

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS

Introduction

Even though every passage in Scripture enjoys plenary inspiration, each has its unique place in God's revelation of Himself and His will. Matthew, for example, cannot replace Acts; Revelation cannot replace Genesis. Thus, Romans occupies its special place in Christianity. The Epistle to the Romans is the New Testament's most thorough presentation of the theology of salvation.

It would be impossible to overestimate this epistle's impact on modern civilization. The Protestant Reformation, to a large degree, was the result of Luther's study of Romans. The course of history was altered by the Reformation. In 1515, Luther translated Romans and prepared lectures for a seminary course that he would teach during the winter of 1515-1516. In the winter of 1516-1517 his subject was Galatians. Somewhere along the way, the phrase in Romans 1:17, "The just shall live by faith," brought the illumination that was to dominate the rest of his life. For the first time, Luther grasped the truth that salvation is an act of God's grace, and is appropriated by faith, not by meritorious deeds. On October 31, 1517, (popularly called, "the birthday of the Protestant Reformation) he posted the Ninety-Five Thesis on the door of the castle church in Wittenberg.

Personal note: My experience and Luther's were quite similar. The Christianity in which I spent my childhood and youth was a religion of laws, "thou shalt nots" and "thou shalt." I lived in a constant state of guilt because of my failures. The translation of Romans was one of the assignments given in my second-year Greek class in seminary. While translating the epistle, I comprehended at a heart level that salvation was based on the mix of grace and faith, rather than perfection of performance. I had read Romans many times in English. The process of translation planted the truth in my heart. For the first time in my life, I found peace. It was only later that I learned of Luther's experience (JWG)

More than Two hundred years later, on May 24, 1738, after evening prayers at St. Paul's Cathedral in London, John Wesley attended an informal meeting of an Anglican society on Aldersgate Street. At the meeting, someone read aloud Luther's preface to his *Commentary on Romans*. There suddenly broke upon Wesley something similar to what Luther had experienced. As Wesley recorded in his journal, "About a quarter before nine, while he (Luther) was describing the change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone, for salvation; and an assurance was given me that he had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death." The experience so central to Protestantism, salvation by faith alone, gripped Wesley, who at the time was a high Anglican, and launched him into his life's work (Luther's preface is attached to these notes as Appendix I).

In this course, we will exegete the book, with side excursions into other portions of Scripture that flesh out the doctrines discussed in the text. We begin by considering the background of the epistle.

I. AUTHORSHIP

A book or a portion of a book is said to be, "genuine," if it were written by the one to whom it is attributed. There is almost universal agreement, even among the most liberal theologians, that Romans is "genuine." Paul is the author. There are some questions concerning the textual integrity of a few passages. Even before the close of the canon, this epistle was considered to be Scripture, penned by Paul.

- Peter classes the writings of Paul as Scripture (II Peter 3:14-16). In his First Epistle, Peter makes numerous allusions to passages in the Epistle to the Romans:

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|----------------|---------------|
| Romans 9:25 | I Peter 2:10 |
| Romans 9:32,33 | I Peter 2:6-8 |
| Romans 12:1 | I Peter 2:5 |
| Romans 12:2 | I Peter 1:14 |

Sanday and Headlam state¹, "In I Peter 2:6, there is a quotation from the Old Testament with the same variations from the Septuagint that are found in Romans 9:32. Not only do we find the same thoughts, such as the metaphorical use of the idea of sacrifice (Romans 12:1; I Peter 2:5), and the same rare words, such as *sunchematizesthai* (*suschmatizesqai*), *anupokritos* (*ajupokritov*) but in one passage (Romans 13:1-7; I Peter 2:13-17) we have what must be accepted as conclusive evidence, the same ideas occurring in the same order... St. Paul works out a thesis clearly and logically; St. Peter gives a series of maxims for which he largely indebted to St. Paul."

- The following passages in I Peter seem to be modeled on St. Paul's thoughts and words:

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|-------------------|------------------|
| Romans 12:3,6 | I Peter 4:7-11 |
| Romans 12:9,10 | I Peter 1:22 |
| Romans 12:16-18 | I Peter 3:8,9,11 |
| Romans 13:1,3,4,7 | I Peter 2:13-17 |

- Several passages in James also resemble Romans:

| | |
|--------------|-------------|
| Romans 2:1 | James 4:11 |
| Romans 2:13 | James 1:22 |
| Romans 4:1 | James 2:21 |
| Romans 4:20 | James 1:6 |
| Romans 5:3-5 | James 1:2-4 |
| Romans 7:23 | James 4:1 |
| Romans 13:12 | James 1:21 |

¹ Rev. William Sanday, D.D., LL.D., Rev. Arthur C. Headlam, D.D., *The Epistle to the Romans*, The International Critical Commentary (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons) 1896, pp ix xv -ix xvi

- Hebrews and Jude also allude to Romans.

Romans 4:17-21
Romans 12:19
Romans 16:25-27

Hebrews 11:11,12
Hebrews 10:30
Jude 24-25

- Romans often is heard in the writing of Church leaders of the first generation following the death of the apostles. Clement of Rome has so many quotes from Romans that it would be difficult to list all of them. Ignatius, Polycarp, Justin Martyr, Marcion, and Irenaeus, all writers of the Second Century, quote this epistle. From the first, Romans was recognized as being written by Paul, looked upon as canonical, and a groundwork of Christian theology.

II. PLACE AND DATE OF ORIGIN

The place and date of origin can be determined with a high degree of certainty. Internal evidence in Romans, coupled with facts from Acts and Paul's two letters to Corinth, can be harmonized with secular dating to give us the information that we need.

Several things lead to the conclusion that Paul wrote the epistle while he was in Corinth:

1. Phoebe was the one who carried the epistle to Rome (Romans 16:1-2). She is described as "a servant of the church which is at Cenchrea." Cenchrea was the port city for Corinth.
2. Paul's host while he was writing Romans was Gaius, who sent greetings to the Roman Church (Romans 16:23). Such a Gaius is mentioned as being a member of the church at Corinth (I Corinthians 1:14).
3. Erastus, treasurer of the city where Paul was residing (Romans 16:23), is another brother who sent greetings to the Romans through Paul's epistle. Paul mentions in II Timothy 4:20 an Erastus whom he left at Corinth, naturally enough if it were his home. NOTE: there is a pavement block in Corinth with an inscription stating that it was laid at the expense of Erastus, Commissioner of Public Works of Corinth. Could this be the city treasurer who sent greetings in Romans 16:23?

Another fact that helps to set both the point of origin and the date are the references to the collection for the Jerusalem church that Paul was gathering from among the Gentiles. In Romans 15:22-28, Paul wrote that the collection had been completed:

For this reason I have often been hindered from coming to you; but now, with no further place for me in these regions, and since I have had for many years a longing to come to you I go to Spain-- for I hope to see you in passing, and to be helped on my way there by you, when I have first enjoyed your company for a while-- but now, I am going to Jerusalem serving the saints. For Macedonia and Achaia have been pleased to make a contribution for the poor among the saints in Jerusalem. Yes, they were pleased to do so, and they are indebted to them. For if the Gentiles have shared in their spiritual things, they are indebted to minister to them also in material things. Therefore, when I have finished this, and have put my seal on this fruit of theirs, I will go on by way of you to Spain.

This would place the writing of Romans after Paul's Corinthian letters, because they describe the offering as being in process:

Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I directed the churches of Galatia, so do you also. On the first day of every week let each one of you put aside and save, as he may prosper, that no

collections be made when I come. And when I arrive, whomever you may approve, I shall send them with letters to carry your gift to Jerusalem; (I Corinthians 16:1-3)

Chapters Eight and Nine of II Corinthians also picture the offering as still being in process.

Acts 20:3 informs us that Paul spent three months in Corinth, during his third missionary journey, then went to Macedonia. All of the listed indicators fit the period described in Acts 20:2-3. Romans, therefore, probably was written sometime during these three months. Based upon the chronology of Acts, the Acts 20:2-3 visit to Corinth would have been in early AD 58. This then would be the date of the writing of the epistle.

III. ROME IN AD 58

Rome was enjoying the early years of Nero's reign. The period is significant, later being called the *Quinquennium* of Nero (Nero's five years), and remembered as the happiest period of the Empire since the death of Augustus. It was a time of judicial reform and it was becoming more and more possible for Roman citizens of every stripe to obtain justice in the courts. Except where the personal wishes of the Emperor intervened, the law was justly administered. The police administrations in the city were strict and well executed. Free trade had recently been proclaimed for all of the Empire and where trade abounded, wealth resulted. As a result of this prosperity in the Empire, Rome also prospered.

Nero and his noisy companions were reputed to have wandered the streets at night looking for adventure. He did not hide his illicit union with various freedwomen. He also was well known for his taste for literature, music, and drama. The Emperor, however, was out of step with the societal leaders of his day. The more respectable of Roman society would consider Nero's behavior and taste to be signs of degradation. There were standards of respectability in the city, although the more common classes ignored them.

More than Nero, Seneca influenced Rome. His stoic teachings were of extreme significance. His universalist and humanitarian views permeated Roman society. He taught, for example, the equality, in some sense, of all men, even slaves. Even though Seneca and the other jurists may not have lived the noblest of lives, their teaching was molding and changing the law and system of the Empire.

The population of Rome in 58 AD was about 800,000. Much of the population consisted of people from the provinces who had moved to the capital city. The slave population was significant, and people of all races existed together in this slave society. Many of Rome's inhabitants lived in multistoried apartment complexes.

Almost every religion had adherents in Rome. All religions were given freedom, as long as they did not interfere with the administration of the city. The earliest monuments to the worship of Mithras date from the time of Tiberius (AD 14-37). The poet, Lucan (AD 39-65), celebrated the worship of Isis in Rome. Nero revered the Syrian goddess Astarte. Judaism came near to the throne in the person of Poppaea Sabina, whose influence over Nero is said to have begun in 58 AD.

The first sizeable settlement of Jews in Rome dates from B.C. 63. This is the year that Pompey took Jerusalem and sold Jews as slaves to Roman citizens. Because the Jews refused to compromise their national customs and religion, they usually proved to be problems to their owners. Most of them soon were freed. The Jews in Rome were so numerous and prosperous that they financed the

formation of a synagogue of their own in Jerusalem, so that they would have a place to worship when they made the various annual pilgrimages to Jerusalem.

The policy of the early emperors favored the Jews. When Julius Caesar died, the Jews passionately bewailed his death, going by night and by day to his funeral pyre. Under Augustus, they were allowed to form a regular colony on the further side of the Tiber. In time, the Jews became so numerous, that their settlement overflowed into other parts of the city. They became a powerful political block. When a deputation came from Judea to complain to the Emperor that Archelaus was abusing his power as governor of Palestine, 8000 Roman Jews joined the delegation (in response, the Emperor removed Archelaus in 6 A.D.). There were synagogues of *Augustus* and *Agrippa* (either of the household or under the patronage of Augustus and his minister, Agrippa).

In AD 19, during the reign of Tiberius, two scandals happened at the same time, one connected with the priests of Isis and the other with some Jewish scam artists. A wealthy Roman lady who had become a proselyte to Judaism, was swindled by some Jews who claimed to be raising funds to be sent to Jerusalem to help the faithful in that city. When they were exposed, at the same time that the scandal associated with the priests of Isis was exposed, Tiberius instituted repressive measures against Judaism. Four thousand Jews were banished to Sardinia.

Caligula, the half-crazy and sex obsessed Emperor gave the Jews a hard time. He insisted on the setting up of his own bust in the Jerusalem Temple. His opportune death in 41AD saved the Jews from worse things.

During the reign of Claudius, persistent tumults in the Jewish quarter, "at the instigation of Chrestus," resulted in the expulsion of the Jews from Rome (about 52 AD). This is mentioned in Acts 18:2 with reference to Aquila and Prisca, as well as being mentioned by the Roman historian, Suetonius. "At the instigation of Chrestus," probably is a reference to the effect of the early preaching of Christianity. Three years after this edict, Claudius died, being succeeded by Nero. The Jews returned to Rome at this time and gained in numbers and influence.

IV. THE ROMAN CHURCH

The origin of the Roman Church is obscure. Scripture does not describe its founding. Roman Catholicism holds to the view that the Roman Church was established by Peter and that he was the first Bishop of Rome, occupying that role for twenty-five years. There are some traditions that developed around 170 A.D. on which this view is based. There is stronger evidence that Peter visited Rome at a later date and died there at some uncertain date.

Abriasiaster, a Fourth Century writer, and probably a member of the Roman Church, does not give credit to any apostle for the establishment of the Roman Church. He thinks that it arose among the Jews of Rome and Gentile converts. He further states that they had not seen any miracles or any of the apostles.

One strong possibility is that the church was the result of Roman Jews who were present on Pentecost. Acts 2:10 informs us that there were "visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes," who heard Peter's Pentecost sermon. If this is the origin of the church, then these Roman converts would have had to remain for a time in Jerusalem to learn enough to be Christians in the full sense. Certainly, some of those on Pentecost who returned immediately to Rome would have been predisposed to accepting further teaching. This is one very viable possibility for the origin of the Roman Church.

Another possibility is the dispersion of Acts 8, although this is not likely, since Jerusalem Christians are described as being scattered throughout Judea and Samaria.

Another possibility is that believers who had come into Christ through the preaching of Paul had ended up in Rome. The three great cities in which Paul had spent the most time - Antioch, Corinth, and Ephesus - were the cities in the Empire with which Rome had the greatest intercourse (along with Alexandria). A constant stream of migrants moved from the eastern provinces into Rome. Among these crowds there certainly would have been some Christians. It is safe to assume that those who are listed in Romans 16 had some acquaintance with Paul. Since Prisca and Aquila were two of Paul's closest companions (they were quite active in witnessing), and since they were at Rome, there is no reason to reject the possibility that they were instrumental in the founding of the Roman Church. Most regard the most probable origin of the church is this mix of immigrant Christians from Palestine, Corinth, Ephesus and other portions of proconsular Asia, Tarsus, Syrian Antioch, etc.. They arrived in Rome for various personal reasons, possibly unknown to one another. Through the lines of fellowship that are natural to Christians, they came to know one another and formed house-churches.

The strongest argument against the Roman Church's being planted by an apostle is Paul's statement in Romans 15:18-23

For I will not presume to speak of anything except what Christ has accomplished through me, resulting in the obedience of the gentiles by word and deed, in the power of signs and wonders, in the power of the spirit; so that from Jerusalem and round about as far as Illyricum I have fully preached the gospel of Christ; and thus I aspired to preach the gospel, not where Christ was already named, that I might not build upon another man's foundation; but as it is written, "they who had no news of him shall see, and they who have not heard shall understand. " For this reason I have often been hindered from coming to you; but now, with no further place for me in these regions, and since I have had for many years a longing to come to you...

Paul sought to avoid building upon another man's foundation. Yet, he desired to preach at Rome. It is clear from Romans 1:5-15 that Paul considered his sphere to be the Gentiles and that Rome fell within that sphere. This is the strongest internal evidence that the Roman Church was not founded by Peter (whose sphere was Judaism, cf. Galatians 2:7-9).

The house-churches described in Romans 16 will be a special point of study. We should note that one of them probably consisted of converts from Palestinian Judaism. Sections of the Epistle to the Romans seemed to be pointed at Gentiles and some of it is pointed to Jews. This reflects the constituency of the Roman Church.

V. CONTENTS OF THE EPISTLE

As with many of his epistles, Paul divides Romans into two sections. Chapters 1-11 contain theology, what we are to believe. Chapters 12 - 16 are practical.

ANLYTICAL OUTLINE OF THE EPISTLE

I. THE FUNDAMENTAL THESIS 1:1-17

- A. The apostolic greeting 1:1-7
- B. Introductory references to the writer's feelings and purposes as they relate to the Roman brethren 1:8-15
- C. Statement of the fundamental thesis if the epistle 1:16-17

II. THE UNIVERSAL NEED FOR SALVATION 1:18-3:20

- A. The condition of the Gentile world 1:18-32
- B. General considerations applicable to both Jews and Gentiles 2:1-16
- C. Direct reference to the sinful state of Jews 2:17-29
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THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS

Notes and Comments

I. THE FUNDAMENTAL THESIS 1:1-17

A. The apostolic greeting 1:1-7

In each of Paul's epistles, the salutation fits the specific epistle. For example in Galatians, where Paul is arguing against the heresy of Judaizers, he argues that the doctrine which he brought to the Galatians came directly from God. In his salutation to the Galatians, therefore, he begins by emphasizing that his apostleship is the result of divine sovereignty.

Galatians 1:1 Paul, an apostle (not sent from men, nor through the agency of man, but through Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised Him from the dead)...

In the Roman epistle, his first concern is to present an explanation for why he should be involved in the Church at Rome. This is seen in the qualifying clauses of the salutation. Because of these clauses, the salutation is a very long sentence. It has 93 Greek words and 126 words in the NAS. If all of the qualifying clauses are removed, the sentence reads, *Paul, to all that are in Rome; grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.* This is the style of greeting with which letters were begun during this era. (Note how similar this is to the salutation of Claudius in his letter to Felix, recorded in Acts 23:26ff, *Claudius Lysias, to the most excellent governor Felix, greetings*).

Paul enlarges this sentence by three sets of statements, each one leading up to and introducing the next. The qualifying series form a closely connect chain of thought. The first set begins with Paul and ends with the Gospel:

- Statements about himself: Paul is an apostle, sent out to preach the Gospel
- Statements about the Gospel: It's source is God; it was promised by the OT prophets; the Gospel concerned God's Son
- Statements about God's Son: according to the flesh, he was born a descendent of David; according to His spiritual or divine nature, He was birthless; He was pointed out as the Son of God with power; the power was manifested in His resurrection; this Son of God is Jesus Christ our Lord.

The second set returns to Paul and his apostleship.

- Through Jesus Christ our Lord Paul had received grace (forgiveness, reconciliation, etc.) and the apostleship of which he had spoken. The aim of that apostleship is (1) to produce among the Gentiles obedience to the will of God which results from faith in Jesus Christ, (2) to glorify or exalt the name of Jesus Christ by promoting obedience, etc.,
- Paul's apostleship encompassed the Romans, since they were Gentiles who had been called into the faith that made them Christ's.

The third set addresses the Roman Christians, stating that they are (1) the object of God's love, and (2) that they are called to the obedience of faith that separates them from sin and makes them holy.

Thus, step by step, Paul explains *to what Gospel* he is an apostle, *to whom* his Gospel relates, *from whom* he received his apostleship, *the purpose* for which he had received it, *what right* it gave him to write the letter, and *to whom* it was addressed.

Verse 1

Paul: The epistle opens with Paul's own name. His given name was *Saul*, and he was known as Saul of Tarsus (Tarsus being the city of his birth; Acts 9:11, 30; 12:25; 21:39). Saul is a Jewish name which means, "asked." The transition from his use of the Hebrew name, Saul, to the Roman name, Paul, is recorded in Acts 13:9. This is when Barnabas and Saul had just begun their first missionary labors. They were in their very first ministry location, Cyprus. The proconsul of Cyprus was Sergius Paulus, described in Acts as a *man of intelligence*. Some have argued that Saul became Paul because of the conversion of this powerful Roman, who bore the name, *Paul*. Others have argued that since the name, *Paul*, means, "little," that this was his nickname because he was small of stature. A more probable explanation is found in the practice of Jews who were Roman citizens (Paul's father was a Roman Citizen; Acts 16:37; 22:25-28) to give their children both Jewish and Roman names. Since Saul was called to be an apostle to the Gentiles, it would make sense for him to begin using his Roman name, rather than the Jewish name.

