be judged "according to his works" (read Rom. 14:10-12).
 2. That this refers to the final judgment is clear from the contrast made in the immediate

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- context (see Rom. 2:7-8 and compare Matt. 25:31-46).
3. The relationship of “faith” and “works” is to be Paul’s major discussion in later passages.
- G. Judgment has its *rewards and regrets* (2:7-10; compare 1 Peter 4:16-17; 2 Thess. 1:5-10).
1. The rewards are *glory, honor, peace, incorruption, and eternal life* for each person who persists in doing good (read carefully 1 Peter 1:3-7; Phil. 2:12-13 and compare Gal. 6:7-10; Titus 2:14; 3:8, 15; Eph. 2:10).
 2. The regrets are *wrath, anger, trouble, and distress* for each person who seeks his own evil way and rejects God’s truth (read carefully Matt. 7:21-23; Rom. 1:32; 1 Cor. 6:9-10; Gal. 5:19-21; Eph. 5:5-6; Col. 3:5-6).
- H. Judgment is *impartial* (2:11).
1. It is without favoritism (read Acts 10:34; James 2:1-9).
 2. It is not a question of who you are.
 3. The question is, “What have you done with your life?” (read Matt. 25:1-46).
- I. Judgment is *universal* in its scope (2:12-15).
1. No man (Jew or Greek) has ever been without some form of law before (read Lev. 18:5; Ps. 147:19-20 and compare Rom. 5:12-14).

NOTE: From the beginning, God has revealed His law to mankind. All were under a patriarchal system initially, in which God spoke to the heads of certain families (see Rom. 5:12-14; Heb. 1:1). Throughout history, Gentiles had proven to be sinners in three important ways: *First*, they failed to keep patriarchal law (no matter how corrupt or faded this revelation might have become through the transmission of the traditions). *Second*, they failed to live up to the standards of behavior which they bound upon their fellowman. *Third*, they violated the standards of their own consciences.

Conscience is one of man's built-in (natural) faculties, but it requires education in order to function. Conscience may be educated properly or poorly. Conscience is the core of personality. It is the mind's function of self-judgment (see Rom. 2:14-15; 14:23).

2. Paul describes three types of action related to "the law" (of Moses):
 - a. Those who have sinned without "the law" will perish without "the law."
 - b. Not "hearers" of law will be justified, but "doers."
 - c. Those without "the law" are "a law unto themselves," since they selectively practice the things of law "naturally." (Paul's phrase "by nature" is used here to mean "by *acquired* nature or custom," as in 1 Cor. 11:14; Eph. 2:3; Rom. 2:27).
3. Thus, they show *the work* of the law written in their hearts (not the law itself, but the

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- necessity of submitting to a code of ethics to which their conscience bears witness (2:12-14; see also James 1:22-25).
4. Judgment (wrath) is upon all sinners, whether Jew or Greek.
 - a. Jews sinned against ceremonial laws. Greeks sinned against patriarchal laws.
 - b. Jews sinned against God's revealed moral laws. Greeks sinned against their own moral codes passed on by tradition and often produced or modified by human reasoning.
 - c. Jews sinned against their individual consciences. Greeks also sinned by violating their own consciences (read again Rom. 2:6-11).
 - J. Judgment's standard is based upon the *gospel* (2:16; compare Acts 17:31).
 1. God's judgment is according to the *heart*; that is, the inner core of motivation (see Rom. 2:28-29).
 2. God's judgment will expose the "secrets of men" (see Heb. 4:12-13; 1 Cor. 4:3-5 and Rev. 2:23).
 3. God's judgment of sinners can be escaped only by the removal of sin by the Son of God, Jesus Christ: thus, we have the *sin*

problem and the *Son solution* (The “sin problem” is answered only by the “Son solution.” It is a new life founded upon a new Lord!)

II. Jewish privileges did not attain righteousness (2:17-29).

- A. The sentence structure of Rom. 2:17-20 indicates that the “if” clause should be consistently understood as “since” throughout this section:

NOTE: The grammatical construction and interpretation of the entire passage hinges on the word “if” (Rom. 2:17). “If” (Gr: *eî*) introduces a “first class conditional sentence” (a grammatical construction which *assumes* that the condition is fulfilled).¹ This means that “if” could rightly be translated “since.” This use of the word “if” appears frequently in Paul’s writings (see Rom. 5:10, 15, 17; 6:5, 8; 8:31; 1 Cor. 6:2; Phil. 2:1). Thus the rendering of the verse would literally read: “*Since* you are classifiable as a Jew” (“If you call yourself a Jew—and you *do* actually bear such a name”). The condition is understood as fulfilled.

1. “*Since* you are a Jew....”
2. “*Since* you depend upon your relationship to law....”
3. “*Since* you glory in being in covenant relationship with God....”
4. “*Since* you presume to know God’s will....”
5. “*Since* you pass judgment upon what things are good and bad....”

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6. “*Since* you have all confidence that you have all the answers....”
 7. “*Since* you consider yourself to be the light to all in darkness....”
 8. “*Since* you assume to instruct correctly the foolish....”
 9. “*Since* you feel mature enough to instruct novices....”
- B. The logic of Paul’s exposition is seen in the following syllogism:
1. *Major premise*: God is righteous and impartial to condemn those who have violated His righteous law (2:1-16).
 2. *Minor premise*: The Jews have violated God’s righteous law (2:17-29).
 3. *Conclusion*: The Jews are justly under God’s condemnation and wrath (3:1-20).
- NOTE*: Paul, in the minor premise, deals a death blow to those Jews who were hypocritical, boasting, and self-righteous.
- C. The self-righteous Jew’s “claims of privilege” (2:17-20):
1. *He claimed a name* (2:17), and depended more upon that name (Jew) than reality warranted.
 - a. Just to wear a name is not enough; one must *be* what that name designates (see 1 Cor. 1:12).

- b. To wear even the name of Christ amounts to nothing, unless one actually is a *genuine* Christian (see Luke 3:8; Rom. 9:6-8; John 8:39-47 and compare John 13:34-35).²
- 2. *He claimed a document* (2:17).
 - a. Insisting on establishing his own righteousness, the Jew placed his hope in the very law that condemned him.
 - b. He considered himself to be God's special favorite who held exclusive title to knowledge of God (see Rom. 2:11).
- 3. *He claimed a Deity* by arrogantly assuming that God was his and *his only* (2:17).
 - a. The polytheistic Greeks saw the Jews as atheists for their refusal to worship and acknowledge their many "deities".
 - b. The Jew did *claim* to trust in the one true God.
- 4. *He claimed to know* God's revealed will (2:18), and took much pride in that fact; yet, he did not *do* God's revealed will (see Hosea 4:6; John 5:39-40; 8:47; Gal. 6:13).
- 5. *He claimed discernment* in distinguishing between excellence and inferiority, and in determining the fine distinctions of right and wrong (2:18; see Matt. 23:1-3, 23-24).

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6. *He claimed to possess special instruction* (2:18).
 - a. He knew his “catechism” of Mosaic code and oral tradition in great detail.
 - b. He had “God, His will, and the law,” but a high standard of instruction and knowledge calls for a high standard of life!
7. *He claimed leadership* in lighting the way for the lost and in guiding the blind (2:19); this claim, however, was only an assumption.
 - a. It is one thing to *point*, and another thing to *lead*.
 - b. It is one thing to *say*, and yet another to *do* (see Matt. 23:1-4 and compare Acts 1:1).
8. *He claimed to be a light-bearer*, which was true, to a degree (2:19).
 - a. The Jewish people gave us the prophets, psalms, Messiah, and most of the New Testament writings.
 - b. They possessed light, but their proud, nationalistic spirit dimmed that light; they possessed the light, but they did not reflect it to others (see Matt. 5:13-16 and compare Rom. 2:20; 3:6; 9:3-5).

9. *He claimed to be an educator* who “corrected the foolish” (2:20).
 - a. Yet he did not correct his own foolish and legalistic ways.
 - b. The Jew knew so much more than the Gentile, but he forgot to teach *himself* (see Matt. 5:20-6:18).
 10. *He claimed maturity* as a “teacher of babes” (2:20).
 - a. He indeed had in the law “the embodiment of knowledge and truth,” but he had “denied its power.”
 - b. To him, religion was merely a matter of formal ritual and external behavior, and not of “the heart” (2:28-29; see James 1:27; 2 Tim. 3:5; 1 Tim. 1:3-11 and compare Mark 7:1-23; Isa. 1:10-20; Amos 5:21-24; Micah 6:6-8.)
- D. The righteousness of God holds the self-righteous Jew responsible (2:21-24).
1. *He is responsible for his practice*, since it is morally axiomatic that a teacher must first teach himself (2:21).
 - a. This is the flaw of the self-righteous: Always telling others, they seldom tell themselves.

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- b. The greatest evidence of true righteousness is purity of life (see Matt. 23:14; Luke 11:52 and compare Matt. 5:6, 8; 7:1-3; John 8:39; 1 Tim. 4:12-16; Titus 1:13-16; 1 John 3:7-10).
2. *He is responsible for personal purity (2:22; see Matt. 5:27-30; 6:22-23; 15:17-20; John 8:1-11).*
3. *He is responsible for practical sanctification, which decisively excludes the practice of robbing the pagan temples (2:22): Even to touch such booty was a detestable sin under the law (see Deut. 7:25; Acts 19:37).*
4. *He is responsible for promoting God's honor (2:23).*
 - a. They gloried in the law, but not in the God who gave them that law.
 - b. They transgressed the law, because they were concerned for legality in the *letter of the law* (external appearances), but cared nothing for the *spirit* of the law (inward intent and motivation behind it).
 - c. As a *holy God*, God is honored by a *holy life*, but dishonored by the opposite (see Lev. 11:44-45; 1 Peter 1:14-16; Matt. 15:7-9; 6:1-18; 23:5, 16-28; Luke 16:15; Rom. 7:5-6; 2 Cor. 3:3, 6).

5. *He is responsible for the consequence of his irresponsibility (2:24-25).*
- a. Failing in practice, purity, sanctification, and honor, the Jews caused God's name to be blasphemed.
 - b. They proved not to live up to their own law, and thus became a laughing stock to their Gentile neighbors.
 - c. Paul's conclusion is justified, because the law demanded obedience; therefore, "circumcision has value *if you observe the law*" (see 1 Peter 2:11-12 and compare John 17:20-21).

NOTE: In verse 24, Paul alludes to Isa. 52:5 in his reference to Gentiles blaspheming the name of God because of the conduct of the Jews. The original application of the passage concerned the pagans' response to Israel's Babylonian exile (because of Israel's sins). Without prophetic revelation, the nations thought Israel's exile was due to the weakness or indifference of Israel's God. Though the Gentiles were wrong in their assessment of the situation, Israel's wickedness *had* caused the judgment that provided opportunity for the dishonoring of God's name. Paul sees the same principle at work in the case of Jews who glory in the law but flagrantly dishonor it in full view of their Gentile neighbors.

- E. The proof of genuine Jewishness is inward as well as outward (2:25-29).

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1. The outward mark of Judaism was circumcision; however outwardness alone is not a sufficient basis for relationship to God, as Paul notes in the following contrasts (2:25-27):
 - a. "You have become as though you had not been circumcised."
 - b. "Will they not be regarded as though they were circumcised?"

NOTE: The difference between legalism and Christianity is: Christianity is a *spiritual* religion, a religion of the *heart*. Jesus had plainly taught that fleshly relationship is nothing. It is the spiritual rebirth that matters (see John 3:3-5; 4:23-24; 6:63; also, the Study Guide, *Building Up The Church Through Spirituality* and the Expanded Study Guide, *John: That You May Have Life*, both by Larry Deason).

2. The inward mark of Judaism is a heart of faith that obeys *out of love*: The real Jew is the spiritual Jew whose circumcision is inward (of the heart) and whose obedience is consistent (even though not flawless) (see Lev. 26:40-41; Deut. 10:16; 30:6; Jer. 4:4 and compare Matt. 3:9-10; Rom. 9:6).

NOTE: The self-righteous Jew has failed Paul's test. It is not a matter of *birth*, but of *re-birth*. It is not *pedigree*, but *purity* of heart and life. It is not what *men* think, but what *God* thinks (see Luke 16:15; Matt. 6:1; Gal. 1:10) (2:29).

Righteousness Needed by All

—Romans 3:1-20

- I. Of what profit is Jewishness (according to Paul's gospel)? (3:1-9)
- A. The preeminent advantage of the Jews (and the profit of circumcision) is that they were "entrusted with the very words of God." This primary advantage led to many other advantages (3:1-2; read also Rom. 9:3-5; Eph. 2:11-15).
1. They were the people of God (3:1; see Rom. 9:4-5 and compare Deut. 7:6; Exod. 19:3-6).
 2. They were entrusted with the Word of God (see Rom. 3:2).
 3. They were beneficiaries of the faithfulness of God (see Rom. 3:3).
 4. They could depend upon the truthfulness of God (see Rom. 3:4).
 5. They magnified the righteousness of God (see Rom. 3:5).
 6. They were subject to the judgment and justice of God (see Rom. 3:6).
 7. They were the showcase for the glory of God (see Rom. 3:7-8 and compare Rom. 9:4).
 8. They were elected as custodians of God's covenants (see Rom. 9:4; Eph. 2:11-15).

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9. They were given the law (see Rom. 9:4).
10. They were employed in the service of God (see Rom. 9:4).
11. They were heirs of God's promises (see Rom. 9:4).
12. They were descendants of the faithful fathers (see Rom. 9:5).
13. They were the people of the Messiah (see Rom. 9:5).

NOTE: Advantages mean responsibilities, and this is where "some" (most) of the Jews failed (read Rom. 3:3 and compare Acts 7:37-53; 1 Cor. 10:1-10).

B. The perversity and corruption of the unbelieving Jew does not make ineffective God's faithfulness and righteousness (3:3-8).

1. Paul poses a question concerning the Jews' "unfaithfulness" (3:3).
 - a. Will God break His word if some (most) do not show proper faith? (Compare Heb. 3:7-4:11.)
 - b. Does God's faithfulness depend upon man's faithfulness? (Read 2 Tim. 2:13.)
 - c. Does human unfaithfulness destroy God's faithfulness?
 - d. Does God break His covenants with Israel (through Abraham and Moses) if He condemns the faithless Jew?

2. Paul pronounces a decisive reply: “Not at all!” (3:4)
 - a. He cringes at the very thought of God being unfaithful and presents scriptural proof that God is faithful.
 - b. In fact, the judgment of God is enacted by His own words, as infallible in the case of Christ-rejecting Jews as in the case of the adultery of David long ago (read carefully Ps. 51:4 and compare Ps. 89:30-37).

NOTE: When God is tried, He is found “true” and righteous! God is justified in whatever He says and “prevails” over (conquers) the criticisms of those who would slander the righteousness of His ways. Because He is who He is, He must “bless” and “curse” in order to be faithful to Himself (read Rom. 3:26; 9:16-24; 11:22; 2 Tim. 2:12-13).

3. Paul anticipates a question concerning the righteousness of God’s wrath (3:5).
 - a. The Jewish unbeliever might argue: “Is not God unrighteous for condemning the Jew?” (Men always try to excuse and justify themselves in their sin!)
 - b. “Is not unrighteousness a virtue (and therefore, desirable) if it magnifies God’s righteousness?”
 - c. “How can God be righteous in visiting

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with wrath, when He condemns the very thing that establishes His righteousness (namely, the unbelief of the Jewish nation which resulted in the crucifixion of Jesus)?”

4. Paul answers with a resolute: “Certainly not! If that were so, how could God judge the world?” (3:6-7)

NOTE: If sin is a virtue, no man (Jew or Gentile) could be judged! The more one sinned, the more he would show God to be righteous! Therefore, the Gentile (Greek) would receive greater *commendation* than the Jew! (This would be thought-provoking to a Jew.) *If sin is a virtue, “universal salvation” logically follows, for “all are under sin.”* The Jews knew better than ever to accept this conclusion. Yet, they still attempted to justify their rejection of Jesus with blasphemous reasoning: “Why judge me for rejecting the gospel if it is my falseness (rejection of truth and righteousness) that enhances God’s truthfulness and so increases His glory? The logical conclusion of Paul’s gospel is: ‘Let us do evil that good may result.’” (This was falsely reported as being the teaching of Paul and those who believed his gospel.)

5. Paul concludes that those slandering Christ’s ministers with such wicked reasoning and accusations would receive their *just* reward: *condemnation* (3:8).
- C. Paul’s question concerning the spiritual status of the Jews summarizes his argument that “all are under sin” (3:9).

1. He raises the question: "Are we [Jews] better than they [Gentiles]?" With all their advantages, could they (in and of themselves) boast and glory? Can we? (Read carefully Rom. 3:1-2, 27-31 and compare 1 Cor. 1:28-31; Eph. 2:8-9.)
 2. His answer resounds: "Not at all! All are under sin!"
 - a. The *extent* of the verdict is "all."
 - b. The *dominion* of the verdict is "under."
 - c. The *nature* of the verdict is "sin."
- II. Paul offers proof from Jewish Scriptures that Jews share in the condemnation of sin (3:10-18).

NOTE: The collection and use of Scripture as noted here is known as "*kharaz*," meaning "pearl-stringing."³ Paul's background as a student of the rabbi Gamaliel becomes evident in his teaching method here (see Acts 5:33-40; 22:1-3; Gal. 1:14).

Paul "strings together" these "pearls" from the Jews' own Bible to drive home his point that "*all are under sin*"—yes, including the Jew (read Pss. 14:1-3; 5:9; 140:3; 10:7; 36:1; Isa. 59:7-8).

- A. *Sin in character* is described in the following terms (3:10-12).
1. "There is no one righteous."
 2. "There is no one who understands."
 3. "[There is] no one who seeks God."
 4. "There is no one who does good."
 5. "All have turned away."

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6. "They have together become worthless."

NOTE: Men need to repent of what they *are*, as well as what they *do* (see Matt. 5:1-6:18; Jer. 17:9-10).

B. *Sins of conduct* are noted

1. In word (vulgarity; deception; slander; blasphemous profanity) (3:13-14)
2. In works (murder; destruction; strife) (3:15-17)

C. The *sin of contempt* toward God is the source of all sinfulness manifested throughout the whole personality (3:18; see Prov. 1:7; Rom. 1:21).

1. The sin of *disrespect* for authority starts here.

2. The sin of *irreverence* toward those of superior status starts here.

3. The sin of *disregard* for others starts here.

D. These Old Testament passages are Paul's "anatomy of evil" to declare strongly to the self-righteous Jew that his own Scriptures convict him *thoroughly* (3:10-18; see Rom. 3:19 and compare Rom. 6:13; Eph. 2:1-3; Titus 3:3).

1. "Their throats" are indicted (3:13).

2. "Their tongues" are accused (3:13).

3. "Their lips" are impeached (3:13).

4. "Their mouths" are arraigned (3:14).

5. "Their feet" are incriminated (3:15).

6. "Their minds" are implicated (3:16-17).
7. "Their eyes" are cited (3:18).

NOTE: The *Scriptures* prove that "none are righteous," and the *Scriptures* speak to *the Jew* (read Rom. 3:1-2, 19 and compare Ps. 147:19-20). Therefore, if a Jew denies his need of righteousness, he denies his own *Scriptures*! The point is established: "All are under sin," and in need of God's righteousness.

III. Paul expounds on the place of (the) law in his preaching of the gospel (3:19-20).

NOTE: Paul uses the article in Rom. 3:19 (the law), since he is specifically addressing the Jew out of his own law (*Scriptures*). His concern was to silence "every mouth" (including the *Jewish* mouth), to show that "all" are under the condemnation of sin. In Rom. 3:20, Paul drops the article to speak of the general principle of "law." To Paul, the Mosaic law was the preeminent representative of all legal systems.

A. Paul defines the *negative* function of (the) law:

What it *cannot* do.

1. Law *cannot* pardon and save.
2. Law *cannot* justify and make righteous.
3. Law's works *cannot* earn salvation for any man. If law *could* save, Christ would not have had to die! (Carefully consider Gal. 2:21; 3:21.)

NOTE: Legal justification is impossible. If justification is by law (works), "grace is no more grace"! (See Rom. 11:6.)

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4. Law *cannot* heal and remedy sin.
5. Law *does not have* the power or office to justify a person.
- B. Paul defines the *positive* function of (the) law: What it *can* do.
 1. Law *can* stop the mouths of self-righteous and sinful people.
 2. Law *can* bring “the whole world” under the condemnation of the righteous wrath and judgment of God. (No man has ever been without law) (read again Rom. 2:1-16).
 3. Law *can* reveal the knowledge of sin.
 - a. The law is like a mirror in that it can let you know that you are not clean and need washing.
 - b. But, as a mirror cannot reach out and cleanse a smudge from your face, neither can law remove guilt from a sinner! (Read Rom. 7:7, 13; Gal. 3:19 and compare James 1:22-24.)

NOTE: A law (legal code; set of rules) has no power to redeem a lost sinner! No sin has ever been, nor can ever be, forgiven through a “works” or “legal” justifying principle! Another approach is needed, and it is given. Thank God! (See Rom. 3:21-26 and compare Rom. 7:21-8:4; see Appendix 1.)

- C. In view of what law *can* and *cannot* do, what should the lost and judged man do?
1. The law is not the end of man's hope, but Christ is the "end" of the law (read carefully Rom. 10:3-4 and compare Gal. 3:10-14).
 2. Therefore every man, having no refuge in law (self), should throw himself upon the gracious mercy of the benevolent Judge who is our Savior. There is *saving power* in the righteousness of God!

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¹See Robert W. Funk, ed., *A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, translated and edited from F. Blass and A. Debrunner, eds., *Grammatik des neutestamentlichen Griechisch* (10th edition: Göttingen, Germany: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1959); English edition: (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961), § 372, 3 (pp. 189-190); hereafter cited as Blass-Debrunner-Funk. See also Lenski, *Romans*, p. 179.

²See the Expanded Study Guide, *Genuine Discipleship*, L. Deason.

³Barclay, *Romans*, p. 51.

**The Book of Romans:
“The Righteousness
of God”**

Part III

***Righteousness
Presented***

Lesson Five

Romans
3:21 - 4:25

When Paul speaks of God justifying the sinner, he means that God, instead of punishing the sinner, instead of issuing penalty like a righteous but merciless judge, treats the sinner as if he had been a good man. . . . Instead of smashing the sinner, He welcomes him with open arms. Instead of outpouring the mighty vials of His outraged holiness, He pours out the cleansing waters of His sacrificial love.

— William Barclay

Righteousness is “in Christ” —Romans 3:21-31

OUTLINE OF ROMANS		
INTRODUCTION (1:1-17)		
EXPOSITION (1:18 - 11:36)	Righteousness	PROCLAIMED (1:18 - 3:20)
		PRESENTED (3:21 - 5:21)
		PERFECTED (6:1 - 8:39)
		PURPOSED (9:1 - 11:36)
EXHORTATION (12:1 - 15:13)	Relationships	SPIRITUAL (12:1-2)
		SOCIAL (12:3-8)
		PERSONAL (12:9-21)
		CIVIL (13:1-7)
		PUBLIC (13:8-14)
		FRATERNAL (14:1 - 15:13)
CONCLUSION (15:14-16:27)		

Notes:

- I. The righteousness of God is “through faith in Christ Jesus” (3:21-26). (These verses comprise the very marrow of the gospel.)

NOTE: The “righteousness of God” to which Paul refers in this section is not primarily God’s own righteous character (though this righteousness flows out of God’s very Being), but is rather His way of delivering people from the condemnation of sin. It speaks of God’s means of restoring man to a *right* standing with *Himself*. (Read again the material on “righteousness” in Lesson Two.)

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The phrase “righteousness of God” should not be understood in a purely forensic or judicial sense, however. God is not a Judge who merely hands down decrees from on high, but One who personally acts to deliver the oppressed, and to execute justice on their behalf (as the kings and judges of Israel’s past had done in an inferior way).

- A. The righteousness of God is *revealed* in the gospel of Jesus (read again Rom. 1:16-17).
- B. God’s righteousness has been *made known* in the message of the gospel, and has nothing to do with law-keeping of any kind (Mosaic or otherwise) (3:21; see also Rom. 6:17-18 and compare 1 Cor. 15:1-4).

NOTE: Paul states the plain fact that the principle of “law” cannot save people. “Law” can only manifest man’s *unrighteousness*. The gospel alone manifests God’s *righteousness*. There are no exceptions to these principles (read Rom. 3:20, 23-24 and compare Rom. 1:16-17).

- C. God’s righteousness is *attested* by the Old Testament revelation (“Law and the Prophets”) (3:21).
 - 1. Though righteousness is “apart” from law, it is not contrary to it.
 - 2. God’s righteousness clearly bears His stamp of authenticity in the types, promises, and prophecies of the Hebrew Scriptures (see Luke 24:25-27, 44-47; John 5:39, 46;

Acts 3:21-24; 2 Tim. 3:15-17; 1 Peter 1:10-12; 2 Peter 1:19-21).

3. Romans 4:4-25 will prove this point.
- D. God's righteousness is *appropriated* by faith (3:22): The key words are "through faith" and "believe," which take us back to the key passage of the book (read again Rom. 1:16-17).
1. This "faith principle" is applicable to all people and implies a living relationship of "trust in Christ." Thus, all are without hope, except through faith in Jesus Christ, the Son of God.
 2. It is important to recall that our English words "faith" and "believe" have the same root meaning: One's faith is the end product of his believing.
 - a. A valid, genuine faith involves trust and commitment, a delivery of the whole self into complete dependence on the Savior.
 - b. Thus "believing," the righteous shall *by faith* live.
 3. "Law-righteousness" is "works-righteousness," and is not "*faith-righteousness*." But God's righteousness is "of faith" that it may be given freely by *grace*.
 4. Faith is the natural response to the freely-given sin offering of Christ. So, we are

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saved (both made alive and kept alive) by *grace*, and through *faith* (believing) we are “accounted” righteous by God (read carefully Rom. 3:9, 23 and compare Rom. 10:4-6; Gal. 3:11-12; Phil. 3:8-9; Eph 2:8-9; Rom. 3:24; 4:16).

- E. God’s righteousness is needed by “all”: Paul’s emphasis of this word “all” shows the *quality* of the need (it is desperate) as well as its *quantity* (a measure of the vast need of humanity) (3:23; compare Rom. 3:9, 19, 23; 11:32).
- F. God’s righteousness is provided historically in the *fact* of the Cross and experientially by *faith* in the saving significance of the blood of Jesus Christ (3:24). Seeking to know and understand both the *fact* and the *faith* of the “righteousness of God in Christ Jesus” necessitates a study of the vocabulary of God’s righteousness.
 - 1. *Justify* (Gr: *dikaioō*) means “to be acquitted, pronounced and treated as righteous, set free, made pure.”¹
 - a. Justification is God’s sovereign right (based on His eternal scheme of redemption) to “credit as righteous” *all* condemned persons immediately upon their “obedience of faith” (see Rom. 1:5; 16:26).

- b. Justification is a “forensic” justification, in the sense that it is based on something “outside of me”: Its basis is the saving work of God in the Cross of Jesus Christ.²
 - c. We are *accounted* righteous, even though, in our own right, we are not truly righteous and are personally *undeserving* of this status.
 - d. We are permitted to wear the robes of Christ’s righteousness; *He* is our righteousness, since we “have not a righteousness of our own” (see 1 Cor. 1:30; Phil. 3:9 and compare Gal. 3:26-27).
2. Since salvation is not of law (works), it must be offered *freely*. (This is what grace implies.)
- a. Justification is out of man’s reach, except as a *gift*: It is *freely given* (bestowed) since sin is such an offensive thing to God that man (of himself) could never make a suitable atonement.
 - b. Human “earning power” (works of merit) is certainly insufficient to offset the terrible effects of sin! “Not the labor of my hands can fulfill the law’s demands.”

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- c. Since we cannot earn salvation, we are “justified *freely*” in Christ, because of His saving act in our behalf (see Eph. 2:8-9; Rom. 6:23; Titus 3:4-7 and compare 2 Cor. 5:21; Gal. 3:13; Heb. 2:9; 1 Peter 2:24).
3. *Grace* is the reason that one is justified *freely*: God justifies, not on the basis of human merit or legal justice, but on the ground of His own personal *lovingkindness* and pure *goodness* (see Rom. 11:6; Eph. 2:8 and compare Rom. 5:6-8; Eph. 1:7).
4. The principle of grace expresses itself in the reality of *redemption*: The God of *grace* is the *source* of justification; His redemption in Christ is the *means* of justification; and “given freely” is the *manner* of justification.
 - a. “Redemption” (Gr: *apolutrōsis*) means “orig[inally] ‘buying back’ a slave or captive, ‘making’ him ‘free’ by payment of a ransom, lit[erally] ‘release,’ fig[uratively] ‘redemption, acquittal.’”³
 - b. Redemption is free to men, but not to the Father and the Son: we have redemption “in His blood.” The *how* and *why* of redemption Paul sets forth in Rom. 3:25-26 (see Titus 2:14 and compare

Eph. 1:7; 1 Peter 1:18-20; refer also to the Study Series, *The Eternal Purpose And Plan Of God*, L. Deason).

- G. God's righteousness is *declared* in the death of the willing Christ as God's sin offering on behalf of the condemned-to-death human race (3:25; read Heb. 10:1-10; Rom. 8:1-4 and compare Isa. 53:4-6, 10-12).
1. Paul explains *how* God redeems fallen men:
"God presented Him [Christ Jesus] as a sacrifice of atonement."
 - a. The word used of Jesus' redeeming work is "sacrifice of atonement" (Gr: *hilas-tērion*) and is variously interpreted "expiation; atonement; propitiation; satisfaction."⁴ The idea common to all these understandings is "that which fulfills what is required."
 - b. The phrase "in His blood" is to be taken in immediate connection with *hilas-tērion*: The death of Christ was a necessary requirement in redemption (see Heb. 9:22-24).
 2. God's purpose in presenting Christ as a "sacrifice of atonement" is to reconcile mankind to Himself and to restore both Jew and Gentile together to the status of "children of God

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- and joint heirs with Christ” (see Rom. 8:15-17 and compare Rom. 5:6-11; 2 Cor. 5:14-21; Eph. 2:14-18).
- a. God is never said to be reconciled to man. It is just the reverse!
 - b. It is *man* who sinned (not God), and it is *man* who needs to “return” to that proper relationship with God!
3. All people should appreciate and appropriate the saving “blood of Christ,” for “redemption is in His blood” (see Eph. 1:7).
- a. Jesus Christ is the “atoning sacrifice for our sins”: This is the major declaration of God’s righteousness, and as central a statement as could be made of the genuine Christian religion (read 1 John 2:2; 4:10 and compare Gal. 2:20-21; Heb. 2:14-15).
 - b. Salvation (redemption) is not something that is *achieved* by man, but something that is *bought* by God in the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ (see 1 Peter 1:18-20; Acts 20:28; 1 Cor. 6:20; John 1:29; Rev. 1:5; 5:9 and compare Rev. 5:6, 8, 12, 13).
4. Redemption is not some devised plan by which a sinner can save himself!

- a. Sin offends a holy and righteous God, and is deserving of the punishment of divine wrath; it cannot be ignored by “the Judge of all the earth” (see Hab. 1:13; Isa. 6:1-6).
 - b. Because God cannot deny or compromise His own righteous character, He cannot forgive and restore sinners arbitrarily; they *must* encounter God’s appointed punishment for sin (death, separation from the *living* God).
5. In Jesus, the Sin Offering, man experiences the horrible condemnation of sin, even as God mercifully takes upon Himself the burden and the pain of man’s deliverance from the oppression of sin and death (read carefully 1 John 2:2; 4:10 and compare 2 Cor. 5:19-21; Gal. 3:13; Heb. 2:9, 14-15; 1 Peter 2:24; Rom. 8:1-4).
- H. God’s righteousness is *satisfied* “in Christ”: God redeemed mankind (in Christ) “to demonstrate His justice [righteousness]” (3:26).
1. God desired to prove the fairness of His previous *passing over* (“leaving unpunished,” Rom. 3:25, NIV) of the sins of former generations: In those generations, “continual” sacrifices were a “constant

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- reminder” of sinfulness (see Heb. 10:1-4; 9:24-26; 8:12).
2. The previous systems of religion had no genuinely effective atonement: They were merely shadows of the substance (see Heb. 8:1-10:22).
 3. Had Christ not, “at just the right time,” been “offered for sin,” all typical religious institutions would have been meaningless (see Rom. 5:6 and compare Gal. 4:4).
 - a. In God’s plan of redemption (which He devised “before the foundation of the world”), the former systems (priesthood of Levi) find their significance only in the ultimate Sin Offering, the God-Man, Jesus Christ (recall Rom. 1:2-4).
 - b. Animal sacrifices could not save, but when Christ shed His blood, meaning and validity were given to those sacrifices: The substance of the shadow is seen! (Read Heb. 10:1-4.)
 - c. Had Christ never died on the cross, no one would ever have been saved! (See Heb. 9:15 and compare Acts 17:30-31.)
 - I. God’s righteousness is *demonstrated* “at the present time”: The Cross forever proves that God will not tolerate sin, no matter if it be

visited even on His own sin-bearing (though personally sinless) Son (3:26; see also Rom. 5:6-8; Eph. 1:9-10; Acts 2:14-24; 1 Cor. 10:11; Gal. 4:4-5; 1 Peter 1:20; 1 Peter 2:21-24).

NOTE: Faith was the condition of salvation “beforehand,” and the same is true “at this present time.” Whereas *their* faith was *prospective*, *our* faith is *retrospective* (see 1 Peter 1:10-12; Heb. 9:15-17). The Cross of Christ, then, reveals the righteousness of God, “that He might Himself be just [He remains true to Himself] and the One who justifies the man who has faith in Jesus [He acts mercifully toward man].” The gospel of the Cross is a divine demonstration of God’s righteousness and man’s unrighteousness. It satisfies God and saves man (read Rom. 8:1-4).

- II. Righteousness is of God; therefore, where is the boasting? (3:27-31; compare Jer. 9:23-24; 1 Cor. 1:26-31; Eph. 2:8-9)
- A. Boasting is excluded: There is no room for the saved man to boast, since he is saved by grace, not works.
1. This statement charges the self-righteous in their sinful pride.
 2. In Christ and His redemption, there is no ground for proud boasting: Nothing so exalts God’s glory and humbles man’s pride as does Christianity (read James 4:5-10; Luke 18:9-14; Eph. 2:8-9; 1 Cor. 1:18-31).

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B. How is glorying (boasting) excluded?

1. Does the law, viewed legalistically (a “law of works”), exclude human boasting? No! (See Phil. 3:4-6.)
2. Does the law, viewed as a “law of faith,” exclude human boasting? Yes! (See Rom. 9:30-10:13).
3. The “law of faith” does not exclude obedience; rather, it inspires it (see Rom. 1:5; 16:25-26).

NOTE: Nothing so quickly obliterates legalism as does a correct knowledge of Jesus Christ, the sacrifice for our justification. Justification is not a *work* for men to *do*, but a *word* about a work to be *believed*. It is a work already *done*! It is a work done on a Roman cross. It is a work done by Christ. *Only* “the way of the Cross leads home.” Man’s boasting is excluded by faith in Christ, who alone did the saving work. Hence, our boasting is “in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ”! (Read Gal. 6:14 and compare Gal. 2:21; Phil. 3:4-6; Rom. 10:5-13.)

C. The divine conclusion: *All* (Jew and Gentile) are justified by *faith apart from works* (3:27-31) because

1. There is no advantage in racial associations: That there should be two ways to justify one mankind is absurd.
 - a. It would imply two gods, or a God with a split personality.