Bond-servant: The Greek term is *doulos*, which means, *slave*. Note the following on the term:

"Several Greek words refer to some sort of servanthood. Each term has a special emphasis. The King James Version translators did not distinguish between the various terms, but rendered all of them, "servant," thus obscuring important biblical insights. For example, there is a very great difference between a *diakonos*, the general term for "servant" (possibly for hire), and a *doulos*, a "slave."

"Most modern translations make a distinction between the various Greek terms, but some of these have tended to soften the impact of *doulos*, by rendering it, "bond-servant." To the Greeks, the term meant, "slave." The free Greeks saw the role of *doulos* as something to scorn. For example, one reason the Greeks looked down on the Persians was because they were not free, but after the manner of *douloi*, they were subject to *despotai* (those who own slaves). In his article on the term, *doulos*, Kittel says, 'Hence, we have a service which is not a matter of choice for the one who renders it, which he has to perform whether he likes it or not, because he is subject, as a slave to an alien will, to the will of his owner.'" (excerpt from James W. Garrett, *The Doulos Principle*, [Doulos Press, Tulsa, Ok 1999])

In the Old Testament, *servant* is one of the Messianic designations. The prophets also were called, *My servants, the prophets* (II Kings 9:7; 17:13; Jeremiah 7:25; 26:5; 29:19; 35:15; 44:4; Ezekiel 38:17; Zechariah 1:6). Paul probably used the term here, not only as a slave of Christ in the general sense, but also with some degree of an official title. He was writing on the same plane as the Old Testament prophets. This would imply that the message that he had to bring was not his own, but that of His Master, who was the source and authority under which he served.

Called to be an apostle: The term for "called" is *kletos*, an adjective derived from the verb, *kaleo*, "to call." Note that the words, *to be*, are in italics in the English translation. These are not in the original, thus some translations render this expression, *called an apostle*, indicating that this referred to what people called him. The context, in which Paul is presenting his authority and his reason for

writing to Rome, would favor the rendering, *called to be an apostle*, or *called as an apostle*. To say that some called him an apostle would not serve these purposes at all.

It is interesting to note that Paul never refers to himself as *the apostle Paul*. The term never is used as a title but in a functionary sense (note the difference between "Carpenter Bill," and "Bill, who is a carpenter"). His identity was not in his role, but in who he was in Christ Jesus.

On the term apostle, we have written elsewhere, and would suggest that you read "Apostles then, and Now," from our book, *New Testament Church Leadership* (Doulos Press; Tulsa, OK 1997). In summary, the term, *apostolos*, means, "one sent with a commission." It can be used in a generic sense, i.e., anyone sent to do anything... "please carry this pail of water to the horses." In the New Testament, it is used both in the generic sense and in a technical sense. In the technical sense, it refers to that special group commissioned by Jesus Christ to represent Him in the establishment of the Church, specifically being witnesses to His resurrection (Acts 1:7-8. 21ff). Paul described himself as one who was *untimely born* into this group. He defended his right to the role of apostle in several of his writings (for example, the first two chapters of Galatians and First Corinthians 15:1-11).

Separated unto the Gospel of God: The term translated, *set apart*, is *aphorismenos* (αφωρισμενος), and has the sense of "to select from among others." It has this sense in Leviticus 20:24 and 26, "I am the Lord your God, who has set you apart from the nations."

In Acts 13:2, the Holy Spirit instructed the leadership council of the Antioch Church, *Set apart for Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them*. Although this was the formal beginning of the ministry, it was not the time of Paul's consecration to Gospel ministry. Paul wrote to the Galatians, *But when He who had set me apart, even from my mother's womb, and called me through His grace...* (Galatians 1:15), indicating that the separation was from the moment of his birth. This is reminiscent of Jeremiah 1:4-5, *Now the word of the LORD came to me saying, "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, And before you were born I consecrated you; I have appointed you a prophet to the nations."*

When Jesus sent Ananias to present the Gospel message to Paul and to baptize him into Christ, he told Ananias, *Go, for he is a chosen instrument of Mine, to bear My name before the Gentiles and kings and the sons of Israel;* (Acts 9:15). So, Paul had been set apart unto the Gospel of God from the time of his birth. However, it was not actualized until the Antioch Church laid hands on Barnabas and Saul, formally setting them apart for the work, and then released them to go out and fulfill their call. This is the New Testament pattern. God ordains and calls. The Church, however, has a responsibility to confirm the setting apart. This is "ordination." The three terms, *doulos*, *kletos*, *aphorismenos* (δουλος, κλητος, αφωρισμενος) all serve to emphasize the Scriptural doctrine that human ministers are but instruments in the hand of God. A true minister of Christ has no initiative or merit of his own.

Unto the Gospel of Christ: The particular function for which Paul has been set apart is the preaching of the Gospel. Sometimes the Gospel is described as the *Gospel of God* and sometimes, *the Gospel of Christ* (e.g. Mark 1:1). The terms are synonymous.

- I Corinthians 15:1-4 contains Paul's description of the elements of the Gospel, which he preached:

Now I make known to you, brethren, the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received, in which also you stand, by which also you are saved, if you hold fast the word which I preached to you, unless you believed in vain. For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also

received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures...

- In Romans, Paul describes the results of Christ's death for our sins and His resurrection. The result is the good news, the glad tidings... the Gospel.

Verse 2

Which He promised beforehand through His prophets in the Holy Scriptures: From Genesis 3:15 onward, there had been promised an intervention of God. In each step, the nature of that intervention became clearer. When God promised Abram the birth of a son and what the ultimate result of that birth would be, there was prefigured the work of Jesus Christ (Genesis 22:16-18). Often in the Psalms there are figures that referred to the Christ. In the prophets, most notably in Isaiah, there are many references to the Messiah/Savior that are very specific.

The *Holy Scriptures* referred to the Old Testament. The term, *Scripture (graph)*, is used fifty times in the New Testament, always referring to that particular body of writing that we call the Old Testament. In II Peter 3:15-16, Peter equates the writing of Paul with the Old Testament Scriptures. Therefore, Romans is as binding as any writing that is inspired by God.

...and regard the patience of our Lord to be salvation; just as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given him, wrote to you, as also in all his letters, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which the untaught and unstable distort, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures, to their own destruction.

Verse 3

Concerning His Son, born of a descendent (literally, of the seed) *of David, according to the flesh:* Galatians 4:4 uses the same term. This is not the usual word for *born*. The usual terms for "born" are *gennao (gennaw)* or *tikto (tiktw)*. The term used here and in Galatians is *genomenou (genomenou)*, which denotes "transition from one state or mode of existence to another." The term often is translated, "became."

- Here are important passages that refer to the Messiah's identity and His lineage:

2 Timothy 2:8 *Remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, descendant of David, according to my gospel,*

Acts 2:30 *And so, because he was a prophet, and knew that God had sworn to him with an oath to seat one of his descendants upon his throne,*

Hebrews 7:14 *For it is evident that our Lord was descended from Judah, a tribe with reference to which Moses spoke nothing concerning priests.*

2 Samuel 7:4b-5a, 12-14a *...the word of the LORD came to Nathan, saying, Go and say to My servant David ... "When your days are complete and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your descendant after you, who will come forth from you, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for My name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be a father to him and he will be a son to Me..."*

Hebrews 1:5 (quoting 2 Samuel 7:14) *For to which of the angels did He ever say, "Thou art my Son, today I have begotten Thee"? And again, "I will be a Father to him and He shall be a Son to Me"?*

Isaiah 7:14 *Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, a virgin will be with child and bear a son, and she will call His name Immanuel.*

Isaiah 9:7 *There will be no end to the increase of His government or of peace, On the throne of David and over his kingdom, To establish it and to uphold it with justice and righteousness From then on and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will accomplish this.*

Isaiah 11:1 *Then a shoot will spring from the stem of Jesse, And a branch from his roots will bear fruit.*

Isaiah 11:10 *Then it will come about in that day That the nations will resort to the root of Jesse, Who will stand as a signal for the peoples; And His resting place will be glorious.*

Hosea 3:5 *Afterward the sons of Israel will return and seek the LORD their God and David their king; and they will come trembling to the LORD and to His goodness in the last days.*

Jeremiah 30:9 *But they shall serve the LORD their God, and David their king, whom I will raise up for them.*

Ezekiel 37:24 *And My servant David will be king over them, and they will all have one shepherd; and they will walk in My ordinances, and keep My statutes, and observe them.*

Ezekiel 34:23 -24 *Then I will set over them one shepherd, My servant David, and he will feed them; he will feed them himself and be their shepherd. And I, the LORD, will be their God, and My servant David will be prince among them; I, the LORD, have spoken.*

Psalms 110:1 {A Psalm of David.} *The LORD says to my Lord: "Sit at My right hand, Until I make Thine enemies a footstool for Thy feet.*

- Two genealogies of Jesus appear in the Gospel accounts.

Matthew begins with Abraham and moves forward to the birth of Christ.. Luke begins with the birth of Christ and moves back to Adam. The two lines run parallel from Abraham to David. Matthew comes down to Jesus by way of Solomon, the son of David, while Luke comes down to Jesus by way of Nathan, the son of David. The two genealogies are the lines of two brothers, whose children were cousins, first, second, and once removed.

Matthew's genealogy is that of Joseph; Luke's is of the virgin Mary. Luke's genealogy, does not say that Joseph is the son of Heli. The word, *son*, is missing throughout Luke's genealogy. The Greek says, *Joseph, of Heli*. This expression could mean either "son" or "son-in-law." Solomon's line, in Matthew, is the royal line. Nathan's line, in Luke, is the legal line. Nathan was Solomon's older brother and, legally, had a claim to the throne. Solomon took the throne, however, and his line became the royal line. Through his mother, Mary, Jesus was in the legal line (descended from Nathan). Through his step-father Joseph, Jesus was in the royal line (descended from Solomon).

Matthew 1:1-16

Matthew 1:1 The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham. 2 To Abraham was born Isaac; and to Isaac, Jacob; and to Jacob, Judah and his brothers; 3 and to Judah were born Perez and Zerah by Tamar; and to Perez was born Hezron; and to Hezron, Ram; 4 and to Ram was born Amminadab; and to Amminadab, Nahshon; and to Nahshon, Salmon; 5 and to Salmon was born Boaz by Rahab; and to Boaz was born Obed by Ruth; and to Obed, Jesse; 6 and to Jesse was born David the king. And to David was born Solomon by her *who had been the wife* of Uriah; 7 and to Solomon was born Rehoboam; and to Rehoboam, Abijah; and to Abijah, Asa; 8 and to Asa was born Jehoshaphat; and to Jehoshaphat, Joram; and to Joram, Uzziah; 9 and to Uzziah was born Jotham; and to Jotham, Ahaz; and to Ahaz, Hezekiah; 10 and to Hezekiah was born Manasseh; and to Manasseh, Amon; and to Amon, Josiah; 11 and to Josiah were born Jeconiah and his brothers, at the time of the deportation to Babylon. 12 And after the deportation to Babylon, to Jeconiah was born Shealtiel; and to Shealtiel, Zerubbabel; 13 and to Zerubbabel was born Abihud; and to Abihud, Eliakim; and to Eliakim, Azor; 14 and to Azor was born Zadok; and to Zadok, Achim; and to Achim, Eliud; 15 and to Eliud was born Eleazar; and to Eleazar, Matthan; and to Matthan, Jacob; 16 and to Jacob was born Joseph the husband of Mary, by whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ.

Luke 3:23-28

23 And when He began His ministry, Jesus Himself was about thirty years of age, being supposedly *the son* of Joseph, the *son* of Eli, 24 the *son* of Matthat, the *son* of Levi, the *son* of Melchi, the *son* of Jannai, the *son* of Joseph, 25 the *son* of Mattathias, the *son* of

Amos, the *son* of Nahum, the *son* of Hesli, the *son* of Naggai, 26 the *son* of Maath, the *son* of Mattathias, the *son* of Semein, the *son* of Josech, the *son* of Joda, 27 the *son* of Joanan, the *son* of Rhesa, the *son* of Zerubbabel, the *son* of Shealtiel, the *son* of Neri, 28 the *son* of Melchi, the *son* of Addi, the *son* of Cosam, the *son* of Elmadam, the *son* of Er, the *son* of Joshua, the *son* of Eliezer, the *son* of Jorim, the *son* of Matthat, the *son* of Levi, 30 the *son* of Simeon, the *son* of Judah, the *son* of Joseph, the *son* of Jonam, the *son* of Eliakim, 31 the *son* of Melea, the *son* of Menna, the *son* of Mattatha, the *son* of Nathan, the *son* of David, 32 the *son* of Jesse, the *son* of Obed, the *son* of Boaz, the *son* of Salmon, the *son* of Nahshon, 33 the *son* of Amminadab, the *son* of Admin, the *son* of Ram, the *son* of Hezron, the *son* of Perez, the *son* of Judah, 34 the *son* of Jacob, the *son* of Isaac, the *son* of Abraham, the *son* of Terah, the *son* of Nahor, 35 the *son* of Serug, the *son* of Reu, the *son* of Peleg, the *son* of Heber, the *son* of Shelah, 36 the *son* of Cainan, the *son* of Arphaxad, the *son* of Shem, the *son* of Noah, the *son* of Lamech, 37 the *son* of Methuselah, the *son* of Enoch, the *son* of Jared, the *son* of Mahalaleel, the *son* of Cainan, 38 the *son* of Enosh, the *son* of Seth, the *son* of Adam, the *son* of God.

Note that Matthew does not say that Joseph begat Jesus, but that he was the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus. Also note that Luke says that Jesus, *being, as was supposed, the son of Joseph*. Thus, both Matthew and Luke presume the virgin birth. Matthew also says that Joseph and Mary did not have sexual relations until after the birth of Jesus (Matthew 1:25).

A telling reason why Jesus could not have been the son of Joseph is seen in the fact that one of Joseph's ancestors was Jechonias. God cursed Jechonias with a curse that took the royal throne away from his descendants. In Jeremiah 22:30 we find, *Thus says the LORD, "Write this man (Jechonias) down childless, A man who will not prosper in his days; For no man of his descendants will prosper Sitting on the throne of David Or ruling again in Judah."* Not one of the seven sons of this man ever possessed the throne (I Chronicles 3:17-18). If Jesus had been the son of Joseph, because of this curse upon his ancestor, he never could have been the Messiah.

On the other hand, the line of Nathan was not the royal line. A son of Heli would have faced the fact that there was a royal line that would have contested any claim that came from a descendent of Nathan. God solved the problem. The line that had no curse upon it produced Heli and his daughter, the virgin Mary and her son, Jesus. He therefore is eligible and exhausts that line. The line that had a curse upon it produced Joseph and Jesus exhausted that line also, because Joseph's other children had an older brother who legally, by adoption, was the royal heir. The title therefore is free through the lack of reigning royalty on one line and a curse upon the other.

When the Holy Spirit begat the Lord Jesus in the womb of the virgin, Mary, without any human father, Jesus was born the seed of David, according to the flesh. When Joseph married Mary and took the unborn child as his own, he legally gave him the title that had come to him through his ancestor Solomon. Jesus is the only possible Messiah.

The term translated, *according to the flesh*, is the Greek term, *sarx* (σαρξ). This expression obviously implies the superhuman character of Jesus. If he were just a man, then there would be no reason to comment, *according to the flesh*. Also, the term, *sarx*, often is used for the "human nature," not just for "flesh." Because of this, many feel that the term here contrasts human nature with divine nature, referring to the humanity of Jesus, not just His flesh and blood body.

Verse 4

Who was declared the Son of God. Declared, designated, pointed out, or appointed are valid translations of the term. *Designate* or *declare* are the best translations.

The significance of the two verbs *became* in verse 3 and *declared* in verse 4 is set forth quite well by Barnhouse:

"The two verbs are "made" and "declared." Jesus Christ was made: Jesus Christ was declared. If you understand those two verbs, you will have the Christ of the Bible. If you do not understand those two verbs, you are in danger of having what Paul elsewhere calls, "another Jesus," and "another gospel."

"Three times in the Bible the Lord God describes His Son Jesus Christ in terms of two different verbs. In the Old Testament prophecy of Isaiah we read, "For unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given" (Isaiah 9:6). As a Child He was born,

as a Son He was given. In Galatians the Holy Spirit announces, "When the fullness of time was come, God sent forth His Son,...made under the law" (Galatians 4:4). He was made in His human nature and sent in His divine nature. Put these passages with our text in Romans, and you find the two natures of Christ - in His humanity He was born, made according to the flesh, made of a woman; in his Godhead, He was declared, given, sent forth. This double line of teaching is found throughout the Bible." (Donald Grey Barnhouse Jr., *Romans*, [Wm. B. Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1977] Volume I, page 38-39)

Jesus is the *Son of God* in a way that no one else ever has been nor ever will be. John 3:16 calls Jesus, God's *only begotten Son* (KJV). The Greek term translated, *only begotten*, is *monogenes* (μονογενής). It means, *unique, the only one of its kind, sui generis*. This is the term that is used when parents speak of their only son or daughter, if they have only one child. Thus, the King James Translators, when casting about for a tidy way to translate the term, arrived at *only begotten*. The NAS kept this rendering, with a side note that the term means, "*unique only one of His kind*." The NIV translators opted for *his one and only Son*, which fits the general use of the term in New Testament times.

It is interesting that in his writings John never applies the term "son of God," *o uios tou theou* (ο υιος του θεου), to anyone other than the historic Christ. John uses the term, "children of God" *tekna tou theou* (τεκνα του θεου) for believers:

John 1:12-13 *But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name, who were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.*

The expression, *o uios tou theou*, "Son of God," is not used for the Logos alone (the everlasting third member of the Godhead), nor for Jesus alone (the flesh and blood human), but for *the word became flesh* (*o logos o ensarkotheis* - ο λογος ενσαρκωθεις). Therefore, the appellation, "Son of God," was not the name of the third member of the Godhead until the incarnation.

The following forty-three verses are those that contain the expression, "Son of God." Note that in the English Bible only Luke 3:38 contains this title in reference to anyone other than Jesus Christ. The word, "son," is not in the Greek text. It was added by the translators, as it was for all of those earlier on the list, to make the translation clearer for English readers. All of those preceding Adam were "of a (their fathers name)." Since Adam was created, he was "of God." However, in the Greek text, throughout the New Testament, "Son of God," is reserved for Jesus Christ.

Matthew 4:3 *And the tempter came and said to Him, "If You are the **Son of God**, command that these stones become bread."*

Matthew 4:6 *and *said to Him, "If You are the **Son of God** throw Yourself down; for it is written, 'HE WILL GIVE HIS ANGELS CHARGE CONCERNING YOU'; and ' ON their HANDS THEY WILL BEAR YOU UP, LEST YOU STRIKE YOUR FOOT AGAINST A STONE. '"*

Matthew 8:29 *And behold, they cried out, saying, "What do we have to do with You, **Son of God**? Have You come here to torment us before the time?"*

Matthew 26:63 *But Jesus kept silent. And the high priest said to Him, "I adjure You by the living God, that You tell us whether You are the Christ, the **Son of God.**"*

Matthew 27:40 *and saying, "You who are going to destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days, save Yourself! If You are the **Son of God**, come down from the cross."*

Matthew 27:43 *"HE TRUSTS IN GOD; LET HIM DELIVER Him now, IF HE TAKES PLEASURE IN HIM; for He said, 'I am the **Son of God.**'"*

Matthew 27:54 *Now the centurion, and those who were with him keeping guard over Jesus, when they saw the earthquake and the things that were happening, became very frightened and said, "Truly this was the **Son of God!**"*

Mark 1:1 *The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the **Son of God.***

Mark 3:11 *And whenever the unclean spirits beheld Him, they would fall down before Him and cry out, saying, "You are the **Son of God!**"*

Mark 15:39 *And when the centurion, who was standing right in front of Him, saw the way He breathed His last, he said, "Truly this man was the **Son of God!**"*

Luke 1:35 *And the angel answered and said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; and for that reason the holy offspring shall be called the **Son of God.***

Luke 3:38 *the son of Enosh, the son of Seth, the son of Adam, the **son of God.***

Luke 4:3 *And the devil said to Him, "If You are the **Son of God**, tell this stone to become bread."*

Luke 4:9 *And he led Him to Jerusalem and had Him stand on the pinnacle of the temple, and said to Him, "If You are the **Son of God**, throw Yourself down from here;*

Luke 4:41 *And demons also were coming out of many, crying out and saying, "You are the **Son of God!**" And rebuking them, He would not allow them to speak, because they knew Him to be the Christ.*

Luke 22:70 *And they all said, "Are You the **Son of God**, then?" And He said to them, "Yes, I am."*

John 1:34 *"And I have seen, and have borne witness that this is the **Son of God.**"*

John 1:49 *Nathanael answered Him, "Rabbi, You are the **Son of God**; You are the King of Israel."*

John 3:18 *"He who believes in Him is not judged; he who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten **Son of God.***

John 5:25 *"Truly, truly, I say to you, an hour is coming and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the **Son of God**; and those who hear shall live.*

John 10:36 *do you say of Him, whom the Father sanctified and sent into the world, 'You are blaspheming,' because I said, 'I am the Son of God'?*

John 11:4 *But when Jesus heard it, He said, "This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the **Son of God** may be glorified by it."*

John 11:27 *She *said to Him, "Yes, Lord; I have believed that You are the Christ, the **Son of God**, even He who comes into the world."*

John 19:7 *The Jews answered him, "We have a law, and by that law He ought to die because He made Himself out to be the **Son of God**."*

John 20:31 *but these have been written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the **Son of God**; and that believing you may have life in His name.*

Acts 9:20 *and immediately he began to proclaim Jesus in the synagogues, saying, "He is the **Son of God**."*

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

2 Corinthians 1:19 *For the **Son of God**, Christ Jesus, who was preached among you by us-- by me and Silvanus and Timothy-- was not yes and no, but is yes in Him.*

Galatians 2:20 *"I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the **Son of God**, who loved me, and delivered Himself up for me.*

Ephesians 4:13 *until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the **Son of God**, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fulness of Christ.*

Hebrews 4:14 *Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the **Son of God**, let us hold fast our confession.*

Hebrews 6:6 *and then have fallen away, it is impossible to renew them again to repentance, since they again crucify to themselves the **Son of God**, and put Him to open shame.*

Hebrews 7:3 *Without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but made like the **Son of God**, he abides a priest perpetually.*

Hebrews 10:29 *How much severer punishment do you think he will deserve who has trampled under foot the **Son of God**, and has regarded as unclean the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has insulted the Spirit of grace?*

1 John 3:8 *the one who practices sin is of the devil; for the devil has sinned from the beginning. The **Son of God** appeared for this purpose, that He might destroy the works of the devil.*

1 John 4:15 *Whoever confesses that Jesus is the **Son of God**, God abides in him, and he in God.*

1 John 5:5 *And who is the one who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the **Son of God**?*

1 John 5:10 *The one who believes in the **Son of God** has the witness in himself; the one who does not believe God has made Him a liar, because he has not believed in the witness that God has borne concerning His Son.*

1 John 5:12 *He who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the **Son of God** does not have the life.*

1 John 5:13 *These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the **Son of God**, in order that you may know that you have eternal life.*

1 John 5:20 *And we know that the **Son of God** has come, and has given us understanding, in order that we might know Him who is true, and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life.*

Revelation 2:18 *"And to the angel of the church in Thyatira write: The **Son of God**, who has eyes like a flame of fire, and His feet are like burnished bronze, says this:*

Three New Testament writers, Matthew, Luke, and Paul, use the expression, "sons of God" (plural) for those who are members of God's Kingdom.

Matthew 5:9 *"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called **sons of God**.*

Luke 20:36 *for neither can they die anymore, for they are like angels, and are **sons of God**, being sons of the resurrection.*

Romans 8:14 *For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are **sons of God**.*

Romans 8:19 *For the anxious longing of the creation waits eagerly for the revealing of the **sons of God**.*

Galatians 3:26 *For you are all **sons of God** through faith in Christ Jesus.*

From this analysis, it is clear that the New Testament views Jesus Christ as the *monogenes*, the one who is uniquely, the Son of God, the Word that became flesh. Believers, having received the spirit of adoption as sons, are children of God (Romans 8:15-16). No believer is **THE** Son. All believers are **A** son, by adoption.

The spirit of holiness is a difficult expression. Note that most versions do not capitalize the word, *spirit*, in this verse, indicating that the translators did not consider this to refer to the Holy Spirit, the third person of the Trinity. There is a play on words in this passage. *According to the*

flesh (*kata sarka- kata σαρκα*) of verse 3, is contrasted with *according to the spirit of holiness* (*kata pneuma agiosunes - kata πνευμα ἁγιωσύνης*) of verse 4. Note that the definite article, "the," is missing in the Greek text. Therefore, the literal translation would be, *according to flesh...according to spirit of holiness*. This play on words and the absence of the definite article, indicate that the nature of Christ is referred to by the expression, *spirit of holiness*. When the Holy Spirit is referred to in Scripture, the term is preceded by the definite article, indicating a specific spirit.

This view is supported by other passages in the New Testament.

Acts 2:27 *because Thou wilt not abandon my soul to hades, nor allow Thy Holy one to undergo decay.*

Acts 13:35 *Therefore He also says in another Psalm, "Thou wilt not allow Thy Holy One to undergo decay."*

Hebrews 9:14 *how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?*

The two Acts passages quote Psalm 16:10. They refer to the resurrection of God's Holy One. This is the same thought that is expressed in the Romans passage before us. Thus, the expression, *God's Holy One* and *the spirit of holiness* seem to be synonymous.

The Hebrews 9:14 passage presents an exegetical situation similar to the one in this passage. To what does *the eternal Spirit* refer? The definite article before spirit is missing in this passage, also. This immediately would lead us to conclude that the Holy Spirit is not referenced in this expression. Two possibilities are before us:

- Christ, having an eternal spirit, was able to perform the whole work of atonement, not merely dying on the cross but passing through that death to present Himself before God. Many of the finest exegetes hold to this interpretation.
- A more probable understanding, considering the context (and the absence of the article), is that the words express the spiritual nature of the sacrifice, which gave it eternal validity. It had superior efficacy to the blood of bulls and goats because it was not merely of the flesh, but was expressive of the spirit.

The resurrection from the dead. The Greek here again is very interesting. *Ekz anastaseos nekron* (*ἐκ ἀνάστασεως νεκρῶν*). The preposition that begins the expression, *ek*, primarily means "exit" or "emission out of." This term is used a number of ways. Two of the uses are "time" (*from the time of*) and causal (*growing out of, on the basis of, because of*). Luther, Erasmus, and others have rendered the preposition in its temporal sense, *after the resurrection from the dead*. According to this understanding, it was not until after the resurrection of Christ that the evidence of his Sonship was complete; it was only then that the full import was known to the apostles. This rendering is not the best, in the light of the context. Hodge has written,

But it suits the context better, and is more in line with the Scriptures to consider the resurrection itself as the evidence of his Sonship. It was by the resurrection

that he was proved to be the Son of God. God, says the apostle, "has set a day when he will judge the world with justice by the man he has appointed. He has given proof of this to all men by raising him from the dead" (Acts 17:31). The apostle Peter also says that "In his great mercy he has given us new birth, into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead" (I Peter 12:3; compare 1 Peter 3:21; Acts 13:35; and 26:23; I Corinthians 15:20). In these and many other passages the resurrection of Christ is taught, and of the validity of all his claims. (Charles Hodge, *Romans* [reprint of the 1835 classic by Crossway Books, Wheaton, 1993] page 18)

Thus, the best rendering of *ek* in this passage is causal, *on the basis of*, or to shorten the translation, the single word, *by*, will suffice.

The final term, *nekron* (νεκρῶν), is plural, meaning "dead people" (the translators communicate this by adding the definite article, "the" before the word, "dead"). The next factor is the term, *anastaseos* (ἀναστάσεως), which is singular. Literally, then, the expression reads, *by a resurrection of dead persons*. It is important to note that *ek* does not relate to *nekron*, but to the expression, *anastaseos nekron*. If *ek* had been joined to *nekron* (as it is I Peter 1:3) the expression would mean that Jesus was resurrected out of the midst of dead people, he was separated from out of them.

However, since the term, *anastaseos*, intervenes between *ek* and *nekron*, there is another legitimate way of understanding the Greek in this expression. This understanding would state that Jesus' resurrection was representative of the resurrection that all will experience. He was out of that group that will be resurrected. *Anastaseos* and *nekron* coalesce so closely in meaning that they join together to have the force of a compound word, thus giving us the rendering, *by a dead-rising* (i.e., a resurrection such as that when dead persons rise). Christ is the first-born of the dead (Colossians 1:18). Again, Jesus is seen as a representative of all who will be resurrected. The resurrection of Jesus Christ guarantees the resurrection of His Church at the last day. Acts 26:23 is exactly the same expression in the same word order:

that the Christ was to suffer, and that by reason of His resurrection from the dead He should be the first to proclaim light both to the Jewish people and to the Gentiles. "

The expression *resurrection from the dead* (the word, "His" is not in the Greek, it was added by the translators) is the same as Romans 1:4, *ekz anastaseos nekron*. Note that in the opening of Paul's speech in Acts 26, he declared that he was contending for the promise to the fathers, and that involved the resurrection from the dead (vs 1-8).

Paul considered the resurrection of Christ to be of primary importance, because, among other things, it guaranteed the resurrection of God's Church.

1 Corinthians 15:12-19 *Now if Christ is preached, that He has been raised from the dead, how do some among you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there is no resurrection of the dead, not even Christ has been raised; and if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is vain, your faith also is vain. Moreover we are even found to be false witnesses of God, because we witnessed against God that He raised Christ, whom He did not raise, if in fact the dead are not raised. For if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised; and if*

Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless; you are still in your sins. Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. If we have hoped in Christ in this life only, we are of all men most to be pitied.

Christ's resurrection is far different from any other resurrection.

- Supernatural phenomena were a part of Christ's death and resurrection.
- Christ's resurrection was achieved by His own power
- Christ's resurrection was an essential part of the atonement
- His is the only vicarious death
- The resurrection was essential to His own person (perfecting)
- He could not function as the High Priest without the resurrection
- His resurrection is the touch stone of Christianity
- His resurrection exemplifies the resurrection of all believers
- His resurrection guarantees our glorified bodily resurrection (Philippians 3:21: in heaven we will not be spirits denuded of a body)

Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead. It should be noted that a few exegetes have explained this expression to mean that Jesus was declared to be the Son of God because He, during his earthly ministry, demonstrated that he had the power to raise the dead. This is an innovative explanation and goes against the understanding of the passage throughout the history of the Church. It seems to have developed as a reaction to liberal theologians who adopted Luther's translation (noted above), *declared to be the Son of God with power after the resurrection from the dead.* The liberal argument was that no one claimed that Jesus was the Son of God until after the resurrection. As a reaction to this, exegetes such as Moses E. Lard (a very fine exegete) felt that the translation should read, *by the resurrection of the dead* and that this referred to the people that were resurrected by Jesus during His earthly ministry. Here is Lard's explanation:

The expression refers to Christ's raising others from the dead, not to his own resurrection. But how, it may be asked does raising the dead determine Christ to be, as to his spirit or inner man, the Son of God? I answer, Christ raised the dead only *as* the Son of God, or in that character. He never raised the dead merely as a man. He claimed to raise them only as the Christ; and the act of raising established the claim. Peter also raised the dead; but he raised them as an apostle only, and not as the Son of God; and the act of raising proved the reality of the character in which he acted. Moreover, when we reflect on all the facts in the life of Christ not one strikes mind as so overwhelming proof of the presence in him of divine power, undivided or undelegated as his raising the dead.

There are three reasons for rejecting this interpretation:

- This is not the best rendering of the Greek.
- *With power* can be understood two ways. If it is taken with *Son of God*, it refers to the powerful Son, His state of power as the Majestic Son in glory. If it is taken with *declared*, it refers to the marvelous display of divine power involved in the resurrection referred to in this passage. Others before Christ had resurrected people from the dead (Elisha, for example; II Kings 4:29ff; 13:20ff). Therefore, raising people from the dead would not be that unique display of divine power. Either way that this is taken, would rule out the position that the resurrection refers to those whom Jesus resurrected, rather than His own resurrection.
- The historic understanding of the verse

Thus, the best understanding of this phrase is that the resurrection of Jesus Christ was the crowning evidence that He is the Son of God. He did not die a second time after his resurrection. In spite of all that his enemies could do to keep the body in the grave, He came forth by his own power. Before the resurrection, he was not in the fullness of his Sonship.

Verse 5

Through whom we have received grace and apostleship. Paul was very aware that he had been saved by grace. He had been an enemy of Jesus Christ, even to the point of causing Christians to be put to death. Yet, Christ took the initiative and saved him. Throughout his life, Paul never forgot from whence he had come and what the love of Christ had done for him. (Acts 22:4-5, 19-20; 26:10ff; Philippians 3:6-11; I Timothy 1:12-16; etc)

In addition to the grace of salvation, Paul received a commission to be an apostle. The Greek term here is *apostolen* (ἀποστολή) and refers to the commission given to an apostle.

To bring about the obedience of faith among the Gentiles, was Paul's commission. The Greek term translated, *Gentiles*, literally is *nations*. Even though Paul always felt an obligation to preach first to the Jews (Roman 1:16, etc.), he realized that the Gentiles were the special burden that Jesus had put upon him. Both he and the other apostles understood Paul's commission (Galatians 2:7-10):

But on the contrary, seeing that I had been entrusted with the gospel to the uncircumcised, just as Peter had been to the circumcised (for He who effectually worked for Peter in his apostleship to the circumcised effectually worked for me also to the Gentiles), and recognizing the grace that had been given to me, James and Cephas and John, who were reputed to be pillars, gave to me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship, that we might go to the Gentiles, and they to the circumcised. They only asked us to remember the poor-- the very thing I also was eager to do.

This is a part of Paul's explanation why he wants to preach in Rome.

Obedience of faith refers to the obedience that springs from faith. This does not refer to being obedient to the point of believing, but of a transformation of life that results from belief. Something supernatural is involved in this faith. To view the obedience to faith as works, one is not ready to understand the Epistle to Rome. Much of the epistle deals with a description of this faith and the evidence thereof. This being true, we will not comment more fully at this point.

For His name's sake: Name in the orient involves the person and all of his characteristics. The conversion to Christ would bring honor to Christ and commend the Gospel to others.

Verse 6

Among whom you also are the called of Jesus Christ. Writing to the Thessalonians, Paul stated,

2 Thessalonians 2:14 *And it was for this He called you through our gospel, that you may gain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

Two views are held concerning those who are called of Christ. One view holds that everyone who hears the Gospel is called of Christ, but only those who obey are chosen. The other view is that only those who obey are called; God exercises sovereignty in the hearts of certain ones so that they accept the Gospel, this constitutes an irresistible call. There is a middle ground, one held by Wesley, which advocates pre-venient grace. According to this view, God does a work of grace in a person's heart that enables them to respond to the Gospel. These are called. Those in whom that work does not occur, are not called. We will comment on these positions as we move through the epistle, but suffice it to say, the Scripture uses the term "called" to refer to those who are in God's Kingdom:

Jude 1 Jude, a bond-servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, to those who are the called, beloved in God the Father, and kept for Jesus Christ:

Revelation 17:14 "These will wage war against the Lamb, and the Lamb will overcome them, because He is Lord of lords and King of kings, and those who are with Him are the called and chosen and faithful."

Verse 7

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

Called saints: the word is *agios* (**αγιος**) which means, "holy." The idea behind the term is one of separation, or set apart for God, whether things or people. In time it also came to mean "free from blemish," since that was required of that which is set apart from God. The freedom from blemish is not the result of human perfection, but of the removal of all blemishes in God's eyes through his grace.

Grace (*charis* - **χαρις**) carries the idea of unmerited favor. It is given not because the recipient has any right or claim upon it, but because of the generous heart of the giver.

Peace (*irene* - **ειρηνη**) In Hebrew, this is the word, *shalom*, which was the most comforting word in the Hebrew vocabulary.

Grace encompasses the sum of the blessings of God. Peace is the sum of the blessings experienced by man.

God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. This is a strong affirmation of the deity of Jesus Christ. It would be blasphemy to put any name but Jesus in this phrase. Also, note that there is a continual distinction between God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Those who hold to the Oneness Doctrine have to explain away this consistent distinction.

B. Introductory references to the writer's feelings and purposes as they relate to the Roman brethren 1:8-15

Verse 8

I thank my God through Jesus Christ:

Jesus Christ is the great Mediator and our High Priest.

Colossians 3:17 *And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father.*

Ephesians 5:20 *always giving thanks for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father;*

Hebrews 13:15 *Through Him then, let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that give thanks to His name.*

1 Peter 2:5 *you also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.*

This is the consistent biblical pattern. Jesus is not the object of our prayers, but the one who conveys them to God the Father. Appendix II contains an excerpt from a paper on prayer, that we wrote a few years ago, discussing this topic.

Because your faith is being proclaimed throughout the whole world

Faith is used with a number of different meanings. Here, it is practically equivalent to *your Christianity*.

The fact that the reputation of the Roman church was widespread, makes it obvious that the Roman church had been in existence for some time.

The expression, *the whole world*, does not mean the entire globe. It refers to the portion of the globe known by those who were citizens of the Roman Empire, chiefly, the lands surrounding the Mediterranean Sea.

Verse 9

For God, whom I serve in my spirit in the preaching of the gospel of His Son

- The word translated, *serve* (*latreuo - Iatreuo*) is a word that is used almost exclusively for service to a higher power (either the true God or heathen deities). It is a service that carries a sense of worship and sometimes is translated, "worship." It is from the family of Greek words from which the English word, "liturgy," is derived.

- *In my spirit*: the spirit (*pneuma* - **pneuma**) is the organ that serves. All true worship must come from the spirit:

John 4:24 *God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.*

The spirit of man is that which is made in the image of God. This is what makes man different from the animals. A cow cannot pray or worship because it does not have a spirit that allows it to have affinity with God.

- *In the preaching of the gospel of His Son*, is the sphere in which the spirit serves.
- *God... is my witness as to how unceasingly I make mention of you, always in my prayers...*

The Greek reads, literally, *at my prayers*. The terminology hints of a regularly scheduled regimen of prayer. The Jews had set times of prayer, each day, even as the Muslims do today. It is possible that Paul sought to continue that practice, to the degree that he could, throughout his life. Paul's prayer life must have been amazing, considering all of the people and churches that he had on his heart.

1 Corinthians 1:4 *I thank my God always concerning you, for the grace of God which was given you in Christ Jesus*

Ephesians 1:16 *do not cease giving thanks for you, while making mention of you in my prayers;*

Philippians 1:4 *always offering prayer with joy in my every prayer for you all,*

Colossians 1:3 *We give thanks to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you,*

1 Thessalonians 1:2 *We give thanks to God always for all of you, making mention of you in our prayers;*

2 Timothy 1:3 *I thank God, whom I serve with a clear conscience the way my forefathers did, as I constantly remember you in my prayers night and day*

Philemon 1:4 *I thank my God always, making mention of you in my prayers*

Verse 10

Making request, if perhaps now at last by the will of God I may succeed in coming to you.