- b. Therefore God, being One (as all Jews confessed), cannot limit His blessings to a portion of His creatures.
 - c. He is the God of *all* mankind! God has no “stepchildren” (3:27-29; see also Deut. 6:4 and compare Rom. 1:16; 2:9-11; 10:12-13; 1 Cor. 8:5-6; Eph. 3:14-15; James 2:19).
2. God justifies all on the same basis: “By” and “through” faith is simply a play on words with no diversity of meaning (3:30; see the Greek text). *Both* Jew and Gentile must be saved on the same basis, thus “creating in himself one new man out of the two” (see Acts 15:1-21; Gal. 2:16; 3:8 and compare Eph. 2:13-16).

NOTE: The distinction of emphasis in describing God’s justification of Jews and Gentiles is not a contrast. Jews are justified “by” (Gr: *ek*) meaning “out of”⁵ (faith). The emphasis is on the *source and nature* of justification “out of faith,” not works, as being harmonious and continuous with what their God had already revealed in the Jewish Scriptures (see Rom. 4:1-25). Gentiles are justified “through” (Gr: *dia*) meaning “by agency or means of”⁶ (that same *faith* in Jesus). Though “grafted in” as members of God’s covenant people, they stand on the same basis as believing Jews (read carefully Rom. 9:1-11:36).

3. (*The*) law is established through faith: Christ came to fulfill the law, and for *everyone* who

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believes, Christ is the “end [that is, goal] of the law” as a means of pursuing righteousness (3:31; see also Matt. 5:17-18; Luke 24:44-47; Gal. 3:16-29 and compare Rom. 10:3-4; Phil. 3:3-9).

NOTE: Thus (the) law is established: To this end was it given as *spiritual* (in that it honored and revealed the character of God, Rom. 7:14), as *sin-revealing* (see Rom. 3:20-21), and as *righteousness-promoting* (see Rom. 8:1-4; 13:8-10). In dying to “law” (the principle of legalistic relationship to God), we can be justified in Christ (see Rom. 7:1-4; Gal. 2:19).

Righteousness is Credited Through Faith—Romans 4

I. Abraham's history shows how righteousness is credited: *through faith* (4:1-8).

NOTE: The faith of Abraham is celebrated frequently in the New Testament (see John 8:31-59; Gal. 3:1-29; Heb. 11:8-12, 17-19; James 2:20-24).

A. Paul presents evidence that God's righteousness is not attained by works (4:1-2).

1. "What therefore shall we say to have found Abraham the forefather of us according to the flesh?" (literal rendering from Greek text) (4:1).

NOTE: Abraham is called "forefather" (Gr: *propatōr*).⁷ Paul is referring to Abraham as an example of "justification by faith" as "witnessed by the law and the prophets" (read again Rom. 3:21 and compare Rom. 1:2-4, 16-17; Hab. 2:4).

2. "If, in fact, Abraham was justified by works, he had something to boast about [literally, 'has a boast']" (4:2).

NOTE: Here is a clear "either/or" situation: *Either* justification depends on works *or* it depends on faith. Boasting has already been ruled out (read again Rom. 3:27). Therefore, *if Abraham had* been "accounted as righteous" by works, his boasting would not have been "toward God." It was in *faith* that Abraham "gave glory to God" (read Rom. 4:20).

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3. The difference between works and grace is the difference between labor and life! Paul's contrast in this section is not between 'obedience' and 'faith,' but between 'works' (flawless performance as a basis of justification) and 'faith' (trusting in God, who justifies the ungodly).
- B. Paul presents evidence that God's righteousness is appropriated by faith (4:3).
 1. This is the testimony of scripture: "Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness" (see Gen. 15:6).
 2. Biblical "faith" is not a mere psychological operation; it is always determined by its *external object*.
 3. Abraham was counted "righteous" because of his faith; that is, Abraham's faith was credited to him for righteousness (see Rom. 4:5).
 - a. The words "it was credited" are really one word (Gr: *logizomai*) meaning "to count; take into account; credit."⁸ This word is used eleven times in this chapter (see Rom. 4:3-6, 8-11, 22-24 and compare Gal. 3:6; James 2:23).
 - b. Abraham was justified on the condition of faith, not works. His faith brought

him into right standing with God. Faith brings righteousness.

- c. God's personal righteousness is the *ground* of our justification; our faith is the *means*.

C. Paul explains the nature of *works* (4:4).

1. 'Works' oppose 'grace': The worker's wages are not credited to him as a gift.
2. If it is by 'works,' it is 'an obligation,' not a gift.

NOTE: Where is the "list of things done" that was the means of Abraham's justification? (See Gen. 15:6.) What would be a sufficient amount of works to fulfill our moral obligation to God? And who sets the amount of work needed to pay the debt? (Read carefully Rom. 8:3-4 and compare Rom. 13:8-10; Gal. 5:14-6:2; James 2:8-13.)

3. *Work recognizes a debt:* It must "achieve."

D. Paul explains the nature of *faith* (4:5-8).

1. *Faith recognizes a gift:* It is "believing" instead of "achieving"!
2. Faith in God is the sinner's need.

NOTE: God is the One who either "credits faith" or "accounts sin." Before the law of Moses, God credited Abraham's faith as "righteousness." Under the law of Moses, God did not count David's sin against him ("righteousness apart from works"). When God forgives sin, He establishes justification (righteousness). It is the "wicked" who are justified by faith in Christ's

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sacrifice of atonement. It is the sinner (and “all have sinned”) who believes and receives justification.

3. Faith, not works, is the principle of relationship to God set forth by David, a “man after God’s own heart” (4:6-8; see also 1 Sam. 13:14; Ps. 32:1-11 and compare Ps. 51:1-19).
 - a. David (speaking by the Holy Spirit) pronounces blessing upon the man credited with righteousness “apart from works” (transgressions forgiven; sins covered; sins not counted by the Lord).
 - b. Therefore the man against whom God does not “count sin” is “accounted righteous” on the condition of his belief and trust in God! It has always been so! (See Hab. 2:4 and compare Heb. 11:1-40.)
- E. Thus we have the conclusion concerning justification in regard to “works” or “faith” (read Rom. 4:1-8 and compare Eph. 2:8-10).
- II. Abraham’s circumcision shows who is reckoned righteous by faith: both circumcised and uncircumcised (4:9-12).

NOTE: Those Jews who were self-righteous trusted in two things: *circumcision* (their rite of entry into the “chosen nation”), and the *law* (their ability to earn salvation by keeping rules). As the law bore witness to justification by faith, so does circumcision.

- A. *When* was Abraham's faith credited to him as righteousness: only while circumcised, or while yet uncircumcised? (4:9-10)
1. "Not after circumcision": Abraham was 99 years old when he was circumcised, 100 years old when Isaac was born, and about 115 to 120 years old when he offered Isaac (see Gen. 17:24; 21:5).
 2. "But before circumcision": Circumcision has nothing to do with justification! Abraham received the "sign [physical evidence] of circumcision, a seal of righteousness" *after* his faith was credited to him *as* "righteousness" (see Gal. 5:2-4; 6:13-14; Acts 15:1-11).

NOTE: The *sign* was testimony of Abraham's covenant relationship with God. The *seal* was the certification (physical evidence) of Abraham's justification by faith. There is no value in the seal apart from the thing ratified; that is, Abraham's justification by faith.

Those who would equate baptism as a "sign" ("seal") of equal significance as circumcision should consider that baptism's purpose is "for remission of sins." Baptism is not spoken of as a "sign and seal," but in baptism we receive the Holy Spirit, who is our "seal" (see Acts 2:38; Eph. 1:13-14 and compare 2 Cor. 1:22; 5:5; 1 Cor. 6:11; Eph. 4:30; Acts 5:32).

- B. *Why* was Abraham counted righteous while still uncircumcised? (4:11-12)

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1. This was so that he might be “the father of all who believe [even though they be Gentiles]...who also walk in the footsteps of the faith that our father Abraham had before he was circumcised” (see Gal. 3:26-29).
 2. This was so that all might be *counted righteous* who walk in the steps of the faith Abraham had even before circumcision.
 3. Therefore, the spiritual fatherhood of Abraham embraces everyone who *walks in the steps* of his faith, rather than simply those who would conform to the rite of circumcision as a means of justification.
 - a. That would be legalism!
 - b. The promise applies only to those who *believe* (whether circumcised or not) (see Acts 15:1-29; Gal. 1:6-9; 3:6-9, 13-14, 26-29).
- III. Abraham’s reception of the promise shows *why* we are justified by faith: “that it may be by grace and may be guaranteed” (4:13-17).
- A. Abraham could not “inherit the world” through law, because justification and inheritance are out of law’s reach (4:13).
1. Law afforded the recognition of sin (see Rom. 3:20 and compare Gal. 3:19; Rom. 5:13; 7:7-13).

2. Law brings wrath and condemnation on sin (read again Rom. 2:1-3:20).
 3. Law does not bestow an heirship (see Gal. 3:15-18).⁹
- B. The promise of inheritance is not of law because law makes the promise of none effect; due to its very nature, law makes void (nullifies) (4:14-15; compare Rom. 4:4-5; 11:6; Gal. 2:21).
1. "Law brings wrath": Failure to conform perfectly with legal requirements brings condemnation.
 2. "Where there is no law there is no transgression" (4:15): Since "all have sinned," it is evident that "all" have been under law and have failed to attain righteousness by law.
 3. Behind every sin there is law, and to be made free from sin, one must be made free from law (read Rom. 3:4; 2:1-16; 5:12-14 and compare Rom. 7:7-11; 1 Cor. 15:55-56).
 - a. *Under law* implies *under sin*, which implies "under wrath." To be under wrath means that a person is not righteous and therefore fails to inherit any blessing.
 - b. The blessing of Abraham (justification and inheritance) is guaranteed because it is *promised*, not *earned*.

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- C. The promise is not of law, but of faith, that it might be according to *grace* (4:16).
 - 1. What is by *gain* cannot be by *gift* (see Rom. 11:6).
 - 2. Faith and grace complement each other: they are inseparable counterparts.
 - 3. The Cross is the basis of grace, and grace calls for faith!
- D. The promise of inheritance is by grace and not law, that the inheritance “may be guaranteed to all Abraham’s offspring”: both Jews and Gentiles (4:16-17 and compare Gal. 3:1-29).
 - 1. Inheritance is by *promise* and not *merit* (see Heb. 6:17-18).
 - 2. Therefore, being a promise, it can only be received by faith! (See Gal. 3:6-16.)
- IV. The recorded description of Abraham’s faith explains *when* we are justified: it was recorded *for our sake* (4:17-25).
 - A. Paul comments on the *crediting of faith* (4:17).
 - 1. *Faith* was not in a scheme or plan, but in a Person: Abraham believed *in* God and he believed *before* he saw fulfillment (see also John 8:56).
 - 2. *Faith* was in God and in His *power*: “who gives life to the dead” (see Rom. 4:24 and

- compare 2 Cor. 1:9; Col. 2:12; Heb. 13:20; 1 Peter 1:21).
3. *Faith* (our faith!) must believe that God *can* give life to the dead (see Rom. 10:9-10; 1 Cor. 15:1-4 and compare Col. 2:12).
 4. *Faith* believes in unseen realities (see John 20:29-31; 2 Cor. 5:7; Heb. 11:1-3; 1 Peter 1:8-9 and compare Rom. 4:18; 8:24-25) (4:17).
- B. Paul conveys the *basis of faith* (4:18).
1. Abraham believed “just as it had been said to him”: He *hopefully believed* under *hopeless conditions*.
 2. Only when one’s faith has its foundation in God’s Word can he hopefully believe (see Gal. 3:16 and compare Rom. 10:8-17; Gal. 3:8; Eph. 1:12-14; Heb. 4:2, 6).
- C. Paul contemplates the *consideration of faith* (4:19-20).
1. The strength of Abraham’s faith was the strength of God’s ability (consider Jer. 32:27; Dan. 3:17; Matt. 3:9; Luke 1:37; Rom. 11:23; 14:4; 16:25-27; 2 Cor. 9:8; Eph. 3:20-21; 2 Tim. 1:12; 1 Cor. 10:13; Heb. 2:18; 7:25; 11:19; James 4:12; Jude 24-25).
 2. “He faced the fact that his body was as good

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as dead... and that Sarah's womb was also dead."

- a. Faith faces facts. It neither ignores the harsh realities and obstacles of life, nor functions on the basis of blind optimism. It is fully informed, not only of natural obstacles, but also of supernatural realities.
 - b. Had Abraham's "consideration of facts" ended with himself, he would have had to deny faith in the face of his own weakness.
 - c. But Abraham "gave glory to God." He considered his own weakness; then he considered God's greatness!
3. "He did not waver through unbelief regarding the promise of God, but was strengthened in his faith": *Faith is what made the difference!*
- D. Paul characterizes the *assurance of faith* (4:21).
1. Faith stands assured because *God is great* (see Heb. 11:1-6).
 2. Faith stands assured because *God does not lie* (see Rom. 3:4; Titus 1:1-2; Heb. 6:13-17).
 3. Faith stands assured because *God is able*

(see 1 Thess. 5:24; Eph. 3:20-21; Jude 24-25).

- E. Paul considers the *persuasion of faith* (4:21).
1. God has promised.
 2. God is able to perform what he has promised.
 3. "You of little faith, why did you doubt?"
How much persuasion does man need? (See Matt. 14:31; 2 Tim. 1:12.)
 4. God has made many promises and kept all of them!
 - a. Do we not believe that He will now keep His promises?
 - b. God does not lie! He will keep His word (see Rom. 3:4; Heb. 6:14-17; Titus 1:2 and compare 2 Cor. 1:20).
 5. Faith says God can do anything, even supernatural things. *Belief calls into action all the power of divine ability* (see Rom. 1:4 and compare Matt. 9:27-30; John 11:25, 38-44).
- F. Paul chronicles the *effect of faith* (4:22-24).
1. It brings the accounting of righteousness.
 2. This truth (and the historical record of it) is not only for Abraham, but for us also (see Heb. 11:19, 39-40 and compare Rom. 4:19).
 3. Faith brings righteousness and power to persevere through trials and obstacles to the

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goal (see Heb. 6:14-20; 10:35-12:3 and compare Rom. 5:1-11; 1 John 5:4-5).

G. Paul communicates the *goal of faith* (4:25).

1. As Abraham “believed,” so also must the Christian “believe” in Him who raised Jesus from the dead, who was “delivered over for our sins and was raised to life for our justification” (see Rom. 15:4 and compare Rom. 1:4; 10:9-10; Gal. 1:4; Acts 2:22-24, 36-39).
2. Christ “delivered over for our sins” and “raised for our justification” is something (and Someone) to have faith in.
 - a. It is the grace of God, not the work of man.
 - b. Man’s “merit” nullifies God’s grace! (See Rom. 10:9-10 and compare 1 Cor. 15:1-4.)
3. Only “through faith” can it be said that “we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ” (see Rom. 5:1).
4. There is “power [God’s power!] in the blood” (see Rom. 1:16; 3:25).

NOTE: Only in the message of “Christ crucified for sins” (the gospel) is *grace* bestowed and *righteousness* credited. Man’s spiritual needs will always outrun his proud pursuit of *life* without God. The power of modern man’s technology will never be as timely as the gospel of God’s eternal ability.¹⁰

NOTES

¹Bauer-Arndt-Gingrich-Danker, p. 197. .

²See Robert D. Brinsmead, "Justification by Faith and the Clarity of the Bible," *Present Truth* 4, 6 (Dec. 1975):10-30; and Brinsmead, "Notes on Justification in the Book of Romans," *Verdict: A Journal of Theology*, Essay 9 (1983):1-5.

³Bauer-Arndt-Gingrich-Danker, p. 96.

⁴Bauer-Arndt-Gingrich-Danker, p. 375; Vincent, 3:43-44.

⁵"Of the effective cause, 'by, because of'" (Bauer-Arndt-Gingrich-Danker, p. 234).

⁶"To denote the efficient cause, 'through, with'" (Bauer-Arndt-Gingrich-Danker, p. 180).

⁷Bauer-Arndt-Gingrich-Danker, p. 709.

⁸Bauer-Arndt-Gingrich-Danker, pp. 475-476.

⁹See Appendices 2 and 3.

¹⁰See Appendix 4.

Lesson Six

Romans Chapter 5

If God in sheer grace assures us of our acceptance in advance, and we gladly embrace that assurance, then we can go on to do His will from the heart as our response of love, without constantly worrying whether we are doing it adequately or not. In fact, to the end of the chapter we shall be unprofitable servants, but we know whom we have believed: "He owns me for His child; I can no longer fear."

— F. F. Bruce

Justification's Blessedness — Romans 5:1-5

OUTLINE OF ROMANS		
INTRODUCTION (1:1-17)		
EXPOSITION (1:18 - 11:36)	Righteousness	PROCLAIMED (1:18 - 3:20)
		PRESENTED (3:21 - 5:21)
		PERFECTED (6:1 - 8:39)
		PURPOSED (9:1 - 11:36)
EXHORTATION (12:1 - 15:13)	Relationships	SPIRITUAL (12:1-2)
		SOCIAL (12:3-8)
		PERSONAL (12:9-21)
		CIVIL (13:1-7)
		PUBLIC (13:8-14)
		FRATERNAL (14:1 - 15:13)
CONCLUSION (15:14-16:27)		

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NOTE: This section serves as a connecting summary which introduces the following divisions: (1) justification results in *salvation and life* (see Rom. 5:6-21); (2) justification results in *freedom from sin* (see Rom. 6:1-23); (3) justification results in *freedom from law* (see Rom. 7:1-25); (4) justification results in *a walk in the Spirit* (see Rom. 8:1-17); (5) justification results in *assurance in trials* (see Rom. 8:18-39).

In the following analysis of this parenthetical summary which links the opening chapters of Romans with the rest of the book, it will be noted that justification by faith is the basis of the believer's assurance of salvation (5:1-5).

Notes:

- I. The personal result of justification by faith is *peace with God* (5:1).
 - A. Peace is the transcendent joy in the believer's heart, since he knows he is now in a right relationship with the very God with whom he had been at war. Hostilities are over; the peace treaty is signed (compare Isa. 59:1-2; Eph. 2:1-7; Titus 3:3-7; John 3:36).
 - B. "In Christ," there is a true, objective change of relationship with the true and living God.
 1. Divine judgment is averted; guilt is removed; Christians are no longer under God's condemnation with Christ-less (faithless) people.
 2. This objective "peace *with God*" results in the subjective "peace *of God*" which transcends (but does not contradict) rational understanding.
 - C. *Christ* (rather than our own ethical efforts, religious self-righteousness, or moral merits) is *our peace!* This "peace" is not an effort, but an effect; not a reward, but a gift; not in self, but in the Savior (read Rom. 8:1; John 5:24; Eph. 2:14; Isa. 9:6; Micah 5:5 and compare John 14:27; 16:33; Phil. 4:4-7).

- II. The corporate reality of justification by faith is *access into God's grace* (5:2).
- A. We have been “led into the presence” of grace (blessedness) through Christ by faith, meaning that we now have “free admission” into God’s glorious presence (read Rom. 5:2 and compare John 14:6; Eph. 2:18; 3:12; Heb. 4:14-16; 6:19-20; 7:25; 10:19-25).
 - B. The concept of “the *glory* of God” signified “the *presence* of God” (of which all people have fallen short), but *in Christ* “we have gained access by faith” (Rom. 3:23; 5:12-21).
 - C. Having been justified, we stand! Let us *continue* to stand in this grace (read 1 Cor. 15:1-3, 56-58 and compare Eph. 6:13; Rom. 5:15-16; Gal. 5:1; Col. 1:21-23).
- III. The cause of *rejoicing in the hope of the glory of God* is justification by faith (5:2).
- A. Since “hope” is “desire and earnest expectation,” believers are desiring and earnestly expecting to share in the “glory of God”; that is, His personal presence and all its attendant blessings (compare Rom. 8:17-25).
 - B. Hope (as also peace) is *Christ*. He is Himself the *ground of hope* (see 1 Tim 1:1 and compare Col. 1:26-28), even as “rejoicing” is the *result* of hope (see Rom. 12:12).

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C. The goal of this hope is “the glory of God” that will be revealed at the return of Christ (read carefully 1 Peter 1:3-13).

IV. The confidence of *rejoicing in our sufferings* is found in justification by faith (5:3-5): Suffering may be a *bitter* tree, but (in Christ) it surely is not a *barren* tree (compare John 15:1-11; Heb. 12:7-11; James 1:2-12; 2 Cor. 12:7-10; Rom. 8:18-30).

A. “Sufferings” (Gr: *thlipsis*) means “pressure, oppression, affliction, tribulation.”¹ Pressures can only be rejoiced in by those who trust in God and waver not in faith, committing themselves to God’s care (see Rom. 8:28-39).

B. The gospel of Christ offers three positive perspectives concerning sufferings:

1. *First*, sufferings produce “perseverance” (Gr: *hupomonē*, which means “patience, endurance, steadfastness” [literally, “an abiding under”]).²
2. *Second*, the perseverance produced out of sufferings will in time yield “character” (Gr: *dokimē*, which denotes “the quality of being approved”)³ (see James 1:2-12).
 - a. The principle is that out of the fiery furnace of affliction comes a stronger, purer, and better person.
 - b. Out of trials and afflictions one comes

nearer to God (read Acts 14:21-22; John 16:33 and compare Heb. 10:35-36; 12:10-11; 1 Peter 1:6-7).

3. *Third*, from the character of the patient sufferer issues a hope that “does not disappoint” or “let us down” in the midst of life’s trials (compare Rom. 8:17-18).
- V. The promising response to *the love of God poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit* is made possible in justification by faith (5:5): Hope will not disappoint us, because the Spirit was given to us (compare Rom. 8:11-17; Gal. 4:6; Eph. 1:13-14; Acts 2:33, 38-39; 5:32).
- A. God’s love was “poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit” when we believed the gospel, and “the fruit of the Spirit is love...” (read Gal. 5:22 and compare 1 John 2:20, 24).
 - B. The “love of God” and the “Spirit of God” are inseparable (see John 14:15-17; 1 John 3:21-24; 4:7-13; Rom. 8:1-17).
 - C. Through faith in Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father which His Spirit poured out in our hearts assures us that our hope will not be disappointed! Our victory is assured, as a guaranteed promise from God (consider Gal. 5:22-23; Eph. 1:13-14; 2 Cor. 1:22; 5:5 and compare 1 John 3:21-24; 5:4).

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Justification's Effects

—Romans 5:6-19

I. We shall be *saved* (5:6-11).

NOTE: The key to understanding the relationship of justification to salvation is found in Rom. 5:9-10.

- A. "*When we were still powerless,*" God acted in Christ to save us (5:6).
- B. "*At just the right time...* Christ died for the ungodly" (5:6).
- C. "*While we were still sinners,* Christ died for us" (5:8).
- D. "*When we were God's enemies,* we were reconciled to Him through the death of His son" (5:10).

NOTE: The tremendous depth of the grace and love of God in Christ Jesus can only begin to be appreciated against the background of man's wretched position (see Rom. 1:18; 3:23; 4:5 and compare Eph. 2:1-7).

II. We shall be *saved by Christ's death*.

- A. "*Christ died* for the ungodly" (5:6).
- B. "*Christ died* for us" (5:8).
- C. "*We have been justified by His blood*" (5:9).
- D. "*We were reconciled to Him through the death of His Son*" (5:10).

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NOTE: The gospel of Jesus is the Good News of God's justifying act in His Son (His death and glorious resurrection) by which He delivers us from wrath to come (read Rom. 3:24-25; 4:24-25; 1 Cor. 15:1-4 and compare Rom. 2:5; 1 Thess. 1:10; 5:9-10; 2 Thess. 1:6-10).

III. We shall be saved *by Christ's life* (5:10-11).

NOTE: Paul's repeated usage of the expression, "how much more," indicates a logical method of argumentation which is still recognized and used today. It is called the "argument from the lesser to the greater," and generally takes the form: If "A" is true, how much more certain is "B." Jesus Himself had also used this method (see Rom. 5:9-10, 15, 17 and compare Matt. 6:26, 30; 7:11; 9:5-7; 10:29-31).

- A. If God so loved rebellious sinners (the "ungodly"; the weak; enemies who had not yet made peace with God), does He love less those who have laid down their hammers and nails?
- B. If Christ's death is the ground for sinners' justification, does not the fact that "*He lives*" give assurance of ultimate deliverance?
- C. "Much more," now that enemies are "reconciled," shall they be *saved* by His "life" (see John 10:18; 14:19; Heb. 7:25 and compare Heb. 9:24-26; 10:11-12; Rom. 8:34; 1 John 1:7-2:2).

NOTE: Jesus' redemptive work is *continuous*: He *was* Sacrifice and *is* High Priest. As He died to save us, He now lives

(eternally) to save us. As His humanity is glorified in the presence of the Father, so shall be ours "in Him" (read Col. 3:1-4 and compare 1 Tim. 2:5-6; 2 Tim. 2:8-13).

IV. In our salvation we were reconciled to God through the death and risen life of His Son (5:9-11).

A. The word "reconciled" (Gr: *katallassō*) means "to change; exchange; to change from enmity to friendship."⁴

1. God is never said to be "reconciled" to man, for He has never changed His attitude of constant benevolence and love toward man.
2. It was not God who "moved away" from man, but man who became morally and spiritually separated from God by freely choosing the way of *ungodliness* and *unrighteousness* (sin) (read 2 Cor. 5:18-21).

B. What God has done to procure our reconciliation, He has done "through our Lord Jesus Christ." It can only be received by man "through faith" (read Rom. 5:1, 11 and compare Col. 1:19-23).

NOTE: This reconciliation describes both a *corporate relationship* ("we" who formerly were "in Adam" but are now "in Christ"), and a *personal responsibility*. God has provided the reality of reconciliation in Christ. Each person must decide to either remain in rebellion, or to accept peace with God "in Christ Jesus" (read carefully 2 Cor. 5:14-21; Eph. 2:11-22 and compare Luke 14:31-33).

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- C. Therefore, we “rejoice in God.”
1. While *unbelief rejects* “the reconciliation” and *perishes in spite of it*, *belief receives* “the reconciliation” and is *saved because of it!*
 2. We *rejoice* in God “through Christ,” because it was “through Him,” Jesus Christ, that reconciliation was accomplished!
 - a. In the reconciliation that we receive in Christ, all the glory belongs to God. He is the Doer throughout: *God* reconciles; *God* justifies; *God* saves.
 - b. Boasting is completely ruled out by the principles of grace and faith (read again Rom. 3:27-28 and compare 1 Cor. 15:10; Eph. 2:8-10).
- V. Salvation by grace reigns through righteousness to bring eternal life (5:12-21).

NOTE: The passage is highly controversial, and is probably one of the most abused passages in the entire Bible. It is a major proof-text for the so-called Calvinistic theory of the “depravity of infants.”⁵ (Catholics speak of “original sin,” and Protestants generally refer to “total hereditary depravity.”)

This doctrine goes back to the theology of the “church father” Origen, in the early third century A.D.⁶ It has already been stated that the emphasis of this study is expositional rather than argumentative. Yet, a careful exposition of Rom. 5:12-21 in its context will inevitably disprove this theory of the nature of human guilt. A proper interpretation of this crucial

section of Paul's Epistle to the Romans will help to prevent us from being swayed by false doctrines of human origin (see Matt. 15:19; Eph. 4:14).

A correct understanding of this passage will impart to us a better understanding of the potentials and limitations of human nature as it deepens our appreciation for Jesus Christ's accomplishments in our behalf. Because this passage sums up all that Paul has said thus far concerning man's failure under law and his need of God's righteousness and grace, Rom. 5:12-21 is vital to our understanding of the entire Book of Romans.⁷

- A. A study of the background of the text calls for a review of the central thesis of Romans: "The righteousness of God" (what it is, why man needs it, and what it does for humanity).
1. In Rom. 5:12-21, Paul summarizes and concludes the argument he has developed in the first five chapters:
 - a. He has shown the universal sinfulness of all mankind: Jew and Gentile (see Rom. 1:18-2:29).
 - b. He has concluded that "all are under sin. There is no one righteous, not even one" (see Rom. 3:1-20).
 - c. He has shown, however, that sinful man may be counted righteous through Jesus Christ (see Rom. 3:21-31).
 - d. He has demonstrated from Scripture that this righteousness, being by faith, does

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- not nullify law; it *confirms* law. Abraham's case is proof (see Rom. 4:1-25).
- e. He has affirmed that, through Christ, humanity is lifted out of disobedience, despair, and death, being justified and given access to grace (see Rom. 5:1-11).
2. "Therefore," Adam and Christ are compared. Adam is a "pattern" (Gr: *typos*, meaning "form, figure, pattern")⁸ of Christ.
 - a. Through Adam, the human race died. This is often referred to as "the fall of man" (read again Rom. 1:18-3:20).
 - b. Through Christ Jesus, the human race is made alive. It is raised and restored to its proper place in God's order of things (read Rom. 3:21-5:11 and compare Eph. 2:1-10; Heb. 2:5-15).
 - B. Rom. 5:12-21 contrasts the effects of Adam's sin with the effects of Christ's death, showing that His death is *more than enough* to offset the negative results of sin.
 - C. To summarize the passage: Both Adam and Christ had a tremendous effect upon the condition and destiny of the whole human race, but this is the end of their similarity.
 - D. It is obvious from this passage, and many others, that Paul and the other New Testament

writers (who claimed inspiration by the same Spirit who spoke through the Old Testament) would not have agreed with those who deny the historicity of the early chapters of Genesis (read also Matt. 19:1-6; Luke 3:38; 1 Cor. 11:7-12; 15:21, 45-49; 2 Cor. 11:3; 1 Tim. 2:12-15 and compare Gen. 1:26-3:24).

E. The chart below shows what has been “credited” to mankind under the headship of Adam and under the headship of Christ. (The *conditions* attached to these attributes are not under consideration in this passage.)

Notes:

The Old Man—Adam	The New Man—Christ
One act of sin (trespass, disobedience) sums up the history of man “on his own” as a failure “under law.”	One ultimate act of righteousness (obedience) sums up the status of man justified by faith and alive “under grace.”
Involves all humanity	Involves all humanity
Sinfulness	Righteousness
Judgment	Free gift
Condemnation	Justification
Death	Life

NOTE: Paul speaks of “our old man,” meaning that what we lost “in Adam,” we gain again “in Christ.”

For the transparency version of this chart, see p. 371

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- F. Concerning the transmission of “sin” and “righteousness,” Paul does not state “how”: He simply states that Adam’s violation of God’s specific command brought sin and death to the human race.
1. By Adam’s one sin, therefore, all of his descendants have shared in the *consequence*.
 - a. However, to share in the consequence does not mean we share in the *guilt* of Adam’s sin.
 - b. The topic of Paul’s discussion is *Adam’s “One” Sin*, and its impact; it is not concerned with our personal sins and resultant spiritual death, except by implication.
 2. “Death” (Gr: *thanatos*) means “separation” (from the living God, the source of life).⁹
 - a. Man’s expulsion from the presence of God in Eden meant that he was deprived of the fruit of the tree of life. He would return to dust, for man is “whole” only in his unbroken fellowship with his Creator.
 - b. Physically, we share in the *consequence* of Adam’s sin, as *physical death* is inherited by all of Adam’s race (read Gen. 5:5, 8, 10, 17, 20, 26).

- c. But Paul's main emphasis in this section concerns man's *spiritual* relationship (to God), not his *physical* relationship (to his body). Physical death was a symptom and testimony to a more essential and terrible death: spiritual separation from God (see Eph. 2:1-3).

NOTE: In the very day he ate the forbidden fruit, Adam died spiritually. His gradual physical deterioration and eventual expiration bore witness to his fall from Eden. In Christ, man is made whole again: Fellowship with the living God is immediately restored (as attested by the gift of His Spirit), and one day, He will restore us from physical death to bodily immortality (read carefully Rom. 8:9-25; 2 Cor. 4:16-5:5 and compare 1 Cor. 15:20-58; Phil. 3:20-21; 1 Thess. 4:13-18; 1 John 3:2).

- G. The problem of properly interpreting this section can be stated by considering the possible alternatives:
1. *If we say* "all" are involved in Adam's sin by exact imitation, "all" would then be involved in Christ's act of righteousness by exact imitation. However, this is against the facts, and it eliminates the need for faith and grace.
 2. *If we say* that "all" are involved in Adam's sin by inheritance, "all" would be in Christ's righteousness by inheritance.

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3. *If we say that Adam's sin is imputed universally and unconditionally, we must say Christ's righteousness is imputed universally and unconditionally (read carefully Rom. 5:17).*
- H. The problem of properly interpreting this section must be solved by considering *context* and *common sense*.
 1. Note carefully that the text does not explicitly say we have "all sinned in Adam." However, the phrase "all sinned" in and of itself does not solve the problem, for it *could* mean (without considering other passages or context) that "all sinned *in Adam*."
 2. Although this interpretation would be grammatically correct, more than grammar must be considered.
 - a. The verb "sinned" is in the Greek aorist tense. This could grammatically mean either the "*one act*" of Adam's sin, or the *total, absolute activity of sinning* engaged in by all of accountable humanity throughout history.¹⁰
 - b. The same grammatical expression is used in Rom. 3:23. (There can be no doubt that it carries the sense of the "total activity" of human sinning in that

passage.) The simple fact is that all humanity has actively engaged in the practice of sinning.

- c. This interpretation does no violence to the immediate passage, the Book of Romans, or any other passage of Scripture, whereas the other interpretation (“all sinned in Adam”) *does* (read carefully Exod. 32:33; Deut. 24:16; 2 Kings 14:6; 2 Chron. 25:4; Ezek. 18:4, 20; Matt. 16:27; Rom. 2:5-11; 2 Cor. 5:10; Rev. 20:12-13).
 - d. This does not negate the biblical principle, “Like father, like son”; rather, it is the most tragic example of that principle (read Exod. 34:5-7 and compare Matt. 23:35-36; John 8:39-47).
- I. The immediate context strengthens and confirms the above mentioned interpretation of “all have sinned.”
- 1. It speaks of death (the penalty for *sin*) reigning before “law” (the law of Moses) was given.
 - 2. This implies that sin was being *committed* (not “inherited”) by those who lived from the time of Adam (who received the first “law” directly from God) until the time of

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Moses (who received *the* law directly from God).

NOTE: The usual Protestant interpretation of “inherited sin” ignores all that Paul has established from Rom. 1:18-3:20. *Gentiles did commit sin “without law”* (the law of Moses). Their lack of Mosaic law exempted them from being *Jews*, but not from being *sinners* (see Rom. 2:12-14 and compare Ps. 147:19-20; Eph. 2:1-12). They had a “knowledge” of sin (read again Rom. 1:21, 28, 32). They knew God’s “decree” (Gr: *dikaiōma*, which means “regulation, requirement, commandment”).¹¹

Since Gentiles had a knowledge of sin, and since such knowledge comes only through “law,” then the Gentiles had “law.” Although “sin” cannot exist where there is no “law,” Paul has already spoken of those who lived “in the midst of law,” but whose sins were not reckoned since they lived by faith (not “under law”) (see Rom. 4:1-8 and compare Rom. 3:20; 4:15; 5:13-14).

- J. Sin is here treated as a simple but universal fact of life: All humans who are capable of sinning have done so, are doing so and *will* do so, because they are never without “law.”
- K. There was no law given directly by God between the time of Adam and Moses to *enact the penalty of physical death for sin*: “Nevertheless, death reigned”!

NOTE: These people shared in the *consequence* of Adam’s sin, even though they had not transgressed “after the likeness” of Adam’s *particular* sin. (The NIV translates Rom. 5:14 in

such a way as to suggest the possibility of sin without “law.” Although they were certainly not responsible for Adam’s mistake, they suffered the consequence of that sin.

Though this point is beyond Paul’s discussion in this section, many examples of suffering the *consequences of sin* without personal *responsibility for the sin* could be cited, including the suffering of infants, the victims of child abuse, and the human carnage left by the drunken driver. The *nature of sin* is such that the innocent suffer. Sin “victimizes”!