The Greek for *now at last* is difficult to render in English. There is a suggestion of surprise or relief that the desired thing has been reached as soon as it has. A suggested rendering is, "if somehow, now, after all this waiting." For a long time, Paul had wanted to visit Rome. The possibility of doing so was becoming a reality.

In the expression, *by the will of God*, Paul lays stress on the fact that all of his movements are in the hands of God. He has a strong sense of the risk that he will incur by going to Jerusalem .

Romans 15:30-32 *Now I urge you, brethren, by our Lord Jesus Christ and by the love of the Spirit, to strive together with me in your prayers to God for me, that I may be delivered from those who are disobedient in Judea, and that my service for Jerusalem may prove acceptable to the saints; so that I may come to you in joy by the will of God and find refreshing rest in your company.*

Indeed, as he began the journey to Jerusalem, prophets in city after city warned him that imprisonment awaited him. Yet, he pressed on because he was obedient to the Holy spirit.

Acts 19:21 *Now after these things were finished, Paul purposed in the spirit to go to Jerusalem after he had passed through Macedonia and Achaia, saying, "After I have been there, I must also see Rome."*

Acts 20:22 - 23 *And now, behold, bound in spirit, I am on my way to Jerusalem, not knowing what will happen to me there, except that the Holy Spirit solemnly testifies to me in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions await me.*

Note that in these two quotes from Acts, spirit does not have a capital "S." I believe that this is not the best rendering. I agree with McGarvey, Bruce, Williams, and others, that the Holy Spirit, not Paul's human spirit is referred to, here. I conclude this because the word spirit is preceded by the definite article, which indicates a definite spirit. This is the language used for the Holy Spirit, as contrasted with "my spirit," which Paul customarily uses when describing his human spirit (Romans 1:9; I Corinthians 14:14). When he does not do so, it is in a context so that his human spirit obviously is the topic (I Corinthians 14:15 in the context of v 14 et.al.)

Verse 11 - 12

For I long to see you in order that I may impart some spiritual gift to you, that you may be established; that is, that I may be encouraged together with you while among you, each of us by the other's faith, both yours and mine.

Is Paul referring to natural gifts or supernatural gifts. The encouragement, spoken of here, would be a natural gift. However the catalogue in Chapter 12 contains both supernatural and natural gifts. We would conclude therefore that Paul meant his total ministry, which would involve both.

Note that Paul looked forward to his visit to Rome because his association with them would be a two-way blessing.

Verse 13

And I do not want you to be unaware, brethren, that often I have planned to come to you (and have been prevented thus far) in order that I might obtain some fruit among you also, even as among the rest of the Gentiles.

The Greek says, literally, *I do not wish you to be ignorant*, which has the idea of not knowing. Paul wanted them to know that he had planned to visit them but had been prevented (Romans 15:22-23; similar to Acts 16:7)

Verse 14

I am under obligation both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to the wise and to the foolish.

Paul did not recognize any racial or intellectual barrier. *Barbarian* is the Greek term, *barbaros* (*βαρβαρος*). This the term that the Greeks used for all non-Greeks. It has an interesting origin. They said that the languages of the surrounding nations sounded like, "bar, bar, bar." So, they named all non-Greeks, "barbarians." Paul reflects this in I Corinthians 14:11.

Verse 15

Thus, for my part, I am eager to preach the gospel to you also who are in Rome. The KJV translates literally, the idiomatic expression in the Greek, as much as in me is. This carries the force of what Paul is saying, rather than the tame, I am eager.

C. Statement of the fundamental thesis if the epistle 1:16-17Verse 16

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

- This verse reminds us of I Corinthians 1:21-24, *For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not come to know God, God was well-pleased through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe. For indeed Jews ask for signs, and Greeks search for wisdom; but we preach Christ crucified, to Jews a stumbling block, and to Gentiles foolishness, but to those who are the called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.*

The Jews wanted a powerful Messiah who would free them from the Romans and any other dominant world power. The Greeks, who were admirers of philosophy, considered the message of a crucified young man to be foolishness. Yet, Paul did not hesitate to preach this message.

II Corinthians 5:18-19 expresses the heart of the Gospel that Paul preached.

Now all these things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ, and gave us the ministry of reconciliation, namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation.

- *The power of God unto salvation, to everyone who believes...* The following analysis helps to grasp the significance of this phrase:

| | | |
|-----------|----|----------------------|
| Power | vs | Legal Weakness |
| God | vs | Human Righteousness |
| Salvation | vs | Legal Condemnation |
| Everyone | vs | Jewish Exclusiveness |
| Believes | vs | Legal Works |

1. Romans 7:12 *So then, the Law is holy, and the commandment is holy and righteous and good.* (cf Romans 8:1ff)

God, apart from the sacrifice of Jesus, could save no one. The Law was so good and righteous that no one except Christ fulfilled all of its moral requirements. God cannot do anything that is not in harmony with His character. So, in order to bestow grace, a sacrifice for sin was required. God cannot deny Himself. *Propitiation* points to God, but it is not appeasement of an angry or cruel God, as the heathen gods demand. Thus, in Christianity, propitiation and love are not contradictory, because God provided the propitiation and this is the ultimate expression of love.

2. The righteousness of man always has to do with meritorious works.

Philippians 3:9 and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith,

Romans 10:1 - 3 Brethren, my heart's desire and my prayer to God for them is for their salvation. For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not in accordance with knowledge. For not knowing about God's righteousness, and seeking to establish their own, they did not subject themselves to the righteousness of God.

3. The Law was a ministration of death and/or condemnation. Under the Law, all stand condemned.

Galatians 3:10 For as many as are of the works of the Law are under a curse; for it is written, "cursed is everyone who does not abide by all things written in the book of the law, to perform them."

Romans 7:9 - 10 *And I was once alive apart from the Law; but when the commandment came, sin became alive, and I died; and this commandment, which was to result in life, proved to result in death for me;*

2 Corinthians 3:6 - 9 *who also made us adequate as servants of a new covenant, not of the letter, but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life. But if the ministry of death, in letters engraved on stones, came with glory, so that the sons of Israel could not look intently at the face of Moses because of the glory of his face, fading as it was, how shall the ministry of the Spirit fail to be even more with glory? For if the ministry of condemnation has glory, much more does the ministry of righteousness abound in glory. (Referring to the giving of the 10 Commandments).*

4. The Old Testament speaks of God's love for all nations. This is why God chose the Jews; they were to be God's nation to bring all into a relationship with Him. The Jews, however, perverted their relationship with God and came to view all Jews as being saved, but all Gentiles as being lost and hopeless.

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

Romans 10:11 - 13 *For the Scripture says, "whoever believes in Him will not be disappointed." For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord is Lord of all, abounding in riches for all who call upon Him; for "whoever will call upon the Name of the Lord will be saved."*

5. Under the legal system, doing is the ground of acceptance. If faith becomes the ground of salvation, then Christianity also becomes a legal system. The true ground of salvation is the blood of Christ and God's love. Faith is a conclusion that comes from the true grounds of salvation.
- *To the Jew first, and also to the Greek...* A few have wanted to render this phrase *To the Jew, especially...* This is not the idea behind the expression, because Paul frequently asserts that this is not the case.

Romans 3:9 *What then? Are we better than they? Not at all; for we have already charged that both Jews and Greeks are all under sin;*

Romans 3:22 *even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe; for there is no distinction;*

Romans 3:29 *Or is God the God of Jews only? Is He not the God of Gentiles also? Yes, of Gentiles also,*

Romans 10:12 *For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord is Lord of all, abounding in riches for all who call upon Him;*

First refers to time. Jesus said to the woman of Samaria, *Salvation is from the Jews*. The Messiah came from the Jews, they first heard the Gospel message, and they are the ones that took the Gospel message to the world.

- Paul followed this plan of "to the Jew first," by going to the local synagogue (when there was one) to begin his evangelistic activity in a city. There always was a remnant of Israel within Israel.

Verse 17

Romans 1:17 *For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, "but the righteous man shall live by faith."*

There has been great debate over this verse. The two difficult expressions are *the righteousness of God* and *from faith to faith*.

FIRST WE CONSIDER THE EXPRESSION, *THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD*. Does this refer a characteristic of God Himself, or does it refer to the righteousness imputed to believers? This is not an easy question to resolve. There is evidence on both sides of the argument.

- This is one of those expressions that conveys ideas that are unique to the Gospel. So, we cannot learn the meaning by the mere study of words. Instead, we must look at parallel passages and note the explanations given in the Gospel itself. Even so, it is helpful to understand the meaning of the terms. The term, *righteousness*, is a translation of the Greek word, *dikaioσune* (*dikaioσunh*). The term, *righteous*, is a translation of *dikaioσ* (*dikaioσ*). These terms are derivatives of *dike* (*dikh*), which carries the idea of justice (in the New Testament the term is used exclusively for judicial punishment).

Both of the terms, *dikaioσune* and *dikaioσ*, carry two basic ideas (a) right behavior and (b) justice. To the Jew of Paul's day, righteousness was the highest moral ideal, the principle of all action and the goal of all effort. Unfortunately, the Jew went the wrong way to attain it. For the Jew, the Mosaic Law took up the whole sphere of righteousness. In time the Law was approached as a code of law, more than an expression of the will of God. As a result, obedience to the Law became more formal and mechanical. The way to righteousness seemed to be through precise obedience to the smallest tenet of the Law. The true spirit of the Law was missed (Jesus pointed this out as recorded in Matthew 22:37-39).

- Primarily, the expression, *the righteousness of God*, refers to an attribute of God.
 - a. This is the consistent use of the expression in the Old Testament, especially in the passages that closely resemble this one (example: Psalm 48:2 *The Lord hath made known His salvation; His righteousness hath He revealed in the sight of the nations*)
 - b. Elsewhere in the epistle, the expression refers to a characteristic of God. Some passages (3:21, 22; 10:3) have the same ambiguity as the verse before us, but in some it is quite clear:

3:5 *But if our unrighteousness demonstrates the righteousness of God, what shall we say? The God who inflicts wrath is not unrighteous, is He? (I am speaking in human terms.)*

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

3:26 *for the demonstration, I say, of His righteousness at the present time, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.*

- c. The patterns in verses 17 & 18, *the righteousness of God is revealed* (v 17) and *the wrath of God is revealed* (v 18), require us to understand the Greek genitive of *God*, in the same manner in both verses. These therefore would be traits of God (righteousness and wrath).
- The expression must also refer to the impartation of that righteousness to man.
 - a. The righteousness is described as being revealed in the Gospel *from* (or by) *faith to* (or into) *faith*. In the parallel passage 3:21-22 *the righteousness of God* is described as being manifested through faith in Jesus Christ.

Romans 3:21 - 22 *But now apart from the Law the righteousness of God has been manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe; for there is no distinction;*

- b. The verse before us (v 17) quotes Habbakuk. In Habbakuk, the righteousness mentioned is that of a human. This would force us to conclude that the *righteousness of God* in verse 17 refers to a characteristic of those who possess faith, thus referring to an imparted righteousness, rather than to a characteristic of God.

Habakkuk 2:4 *Behold, as for the proud one, His soul is not right within him; But the righteous will live by his faith.*

- c. In the parallel passage in Philippians, the thought of imputed righteousness is quite explicit.

Philippians 3:9 *and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith,*

- With this background, we must conclude that the passage refers both to righteousness, as a characteristic of God, and righteousness as something imputed to man. The reason that the Gospel is efficacious is because it reveals the righteousness of God.

Coupling verses 16 and 17 together, without the defining clauses and expressions, we see that it states the following:

- a. The Gospel of Christ reveals to us that righteousness, which is a characteristic of God
- b. is bestowed upon those who have faith in the facts of the Gospel
- c. rather than through the diligent keeping of a code of Law.

This is a revolutionary concept to the Jew. It was a foolish concept to Greek philosophers.

THE EXPRESSION, *FROM FAITH TO FAITH* REFERS TO HOW GOD WORKS. God is the source, faith is the condition. Again, Greek terminology is interesting here. All of the Greek terms translated, *believe*, *believer*, and *faith*, are derivatives of the term, *peitho* (πειθω), which means "persuade" or "convince." Saving faith always is expressed in Scripture by the preposition, *eis* (εις), which carries the idea of "into." *Eis* indicates motion. Thus, John 3:16 says, *whosoever believes into Him*. The belief so described is not just intellectual acknowledgment, but a belief that moves one into a relationship. In the verse before us (v 17) the Greek reads, *ek* (out of, from, or as a result of) *pisteuos eis* (into) *pistin* (εκ πιστεωv εις πιστιν). Thus, a literal rendering would be, "as a result of belief into belief (or faith)." The idea is that when the Gospel reveals that the righteousness of God is imparted on the basis of the saving work of Jesus, and a hearer *believes* the message, he then is ready to *enter into a faith relationship* with God. Of course, that faith relationship always results in an expanding faith.

Some have sought to make the expression, *from faith unto faith*, refer to a number of things, i.e., from believing the Old Testament to accepting the New Covenant; immature faith to mature faith; a person of faith preaches the Gospel and this produces faith in the hearer; from the embryonic church in Jerusalem, to the world-wide faith as a result of the Great Commission; etc. None of these take into account the flow of thought in the two verses. The explanation given in the paragraph above seems to be the best expression of the flow of thought between verses 16 and 17.

II. THE UNIVERSAL NEED FOR SALVATION 1:18-3:20

A. The Condition of the Gentile World 1:18-32

Verse 18

The wrath of God Wrath and mercy are basically one. God does not hate men, but He hates sin. God loves sinners, but he hates the sin that destroys them.

Heaven The Jews spoke of three heavens. The first heaven was the area inhabited by the birds. The second heaven was the celestial heaven, where the stars dwell. The third heaven was the dwelling place of God. This is what Paul referred to in II Corinthians 12:2,

I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago-- whether in the body I do not know, or out of the body I do not know, God knows-- such a man was caught up to the third heaven.

Thus, the heaven in verse 18 is the throne of God.

Psalm 9:7 *But the LORD abides forever; He has established His throne for judgment,*

Psalm 11:4 *The LORD is in His holy temple; the LORD'S throne is in heaven; His eyes behold, His eyelids test the sons of men.*

The language of this verse is reminiscent of Hosea 6:5

Therefore I have hewn them in pieces by the prophets; I have slain them by the words of My mouth; And the judgments on you are like the light that goes forth.

Revealed - God's displeasure is revealed in the consequences of their sinful behavior. The main consequence is that God gave them up.

All ungodliness refers to lack of reverence. *Unrighteousness* and *ungodliness* would encompass the whole range of sin.

The sense of the rest of the verse is that these wicked people, by their lives, suppress or oppose the truth concerning God.

Verses 19-20

God made it evident to them. The Gentile world had some light. They did not have a clear revelation, as did the Jews.

Throughout the remainder of this chapter, the Gentile is considered to have had the truth of God in his mind, but the Gentile refused to know God. In the beginning, there was primeval revelation. Adam lived 900 years and we can be certain that he spoke to his children about the Garden of Eden, etc. Certainly, Eve didn't stay quiet. Noah had this revelation and he lived 950

years. During the ages before our era, tradition was more effective. Old men could confirm the tradition.

The creation is charged with God. When we look at the sun, the moon, stars, and the earth; God's power is evident. The Gentiles, who had the tradition of truth from their ancestors, were without excuse for exchanging the truth for a lie.

The power and divinity of God were evident to them, in the light of the traditions.

Verses 21-23

The first step downward was their failure to adore God and to worship Him. There is a lesson here for every society (and Christian group) that does not glorify God.

Nor give thanks, indicates the sin of ingratitude. This is more than just a breach of etiquette; it is one of the basic sins of heathenism. Ingratitude appears in more than one biblical catalogue of black of sins (II Timothy 3:2 as well as this passage).

Foolish hearts literally is "stupid hearts," or "undiscerning hearts." The heart is the most comprehensive biblical term for the human faculties.

Exchanged the glory is a better translation than the KJV, *changed*.

Verses 24-25

God gave them up, can be taken as either permissive or privative. There also is a judicial sense in which this can be viewed.

- a. Permissive would fit Acts 14:15-16 and 17:30

Acts 14:15-16 and saying, "Men, why are you doing these things? We are also men of the same nature as you, and preach the gospel to you in order that you should turn from these vain things to a living God, who made the heaven and the earth and the sea, and all that is in them. And in the generations gone by He permitted all the nations to go their own ways;

Acts 17:30 Therefore having overlooked the times of ignorance, God is now declaring to men that all everywhere should repent...

- b. Privative (a positive withdrawal of a restraining hand) fits II Thessalonians 2:9-11

that is, the one whose coming is in accord with the activity of Satan, with all power and signs and false wonders, and with all the deception of wickedness for those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth so as to be saved. And for this reason God will send upon them a deluding influence so that they might believe what is false,

- c. Judicial refers to the fact that sin, in and of itself, has a hardening effect on the heart.
- The most terrible and just penalty of sin is the hardening of the sinful heart (Moule)
 - Whoso steeles his heart against the truth shall find his heart hardened (Johnson)
 - The Lord, having constituted as the righteous law of His moral government that sin might produce darkness of heart and moral insensibility, declared that He would allow law in their case to take its course (Trench)
 - Sin cuts the optic nerve of the soul (Isaiah 6:10). Thus, a sinner no longer sees his sin. He begins by willfully closing his eyes to the truth, then, eventually, is blinded (Elliott)

Served the creature rather than the creator is better than the KJV *more than*.

Blessed forever is a praise that is due to God alone.

Verses 26-27

Homosexuality and lesbianism are self-worship in its most basic form. This seems to be a result in society after society, where worship of the creature is installed in place of worship for the Creator. Women are the last to be affected by the decay of moral behavior. When Paul says, *even the women* (KJV - which better conveys the Greek than the NAS), he was giving evidence that all virtue has been lost.

In the statement, *receiving in their own persons the due penalty of their behavior*, Paul asserts for the third time in this passage that the moral degradation was the penalty for forsaking God.

Verses 28-32

Again, *God gave them over*. The idea of a *depraved mind* (*reprobate mind* KJV) is of something that is rejected after testing (*edokimasan* [eɟɔkiɱasan]).

In these verses we have the blackest catalogue. The meaning of the terms is so obvious that there is little need to comment on it, except to make us aware of each item.

Worthy of death in verse 32 seems to be a general term, which would encompass physical and spiritual death.

Not only do the same, but give hearty approval to those who practice them. This is as low as one can get. Not only does he plunge to horrible depths, himself, but he is callous to the loss of others.

FIVE LINES OF THOUGHT IN THE PICTURE OF THE GENTILE WORLD

1. It wasn't simply the prevalence of these abominable sins, but the leading men encouraged such sins. A few years ago, a professor commented, "America is sinful. However, our leaders certainly do not advocate suicide, or the murdering of babies." That remark is less true today than when I heard it in 1953.
2. The identification of the particular sins mentioned
3. The bearing of this chapter on the theory of evolution. Romans 1 describes devolution, rather than evolution.
4. The bearing of worship on character. They made gods in their own image and licentiousness developed. Humans often have sought this means of sanctifying the sins or human tendencies that they want to perpetuate. One wonders how near the Prosperity Gospel comes to this sort of maneuver.
5. This is an illustration of "by their fruits shall ye know them."