- L. This passage raises one of the most controversial (and yet practical) problems facing those who study the Scriptures in order to better understand mankind: *Do all human beings have an inherently corrupt nature that forces them to sin?*
1. All men are children of wrath by “nature” (Gr: *phusis*, meaning “‘natural endowment’ or ‘condition’ inherited from one’s ancestors”).¹²
 - a. By being born into the human family, all people eventually *become* sinners, and therefore, objects of God’s wrath.
 - b. They become sinners by “doing” (read Eph. 2:3 and compare Rom. 5:19; 7:9).
 2. It is more in keeping with what we know about Scripture and human behavior to say that sinners are made by sinful societies, not by sinful genes! People become sinners by choice and practice.

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- a. *All people* are sinners because Adam made sin a part of man's spiritual environment.
 - b. *All people* capable of making such a choice have chosen to sin!
 - c. Each one has knowingly and deliberately, at one time or another, done something wrong when he or she could have chosen to do otherwise (read again Rom. 1:18-3:20).
3. The only human being ever to break the "sin cycle" is Jesus (see Rom. 8:3; Heb. 2:14-18; 4:14-16).

Justification's Issues and Origin—Romans 5:20-21

- I. A definite attitude and life-style is necessary
 - A. In being accounted sinful
 - B. In being reckoned righteous
- II. The required attitude and life-style in receiving righteousness (brought in by Christ) is
 - A. Faith (the attitude) (read Rom. 1:5, 12, 16-17)
 - B. Obedience (the life-style) (read Rom. 16:25-26)
- III. The attitude and life-style required in the reception of sin brought in by Adam is
 - A. Unbelief (the attitude)
 - B. Disobedience (the life-style)
- IV. Therefore:
 - A. Physical death and the presence of sin in the world derive from the sin of Adam.
 - B. Spiritual death derives from one's own choice to commit sin (follow in Adam's footsteps).

NOTE: If Adam had introduced *measles* into the world, that would not prove that all his descendants would be *born with measles!* (A sin-infested society is more "contagious" than one infested with measles!)

- 1. That Adam's sin brought physical death and our own sins bring spiritual death is not difficult to receive "by faith."
- 2. That Christ's righteousness (not ours)

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delivers us from the wrath and gives us life is easy to receive “through faith.”

3. Human philosophy and unaided reason have proven incapable of offering any real answers in these areas.
- V. We died in Adam, through no fault of our own; we live in Christ, through no merit of our own!
- VI. Through one man, sin entered the world, and through sin, everything human became subject to death: *until Jesus!* (Death is not only an event, out a power, a ruler) (see Rom. 1:2-4; 8:3 and compare Heb. 2:5-15).
 - A. Sin reigned in death.
 1. It was king in a system (the system of “law”) where no salvation was possible (by “grace”), and where death was the certain end.
 2. Sin abounded, and law magnified it!
 - B. Grace reigns through (Christ’s) righteousness.
 1. Sin and death have been overcome by *life* in the Son!
 2. Grace super-abounded through the redemptive, reconciling merit of Jesus Christ, our Lord (see Rom. 5:1, 6, 8-11, 15-19, 21 and compare Rom. 8:3-4; 1 John 5:4-5, 11-12).

NOTE: The *grace* of God expresses the saving power of His *righteousness*. God’s “grace in Christ” involves His revelation

and giving of Himself in the humiliation of Jesus Christ for the salvation of His people. The grace of God is ultimately revealed in the putting away of sin by God's "Mercy Seat," Jesus Christ (see Rom. 3:21-26 and compare 2 Cor. 8:9).

VII. Paul compares "the reign of sin" and "the reign of grace" (see the chart below).

Notes:

THE "REIGN OF SIN" AND THE "REIGN OF GRACE"	
ADAM	CHRIST
By one sinful act, many made sinners (5:15)	By one righteous act, many made righteous (5:18)
Brings death (5:12, 17; see 1 Cor. 15:21-22, 42-58)	Brings life (5:17-18; see John 10:10)
Stands for man as "unrighteous" (5:12, 19; see Eph. 2:3)	Stands for man as "righteous" (5:19; see 1 Cor. 1:30; 2 Cor. 5:17-21)
Brings condemnation (5:16-18)	Brings commendation (5:18; see Rom. 3:24-25; 8:1)
Lost favor (grace) with God (5:15)	Restored grace to man (5:15-17; see Rom. 3:24; John 1:17)
Offended God (5:15, 17-18)	Pleased God (5:16-18; see Matt. 3:17; 17:5; John 8:29)
Brought the reign of sin in death (5:13-14, 17, 21)	Brought the reign of righteousness in life (5:17-18, 21)
Caused an abundance of sin (5:20)	Caused a super-abundance of grace (5:20-21)

For the transparency version of this chart, see p. 372

NOTE: We need a "new heritage," a "new birth" into a "new humanity." This we have "in Christ": "For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (read Rom. 6:23).

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¹Bauer-Arndt-Gingrich-Danker, p. 362.

²Bauer-Arndt-Gingrich-Danker, p. 846; Vine, 3:167.

³Bauer-Arndt-Gingrich-Danker, p. 202.

⁴Vine, 3:260 (compare Bauer-Arndt-Gingrich-Danker, p. 414).

⁵See John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, Book 2, chapters 1-3 (originally publ. in 1559, this English transl. originally publ. in 1845), 2 vols., transl. by Henry Beveridge (reprint edition: Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publ. Co., 1962), 1:209-264.

⁶See Origen (*Against Celsus*, book 7, chapter 50): "...the prophets, who have given some wise suggestions on the subject of things produced by generation, tell us that a sacrifice for sin was offered even for newborn infants, as not being free from sin" (referring to the sacrifices required in Lev. 12:6-8, apparently offered to cleanse the woman—not the baby—of the uncleanness involved in the flow of blood at childbirth; compare Lev. 15:28-30). Origen goes on to quote Ps. 51:5 and 58:3 (hyperboles about human sinfulness; compare Ps. 58:3, which says the wicked are liars from the womb, literally impossible), and Ps. 39:5, which laments man's corrupt state (Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson, eds., *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, 10 vols., originally publ. in 1885 [reprint edition: Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publ. Co., 1979], 4:631).

⁷For an analytical overview of Rom. 5:12-21, see Appendix 5.

⁸Bauer-Arndt-Gingrich-Danker, p. 830.

⁹Vine, 1:276 (compare Bauer-Arndt-Gingrich-Danker, pp. 350-351).

¹⁰See the discussion of the usual punctiliar action of aorist verbs (Blass-Debrunner-Funk §318, 1 [p. 166]), and the discussion of the complexive or constative aorist (Blass-Debrunner-Funk §332, 1 [p. 171]) (compare Lenski, *Romans*, p. 360).

¹¹Bauer-Arndt-Gingrich-Danker, p. 198.

¹²Bauer-Arndt-Gingrich-Danker, p. 869.

**The Book of Romans:
“The Righteousness
of God”**

Part IV

***Righteousness
Perfected***

Lesson Seven

Romans
Chapters 6 and 7

The idea that grace does not, like law, discourage sin is wholly without foundation. Never was the obligation under law to refrain from sin any greater than the same obligation under Christ. If there is any difference in one's obligation to be dead to sin, the obligation has a greater emphasis under Christ. Law placed man under obligation to refrain from sin, while grace recognizes the same obligation and, in addition, crucifies the "old man" and prepares for a life of righteousness.

—K. C. Moser

The Reign of Righteousness Opposes the Reign of Sin—Romans 6

OUTLINE OF ROMANS		
INTRODUCTION (1:1-17)		
EXPOSITION (1:18 - 11:36)	Righteousness	PROCLAIMED (1:18 - 3:20)
		PRESENTED (3:21 - 5:21)
		PERFECTED (6:1 - 8:39)
		PURPOSED (9:1 - 11:36)
EXHORTATION (12:1 - 16:13)	Relationships	SPIRITUAL (12:1-2)
		SOCIAL (12:3-8)
		PERSONAL (12:9-21)
		CIVIL (13:1-7)
		PUBLIC (13:8-14)
		FRATERNAL (14:1 - 15:13)
CONCLUSION (15:14-16:27)		

Notes:

- I. Being justified, one is dead to sin and alive to God: the *positional* aspect (6:1-14).
 - A. The anticipated question is raised: “What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase?” (6:1-2)
 1. Paul’s abhorrence is conveyed: “May it never be!” (6:1)
 2. Paul’s logic is inescapable: If we “died” (aorist tense, denoting past completed

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action)¹ to sin, how shall we “live” in it any longer (6:2)? (Paul speaks of a *logical contradiction*.)

NOTE: The Christian is free from the guilt and domination of sin; sinning is not for justified ones! Saints belong to Christ! Sin belongs to sinners, not saints! The NIV translates: “Shall we *go on sinning* in order that grace may abound?” This translation again ignores the crucial continuity of thought from Rom. 5:21, where two *realms* (or “*reigns*”) are being contrasted: the realm of *sin* and the realm of *grace*.

The Greek text reads: “Shall we continue in *the sin* in order that *the grace* may abound?”² The *practice* of sin will be discussed at a later point in the chapter (Rom. 6:15-23). The primary point of consideration in Rom. 6:1-14 is the *position* of one justified by faith. Does the gospel logically lead us into the realm of sin and rebellion against God (“that the reign of grace might be magnified”), or does this message remove us from that realm and recruit us for the service of God (righteousness)? (See Rom. 6:1 and compare Rom. 3:3-8.)

B. The anticipated question is answered: “Or don’t you know...?” (6:3-7)

1. *Death to sin* is dramatized and actualized in baptism (6:3-4).
2. All of us who were baptized were “*buried with Him through baptism into death*” (no longer under “sin, death, and wrath,” but “under grace” and “united with Christ” (6:3-4; compare Rom. 5:9, 11, 21).

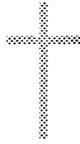
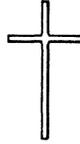
3. *Justification by faith* is the foundation for sanctification: Paul's doctrine does not lead to lawless rebellion, but rather *establishes law* (read again Rom. 3:31 and compare 1 Peter 2:24-25; Titus 2:11-15).
4. Being "*justified by faith*" delivers us out of the rule of sin: We do not "continue in sin," but instead are freed, cleansed, and set apart (sanctified) from it.
5. *Death to sin* is the objective change of relationship to God that causes man to (subjectively) turn from a life of sin to a life of righteousness (read carefully Acts 26:15-18; Col. 1:12-14; 2:11-15 and compare Col. 3:1-4:6).
6. *Death to sin* takes place in the realm of faith and repentance as embodied in baptism (read Rom. 6:17 and compare Rom. 1:16-17; 2:4; 1 Cor. 15:1-4).
7. There is no "magic" in the act of immersion, nor is there power in the water. ("There's power in the blood of the Lamb") (read Rom. 5:9; 3:25 and compare 1 Peter 1:18-21; 3:18-22).

NOTE: Baptism is a most impressive figure of death and resurrection (unlike the practice of "baptism" by sprinkling or pouring water). Christian immersion connects us with the death

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(and resurrection) of Christ (read Rom. 6:5 and compare Rom. 3:25; 5:6-11). Baptism is both the *symbol* and the actual *means* of participating in Christ's death, burial and resurrection. This "reenactment of the gospel" unites us with the death and resurrection of Jesus (see 1 Cor. 15:1-4; Eph. 4:20-24 and compare 1 Cor. 6:17; Eph. 5:23-30). Paul's point here is not the *necessity* of baptism (although it is implied), but the *meaning* of baptism. As Christ's death, entombment, and resurrection were *real* and *sin-destroying* events, so was our death to sin in baptism:

DEAD	BURIED	RAISED
Old man "in Adam" Alive to sin and dead to righteousness	Faith Repentance Baptism Start of New Life	New Creature "in Christ" Dead to sin and alive to righteousness
		
Crucified (only the obedient are crucified with Christ)	Buried (only the "dead" are buried with Christ)	Raised (only the "buried" are raised with Christ)

"Born again" means "raised from the dead"!(See Rom. 6:4-5; 1 Peter 1:3 and compare Rev. 1:5 and Col. 1:18.) Paul is not speaking of when or how the sinner is justified or pardoned; he is speaking of the justified person's relationship to sin (see Gal. 2:20; Col.2:12; 3:1-11).

For the transparency version of this chart, see p. 373

- The purpose and result of our burial with Christ into death is the termination of sin's reign over our lives, for the "old

man” who was owned by sin is crucified (6:4-7).

NOTE: The “old man” is “humanity *in Adam*,” considered collectively (“*our* old man”). It is you and me in all of our “Adam” relationships to sin and law (failing under law; dead in sin). Our connection with Christ in “faith-repentance-baptism” is so real that it carries “our old man” to the very cross of Christ in a judicial crucifixion that destroys the “body of sin.” The baptized individual is identified with the “New Man” (Jesus Christ) and is no longer “under law,” but, “alive to God.” The NIV misinterprets “our old *man*” as “our old *self*” (read Rom. 6:6). This not only violates the meaning of the Greek text, but also ignores the relationship of Rom. 5:12-21 to Rom. 6:1-14 (see also Gal. 5:24; 2 Cor. 5:14-15).

9. “Because anyone who has died has been freed from sin” (6:7).
 - a. In dying to sin, we escape from its dominion.
 - b. We are “freed” (Gr: passive of *dikaioō*, meaning “be acquitted, be pronounced and treated as righteous”).³
 - c. Sin can get no slaving out of a “dead man,” for dead slaves are freed from all the “legal claims” of their former master.
- C. The answer to the question of the Christian’s relationship to sin is modeled in the crucified-and-raised Christ (6:8-10).
 1. *Our experience:* “Now if *we died* [aorist tense indicates completed action in the past

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and points back to baptism]⁴ with Christ, we believe [the content of Christian faith] that *we shall* also *live with* [durative use of the future tense]⁵ Him” (6:8; compare 2 Tim. 2:11).

NOTE: This future reality starts immediately after our “death” (see Rom. 6:4; Eph. 2:1-7), and continues thereafter on the condition of a holy way of life (faith) (see Rom. 6:15-21 and compare 2 Thess. 2:13-14; Heb. 12:14). *We live with Him; we walk in newness of life; we do not live in the sin to which we died* (see Rom. 6:2, 4, 11 and compare Col. 3:1-4).

2. *His experience:* “He died to sin once for all [our sins had claims on Christ *until* His death, which ended His relationship to sin] but...He lives to God [He does not ‘fall short of the glory of God,’ but was raised ‘through the glory of the Father’ to live forever in His presence]” (read Rom. 6:9-10; Gal. 2:20 and compare 2 Cor. 5:20-21; 1 Peter 2:24; Gal. 3:13; Heb. 2:9; 9:28).

D. Those who are justified by faith in Christ are finally and completely sanctified (set apart from the dominion of sin to serve the Kingdom of God) (6:11).

1. “We died to sin” (read Rom. 6:2).
2. “We died with Christ” (read Rom. 6:7-8).

3. "Count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus" (read Rom. 6:11 and compare John 14:6).

NOTE: We are to regard our death to sin's authority as being as certain and final as Christ's death for our sins. We were baptized "into His death" just as surely as we were baptized "into forgiveness of sins" (see Greek text of Acts 2:38 and compare Rom. 6:3). A major weakness of the church today lies in this lack of a proper "self-reckoning." Conversion is every bit as revolutionary as being "born again" or "raised from the dead"!

E. The logical conclusion of the Christian's union with Christ (6:12-14)

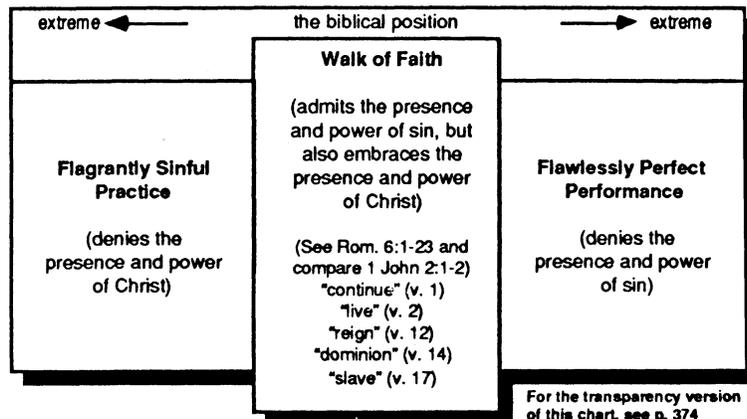
1. "Therefore [on the basis of what has been said] do not let sin reign in your mortal body...."
2. Although the Christian has died to sin, *sin* is not dead! Therefore, Paul gives this admonition.
3. The Christian must forever be on his guard against sin, and must fight against it (read 1 Cor. 10:12-13; Eph. 6:10-13; Gal. 6:1; Heb. 3:12-13; James 5:19-20; 1 John 5:16-17).
4. In justifying man by faith, God does not violate or over-power man's freedom to *choose*, nor does He do so in the matter of sanctification (setting man free from the power and practice of sin).

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NOTE: Contrary to the teaching of certain religious cults, the "mortal body" of man does not exhaust the totality of man's being. The 'whole man' *includes* the physical, but also transcends the physical, for Paul speaks to the 'whole man' when he says: "Do not offer the parts of your body to sin..." (see Rom. 6:11-13 and compare 2 Peter 1:13-14; 2 Cor. 5:6-9; Phil. 1:19-23; 1 Thess. 5:23).

5. A prevalent theory of sanctification among the so-called "holiness" churches says that the Christian attains sinless perfection (moral flawlessness) in this present life.
6. Isolated acts of sin are not what Paul is concerned with in this context. The issue at hand is the Christian's life-style (read Gal. 6:1-2; 1 John 1:5-2:2; 3:4-10; 5:16-18).
7. We must not *practice* sin as a way of life, nor deliberately *permit* sin in our lives. We must die to its power, pollution and practice:



8. Sin is not to “reign” (be king or lord) in the Christian’s life.
 - a. It would be useless to tell those outside of Christ not to let sin reign in them!
 - b. Christians, who have “died to sin,” are no longer to be slaves to sin (read again Rom. 6:2, 8, 11).
9. Man’s “mortal body” is so intricately tied in with sin that sin is said to “reign” in its members (read Rom. 6:12-13).
10. ‘Mortal body’ is not to be confused with ‘flesh,’ as though human flesh were inherently evil (as in some Greek philosophy and eastern religious thought). The physical “body” (with its members) *can* serve righteousness (see Rom. 6:13, 19; 12:1; 1 Cor. 6:19-20; 9:25-27; 1 Thess. 5:23).
11. The term “flesh” however, often has a negative moral connotation (since it is so easily used as sin’s instrument and accomplice), and so must be “crucified” (see Gal. 5:19-21, 24 and compare Rom. 8:3).
 - a. The ‘mortal body’ at one time belonged to ‘our old man’ (see Rom. 6:6; Eph. 4:22; Col. 3:9).
 - b. The ‘mortal body’ was then a ‘body of sin’ (ruled, owned, and enslaved by sin).

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12. In union with Christ, the 'mortal body' is no longer 'the body of sin.'
 - a. Once "our old man" is crucified, sin is not to reign as king!
 - b. Why should that which is "dead to sin" respond to the will and desires of sin? (Sin is being personified in this section) (read Rom. 8:12-13; 13:12-14; 1 Peter 2:11-12).
13. "Do not offer the parts of your body to sin as instruments of unrighteousness" (6:13): 'Unrighteousness' is everything that contradicts God's righteousness and stands opposed to Him (see Rom. 1:17-18; 3:21-26).

NOTE: In place of the 'body,' Paul speaks of all the individual parts of the body as 'instruments' (Gr: *hoplon*, meaning "tool, weapon").⁶ Sin, in exercising its reign, wants now "this part," then "that part," and ultimately, "all the parts." Death to sin logically implies the denial of sin's demands. This is accomplished by following the desires of the indwelling Spirit (see Rom. 5:5; 8:13-15; Gal. 4:6; 5:16-18).

14. "But rather offer yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life" (6:13): If a Christian sins, it is "out of character" and against his intended direction of life. (Sin comes to the Christian as an *intruder*.) (Compare Rom. 12:1.)

NOTE: *First*, “offer yourselves” (one’s total being). *Second*, the logical and natural consequence is to “offer the parts of your body.” Whatever we give “ourselves” to is that to which we will give our various bodily *parts*.

15. “For sin *shall not be your master* [literally, ‘shall not lord it over you’]” (6:14): The absence of the article in the Greek text (“*the sin*”) is conspicuous, since it is used consistently up to this point (compare Greek text, Rom. 5:12-6:13).

NOTE: ‘Sin’ without the Greek article has broader applications than *with* the article: ‘*The sin*’ refers to the *power* (reign) of sin, while ‘sin’ points to *anything* in the nature of ‘sin.’⁷ In Rom. 6:12 the “power of sin” is not to reign over us, but in Rom. 6:14 no single sin of any kind is to play the lord over us. A Christian has no *reason* to sin! A Christian is not *obligated* to sin! A Christian is *really free*, if he *chooses* to be! (Read John 8:31-36 and compare 1 John 1:8-2:2.)

16. Sin shall not dominate us, because we are not “under law” but “under grace” (6:14): ‘Grace’ and ‘law’ (no articles)⁸ are opposites. Man can never be spiritually independent; he is “under grace” or “under law” (and “under sin”).
- a. Christians are *under grace* (see Rom. 3:21-26). Justification is a gracious, divinely accomplished change in the lives

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- of the justified. The law can make no such change in spiritual relationship.
- b. Law can make subjects and slaves, but not saints. To go back “under law” (and so “under sin”) would be to defeat one’s justification (see Gal. 1:6-7; 2:16, 21; 3:10-11; 5:2-4).
 - c. Paul, having previously mentioned ‘law,’ will treat this subject fully in a subsequent section of Romans (see Rom. 7:1-25 and read again Rom. 3:20-21, 27-31; 4:13-14; 5:14, 20; 6:14-15).
- II. Being justified, one is free from sin and enslaved to God: the *practical* aspect (6:15-23; compare Titus 2:11-14; 2 Cor. 5:14-21; Eph. 4:17-5:2; Col. 3:9-4:6).
- A. Paul discusses the practical implications of ‘law’ and ‘grace’ (6:15).
1. Paul’s discussion of ‘law’ in Romans up to this point has been threefold:
 - a. *First*, he set aside ‘law’ as the means of justification (see Rom. 3:21).
 - b. *Second*, he set aside ‘law’ as the means of obtaining the Abrahamic promise (see Rom. 4:13).
 - c. *Third*, he sets aside ‘law’ in connection

with sanctification and the entire sanctified way of life (6:15-19).

2. "Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? By no means!": "Under grace" does not mean "free to commit sin," for grace (properly understood) discourages the practice of sin in a way that law never could (see Rom. 7:7-14).

NOTE: To be "under grace" does not remove our obligation to God, but enables us to *fulfill* it. "Under grace" means "not under law." but it does not imply *lawlessness* any more than it demands *flawlessness* (read Rom. 8:1-9).

B. Paul describes the practical application of "slaves" and "masters" (6:16-20).

1. "You are slaves to the one whom you obey" (6:16): Here is an obvious universal truth.
 - a. One who serves *Satan* ceases to be a servant of *God*.
 - b. One who "*serves sin*" cannot at the same time "*serve righteousness*."
 - c. One who is saved through Christ is *saved from sinning* or *Christ does not save!* (See 2 Peter 2:19 and compare Matt. 6:24; 12:30; Mark 9:38-41.)

NOTE: Jesus came to save us "from" (not "in") our sins (see Matt. 1:21). An "ungodly" child of God is a misnomer (read

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carefully 1 John 3:9-10). It is an inescapable fact of our humanity that *we must choose to serve* as either “slaves to sin, which leads to death, or to obedience, which leads to righteousness” (read Rom. 1:5; 16:26).

2. “Though you used to be slaves to sin [literally, ‘of *the sin*’], you wholeheartedly obeyed the form of teaching to which you were entrusted” (6:17): *Obedience* is not a mere external form, but an inward and spiritual submission to God (compare John 3:3-5, 14-16, 36; Rom. 2:25-28; Matt. 3:8-9; 7:15-21; 15:1-20; 22:34-39; 23:1-39; Acts 7:51-53).

NOTE: That “form of teaching” is the ‘gospel’ and all its effects. Paul’s usage of the word ‘form’ (Gr: *typos*) means “form, figure, pattern, model.”⁹ The gospel is an exclusive and unique pattern of teaching (see Rom. 1:1-4, 16-17; 2:16; 16:25 and compare 1 Cor. 15:1-4; Gal. 1:6-9; 2 Tim. 1:13-14; 2:8; Jude 3). Only *this* “form of teaching” is effective to free us from sin and enslave us to righteousness, and it must be *obeyed wholeheartedly* (see Rom. 6:3-4 and compare 2 Thess. 1:8-10; Gal. 5:7).

- a. Christianity is not a moral *code*, given that we might live up to moral perfection in order to please God; rather, it is built upon the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ (*the Cross; Christ crucified; the gospel*) (read carefully 1 Cor. 1:18-2:2; Gal. 6:14).

- b. What Christ experienced historically (in dying to sin), Christians must experience and embody in “faith-repentance-baptism.” This obedience is “*from the heart*” (willing and sincere) rather than “with eye-service” (see Eph. 6:6 and compare Rom. 2:16; 1 Cor. 4:5).
3. The result of this obedience is that Christians have been “set free from [the] sin and have become slaves to [the] righteousness” (6:18): The ‘freedom’ became a reality when we entered into ‘grace’ upon our trusting obedience to the conditions related to the Good News of Christ’s death, burial, and resurrection.

NOTE: The ‘freedom’ Paul speaks of in this section is not related primarily to *justification* (our position in Christ), but to our *sanctification* (our practice in Christ). Christians are to “offer the parts of their bodies in slavery to righteousness.” How could we even think of letting ourselves slip back into the service of the old master (sin)? “By no means!” (See Rom. 6:15-18 and compare Gal. 5:13; 1 Peter 2:16.)

4. The practical aspect of “slaves” and “masters” is illustrated by a human example (6:19-20): Those “owned” by sin are only too ready to submit their bodily members to the evil desires of their master, but those “owned” by righteousness must be equally

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zealous to slave for righteousness (compare 1 John 3:4-6; 1 Cor. 6:9-20).

- a. Paul calls upon Christians to be as thoroughly “sold out” in service to righteousness as they once were in the service of sin.
- b. There is to be a progressive realization of increasing purity, dedication, and consecration in the service of righteousness (see 2 Cor. 6:14-7:1; Matt. 5:48; 1 Peter 1:2, 15-16; John 17:17; 2 Thess. 2:13-14; Heb. 12:14; 2 Peter 3:18).
- c. This does not deny the fact that Christians are “set apart from sin and for God” when they are converted (see 1 Cor. 1:1-3; Col. 1:13-14).
- d. Paul bases his appeal for the *practice* of righteousness on the Christian’s *position* of slavery to righteousness (God). Their “freedom from righteousness” had decisively and completely ended when their slavery to sin was finished. They are now logically and morally obligated to serve righteousness, for they belong to God (read Rom. 6:20).

C. Paul defines the practical culmination of slavery to sin (shame and death) and slavery to God (holiness and life) (6:21-23).

1. Slavery to sin results in *shame* and bears bitter fruit: *death* (6:21; compare Eph. 5:5-12).
2. Slavery to God results in a harvest of *holiness* and eternal *life* (6:22; compare Gal. 5:22-24; 6:7-8; 2 Tim. 4:7-8; 2 Peter 1:8-10; John 15:1-11; Col. 1:3-6; James 3:13-18; Phil. 1:9-11; Titus 3:14).
3. The chart below reviews the contrast of living “under grace” and “under law”:

“Under Law”	“Under Grace”
Sin leading to death (v. 16)	Obedience leading to righteousness (v. 16)
Slaves of sin (vv. 17-18)	Slaves of righteousness (vv. 17-18)
Enslaved to sin (v. 18)	Free from sin (v. 18)
Wages of sin (v. 23)	Free gift of God (v. 23)
Death (v. 23)	Eternal life (v. 23)

For the transparency version of this chart, see p. 375

4. “For the wages of sin is death” (6:23): Adam’s disobedience was the start of the

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reign of sin and death, and we (with our own sinning) are the continuation (compare Rom. 5:12).

- a. Sin “pays off” its slaves. It gives them that which is due, earned, and deserved (see Rom. 4:4).
 - b. *Death* is the “wages” which sin brought in; *death* in its finality; the punishment of eternal separation from the living God (see Rom. 1:32; 2 Thess. 1:8-10).
 - c. Why the delay in sin paying wages? The certainty of the “pay-off” was revealed at the Cross, but God’s kindness desires the repentance and justification of the sinner, even as His patience awaits it (see Rom. 2:4-11; 2 Peter 3:9).
 - d. It has been said: “Sin is a faithful paymaster, but no one can live on its wages” (see 1 Cor. 15:55-56 and compare Gal. 6:7-8).
5. “But the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord” (6:23): There is sharp contrast between a “gift” which cannot be earned, but must be received freely by faith (“life”) and “wages” which must be merited and deserved (“death”) (compare Rom. 5:15-17; 1 Cor. 15:1-4; Gal. 5:19-22).

6. Eternal life is “in Christ Jesus our Lord” (6:23; compare Rom. 3:22, 24-26; 5:1-11; 6:3, 11; Gal. 3:26-29; 2 Tim. 2:10).

III. Conclusion: “Shall we continue in sin?”

A. Shall we, since grace abounds, remain in sin’s power? (Read Rom. 6:1.)

1. Shall we, since we are not “under law,” do *some* sin? (See Rom. 6:15.)
2. Shall we desire to do *any* sin? (See Rom. 6:15.)

B. The very idea of remaining in the power and practice of sin is contrary to a genuine Christian’s mind. Perish the thought! (Read 1 John 1:5-2:2.)

1. Sin is an intruder!
2. Sin is an unwelcome guest!

C. The teaching of Romans 6:1-23 is sanctification (both *positional* and *practical*): A Christian is

1. Justified to be sanctified (see Rom. 6:3-5 and compare Rom. 6:6-7)
2. Sanctified to be glorified (see Rom. 6:8)

NOTE: “Without holiness no one will see the Lord.” This is the church’s urgent need! (Read Heb. 12:14.)

Notes:

Dead to the Law, Joined to Christ—Romans 7:1-6

- I. The principle of the dominion of law is illustrated by the law of the marriage covenant (“the law of the husband”) (7:1-3).

NOTE: All the previous references to law are combined, and the relationship of the doctrine of justification to law is now presented: The righteousness of God is manifested and realized “apart from law” (see Rom. 3:20-21). Heirs of the Abrahamic promise are not “those of law” (see Rom. 4:14). Those who are “under grace” are no longer “under law” (see Rom. 6:14-15).

- A. Paul recounts the facts concerning Jewish marriage law. (He is not giving an exposition of marriage and divorce, but illustrating the “binding” nature of covenant arrangements.)
1. Law has dominion over a man only for the time he lives (just as sin does—read again Rom. 6:7).
 2. A woman is bound “by law” to her husband as long as he is alive.
 3. A woman is “released from the law of marriage” when her husband dies.

NOTE: The woman is free to be joined to another; she is dead as *wife*, but still alive as *woman*. She is not an adulteress in this case, since her husband no longer lives. (The realm of law does not reach beyond a person’s life span.) She is no longer a *wife*. The

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death of her husband abolishes the effect of her “wife-hood.”
Death dissolves legal obligation (1 Cor. 7:39).

B. Let it be noted that “the law” (concerning marriage) did not die, but *the husband died, thus freeing the wife* from legal obligation to “the law of marriage.”

II. The deduction from the marriage illustration is:
“You also died to the law [article implies Mosaic law, as later context confirms] through the body of Christ, that you might belong to another” (7:4).

A. Christians are made *dead to the law* “through the body of Christ” (Christ crucified) (compare Col. 2:14 with Heb. 10:5-10).

B. Paul is speaking specifically (but not exclusively) of the law of Moses.

NOTE: Elsewhere Paul says that all moral debt to the Mosaic law “that was against us and stood opposed to us” has been canceled at the Cross (see Col. 2:13-14). Here Paul speaks of the *Christian* “dying,” not the law.

C. Christians die to the “law-principle” (whether that of Moses or any other kind): We died as “wife to law,” and therefore we are free to be joined as covenant-partner to another—the risen Christ (see Rom. 7:4, 6).

NOTE: The Christian’s “death to law” occurred “through the body of Christ” (compare Rom. 6:1-7).

- D. Christians cannot be joined to Christ as long as they are “under law,” that is, bound to a legal system.
- E. To be “under law” is to be under sin’s dominion (see Rom. 6:14-15).
- F. To *be* “under law” is to *fail* “under law” (and to be therefore “under sin”) (see Rom. 3:20; Gal. 3:10-12).
- G. Law held us captive to sin, but we have “died to sin” and therefore cannot be held by law to it any more (see Rom. 6:11, 14 and compare Rom. 7:5-6; Gal. 3:21-23).

NOTE: The Christian, now joined as “wife” to Christ in covenant relationship, puts himself trustingly into His hands at each moment, and so bears fruit that glorifies God (read Rom. 7:4-6 and compare John 15:1-7; Gal. 5:22-23; Eph. 5:8-10).

- III. The effect of the Christian’s death to the law is a new way of serving God (7:5-6; compare Rom. 12:1-21; 2 Cor. 3:1-18).

NOTE: Verses 5 and 6 present a contrast. It must be kept in mind that the central theme in chapters 6-7 is the practical relationship of the Christian to sin and law—sanctification.

- A. The contrast of two “marriages” (to law or to Christ) is expressed in two references to time (“But when we were....” and “But now....”).

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- B. The “*old way of the written code*” (under law) was characterized by “*the flesh,*” “*sinful passions,*” “*law,*” and “*death.*”
- C. The “*new way of the Spirit*” is made possible by “*dying to that which bound us*” and being “*released from the law.*”
1. “Released” (Gr: *katargeō*) means “to make ineffective, powerless, idle.”¹⁰ This refers back to the illustration (Rom. 7:2, Greek text). Through our union with Christ in His death, we have died “to what once bound us”: We were held by sin as its slave “under law.”
 2. At that time, (the) law aroused our natural human passions to sinful bodily expression, resulting in conduct worthy of death (read Rom. 1:32; 6:20-21; Eph. 2:1-3; James 1:13-15).
 3. This whole arrangement is rendered inoperative “in Christ” (read Rom. 8:1-9).
- IV. The summation and conclusion of Paul’s illustration concerning “death to the law” is as follows:
- A. As the widowed woman was “released from the law of marriage” (that which “once bound her”), so the Christian is “released from (the) law” through his faith-union with the crucified and risen Christ.

B. As the woman in the illustration was no longer bound by the law concerning marriage (literally, “the law of the husband”), the Christian is no longer bound to sin by the law (7:6; compare Gal. 3:21-24).

NOTE: The Christian is: (1) *dead* to sin (see Rom. 6:11); (2) *not controlled* by “the flesh” (see Rom. 7:5; 8:9); (3) *crucified* with Christ (see Rom. 6:6; Gal. 2:20); (4) *free* from “the body of sin” (see Rom. 6:6); (5) *no longer a slave* to sin (see Rom. 6:6); (6) *free* from sin and from “the law of sin and death” (see Rom. 8:1-2 and compare Rom. 6:22; 7:6).

V. The following two charts portray humanity “under grace” as contrasted with “under law” (7:1-6; compare Rom. 6:14; 5:12-8:17).