B. General Considerations applicable to both Jews and Gentiles 2:1-16

In this paragraph, Paul demonstrates that judgment is according to actual guilt, not according to race. Then he shows that the purpose of God's long-suffering is that men may come to repentance. This is a Nathan-like paragraph (II Samuel 12)

Verses 1-3

These verses must not lead us to believe that judgment always is wrong. The Bible commands that there be an element of judging in certain situations, using our discerning faculties. Here are few passages that address this issue.

Matthew 7:1ff This passage seems to refer to hypocritical judgment
 I Corinthians 6:4-5 If the Church is to replace a court, judgment is required.
 I Corinthians 5:13 Judgment would be required to cast out a wicked believer
 II John 9-11 Judgment of false teachers is demanded
 I Corinthians 10:15 Paul urges them to judge his teaching
 I Corinthians 4:5 Here, the stipulation is to not judge motives, etc.
 Matthew 18:15-17 The same truth as I Cor. 6:4-5

Even so, there is a human tendency to condemn in others the very sins to which we are blind in our own eyes.

God's judgment is based on reality. Condemning sin in others does not help us to escape judgment, it insures it. No one can escape the judgment of God.

2 Corinthians 5:10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.

In this section, we must not be hung up on the various views of judgment. Some dispensationalists have seven judgments. The picture in this section is a general truth, like the parable of Jesus in which He pictured some on the left and some on the right.

Romans 14:11-12 *for it is written, "as I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to Me, and every tongue shall give praise to God." so then each one of us shall give account of himself to God."*

Verse 4

God is not in a hurry to punish. He delays punishment to give more time and opportunity for repentance. The verb translated, *leads to repentance*, is a verb of continual action. It implies effort. God's goodness works toward repentance. The long suffering of God has for its goal the repentance of man. The biblical idea of long suffering is an argument against the Calvinist position. Paul's own heart reflected the heart of God.

Romans 9:2 *that I have great sorrow and unceasing grief in my heart...* (Paul's description of his own heart)

2 Peter 3:9, 15 *The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance... and regard the patience of our Lord to be salvation; just as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given him, wrote to you...* (Peter's description of God's heart)

Verse 5

The day of wrath reminds us of the Revelation 6:16 description of the *wrath of the Lamb*. In the Old Testament there is reference to the *Day of Jehovah*. This always looked forward to judgment. Sometimes that judgment came immediately, but it always looked to a final judgment. In that day there will be a marvelous manifestation of God, fearful for some but joyous for others.

Verse 6

If the judgment were on the basis of meritorious works, all would be in hell. No one can be saved by his morals, but no one can be saved without morals. James calls this showing our faith by our works.

Verses 7-10

This passage is an inverted parallelism. The first and fourth are parallel. The second and third are parallel.

Verses 7 & 10 give the promise
Verses 8 & 9 give condemnation

Verses 11-16

Verse eleven echoes the words of Cornelius in Acts 10:34-35

One of the most difficult things in Romans is to determine when Paul is referring to the Mosaic Law and when he is referring to law in general (a legal system).

When the word, *law*, is used without the definite article, it refers to the character of a legal system. When the article is used, it refers to something known, in this instance, the Mosaic Law. Sometimes, *law* without the article is used for the Mosaic code as an example of law.

The Gentiles did not have the explicit Law of Moses and were to be judged accordingly. The Gentiles were accountable for abusing the light that they did have.

The implication of these verses is that if anyone perfectly kept the law that he had, he would be acceptable to God. The message of this section (1:18-3:20) is that no one ever has done so.

According to my Gospel (v 16) refers to the Gospel that Paul preached.

That God would judge the world was an old idea. The idea that God will judge the world through Jesus Christ (as God's deputy) was a new idea.

Jesus will judge us in harmony with this paragraph. How has an individual responded to the light that he had? Certainly, the people of Noah's day will not be judged on the same basis as those of us who have heard the Gospel.

Verse 16 frequently is misused. Some argue that Jesus preached to the people of Noah's day when He went into hades, after His crucifixion. They cite I Peter 3:18-22

For Christ also died for sins once for all, the just for the unjust, in order that He might bring us to God, having been put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit; in which also He went and made proclamation to the spirits now in prison, who once were disobedient, when the patience of God kept waiting in the days of Noah, during the construction of the ark, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were brought safely through the water. And corresponding to that, baptism now saves you-- not the removal of dirt from the flesh, but an appeal to God for a good conscience-- through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who is at the right hand of God, having gone into heaven, after angels and authorities and powers had been subjected to Him.

The word translated *proclamation* (*preached* KJV) is the Greek word, *kerusso* (*khrussw*), which has the sense of proclaiming or announcing. So, when Jesus entered Hades he proclaimed what He had done. He did not evangelize (a different Greek word). No one sang, "Just As I Am" at the close of the service.

C. Direct reference to the sinful state of the Jews 2:17-29

Verses 17-20

These verses constitute the indictment

1. *bear the name, "Jew"* - boastfully
2. *rely upon the Law* - They relied upon the Law not by obeying it, but by trusting in the fact that they had the Law. Their hope and trust should have been in the Abrahamic/Messianic promise.
3. *Boast in God* - a perversion of what could have been a correct and godly boast. If that boast is motivated by our own sense of emptiness and a correct understanding of His excellence and our faith in His promises, then it is a godly boast. However, if it arises out of a false understanding of our relationship with God, thinking that we are His favorites, then it is a wicked boast. Jeremiah wrote,

Thus says the LORD, "Let not a wise man boast of his wisdom, and let not the mighty man boast of his might, let not a rich man boast of his riches; but let him who boasts boast of this, that he understands and knows Me, that I am the LORD who exercises lovingkindness, justice, and righteousness on earth; for I delight in these things, "declares the LORD. (Jeremiah 9:23-24)

Paul echoed this sentiment in a New Testament setting,

But may it never be that I should boast, except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. (Galatians 6:14)

4. *Know His will* - The Jews did have superior knowledge of God's will. However, having this did not constitute grounds of acceptance.
5. *Approve the things that are essential* - Being instructed out of the Law, they had understanding, this was one of their privileges, but not a ground of acceptance.
6. *A guide to the blind...a teacher of the immature* - Again, they were boasting in the sense that they were people of privilege.
7. *Having in the Law the embodiment of knowledge and of the truth* - The term translated, *embodiment*, occurs only here and in II Timothy 3:5. In the Timothy passage, the term is used to describe a sham. However, in Romans 2:20, the term is used in reference to a true embodiment. The Old Covenant was divine revelation. Again, the Jews were using the fact that they possessed this as a ground of acceptance by God.

Verses 21-24

Paul now strikes at the Jew. He accuses them of violating the commandments of the Law, even while insisting that the world should come under the Mosaic Law.

A climax of sarcasm is reached in the question, *You who abhor idols, do you rob temples?* A prohibition in the Law stipulated that the Jews did not have a right to appropriate the gold and silver from destroyed idols.

Deuteronomy 7:5 *But thus you shall do to them: you shall tear down their altars, and smash their sacred pillars, and hew down their Asherim, and burn their graven images with fire.*

Deuteronomy 7:25 *The graven images of their gods you are to burn with fire; you shall not covet the silver or the gold that is on them, nor take it for yourselves, lest you be snared by it, for it is an abomination to the LORD your God. 26 "And you shall not bring an abomination into your house, and like it come under the ban; you shall utterly detest it and you shall utterly abhor it, for it is something banned.*

Note that when the Ephesian silversmith, Demetrius, had raised a riot against Paul and his companions, the town clerk sought to put down the disturbance. Note that one of his points before the crowd was that Christians did not disturb temples.

Acts 19:37 *For you have brought these men here who are neither robbers of temples nor blasphemers of our goddess.*

The behavior and attitude of the Jews have dishonored God. Verse 24: *For "the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you," just as it is written.* Paul here harks back to God's indictment against the Jews during the Old Testament era.

Isaiah 52:5 *Now therefore, what do I have here," declares the LORD, "seeing that My people have been taken away without cause?" Again the LORD declares, "Those who rule over them howl, and My name is continually blasphemed all day long.*

Ezekiel 36:20 - 23 *When they came to the nations where they went, they profaned My holy name, because it was said of them, "These are the people of the LORD; yet they have come out of His land." But I had concern for My holy name, which the house of Israel had profaned among the nations where they went. Therefore, say to the house of Israel, "Thus says the Lord GOD, 'It is not for your sake, O house of Israel, that I am about to act, but for My holy name, which you have profaned among the nations where you went. And I will vindicate the holiness of My great name which has been profaned among the nations, which you have profaned in their midst. Then the nations will know that I am the LORD," declares the Lord GOD, when I prove Myself holy among you in their sight.*

2 Samuel 12:14 *However, because by this deed you have given occasion to the enemies of the LORD to blaspheme, the child also that is born to you shall surely die.*

Paul gives a similar exhortation to Christians.

Titus 2:5, 8, 10 *to be sensible, pure, workers at home, kind, being subject to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be dishonored... sound in speech which is beyond reproach, in order that the opponent may be put to shame, having nothing bad to say about us... not pilfering, but showing all good faith that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in every respect.*

Verses 25-29

These verses contrast one who has kept the covenant with a right heart toward God, versus the one who has kept the covenant outwardly, without a right heart. The Mosaic Covenant did embody the heart. It did not just deal with mechanical obedience. There was an emphasis on a contrite heart. There always was "an Israel within Israel."

Deuteronomy 10:16 *Circumcise then your heart, and stiffen your neck no more.*

Jeremiah 4:4 *Circumcise yourselves to the LORD And remove the foreskins of your heart, Men of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem, Lest My wrath go forth like fire And burn with none to quench it, Because of the evil of your deeds.*

Jeremiah 9:26 *Egypt, and Judah, and Edom, and the sons of Ammon, and Moab, and all those inhabiting the desert who clip the hair on their temples; for all the nations are uncircumcised, and all the house of Israel are uncircumcised of heart.*

Ezekiel 44:7 *when you brought in foreigners, uncircumcised in heart and uncircumcised in flesh, to be in My sanctuary to profane it, even My house, when you offered My food, the fat and the blood; for they made My covenant void-- this in addition to all your abominations.*

1 Samuel 16:7 *But the LORD said to Samuel, "Do not look at his appearance or at the height of his stature, because I have rejected him; for God sees not as man sees, for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart."*

Acts 7:51 *You men who are stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears are always resisting the Holy Spirit; you are doing just as your fathers did.*

Philippians 3:3 *for we are the true circumcision, who worship in the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh,*

Romans 9:6 *But it is not as though the word of God has failed. For they are not all Israel who are descended from Israel;*

Even though the Jews were descended from Abraham, many of them behaved like heathens. A heathen Jew, even though circumcised, would not come under God's favor. A Gentile who kept the tenets of the Law, even though not circumcised, would come under God's favor.

In verse 27, Paul states that the life of a good Gentile would sit in judgment against a bad Jew.

Verse 29 is a play upon words. The name, *Judah*, from which comes the name, *Jew*, means, "praise." (Genesis 29:35; 49:8)

D. The superior privileges of the Jews, yet no superiority over the Gentiles in their moral condition before the Law. 3:1-20

In Verses 1 - 8, Paul answers objections to what he has just written.

Verse 1

The Jews had many advantages. Paul refers to these again in 9:4-5.

Verse 2

Oracles of God is a term used many times in the New Testament, referring to the Old Testament Scripture.

Verses 3-4

God's character cannot be changed, regardless of what man does. God always is true. He cannot be false.

May it never be is rendered, *God forbid*, in the KJV. The Greek term is *me genoito* (μη<genoi to). It is the strongest possible negative. It is used fifteen times in the New Testament, fourteen times by Paul. Twelve times Paul uses it to keep people from making a false inference from his argument.

Paul proceeds to show that all men are false and untrue. He quotes Psalm 51:4 in the Septuagint, the wording of which is somewhat different from Psalm 51:4 in our Bibles.

Verse 5

The unbelief of the Jews highlighted the faithfulness of God. That being true, someone might offer the idea that man's unrighteousness causes glory to God. If that is true, why is God angry? Paul answers the objection by saying that man's sin may make God's goodness conspicuous by the manner in which God deals with sin, *For the wrath of man shall praise Thee; With a remnant of wrath Thou shalt gird Thyself* (Psalm 76:10). No one can sin to the glory of God. A criminal, like Pretty Boy Floyd, might rob banks and give a thousand dollars to a poor farmer, or leave several hundred dollars in the collection plate of a church, but that still is not to God's glory. Ends cannot justify means.

Note that Paul says *I am speaking in human terms*. This is the foolish would reason.

Verse 6

Paul uses *me genoito* again. Paul considers the fact that God will judge the world as a fixed fact. The first element in all religions, true and false, is that God will judge. The present society has moved away from this truth.

Genesis 18:25 *Far be it from Thee to do such a thing, to slay the righteous with the wicked, so that the righteous and the wicked are treated alike. Far be it from Thee! Shall not the Judge of all the earth deal justly?*

Hebrews 6:2 *of instruction about washings, and laying on of hands, and the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment.*

Acts 17:30 - 31 *Therefore having overlooked the times of ignorance, God is now declaring to men that all everywhere should repent, because He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead.*

That the world will be judged in righteousness is as certain as the fact that Jesus came forth from the grave.

Verses 7-8

In the verses, Paul probable is referring to how the Jews viewed him, as an apostate. If through his becoming and apostate Jew God is glorified, why is Paul still being judged as a sinner?

He again argues that the end cannot justify the means. Those who use wicked means, even for a good thing, are damned (*their condemnation is just*).

For the wrath of man shall praise Thee; With a remnant of wrath Thou shalt gird Thyself.

Verse 9

All are under sin

Chapter One - the Gentile world

Chapter Two - The Jewish world

Verse 10-12

These three verses describe the state of sin. Psalm 14 is cited (not quoted). Paul cites the Septuagint, but not word for word. It is a paraphrase. Sometimes, the New Testament writers differ from both the Hebrew and the Septuagint.

There were some who kept the Law (Luke 1:6; II Chronicles 34:1-2). This is not a contradiction to Romans 3:10-12. The Romans passage is a general statement concerning the general state of mankind.

Verses 13-17

These five verses describe the practice of sin. Verses 13-14 address sinful words. Verses 15-17 address sinful deeds.

Psalm 5:9, Psalm 10:7, and Isaiah 59:7-8, in the Septuagint are cited.

Verse 18

This verse, quoting Septuagint's Psalm 36:1, describes the source of sin.

This section underlies all that has preceded. It is confirmation from the Jewish Scriptures that all are under sin.

E. The decisive result of the foregoing discussion, setting forth the moral condition of all races before the Law 3:19-20

Verse 19

The term, *the Law*, can mean the Penteteuch or the Old Testament revelation as a whole. Here are two quotes, the first from Psalms and the second from Isaiah, which are described as in the Law. Neither of these, of course, is in the Penteteuch.

John 10:34 *Jesus answered them, "Has it not been written in your Law, 'I said, you are gods'?"*

1 Corinthians 14:21 *In the Law it is written, "by men of strange tongues and by the lips of strangers I will speak to this people, and even so they will not listen to Me," says the lord.*

Verse 20

Justification on the basis of meritorious works demands perfect obedience of law, whether Jew or Gentile law.

III. THE JUSTIFICATION OF BELIEVERS, PROVIDED BY THE REDEMPTION THAT IS IN CHRIST JESUS 3:21 - 5:11

A. Exposition of justification by faith apart from legal works as the only possible justification 3:21-31

Verse 21

But now refers to the Christian age.

The use of the terms, *righteousness* and *justification* are used with different meanings in the various passages of Romans. Here, righteousness is used in the sense of God's being the author and man's being the recipient. The effect is redemption and the condition is faith.

Manifested in the work of Christ and the proclamation of the Gospel

Witnessed through the whole range of Messianic prophecies.

Verse 22

Faith is the only condition. The ground before the cross is level. There isn't any distinction from the standpoint of sin, nor from the standpoint of grace, mercy, and faith.

Verse 23

All have sinned, is aorist tense, so the literal rendering is *all sinned*. There is no statement concerning lifestyle, etc., but a simple statement that every person has committed sin.

Glory of God would refer to receiving God's approbation. This would be similar to the statement in John 12:43

John 12:43 *for they loved the approval of men rather than the approval of God.*

The word translated *glory* in Romans 3:23 and *approval* in John 12:43 are the same word, *doksa* (δοξα).

Verse 24

Justified ...

1. It is a gift
2. By His grace
3. Through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus

There is nothing that we can do to earn this justification. We must comply with certain conditions. There is no sense of paying a ransom to Satan, as some have tried to assert. Man is delivered from the curse of sin.

Verses 25 - 26

This is the very heart of the whole matter. The ground of salvation is the blood of Christ.

1. Christ is a propitiatory. This has reference to Christ as an antitypical mercy seat. The picture of the work of Christ in Hebrews 9 is an elaboration of this truth.
2. *Propitiation* means to appease, to placate, and to conciliate. It involves expiation for sin, an adequate and satisfactory offering for sin. This does not teach the heathen idea of sacrificing human beings to appease angry gods. God always has loved man. Christ did not die to get God to soften His heart and thus to save man (the mourners' bench reflects this erroneous attitude).
3. God, a god of love, through love, offered a propitiation. *Propitiation* points to the necessity of the cross. Apart from the cross of Christ, God cannot forgive sin. To do otherwise would be to violate His character.
4. *Passed over* indicates God's justice had been withheld through the ages. Full punishment for sin never had been exacted. In the cross, sin was atoned for. The justice of God had expressed itself.
5. *Passing over* does not refer to remission.

Verse 27-28

The only salvation is by grace. The law of faith is contrasted with the law of works.

Verse 29-30

There is not a plan of salvation for the Jews and another for Gentiles. God will judge all and those who are saved are all saved the same way.

Verse 31

Again, Paul uses *me genoito*. Faith in the necessity of the work of Christ and in the efficacy of the cross establishes the principle that drove the Law. The moral law of God and the sinfulness of man required the cross.

B. Evidence from the Old Testament that justification is by faith, apart from works 4:1-8

Verse 1-2

Abraham had no claim to justification by works.

Verse 3-8

The contrast between faith and works does not refer to the works that spring out of faith. Paul wrote.

Ephesians 2:9-10 *not as a result of works, that no one should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.*

Misunderstanding this distinction is what causes some to view James as contradicting Romans and Galatians.

James 2:19 *You believe that God is one. You do well; the demons also believe, and shudder.*

James 2:21 *Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he offered up Isaac his son on the altar?*

James 2:22 *You see that faith was working with his works, and as a result of the works, faith was perfected;*

James speaks of a faith that works. Paul argues against meritorious works. Interestingly, both Paul and James use Genesis 15:6 as a proof text.

Works are not an efficient causation, but an instrument (baptism falls into this category).

Faith, misunderstood, can become works. We are not saved by faith, as if faith were the ground of salvation. We are saved by the work of Christ. Faith looks to Christ, not to faith, as the ground of salvation. Faith viewed otherwise is shamanism.

F. The blessings of grace are conditioned on obedient faith and are available to all races 4:9-25

Verse 9-16

These verses show the universality of justification by faith. Abraham heard the blessing before he was circumcised.

Heir of the world reminds us of the many promises made to Abraham. Not only was he promised many descendants, but also that one of his descendants would bless the entire world. In the final scope of Abraham's blessing we envision the new heaven and the new earth.

Verse 17

God, who gives life to the dead and calls into being that which does not exist. This is one of the favorite verses of the Faith Formula teachers. Note, however, that it is not the faith of Abraham, God who calls into being that which does not exist. Also, Abraham's faith was based upon a very specific promise of God. This is far different from people who "believe God for..." when God has not made a specific promise.

Verse 18

Hoped against hope is an oxymoron. There was no hope but Abraham believed God's promise and received a child.

Verses 19-22

Abraham did not waver in unbelief. Abraham was right in his faith, but sometimes he was wrong in his opinion. He thought that God might raise Isaac from the dead. God worked it out differently. On the other hand, the sacrificial knife was not withdrawn from Jesus Christ, the antitypical Isaac. We have to give a lot of credit to Isaac for the Mt. Moriah episode. A strong young man could have escaped.

Verses 23-25

Now not for his sake only was it written, that it was reckoned to him, but for our sake also, to whom it will be reckoned, as those who believe in Him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead, He who was delivered up because of our transgressions, and was raised because of our justification.

Not for his sake only was it written...but for our sake also i.e., those to whom God will credit righteousness, if they believe as Abraham believed. The fact that Abraham was justified by faith is recorded in Scripture as a perpetual testimony to the true method of justification before God. If the object of Abraham's faith was the promise of redemption, that must be the object of our faith. He believed in God as one who brings the dead to life (able to raise the promised redeemer from one who was as good as dead). Therefore, *those who believe in Him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead* shall have faith credited as righteousness.

It is to the Christian's benefit to study all of the Old Testament. God brought out of the dead body of Abraham an ancestor to Our Lord.

The cross and the empty tomb must hang together. One without the other is meaningless. The atonement was not completed in the death of Christ. The victory over death was achieved in the resurrection. The sacrifice was taken into the true Holy of Holies at his ascension.

D. The fruits of justification by faith, resulting from the work of Christ 5:1-11Verse 1

Peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, refers to the fact that God now is at peace with us. His wrath toward us is removed. The expression refers to a relationship, not our peace of mind. This peace is not the result of anything that we have done, nor anything that we could do. It is *through our Lord Jesus Christ*. Both the mercy and the justice of God are expressed through God's gift of propitiation. With that propitiation, God's justice is satisfied and His wrath is turned away. This whole section is dealing with propitiation, reconciliation, and the removal of the wrath of God. This section does not deal with inner sanctification. Inner sanctification is dealt with in other portions of the epistle.

Verse 2

The word translated, *introduction*, in the NAS, is translated, *access*, in the KJV and NIV. Both are proper interpretations of the word, *prosagoge* (προσαγωγή). The place that the believer occupies is a place of *grace*, and the state of grace is manifested in *justification*. The believer is ushered into this state by Jesus Christ, on the basis of faith in Him and His atoning work.

In which we stand is reminiscent of two statements written by Paul in his Corinthian letters:

1 Corinthians 15:1 *Now I make known to you, brethren, the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received, in which also you stand...*

2 Corinthians 1:24 *Not that we lord it over your faith, but are workers with you for your joy; for in your faith you are standing firm.*

The state of grace is not a precarious state. Not only is there firm ground upon which to stand but the help of God is there to assist in standing.

And we exult in the hope of the glory of God... The expression can refer either to the glory that God possesses or to the glory that He gives. In either case, it refers to the blessed state of the believer who will share in Christ's glory. Believers appropriately rejoice in the exaltation and blessedness secured for us by Christ.

Verses 3-4

Since our relationship with God is changed, our relationship with everything is changed. One of most striking changes is the believer's response to *tribulation*. The Greek term in our passage, of which tribulation is a translation, is *thilipsis* (θλιψις), which means, *a pressing, pressing together, or pressure*. It is interesting to note that the New Testament was the first Greek document to use this word as a term for suffering. Christians were the first to think of themselves as being like olives or grapes, being pressed down in a vat so that their joy ran out like oil or wine.

When an unbeliever suffers, the devil is having his way with one of his own. However, when a Christian suffers, it is only by God's permission. There are at least three purposes of suffering set forth in the Bible.

- *Corrective suffering* - Hebrews 12:5ff is the leading passage;
- *Constructive suffering* - I Peter 1: 6-7 and Philippians 1:6 speak of this suffering.
- *Exemplary suffering* - God chooses for some of His children to suffer for reasons of His own, entirely apart from any sin in their lives, or without any apparent constructive purpose. Those so chosen do grow in grace and in the knowledge of God as a result of their experience. Job is an example of exemplary suffering.

Our immediate response to suffering should be first, "Have I wandered from His path?" Second, we should ask Him to use our suffering to form the image of Christ in us. Then, we might ask Him to use our suffering for His glory and His honor.

This tribulation produces *perseverance* or *constancy*. Faithfulness to truth and duty in the midst of trials produces strength and firmness in us, which results in *proven character*. The Greek word translated "character," is *dokime* (*dokimē*) which carries the idea of *trial* (2 Cor. 8:2), *evidence* or *proof* (2 Cor. 13:3), and *approbation* (James 1:12).

When going through a trial, if we are surrendered to God, the inner strength that comes from the Holy Spirit and the manner in which we are enabled to endure, produces a "well tested faith." This well tested faith produces *hope*, which is based on our justification through Jesus Christ.

Verse 5

Hope does not disappoint us. The basis of the believer's assurance is not the strength of his purpose, etc., but the love of God. It is because *God has poured out His love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom He has given us*, that we have this assurance. As is seen in the following verses, it is not our love for God, but His love for us that is our assurance.

The tense of the Greek verb translated, *poured out*, indicates that this is a continual process. Also, it is poured out into our hearts. Thus, it is not by the examination of some external evidence, but by an inward assurance that we are beloved of God. *The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children* (Romans 8:16; 2 Cor. 1:21-22; Ephesians 1:14).

Verse 6

This verse begins with the Greek term, *gar* (*γαρ*), which means, "for," or "you see..." The thought of the previous verse flows into this one. We are the objects of God's love, *for* Christ died for us.

We were helpless and Christ acted on our behalf *at the right time*. This is the same thought as expressed in Galatians 4:4 *But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law* (compare Ephesians 1:10; 1 Timothy 2:6; Titus 1:3; John 5:4).

It would have been natural for Paul to write, *Christ died for us*, since he had written, *when we were powerless*. However, he wrote, *for the ungodly*, to emphasize the free nature of God's gift of love. The Greek term translated, "for," is *huper* (*υπερ*). In this and similar passages, the meaning is, "in the place of" (2 Cor. 5:15, 20-21; Galatians 3:13; Philemon 13).

Verses 7-8

These two verses illustrate more fully God's love. The righteous man is one who keeps all of the tenets of law. Such a man may not have any heart for people, but he does cross every "T" and dot every "I." No one would give himself for such a one. A good man is one who would be seen as good and kind. Perhaps someone might die for a good man. The free nature of God's gift of love is seen in that we, in God's eyes were far from being good; we were not even righteous; we were sinners, ungodly enemies.

God "renders conspicuous" (*sunistemi* - *sunisthmi* - literally, "demonstrates") His love for us by sending His Son to die, not for righteous or good men, but for sinners.

Verse 9

Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him.

This is an *a fortiori* argument. If Christ died for His enemies, He surely will save His friends (which is what we become through faith).

Justified in this sentence, refers to reconciliation and restoration to favor with God.

Verse 10

For if while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.

This verse says virtually the same thing as verse 9, but it is presented in a different form. The word, *enemies*, is applied not only to describe our unredeemed moral character, but our relationship to God, prior to salvation.

Verse 11

One possible rendering of this verse, which brings out the best sense of what is being said, is, *We shall not only be ultimately saved, but even now we glory in God.*

III. GOD'S POWER FOR SALVATION THROUGH CHRIST, MANIFESTED IN THE COMPLETE DELIVERANCE FROM SIN AND DEATH, CULMINATING IN GLORIFICATION. 5:12-8:39

A. The provision of salvation through Christ is coextensive with the ruin resulting from Adam's sin 5:12-21

Verse 12

Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned--

What type of death is referred to in this verse? Note the following:

Genesis 2:16-17 And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, "From any tree of the garden you may eat freely; but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it you shall surely die."

Genesis 3:19 By the sweat of your face You shall eat bread, Till you return to the ground, Because from it you were taken; For you are dust, And to dust you shall return. "

Romans 5:14 Nevertheless death reigned from Adam until Moses, even over those who had not sinned in the likeness of the offense of Adam, who is a type of Him who was to come.

The flow of thought in Genesis makes it apparent that physical death was the penalty that mankind experienced as a result of Adam's sin.

The death that reigned from Adam to Moses was physical death (further comment on 5:14 below).

We die because Adam sinned. A man may die because he is shot, but if he is not shot, he still will die someday. We inherit the consequences of Adam's sin, not the guilt. If a man commits murder and is convicted, his family experiences many consequences of that conviction, but not the guilt of the crime. So it is with Adam and the human race.

So death spread (death came NIV; death passed KJV) to all men is a translation of *dialthen (dihl-qen)*, which means, "made its way to each individual member of the race."

The expression, *because all sinned*, is difficult. The first thing that makes it difficult is that Paul breaks off his thought just after he wrote, *because all sinned*. This is demonstrated in the KJV by putting a parenthesis around verses 13 - 17. The NAS and NIV indicate this by putting a dash after verse 12. Even when Paul returns to his train of thought in verse 18, he does not fully return. This style is seen often in Paul's writings. He was a very passionate writer and his emotions often caused him to write a piece of a sentence or to go on and on in a very long sentence that requires great care in interpretation. The gender of the terms in the passage and the

syntax does not allow this expression to be tied to what has just been said. Paul was starting to say something and then was captured by the thought of how Adam and Christ are juxtapositioned. So, the expression, *because all sinned*, just hangs out there by itself.

The Greek fathers, for the most part, took *hemarton* (*hmarton*) in its usual sense of "sin." They interpreted Paul to say, "all sinned in their own persons and on their own initiative."

Calvin, Luther, and others, would supply "in Adam," as if Paul had written, *all sinned in Adam*. They would argue that Paul broke off before he finished what he was writing and if he had completed the sentence, he would have written, "in Adam." Therefore, all committed sin when Adam sinned. Thus, they would compare this to the passage in Hebrews 7:9-10, in which all descendants of Abraham are pictured as having paid tithes to Melchizedek, when their father Abraham did so. There was a figurative participation.

And, so to speak, through Abraham even Levi, who received tithes, paid tithes, for he was still in the loins of his father when Melchizedek met him.

There are three views that hold that some sort of guilt attaches to every human being because of Adam's sin.

- *Augustinian Realism* states that all of us were in Adam when he sinned and so all of us committed sin. As a result, all of us bear the guilt of Adam's sin. Every infant is born with the guilt of sin already upon his soul.
- *Federal Theory* states that Adam sinned as our representative. Since he represented us, all of us are guilty of his sin. The difference between *Augustinian Realism* and the *Federal Theory* is that in the former all mankind actually committed sin, whereas in the latter we sinned through our representative.
- *Original Sin* holds to the view that we did not actually sin, but that we inherit the guilt of sin from our parents.

The result of all three of these views is the belief that a newborn baby is guilty of sin and something must be done to save him from hell. This is the source of the practice of infant baptism. Roman Catholicism, seeking to deal with this issue, holds to a doctrine of *limbo*, where infants who die without the proper rites, etc., go to await the judgment and heaven.

The three views above, all of which arrive at the same point (that we are born with the guilt of sin upon us and therefore barred from heaven), has many things that stand against it. One of the chief arguments against it is Jesus statement concerning the citizens of the Kingdom of Heaven. In the NAS and the NIV, Matthew 19:14 reads, *for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these*. The KJV says, *of such is the kingdom of heaven*. The KJV is quite literal, here. Jesus was referring to the little children that were brought to Him for prayer. So, Jesus said that those in the Kingdom of heaven possess the qualities of the little children (the Greek term indicates, "little" children). How could this be if little children were guilty of sin?

Other arguments against the view that we are born with the guilt of Adam's sin upon us, point out that Scripture teaches that we will be judged for deeds done in the flesh (several which we already have noted), not for any guilt that we have from conception.

In opposition to the Original Sin variations, many Protestants hold another view, one that agrees with the Jewish view of Paul's day.

Sanday and Headlam summarize how Jewish theology views the effects of Adam's fall:

1. The Fall of Adam brought death not only to Adam himself but to his descendants;
2. The Fall of Adam also brought sin into the world and the tendency to sin;
3. In spite of this, the individual human does not lose his personal responsibility.

Alfred Edersheim, the great scholar and historian of the Jewish people, states, "So far as their opinions can be gathered from their writings, the great doctrines of Original Sin and of the sinfulness of our whole nature, were not held by the ancient Rabbis" (Edersheim, *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*, Vol. I, page 165.) Sanday and Headlam point out that even so, the Fourth Book of Ezra and the Apocalypse of Baruch do intimate the three points listed above.

In his writings on this topic, Paul seems to reflect this thinking. He implies that man inherits his nature, but man must not be allowed to shift responsibility from himself.

Verse 13-14

Sin existed before the Law (before Moses) and death existed before the Law. However, since there was no law imposing the death penalty for sin, those who died prior the Law did so for a reason other than their personal sin.

Adam sinned in the face of a death penalty. God said, "If you... you shall die." Between Adam and Moses, there were some who never broke a law in the sense that Adam broke a law (one which bore the death penalty), yet all died. Genesis 9:6 is a law, but a man did not immediately die, as did Uzzah when he touched the Ark (2 Samuel 6:6ff).

Genesis 9:6 Whoever sheds man's blood, By man his blood shall be shed, For in the image of God He made man.

Genesis 9:6 requires a trial or at least someone to execute judgment. Adam, Uzzah, Nadab & Abihu (Leviticus 10), etc., violated divine laws that included the death penalty, but these laws required no man to execute the penalty. Sometimes the death was immediate, and sometimes it was delayed, but certain.

From Adam to Moses, humans died who did not violate a law that sanctioned the death penalty, yet all died because of the sin of the generic head of the human race. Death was "in their genes."

Who is a type of Him who was to come, refers to Adam and Christ. Adam, the first representative of the human race, prefigured the Great Representative, whose coming was in the future. Thus, Jesus is called *the Last Adam*.

1 Corinthians 15:22 *For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all shall be made alive.*

1 Corinthians 15:45 *So also it is written, "The first Man, Adam, became a living soul." The last Adam became a life-giving spirit.*

The *International Critical Commentary* (Charles Scribners & Sons, New York, 1896) contains a wonderful paraphrase of these verses 12 - 14.

12 The description just given of the Work of Christ, first justifying and reconciling the sinner, and then holding out to him the hope of final salvation, brings out forcibly the contrast between the two great Representatives of Humanity-Adam and Christ. The act, by which Adam fell, like the act of Christ, had a far-reaching effect upon mankind. Through his Fall, Sin, as an active principle, first gained an entrance among the human race; and Sin brought with it the doom of (physical) Death. So that, through Adam's Fall, death pervaded the whole body, of his descendants, because they one and all fell into sin, and died as he had died. 13 When I say 'they sinned' I must insert a word of qualification. In the strict sense of full responsibility, they could not sin: for that attaches only to sin against law, and they had as yet no law to sin against. 14 Yet they suffered the full penalty of sin. All through the long period which intervened between Adam and the Mosaic legislation, the tyrant Death held sway; even though those who died had not sinned, as Adam had, in violation of an express command. This proved that something deeper was at work: and that could only be the transmitted effect of Adam's sin. It is this transmitted effect of a single act which made Adam a type of the coming Messiah.

Verses 15 - 16

The results of the disobedience of the first Adam are contrasted with the results of the obedience of the Last Adam, Jesus Christ. Adam's act was one of self-indulgence. Christ's act was one of self-sacrifice.

Because of the sin of Adam, everyone dies. A single act brought death. On the other hand, the *free gift* given through Jesus Christ is not the result of one sin, but it arose out of many transgressions. In other words, the free gift not only undoes the one sin of Adam, but also offers to every person who ever has lived the forgiveness of all of his sins. So, the *free gift* is described as *much more*, in comparison to the results of Adam's sin. Adam's transgression is like an inverted pyramid, with his sin being the downward point. The Free Gift is like an upright pyramid, with all of the sins of all humanity, including Adam's as the base, with the apex being the justifying work of Christ. Death came from the one deed. The Free Gift came in response to millions of sins.

Verses 17 - 21

In these verses, the definition of terms, as they are used in this passage, is very important.

Condemnation refers to death

Righteousness refers to God's declaration or God's act in Christ

Justification has a specific and general meaning in this passage.

If condemnation were used to mean eternal damnation, justification would have to mean eternal, universal salvation. Of course, the rest of Scripture does not allow this understanding.

In this section, (12 - 18) the focus is on death. The term, *justification*, in this section refers to "balancing the books," so to speak, primarily in the matter of Adam's sin. Adam's sin resulted in death. Jesus' work, especially the resurrection, undid for the whole human race, the consequences of Adam's sin. Therefore, everyone, saint and sinner, will be resurrected. Justification, in this section, does not refer to "salvation." To understand the term otherwise would mean that no one would go to hell, but that everyone would be saved. Even so, salvation and the forgiveness of our individual sins is involved in the truths presented. The full consequences of Adam's sin will be undone for everyone. The eternal consequence of our individual sins also can be undone, because the free gift extends to every sin committed. The results of this free gift, in its relationship to our individual sins, is conditional. That condition is faith in the justifying work of Jesus, as it is revealed in the Gospel.

CHRIST'S FREE GIFT

WITH RESPECT TO:

Adam's Sin

Unconditional

The Many (the human race: v15)

WITH RESPECT TO:

Personal Sins

Conditional

Many Offenses (personal sins: v 16)

When the effects of Christ's free gift are co-extensive with the sin of Adam, the effects are unconditional. This only encompasses our physical death and resurrection (John 5:28-29) The effect of Christ's free gift goes further than this. His atoning act also encompasses the sins of each individual. This free gift benefit is conditional. This is the *much more* of verse 15. Verse 18, however, does not refer to the conditional aspects of the free gift.

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

This throws us back in verse 12, referring again to the sin of Adam. This is not the same thought as Romans 3:23, which refers to personal failure to keep whatever law we possess.

We are made *righteous* in that we are freed from the consequences of Adam's sin.

V 20 And the Law came in that the transgression might increase; but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more,

The Law was not give to force us to sin. The Law did and does increase our knowledge of right and wrong. It also increases our consciousness of our failure. That being true, our recognition of the horrible state of our sinful souls causes us to be stunned by the abounding grace of God toward us. The more we are aware of sin, the more grace needed to overcome that state.

V 21 *that, as sin reigned in death, even so grace might reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

Sin reigns, as it were, over a mortuary. The subjects of sin's empire are men as good as dead, in every sense of the word, morally and spiritually, and doomed to die physically.

The reign of grace is made possible by the gift of righteousness, which the Christian receives through the mediation of Christ. This grace opens up the prospect of eternal life.

B. Grace is no encouragement to sin 6:1-14

Verses 1-2

The fact that Paul has been insisting that sin does act as a provocative of Divine grace, recalls to Paul's mind the accusation brought against himself of saying, "let us do evil that good may come (3:8). He is conscious that his own teaching, if pressed to its logical conclusion is open to this charge. He immediately repudiates this thought by showing how this train of thought is immediately crossed by another more basic thought, the mystical union of believers that begins with one's baptism.

Again, in verse 2, he cries out, *me genoito* (μη-γενοι to), the strong negative outcry that he uses so frequently in Romans.

He asks, rhetorically, "How can a dead man practice things that belong to life? If we died to the world of sin, we are dead to that life, so how can we live in it any longer?"