Notes:

<p>UNDER LAW <i>Husband-Wife</i></p> <p>Adam’s sin—sinner Flesh—servants of sin</p>	<p>UNDER GRACE <i>Husband-Wife</i></p> <p>Christ—Christian righteousness Spirit—servants of righteousness</p>
<p>(See also Rom. 7:25; 8:5-14 and compare Gal. 3:1-3; 5:16-25; 2 Peter 1:1-4; Eph. 2:1-3, 13-18.)</p>	
<p>“We were...”</p> <p>Married to sin Bound by law Wife to Adam Bringing forth fruit that resulted in death</p>	<p>“But now...”</p> <p>Married to righteousness Free from law (“released”) Wife to Christ (see 1 Cor. 6:17) Bringing forth fruit that results in sanctification and eternal life</p>
<p>“Our old man” has died (see Rom. 6:6-7, 11 and compare Gal. 2:20; 6:14)</p>	

For the transparency version of this chart, see p. 376

Notes:

- VI. Now that we have been released from (the) law and have died to sin, “we serve in the new way of spirit [no article] and not in the old way of letter [no article]”¹¹ (7:6; compare Rom. 6:4-7).
- A. The free man is a slave, but not to sin (see 1 Cor. 7:22; Gal. 4:4-7; 5:1, 13; 1 Peter 2:16).
 - B. The free man serves, but not in the “old way of written commandment.” (This includes the Ten Commandments, according to the context.) He serves in the “new way of spirit,” not according to any legalistic code, with its “earning system” (see 1 Cor. 13:1-3 and compare Rom. 13:8-10; 1 Cor. 16:14; Gal. 5:13-14; Matt. 7:12; 22:34-40; 1 John 3:16).
 - C. Faith is the basic principle of those who “serve in spirit” (as contrasted with our former state, “in the flesh”) (see Rom. 2:29; 7:6; 2 Cor. 3:3-6).
 - D. The trouble with the “old way” was that it was “weak and useless” in procuring righteousness; it was dead and unspiritual in its application of the law; it could not bring about the necessary inward change: a “new heart” (see Heb. 8:10; 7:18-19; 10:14-22; Rom. 2:28-29; 3:31; 6:17-18; 12:1-8; John 4:23-24 and compare Jer. 31:33; Ezek. 11:19; 36:26-27).

- E. Therefore, having died to the *lordship of sin* and the tyranny of *the letter of (the) law*, we are no longer under law, but under grace.
1. We serve in acceptable obedience unto God (not flawless, but neither lawless).
 2. We offer our bodily parts to serve righteousness.
 3. We live in newness of spirit, reaping holiness and eternal life (see Rom. 7:6; Gal. 6:7-10; Phil. 3:1-21 and compare Rom. 6:4, 17, 19, 22).

Notes:

Freed from Law Through Christ—Romans 7:7-25

NOTE: It is necessary to be set free through Jesus Christ our Lord in order to be delivered from law's inward struggle (7:7-25). It should be remembered that in the previous verses (see Rom. 7:1-6), Paul has made it very clear that one who has "died to sin" has also equally "died to law." The Christian is not under the "dominion of sin," nor is he "under law" (see Rom. 6:1-11 and compare Rom. 7:1, 4, 6; 6:14).

- I. The nature of (the) law is exalted (7:7-14).
 - A. The law is *not sin* (7:7).
 - B. The law is *holy*; the commandment is holy, righteous, and good (7:12).
 - C. The law is *spiritual* (7:14).
 - D. The law is *weak* through dependence upon human 'flesh' (see Rom. 8:3 and compare Gal. 3:21; Heb. 7:18-19).
- II. The purpose of (the) law is explained (7:7-14).
 - A. Law manifests the fact (knowledge) of sin (7:7; see Gal. 3:19).
 - B. Law makes occasion for sin (7:8; see Gal. 3:22).
 - C. Law reveals the power of sin (7:9).
 - D. Law reveals the effect of sin (7:10).
 - E. Law reveals the deceitfulness of sin (7:11; see Heb. 3:12-13).
 - F. Law reveals the holiness of its Maker (7:12).
 - G. Law reveals the sinfulness of sin (7:13).

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NOTE: The omission of the article before “law” (7:7-11) suggests that, although Paul specifically mentions the Tenth Commandment of the Law of Moses, he also includes all systems of law. The purpose of law was (and is) to *reveal sin, not relieve it!* (See Rom. 7:3, 7-11 and compare 1 Tim. 1:8-11.)

III. The power of sin is revealed and recognized (7:7-14).

A. Through the commandment, sin seized “opportunity” (Gr: *aphormē*, meaning “occasion, pretext, opportunity”)¹² (7:8, 11).

NOTE: The commandment (law) itself was not the source of the evil desires (see also Matt. 15:19-20; James 1:13-15). It was the means for sin to assert itself, “for apart from law, sin is dead.”

B. Through the entrance of commandment, sin “sprang to life” (Gr: *anazaō*, meaning “to come to life again, spring into life”)¹³ (7:9-10).

NOTE: The experience of Adam (failure under law) is repeated anew in each human life as it becomes morally accountable to God. Paul’s experience was as ours is: Once, spiritually alive apart from law; then, the entrance of knowledge of law; finally, sin “lives again” in Adam’s descendant and kills him. People are not born dead in sin. They follow the footsteps of Adam. They fail “under law” and they die.

C. Through what was good (God’s commandment), *sin deceived and produced death* (7:11, 13; see 2 Cor. 11:3, 13-14; John 8:44; Heb. 3:13; Eph. 4:22; 1 Tim. 2:14 and compare Lev. 18:5; 19:2; Luke 10:28; Gal. 3:10).

IV. The power of sin is exposed (7:14-23).

NOTE: If the “wretched man” of Rom. 7:7-25 is “Paul, the Christian” (saint), then “the old man” must be resurrected! Paul had slain the “old man” through his faith-union with the crucified and risen Christ (see Rom. 6:1-7; Gal. 2:20). This “wretched man” is exhausted from seeking deliverance from sin’s power by means of a legal system. He is clearly lost and dead in sin, according to the context (see Rom. 7:7-11). He must seek deliverance from sin outside the realm of “law” (legal system). By extolling the goodness of the law, Paul (by contrast to law’s goodness) presents the problem of the power and utter sinfulness of “sin.”

- A. Sin is *activated* by law (7:8).
 - B. Sin is *vitalized* by law (7:9).
 - C. Sin *exploits* law (7:8, 11).
 - D. Sin *deceives* through law (7:11).
 - E. Sin *kills* through law (7:13, 20).
- V. This personified “sin” is the polluting power which Saul the Pharisee, in and of himself (note the repetition of personal pronouns), could not conquer. *Sin conquered him* (7:14-25).
- A. “I am unspiritual [Gr: *sarkinos*, ‘fleshy,’ ‘(made) of flesh’]”¹⁴ (7:14).
 - B. “I am... sold as a slave to sin [literally, ‘sold under sin’]” (7:14).
 - C. “Sin [is] living in me” (7:20).
 - D. “[I am] a prisoner of the law of sin” (7:23).
 - E. “[I am] a slave to the law of sin” (7:25).

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NOTE: It takes more than a holy, good, and righteous commandment to rid oneself of sin. The “wretched man” is not crying out for a better law-keeping record. What he wants is *deliverance from sin and death!*

- VI. The power of sin exceeds the unaided ability of man in his daily struggle against it (7:15-23).
- A. The utter inability of man to conquer sin through toil and struggling under law is portrayed in the following phrases (7:15):
1. “I do not understand what I *do*” (Gr: *katergazomai*, meaning “achieve, accomplish, bring about, produce”).¹⁵
 2. “For what I want to do I do not *do*” (Gr: *prassō*, meaning “accomplish, commit, practice, busy oneself with”).¹⁶
 3. “But what I hate I *do*” (Gr: *poieō*, meaning “make, create, cause, bring about, accomplish”).¹⁷
- B. The cause of despair and death is sin, not (the) law, as is expressed in the phrase: “sin living in me” (7:16-18).

NOTE: Paul uses the verb “living” (Gr: *oikeō*) meaning “live, dwell, have one’s habitation”.¹⁸ This expresses the same reality as Paul’s earlier phrase, “sold under sin” (see Rom. 7:14). The verb “sold” (Gr: *pipraskō*) denotes “sell someone (as a slave).”¹⁹ It is an expression of utter dissatisfaction with bondage to a corrupt nature (“our old man”), involving the futile use of law as a means of deliverance.

- C. Paul states one's positive desire (yet, one's inability) to realize a consistently "good" law-fulfilling life: this cannot be true of Paul as a Christian (7:19; see Rom. 6:1, 15-23; 8:1-9; Gal. 5:16-24; 6:14; 1 Thess. 2:10).
- D. Paul states the dilemma of one under law: "It is sin living in me" (7:20-23).

NOTE: Only a man "under law" could make such a statement! The "law of sin" means the "reigning power of sin" (see Rom. 7:23, 25 and compare Rom. 8:1-3). A man who is "under grace" has the resources to combat and overcome the dominating, reigning, overpowering tyranny of sin (see Gal. 5:17, 24; Rom. 8:13). See Appendix 6.

- VII. Paul portrays the powerless predicament of man under law (7:24-25).
- A. Only when sin is revealed for what it really is and does will a man cry out for deliverance!
- B. We must, as Saul of Tarsus did, look *outside ourselves* for deliverance: "*Who* [not *what*] will rescue me from this body of death?" (7:24).
1. The "ego" (I, self) with which the "wretched man" has been preoccupied in this section has been totally inadequate to deliver him from the power of sin and death (read carefully Rom. 7:14, 17, 20, 24-25).
 2. "Ego" ("the flesh") is a slave to sin; this is man outside of Christ (7:25).

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- C. We must be willing to surrender to Christ, who gives the victory: “Live no more *I [ego]*” (literal rendering of Gal. 2:20; compare John 15:5; 1 Cor. 15:10, 55-58; Phil. 4:13).
- D. We must look away from sinful self to the sanctifying Savior (read Acts 15:1, 10).
- E. Paul’s cry and confession reveal the desperation of a man laboring and losing under law: “What a wretched man I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?” (7:24).

NOTE: The word “wretched” (Gr: *talaiḗpōros*) means “miserable, wretched, distressed.”²⁰

- F. Two other ways (besides seeking deliverance “outside of self”) are possible for a conscientious man who is under law: he can either repudiate the law and sear his conscience, or he can plunge into despair and possible suicide.

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¹Blass-Debrunner-Funk, §318, 1 (p. 166).

²Both the article ('the') before 'sin' and the article before 'grace' are examples of what is called "the article of previous reference" (or "the anaphoric article") and serve to tie the discussion in chapter six with references to 'sin' and 'grace' back in chapter five (see Blass-Debrunner-Funk, § 252, 1 [pp. 131-132] and compare Lenski, *Romans*, p. 388).

³Bauer-Arndt-Gingrich-Danker, p. 197.

⁴Blass-Debrunner-Funk, §318, 1 (p. 166).

⁵Lenski, *Romans*, pp. 404-405.

⁶Bauer-Arndt-Gingrich-Danker, p. 575.

⁷Lenski, *Romans*, p. 417.

⁸Lenski, *Romans*, p. 418.

⁹Bauer-Arndt-Gingrich-Danker, p. 830.

¹⁰Bauer-Arndt-Gingrich-Danker, p. 417.

¹¹See Lenski, *Romans*, p. 455.

¹²Bauer-Arndt-Gingrich-Danker, p. 127.

¹³Bauer-Arndt-Gingrich-Danker, p. 53.

¹⁴Bauer-Arndt-Gingrich-Danker, p. 743.

¹⁵Bauer-Arndt-Gingrich-Danker, p. 421.

¹⁶Bauer-Arndt-Gingrich-Danker, p. 698.

¹⁷Bauer-Arndt-Gingrich-Danker, pp. 680-681.

¹⁸Bauer-Arndt-Gingrich-Danker, p. 557.

¹⁹Bauer-Arndt-Gingrich-Danker, p. 659.

²⁰Bauer-Arndt-Gingrich-Danker, p. 803.

Lesson Eight

Romans
8:1-17

In Paul's view, life in the Spirit is the life of the "new creation" in Christ. Experience of the Spirit is not merely one aspect of the new life of the believing community; it is the principle of it. It is that in which the new life consists.

— G. W. H. Lampe

Spirituality and the Spirit

—Romans 8:1-11

OUTLINE OF ROMANS		
INTRODUCTION (1:1-17)		
EXPOSITION (1:18 - 11:36)	Righteousness	PROCLAIMED (1:18 - 3:20)
		PRESENTED (3:21 - 5:21)
		PERFECTED (6:1 - 8:39)
		PURPOSED (9:1 - 11:36)
EXHORTATION (12:1 - 15:13)	Relationships	SPIRITUAL (12:1-2)
		SOCIAL (12:3-8)
		PERSONAL (12:9-21)
		CIVIL (13:1-7)
		PUBLIC (13:8-14)
		FRATERNAL (14:1 - 15:13)
CONCLUSION (15:14-16:27)		

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NOTE: The doctrine of sanctification continues through Rom. 8:17. The major shifts in Paul's presentation may be noted as: *walking in newness of life* (Rom. 8:1-17) and *waiting expectantly for glorification* (Rom. 8:18-39). Coming out of Romans 7 into Romans 8 is like coming out of a terrible, vicious storm into a tranquil, serene calm: from wretchedness to newness of life and glory. The Spirit makes the difference! (See also Rom. 5:1-5; 6:1-4; 8:1).

- I. *In Christ*, the Spirit frees us from the power of sin and death (8:1-4).

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- A. “Therefore [in answer to the wretchedness of slavery under law], there is now [in the present moment] no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus” (8:1; see Rom. 6:1-5; 3:21-26; Eph. 2:1-10 and compare John 5:24; 1 John 5:13).
- B. Paul contrasts the “law of the Spirit of life” and the “law of sin and [of] death.”
1. *Law* in this usage refers to a ruling principle or force, rather than to a code of conduct.
 2. The “law of sin and death” is reigning outside of Christ, while the “law of the Spirit of life” reigns “in Christ Jesus” (see Rom. 7:6, 23-25 and compare Rom. 6:14; 5:12-21).
- C. “For what the law [God’s moral law] was powerless to do [free man from sin and death], in that it was weakened by the sinful nature [literally, ‘the flesh’], God did” (8:3).

NOTE: In this section (Rom. 8:1-17), Paul mentions the term translated ‘[the] flesh’ thirteen times, and ‘[the] Spirit’ seventeen. The law of God was not weak in and of itself, but because it depended upon ‘flesh’ (unaided human effort) for fulfillment of God’s will (compare Heb. 8:7-8). “In Christ Jesus,” *God’s power* is effective to *make alive* (see Rom. 5:1-5, 10; 6:1-13 and compare Rom. 3:20; 7:9-13).

Although the law was perfect in every way, the medium through which it worked (unaided human merit) was not perfect

(see Rom. 7:12, 14; Pss. 19:7-11; 119:1-176 and compare Gal. 3:10-14).

1. 'The flesh' (man "on his own," without God's grace)¹ can never be brought to obedience. We must get rid of it! All that can be done with the flesh to please God is to "crucify it" (see Gal. 5:24; 2:20; 6:14) and put its deeds to death continually (see Gal. 5:16-21; Rom. 8:13).
 2. The phrase "in that," used in connection with the imperfect tense of the verb ("weakened"), stresses that the impossibility of law to free man from sin and death is a permanent weakness. Therefore, God used another means of delivering man from sin: Our 'flesh' was weak because of sin, but God and God's own Son are not! (See Rom. 3:21; 4:13-15 and compare 1 John 1:6-2:2.)
- D. "By sending [aorist participle denotes the whole mission of the Son in liberating man from sin and death]² His own Son in the likeness of sinful man [literally, 'sinful flesh']" (8:3; see also Rom. 8:32; Gal. 4:4-6)

NOTE: The literal expression, "in the likeness of sinful flesh," is a precisely stated truth that admits of no change. Lenski³ suggests that the phrase "the likeness of flesh" would leave Christ without real flesh, as in *Docetism*⁴ (see John 1:14; 1 John 1:1-4), while the

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“the flesh of sin” would make Christ’s flesh inherently sinful, as in *Ebionism*.⁵ The exact expression, “in the likeness of sinful flesh,” is biblical doctrine: This is real, human flesh without sin (see Heb. 4:15). The usage is not to be confused with the negative application of “flesh” (see Gal. 5:19-21; Rom. 13:14), nor with the simple expression, “flesh” (see John 1:14; Heb. 2:14, 17). *He did not sin in the flesh!*

- E. “To be a sin offering [literally, ‘and concerning sin’; that is, concerning everything in the nature of sin]” (8:3; see also Rom. 1:4; 3:13; 5:6, 8; 4:25; John 1:29; Heb. 9:14; 10:8, 10 and compare Gal. 1:4; 1 Peter 3:18)
- F. “And so [by the sinless life and atoning death of His incarnate Son] he condemned sin [the aorist verb points to the historical, ‘once-for-all’ past]⁶ in sinful man [literally, ‘in the flesh’; that is, the humanity with which God has identified Himself in Christ]” (8:3; see also Isa. 53:4; Matt. 27:45-46 and compare 2 Cor. 5:19-21; Gal. 3:13; Heb. 2:9, 14-15; 1 Peter 2:21-24).

NOTE: Sin “condemned” has no power to rule over those “in Christ Jesus.” The reader should recall that Paul’s discussion in this section has been in response to the accusations of his critics, who would claim that Paul’s doctrine of justification by faith logically leads to sin and lawlessness (read again Rom. 3:5-8; 6:1-2, 15-18). On the contrary, the gospel to which the believer is committed condemns sinful practices and liberates from sin’s power.

- G. "In order that the righteous requirements of the law [a sinless record] might be fully met [through being counted righteous 'in Christ'] in us, who do not live according to the sinful nature [literally, 'who do not walk according to the flesh'] but according to the Spirit [or, 'spirit']" (8:4)
1. The contrast here is between two distinct 'walks,' or ways of life. This term speaks of outward conduct as expressive of *inward reality* (see Col. 1:10; 2:6; Eph. 2:2, 10; 4:1, 17; 1 Thess. 2:12; 1 John 1:7; 2:6; 2 John 4, 6).
 2. The "walk according to flesh" is man's way of life without grace, characterized by *self-righteousness* and/or moral failure. The "walk according to spirit" is man's way of life under grace, characterized by *God's* righteousness and newness of life "in Christ Jesus" (read carefully Rom. 6:4, 14; 8:13-14; 16:20 and compare Phil. 3:3-9; Gal. 5:16-6:10).
- H. In conclusion, sin is neither necessary nor essential to human nature: Christ proved this by becoming human "in every way," *yet without sin* (see Heb. 2:14-15; 4:15).

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1. Adam and Eve (before the Fall) had all that belongs to human nature.
 - a. Sin came into their lives as a *foreign* element; sin is no more a part of man's nature than dust in his eye is a part of the nature of his eye!
 - b. This is true also of the descendants of Adam and Eve, contrary to the doctrine of "total hereditary depravity."
 2. Man's passions of the flesh are stronger than his regard for law! In his *ignorance* and *selfishness*, he deliberately rejects its requirements.
 3. What the once-sinless Adam lost, the ever-sinless Christ regains! (Read again Rom. 5:12-21.)
 4. Christ made atonement for sin on our behalf, making it possible for us to "die to sin" in union with Him and to rise with Him to "newness of life" by the power of the indwelling Spirit.
- II. *In Christ*, the 'minding' of the things of the Spirit produces the fruit of righteous character and conduct (8:5-11).
- A. One is 'minding' the things either of 'flesh' ("sinful nature," NIV)⁷ or of 'spirit' (see John 3:3-8; 6:63).

NOTE: In 8:5, Paul uses the verb form of 'mind' (Gr: *phroneō*), meaning "to think, form or hold an opinion, judge, set one's mind on, be intent on,"⁸ with the object of the verb being the "thought-product," or that which is "minded." In 8:6, Paul's usage of the noun form of 'mind' (Gr: *phronēma*) means "way of thinking, mind-set, aim, aspiration."⁹

- B. *Minding* regulates our *walking* (8:4): To "set the mind" on things of the flesh results in our "living according to the flesh" (see also Matt. 6:19-21; Rom. 12:2; Titus 2:11-15; 3:4-8; Col. 3:1-4).
- C. The "things of the Spirit" (NIV: "what the Spirit desires") involve
1. *God-centered* interests of the "new life" (see Matt. 5:20, 48; 1 Peter 1:14-15)
 2. *Christlike* concern for "righteousness" (see 1 John 3:4-10; Rom. 6:1-21)
 3. *Spiritual* affairs of God our Father and Jesus Christ "our Righteousness" (see Jer. 23:6; 1 Cor. 1:30 and compare 1 Peter 2:1-2; Matt. 5:6; Col. 3:1-4; Eph. 1:3; 2 Thess. 2:13)
- D. The more we mind the things of the Spirit, the fuller, richer, and stronger our spiritual life will be: This is real life and real peace! (See Rom. 5:1-5; Gal. 5:22-23.)

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E. See the chart below: “The things of the flesh” versus “the things of the Spirit” (Rom. 8:5-11).

FLESH	SPIRIT
Mind of the flesh: death (8:6). Is hostile to God (8:7). Is not (cannot be) subject to God (8:7) Cannot please God (8:8) Without the Spirit: do not belong to Christ (8:9)	Mind of the Spirit: life and peace (8:6) Spirit-indwelt (8:9) Body dead because of sin (see Rom. 7:24) (8:10). Spirit gives life because of righteousness in Christ (8:10; see Rom. 7:6; 8:1-2) God will give life to our mortal bodies (Rom. 6:11-13; 8:2-12, 23; 1 Cor. 15:53-58; Phil. 3:20- 21; 1:23; 2 Cor. 1:22; 5:5-8)
<p align="center">“IF CHRIST IS IN YOU” (see John 15:1-7) Rom. 6:22-23</p>	

For the transparency version of this chart, see p. 376

NOTE: The possession of the Spirit is the difference, the absolute dividing line, between the two ways of life! Try as he will, the carnal man *cannot* please God! (It is not a matter of something that is “too difficult”; it is a matter of something that is inherently *impossible*) (read carefully Rom. 7:4, 6, 24 and compare James 4:4).

Sonship and the Spirit

—Romans 8:12-17

- I. As “brothers” (sons of God in Christ) we are “debtors,” but not to the flesh (“sinful nature,” NIV) (8:12-13; compare Rom. 1:14).
- A. In reply to those who slandered Paul and the gospel by saying that his teaching logically leads to sinful indulgence, Paul replies that Christians are indebted (under “obligation”), not to commit sin, but to put sinful deeds to death (see also Col. 3:1-11).
- B. To live according to the flesh is to die (spiritual separation from the living God): Living in spiritual death (“For if you live according to the sinful nature”) can only lead to ultimate and eternal death (“...you will die”).

NOTE: To brothers who have been justified from sin, “debtors to flesh” is a very strong negative motivation. Who wants to finally end in death? It was for the purpose of *escaping* death and finding life that we *became* Christians! (See Eph. 2:1-5 and compare 1 Tim. 5:6; Rev. 3:1; Luke 15:24.)

- C. If, by the help of the Spirit (who assures us by indwelling us and guides by His Word in Scripture), Christians put to death the *misdeeds* of the body (not the body itself, nor the “body of sin”

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which was already crucified with Christ), *they will live* (8:13; read again Rom. 1:17 and compare Mark 8:34-35; John 12:23-26; Gal. 5:24; Col. 3:1-14).

- D. Paul's phrases in this section contain the secret and success of the Christian's sanctification (read Rom. 8:1-13 and compare 2 Thess. 2:13; Eph. 3:16):
1. "The law of the Spirit of *life*" (see Rom. 8:2)
 2. "Free from the law of sin and *death*" (see Rom. 8:2)
 3. "The mind controlled by the Spirit is *life* and peace" (see Rom. 8:6)
 4. "Spirit is *alive* because of righteousness" (see Rom. 8:10)
 5. "Will also give *life* to your mortal bodies" (see Rom. 8:11)
- E. Life begins and continues "in Christ" by the law of the Spirit of *life*: The spiritual life in which we share, as genuine Christians, is to continue forever.
1. We are not going to get "another life," though we will live in another "state."
 2. Our *present* spiritual life is going to leave the limitation of this mortal realm and will enter into heaven (see also John 3:15-16, 36; 10:10).

- F. The clash in terms in these two verses reach their climax (8:12-13): There is a “living” that brings on “death,” even as there is a “putting to death” that “makes alive and keeps alive” (see also 1 Cor. 9:27).
- G. Our new spiritual nature is “spirit” (no article) because it is “born of the Spirit”: Our logical and moral obligation is to live in accord with our new spiritual nature (see also John 3:3-5; 6:63 and compare 2 Peter 1:4-11).

NOTE: This ‘spirit’ (new life from and with God) rules in us, instead of the old ‘flesh.’ ‘Flesh’ may seem strong, but ‘the Spirit of God’ is stronger! (Read carefully Rom. 6:12-13 and compare Jer. 17:5-8; Phil. 3:3-21.)

II. *Sonship’s proof:* “Those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God” (8:14-16).

NOTE: The concept of “sonship” is related to Paul’s defense of his gospel against the charge that it produces lawlessness (rebellion). On the contrary, this message imparts to believers the Spirit of divine sonship and obligates them to live according to the pattern of their elder brother, Jesus (see Titus 2:11-14). Paul’s main considerations of “sonship” in this section are: *sonship’s proof* (Rom. 8:14-16) and *sonship’s inheritance* (Rom. 8:17).

- A. One is led by either *flesh* or *spirit* (8:14): Practicing the “works of the flesh” is fulfilling the lusts of the flesh, while the fruit of the Spirit is

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borne by those who live, walk, and are led by the Spirit (see Gal. 5:16-25).

- B. “Those who are led by the Spirit of God [these] are sons of God” (8:14): Being “led” involves *willful submission, loving obedience, and trust*. We are led, not driven or dragged! (See Rom. 6:16 and compare 1 John 2:24, 27; Acts 2:38; 5:32; 1 Cor. 12:2-3; Eph. 1:13-14.)
- C. It is to be noted that those who are led by the Spirit are those who are indwelt by that same Spirit (8:14): These, and only these, Spirit-indwelt, Spirit-led ones are “sons of God” (see Rom. 8:9).

NOTE: The Spirit *never* leads in a way contrary to His revealed Word! He leads us with His *instructing Word* by which we can understand His *providential activity* (see Pss. 23:3; 119:7-10).

- D. Because we are “sons,” we have “received the spirit of sonship [literally, ‘adoption’]” (8:15): This is the opposite of a “spirit of slavery [to sin and death]” that results in “fear [of God’s judgment]” (see 1 John 3:18-24; 4:17-21; Rom. 2:16; Heb. 2:14-15 and compare 2 Tim. 1:7).
1. God gave us the Spirit of His Son *because* He has adopted us as sons (see Gal. 4:4-7 and compare Rom. 5:5).

2. The word “adoption” (Gr: *huiiothesia*) signifies “the place and condition of a son given to one to whom it does not naturally belong.”¹⁰ It is a covenant term that has its roots in Yahweh’s adoption of Israel (see Rom. 9:4; Exod. 4:22; Hosea 11:1; Ezek. 16:1-7; Deut. 14:1; Jer. 31:9).
 3. The act of adoption declares how we became God’s sons. The fulfillment of our adoption is our entrance into Christ’s inheritance of glory (see Rom. 8:23; Eph. 4:30).
- E. “And by Him [or, ‘by which’] we cry, ‘*Abba, Father*’” (8:15): *Abba*, is an Aramaic term of endearment, translatable as “daddy,”¹¹ and used of the Father by our elder brother, Jesus, while the term “Father” (Gr: *patēr*)¹² is an expression of *sonship*, not *slavery* (see Mark 14:36).
1. “We cry” (Gr: *krazō*) means “to cry out, scream, shriek, call, call out, cry.”¹³ This word suggests a boy yelling, “Father, father!” when he is in distress.
 2. Paul will later comment on the Christian’s sufferings as a sharing of sonship with Christ (see Rom. 8:17-18 and compare Heb. 5:7).
- F. “The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit [not ‘to our spirit’] that we are God’s children” (8:16): As sons of God, we cry out to Him,

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“*Abba!*” (denoting our attitude toward Him as our *Father*), and the testimony of the Holy Spirit in God’s Word is further testimony concerning the fact of our sonship (see John 8:47; 1 Thess. 2:13 and compare 1 Peter 1:10-12; 2 Peter 1:19-21; 2 Tim. 3:14-17; 2 Thess. 2:13-14).

NOTE: Whereas “sons” stresses the idea of *adoption*, the term “children” is more expressive of the *new birth* concept. (Both “adoption” and “born again” are figurative expressions illustrative of a changed relationship to God, each emphasizing a different perspective.) “Sons” is a status standing in contrast to “slaves,” while “children” speaks of a *natural endearment*.

“Sons” suggests *conduct that is appropriate* in response to what is expected because of relationship to the Father (“like father, like son”), and “children” conveys the idea of *child-like dependence and trust*. (These distinctions are general, and there is a broad overlapping of these concepts.)

III. *Sonship’s inheritance:* Heirship with Christ means both present sufferings and future glory (8:17; compare Gal. 3:26-4:7).

- A. “If [or ‘since’] we are children, then we are heirs —heirs of God [denoting possession]” (8:17):
We do not inherit God, but His promise made to all faithful “children of Abraham” (see Titus 2:14; Eph. 1:13-14; Rom. 4:9-25; Heb. 6:11-20; 1 Peter 1:3-4; 2 Peter 1:3-4; 1 Cor. 3:21-23).
- B. Christians are “co-heirs with Christ”: As supreme and natural heir, Jesus has already

received the inheritance, an inheritance fit for God's only begotten Son and now to be shared by His adopted brothers. (Will we so live as to thrust our inheritance from ourselves? "May it never be!") (See Matt. 21:33-44; Luke 15:11-32; Heb. 1:2; 2:5-18 and compare 1 John 3:1-3.)

- C. The inheritance is conditional: "If indeed we share in His sufferings in order that we may also share in His glory" (8:17; see 1 Peter 1:11; 2:20-24; 4:12-16; 5:1, 10).
1. Paul views this identification with Christ's suffering and glory as a one-time act (note the aorist tenses of the verbs in Rom. 6:1-11) which demands a continual, personal application (read carefully Rom. 6:12-23; 2 Tim. 3:12; Matt. 5:10-12).
 2. Not mere *suffering* fulfills the requirement of faith, but suffering *with Him*.
 - a. It is not that our suffering is of the same value or quantity as His own, but that it is the token and testimony of our real union with Him.
 - b. Our suffering "as sons" is because of our relationship in this world to Jesus and His Father (see Col. 1:24; Matt. 10:34-39; 16:24-26; John 15:18-21; 2 Cor. 1:5; 4:10; Gal. 6:12-17; Phil. 3:10-11).

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¹According to Barclay, 'flesh' to Paul means "all the weakness, all the inadequacy, all the liability to sin, which are inherent in human nature without Christ.... [T]he Christless man has in his body a bridge-head through which sin can effect an entry into his life with fatal ease"(Barclay, *Mind of St. Paul*, p. 204; see *Mind of St. Paul*, pp. 194-205).

²Lenski, *Romans*, p. 499.

³Lenski, *Romans*, p. 500.

⁴The Docetists' denial of the reality of Christ's human flesh was a logical extension of their assumption that matter is inherently evil. "If matter is evil and Christ was pure, then Christ's human body must have been phantasmal" (A. H. Strong, *Systematic Theology*, 3 vols. [London: Pickering & Inglis, Ltd., 1907; reprint ed. (3 vols. in 1): London: Pickering & Inglis, Ltd., 1970], 2:670). (Hereafter cited as Strong, *Systematic Theology*.)

⁵Lenski appears to have read the doctrine of original sin into what the Ebionites actually believed. Ebionism was a diverse heretical movement among the Jewish element of the early church. They regarded themselves as "The Poor," that is, the righteous remnant of God's people, a description from which the sect's name is derived. Most of them denied the supernatural conception and divine nature of Jesus, maintaining (like the Cerinthian gnostics) that the divine spirit of the Christ descended upon the man Jesus at His baptism and abandoned Him before He expired on the cross. See Lenski, *Romans*, p. 500; Strong, *Systematic Theology*, 2:669-670; see also the thorough discussion of Ebionism by J. E. H. Thompson ("Ebionism," 2:890-894 in *International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia*, edited by James Orr, et al., 5 vols. (reprint ed.: Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publ. Co., 1939).

⁶Lenski, *Romans*, p. 501.

⁷The NIV's unfortunate rendering of *sarx* as "sinful nature" is misleading in that it suggests the idea of inherited original sin. Foy E. Wallace Jr. states: "The eighth chapter of Romans [in the NIV] is the epitome of the false doctrine of original sin insinuated promiscuously into Paul's epistles.... It is slyly ensconced within the sinister phrase 'our sinful nature'" (*An Evaluation of the New International Version* [Fort Worth: Foy E. Wallace Jr., 1976], p. 48; see his whole discussion on this topic, pp. 48-50). The translators themselves justify their rendering in this way: "In order to show that 'flesh' refers, not to the body, but to the sinfulness of man, the NIV has often rendered 'flesh' as 'sinful nature' (cf. Rom. 8:3-5, 8-9). While many readers would properly understand 'flesh' (*sarx*) as 'human weakness,' the translation 'sinful nature' avoids any misinterpretation of this key theological term" (Herbert M. Wolf, "When 'Literal' Is Not Accurate," chapter 12 of *The NIV: The Making of a Contemporary Translation*, edited by Kenneth L. Barker [Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1986], p. 130). If 'sinful nature' only suggested "vulnerability to sin" (see note 1 above), such a rendering would be permissible, but because it also includes the idea of inherited sin, the more literal 'flesh' is preferable. As a concession to these criticisms, the NIV's New Testament (2nd ed.) regularly added at an occurrence of 'sinful nature' a footnote 'Or flesh' (Jack Lewis, *The English Bible from KJV to NIV* [Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1981], p. 307).

⁸Bauer-Arndt-Gingrich-Danker, p. 866.

⁹Bauer-Arndt-Gingrich-Danker, p. 866.

¹⁰Vine, 1:32 (see Bauer-Arndt-Gingrich-Danker, p. 833).

¹¹See Bauer-Arndt-Gingrich-Danker, p. 1.

¹²See Bauer-Arndt-Gingrich-Danker, pp. 635-636.

¹³Bauer-Arndt-Gingrich-Danker, p. 447.

Lesson Nine

Romans
8:18-39

Nothing is more necessary for Christians than to be well persuaded of the happiness and privileges of their condition, that they may be able to serve God with cheerfulness and freedom of spirit, and to pass through the troubles and difficulties of the world. Here, then, is further consolation: Christians are often in sorrows, sufferings, and trials. . . . Though afflictions in themselves are evil, yet in their effects as overruled and directed by God, they are useful. Yea, all things, of every kind, that happen to the Christian are overruled by God for his good!

— Robert Haldane

God's Promise to Redeem Our Bodies—Romans 8:18-25

OUTLINE OF ROMANS		
INTRODUCTION (1:1-17)		
EXPOSITION (1:18 - 11:36)	Righteousness	PROCLAIMED (1:18 - 3:20)
		PRESENTED (3:21 - 5:21)
		PERFECTED (6:1 - 6:39)
		PURPOSED (9:1 - 11:36)
		SPIRITUAL (12:1-2)
EXHORTATION (12:1 - 15:13)	Relationships	SOCIAL (12:3-8)
		PERSONAL (12:9-21)
		CIVIL (13:1-7)
		PUBLIC (13:8-14)
		FRATERNAL (14:1 - 15:13)
		CONCLUSION (15:14-16:27)

Notes:

NOTE: The section of the epistle now before us (Rom. 8:18-39) is the “peak” of the wonderful comfort of this remarkable letter. It addresses the great human realities of *suffering and hoping* (see also 2 Tim. 3:12; 1 Peter 1:3-9).

- I. Our present sufferings (as the children of God in union with Christ) are not worth comparing with the future glory that is to be revealed in us as our inheritance (8:18; compare 2 Cor. 4:16-5:5; Rom. 5:3; Phil. 3:20-21; 1 Cor. 15:20-28, 35-58; 1 John 3:1-3; 1 Thess. 4:13-18).