Verse 3

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

Because there has been a departure from the New Testament practice of baptism (evangelical practice of asking Jesus to come into one's life and then pronouncing someone saved without immediately baptizing, etc.) this chapter often has been used to argue the necessity of baptism. Paul is not making that argument here. He assumes that every believer has been baptized. In the New Testament, there was no such thing as an un-immersed believer. As soon as someone accepted Christ, baptism happened immediately. So, what Paul is asking, is, "Don't you understand what happened to you when you were baptized?" This refers to the very deep significance of baptism.

Again, we encounter the importance of the Greek preposition, *eis* (εις), indicating motion from one place into another. The believer is baptized *into* Christ.

Verse 4

Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, in order that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.

First, we need to note that the New Testament is filled with references to baptism as the event in which we enter into a relationship with Christ. Note that in his letter to the Galatians, Paul pictured baptism and faith as virtually one event, rather than two, the event that made believers sons of God.

Galatians 3:26 - 27 For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.

In Colossians, Paul expressed the very same thought that he is expressing in Romans. That in baptism, the old man is buried and the newborn child of the Kingdom is brought forth out of the baptismal waters.

Colossians 2:12 having been buried with Him in baptism, in which you were also raised up with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead.

Peter agrees with Paul's assessment, that baptism is integral to the saving event.

1 Peter 3:21 And corresponding to that, baptism now saves you-- not the removal of dirt from the flesh, but an appeal to God for a good conscience-- through the resurrection of Jesus Christ,

These are but three examples of many that could be cited from Acts and the Epistles.

We would do well to cast aside the term, *baptism*, and use the term, *immersion*, for that is what the Greek term means. Immersion was practiced, universally, in the early church. Today, the Greek Orthodox Church immerses infants, because Greeks can only understand the term as immersion. Around 120 A.D., the *Didache* was compiled from documents that date decades earlier. The *Didache* (Also known as *The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles*) describes church life and gives instructions concerning church government, liturgy, etc. Since it seems to be a compilation of documents that were written over a number of years, we cannot be certain about the age of any portion of it. Chapter Seven describes in detail how the church administered baptism at the time that the document was written. The *Didache* did make allowance for an extreme situation in which water was not available. This was quite pertinent for the Christians of that era, since many were imprisoned and conversions took place among the prison inmates.

Now concerning baptism. Baptize as follows. When you have rehearsed the aforesaid teaching: Baptize in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit in running water. But if you do not have running water, use whatever is available. And if you cannot do it in cold water, use warm water. But if you have neither, pour water on the head three times - in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. And prior to baptism, both he who is baptizing and he who is being baptized should fast, along with many others who can. And be sure that the one who is to be baptized fasts for one or two days beforehand.

Three interesting things are apparent. First, the writer of the *Didache*, considered baptism so important that it was to take place in spite of circumstances. The second thing that is apparent is the idea that the baptism of Christ in the Jordan River should be duplicated to the degree possible. The third thing is that this was written at a time when traditions and ceremonies were

being added to the pure teaching of the Gospel. In the New Testament, there is no period of fasting, etc. People were baptized immediately, without any great instruction as a prelude. Therefore, we are not able to say for certain how ancient is the portion of the document that speaks of pouring water on the head three times. It may have been something that developed later and was added to the document.

The practice of *clinical baptism* also developed in the early centuries. This occurred when someone who was too sick to be carried to a water receptacle, accepted Christ. Those who attended the sick person brought in buckets of water and poured them over the new convert, who probably was going to die. The idea was to make it as much like immersion as possible.

Later, when a sacramental view of baptism developed, the important thing was to get holy water on the person for their spiritual cleansing. Infant baptism and sprinkling met the requirements. This, of course, does not fit the New Testament picture at all. People were immersed in any water available (the Ethiopian eunuch, for example: Acts 8:36ff). The 2000 year history of Christian baptism is a very interesting topic, but this is outside of the scope of our present study. Addenda III does contain interesting material on what historic church leaders have said about immersion.

The expression *walk in newness of life* is a very clear expression. To the Corinthians, Paul wrote,

Therefore if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come. (2 Corinthians 5:17)

A man is not in Christ because he is a new creature. He is a new creature because he is in Christ.

John 3:5 is the figurative expression of what is expressed realistically in Acts 2:38:

John 3:5 *Jesus answered, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.*

Acts 2:38 *And Peter said to them, "Repent, and let each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.*

Some have sought to separate "water" and "spirit" as two separate births, in John 3:5. The Greek implies that being *born of water and spirit* is a single birth. The Greek says, *gennethe ex udatos kai pneumatos* (γεννηθητε εκ υδατος και πνευματος). There are no definite articles in this phrase. The sense then is that the expression refers to a single birth, which consists of two ingredients. This is like saying, "I made mortar out of water and mud." The early believers all considered this statement to refer to baptism.

Even so, water and spirit are not strictly coordinate. Water is not an actual spiritual agency in the second birth. It is only a symbol. Yet, in every true spiritual birth there is a negative and a positive, a renunciation of the past as well as a new life created. Immersion represents a rejection of the past and an acceptance of a new future in Christ. Water is a symbol of that which cleanses from sin; the Spirit is that which gives new life.

Note that when Ananias came to present the Gospel to Saul of Tarsus, he spoke of baptism (water) as the cleansing from sin.

And now why do you delay? Arise, and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on His name. (Acts 22:16)

Titus 3:3 -5 expresses this idea also:

*For we also once were foolish ourselves, disobedient, deceived, enslaved to various lusts and pleasures, spending our life in malice and envy, hateful, hating one another. But when the kindness of God our Savior and His love for mankind appeared, He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, **by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit,***

In Ezekiel 36:25-27, God speaks in a figure and uses the same combination of water and Spirit, although not referring to baptism, in his description of how He will make Israel acceptable to Him again.

Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols. Moreover, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances.

So, in baptism, one rejects the past, expressing his death to the past in a symbolic burial. Coming up out of the water symbolizes a resurrection, in which the believer is a newborn spiritual creature, possessing the Holy Spirit.

Verse 6 - 7

This involves the whole being. Both one's flesh and his spirit had been used in serving sin. If a person is not in complete submission to God, he is not a candidate for baptism.

Verses 8 - 11

How did Christ, *die to sin*? He was sinless. Before Jesus went to the cross, there was a certain subjection to sin, in that he dwelt among us as a man and was tempted. After His resurrection, he was not subject to temptation ever again.

Consider yourselves is an important expression. The Christian must continually say to himself that he is dead to sin. It is an attitude that one has toward himself that is important.

Verses 12 - 13

Flesh, per se, is not sinful. What can we do for God apart from using our bodies? It is the inner man that is sinful. The sinful inner man submits his flesh to the use of sin. The godly inner man submits his flesh to the use of God.

Verse 14

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

Prior to our entering into Christ, law was the standard that ruled us and judged us. After we enter into Christ, that law no longer is the standard for us. The free gift of God's grace, through Christ, is the standard and the motivating force of our lives.

To the Galatians, Paul wrote, *For as many as are of the works of the Law are under a curse; for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who does not abide by all things written in the book of the Law, to perform them." Now that no one is justified by the Law before God is evident; for, "The righteous man shall live by faith." However, the Law is not of faith; on the contrary, "He who practices them shall live by them." Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us-- for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree" - - (Galatians 3:10 - 13)*

We are not under a legal system. However, this does not mean that there is no moral standard for us.

C. Although not under a legal dispensation, believers are under obligation to obey standards of godly morality 6:15-23

Verse 15

Once again, Paul realizes that his line of thought could bring people to a false conclusion. Once again, he cries out, *me genoito (mh-ge~~no~~oi to)*.

Verse 16

A basic choice that everyone has in life is a choice of masters. It may seem paradoxical, but when we submit ourselves completely to Christ, without any reservation, we have complete freedom.

Another thing that is certain, sin always pays off, although the coin with which he pays is death *you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin resulting in death...*

Verse 17

This is an elliptical statement. God is not thanked that they were servants of sin, but that they changed their heart.

Form of teaching: The word, *form*, is the same word that is in 5:14. It has reference to a mark that is made by a blow. It may mean an impress or a figure of a blow. It also can refer to a tool that makes a pattern, or a mold. Many understand this to baptism as a summary of the faith or teaching, which they received. To obey by being baptized, is to obey the form (baptism) that was delivered to them.

From the heart is very important. Hypocritical or surface conversion is a waste of time.

Verses 18 - 23

Paul speaks of the *weakness of your flesh*, meaning that they had an intellectual weakness of understanding. He indicates that the illustration that he is using is inadequate, but he has been accommodating himself to their intellectual limitation. The people are familiar with slavery and so he has used this as an illustration.

The term, *wages*, in verse 23 is a military term. The death here is the final wages of sin, spiritual death. What a contrast! The *wage* of sin is death. The *free gift* is eternal life.

D. The need to be under grace and not under law 7:1-6

The Greek particle, *A* (ἄ pronounced like the *a* in *late*) that begins this section is usually overlooked in the English translation. This is unfortunate, since it implies that what comes next is in reference to the preceding context. It refers back to 6:14:

6:14a *For sin shall not be master over you*, is worked out in 6:15-23.

6:14b *for you are not under law, but under grace* is worked out in 7:1-6.

So, a good paraphrase of this opening phrase would be, *surely you know this - that the regime of Law has come to an end and that Grace has superseded it.*

In this section, Paul uses the term, *law*, with a wider connotation than the Mosaic Law. He is dealing with the Mosaic Law in particular but with an wider application of the principle.

Verse 1

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

Paul is writing to brothers who know the law. They know that death frees a person from the law.

Some have made the mistake of trying to make an allegory of this section, i.e., the husband represents something, the wife represents something, etc. This is a mistake. This is an analogy, not an allegory.

When someone dies, the laws of this life no longer applies to him. He is free from paying taxes, etc.

Verses 2 - 4

Verses 2-3 illustrate the truth by stating that when a woman's husband dies, she no longer is bound by law to her husband (the Greek says that she no longer is bound by the "law of the husband"). So, she is free to find a new mate.

Paul bounces back and forth in this illustration. He begins by saying that when a person dies the law no longer has jurisdiction over him (v 1). Then, when a woman's husband dies, she is free

from the law (vv 2-3). Then, he bounces back to the person dying as being freed from the law (v 4). In all of this, he is making the point that the Law no longer has a place in the life of the believer, because the old man died in Christ as exemplified in baptism. Therefore, the believer is free to be joined to another, the resurrected Christ, in order to bear fruit unto God. The fruit which the Christian, wedded to Christ, is to bear is that of a reformed life.

Verse 5 - 6

These verses develop the idea contained in the expression, *bear fruit* (*karpothorhsomen* - *καρποφορῶσμεν*). The new marriage should be fruitful because the old one was. The former life had no higher goal than the gratification of the senses. The new life is permeated by the Spirit.

E. The relation of Law to Sin 7:7-12

Verse 7

Paul again realizes that one could draw a wrong conclusion from an illustration that he has just used, and so he cries out once again, *me genoito*. Paul called the Law holy, righteous, and good (v 12). He states that only through the law did he know what was sinful. He would not have known that coveting was a sin, if the Law had not so defined it.

Verse 8

Law is a general term. *Commandment* is specific.

Verse 8 is not logically linked to verse 7. It is rather an additional answer to the question, "Is the Law sin?" To this Paul replies, "No, on the contrary, it leads to the knowledge of sin."

The expression, *produced in me coveting of every kind*, can be understood in two ways. First it can be understood to mean that the law made Paul aware of how many types of covetousness were at work in his heart.

The other understanding would be that "forbidden fruit" always is appealing. The sinful nature of man hungers for sin. That is a characteristic of a sinful nature. So, when something is defined as sin, that creates within the sinful nature a hunger for whatever has been labeled sin.

Both of these understandings are true.

Verse 9 - 11

We cannot be certain if Paul is referring to a time in his life when he was not aware of the Law, or if he is speaking rhetorically, as if there were a time when he did not have the Law as a part of his life. The point is that before the Law (any law), one's conscience is free, because nothing is defined as evil. The commandment did not cause sin, but it revealed sin in him.

Sin is personified in this section. Substitute "Satan" for "Sin" in verse 11 and there is a parallel with Genesis 3.

Verse 12

The Law was holy, righteous, and good. This always must be remembered when we are discussing the Mosaic economy. Hebrews 8:7 indicates that there was a flaw in the Law, but that flaw was in the imperfect sacrifice.

For if that first covenant had been faultless, there would have been no occasion sought for a second.

F. Being under grace, rather than law, is essential to the continued life and peace of the believer 7:13-25

Verse 13

What an apt expression, "the exceeding sinfulness of sin." We are reminded of the episode in Luke 20: 19ff, in which the enemies of Jesus, knowing that He would teach the truth regardless of the consequences, sought to ensnare Him through his truthfulness. When sin uses the holiness of the Law to entice people to sin, this is the sinfulness of sin.

Verse 14

The source of the Mosaic Law is the Holy Spirit. Therefore, the Law has the character of its origin. The Law is spiritual.

The idea behind the term, flesh *sarkikos* (σαρκικόν) denotes the material of which human nature is composed and as such is exposed to all of the temptations which act through the body.

Verses 15 - 20

The term, "understand" in verse 15, is used in the sense of approval. Paul says that he does not approve of what he does. The fact that he recognizes that it is wrong to fall below the commandment is evidence that the commandment is good.

In verse 17, Paul does not mean to say that he is not responsible. He is stating that it was not his higher self, or resolving self, that acted in ways that violated the Law.

Paul stated that he did not always do that which was commanded in the Law. Only Jesus Christ always did that which fulfilled the Law.

Verses 21 - 24

Paul does not equate the evil law with his "members," but the law is in his members (v 23).

Here is the conflict that is experienced by every human. We hold to high principles, but find ourselves failing to live up to these throughout our life.

This section has been an area of intense debate. Does Paul refer to his experience before he became a Christian, or does this describe his ongoing life?

Could Paul have written *For I joyfully concur with the law of God in the inner man* (v 22), if he were unregenerated?

Could he have written, *Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of this death*, if he were regenerated?

The argument for Paul's describing his time of life before conversion, goes as follows:

1. The context (v22-24) How much as Paul said about the Savior in these verses? Nothing.
2. Verses 5 & 6 give us this same contrast (before and after conversion)
3. Verses 8:1 and 7:25 picture a man under grace; he is not wretched
4. 6:14 states that under grace sin does not have dominion over us
5. Would Paul plea, "I am wretched, come and obey the Gospel and join me in wretchedness"? No, Paul is arguing from the point of view that this is how he would feel if he still were under the Law.

The argument for Paul's describing his experience after conversion moves in many directions. One is that it is consistent with the ongoing struggle experienced by every honest believer. In the New Testament we have the example of Peter and Barnabas at Antioch, who sought the approval of men, rather than God and were rebuked by Paul (Galatians 2:11ff). Other examples could be cited.

Another objection to the view that Paul was describing a pre-conversion man is that to take these verses as referring only to a pre-conversion individual would require us to accept the view that absolute perfection of character was imparted to the believer by his conversion. There are some who hold to this view, i.e., that there is a state of perfection available for believers in which they cannot sin. Although I know that those who believe this are abroad, I never have seen anyone who exemplifies this doctrine. Also, I John's provision for sinning believers belies this state.

It really is not necessary for us to come down on one side or the other of this argument. Paul is contrasting the difference between a person who is under the law (miserable) and one under grace (at peace).

G. Advantages and blessings of those who are in Christ and thus, freed from sin and death 8:1-17

The Eighth Chapter of Romans has been labeled, "The Triumphant Hymn of Hope."

This chapter is an expansion of *Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord* (7:25a). It describes the innermost circle of the Christian life, from its beginning to its end, described elsewhere by Paul as *hid with Christ in God* (Colossians 3:3). The dissertation works gradually up through the calm exposition of verses 1 - 17 to the more impassioned outlook of verses 18 - 30, to the magnificent climax of verses 31 - 39.

Verse 1

The opening statement is a conclusion drawn, not from a single premise, but from all of the conclusions reached in the previous sections. It is a conclusion from conclusions. The condemnation spoken of in this verse is *katakrima* (*kata* + *krima*), which refers to legal judgment. This ended for the Christian at the time of his conversion. This verse, however speaks of the life after justification, the life that is *in Christ* (note that this is the preposition, *en*, which refers to one's location, rather than *eis* which refers to movement from one place or state to another). The *in Christ* state also has freedom from condemnation, by a process to be explained more fully in verse 3.

Of course, this does not mean that if those in Christ commit sin they will be free from any responsibility for it. If they sin and repent, they will be forgiven, so it still remains true for those in Christ, that there is no ground for condemnation (I John 1:5-9; 2:1).

Note that the KJV adds to verse 1, the phrase, *who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit*. Manuscripts unavailable at the time of the translation of the KJV, make it evident that this phrase was not in the original.

Verse 2

The law of the Spirit of life refers to the authority exercised by the Spirit. In the last chapter, there was a free use of the word translated, *law* in this verse (*nomos* *νομος*), especially in verse 23, *law of my mind* and *law of sin*. This does not refer to a code, but an authority producing regulated action such as would be produced by a code. We might illustrate this by the term, "the law of gravity," which produces and controls the behavior of matter. Thus the law of the Spirit of life produces life.

The genitive case of the Greek expresses the effect wrought. "The Spirit brings life because the Spirit essentially is life," is the sense of this expression.

This authority of the Spirit, operating through the union with Christ, has set us free from the authority (the same sense as that of *the law of the Spirit of life*) exercised by sin and ending in death.

The law of sin and death harks back to 6:14, *For sin shall not be master over you, for you are not under law, but under grace*. When we were under law, from the standpoint of law, were were under the reign of sin and death.

Psalm 32:1 states, *How blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, Whose sin is covered!* From what has gone before, in Romans, Paul has demonstrated that this blessed condition could not be obtained under the Law.

Verse 3

For what the Law could not do... The Law could not do a number of things:

1. The Law could not provide a perfect sacrifice for sin (Hebrews 9 & 10)
2. The Law could not fully reveal the sinfulness of sin. That was revealed, fully, at calvary.
3. The Law did not provide a perfect example. There were many good men, under the Law (Moses, Noah, etc.), but the perfect example was in Christ Jesus.

Weak as it was through the flesh... Romans 7:12, as we have stated previously, is basic. *So then, the Law is holy, and the commandment is holy and righteous and good.* However, humanity was weak and that weakness was an occasion for sin.

God did: sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh... Psalm 51:5 states, *Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, And in sin my mother conceived me*, referring to the sinful stock into which all of us are born. Flesh is not inherently sinful, but all sin. Christ was incarnated in a human body. However, He had control over that body.

Condemned sin in the flesh... Christ did this two ways:

1. He condemned sin in the flesh by way of contrast. Even as Noah (Hebrews 11:7; Matthew 12:41-42), by living a righteous life condemned those who lived in his day, so the perfect life of Jesus condemns all of us, by contrast.
2. He condemned sin through His redeeming work
 - 2 Corinthians 5:21 *He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.*
 - 1 Peter 2:24 *and He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed.*
 - Isaiah 53:4 *Surely our griefs He Himself bore, And our sorrows He carried; Yet we ourselves esteemed Him stricken, Smitten of God, and afflicted. 5 But He was pierced through for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; The chastening for our well-being fell upon Him, And by His scourging we are healed. 6 All of us like sheep have gone astray, Each of us has turned to his own way; But the LORD has caused the iniquity of us all To fall on Him.*
 - Romans 6:14 *For sin shall not be master over you, for you are not under law, but under grace.*
 - Romans 8:1 *There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.*

Verse 4

What "spirit" is referred to in this chapter? There is a great question as to whether the term should be capitalized. Some of the greatest exegetes have argued that the term refers to the human spirit in Romans 8. There are some good arguments for this. According to this understanding, the contrast is between one whose spirit is in control, versus one whose flesh is in control.