Notes:

- A. Paul does not use the Greek term for “world-age” (Gr: *aiōn*)¹ in this context, but the word for “present” (literally, “the now time”). “Time” (Gr: *kairos*) denotes “point of time, time of crisis,”² probably in this context meaning our brief, earthly sojourn.
- B. “For” (omitted by the NIV) introduces this section, connecting its subject matter (the Christian’s present suffering and future glory) with the previous passage (read again Rom. 8:17).
- C. “Worth comparing” (NIV) is really an adjective, “worthy” (Gr: *axios*), meaning “corresponding, comparable.”³

NOTE: Unlike the modern Christian Scientist or eastern mystic, Paul did not deny the reality of physical (or emotional) suffering. Neither did he intend to minimize the horror of human suffering, known only too well by the great apostle (read Acts 9:16; Gal. 6:17; 2 Cor. 11:23-12:10). He meant that if all the sufferings of this present life were placed on one pan of the scale, and the coming glory on the other, the “weight” of suffering would fly up into the air as if it were a few feathers *by comparison* (see Heb. 12:2-3; 2 Cor. 1:3-11; 4:7-11, 17; 1 Peter 4:12-14; 5:6-10).

- D. “The glory that will be revealed in us” is our inheritance in *prospect* (hope) at the present time, but in actual possession on that “day” (read 1 Peter 1:3-9; 1 John 3:1-3).

NOTE: The glory will be revealed *in* the Christian. “In” (Gr: *eis*) means “in, into,”⁴ and perhaps points to a manifestation of glory similar to our Lord’s transfiguration. Paul’s attention is turned in this section to the *prospective glory of the children of God and of the creation* (see Rom. 8:19-25).

II. The creation waits for the revealing of the sons of God in earnest expectation (8:19-22).

NOTE: The “eager expectation,” attributed here to the creation, is an expression found in the New Testament only here and in Phil. 1:20. “Eager expectation” (Gr: *apokaradokia*) literally means: “A watching with the head erect or outstretched,” and “a waiting in suspense.”⁵ “Waits” (Gr: *apekdekhomai*) means “await eagerly.”⁶ Paul’s total picture, therefore, portrays the head stretched forward in intense watching, waiting, and never tiring until that which is awaited appears.

A. The section begins with describing the “creation” and its connection with the revealing of the sons of God (8:19).

1. The word “creation” (Gr: *ktisis*) may signify either “the act of creation” or “individual things or beings created”⁷—that is, “the creature world.” This latter meaning is in view in this context.
2. But how is this passage to be understood? Interpretations vary, including
 - a. The whole, unredeemed creation, both rational and irrational

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- b. All creation except humanity
- c. The redeemed of all the creation (the church universal)
3. It is important to note that this entire section disregards the destiny of the “ungodly.” Our conclusion concerning what this “creation” is will be stated following the whole exposition on which that conclusion is based.
- B. “For the creation was subjected to frustration” (8:20; compare Gen. 3:17-19):
 1. The present condition of the physical creation is not what it was originally purposed and created by God to be.
 2. Before the fall of Adam and Eve, creation was subject to mankind, but not subject to “frustration” (Gr: *mataiotēs*, meaning “emptiness, futility, purposelessness, transitoriness”).⁸ The root word is “vain” (Gr: *mataios*) denoting “idle, empty, fruitless, useless, powerless, lacking truth.”⁹
 3. That the creation was “subjected to *frustration*” points to the apparent futility of the cycle of life, death, and decay.
 - a. Man eats the fruit of the earth and dies. (Is that the intended end of man and of these fruits?)

- b. Man tames and utilizes the animal kingdom, and then his life ends in decay. (Is this God's intent?)
 - c. If the present state of creation is all there is to it, it would seem to be a total absurdity and a complete failure! (Read carefully Gen. 1:26-31; Ps. 8:1-9; Heb. 2:5-9; 1 Tim. 4:4; Eccl. 1:1-14; 2:12-23; 3:18-21.)
- C. "Not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope" (8:20; compare Gen. 3:15, 17-19):
1. The present state of God's creation, though not reflective of what God originally intended, exists because of God's choice.
 - a. The original creation was "very good."
 - b. It was a perfect expression of God's own goodness.
 2. By their own free, moral choice, Adam and Eve (God's appointed lords over creation) had fallen.
 - a. They were perverted and corrupted by sin.
 - b. They were no longer fit to live in a perfect creation.
 3. The unity and interdependence of God's creation is seen in the close tie between man

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(a physical being; a body, though not only a body) and the physical creation over which God placed him to reign.

- a. Man is “bound up” with creation, even as the state of physical creation is “bound up” with man’s state.
 - b. The Bible gives us a clear picture of man’s ecological relationships and responsibilities under God’s rule.
- D. “[In hope] that [also] the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay” (8:21; compare Rom. 8:22-23):
1. The usage of the conjunction “also” (omitted by the NIV) and the phrase, “creation itself,” distinguishes “creation” from “the children of God,” and places it in a position parallel to them with regard to their “hope.”
 - a. Creation had no moral guilt; it was cursed by God *because of man*.
 - b. Man suffers *justly*; creation suffers *consequently*.
 2. Man’s restoration to freedom and glory is a matter of pure *grace*; creation’s liberation and glorification will be an exhibition of divine *justice*.
 - a. As God subjected, so God shall liberate: The “subjection to frustration” was not

“without hope,” but was rather “in hope.”

- b. The hope which was opened to mankind at the Fall is extended to the creation of which man is a part and over which he is to rule.
 3. God’s creation is not a grand failure; great was corruption and destruction, but greater still is grace and restoration (see Gen. 3:15, 17 and compare Rom. 5:15, 20-21; 8:18).
- E. “And brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God” (8:21):
1. Standing opposite to creation’s present “subjection,” its future “freedom” shall be *from* “its bondage to decay” and *into* “the glory of the children of God.”
 2. Creation and the children of God will be joined together in the final, great emancipation; they share the same hope of freedom.
 3. “Glorious freedom” cannot mean one thing (annihilation) to creation, while meaning something else (eternal glory) to the children of God.
 - a. The children’s liberty will be shared by the creation.
 - b. This is fitting because the curse of frustration has been shared by the creation.

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- F. “We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth [together] right up to the present time” (8:22).
1. The verb “groan” (which occurs three times in this chapter: 8:22, 23, 26) describes
 - a. The present sufferings of the “whole creation” and of the children of God
 - b. The intercessory work of God’s Spirit responding to man’s distress in this present world
 - c. (Here) all nature expressing the distress and chaos which man’s sin has brought into creation
 2. The phrase “pains of childbirth” (Gr: *sunō-dinō*) means “be in travail with, suffer agony together.”¹⁰
 - a. See usages of this word and its root in Gal. 4:19, 27; Rev. 12:2 and compare John 16:21: The word conveys the idea of “deliverance.”
 - b. The groaning and pain do not end when death sets in, but rather when a *new condition* comes forth out of the pain (read 1 Peter 4:12-17).
- III. Christians indwelt by the Spirit groan inwardly in eager hope of the redemption of their bodies (8:23-25).

- A. Christians who anticipate this great hope now have the firstfruits, the indwelling Spirit, a “down payment” of the fullness of the inheritance (8:23; compare Eph. 1:13-14; 2 Cor. 1:22; 5:5; Rom. 8:9, 16-17).
- B. Like creation itself, “we ourselves” are waiting for a better thing; that is, “our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.”
1. Paul does not deny our present full sonship, but refers to the full possession and enjoyment of our inheritance as Christ’s adopted brothers and sisters.
 2. The child-heir must “wait” until the inheritance is turned over to him (8:23; compare 1 Peter 1:3-9; Gal. 3:26-4:7; Luke 15:11-12).
- C. Paul uses the usual term for “redemption” (Gr: *apolutrōsis*), meaning “release, redemption, acquittal”¹¹ by Christ’s atoning death (read Rom. 3:21-25; Eph. 1:7; Rev. 1:5-6).

NOTE: The Christian’s body is no longer a “body of sin” or a “body of death.” Christ’s death and resurrection to glory have made us fit to serve God both now and forever in glorified bodies (see Rom. 7:24; 8:10-11 and compare Rom. 6:1-10; 12:1-2; 1 Cor. 6:12-20).

1. That the human spirit survives physical death does not change the fact that physical death brings a division in the wholeness of

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- man that God never intended, however temporary that separation might be (see Eccl. 12:6-7; Luke 16:19-31; 23:43; 2 Cor. 4:16-5:10; Phil. 1:21-24; James 2:26).
2. The Christian hopes for the resurrection of the body at the coming of Jesus (see 1 Cor. 15:23-24, 50-58; John 5:28-29; 6:39-40, 44, 54).
- D. Paul concludes this paragraph with a positive and comforting statement: “for in this hope we are saved” (8:24-25).
1. The emphasis of “hope” in this context is objective.
 2. Paul is not changing his mind about salvation by *faith*. Hope rests on faith—faith carries hope within itself.
 3. Once the object of hope is seen, it no longer is an object of hope; it turns into realization! Our present situation is one of waiting (read 2 Cor. 5:7 and compare Rom. 5:1-5; Gal. 5:5; Phil. 3:20; Titus 2:11-14).

God's Spirit Abides with Us —Romans 8:26-27

- I. We are weak.
 - A. But we are not left in our weakness; we have providential help.
 - B. Hope helps us to endure afflictions; the Spirit helps us in our infirmities.
- II. We know not how to pray as we ought.
 - A. Our praying ability is limited because of
 - 1. *Circumstance* (we do not know the present needs in all places)
 - 2. *Ignorance* (we do not always know what is best)
 - 3. *Inability* (we cannot foresee the future)
 - B. Paul includes himself when he says “us” and “we.”
 - C. “We” do not “according as it is necessary” (the force of the Greek) know what to pray: No petition is more spiritual than, “Thy will be done.”
- III. We have help from the Spirit.
 - A. The Spirit is presented in one of His functions as “Paraclete” (Gr: *paraklētos*), meaning “one who appears in another’s behalf, mediator, intercessor, helper.”¹²
 - B. He, along with us, takes hold of the burden and helps us (read John 14:16-17).

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- IV. "The Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express."
 - A. The "groanings" are our own groanings, as we live and labor in the midst of a creation corrupted by sin and decay, waiting for the fulfillment of our hope of bodily redemption.
 - B. These are groanings that "words cannot express" (Gr: *alalētos*, meaning "unexpressed, wordless, inexpressible").¹³
 - C. These groanings come from our hearts (8:27).
 - D. These groanings are expressions of what is verbally inexpressible: They are neither uttered nor utterable; they are locked in our hearts; "we ourselves, within ourselves, groan" (read Rom. 8:23).
- V. Since we, as sincere children of God, have deep within our hearts longings and urgings that we cannot articulate
 - A. The Spirit takes even these and uses them in making intercession for us
 - B. The Spirit helps our "weakness"; the Helper helps our helplessness
 - C. The Spirit "intercedes" before God on our behalf with these "groanings," for He understands our needs and longings even as the Spirit knows the mind (thoughts) of the Godhead (8:27; compare 1 Cor. 2:10-11)

NOTE: The Spirit intercedes “for the saints” (see Col. 1:12-14; 1 Cor. 1:2). “Intercede” (Gr. *entugkhanō*) means “to meet, turn to, approach, appeal, petition.”¹⁴ There is dynamic interaction within the eternal Godhead on behalf of the saints, but only Jesus is Mediator in the redemptive sense (see 1 Tim. 2:5 and compare 1 John 2:1-2).

VI. We are assured of our Helper’s intercessory work:
“And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with God’s will.”

A. The Heart-Searcher is God (read Rom. 2:16; 1 Cor. 4:5; Acts 1:24; Rev. 2:23; 1 Thess. 2:4; 1 Chron. 28:9; Ps. 7:9; Prov. 17:3; Jer. 11:20; 17:10; 20:12).

NOTE: If the groanings mentioned here were the Spirit’s, it would read, “He who searches the Spirit knows the mind of the Spirit....”

B. God knows “the mind of the Spirit”: the Father knows His intercessory intent.

C. God knows the Spirit’s mind as the Spirit transforms our unutterable groanings into a perfect intercessory prayer according to God’s will.

VII. All this is “according to God’s will” because His Spirit steps in and helps His saints. What assurance! What comfort belongs to “suffering, sighing sons of God” (read Heb. 2:10).

Notes:

God's Providence Assures Us —Romans 8:28-30

- I. Paul's confident understanding of divine intervention is stated (8:28; compare the Greek text).
 - A. The *reality* of His providence is certain: "We know."
 - B. The *scope* of His providence is universal: "all things."
 - C. The *continuity* of His providence is dynamic: "God works."
 - D. The *unity* of His providence is harmonious: "together."
 - E. The *outcome* of His providence is beneficial: "for good."
 - F. The *recipients* of His providence are specified: "to those who love God... to those being called according to His purpose."

NOTE: We do not know how to pray as we ought, but we do know that "God is working all things together for good" on behalf of Christians. History (both personal and general) is not operating "on its own," but is energized and overseen by the God of all goodness.

- II. The purpose of God is the primary consideration in the outworking and understanding of His providence.

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- A. Lovers of God are “called according to His purpose” (read Eph. 1:1-10; 3:4-11 and compare 2 Thess. 2:10-14).
 - B. God’s “working together” is to attain His purposed result.
 - C. God’s purpose (as it is still now developing) is outlined in Rom. 8:29-30.
- III. The certainty of the outcome of God’s purpose gives reassurance to Christians who “groan” in the midst of the chaos and suffering of this present world (8:29-30).
- A. To ‘foreknow’ means He “knows in advance” and “graciously chooses to enter into relationship with” (read Rom. 11:2).
 - 1. ‘Foreknowledge’ does *not* mean: foreordination; predestination; unconditional pre-election; causation.
 - 2. Whom He “foreknew,” He “knew beforehand with affection and with a resultant effect.” The result of God’s foreknowing, then, cannot be restricted to any point in time: It covers all time in one act.
 - 3. All this is based on God’s purpose in “calling out a people” (His church).
 - B. He ‘predestined’: “Those” whom God foreknew (from among all peoples, Jew and Gentile) are

also those whom He predestined (read Heb. 2:10-11):

1. These are not predestined to be “saved,” but rather (in accordance with God’s purpose) they are predestined to become like Jesus Christ, “conformed to the likeness of His Son.”
 - a. This “predestination” is not to salvation, but to the *condition* which God has purposed for all the saved.
 - b. Jesus is to be the preeminent prototype for all who are redeemed.
2. ‘Firstborn’ (Gr: *prōtotokos*) means “first in preeminence or rank,”¹⁵ in keeping with the custom of the firstborn son’s receiving the greater share of inheritance because of his unique position among the children (see Col. 1:15-18; Acts 26:23; 1 Cor. 15:20; Rev. 1:5 and compare Col. 3:10; Phil. 3:21; Rom. 8:12-17).
- C. He ‘called’: Those whom God foreknew as His own and predestined to be like Christ were effectively ‘called’ by God through the message of the gospel of Jesus Christ (read Rom. 10:14, 17)
 1. Christians are ‘called’ by the agency of the gospel message.

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2. The voluntary acceptance of God's call is assumed in the passage (see Rom. 1:7, 16; 2 Thess. 2:13-14 and compare Matt. 20:1-16; 22:1-14; Luke 8:1-15; Jude 1; Rev. 17:14).

D. He 'justified': Paul's great theme has been explained in the introduction and exposition (read Rom. 1:16-17; 3:21-26).

NOTE: 'Justification' involves the action of God through which He, of unadulterated grace, based on the one act of righteousness by Jesus Christ, pronounces righteous a sinner who genuinely trusts in Christ, sets him or her free from guilt, and declares him or her justified.

E. He 'glorified': This is the crown and culmination of the whole process of salvation (read Col. 3:4).

1. Paul uses five aorist tense verbs in Rom. 8: 29-30. Lenski describes them as "gnomic aorists," which would mean that these verbs (and "those" whom they describe) are not *subject to time*.¹⁶
2. Past, present, and future are not considered in this connection.
 - a. There are some yet to be 'called' and 'justified.' Some who are to be so are not yet born.

- b. The term “those” means “all the saved to the last one, to the end of time; the church universal; the whole community of God’s redeemed.”
- c. Paul sees God’s work complete: from eternity to eternity; from the foreknowing to the glorifying of those called to be saints (sons of God) (see Phil. 1:6; 1 Cor. 1:8-9 and compare Rom. 8:18-23; 9:23; 1 Thess. 5:9; Titus 2:11-14).

Notes:

God's Love Gives Us Confidence

—Romans 8:31-39

- I. "What then shall we say in response to this [the certainty of the fulfillment of God's purpose for us in Christ]?" (8:31)
 - A. Shall we weep and lament?
 - B. Shall we view our sufferings as simply a sad lot?
 - C. Shall we complain and doubt?
 - D. Shall we be ashamed?
- II. The conclusion of the whole matter is simply and emphatically stated: "If God is for us, who can be against us?" (8:31)
 - A. Literally, Paul says: "If God on behalf of us, who against us?"
 - B. This is a first class conditional sentence (the condition is assumed to be true): "Since God is for us, [therefore] who can oppose us?"¹⁷

NOTE: Paul is not saying that there is no one to stand against us, for sin, Satan, and his forces (both human and supernatural) do, in fact, oppose us. Paul is saying that, since God is on our side (and we on His), it makes not one bit of difference who makes himself our enemy: They cannot prevail against us! Bring on the whole world, a million enemies, thousands of woes, multitudes of sufferings! God is greater, mightier, and ever with us. *He* is "for us"! (See John 10:27-30; 1 John 4:4 and compare Matt. 28:20; Heb. 13:5-8.)

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- III. "He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?" (8:32)
- A. Do we yet doubt or disbelieve in God's providential care and protection? Then consider what He has already shown Himself willing to do for us! (Read again Rom. 5:6-8.)
 - B. This is an "argument from the greater to the lesser." Jesus taught concerning God's providential care for His children by arguing from the lesser to the greater (read Matt. 6:25-33; 7:7-11).
 - C. God "gave him up": That which God acknowledged as the highest proof of faith and love in Abraham, He Himself actually did (read Gen. 22:1-18 and compare Rom. 1:2-4; 3:21-26; 4:24-25; Matt. 21:37; John 3:16; 1 John 4:9-10).
 - D. What God has historically done seals what He still will do: "How will he not also, along with him, freely give us all things?" (Read 1 Cor. 3:21-23; Matt. 6:33.)
- IV. "Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen?" (8:33; Compare 1 Peter 1:1-2.)
- A. Who presses charges and makes accusations? "It is God [the ultimate Judge] who justifies."
 - B. Here is the reply to all accusations from Satan, angels, or men: God acquits us in Christ! (In this

statement lies the entire doctrine of justification)
(read again Rom. 8:1, 29-30).

1. This justification clears God's elect from any conceivable charge that might be brought against them by any person. This is important to remember as we deal with one another, also (see Matt. 5:10-12; Zech. 3:1-4; Job 1:6-12; 2:1-6; Rom. 14:1-13; Rev. 12:10-11; 1 Peter 2:12; 4:12-16).
2. The suffering Christian is identified with the Suffering Servant of the Lord, and shares His steadfast confidence that God will vindicate His Servant (read carefully Isa. 50:4-9).

V. "Who is he that condemns?" (8:34)

NOTE: To "condemn" is more severe than to "charge." "No condemnation" is the verdict for those who are "in Christ." The only One qualified to judge has already gone to the most extreme lengths (death on a cross, resurrection, ascension) in order to *free* us from all condemnation. Who will presume to challenge the verdict of the Almighty Judge, and to negate His saving work? (See Rom. 8:1; Phil. 2:5-11; Eph. 5:1-2; John 5:22-27; Acts 17:31.)

- A. He died for us (see Rom. 4:25).
- B. He rose again for us (see Rom. 4:24-25).
- C. He sits at God's right hand for us (see Rom.

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- 5:9-10; 1 John 1:7; 2:1-2; Heb. 4:14-16; 7:23-27; 1 Peter 1:21-22; Eph. 1:18-2:10).
- D. He intercedes for us (see 1 Tim. 2:5; John 17:11, 17; 1 John 2:1-2).
- VI. “Who shall separate us from the love of Christ [Christ’s love for us]?” (8:35-36)
- A. “Shall *trouble* [Gr: *thlipsis*: literally, ‘pressing, pressure,’ used in the N.T. in the figurative sense ‘oppression, affliction, tribulation’]¹⁸...?” (See 2 Cor. 6:4.)
- B. “Shall *hardship* [Gr: *stenokhōria*: ‘in the literal sense, “narrowness,” fig[uratively] “distress, difficulty, anguish, trouble”]¹⁹...?” (See Rom. 2:9, Greek text.)
- C. “Shall *persecution* [Gr: *diōgmos*: ‘pursuit or persecution (by enemies)’]²⁰...?”
- D. “Shall *famine* [Gr: *limos*: ‘hunger, famine’]²¹...?”
- E. “Shall *nakedness* [Gr: *gumnotēs*: ‘nakedness, destitution, lack of sufficient clothing’]²²...?”
- F. “Shall *peril* [Gr: *kindunos*: ‘danger, risk’]²³...?”
- G. “Shall *sword* [Gr: *makhaira*: ‘literally “sword, saber”; figuratively *m.* stands for “violent death” in war’]²⁴...?”

NOTE: All of these things look like anything but love’s tender caresses. To the uninformed, it would appear that no Christ existed; if so, He had abandoned us or become our enemy! The

outward appearance of things sometimes causes Christians to be regarded as victims for their enemies to freely slaughter. Paul relates the experiences of Christians in a hostile world to the context of Ps. 44:22, a prayer of faith and thanksgiving to God for His steadfast love in electing Israel.

In the midst of this great statement of faith is a plea for mercy and deliverance from disgrace and persecution which the psalmist is at a loss to understand. The writer is certain, however, that within the covenant relationship which faithful Israelites maintained with God, divine sovereignty and wisdom would certainly provide for and protect His people.

The steadfast love of God (demonstrated to Israel in the Exodus and to Christians at the Cross) calls for steadfast faith from man. Paul also knew of God's steadfast love in his personal experience, though he does not appeal to his experience as the basis of understanding God's love (see also 1 Cor. 4:8-13; 2 Cor. 11:23-12:10; Phil. 4:10-20; 2 Tim. 4:16-18).

- VII. "No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us" (8:37).
- A. "More than conquerors": a victory that is more than a victory! (See also Rom. 5:3-5; 16:19-20; Acts 5:41.)
 - B. Literally: "We conquer through Him that did love [aorist verb suggests 'historically and absolutely loved']²⁵ us."
 - C. It is upon the basis of that supreme act of Christ's love that we *more than conquer* any and all!

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- D. That act of love (his death for us) *stands* in history: *nothing* can remove it or lessen it.

NOTE: With knowledge of the demonstration of God's supreme love, we settle every doubt and tribulation; we overcome every fear, and death itself. "He loved us," and that holds good no matter what else might change.

- VIII. Paul's final (and perhaps most glorious) "I am": "I am convinced" (8:38-39).
- A. His conviction extends to his readers: "[nothing] will be able to separate *us*."
- B. Note that in the list there is nothing in reference to our own internal unbelief, lukewarmness, or apostasy. (His concern is to assure the Christian that nothing external to himself can thwart God's choice to save him in Christ, as he walks according to the Spirit.)
- C. We are assured that *nothing anywhere* is able to separate us from God's love displayed and bestowed "in Christ Jesus our Lord": This includes *impersonal powers* ("death nor life"); *supernatural beings* ("angels nor demons"); *things in time* ("the present nor the future"); *things in space* ("height nor depth"); *every other conceivable factor* ("anything else in all creation").
- D. We are more than conquerors! (See Rev. 12:10-11 and compare Rom. 11:33.)

**Why Jews and Gentiles Share One
Great and Glorious Reality**

1. Because "in Christ" we are *not condemned* (8:1).
2. Because "in Christ" we are *free from the law of sin and death* (8:2).
3. Because "in Christ" we *walk according to the Spirit* (8:3-4).
4. Because "in Christ" we are to *mind the things of the Spirit* (8:5).
5. Because "in Christ" we have *peace and life* (8:6-7).
6. Because "in Christ" we are *owned by Him* (8:8-9).
7. Because "in Christ" we have *righteousness* (8:10).
8. Because "in Christ" we have *hope* (8:11).
9. Because "in Christ" we are *sons of God* (8:12-14).
10. Because "in Christ" we are *co-heirs with Him* (8:15-17).
11. Because "in Christ" we will be *glorified* through suffering with Him (8:18-23).
12. Because "in Christ" we in hope *endure* (8:24-25).
13. Because "in Christ" we are *assisted in prayer by the Holy Spirit* (8:26-27).
14. Because "in Christ" we have *assurance based on God's providence* (8:28-30).
15. Because "in Christ" we are *more than conquerors* (8:31-39).

For the transparency version of this chart, see p. 378

NOTE: If we are still living the unfulfilled lives of Romans 7, Romans 8 tells us why! (Are we "in Christ"? Do we understand what it means to be "in Christ"?)

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¹Bauer-Arndt-Gingrich-Danker, p. 27.

²Bauer-Arndt-Gingrich-Danker, pp. 394-395.

³Bauer-Arndt-Gingrich-Danker, p. 78.

⁴Bauer-Arndt-Gingrich-Danker, p. 228.

⁵Vincent, 3:92 (compare Vine, 2:61; Bauer-Arndt-Gingrich-Danker, p. 92).

⁶Bauer-Arndt-Gingrich-Danker, p. 83.

⁷Bauer-Arndt-Gingrich-Danker, p. 455.

⁸Bauer-Arndt-Gingrich-Danker, p. 495.

⁹Bauer-Arndt-Gingrich-Danker, p. 495.

¹⁰Bauer-Arndt-Gingrich-Danker, p. 793.

¹¹Bauer-Arndt-Gingrich-Danker, p. 96.

¹²Bauer-Arndt-Gingrich-Danker, p. 618.

¹³Bauer-Arndt-Gingrich-Danker, p. 34.

¹⁴Bauer-Arndt-Gingrich-Danker, p. 270.

¹⁵See the discussion in Vine, 2:104-105. Bauer-Arndt-

Gingrich-Danker (p. 726) says: "This expr[ession], which is admirably suited to describe Jesus as the one coming forth fr[om] God to found the new community of saints, is also used in some instances where it is uncertain whether the force of the element *-tokos* ['born'] is still felt at all."

¹⁶Lenski, *Romans*, p. 563.

¹⁷See above on p. 79 and n. 1 on p. 95.

¹⁸Bauer-Arndt-Gingrich-Danker, p. 362.

¹⁹Bauer-Arndt-Gingrich-Danker, p. 766.

²⁰Lenski, *Romans*, p. 573 (compare Bauer-Arndt-Gingrich-Danker, p. 201).

²¹Bauer-Arndt-Gingrich-Danker, p. 475.

²²Bauer-Arndt-Gingrich-Danker, p. 168.

²³Bauer-Arndt-Gingrich-Danker, p. 432.

²⁴Bauer-Arndt-Gingrich-Danker, p. 496.

²⁵See Lenski, *Romans*, p. 575.

**The Book of Romans:
“The Righteousness
of God”**

Part V

***Righteousness
Purposed***

Lesson Ten

Romans
Chapters 9, 10, and 11

The central message of Paul is not by any means that the Jewish people are repudiated or their covenant abrogated with the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. His central message is that Christ's obedient death and glorious vindication are God's gift to all humanity, inaugurating the new age for which the Jews had long hoped, and improving the lot of non-Jews identically with that of Jews.

— Gerald S. Sloyan

God's Sovereign Freedom: Israel's Rejection—Romans 9

OUTLINE OF ROMANS		
INTRODUCTION (1:1-17)		
EXPOSITION (1:18 - 11:36)	Righteousness	PROCLAIMED (1:18 - 3:20)
		PRESENTED (3:21 - 5:21)
		PERFECTED (6:1 - 8:39)
		FURPOSED (9:1 - 11:36)
EXHORTATION (12:1 - 15:13)	Relationships	SPIRITUAL (12:1-2)
		SOCIAL (12:3-8)
		PERSONAL (12:9-21)
		CIVIL (13:1-7)
		PUBLIC (13:8-14)
		FRATERNAL (14:1 - 15:13)
CONCLUSION (15:14-16:27)		

Notes:

- I. The passion of Paul for the salvation of his people is undeniable: Paul is not a rebellious renegade who is ashamed of or unconcerned for Israel (9:1-3).
 - A. His sincerity of concern for Israel is *soul-searching*.
 - B. His burden of concern for Israel's salvation is *soul-conscious*.
 - C. His sensitivity of concern over Israel's unbelief is *soul-compassionate*.

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- II. The position of Israel in the purpose of God is indisputable: Physical Israelites are heirs to tremendous blessings and privileges (9: 4-5).
 - A. “The adoption”: This speaks of God’s freely choosing to enter into covenant with them that they might become “His son” among the nations (read also Exod. 19:3-6; Amos 3:1-2; Hosea 11:1; Exod. 4:22-23).
 - B. “The divine glory”: God’s manifested presence among Israel from the days of the Exodus through the time of Solomon’s temple set them apart from the nations (see Exod. 33:7-34:7; 40:34-38; 1 Kings 8:10-11).
 - C. “The covenants”: The plural form cannot be restricted to any single “covenant,” but emphasizes the advantage of Israel in God’s extension of relationship to them in Abrahamic, Mosaic, Davidic, and (Jeremiah’s) “new” covenants.
 - D. “The receiving of the law”: Paul refers not only to “the law” (though God’s revealed law is glorious enough in itself), but also to all the majesty and glory of the display at Sinai when it was given.
 - E. “The service of God”: This refers to the true and God-given system of priestly sacrifice and covenant worship (see Heb. 8:5).
 - F. “The promises of God”: These were given to the seed of Abraham in the patriarchal covenants, to

the nation in the Mosaic covenant, and through the prophets.

- G. "The fathers": Jewish heritage included great men of God such as Abraham, Jacob, David, and other "ancient worthies."
 - H. "The Christ": According to God's promise, the Jewish Messiah was born a descendant of both Abraham and David (see Rom. 1:2-4; Matt. 1:1-25).
- III. The purpose of God in election proves that God keeps His promises: "Not all who are descended from Israel are Israel" (9:6-29).
- A. God's faithfulness is upheld by Paul's gospel, even though many of Abraham's descendants remain outside of the Messianic blessings (9:6-13; compare Rom. 2:28-3:8).
 1. The word of God's promise, received by faith, brings forth "children of the promise" who are regarded as Abraham's *heirs* (read Gal. 3:26-29; Gen. 18:10, 14; 21:12; 22:2, 12).
 2. Ishmael's birth was the result of human effort and scheming; Isaac's birth was in fulfillment of God's promise (grace; faith) (read Gal. 4:21-31).
 3. God chose Jacob over Esau to be the fore-bearer of the Messiah without regard of

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ancestry (they were twins) or law keeping (they were yet unborn) (read Gen. 25:21-26; Mal. 1:2-5).

4. Paul reminds his readers of all of this so that they may understand that God's *purpose* (not physical ancestry or works of law) determines who receives God's blessings.

NOTE: These passages do not speak of individuals being arbitrarily hated and kept from salvation by God; they speak of *nations* being selected (while others are rejected) for the purpose of being the covenant nation through which God would bring forth Christ into the world. Paul illustrates and establishes his point about God's freedom to choose according to His purpose.

- B. God's "justice" (righteousness) is upheld by Paul's gospel, even though man's sinful unbelief was used to fulfill God's purpose (9:14-29 and compare Gen. 45:4-8; Isa. 10:15-19; 44:28-45:6; Acts 2:22-24; 3:17-18; 4:27-28; 13:26-30; 1 Cor. 2:6-8).
1. Moses (a representative of a nation of unworthy sinners) stands as an example of God's right to freely extend *mercy* to whom ever He chooses, since salvation is *always* a matter of mercy and not merit. (God is under neither legal compulsion nor moral obligation to the demands of "fairness" in saving

- anyone*) (9:14-16; compare Exod. 33:19; Deut. 9:4-6).
2. Pharaoh stands as an example of the truth that God is free to use the unbelief and hardness of heart of whomever He desires, in order to fulfill His purpose and manifest His power and glory (9:17-23; compare Rom. 3:5-8; Exod. 9:16; Jer. 18:1-12; Isa. 29:16).
 - a. Paul's reference to man as clay in the hand of a potter (God) should not be pressed too far. Man's freedom to choose his response to God is not denied by this illustration, and was a significant factor in God's dealings with both Israel and Pharaoh (see Deut. 28:1-30:20; Josh. 24:14-24 and compare Exod. 3:19; 4:21; 7:3-4, 13-14, 22; 8:15, 19, 32; 9:7, 12, 34-35; 10:1, 20, 27; 11:9-10; 14:5, 8).
 - b. This section is Paul's defense of his gospel against those who would say that it makes God unjust in His rejection of unbelieving Israelites.
 3. Paul cites the Jews' own Bible to show that there is an "Israel" *within* physical Israel which God has "called" (elected) for *salvation by mercy* (faith and grace, as opposed to

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law and works) (9:24-29; compare Hosea 2:23; 1:10; Isa. 10:22-23; 1:9).

NOTE: Paul's references to Hosea, though contextually connected with the phrase, "also from the Gentiles," probably do not apply to Gentiles saved in Christ. Hosea's original application was certainly to the nation Israel. Paul mentions that Gentiles are "also" among those elected by God, since the election depends upon mercy and not merit or flesh. But the main thrust of the section is to show the Jew that he *also* (not only the Gentile) becomes an "object of mercy" in the matter of God's salvation.

This notion was fiercely rejected by many proud, self-righteous Jews (see John 8:31-42). National Israel (as a whole) was not "the elect of God" as far as salvation is concerned (see Matt. 3:7-12; John 3:1-6). There has always been a "remnant" within the nation which was righteous by faith in Yahweh, and for whose sake the nation itself was preserved. Note the Isaiah passages in their own historical context.

IV. Israel rejected God's way (9:30-33). (Read Isa. 8:14; 28:16.)

A. *They searched for righteousness by works:*

The nation's failure to inherit their promised Messianic blessings is not God's fault (9:30-32).

1. Israel stubbornly insisted on pursuing righteousness by means of law instead of submitting to God's righteousness by faith in Messiah.
2. Paul sees in this situation the same proud,

hardhearted spirit that Isaiah observed in those of his day, who refused to trust in Yahweh for salvation from Assyrian oppression, but trusted instead in their own military power, political ingenuity, and foreign alliances.

- B. *They stumbled at the Christ*: Paul explains the reason that “godless Gentiles” are enjoying righteousness in Messiah, while the Jewish nation (as a whole) remains unblessed (9:32-33).
1. Gentiles were happy to accept the righteousness of God freely by trusting in Jesus, while the Jews (as a nation) remained proudly determined to earn righteousness by works of law.
 2. Unwilling to admit their need of God’s mercy, they “stumbled” over God’s only appointed “stone” of salvation, Jesus Christ.
 3. The Jews (as a nation) were offended by the demand that they abandon their self-reliance and self-righteousness in order to submit themselves trustingly to Jesus (see Matt. 21:33-46).

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God's Righteousness Upheld: Israel's Unbelief – Romans 10

- I. Israel refused God's righteousness (10:1-15).
- A. Legalistic righteousness says: "Do and live" (10:1-5; compare Lev. 18:5; Gal. 3:10-14; Rom. 3:19-21; Phil. 3:2-9).
1. Paul reaffirms his compassion for Israel and his commitment to the cause of their salvation (10:1; compare Rom. 9:1-5).
 2. Paul diagnoses Israel's problem as their self-willed ignorance of faith-righteousness, and their determination to establish their own legalistic righteousness (10:2-3; compare Gal. 2:21).
 3. Faith in Christ Jesus frees the believer from the futile pursuit of righteousness by law-keeping (10:4; compare Rom. 7:1-6).
 4. Legalistic righteousness could be attained (if it were possible) only by flawless performance (10:5; compare Gal. 3:21).
 5. This legalistic understanding of obedience to the law is opposed, not only to Paul's understanding of the gospel ("the obedience of faith"), but also to the original intent of the Mosaic law ("do and live") (see Rom. 1:5; 16:26; 3:31; 9:30-33; Gal. 5:6).

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B. Faith-righteousness says: "Believe, confess, call" (10:6-15; compare Deut. 30:11-16; Isa. 28:16; Joel 2:32).

1. *Salvation has been brought down*: God has graciously accomplished for the Jew (and Gentile) the saving work he could never have done for himself, by means of the incarnation and resurrection of Messiah (10:6-7).
2. *Salvation (by faith) has been revealed*: The law of Moses had within itself the provision of grace for believers as it bore witness to righteousness by faith in the Lord (10:8-13; compare Rom. 3:21; 4:1-8; Gal. 3:6-9).

NOTE: The Law was the embodiment of the knowledge of God to the Jew before Christ: To *faithfully* (not "legalistically") follow its commandments, because of faith and love toward Yahweh, was the proper way for the godly Jew to express faith in God. Jesus has transcended the Law as the embodiment of the revelation of God (see John 1:1-18; 2 Cor. 4:3-6; Heb. 1:1-3; Col. 1:15-18; 2:9 and compare Gal. 3:23-4:7; Matt. 17:1-5). Those who would live by faith in God must now believe in Him through Jesus Christ (see 1 Peter 1:21; Phil. 2:5-11). This is no less true of the Jew than of the Gentile.

3. *Salvation (by faith) has been proclaimed*: The Good News of God's salvation in Messiah has been made available to Israel through those whom God has sent (10:14-15; compare Isa. 52:7; 40:9; Nahum 1:15).

NOTE: The “Good News” (gospel) of *peace* and *salvation*, to which Isaiah referred, involved Israel’s *deliverance* out of captivity in Babylon and their *restoration* to their own land, in fellowship with Yahweh. God would bring about this great deliverance, even as He was proclaiming it through His anointed prophet. So also, says Paul, God has brought about for Israel an even greater deliverance (from bondage to sin) and restoration (full divine sonship through adoption in Christ).

Those who preach the gospel of Jesus Christ are God’s (and Christ’s) personal news-bearers to the people (see 1 Peter 1:10-12; Heb. 2:1-4; 2 Cor. 5:19-21; Gal. 1:1, 11-16; Eph. 3:1-7; Col. 1:23-29; 1 Tim. 1:12; 2 Tim. 1:11; Acts 10:39-42).

- II. Israel reproached God’s gospel (10:16-21).
- A. *They heard, but did not heed* (10:16-18; compare Isa. 53:1; Ps. 19:4).
1. Good and honest hearts readily accept God’s word when they hear it from God’s proclaimer (read Matt. 13:1-23; John 8:39-47).
 2. Israel’s present rejection of the message concerning Christ is an old story, characteristic of their historical hardheartedness and unbelief (read Matt. 12:38-40; 16:1-4; 23:29-39; Acts 7:51-53; 1 Thess. 2:14-16; Heb. 3:7-4:11).
 3. The testimony about the Good News of salvation through faith in Messiah was plainly and widely made available to the Jews in their Scriptures and through apostolic preaching (read John 5:39, 45-47; Luke

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24:25-27, 44-48; 1 Peter 1:10-12; Rom. 1:1-5; 1 Cor. 15:1-7).

- B. *They knew (understood), but refused to respond in obedience of faith (10:19-21; compare Deut. 32:21; Isa. 65:1).*
1. God has spoken clearly through Moses concerning His use of other nations in motivating Israel to respond to Him (read Rom. 11:11).
 2. God has spoken clearly through Isaiah concerning His freedom to graciously make Himself known to anyone (including Gentiles).
 - a. Paul's point in Rom. 10 is not to contrast "righteousness by faith" with the necessity of "obedience," but rather to clearly differentiate between a *self-reliant* (works of law) and a *Christ-reliant* (obedience of faith) approach to righteousness.
 - b. Israel refused God's righteousness through faith in Christ, and forfeited their (conditionally) promised Messianic blessings.
 - c. Paul is careful to distinguish between that which is *conditional* (received by faith) and that which is *merited* (earned

by works), when he speaks of the “obedience of faith” (see Rom. 1:5; 6:17; 16:26).

C. They disobeyed and repudiated the gospel
(10:21; compare Isa. 65:2).

1. God was not hard to find.
2. Israel was hard of heart (hard of “hearing”).

NOTE: In this chapter, Paul clearly teaches that Israel’s refusal to accept righteousness by faith in Jesus, and their insistence on pursuing a (self-)righteousness of their own makes their un-blessed condition *Israel’s* own fault, and not God’s. It is possible even today for one to: (1) hear and not heed; (2) understand and not obey; (3) reject God and be rejected by God; (4) elect God and be elected by God. Only one who *believes in Jesus* is a “child of promise,” a righteous descendant of Abraham. One who *rejects God’s way, refuses God’s righteousness, and reproaches God’s gospel* can blame no one but himself for his lost condition!

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God's Forbearance: Israel's Salvation—Romans 11

- I. God has by no means rejected His people (11:1-10).
 - A. Paul presents evidence that God is faithful to His promise (11:1-5).
 1. *The personal example* is Paul himself, physical (as well as spiritual) descendant of Abraham, and member of the elite tribe of Benjamin (11:1): Though once an enemy of the Messiah whom he now proclaimed, Paul was now enjoying the fulfillment of God's promise to Abraham.
 2. *The Scriptural support* is Psalm 94:14.
 3. *The historical precedent* can certainly be recognized in the situation of Elijah's day (11:2-4): Out of the whole nation, the people of God were only a small remnant of Israelites who were righteous "by grace through faith" (compare 1 Kings 19:1-18).
 4. *The spiritual application* is that "the chosen people of God" had always been the remnant of "Israel *within* Israel," which approached the attainment of righteousness by grace through faith, rather than by law through works (11:5): *God's* Israel is the portion of *national* Israel that believes the Good News

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of Jesus! (Compare Rom. 9:6-8; Acts 3:22-23.)

- a. The “remnant” is proof and witness that God is faithful to His promise: “There is a remnant chosen by grace” (read Rom. 9:27-29; compare Rom. 8:29-30).
 - b. God’s faithfulness does not depend on some future conversion of the whole nation of Israel, for His promises were never spoken concerning *unbelieving* Israel, but only those who were “*of faith.*”
 - c. The *remnant* received the Messianic blessings, and so God’s faithfulness is vindicated: God rejected *unbelieving* Jews, but God has never rejected a single one of *His people* (read Acts 3:17-26).
- B. Paul draws the conclusion that God has graciously saved a faithful remnant and judicially hardened the unbelieving majority of Israel (11:6-10; compare Deut. 29:4; Isa. 29:10; Ps. 69:22-23).
1. “*The elect*” (faithful remnant of Israel) obtained the Messianic blessings that the nation (as a whole) had earnestly but futilely pursued (11:6-7; compare Rom. 9:30-10:3; Acts 26:6-7).

2. *"The rest"* (unbelieving, self-righteous majority of Israel) responded to the Messiah and His gospel with hostility and hardness of heart (11:8-10).
 - a. God used the nation's unbelief to further His own purpose and manifest His glory. He did not *make* the Jews "unbelieving": He provided them with the Messiah and message which He knew their self-determined unbelief would stubbornly oppose.
 - b. God has every sovereign right to require obedient belief of everybody, even if He knows that His revealed word will only drive the unbeliever further into unbelief. God is also free to use that unbelief in whatever manner He chooses (see comments on Rom. 9:14-24 and compare Rom. 1:24, 26, 28; 2 Thess. 2:9-14; 1 Kings 22:1-38; 1 Sam. 2:22-25).
 - c. Indeed, God had set a lavish table for Israel, serving up the *Messiah* (but they refused to see Him), the free gift of *righteousness* (but they rejected it), and the *gospel* of forgiveness and reconciliation (but they would not heed it). Their unbelief turned the Messianic banquet

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table into a snare of divine judgment upon themselves, and the offer of divine blessings to the world (see Ps. 69:22 and compare Matt. 21:33-22:14).

II. Israel has by no means fallen beyond recovery (11:11-32).

A. God still loves the unbelieving Jews and desires to bless them in Christ (11:11).

1. God did not *desire* Israel's unbelief, but *used* it in order to offer salvation to Gentiles.
2. In offering the gospel of Messianic blessing to Gentiles, God's desire is to motivate Jews to become envious of the Gentiles' blessedness, so that they will believe and be saved.

B. Israel's fall means "riches for the world":

Israel's rejection of Messiah and the gospel makes salvation available to all nations (11:12-14; compare Matt. 28:18-20; Acts 13:46; Eph. 1:7-8; 2:7; 3:14-16).

1. Paul will later speak of Gentiles being "grafted in" as spiritual seed of Abraham, to share in the spiritual blessings promised to (believing) Israel (11:17-24; see Rom. 15:25-26; compare Eph. 2:11-22).
2. What Gentile Christians were enjoying had been promised to (believing) Israel: It was *Israel's God, Israel's Messiah, Israel's*

Scriptures, *Israel's* hope, and *Israel's* promises that Gentiles were now graciously receiving (read Rom. 3:29-30; 4:9-12; 9:22-24; 10:12-13 and compare Rom. 9:1-6).

3. Israel, upon seeing this development, should be moved to repentance and obedience of faith.
4. Unlike some who theorize a future conversion of all of modern Israel, Paul's optimism allowed him to hope that God would use his ministry to "save some of them" (read Rom. 11:11, 14, 31-32).

NOTE: Paul in this section speaks directly to Gentile Christians in the Roman congregations who may have been tempted to feel superior to their Jewish brothers and sisters in Christ, reasoning that God had cast off Israel in favor of the Gentiles. Paul assures these Gentiles that no true (believing) Jew was ever rejected by God, and that those Jews who now find themselves outside the Messianic community can be immediately reckoned among the chosen people of God on the condition of faith in Christ Jesus.

At the same time, Paul reminds the Gentile Christians of their dependence upon God's grace in their participation in Israel's blessings, and cautions them that only their faith in Jesus enables them to be saved. In the same way, only Israel's unbelief prevents them from being saved, and this is not necessarily without remedy.

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C. The relationship of Israel and the Gentiles in the purpose of God is illustrated by the dough and the root (11:15-24; compare John 4:22; Rom. 1:16-17).

1. If God's *rejection* of (unbelieving) Israel means the unfathomable blessing of reconciliation for the world (through the gospel of Jesus Christ), then God's *acceptance* of them (on the condition of their obedient faith in Jesus) would mean a blessing so great that it could be compared to life from that which was dead (11:15; compare Dan. 12:1-3; John 5:24-25; Luke 2:34; 15:32; Eph. 2:1-3).
2. Israel's importance in God's plan of salvation is primary: The acceptable position of Gentile Christians before God depends upon their participation in blessings promised to Israel (11:16; compare Num. 15:17-21).

NOTE: The "firstfruits" of God's inheritance (the saved) are the faithful patriarchs (Abraham, Isaac, Jacob), and those of their physical descendants who also were believers, and therefore, the *natural* heirs of the promise (see Rom. 9:1-8). Paul likens these "true Israelites" to the firstfruits offering, which not only looked forward to the greater harvest to come, but also sanctified the entire harvest as being "the Lord's."

Nobody can be "the Lord's" unless he or she is counted among Abraham's descendants and participates in the spiritual

blessings promised to the (faithful) Jews (see also Gal. 3:26-4:7, 21-31; Rom. 4:1-25; Eph. 2:11-22; Isa. 2:1-4).

3. *The root* (olive tree) represents Israel's patriarchs, who received the Messianic promises by faith, and their physical descendants who inherited them by also having faith (11:16, 18, 24).
4. *The natural (broken off) branches* are the unbelieving majority of the physical stock of Israel, whose unbelief resulted in their forfeiture of the Messianic blessings, and brought the offer of reconciliation to the world (11:17-21, 24).
5. *The wild (grafted in) branches* stand for Gentiles who, although not of the physical ("natural") stock of Israel, have believed the gospel of Christ, and therefore have become partakers in the Messianic blessings by God's grace (11:17-21, 24).

NOTE: Paul's point is not directed toward Jewish Christians, but *Gentile* believers who saw God's rejection of the (unbelieving) nation of Israel, and His acceptance of the Gentile (believers) into the Messianic community, as grounds for Gentile superiority (see Rom. 11:13). The lesson is that the majority of Israel was cut off from Messianic blessings because of their self-righteous unbelief in the Messiah. If Gentile believers become arrogant and self-righteous, they will (like the majority of Israel) be "cut off."

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On the other hand, if God was able to bless those who had no natural (physical) claim to the Messianic promise—if His gospel is so powerful that it can save those who had no Messianic hope or patriarchal promises—then He can certainly yet save and fully bless any and all Jews who will give up their unbelief and enter (by faith) into their “natural” inheritance (read carefully Rom. 11:22-24 and compare Rom. 1:16-17).

- D. Israel’s rejection is the means to their salvation (11:25-32).
1. Paul’s apostleship involved a special and unique insight into the “mystery” (previously unclear divine purpose) of God’s plan in Christ for Jews and Gentiles (11:25; compare Eph. 3:1-13; Rom. 16:25-26).
 2. Paul wanted Gentile Christians at Rome to avoid the pitfall of arrogant pride, by understanding that it was the *unbelieving part* of Israel that was “hardened” against the Messiah and the gospel, in order to bring blessing to the Gentiles: Not a single *true Israelite* was ever “hardened” or “cut off,” and God’s promises to true Israel shall never be revoked (11:25, 28-29).
 3. The “fullness” of Gentiles means their overflowing state of blessedness in the Messiah, as contrasted to a condition of fallenness and loss (11:25; compare Rom. 11:11-12; 15:29).

NOTE: The term “fullness” carries no necessary connotation of *number* (as the NIV mistakenly interprets).¹ The section is not a predictive prophecy, for the context is dealing with God’s *purpose* in hardening unbelieving Israel. The significance of the word “until” is not predictive here; it describes *a state of affairs which culminates at a crucial point*, with no consideration of the time beyond that point (see Exod. 7:16; Lev. 10:8; Num. 14:19; Isa. 42:4; Matt. 12:20; Luke 16:16; John 5:17; Rom. 5:13-14; 8:22; 1 Cor. 4:13; 8:7; 2 Cor. 3:14; Phil. 1:10).

Paul speaks more clearly concerning the results of the hardening of unbelieving Israel, as he writes: “Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law...*in order that the blessing given to Abraham might come to the Gentiles through Christ Jesus...*” (see Gal. 3:13-14).

4. “And so all Israel will be saved...” (11:26-27): Paul reminds the Gentiles that God did not reject any of true Israel in order to save Gentiles, for “*all Israel*” is “*believing Israel*” (compare Isa. 59:20-21; 27:9; Rom. 9:6-8; 2:28-29; John 8:31-47; Rev. 2:9; 3:9; Matt. 3:7-12).

NOTE: Isaiah’s prophecy was originally placed in the context of a confession of Israel’s sinfulness, and the assurance that God would act in judgment (upon the impenitent) and in redeeming mercy (toward those who would turn toward Him). Peter seemed to refer to Isa. 59:20-21 when he said to his first century Jewish contemporaries: “...God raised up his servant... to bless you by turning each of you from your wicked ways” (see Acts 3:22-26).

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Paul makes a similar application of the passage and describes Christ's work in similar terms. He changes Isaiah's emphasis slightly in saying: "The Deliverer will come *from* [rather than 'to'] Zion." He does this to remind the proud Gentile that "salvation is from the Jews" (see John 4:22 and compare Rom. 9:1-6). The Savior of the Gentiles was the *Jewish* Messiah, whose predicted mission would involve granting repentance and forgiveness of sins *to Israel*. God's gracious extension of the Messianic blessings to the Gentiles *in no way* changed His promise to the Jews.

5. The *unbelieving majority of Israel* has been hardened against the Messiah and His gospel for the sake of the Gentiles' salvation; yet the purpose of God to bless *true Israel* (the 'election') in the Messiah, as He promised the Jewish patriarchs, stands now and always (11:28-29).
6. Jews who were cut off from Messianic blessings because of unbelief were God's means of bringing His mercy, in the gospel of Christ, to the once-disobedient Gentiles; the mercy of God toward obedient Gentiles is God's plan to motivate unbelieving Jews to obey the gospel, so that they may share in their promised Messianic blessings (11:30-31).
7. Since both Jew and Gentile are saved on the

same basis (mercy), neither of them can accuse God of partiality or unfairness, and neither group can exalt itself over the other (11:32; compare Rom. 10:12-13; 9:24; 4:9-12; 3:9, 29-30).

- E. Paul concludes his explanation of God's purpose for Jews and Gentiles with a hymn of praise to God for His great wisdom and judgments (11:33-36; compare Isa. 40:13; Job 41:11).
- III. Summary of Israel's rejection and Israel's salvation: Paul's explanation of God's dealing with Jews and Gentiles may be summarized as follows (see Rom. 9:1-11:36 and compare Rom. 15:8-12, 27).
- A. Only the gospel-believing "remnant" of Israel is "true Israel" (heirs to the messianic blessings promised to the Jewish patriarchs).
- B. The believing "elect" of Israel are enjoying their messianic blessings: This "Israel" was never rejected.
- C. The unbelieving "rest" of Israel were hardened against the Messiah and His gospel in order to make Gentile salvation possible.
- D. The Gentiles were shown mercy in order that more Jews might be moved to enter into God's election (true Israel), and thus obtain the promised blessings through believing in Jesus Christ.

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- E. The inclusion of Gentiles in the messianic blessing does not change God's promise to bless "true Israel": It is instrumental in fulfilling that promise.
- F. God's mercy is still open to Israel for righteousness which is by faith in Jesus Christ our Lord.

NOTE

¹Jim McGuiggan, *The Book of Romans* (Let the Bible Speak Series), (West Monroe, Louisiana: William C. Johnson, Inc., 1974), pp. 120, 126.

**The Book of Romans:
“The Righteousness
of God”**

Part VI

***Righteousness
In Life***

Lesson Eleven

Romans
Chapters 12 and 13

*Christianity is not an **ethic**, nor a **philosophy**, though it is both ethical and philosophical, but it is a **life**. It is not intellectual theory, but energetic character. And because this is so this great Epistle devotes [these chapters] to telling Christians how to behave. This is not an anticlimax, but the crown of Christianity. The dominating notes of this Division are **Duty** and **Action**; the **Paths** of the one, and the **Principles** of the other are made clear.*

— W. Graham Scroggie

The Righteous Man and His Spiritual Relationship —Romans 12:1-2

OUTLINE OF ROMANS		
INTRODUCTION (1:1-17)		
EXPOSITION (1:18 - 11:36)	Righteousness	PROCLAIMED (1:18 - 3:20)
		PRESENTED (3:21 - 5:21)
		PERFECTED (6:1 - 8:39)
		PURPOSED (9:1 - 11:36)
EXHORTATION (12:1 - 16:19)	Relationships	SPIRITUAL (12:1-2)
		SOCIAL (12:3-8)
		PERSONAL (12:9-21)
		CIVIL (13:1-7)
		PUBLIC (13:8-14)
		FRATERNAL (14:1 - 15:13)
CONCLUSION (15:14-16:27)		

Notes:

- I. The appeal and axis of sanctification is *God's mercy* (12:1).
 - A. Note carefully the all encompassing and conclusive “therefore”: On the basis of God being both Creator (which he confessed at the conclusion of his hymn of praise) and Redeemer (“in view of God’s mercy”), Paul makes his appeal.
 - B. Each aspect of the doctrine of justification through faith in Jesus Christ has its basis in

Notes:

- “God’s mercy” (read Rom. 8:32; 9:16; 11:22-23).
1. The power of the gospel is that instrument which enables the Spirit of God and Christ to transform the one “who through faith is righteous” (see Rom. 1:16-17; 8:1-3; Gal. 5:25).
 2. Because of what God has done through Jesus Christ, the Christian is to be “different” (sanctified) (see Eph. 4:1-3, 17-32; Phil. 1:27-2:16; Col. 2:6-7; 1 Thess. 2:12).
 3. God, in mercy, has done something marvelous for us (see Rom. 3:21-26; 8:32-39).
 4. We, by grace, have received something indescribably wonderful from Him (see Rom. 8:28-30; 10:9-10; 2 Cor. 9:15).
 - a. *His call* has come to us in the Good News of Jesus (read 2 Thess. 2:13-14).
 - b. *His justification* has freely bestowed upon us the full status of “sons” (read Rom. 8:14-17).
 - c. *His glorification* is assured to us as we allow the Spirit of His glorified Son to transform us day by day (read 2 Cor. 3:18; 4:16-18).

5. Therefore, we are, by His grace, to live a life in harmony with
 - a. What He has done for us (the lesson of His life) (read 2 Cor. 5:14-15; Phil. 2:5-11; Titus 2:11-14; 1 Peter 2:21-25; 1 John 3:16-18)
 - b. What we have received from Him (life from the dead) (read Rom. 6:1-23; Eph. 2:1-10; Titus 3:3-8)
- II. The attitude and object of sanctification is a *living sacrifice* (12:1).
 - A. Serve *willingly*: “Offer” (Gr: *paristēmi*) is a technical term for Levitical sacrifices and worship under the Old Covenant (read Luke 2:22-24).¹
 - B. Serve *personally*: “Your bodies” now are temples and instruments of service to God (read Rom. 6:13, 19; 1 Cor. 6:12-20).
 - C. Serve *sacrificially*: The phrase, “*Living sacrifices*” (literally “a living sacrifice”), signifies that the lives of Christians offered in service to one another (in this context) constitutes acceptable worship to God (read Rom. 8:12-17).
 1. “Holy” sacrifice conforms to the will and character of God (see 1 Peter 1:14-16 and compare Rom. 1:16-17).

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2. “Pleasing” sacrifice conforms to the example of Christ (see Matt. 3:17; 17:5; John 8:29).
- III. The argument and logic of sanctification is *practical spirituality* (12:1).
 - A. “Spiritual worship” is that which pertains to the human spirit: It is service to God offered rationally and consciously.
 - B. Real, true, and genuine service to God is “worship”: It cannot be restricted to certain actions performed at certain times in certain places (read John 4:21-24; Col. 3:17; 1 Cor. 10:31).
 - C. Our “bodies” have been redeemed by God; now we are to use them to *serve* God.
 - IV. The actions of sanctification are *nonconformity and transformation* (12:2).
 - A. *Negative action*: “Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world” (read Rom. 6:2 and compare Gal. 1:4; 1 Cor. 1:18-2:16).
 1. The Christian has, in Christ, died to it (see Gal. 6:14; Col. 2:20-3:4).
 2. The Christian has, through Christ, overcome it (see 1 John 4:4-6; 5:4-5, 19-20).
 - a. His mind must not remain on it (read Col. 3:2).
 - b. His mind must not bear the image of it (read Eph. 4:17-24; James 4:4; 1 John

2:15-17 and compare Matt. 5:8; 1 John 3:1-3; 2 Tim. 2:4).

B. *Positive action*: “But be transformed by the renewing of your mind” (read Rom. 8:4-9; Eph. 4:17-24; Phil. 2:3-11; 4:8; Col. 1:21-23).

1. A new birth brings forth a new man (see Rom. 6:4 and compare 2 Cor. 5:16-17; Col. 3:9-11; Eph. 2:14-16).
2. A new man must have a new mind: the mind of Christ and His Spirit (see Phil. 2:5; Rom. 8:9; Titus 2:11-3:8 and compare 1 Cor. 2:16; 5:7; Eph. 5:7-10).

NOTE: Paul uses the word “transform” (Gr: *metamorphoō*), meaning “transform, change in form.”² Our English word “metamorphosis” comes from this word which Paul employs to speak of a revolutionary change in the Christian’s way of thinking. The gospel of Christ causes a “thought revolution” in those who take it seriously.

V. The awareness of sanctification is *assurance of God’s will* (12:2).

- A. Discernment is the result of a sanctified mind (personality) (read Phil. 1:9-11).
- B. A new mind is necessary for discerning and approving of that which is the “will of God” (read Eph. 5:17; Matt. 7:21).
 1. “Good” speaks of the *character* of the will of God.

Notes:

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2. "Pleasing" speaks of the *Christ-like* standard of the will of God.
 3. "Perfect" speaks of the *completeness* of the will of God.
- C. The new man no longer judges or makes decisions by a worldly (selfish or fleshly) standard; his aim is that *God's will* be done in all "goodness and completeness" (read Titus 2:11-14 and compare Matt. 10:37-39; 16:21-26; 26:36-44; John 4:34; 8:29; 5:30; 6:38; Heb. 10:5-7).
- D. The conduct of a Christian is to be determined by the fact that he is "in Christ": *One's position governs his practice* (read 2 Cor. 5:17).

The Righteous Man and His Social Relationships—Romans 12:3-8

OUTLINE OF ROMANS		
INTRODUCTION (1:1-17)		
EXPOSITION (1:18 - 11:36)	Righteousness	PROCLAIMED (1:18 - 3:20)
		PRESENTED (3:21 - 5:21)
		PERFECTED (6:1 - 8:39)
		PURPOSED (9:1 - 11:36)
EXHORTATION (12:1 - 15:13)	Relationships	SPIRITUAL (12:1-2)
		SOCIAL (12:3-8)
		PERSONAL (12:9-21)
		CIVIL (13:1-7)
		PUBLIC (13:8-14)
		FRATERNAL (14:1 - 15:13)
CONCLUSION (15:14-16:27)		

Notes:

NOTE: The spiritual and social relationships of man are distinct, but inseparable (see Matt. 7:12; 22:34-40; 25:31-46; 1 John 3:11-18; 4:7-5:2).

- I. *Humility in ability:* God has given each Christian a “measure of faith” (ability of service) (12:3).
 - A. *Each* man is indispensable; no one is independent of the other members.
 - B. No member may exalt himself or herself above another: Everyone is equally important in the body.

Notes:

1. Jesus Christ has given gifts to His body (the church), that the members might serve one another and thus grow together into the image of Christ (see Eph. 4:7, 11-16).
 2. There can be individuality, but not individualism (see 1 Cor. 12:12-31).
 - C. The church cannot exist, function, and grow without the work of each member in his particular ability.
- II. *Diversity in unity*: “These members do not all have the same function” (12:4-8).
- A. A “member” by himself is nothing: A member is a “member” only in its *relation to* the body and *dependence upon* its other members.
 1. It exists only in the body.
 2. Its special function is in the body.
 - B. A member must not attempt to be everything—an impossible goal!
 1. God has dealt each man a measure of faith (12:3).
 2. “We have different gifts, according to the grace given us” (12:6).
 - C. The gifts are different, but all exist for one purpose: building up the body of Christ.
 1. *Gifts are for service*, whether small or great!
 2. *Gifts are bestowed by God* and are to be used for His glory, but unspiritual attitudes

- can make them God-dishonoring (see Matt. 25:14-30; Luke 19:11-27).
- a. *Pride* can make us ambitious to be “better than others.”
 - b. *Indifference* can cause us to bury our talents.
 - c. *False humility* can prostitute gifts into a sickening display of pretentious hypocrisy.
3. *Gifts are diversified* in their distribution throughout the body.
- a. Ignorance of this fact causes *confusion* to well-meaning Christians.
 - b. Indifference to this fact brings forth *chaos* in the body of Christ.
 - c. Inconsideration of this fact results in *conflict* with God’s will.

NOTE: Each member has his or her contribution to make to God’s divine purpose: “That the body of Christ may be built up” (see Eph. 4:11-16; 1 Peter 4:10-11). For further reading, see *The Labor of Christ Through Us: Every Member a Minister*, *The Love of Christ in the Local Congregation*, and *The Life of Christ We Share: Members One of Another*, all by L. Deason.

Notes:

The Righteous Man and His Personal Relationships—Romans 12:9-21

OUTLINE OF ROMANS		
INTRODUCTION (1:1-17)		
EXPOSITION (1:18 - 11:36)	Righteousness	PROCLAIMED (1:18 - 3:20)
		PRESENTED (3:21 - 5:21)
		PERFECTED (6:1 - 8:39)
		PURPOSED (9:1 - 11:36)
EXHORTATION (12:1 - 16:19)	Relationships	SPIRITUAL (12:1-2)
		SOCIAL (12:3-8)
		PERSONAL (12:9-21)
		CIVIL (13:1-7)
		PUBLIC (13:8-14)
		FRATERNAL (14:1 - 15:13)
CONCLUSION (15:14-16:27)		

Notes:

- I. These relationships are founded and based upon “sincere love” (12:9).
 - A. *Love* is “reflex love” which answers to the love that Christ has shown the Christian: not that it is “natural” or instinctive, but that it is unconditionally responsive to human need (read Rom. 5:5-8).
 - B. *Love* is a life-style of self-sacrifice and service for the sake of others (read Eph. 5:2 and compare Rom. 15:14).

Notes:

- C. *Love* is the governing principle of the whole Christian life (read 1 Cor. 16:14 and compare Rom. 13:8-10; 1 Cor. 3:1-8).
- D. *Love* is the embodiment of Christ's way of life (read Rom. 13:14 and compare Col. 3:12-14).
- E. *Love* is the indwelling motivation of genuine discipleship (read Eph. 3:16-19 and compare Col. 2:6-7).
- F. *Love*, as described above, is impossible apart from a living relationship with Jesus Christ (read John 15:4-12 and compare John 13:34-35).
- G. *Love* is the "circulation of the blood" in the body of Christ.
 - 1. In Christ, all the members of the body are immediately related to each other.
 - 2. In Christ, all the members of the body are bound together in oneness.
 - 3. In Christ, love—*Christ's* love—flows from one to another in unfeigned genuineness; that is, love in the heart and not just in outward "talk" (see 1 John 3:16-18; 1 Peter 1:22; 4:8).
- H. *Love* is the primary and essential factor in all Christian relationships.
 - 1. Love is not mentioned first by accident or careless thought (see Gal. 5:22-23).

2. Love includes all the rest that follows (see also Col. 3:14).
 3. Love in this section is parallel to what Paul describes in 1 Cor. 13:1-8.
- II. Paul discusses the behavior of “sincere love” in the context of social relationships (12:9-21).
- A. Love is *genuine* (12:9; read 1 Tim. 1:5).
 - B. Love is *discerning* (12:9; read Phil. 1:9-11).
 - C. Love is *fraternal* (12:10; read 1 Peter 2:17).
 - D. Love is *selfless* (12:10; read Phil. 2:1-8).
 1. “Preferring one another” over self is the *honor* shown by sincere love.
 2. “Outdoing one another” in mutual service is the *devotion* kindled by sincere love.
 - E. Love is *practical* (12:11).
 1. *Diligent love* never lags in zeal (see Gal. 6:9-10; Rom. 6:13, 19).
 2. *Glowing love* is always fervent in spirit (see Phil. 4:4-5; 2 Tim. 4:16-18).
 3. *Serving love* is always conscious of the Lord (see Col. 3:22-24; Eph. 6:5-8; Rom. 12:1-2).
 - F. Love is *exuberant* (12:12).
 - G. Love is *steadfast* (12:12)
 - H. Love is *prayerful* (12:12).
 - I. Love is *helpful* (12:13).
 1. *Benevolent love* shares with those in need (especially brothers and sisters in Christ) (see Matt. 25:31-46).

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2. *Hospitable love* keeps the heart and home open to serve God by being generous to people (see Heb. 13:1-3; 1 Peter 4:9).
- J. Love is *gracious* (12:14; read Matt. 5:43-48).
- K. Love is *considerate* (12:15).
- L. Love is *unifying* (see Eph. 4:1-6; Phil. 1:27-2:4; John 13:34-35; 17:20-21).
 1. Oneness is the objective.
 2. Mutual concern is the means.
 3. Harmony in the body of Christ is the result.
- M. Love is *humble* (12:16).
 1. It is the opposite of high-mindedness (vain pride).
 2. It is the antithesis of arrogance and conceit.
- N. Love is *non-retaliating* (12:17; read Matt. 5:38-41).
- O. Love is *peace-making* (12:18; read Matt. 5:9, 21-26).
- P. Love is *not self-avenging* (12:19-20; see Deut. 32:35; Prov. 25:21-22).
- Q. Love is *victorious* (12:21; read John 16:33).
 1. "Do not be overcome by evil."
 2. "But overcome evil with good."

NOTE: In conclusion, this is what love is like, and how love reacts and behaves in all of life's aspects. To "walk in newness of life" means "to walk in love" (see Rom. 13:8-14). See *This Thing Called Love*, by L. Deason.

The Righteous Man and His Civil Relationships—Romans 13:1-7

OUTLINE OF ROMANS		
INTRODUCTION (1:1-17)		
EXPOSITION (1:18 - 11:36)	Righteousness	PROCLAIMED (1:18 - 3:20)
		PRESENTED (3:21 - 5:21)
		PERFECTED (6:1 - 8:39)
		PURPOSED (9:1 - 11:36)
EXHORTATION (12:1 - 15:13)	Relationships	SPIRITUAL (12:1-2)
		SOCIAL (12:3-8)
		PERSONAL (12:9-21)
		CIVIL (13:1-7)
		PUBLIC (13:8-14)
		FRATERNAL (14:1 - 15:13)
CONCLUSION (15:14-16:27)		

Notes:

NOTE: It is important to compare this passage with similar statements found in 1 Tim. 2:1-4, Titus 3:1, and 1 Peter 2:13-17.

- I. “Everyone must submit himself....”
 - A. Character of authority: “of God” (13:1-4)
 - B. Conscientious subjection: “because of conscience” (13:5-7)

Notes:

<i>Rebels: "Those Who Do Wrong"</i>	<i>Governments and Rulers</i>	<i>Righteous: "Those Who Do Right"</i>
Rebels against what God has instituted (v. 2)	Governments: Established by God (v. 1)	Submit (vv. 1, 5)
Be afraid (v. 4)	Rulers:	No terror (v. 3)
Bring judgment upon themselves (v. 2)	God's (full time) servant (vv. 4, 6)	He will commend you (v. 3)
Punishment (v. 4)	Agent of wrath (v. 4)	He is to do you good (v. 4)

For the transparency version of this chart, see p. 379

- II. "This is also why you pay taxes" (13:5-6).
 - A. *The external compulsion*: "possible punishment" (God's servant bears the sword as an agent of wrath and punishment on the wrongdoer.)
 - B. *The internal compulsion*: "because of conscience" (To oppose God's servant is to sin against God.)
- III. Fulfilling righteousness in civil relationships: "Give everyone what you owe him" (13:7).
 - A. "If you owe taxes, pay taxes."
 - B. "If revenue, then revenue."
 - C. "If respect, then respect."
 - D. "If honor, then honor."
- IV. The lessons taught in this passage are:
 - A. All governments and civil authorities are ultimately instituted by God, not man (see Isa.

10:5-19; Dan. 2:20-21; 4:25-26, 31-32; John 19:11).

- B. Government officials (rulers) are “servants of God” for good.
- C. To oppose (rebel against or disobey) the government in its legitimate role is to oppose God.
- V. The truly righteous person submits himself to the God-ordained powers because of
 - A. Possible punishment (man’s power as an agent of divine wrath)
 - B. Conscience (God’s will as the standard of conduct)

NOTE: Civil authority is not absolute (see Acts 4:19-20; 5:27-29; Dan. 3:1-30; 6:1-28; Exod. 1:15-21).³

Notes:

The Righteous Man and His Public Relationships—Romans 13:8-14

OUTLINE OF ROMANS		
INTRODUCTION (1:1-17)		
EXPOSITION (1:18 - 11:36)	Righteousness	PROCLAIMED (1:18 - 3:20)
		PRESENTED (3:21 - 5:21)
		PERFECTED (6:1 - 8:39)
		PURPOSED (9:1 - 11:36)
EXHORTATION (12:1 - 15:13)	Relationships	SPIRITUAL (12:1-2)
		SOCIAL (12:3-8)
		PERSONAL (12:9-21)
		CIVIL (13:1-7)
		PUBLIC (13:8-14)
		FRATERNAL (14:1 - 15:13)
CONCLUSION (15:14-16:27)		

Notes:

NOTE: This section may be outlined as follows: 1) conduct's standard (13:8-10); 2) crisis of service (13:11-14).

- I. *Conduct's standard:* Justification by faith brings a debt of love which fulfills (satisfies) the law (13:8-10; compare Matt. 7:12; 22:34-40; Gal. 5:14).
 - A. The relationship of law and love may be explained as follows.
 1. Loving one's neighbor *fulfills the requirement* of the law (read also Rom. 8:4-8).

Notes:

2. Loving one's neighbor *sums up the meaning* of the law.
3. Loving one's neighbor *precludes transgression* of the law.

NOTE: The simplicity and liberty (and yet, the limitless obligation) of the Christian life may be summed up by saying: "Love God, love your neighbor, and do whatever you like."⁴

B. The lessons which may be drawn from Rom. 13:8-10 are:

1. Civil claims can be satisfied, but love's claims are never settled; *legal requirements* can be fulfilled, but *the demands of love* continue (13:11).
2. Love is the "filling full" of the law (see Rom. 8:4 and compare Rom. 2:28-29; 7:4-6; 10:4; 2 Cor. 3:6).
3. Love to neighbors is an open account that is never paid up!
4. As righteousness in Christ is complete righteousness, so love is complete fulfillment of the law (see Matt. 22:34-40; James 2:8).
 - a. The law condemns every manifestation of sin (read Rom. 13:9).
 - b. However, what law forbids and condemns does not occur where *love* rules!

Love does no wrong to a neighbor (13:10).

- c. Therefore, there is no longer anything for law to condemn! “Against such things there is no law” (see Gal. 5:14, 22-23).
- d. The law is against sin, but not against Christ, the Spirit, and love.
- e. To “live in Christ” is to “walk in the Spirit,” and to walk in the Spirit is to “walk in love” (see Rom. 8:1-9 and compare Gal. 5:13-24).
- f. Law is fulfilled—not by legalism—but by life “in Christ and in love” (see Rom. 10:4 and compare Rom. 13:10).

II. *Crisis of service:* The time to love is *now* (13:11-14).

A. *Awake out of sleep:* It is already time (13:11-12).

- 1. Salvation is nearer: Every day brings us closer to the blessed hope of standing in the immediate presence of the Lord.
- 2. The night is far spent: The time for the Christian’s involvement in the “night life” of sin is past (see Eph. 5:8-14; 1 Peter 4:1-3).
- 3. The day is at hand: God’s final Word has been revealed, and that Word is love (see 1 John 2:7-8).

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B. *Active involvement is required*: “Let us put aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light” (13:12-14; compare Rom. 6:6, 11; 8:11-14; Eph. 5:8-10; 6:12-20; 1 Thess. 5:5-11).

1. *Negative action*: “Put aside the deeds of darkness...and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the sinful nature [‘flesh’]”:

- a. Orgies (Gr: *kōmos*: “excessive feasting, carousing, revelry”)⁵
- b. Drunkenness (Gr: *methē*: “intoxication, impairment”)⁶
- c. Sexual immorality (Gr: plural of *koitē*: literally, “beds,” “a euphem[ism] for sexual intercourse, pl[ural]: ‘sexual excesses’”)⁷
- d. Debauchery (Gr: *aselgeia*: “licentiousness, debauchery, sensuality”)⁸
- e. Dissension (Gr: *eris*: “strife, discord, contention”)⁹
- f. Jealousy (Gr: *zēlos*: “in a bad sense ‘jealousy, envy’”)¹⁰

NOTE: Biblical lists of sins absolutely ignore man’s customary distinction between “big sins” and “little sins” (see Prov. 6:16-19; Mark 7:20-23; Rom. 1:26-31; 1 Cor. 6:9-10; Gal. 5:19-21; Eph. 5:3-6; Col. 3:5-9; 1 Tim. 1:9-10; 2 Tim. 3:1-5; 1 Peter 4:3, 15; Rev. 22:15).

2. *Positive action*: “Put on”
 - a. The armor of light
 - b. The conduct of the daytime (see Gal. 5:22-24)
 - c. The Lord Jesus Christ (see Gal. 3:26-27; Col. 3:1-14)

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¹Bauer-Arndt-Gingrich-Danker, p. 628.

²Bauer-Arndt-Gingrich-Danker, p. 511.

³For further study on this topic, see Francis A. Schaeffer, *A Christian Manifesto* (Westchester, IL: Crossway Books, 1981); Ronald J. Sider and Richard K. Taylor, *Nuclear Holocaust and Christian Hope* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1982), pp. 59-158; Robert G. Clouse, *War: Four Christian Views* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1981); John H. Yoder, *The Politics of Jesus* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publ. Co., 1972), pp. 193-214.

⁴The quotation is from Augustine: “Once for all, then, a short precept is given thee: *Love, and do what thou wilt*: whether thou hold thy peace, through love hold thy peace; whether thou cry out, through love cry out; whether thou correct, through love correct; whether thou spare, through love spare: let the root of love be within, of this root can

nothing spring but what is good” (*Homilies on the Epistle of St. John*, 7.9, Philip Schaff, ed., *The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, transl. by H. Browne, revised by Joseph H. Myers [originally publ. in 1888; reprint edition: Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publ. Co., 1978], 7:504). (See Barclay, *Romans*, p. 191.)

⁵Bauer-Arndt-Gingrich-Danker, p. 461.

⁶See Vine, 1:341-342. Bauer-Arndt-Gingrich-Danker (p. 498) says: “It seems that... the proximity of *kōmoi* = ‘unrestrained revelry’ may influence *methai* in the direction of ‘drinking bout.’”

⁷Bauer-Arndt-Gingrich-Danker, p. 440.

⁸Bauer-Arndt-Gingrich-Danker, p. 114.

⁹Bauer-Arndt-Gingrich-Danker, p. 309.

¹⁰Bauer-Arndt-Gingrich-Danker, p. 337.

Lesson Twelve

Romans
14:1 - 15:13

God does not view differences of opinion in the area of freedom as a bad thing. The inevitability of such variance of thought is not seen as a flaw in an otherwise beautiful plan. It rather represents one more situation in which the supernatural character of the church, and its observable distinctiveness as a living organism, may be manifested before the world.

— Garry Friesen

The Problem of Judging Our Brother—Romans 14:1-12

OUTLINE OF ROMANS		
INTRODUCTION (1:1-17)		
EXPOSITION (1:18 - 11:36)	Righteousness	PROCLAIMED (1:18 - 3:20)
		PRESENTED (3:21 - 5:21)
		PERFECTED (6:1 - 8:39)
		PURPOSED (9:1 - 11:36)
EXHORTATION (12:1 - 15:13)	Relationships	SPIRITUAL (12:1-2)
		SOCIAL (12:3-8)
		PERSONAL (12:9-21)
		CIVIL (13:1-7)
		PUBLIC (13:8-14)
		FRATERNAL (14:1 - 15:15)
CONCLUSION (15:14-16:27)		

Notes:

- I. *The situation*: Differences in “faith” concerning matters of “opinion” threaten to divide the body of Christ (14:1-5).¹

NOTE: In this section, Paul is discussing matters of *opinion* (“disputable matters,” NIV). Doctrines which negate salvation in Christ are not under consideration, nor are clear practices of ungodliness and immorality (see 1 Cor. 15:12-20; Gal. 2:21; 5:4; Col. 2:18-19; 2 John 7-10; 1 John 2:22-23; 4:2-3 and compare 1 John 3:4-10; Gal. 5:19-21; Eph. 5:3-7; 1 Cor. 6:9-10).

II. *The parties involved* (see the chart below):

WHO ARE THE "BROTHERS" OF ROMANS 14?			
IDENTITY	DESCRIPTION		INSTRUCTION
	First Example: meat-eating	Second Example: observing special days	
STRONG FAITH	conscientious participator (v. 2) can be judged only by his own Master (v. 4) is able to stand before his Master (v. 4) does this "to the Lord" (v. 6)	conscientious non-participator (regards every day alike) (v. 5) does this "to the Lord" (v. 6)*	Don't look down on your brother (vv. 3, 10) Become a peacemaker (v. 19) Don't allow what you consider good to be spoken of as evil (v. 16) Keep quiet about convictions in these matters (v. 22)
WEAK FAITH	conscientious non-participator (v. 2) does this "to the Lord" (v. 6)	conscientious participator (considers one day more sacred than another) (v. 5) does this "to the Lord" (v. 6)	Don't condemn your brother (vv. 4, 10, 13). Keep quiet about convictions in these matters (v. 22)
PEACEMAKER	non-participator for the sake of unity pleasing to God and approved by men (v. 18)	participator for the sake of unity* pleasing to God and approved by men (v. 18)*	It is better not to... do anything... that will cause your brother to fall (v. 21)
DOUBTER	unsure whether to participate	unsure whether to participate	Let each one be fully convinced in his own mind (v. 5) He is condemned if he eats, because his eating is not from faith; and everything that does not come from faith is sin (v. 23)

For the transparency version of this chart, see p. 380

- A. *The brother with weak faith:* His personal convictions and understanding concerning “the faith” do not permit him to exercise freedom of choice in certain practices.
- B. *The brother with strong faith:* Because of his understanding of the faith (the truth of the gospel), he believes that he is free to choose whether to participate in those areas of activity considered wrong by the “weak.”
- C. *Both brothers* are to hold their convictions with mutual acceptance and personal integrity (14:5).

NOTE: Each of us is both strong and weak, depending upon the area of activity under consideration. No one is *always* “strong” in every area, or “weak” in every area. There are bound to be differences in the ways each of us applies the truth of the gospel to the various aspects of his or her life. This is precisely the reason why we must accept one another and allow one another to be who we are, as well as to become what we shall become.

III. *The solution:* Let Jesus Christ be the Lord and let God be the Judge (14:6-12).

- A. Consider the brother whose faith is weak.
 - 1. Accept him without passing judgment (14:1).
 - 2. Do not look down on him (14:3, 10).
 - 3. In his observances and abstinences, he seeks to please the Lord (14:6).

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- B. Consider the brother whose faith is strong.
1. Do not condemn him whom God has accepted (14:3).
 2. God will make him stand acceptably in His judgment (14:4).
 3. In his partaking, he seeks to please the Lord (14:6).
- C. Consider the Lord.
1. He is the Lord of both strong and weak: Both are answering to Him for whatever they do and don't do (14:7-8).
 2. Christ's death and resurrection (the truth of the gospel) procured and proclaims His lordship over *all* mankind (dead and living): *He* is the "Judge," *we all* are "the judged" (14:9-12; compare Phil. 2:5-11; Matt. 28:18; Luke 24:25-26; Acts 17:31; John 5:22-23, 27; 2 Cor. 5:9-10; 2 Tim. 4:1).

NOTE: Paul makes use of a passage from Isaiah, in which God contrasts His reality and power in creation and deliverance with the emptiness and impotence of idols. God calls on all the inhabitants of the earth to renounce idols and find true salvation in Him. He swears that He is the God to whom all mankind must answer.

This is not so much a specific prediction as it is a universal truth (see Isa. 45:23).

- IV. Concluding summary of *the situation* is as follows:
- A. Paul does not take sides in matters of opinion (14:3).
 - B. A command *to eat or not to eat* would be a victory for legalism and a loss of liberty (read also Rom. 14:17).
 - C. The apostle does not say that the “strong” are to convert the “weak” to their expression of faith.
 - D. Concerning Christian liberty, people are not all alike in opinions: Some are strong in faith, some are weak in faith (on any given issue).
 - E. Paul plainly states that the criticisms from the weak brother are baseless (14:14; compare 1 Cor. 8:4-7; 10:23-33).
 - F. Paul’s instruction to the “strong” (in their attitude toward the “weak”) is given because *division* would destroy the Lord’s body (14:15, 20; 16:17-18 and compare 1 Cor. 3:16-17).

NOTE: The situation with which Paul deals in this section is of such a serious nature that it threatens the unity of the body of Christ. The attitude which a Christian is to have in such situations is effectively presented here. The reader is encouraged to carefully study and compare 1 Cor. 8:1-11:1 with this chapter.

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- V. Concluding summary of *the solution* is as follows:
 - A. Do not judge the “strong” by making and binding laws.
 - B. Do not despise the “weak” by insisting on freedoms and rights (see Gal. 5:13-15).
 - C. Let each —“weak” and “strong”—be “fully convinced in his own mind” (14:5).
 - D. Each individual shall give account of himself to God (14:10-12).

The Peril of Destroying Our Brother—Romans 14:13-23

- I. The principle is stated (14:13).
 - A. Two-fold reference to persons involved is made.
 - 1. *Personal*: “Make up your own mind [literally, ‘judge ye’].”
 - 2. *Pointed*: “Your brother’s way” is your personal concern.
 - B. Two-fold application of the relevant principle (love) is given.
 - 1. “Stop passing judgment on one another.”
 - 2. Do not “put any stumbling block or obstacle in your brother’s way.”

NOTE: The word “obstacle” (Gr: *skandalon*) means “trap, temptation to sin, enticement, that which gives offense or causes revulsion, stumbling block.”² The English word “scandal” comes from this word. In the present context, the word refers to an attitude and example (conduct) which could encourage a “weak” Christian (by social pressure) to do that which violates his own faith and conscience before God (see Rom. 14:5, 14, 20-23 and compare 1 Cor. 8:7-13; 9:22; 10:23-11:1).

A “stumbling block” is not merely “whatever somebody doesn’t happen to like about you.” It is something that one does which is destructive to the spiritual life of another (see Matt. 18:6-9; 16:21-23).

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II. The problem is solved (14:14-23):

A. First, *concerning food* (14:14-16)

1. *Teaching*: Knowing Jesus has convinced Paul that nothing (in the realm of food, drink, and other created things) is, *of itself*, unclean. Weak personal faith makes it unclean to the individual (read Mark 7:14-23 and compare 1 Tim. 4:3-5; Titus 1:15; Col. 2:20-23).
2. *Application*: There must be *consideration* (“acting in love”), *compassion* (“Do not by your eating destroy”), and *concern* (“Do not allow what you consider good to be spoken of as evil”).

NOTE: To say that everything which God created is “good” is to trust in that which God has revealed (see Gen. 1:31). This truth does not insure against possible misapplication or abuse of anything which God has made. Proper use of chemicals and herbs to heal and treat illness is a good thing. Recreational substance abuse and drug addiction are perversions of what is good. So also, even meat-eating can be either a legitimate pleasure or a sinful perversion. The determining principle in all such issues is genuine *Christlike* love.

B. Second, *concerning God's kingdom* (14:17-19)

1. *Teaching*: The essence of the kingdom (rule) of God is not *physical* (that which we eat, drink, wear, or whatever), but *spiritual*—

“righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit”: our relationships with one another and with God. Serving Christ in a way that pleases God while winning favor with man is the heart of the kingdom of God.

2. *Application*: “Let us therefore make every effort to do what leads to *peace* [not hostilities and divisions among brothers] and *mutual edification* [not tearing down and destroying one another’s spiritual life]” (read Rom. 12:18; Matt. 5:9; Heb. 12:14 and compare 1 Cor. 10:14-11:1; 14:5, 12, 26; 2 Cor. 12:19; Rom. 15:2; Eph. 4:11-16, 29-30).

C. Third, *concerning God’s work* (14:20-21)

1. *Teaching*: “Do not destroy the work of God [your brother for whom Christ died] for the sake of [your right to eat] food. All food is clean [acceptable to eat], but it is wrong for a man to eat anything that causes someone else to stumble.”
2. *Application*: “It is better [literally, ‘it is good’] not to *eat* meat or *drink* wine or to *do anything else* that will cause your brother to fall” (read also 1 Cor. 8:11-13; Rom. 14:15).

NOTE: This “denial of self” concerning rights and liberties is the trademark of genuine love and Christlikeness (see Phil. 2:5-11 and compare Luke 9:22-25; 14:25-27, 33).

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D. Fourth, *concerning one's faith* (14:22-23)

1. *Teaching*: Liberties in Christ can mean "blessedness" (happiness in Christ) when they are exercised in absolute assurance and settled conviction. When in doubt, *don't*, for doubtful indulgence condemns.

NOTE: If we are willing to do that which we *believe* to be morally wrong (though it may in fact be morally neutral), we manifest a lawless spirit, and this is the essence of sin (see 1 John 3:4).

2. *Application*: The strong are not to "show off" their strong faith, nor are they to exercise liberty in such a way as to be a stumbling block to the weak. The weak are not to imitate the faith of the strong in violation of their own personal conscience. We must *always* consider our own conscience and that of our brothers, lest we "no longer act in love" (read also Rom. 14:15).

The Principle of Edifying Our Brother—Romans 15:1-13

- I. Paul discusses the moral obligation of *bearing infirmities* (15:1; read Gal. 6:1-2; Eph. 4:30-5:2).
 - A. “We who are strong”: Paul counts himself among those of “strong faith” in the issues under discussion (see Rom. 14:14; 1 Cor. 8:4-6, 13).
 - B. Paul approached all aspects of life from a Christ-centered (gospel-serving) perspective, rather than a self-centered viewpoint (see 1 Cor. 9:19-23; 10:23-11:1; compare Mark 8:35).
- II. Paul declares the personal responsibility of *building up* (15:2).
 - A. *Education*: The need of the neighbor is that he be “built up” in the personal knowledge of Christ (see Rom. 14:19 and compare Rom. 13:8-10; 1 Cor. 13:5).
 - B. *Edification*: The cost of “lifting up Christ” to our neighbor is our death to a self-pleasing approach to living (see 1 Cor. 10:23-24 and compare John 4:34-35; 5:30; 6:38; 7:18; 8:28-29; 12:23-26).
- III. Paul defines the example of Christ as the *basis of edification* (15:3-4; read Ps. 69:9).
 - A. Christ, our example, is our *personal pattern*: Though He Himself is sinless and divine, He

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identified Himself completely with the will of the Father, and with the oppression of weak and sinful mankind (see Rom. 8:3-4; Heb. 2:14-18; 10:5-7).

NOTE: Paul's usage of Psalm 69 is noteworthy for its suitability. The psalm is the cry of a righteous man who is suffering because he identifies himself with God and His ways. It is ultimately applicable to Jesus Christ, the Righteous One. Our God is one who takes upon Himself the weaknesses of the weak (in Jesus Christ).

If we identify ourselves with Him, we are called to forego many rights so that those weaker in faith may be built up rather than spiritually destroyed. We must willingly and lovingly take their conscientious prohibitions and scruples (*not* the legalistic requirements and Pharisaic ultimatums) upon ourselves so as to *stand solidly with them*, as God did for us in Christ (see Gal. 4:4; Phil. 2:5-8; 2 Cor. 8:9; Luke 3:21 and compare 1 Cor. 9:22; 10:27-28; 2 Cor. 11:29).

B. God's Word, our exhortation, provides our *practical principles*: The Old Testament revelation led up to Christ and is fulfilled in Him; there is continuity and completion, rather than contradiction and contrast (see 2 Tim. 3:14-17; 1 Peter 1:10-12; 2 Peter 1:19-21; 1 Cor. 10:11; 15:3-4; Rom. 1:2-4; 13:8-10; 3:1-4:25; 10:4; 16:25-26; Luke 24:25-27, 44-47; John 5:39-40, 45-47; Matt. 5:17-18; Gal. 3:24-25; Heb. 1:1-2).

- IV. Paul delivers a prayer and plea that Christians be *bound in unity* (15:5-7; read Eph. 4:1-16; 1 Cor. 1:10-11; Phil. 1:27-2:5; John 17:20-21).
- A. The “endurance and encouragement” on which our hope in Christ is based are *given by God, through the inspired Scriptures* (15:4-5).
- B. This same God, who is the source of Christian endurance, encouragement, and hope, is now invoked as the giver of the spirit of unity among Christians of various backgrounds, all of whom are devoted to genuine discipleship (“as you follow Christ Jesus”).
- C. “*The same mind*” (“one heart,” NIV), demands and implies neither absolute agreement nor total conformity of conduct: The “weaker brother and stronger brother” problem was not handled that way.
- D. “*The same mouth*” is the outward expression of “the same mind,” and both phrases speak of “glorifying the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ” by practicing *the mind of Christ* (love; humility; mutual subjection; acceptance).
- E. “*Even as Christ*” is the pattern and the basis of all ethical demands in the New Testament: God revealed His righteousness in Christ, and called us to *enter into* that righteousness and *walk according to* it by faith.

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NOTE: Walking “even as Christ” means *walking in love*. Accepting one another “even as Christ accepted you” involves a “just as I am” acceptance. Is he or she “in Christ,” where there is now “no condemnation”? If Christ has embraced him into His family, we can do no less (see Luke 15:1-31). Only in this way can *opinions* be relinquished, that the clear teaching concerning *unity* may not be destroyed (see also Eph. 4:1-6 and compare 1 Cor. 3:16-17).

- V. Paul describes the brotherhood of all believers (Jew and Gentile alike) as the result of Christ’s ministry (15:8-13; read Ps. 18:49; Deut. 32:43; Ps. 117:1; Isa. 11:10).
 - A. His ministry’s effects encompass Jew and Gentile (15:8-12).
 - 1. He confirms the promises made by God to the patriarchs of Israel (15:8; compare Gen. 12:1-3; 15:4-6; 22:15-18; 49:10; Rom. 4:1-25; Gal. 3:6-9, 14-29).
 - 2. He causes God to be glorified among the Gentiles for His mercy (15:9-12; compare Rom. 9:1-5, 22-24; 11:1-6, 30-32; 12:1).
 - B. His ministry’s blessings endow *all* believers with spiritual riches (15:13; compare Rom. 14:17-19).
 - 1. They are filled with all *joy*.
 - 2. They are filled with all *peace*.
 - 3. They are filled in *trusting Him*.
 - 4. They are overflowing with *hope*.

5. They are blessed by *the power of the Holy Spirit* (read Eph. 1:12-14; 2:14-22; 3:14-21; Gal. 3:14).

NOTE: The NIV translates “Christ has become a servant of the Jews on behalf of God’s truth, to confirm the promises made to the patriarchs, *so that* the Gentiles may glorify God....” This sounds as if Paul sees the blessing of the Jews in Christ only as a means to the end of blessing Gentiles. The Greek does not read so as to make Gentile salvation God’s primary purpose in Christ, nor does the context support this translation. God’s eternal purpose in Christ and His church encompasses *all* nations equally, though (historically) God chose the nation Israel as the channel of messianic blessing to the whole world.

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¹For a helpful and practical discussion of this passage and the parallel passage in First Corinthians 8, see Garry Friesen and J. Robin Maxson, *Decision Making and the Will of God* (Portland, OR: Multnomah Press, 1980), pp. 377-426.

²Bauer-Arndt-Gingrich-Danker, p. 753.

**The Book of Romans:
“The Righteousness
of God”**

Part VII

Conclusion

Lesson Thirteen

Romans
15:14 - 16:27

The men and women mentioned, and others unmentioned, must have esteemed it a great honour to be Paul's fellow-workers in the highest of all enterprises. And Paul, for his part, was warmly appreciative of their fellowship and collaboration. They ministered comfort to him and strengthened his hands in the Lord. One can well believe that, without their self-denying aid, his own ministry would have been much less effective than it was.

—F. F. Bruce

Paul's Personal Plans —Romans 15:14-29

OUTLINE OF ROMANS		
INTRODUCTION (1:1-17)		
EXPOSITION (1:18 - 11:36)	Righteousness	PROCLAIMED (1:18 - 3:20)
		PRESENTED (3:21 - 5:21)
		PERFECTED (6:1 - 8:39)
		PURPOSED (9:1 - 11:36)
EXHORTATION (12:1 - 16:13)	Relationships	SPIRITUAL (12:1-2)
		SOCIAL (12:3-8)
		PERSONAL (12:9-21)
		CIVIL (13:1-7)
		PUBLIC (13:8-14)
		FRATERNAL (14:1 - 15:13)
CONCLUSION (15:14-16:27)		

Notes:

- I. His *assurance* of their ability: His letter to them is not an indictment of incompetence on their part (15:14).
- II. His *admonition* for their remembrance: The nature of his commission requires his bold tone (15:15; compare 2 Peter 1:12-15).
- III. His *activity* on behalf of the Gentile's acceptance: His preaching ministry among the Gentiles, as well as the harvest of souls he has won, are acceptable

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- offerings to God which are sanctified by His Holy Spirit (15:16).
- IV. His *aim* in preaching is to glorify Christ and serve (worship) God: His involvement with the church at Rome is not to exalt himself by taking credit for the work of others (15:17-21; compare 2 Cor. 10:12-18).
- V. His *ambition* has been and still is to visit the saints in Rome: His interest in them is not a new development, but circumstances and the demands of his ministry have thus far prevented his visiting them (15:22-29; compare 1 Cor. 16:1-6; 2 Cor. 8:1-9:15).
- A. His determined plan is to visit them en route to the Spanish mission field, and to enlist their fellowship in that work.
- B. His duty to minister the financial and material blessings of Gentile churches in Greece to the poor of Jerusalem is a prior commitment which must be honored.
- C. The debt of Gentile Christians to the Jews, who shared the spiritual riches of Christ, is mentioned as motivation for Gentile generosity to the Jerusalem poor.

Paul's Plea for Prayers —Romans 15:30-33

- I. The *platform* of the plea for prayer is
 - A. "By our *Lord* Jesus Christ"
 - B. "By the *love* of the Holy Spirit"

- II. The *purpose* of the plea for prayer is that
 - A. Deliverance might be granted from the disobedient in Judea
 - B. Service might be acceptable to the saints in Jerusalem
 - C. Coming to them might be in joy and in God's will
 - D. Mutual refreshment might be realized

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Paul's Particular Greetings —Romans 16:1-23

NOTE: Paul sends his personal greetings in only one other of his epistles (see Col. 4:15, 17). This is evidence that chapter sixteen is indeed an original part of this epistle. It was not Paul's custom to send personal greetings to members of churches where he was personally well known. According to F. F. Bruce:

...it was but natural that many people whom Paul had met in other places should now be resident in Rome (including Epaphroditus, his first convert in the province of Asia) and that he should send his personal greetings to them and to others of whom he had heard, without risk of causing offense to those whom he had never met and who were unknown to him even by name.¹

- I. Roll of the righteous: Paul recognizes and commends his friends and co-workers (16:1-15).
 - A. To Phoebe: "servant of the church" (16:1-2)
 - 1. She is called a "servant" (Gr: *diakonos*) of the church in Cenchrea, but in which sense—general ("servant") or specific ("deacon")?²
 - 2. She may well have carried Paul's letter to the Roman church (compare references to other letter bearers: Tychicus—Eph. 6:21-22 and Col. 4:7-9; Epaphroditus—Phil. 2:25-30).³

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3. Paul acknowledges Phoebe as “a great help” (Gr: *prostatis* meaning “protectress, patroness, helper”).⁴
- B. To Priscilla and Aquila: “fellow workers in Christ Jesus” (16:3-5)
1. They were at Ephesus when last mentioned by Paul (see 1 Cor. 16:19).
 2. They had previously been Paul’s coworkers both in Corinth and Ephesus (see Acts 18:1-4; 19:18-19, 24-26).
 3. They returned to Rome and hosted a church in their house, as they had done in Ephesus (see Rom. 16:5; 1 Cor. 16:19).
- C. To Epenetus: “the beloved friend and firstfruits” (16:5)
- D. To Mary: “giver of labor” (16:6)
- E. To Andronicus and Junias: “prisoners of Christ” (16:7)
- F. To Ampliatus: “beloved in the Lord” (16:8)
- G. To Urbanus: “fellow worker in Christ” (16:9)
- H. To Stachys: “beloved” (16:9)
- I. To Apelles: “approved in Christ” (16:10)
- J. To Aristobulus (his household) (16:10)
- K. To Herodion (Paul’s relative) (16:11)
- L. To Narcissus’ household (those in the Lord) (16:11)
- M. To Tryphaena and Tryphosa: “laborers in the Lord” (16:12)

- N. To Persis: “the beloved laborer” (16:12)
- O. To Rufus and his mother: “chosen in the Lord” (16:13)
- P. To Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermas, Patrobas, Hermes, and the brothers with them (16:14)
- Q. To Philologus, Julia, Nereus and all the saints with them (16:15)

NOTE: This list of “immortal names” could be designated the “Directory of the Determined,” the “List of the Lord’s Laborers.” It may have been taken from Paul’s personal prayer list (see Rom. 1:9-10). The five households mentioned were probably house churches (see Rom. 16:5, 10, 11, 14, 15).⁵

- II. Response of the righteous: Paul requests (inter) congregational greetings (16:16).
- III. Reaction toward division: Paul reveals and condemns self-serving deceivers (16:17-20; compare Titus 3:10-11).
 - A. *Their destroying action* against the unity of the “brothers” opposes true Christian teaching (16:17).
 - B. *Their deceitful attitude* in the midst of unsuspecting Christians contradicts service to Christ (16:18-19).
 - C. *Their doom announcement* identifies them with the Enemy of the God of Peace (16:20; compare Gen. 3:14-15).

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- IV. Reply of coworkers to the good reputation of the faithful in Rome: Greetings are sent to fellow believers (16:21-24).
- A. From Timothy (“my fellow worker”) (16:21)
 - B. From Lucius, Jason, and Sosipater (“my relatives”) (16:21)
 - C. From Tertius (Paul’s scribe) (v. 22)
 - D. From Gaius (host of the whole Corinthian church) (16:23)
 - E. From Erastus (“the city’s director of public works”) (16:23)

NOTE: In the limestone pavement of a street near the theater of ancient Corinth is an inscription bearing the name “Erastus.” The inscription was originally inlaid with bronze, but looters have long since gouged it out. Nevertheless, the Erastus of the inscription is probably the same Erastus of this passage, because the street was laid before the middle of the first century A.D. and, according to ancient custom, city officials would show their gratitude for their positions by personally funding public works (such as the paving of the streets).⁶

- F. From Quartus (“our brother”) (16:23)⁷

Paul's Praise and Glory —Romans 16:25-27

NOTE: Numerous scholarly debates have raged over whether chapter sixteen was originally a part of the epistle. The final doxology (16:25-27) occurs in various positions in the text: at the end of chapter fourteen (manuscripts of lesser importance), at the end of chapter fifteen (the Chester Beatty Papyrus, p⁴⁶), or where it traditionally occurs, at the end of chapter sixteen (the best manuscripts, including Sinaiticus and Vaticanus).⁸

This has suggested to many the possibility that Romans circulated in three lengths: short (chapters one through fourteen), medium (chapters one through fifteen), and long (chapters one through sixteen). The short and medium versions would make Romans more suitable for reading in places other than Rome, excluding as they would the references to Paul's immediate travel plans and his extended personal greetings to Christians in Rome.⁹

Some have suggested that Paul himself prepared abbreviated version(s) of the epistle for wider circulation. It seems more likely, however, that later scribes interposed the doxology at the end of chapter fourteen or chapter fifteen to provide an inspired and more fitting conclusion to the section of Romans that would be read publicly. (How often is chapter sixteen read in churches of the twentieth century?)

Despite all the discussion, it must also be emphasized that none of the manuscripts¹⁰ actually omits chapters fifteen or sixteen, and therefore any conclusive resolution of the problem is impossible.¹¹

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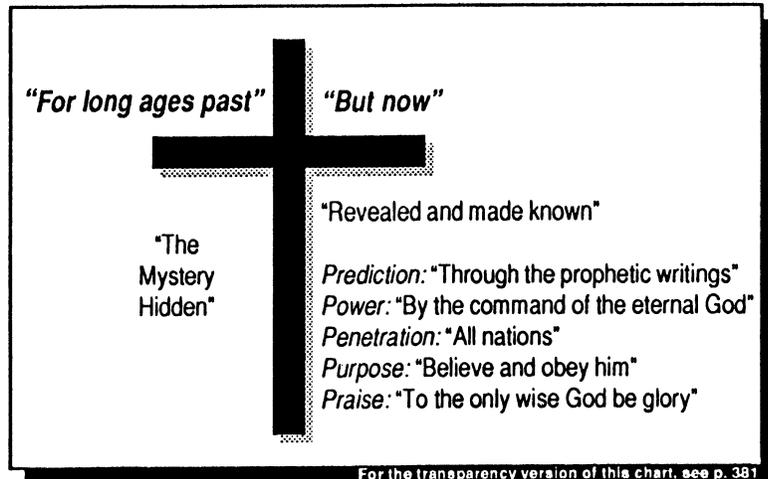
Notes:

- I. God is praised for His everlasting power on behalf of His people:

"Now to Him who is able to establish you by my gospel and the proclamation of Jesus Christ..."

- II. God is praised for His eternal purpose to bring all nations to obedient faith in Jesus Christ:

"...according to the revelation of the mystery hidden for long ages past, but now revealed and made known through the prophetic writings by the command of the eternal God, so that all nations might believe and obey Him—to the only wise God be glory forever through Jesus Christ! Amen."



For the transparency version of this chart, see p. 381

BOOK OF ROMANS

III. Consider the following conclusions:

- A. Spiritual security and stabilization are by means of the “gospel and the proclamation of Jesus Christ.”
- B. The revelation of the divine mystery was *commanded* by the eternal God, *confirmed* by the Old Testament prophecies, and *completed* by Jesus Christ.
- C. This mystery is no longer God’s secret purpose, but is “now revealed and made known...so that all nations might believe and obey him” (see John 3:16, 36; Heb. 5:8-9).

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¹Bruce, *Paul: Apostle of the Heart Set Free* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publ. Co., 1977), pp. 385-389.

²Bauer-Arndt-Gingrich-Danker, p. 184.

³Steve Singleton, *Timothy and Titus: Training for Godliness* (Clifton Park, NY: Life Communications, 1984), pp. 24, 59-60.

⁴Bauer-Arndt-Gingrich-Danker, p. 718. The verb form suggests a function of leadership, but Paul here uses the noun. It is more likely that Paul is honoring Phoebe by acknowledging the importance of her service than that he is referring to her in any official capacity or position she might have held in the church. (See also Bo Reicke, "προιστημι," 6:700-703 in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, edited by G. Friedrich, translated by Geoffrey W. Bromiley [Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publ. Co., 1968].)

⁵For further study on house churches, see "House Churches and Their Problems," pp. 60-91 in Abraham Malherbe, *Social Aspects of Early Christianity* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983).

⁶The entire English translation of the inscription reads "[] Erastus in return for his aedileship laid (the pavement) at his own expense" (see Jerome Murphy-O'Connor, *St. Paul's Corinth: Texts and Archaeology* [Wilmington, DE: Michael Glazier, 1983], p. 37).

⁷Bruce Metzger points out that the earliest and best manuscripts omit verse 24, which is probably a scribe's insertion based on verse 20 to prevent verses 21-23 from looking like an afterthought. Other late manuscripts place verse 24 after verse 27 (that is, after the final doxology), "thus concluding the epistle with a benediction. If, how-

ever, it stood in this position originally, there is no good reason why it should have been moved earlier" (Bruce M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament* [New York: United Bible Societies, 1971], p. 540).

⁸A few late manuscripts place the doxology at the end of both chapter fourteen and fifteen, others (including Codex Alexandrinus) at the end of fourteen and sixteen, while three late manuscripts omit the doxology entirely (one of them leaves space for its inclusion at the end of chapter fourteen). These probably constitute late attempts to solve the difficulty and should be ignored.

⁹The omission of references to Rome (at 1:7, 15) in a few manuscripts provides additional evidence that this epistle was circulated to churches other than the one in Rome (compare the omission of the reference to Ephesus in Eph. 1:3 by several early manuscripts, leading some scholars to draw similar conclusions about Ephesians).

¹⁰Some evidence suggests that the second century heretic Marcion knew Romans in a fourteen-chapter form, but the evidence is inconclusive (see Guthrie, *New Testament Introduction*, pp. 406-407, 409-410).

¹¹For a thorough (but technical) discussion of this problem, see Harry Y. Gamble, Jr., *The Textual History of the Letter to the Romans* (a revision of his 1970 Ph.D. dissertation at Yale University), Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publ. Co., 1977. A convenient summary of the scholarly debate is found in Guthrie, *New Testament Introduction*, pp. 400-414, 419. A good summary of the textual evidence is found in Metzger, *Textual Commentary*, pp. 533-536, 540.

***Appendices and
Bibliography***

Appendix One: What Is The Law And What Does It Do?

***“YOU ARE NOT UNDER LAW,
BUT UNDER GRACE”
(Rom. 6:14)***

1. The law is not connected with justification (Rom. 3:21).
2. The law is not linked to the promise of Abraham (Rom. 4:13).
3. The law is not related to the Christian’s life of sanctification (Rom. 6:15-19).
4. The law manifests the knowledge of sin (Rom. 7:7).
5. The law makes occasion for sin (Rom. 7:8).
6. The law reveals the power of sin (Rom. 7:9).
7. The law reveals the effect of sin (Rom. 7:10).
8. The law reveals sin’s deceitfulness (Rom. 7:11).
9. The law reveals the holiness of its Maker (Rom. 7:12).
10. The law reveals the sinfulness of sin (Rom. 7:13).
11. The law was weak (Rom. 8:3).
12. The law’s requirement is fulfilled in those made righteous by Christ Jesus (Rom. 10:4).
13. The law’s aim was and is Christ (Rom. 10:4).
14. The law is fulfilled in love (Rom. 13:8, 10).

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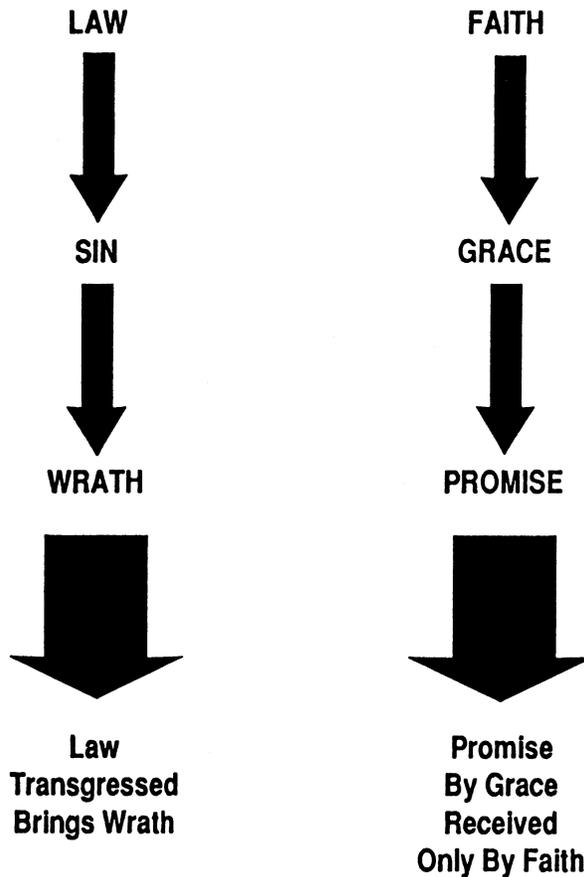
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“WHAT THEN IS THE LAW?”

(Gal. 3:19-24)

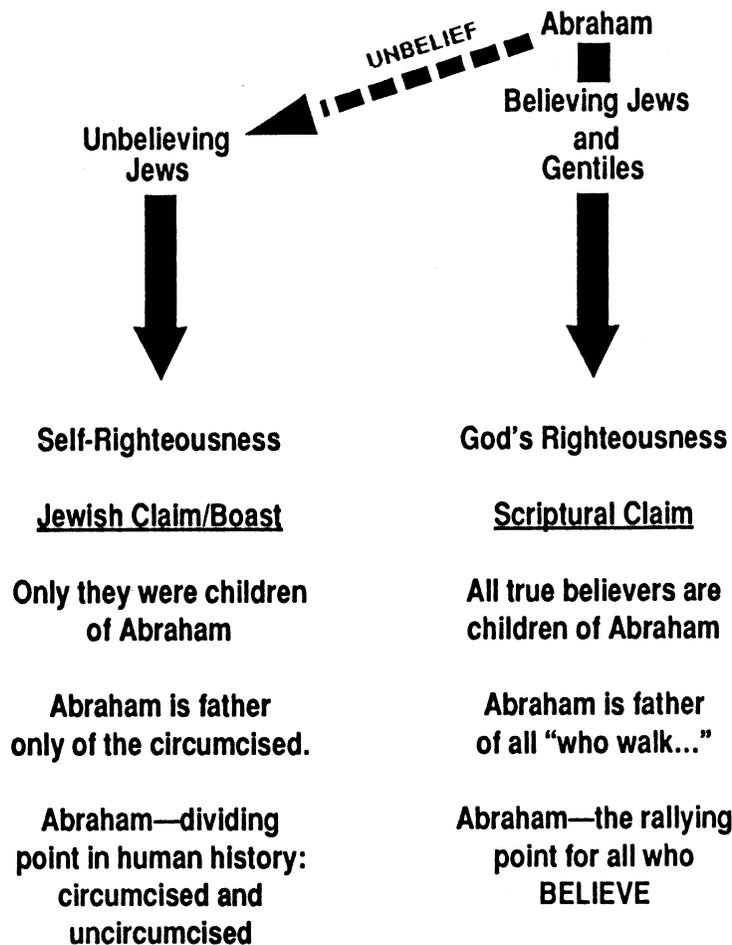
1. The law was added because of transgressions (Gal. 3:19).
2. The law was until the Seed should come (Gal. 3:19).
3. The law was inferior to the covenant of promise (Gal. 3:19-20).
4. The law was not given as a means of salvation (Gal. 3:21-22).
5. The law was a guide to the spiritually immature (Gal. 3:23).
6. The law was to bring us to Christ that we might be justified in faith (Gal. 3:24).

Appendix Two: Doctrinal Inseparables



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Appendix Three: Trust in Circumcision or Trust in Christ



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- I. Promise and law:
 - A. Gen. 12:1-3
 - B. Gen. 13:14-18
 - C. Gen. 15:1-21

NOTE: There is no reference to law, but there is to *believing*. Therefore, righteousness is by faith according to promise and not by law.

- II. Summary (Rom. 4:1-25):
 - A. Abraham believed God.
 - B. Abraham was reckoned righteous because of this faith.
 - C. Abraham was reckoned righteous in uncircumcision.
 - D. Abraham was reckoned righteous “not through the law.”
 - E. Abraham’s righteousness of faith was also for our sake.

Appendix Four: Lessons Concerning Faith

NOTE: Read Rom. 4:1-25 and compare James 1:2-4.

- I. Faith is what it is because of its utter dependence on God.
- II. Abraham had the promise of God, and it was this promise which he believed.
- III. "Faith" means holding on to God's promise, even if
 - A. One's own human ability provides no foundation on which to build
 - B. All human calculations contradict the fulfillment of God's promise
 - C. Circumstances render "hope" a seeming impossibility (Abraham believed God, even though human judgment recognized no hope.)
- IV. The mark of real faith is to believe "in hope against hope."
 - A. Only where the hope of God's promise stands against the merely human considerations of hope is true faith found.
 - B. Where man can manage with his own resources, it cannot be a matter of faith: faith is not self-reliance!
 - C. Faith is the very opposite of confidence in one's own adequacy and resources.

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- V. Faith is not senseless: it considers the realities, both seen and unseen.
 - A. Faith is not an escape mechanism for eluding actual present conditions.
 - B. Faith does not close its eyes to the “facts.”
 - C. Faith responds to God’s Word, in spite of apparent opposition to the “facts.”
- VI. Faith can be weak or strong.
 - A. The effectiveness of faith is weakened by man’s dependence on himself.
 - B. The effectiveness of faith is strengthened by man’s dependence on God
 - 1. Although confronted with mounting difficulties
 - 2. Although faced with overwhelming odds and seeming impossibilities
 - 3. Although surrounded by insurmountable obstacles and trials
 - C. The effectiveness of faith is not weakened by “frightening prospects”: *Just the opposite is true.*
 - 1. When our own possibilities fail, faith can increase.
 - 2. When our own insufficiency is realized, faith in God’s sufficiency increases.
 - a. Faith does not rely on self.

- b. Faith does not rely on personal adequacy or power.
- c. Faith *does* rely on God and His promise.

VII. Faith and God go together.

- A. Talk of faith, without awareness of God, is not faith.
- B. Talk of faith, without absolute trust in God, is not faith.
- C. Faith *is* faith because it *depends* on God.
 - 1. Faith can never be restricted to a “function of the soul.”
 - 2. Faith can never be merely an inner condition of man.
 - 3. Faith can never be confined to mere mental assent.

VIII. Faith gives glory to God, the rightful Recipient.

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Appendix Five: Romans

5:12-21 (Outline)

- I. Sin and death enter into the world (Rom. 5:12-14).
 - A. Sin and death spread to all mankind.
 - 1. Through one man, sin entered into the world.
 - 2. Through sin, death came to all men.
 - 3. Death came to all men, because all sinned.
 - B. Law does not solve the problem of sin.
 - 1. Sin existed among men before the law of Moses was given.
 - 2. Sin is not taken into account when there is no law. (Sin presupposes and implies the existence of “law.”)
 - 3. Nevertheless (even though “law” existed before the law of Moses was given), death reigned from Adam until Moses.
- II. Adam was a “pattern of the one to come [Christ] ” (Rom. 5:15-19).
 - A. Paul compares the sin of Adam and the gift of Christ (Rom. 5:15-17).
 - 1. The power of death is overcome by the power of grace (Rom. 5:15).
 - a. “Many” died because of the trespass of the *one* man (Adam).
 - b. God’s grace and gift of the One Man (Jesus Christ), overflow to “the many.”

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2. The result of one trespass is contrasted with God's response to many trespasses (Rom. 5:16).
 - a. Judgment followed Adam's one sin, bringing condemnation.
 - b. God's gift followed many trespasses, bringing justification.
 3. The reign of death is overcome by the reign of life (Rom. 5:17).
 - a. By the trespass of the one man (Adam), death reigned.
 - b. Life reigns through the One Man (Jesus Christ) to "those who receive God's abundant provision of grace and of the gift of righteousness."
- B. Paul compares the sin of Adam and the obedience of Christ (Rom. 5:18-19).
1. Paul compares the foundations of human condemnation and human justification (Rom. 5:18).
 - a. One trespass (Adam's) resulted in condemnation "for all men."
 - b. One act of righteousness (Christ's) resulted in justification "for all men."
 2. Paul compares the means of man's status as "sinner" and man's status as "righteous" (Rom. 5:19).

- a. Through Adam's *disobedience*, "the many" were caused to be counted "sinners."
 - b. Through Christ's *obedience*, "the many" will be caused to be counted "righteous."
- III. The secondary status of the law in the history of sin: The law came in to magnify the contrast of sin and grace (Rom. 5:20).
- A. The law came in (as a "side issue") so that the trespass might increase.
 - B. Where sin greatly abounds, grace super-abounds.
- IV. Conclusion: The outcome of Paul's doctrine of grace in Christ (Rom. 5:21).
- A. Sin reigned over the human race in *death*.
 - B. Grace reigns over the human race through righteousness to bring *eternal life* through Jesus Christ our Lord.

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Appendix Six: The “Wretched Man” of Romans 7:24

- I. To whom is this passage referring: Saul the sinner or Paul the saint? (See Rom. 7:14-25.)

NOTE: One’s conclusion concerning this point determines his interpretation of this crucial section of Romans and affects his understanding of the whole of Christian doctrine and experience.

- A. Most recent commentators believe that this passage refers to the experience of Paul as a Christian apostle.
1. The comments of R. C. H. Lenski¹ will suffice in giving the commonly accepted view of this passage.
 - a. “When the apostle now continues the narration of his personal experience with the law by changing from historical tenses of past time [Rom. 7:7-13] to present tenses in vv. 14-23, is he still speaking of his former unregenerate state, or is he now speaking of his experience after regeneration?”²
 - b. Lenski, in his condemning critique of the “pre-Christian” interpretation of the “wretched man,” overlooks some vital

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points (which will be set forth later), and also fails to realize that *the rejection of his view is not due to a denial of the power of sin.*³

2. Lenski is helpful in giving an historical sketch of the interpreters on this controversial passage:⁴
 - a. "The older Greek fathers thought that Paul continues to speak of his unregenerate state."
 - b. "Augustine thought likewise until the controversy with Pelagius opened his eyes."
 - c. "Romanists followed the Greek fathers."
 - d. "The reformers followed the latter view of Augustine and deepened it."
 - e. "Our confessions quote this section repeatedly as proof of the doctrine that the flesh still adheres to the regenerate."
 - f. "...the best later commentators fully agree with this view."

NOTE: This view is currently held by many modern commentators, especially those of the Calvinist tradition. Lenski himself, however, was a Lutheran.

3. A much appealed-to proof for the "post-conversion" interpretation of the "wretched man" is *personal experience*.

- B. The view of Lenski is rejected and refuted by the following considerations:
1. *First*, in regard to the transition from the historical tense to the present tense, consider these points.
 - a. Paul, desiring to present as strongly as possible the necessity of death to sin and law, uses the personal pronoun in the present tense.
 - b. Paul uses the same method (and verb tense) in Rom. 13:11-13. Was Paul (the Christian) at that time
 - 1) Walking in *orgies*?
 - 2) Walking in *drunkenness*?
 - 3) Walking in *sexual immorality*?
 - 4) Walking in *debauchery*?
 - 5) Walking in *dissension and jealousy*?
 - c. It is evident that the transition of verb tenses is not the key to the correct interpretation of Rom. 7:14-25. *The context must be decisive!*
 2. *Second*, as a Christian apostle, Paul could never be described as
 - a. “Unspiritual” (Gr: *sarkinos* meaning “fleshy”);⁵ that is, self-reliant and therefore weak (see Rom. 7:14)
 - b. “Sold as a slave to sin” (see Rom. 7:14)

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- c. Doing “what I hate”; that is, habitually sinning (see Rom. 7:15)
- d. Having “sin living in me” (see Rom. 7:17)
- e. “A prisoner of the law of sin” (see Rom. 7:23)
- f. A “wretched man” (see Rom. 7:24)
- g. A captive of “this body of death” (see Rom. 7:24)

NOTE: Neither the immediate nor remote context of Rom. 7:14-25 will bend sufficiently to make the above terms descriptive of a Christian (read carefully Rom. 6:1, 22; 8:1-2, 5-17 and compare Gal. 3:3; 5:17).

3. *Third*, could it ever be that Paul, any Christian at Rome, or any other genuine disciple who had presented his bodily members (his whole being) as instruments for service to God—could it ever be that such a one would be described as the “wretched man”?
 - a. “Shall we go on sinning...? By no means!” (See Rom. 6:1-2, 15 and compare Gal. 5:17-18, 19-21, 24.)
 - b. “For sin shall not be your master, because you are not under law, but under grace” (see Rom. 6:14).
 - c. We are not dominated by sin, for “there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus” (see Rom. 8:1-4).

II. Who is the “wretched man” of Romans 7:14-25?

A. We conclude that Paul is writing his own spiritual autobiography as a “man under law” (read Rom. 7:1).

1. Here is a sincere, conscientious Pharisee who loved God, respected His law, and desired holiness (read carefully Phil. 3:3-8; Gal. 1:13-14; Acts 22:2-3; 23:1; 26:4-5, 9-11; 1 Tim. 1:13).
2. Here is a man, now justified and sanctified through faith in Jesus Christ, writing in retrospect concerning his preconversion spiritual experience. (He writes as one who, though not sinless, is certainly not “sold as a slave to sin”) (read Rom. 7:14; compare 1 John 1:8-2:2).
3. Here is a representative of every human being who has ever struggled with sin by means of law and who finally recognized the *wretchedness* of it all!

B. The key to identifying the “wretched man” is the phrase “I myself” (see Rom. 7:17, 25).

1. The term “I myself” (Gr: *autos egō*) describes the individual man “on his own”; that is, the “I” whom Paul had previously crucified as he wrote these words (read again Rom. 6:1-7 and compare Gal. 2:19-21).

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2. Paul's way (crucifixion of the autonomous, self-reliant man who struggles and fails "under law") is the only way to true peace and salvation!
- C. Paul's confession: "So then, I myself in my mind am a slave to God's law, but in the sinful nature a slave to the law of sin" (read Rom. 7:25).
 1. Under law ("I myself"), Paul was a fragmented man, *intending and desiring* to serve God's law ("in my mind"), but *proving to be* a slave of the power ("law") of sin, in the *actual weakness* of "the sinful nature" (literally, "flesh") (read carefully Rom. 8:1-4).
 2. The terms "I myself" and "sinful nature" (flesh) portray man struggling "on his own" under law, without help, without power, without the Spirit of God (read Rom. 8:1-7 and compare Gal. 5:17).
 3. Sanctification is neither *accomplished* nor *taken by force*.
 - a. Holiness is not a matter of *natural strength or talent* (see Phil. 4:13; 1 Cor. 10:13).
 - b. Holiness is not a matter of *meritorious works* (see Phil. 4:13).

- c. Holiness is bestowed by *the work of God* (see 1 Cor. 1:2, 30; Phil. 2:13-14; Col. 2:12; Rom. 8:13).

III. Conclusion: A person who is “living in Romans 7” today is

- A. Unaware that help is at hand
- B. Likely (if a Christian) to become disillusioned, discouraged, and ultimately defeated (return to “the world”)
- C. Likely to lower God’s standard of holiness to a personal set of legalistic rules
- D. Able (if humble and loving) to take the hand of God and climb to the heights of glory described in Romans 8:1-39

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¹Lenski, *Romans*, pp. 473-474.

²Lenski, *Romans*, p. 473.

³Lenski, *Romans*, p. 474.

⁴Lenski, *Romans*, p. 474.

⁵Bauer-Arndt-Gingrich-Danker, p. 743.

Charts for Transparencies

Paul's Vocabulary in Romans

<i>Word or phrase</i>	<i>Frequency in Romans</i>	<i>Frequency in Paul's other epistles</i>	<i>Frequency in rest of the NT</i>
righteousness (and other related words)	66	49	131
law	75	47	74
faith, believe	61	135	293
sin, sinner, sinful	58	33	173
death, die, kill	48	47	221
in Christ.....	10	66	5
flesh, fleshly, carnal.....	30	68	60
grace	25	77	54
holy (and related words)	24	76	191
credit (=impute)	19	15	7
God forbid (=Certainly not!, etc.)	10	4	1

Theological Concepts in Romans

SIN, GUILT, CONDEMNATION (CHAPS. 1-3)

**PROPITIATION, GRACE, FAITH, JUSTIFICATION
(CHAPS. 4-5)**

SANCTIFICATION (CHAPS. 6-8)

GLORIFICATION (CHAP. 8)

ELECTION (CHAPS. 9-11)

EXHORTATION (CHAPS. 12-16)

The Righteousness of God

Outline of Romans

INTRODUCTION (1:1-17)	
RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD (1:18-15:13)	IN RELATION TO SINS AND SIN (1:18-8:39)
	IN RELATION TO THE SAVING OF ISRAEL (9:1-11:36)
	IN RELATION TO SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS (12:1-15:13)
CONCLUSION (15:14-16:27)	

An Overview of Paul's Thought in Romans

Introduction (1:1-17)

Presentation of Righteousness (1:18 - 11:36)

Considered objectively (1:18-5:21)

How can the guilty be made righteous?

Righteousness and man's spiritual nature

Righteousness and man's circumstance

Righteousness in the course of history

Considered subjectively (6 - 8)

How can the justified be righteous in daily conduct?

Position and practice of the justified

The relation of sin and law to the justified

Considered nationally (9 - 11)

How can Israel experience true righteousness and the covenant blessings?

Israel and God's messiah

Israel and God's covenant

Practice of Righteousness (12:1 - 15:13)

What is so different about being a Christian?

Fruit of righteousness—manifested in the justified

Practice of righteousness—the response of the justified

Conclusion (15:14 - 16:27)

**“What May Be Known About God Is Plain”
Romans 1:19**

<i>Revelation declares (1 Cor. 1:21):</i>	<i>Nature declares (Ps. 19:1-6):</i>
<i>The nature of God</i>	<i>The existence of God(s)</i>
He is one, Eternal God.	God(s) may be he, she, it, or they.
He is Father, Son, and Spirit.	God is beyond creation.
He is omnipotent.	God is powerful.
He is personal.	God may be personal or nonpersonal.
He is Creator and Sustainer.	One god may design, another may create, and still another may sustain.
He is Love.	God may be cruel or benevolent.
He may be known by faith.	The true, infinite God is beyond man's finite knowledge.

Morals in First-Century Rome

“Right and wrong are confounded.”—Virgil

“All was one delirium of hate and terror.”—Tacitus

“No day passed but someone was executed.”

—Suetonius, of the reign of Tiberius

“I see Rome, proud Rome, perishing, the victim
of her own prosperity.”—Propertius

“The earth no longer brings forth any but bad men and cowards.”

—Juvenal

It was an age “stricken with the agitation of a soul no longer master of itself.”

—Seneca

“No guilt or deed of lust is wanting since Roman poverty disappeared.”

—Juvenal

“The greater the infamy, the wilder the delight.”—Tacitus

“Women were married to be divorced and divorced to be married.”—Seneca

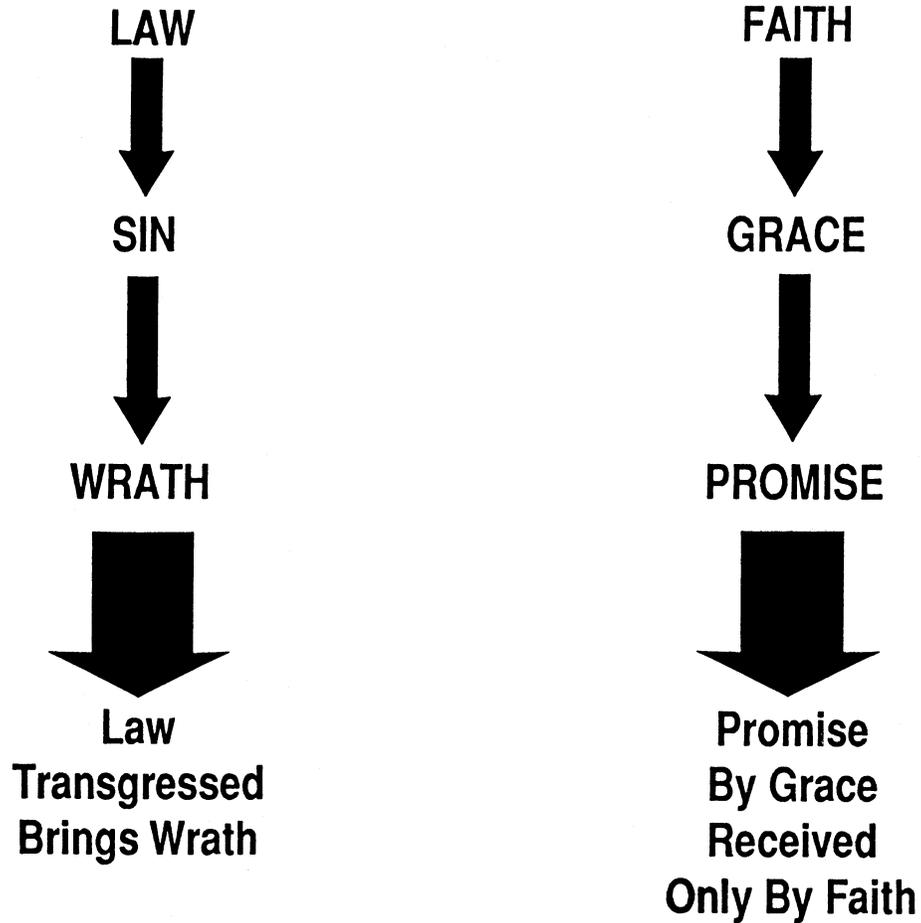
“Is one husband enough for Iberina? Sooner will you prevail
upon her to be content with one eye.”—Juvenal

Juvenal also tells of one woman who had eight husbands in five years, and cites the case of Agrippina (wife of Emperor Claudius) who gave herself nightly to unbridled lust in prostitution.

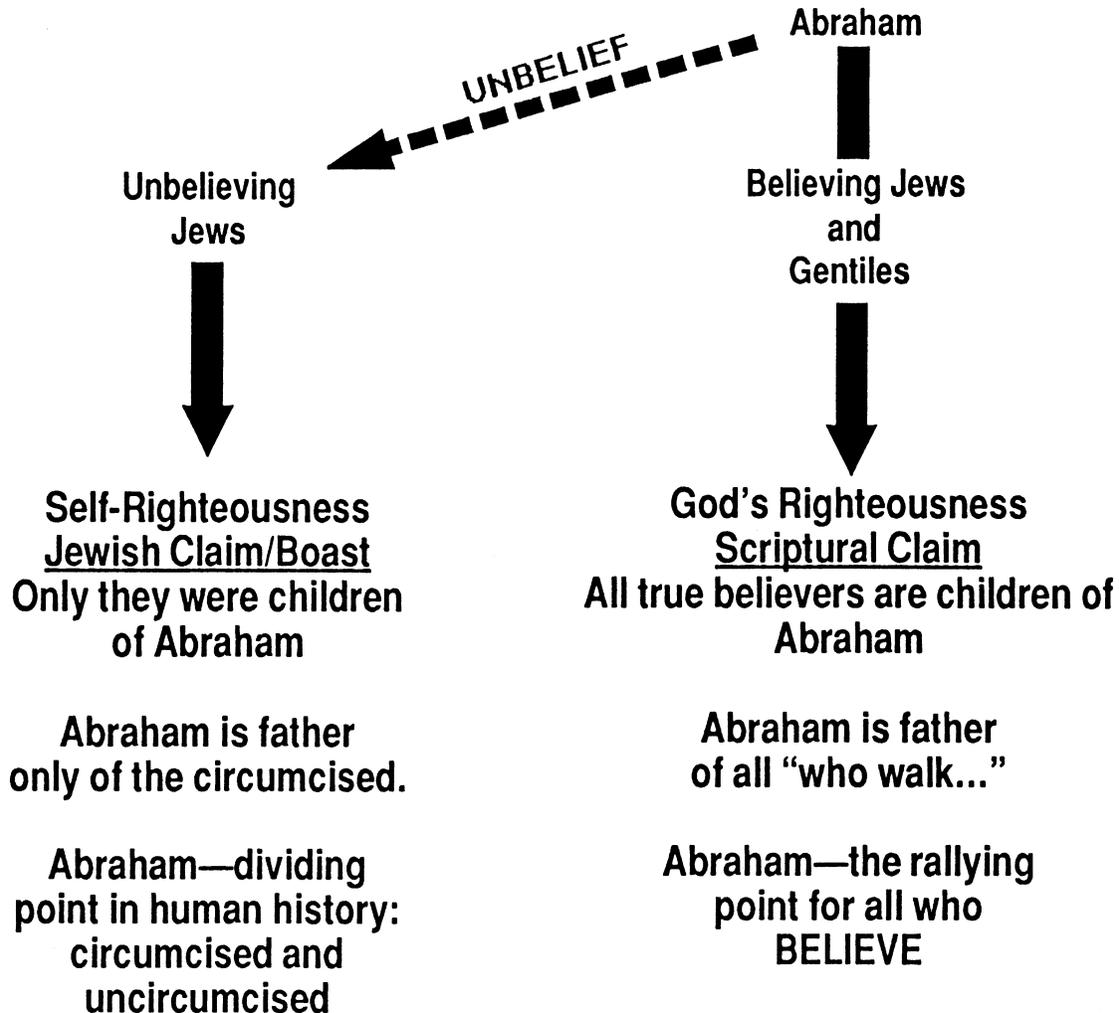
Source: Barclay, William. *The Letter to the Romans* (The Daily Study Bible). Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1957. pp. 23-25.

Doctrinal Inseparables

Romans 3 - 5



Trust in Circumcision or Trust in Christ—Romans 4



What Has Been Credited Under Adam and Under Christ

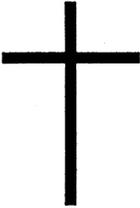
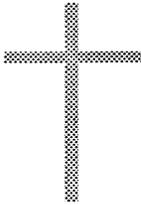
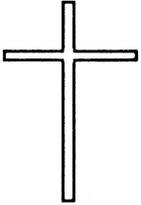
Romans 5:12-21

The Old Man—Adam	The Old Man—Adam
One act of sin sums up the history of man “on his own” as a failure “under law”	One act of righteousness sums up the status of man justified by faith and alive “under grace.”
Involves all humanity	Involves all humanity
Sinfulness	Righteousness
Judgment	Free Gift
Condemnation	Justification
Death	Life

The “Reign of Sin” and The “Reign of Grace” Romans 5:12-21

ADAM	CHRIST
By one sinful act, many made sinners (5:15)	By one righteous act, many made righteous (5:18)
Brings death (5:12, 17; see 1 Cor. 15:21-22, 42-58)	Brings life (5:17-18; see John 10:10)
Stands for man as “unrighteous” (5:12, 19; see Eph. 2:3)	Stands for man as “righteous” (5:19; see 1 Cor. 1:30; 2 Cor. 5:17-21)
Brings condemnation (5:16-18)	Brings commendation (5:18; see Rom. 3:24-25; 8:1)
Lost favor (grace) with God (5:15)	Restored grace to man (5:15-17; see Rom. 3:24; John 1:17)
Offended God (5:15, 17-18)	Pleased God (5:16-18; see Matt. 3:17; 17:5; John 8:29)
Brought reign of sin in death (5:13-14, 17, 21)	Brought the reign of righteousness in life (5:17-18, 21)
Caused an abundance of sin (5:20)	Caused a super-abundance of grace (5:20-21)

Crucified, Buried, and Raised with Christ—Romans 6:1-11

<i>DEAD</i>	<i>BURIED</i>	<i>RAISED</i>
<p>Old man “in Adam” Alive to sin and dead to righteousness</p>  <p><i>Crucified</i> (only the obedient are <i>crucified with Christ</i>)</p>	<p>Faith Repentance Baptism</p> <p>Start of New Life</p>  <p><i>Buried</i> (only the “dead” are <i>buried with Christ</i>)</p>	<p>New Creature “in Christ” Dead to sin and alive to righteousness</p>  <p><i>Raised</i> (only the “buried” are <i>raised with Christ</i>)</p>

“Born again” means “raised from the dead”!

Paul is not speaking of when or how the sinner is justified or pardoned.

He is speaking of the justified person’s relationship to sin.

The Walk of Holiness: Three Alternatives Romans 6

extreme ←

the biblical position

→ extreme

Walk of Faith

(admits the presence and power of sin, but also embraces the presence and power of Christ)

(See Rom. 6:1-23 and compare 1 John 2:1-2)

“continue” (v. 1)

“live” (v. 2)

“reign” (v. 12)

“dominion” (v. 14)

“slave” (v. 17)

Flagrantly Sinful Practice

(denies the presence and power of Christ)

Flawlessly Perfect Performance

(denies the presence and power of sin)

Living Under Grace and Under Law

Romans 6:16-23

“Under Law”	“Under Grace”
Sin leading to death (v. 16)	Obedience leading to righteousness (v. 16)
Slaves of sin (vv. 17-18)	Slaves of righteousness (vv. 17-18)
Enslaved to sin (v. 18)	Free from sin (v. 18)
Wages of sin (v. 23)	Free gift of God (v. 23)
Death (v. 23)	Eternal life (v. 23)

Humanity Under Law and Under Grace

Romans 7:1-6

<i>UNDER LAW</i> <i>Husband-Wife</i>	<i>UNDER GRACE</i> <i>Husband-Wife</i>
Adam's sin—sinner Flesh—servants of sin	Christ—Christian righteousness Spirit—servants of righteousness
(See also Rom. 7:25; 8:5-14 and compare Gal. 3:1-3; 5:16-25; 2 Peter 1:1-4; Eph. 2:1-3, 13-18.)	
<p><i>“We were...”</i></p> <p>Married to sin Bound by law Wife to Adam Bringing forth fruit that resulted in death</p>	<p><i>“But now...”</i></p> <p>Married to righteousness Free from law (“released”) Wife to Christ (see 1 Cor. 6:17) Bringing forth fruit that results in sanctification and eternal life</p>
“Our old man” has died (see Rom. 6:6-7, 11 and compare Gal. 2:20; 6:14)	

“Things of the Flesh” Vs. “Things of the Spirit”—Romans 8:5-11

FLESH	SPIRIT
Mind of the flesh: death (8:6)	Mind of the Spirit: life and peace (8:6)
Is hostile to God (8:7)	Spirit-indwelt (8:9)
Is not (cannot be) subject to God (8:7)	Body dead because of sin (8:10)
Cannot please God (8:8)	Spirit gives life because of righteousness in Christ (8:10)
Without the Spirit: do not belong to Christ (8:9)	God will give life to our mortal bodies (8:23)

“IF CHRIST IS IN YOU”—Rom. 6:22-23

Why Jews and Gentiles Share One Great and Glorious Reality

Romans 8

1. Because "in Christ" we are *not condemned* (8:1).
2. Because "in Christ" we are *free from the law of sin and death* (8:2).
3. Because "in Christ" we *walk according to the Spirit* (8:3-4).
4. Because "in Christ" we are to *mind the things of the Spirit* (8:5).
5. Because "in Christ" we have *peace and life* (8:6-7).
6. Because "in Christ" we are *owned by Him* (8:8-9).
7. Because "in Christ" we have *righteousness* (8:10).
8. Because "in Christ" we have *hope* (8:11).
9. Because "in Christ" we are *sons of God* (8:12-14).
10. Because "in Christ" we are *co-heirs with Him* (8:15-17).
11. Because "in Christ" we will be *glorified* through suffering with Him (8:18-23).
12. Because "in Christ" we in hope *endure* (8:24-25).
13. Because "in Christ" we are *assisted in prayer by the Holy Spirit* (8:26-27).
14. Because "in Christ" we have *assurance based on God's providence* (8:28-30).
15. Because "in Christ" we are *more than conquerors* (8:31-39).

Relationships to Governments and Rulers—Romans 13:1-7

<i>Rebels: “Those Who Do Wrong”</i>	<i>Governments and Rulers</i>	<i>Righteous: “Those Who Do Right”</i>
Rebels against what God has instituted (v. 2)	Governments: Established by God (v. 1)	Submit (vv. 1, 5)
Be afraid (v. 4)	Rulers: God’s (full time) servant (vv. 4, 6)	No terror (v. 3)
Bring judgment upon themselves (v. 2)	Agent of wrath (v. 4)	He will commend you (v. 3)
Punishment (v. 4)		He is to do you good (v. 4)

Who Are the “Brothers” of Romans 14?

IDENTITY	DESCRIPTION		INSTRUCTION
	Example: meat-eating	Example: observing special days	
STRONG FAITH	conscientious participator (v. 2) can be judged only by his own Master (v. 4) is able to stand before his Master (v. 4) does this “to the Lord” (v. 6)	conscientious non-participator (v. 5) does this “to the Lord” (v. 6) (implied)	Don’t look down on your brother (vv. 3, 10) Become a peacemaker (v. 19) Don’t allow what you consider good to be spoken of as evil (v. 16) Keep quiet about convictions in these matters (v. 22)
WEAK FAITH	conscientious non-participator (v. 2) does this “to the Lord” (v. 6)	conscientious participator (v. 5) does this “to the Lord” (v. 6)	Don’t condemn your brother (vv. 4, 10, 13) Keep quiet about convictions in these matters (v. 22)
PEACE-MAKER	non-participator for the sake of unity pleasing to God and approved by men (v. 18)	participator for the sake of unity (implied) pleasing to God and approved by men (v. 18) (implied)	It is better not to... do anything... that will cause your brother to fall (v. 21)
DOUBTER	unsure whether to participate	unsure whether to participate	Let each one be fully convinced in his own mind (v. 5) He is condemned if he eats, because his eating is not from faith; and everything that does not come from faith is sin (v. 23)

“The Mystery Hidden”
Romans 16:25-27

“For long ages past”

“But now”

“Revealed and made known”

Prediction: “Through the
prophetic writings”

Power: “By the command of
the eternal God”

Penetration: “All nations”

Purpose: “Believe and obey
him”

Praise: “To the only wise
God be glory”

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