There are some verses in the chapter that require capitalization, for example verse 26. If verses 4 & 5 are lower case (the human spirit of those in Christ), the human spirit would be following the lead of the Holy Spirit and this arrives at the same place as one would if the word were capitalized.

In order that the requirement of the Law might be fulfilled... The Law required righteousness. As has been demonstrated in the previous sections, only those who come into Christ occupy a position of righteousness. Abraham had a working faith (James 2:14ff), but even a working faith requires the grace of God.

Verse 5 - 8

For those who are according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who are according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit.

Paul is using flesh in an ethical sense. He does not mean, for example, that a man who has worked hard all day and comes home hungry is minding the things of the flesh when he craves food. Neither is he speaking of being conscious of what promotes good health. Note his advice to Timothy, *No longer drink water exclusively, but use a little wine for the sake of your stomach and your frequent ailments* (1 Timothy 5:23).

Paul's constant advice to the churches was to be careful concerning how they lived. Here are some of his exhortations:

- 1 Thessalonians 4:1 - 8 *Finally then, brethren, we request and exhort you in the Lord Jesus, that, as you received from us instruction as to how you ought to walk and please God (just as you actually do walk), that you may excel still more. For you know what commandments we gave you by the authority of the Lord Jesus. For this is the will of God, your sanctification; that is, that you abstain from sexual immorality; that each of you know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor, not in lustful passion, like the Gentiles who do not know God; and that no man transgress and defraud his brother in the matter because the Lord is the avenger in all these things, just as we also told you before and solemnly warned you. For God has not called us for the purpose of impurity, but in sanctification. Consequently, he who rejects this is not rejecting man but the God who gives His Holy Spirit to you.*
- Galatians 2:20 *I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me, and delivered Himself up for me.*
- Galatians 5:16 - 26 *But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh. For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the Law. Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you just as I have forewarned you that those who practice such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its*

passions and desires. If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit. Let us not become boastful, challenging one another, envying one another.

- 1 Corinthians 3:3 - 4 *for you are still fleshly. For since there is jealousy and strife among you, are you not fleshly, and are you not walking like mere men? For when one says, "I am of Paul," and another, "I am of Apollos," are you not mere men?*

Verse 9

However, you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him.

Of course, Paul does not mean that those in Christ do not have flesh and blood bodies. He is continuing the terminology used in verse 8.

This is one of the most important statements in the Bible. In answer to the question, "Are you saved, and if so, how do you know," the Bible's answer is, "I have the Holy Spirit." One who has the Holy Spirit, knows that he has it. Otherwise, so many statements in Scripture are meaningless. For example, when Paul was arguing with the Galatians the case of salvation by faith, rather than works, one of his arguments was that they had the Holy spirit. This they knew. So, he asked, "How did you get it?" If there had been any uncertainty on their part that they had the Holy Spirit, his argument would have been powerless.

Galatians 3:1 - 5 You foolish Galatians, who has bewitched you, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified? This is the only thing I want to find out from you: did you receive the Spirit by the works of the Law, or by hearing with faith? Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh? Did you suffer so many things in vain-- if indeed it was in vain? Does He then, who provides you with the Spirit and works miracles among you, do it by the works of the Law, or by hearing with faith?

Note that Paul's argument could not have been based upon the fact that they had the Holy Spirit as a part of the life of the Church. It was based upon each individual's possessing the Holy Spirit, since he refers to individual's doing the works of the Law verses hearing by faith.

Here are some more illustrative verses:

- John 14:17 *that is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not behold Him or know Him, but you know Him because He abides with you, and will be in you.*
- Acts 2:38 *And Peter said to them, "Repent, and let each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.*
- Ephesians 1:13 - 14 *In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation-- having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is given as a pledge of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of God's own possession, to the praise of His glory.*
- Ephesians 4:30 *And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.*

- 1 Thessalonians 4:8 *Consequently, he who rejects this is not rejecting man but the God who gives His Holy Spirit to you.*
- 2 Corinthians 1:21 - 22 *Now He who establishes us with you in Christ and anointed us is God, 22 who also sealed us and gave us the Spirit in our hearts as a pledge.*
- 2 Corinthians 5:5 *Now He who prepared us for this very purpose is God, who gave to us the Spirit as a pledge.*

If the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit is essential for salvation, how can we know that we have the Spirit? One answer is the character of one's life. Galatians 5:16-26 is a key passage.

But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh. For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the Law.

Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you just as I have forewarned you that those who practice such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit. Let us not become boastful, challenging one another, envying one another.

Note that this passage speaks of the "deeds" of the flesh (literally, "works"). However, in the case of the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit, the product is "fruit." Note that Paul did not write, "fruits." The fruit is singular. There are not different "fruits of the Spirit." There is a single fruit, and here are its characteristics. This is like saying that the fruit of the McIntosh Apple tree is red skinned, with a white inner body, and seed at the core. So, if these characteristics are present in the life of a believer, then this is evidence of the presence of the Holy Spirit.

Are there other evidences? Some would make tongues an evidence. Tongues cannot be an evidence of the presence of the Holy Spirit in a person's life for several reasons:

- Tongues exist in many heathen and heretical religions. For example, Mormons speak in tongues. In Corinth, tongues was a feature of the pagan worship services, and that is one reason that some of the Corinthian Christians wanted them banned from the church service. Paul had to say to the Corinthians that if the tongues were motivated by the Holy Spirit, that they were OK (I Corinthians 12:1-3), and that speaking in tongues should not be forbidden (I Corinthians 14:39). So, tongues cannot be an evidence because the source might be other than the Holy Spirit.
- Paul stated that the Corinthians had the Holy Spirit (note Scriptures cited above). However, he stated that not all spoke in tongues (I Cor. 12:30). So, some who have the Holy Spirit do not speak in tongues.

- Paul went further to state that if they were craving an abundance of tongues in their service, they were asking for the sign of God's displeasure. In I Cor. 14:21-22, Paul quoted Isaiah 28:11ff. In this Isaiah passage, God accused the inhabitants of Jerusalem of being unbelievers. One of the signs that God had judged them for their unbelief would be the presence of people overrunning their land who spoke foreign tongues. In a curious argument, Paul indicated that the abundance of tongues in a service was a sign that God had judged them as unbelievers. So, tongues may or may not be evidence of the presence of the Holy Spirit. Since it is uncertain, it cannot be an evidence. Tongues can be the sign of something other than the Holy Spirit.

A longing (an inward groaning) for the resurrection and the final dwelling with God is a sign of *having the first fruits of the Spirit* (Romans 8:23).

The verses considered in the previous section describe a Spirit-occupied life as one that is holy and an expression of Jesus Christ (I Thessalonians 4:1-8; Galatians 2:20).

Although feelings never can be a measure, because they are of the soul, still they are an element in the evaluation. One who possesses the Holy Spirit will sense, at least in a general way, the presence of God, although there may be times when he does not and the heavens seem as brass. Romans 8:16 implies this, *The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God,*

Christ, the Word, and the Holy Spirit all will dwell in us if any one of them dwells in us.

Verse 10

And if Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, yet the spirit is alive because of righteousness.

The death penalty is the result of Adam's sin. The spirit (human spirit) is alive, not in the mere sense of existence, but in the full sensible, ethical, and useful life. The redeemed human spirit is alive because of the *law of the Spirit of life* (v 2). In an unredeemed man, his evil spirit is alive, but not in the ethical or full sense.

Verse 11

But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who indwells you.

The closing phrase of this verse is uncertain in the manuscripts. Some manuscripts read, *dia tou enoikountos autou pneumatos* (δια του ενοικουντος αυτου πνεματος), which has the noun, the participle, the pronoun, and article in the genitive. This would be translated, *through His Spirit*. Other manuscripts have *dia ton enoikoun autou pneuma* (δια του ενοικουν αυτου πνευμα), in which the noun, participle, pronoun, and article are in the accusative. This would be translated, *on account of, or because of His Spirit*. The evidence on either side of the issue is fairly equal.

Those who follow the KJV, for the most part have accepted the evidence for the accusative. More recent scholars have tended toward the genitive, but not adamantly. Bruce M. Metzger, who was on the committee the editorial committee of the United Bible Societies Greek New Testament, comments on this question, "Remembering that in the Pauline corpus the weight of B when associated with D G (as here) is quite considerably lessened, a majority of the Committee preferred the genitive case, on the basis of the combination of the text-types, including the Alexandrian (Ⲛ A C 81), Palestinian (syr/pal Cyril-Jerusalem), and Western (it/61? Hippolytus)."

Intrinsically, neither reading is preferable over the other and Paul might have used either one. The prominent idea is that since the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of life, that where it dwells life will be. The accusative indicates that because of the indwelling Spirit, God will resurrect or bodies. The genitive indicates that the Holy Spirit Himself is the agency whereby that resurrection will occur.

We are born into the world by natural birth; we are born into the Kingdom of God by spiritual birth; we are born into the Everlasting Kingdom by supernatural birth.

Do not marvel at this; for an hour is coming, in which all who are in the tombs shall hear His voice, 29 and shall come forth; those who did the good deeds to a resurrection of life, those who committed the evil deeds to a resurrection of judgment. (John 5:28-29)

Verse 12 - 13

So then, brethren, we are under obligation, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh-- We don't owe the devil anything. There just can't be any valid obligation to the devil and sin.

Following the way of the devil means death.

Verses 14 - 17

...but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, "Abba! Father!" Many popular contemporary teachers have stated that *Father* is formal and *Abba* is affectionate, similar to, "daddy." This just isn't true.

Abba (Ⲃⲁⲃⲃⲁ) is Aramaic, the language spoken by the Palestinian Jews. *Ho Pater* (ⲟⲓⲡⲁⲗⲏⲣⲟⲥ) is Greek. Both of these terms express the same intimacy with one's father. This brings home to us the fact that Christianity had its birth in a bilingual people. Some scholars are of the opinion that we would do well to not render this, *Abba, Father*, but just to render it, *Father*, or, for intensity, *Father! Father!*

The first use of the dual terms is found in Mark 14:36, in which Jesus prays, *And He was saying, "Abba! Father! All things are possible for Thee; remove this cup from Me; yet not what I will, but what Thou wilt."* The great scholar, J.B. Lightfoot, thinks that Jesus only used the word, *Abba*, in his prayer and that Mark added *o pater* as an interpretation, since his Gospel was written for the Gentile Roman world (as indeed it was).

Lightfoot has the same explanation for Galatians 4:6, the only other place where the dual terms are used, *And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!"* He argues that Paul is interpreting the term, *Abba*, for his Gentile Galatian readers. According to this argument, this would be true for Romans 8:14.

Much more probable is the intense nature of the prayers described in these three passages. The first example, that of Jesus, is a very intense prayer uttered by Jesus, who used familiarly both languages. In that intense prayer, concentrating into this word of all words an inexpressible depth of meaning, felt impelled spontaneously to repeat the word. Some among his disciples caught and transmitted the same practice, because this is what Jesus modeled. It is interesting that among the limited resources that we have of Jewish Christianity, we do not find examples of this use, unless the reference is to the prayer of Jesus.

In Paul's two cases, the same would be true. In both Romans and Galatians, the word, *krazomen*, (*krazomen*) is a very strong word. It describes a loud irrepressible cry. It is this intensity with which the consciousness of sonship breaks forth from the heart of the Christian in prayer. Note that in both Galatians and Romans Paul slips into the first person, *we cry*. He is caught up in the prayer at the moment that he writes. Thus, in his native Aramaic tongue, then in the Greek language, the literary language of those to whom he was writing, he cries out, *Father! Father!*

The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God. Wescott and Hort punctuate the English in a way that makes the statement express better what Paul is saying, i.e., *In that we cry, Father, Father, the Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God.* Our own spirit tells us that we are children of God, but that is done at the inspiration of and the impulse of the Holy Spirit.

Three proofs that we are children of God are given in these verses:

- | | |
|-------------|---|
| Verse 14 | We are led by the Spirit of God (this includes the revelation in Scripture) |
| Verse 15-16 | Our own spirit witnesses with His Spirit |
| Verse 17 | We suffer with Him |

The concept of being heirs and joint heirs must not be pressed beyond the scriptural intent. Joint heirs does not mean that we will be diety. We always will be poor sinners, saved by the grace of God. We will enjoy the beauty, joy, and marvels of heaven.

1 John 3:2 *Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we shall be. We know that, when He appears, we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him just as He is.*

1 Corinthians 15:45-49 *So also it is written, "The first man, Adam, became a living soul." The last Adam became a life-giving spirit. However, the spiritual is not first, but the natural; then the spiritual. The first man is from the earth, earthy; the second man is from heaven. As is the earthy, so also are those who are earthy; and as is the heavenly, so also are those who are heavenly. And just as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.*

Philippians 3:20 *For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ; 21 who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory, by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself.*

If indeed we suffer with him, calls to mind Paul's statements to Timothy, It is a trustworthy statement: For if we died with Him, we shall also live with Him (2 Timothy 2:11) and indeed, all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted (2 Timothy 3:12).

H. The hope of glory, secured by Christ, sustains the redeemed through every trial 8:18-30

There simply is no legitimate reason for one to refuse to accept and obey the Gospel or to remain faithful to his Lord as long as he lives.

Verse 18

For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us. What a magnificent statement!

If we live for Christ, there will be abundant suffering. Jeremiah was the Martyr Prophet. There are stones that are crueler than the ones hurled at Stephen. No man suffered more for Christ than Paul, but even he could write this magnificent statement. Home with Christ is beyond our ability to express. No redeemed person in heaven will want to return to earth, nor will he be sorry that he endured suffering because of his faith. The realization of this fact, while in the midst of suffering, is one of the greatest gifts of grace.

Verse 19-23

What is the meaning of the word, *creation*, in this section? Some hold to the view that the term refers to the physical creation, the universe. Others hold to the view that it refers to humanity.

The problem with viewing this as humanity is that the conclusion of this paragraph would require universal salvation. Since this is not true, then humanity cannot be the meaning of *creation*.

Nature is personified in this section as in Isaiah 24:4-5 and Ezekiel 31:15:

Isaiah 24:4-5 The earth mourns and withers, the world fades and withers, the exalted of the people of the earth fade away. The earth is also polluted by its inhabitants, for they transgressed laws, violated statutes, broke the everlasting covenant.

Ezekiel 31:15 Thus says the Lord GOD, "On the day when it went down to Sheol I caused lamentations; I closed the deep over it and held back its rivers. And its many waters were stopped up, and I made Lebanon mourn for it, and all the trees of the field wilted away on account of it.

Paul here refers to the new heavens and the new earth described in 2 Peter 3:10-13

But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up. Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, on account of which the heavens will be destroyed by burning, and the elements will melt with intense heat! But according to His promise we are looking for new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells.

Note that Peter writes about the *new heavens* (plural), referring to the celestial heavens. This means that all of creation, the earth, planets, stars, etc., were in some way effected by the entrance of sin into creation. In God's time, these will not be annihilated, but the elements will be melted and renovated. In this renovated creation, only righteousness will dwell. The disease of sin will be absent.

And not only this, but also we ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our body.

Christ died for the body as well as the spirit of man. In heaven, there will not be any disembodied human spirits. We will have some sort of a body with which to express ourselves. Note that the resurrection is described as the event in which our adoption as sons takes place. Thus we see the figure of adoption is used to describe two events in the life of the believer:

1. Our entrance into the family of God at conversion;
2. Our entrance into the glorified family of God at the resurrection.

In Romans, Paul pictures our entrance into the first level of family by being resurrected from the watery grave of baptism. He pictures our entrance into the glorified family by being resurrected from an earthen grave.

Verses 24-25

The Greek word, *elpis* (ἐλπίς), translated, *hope*, carries the idea of something more than just an object of longing or a wish. It carries the idea of certain expectation. Faith and hope are almost synonyms in this way. We are convinced that in the future the thing hoped for will happen.

Since we hope, we have not come into the fullness of redemption. The *aorist* tense is used here, *we were saved by hope*, is literal. Our salvation was qualified from the beginning by a reference to a hope of something yet to be. We have been saved from our past sins, but we look to our future complete redemption. The trite statement has become popular, "I am saved, I am being saved, I will be saved."

Verses 26-27

These verses are at the heart of much that is taught about intercessory prayer. Kenneth Hagin has argued that the groaning of verse 26 refers to tongues. This really is a stretch. The Greek term translated *too deep for words* by the NAS, *that words cannot express* NIV, *which cannot be uttered*, is *alaletos* (ἀλαλητος) which carries the idea of something not uttered or something

that cannot be uttered. The word comes from the term that means to speak, *laleo* (**l a l e w**) and the prefix, *a* (**a j & l a l e w**). In Greek, this prefix is used the same way as we use it in English (e.g. a moral person versus an amoral person [one who does not have morals]). Thus, the idea is that this is a silent groaning. It is something that cannot be uttered.

This poses an interesting question. Does the Holy Spirit intercede for us in a deep way that we might not even be aware of, doing so with an intensity that is beyond expression? That is the most natural way of understanding these verses. The other understanding is that the Holy Spirit produces in us some sort of inner groaning that defies being put into language. This does not fit what these verses say, however, because the believer himself is not within the purview of the statement. The Holy Spirit is described as the source and the vehicle.

This verse, therefore, is inappropriate for describing our intercession for the nations, etc. This does not mean that we should not, with great intensity of spirit, intercede for others. Indeed, as we have seen in an earlier section, Paul had an intense prayer life in which he experienced anguish for the various churches and individuals in them.

There is a blessed assurance in this statement. We do not know what we should pray for nor how to pray about it. We are so limited by our perspective. The Holy Spirit knows what and how, and He acts accordingly. All of his prayers are in line with God's will.

Verse 28

And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.

Few verses have been of more comfort to believers of every generation than this verse. *Love God* is the strongest expression of the Christian's attitude toward God that Paul has used, thus far, in the book.

Our idea of *good* is not always God's idea of *good*. Sin is not good, but God can make the wrath of man to praise Him. We can profit from the mistakes of others. Paul is writing to a persecuted people and he assures them that all is for good. In Paul's own life there is an example of what most would consider to be evil to be *good*.

And because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, for this reason, to keep me from exalting myself, there was given me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to buffet me-- to keep me from exalting myself! Concerning this I entreated the Lord three times that it might depart from me. And He has said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness." Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, that the power of Christ may dwell in me. Therefore I am well content with weaknesses, with insults, with distresses, with persecutions, with difficulties, for Christ's sake; for when I am weak, then I am strong. (2 Corinthians 12:8-10)

Verse 29-30

For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the first-born among many brethren; and whom He predestined, these He also

called; and whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified.

These verses are at the heart of the controversy between Calvinism and those who hold to man's free will. Below we summarize the two views.

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CALVINIST VIEW OF FOREORDINATION & PREDESTINATION

Called according to His purpose... The word for *called*, (*kletos*- κλητός), first noted in 1:7, never is used in the New Testament for those who are only the recipients of an external invitation to the Gospel. It always means, "effectually called"; that is, it always applied to those who are **really brought to accept the blessings to which they are invited**. Note the following passages:

1 Corinthians 1:23 -24 *but we preach Christ crucified, to Jews a stumbling block, and to Gentiles foolishness, but to those who are the called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.* (Here contrasting the "true Christians" with others)

Jude 1 *Jude, a bond-servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, to those who are the called, beloved in God the Father, and kept for Jesus Christ:*

1 Corinthians 1:2 *to the church of God which is at Corinth, to those who have been sanctified in Christ Jesus, saints by calling, with all who in every place call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, their Lord and ours:*

The word is used in the same sense as "chosen." This is evident from its use in phrases such as *called to be an apostle* (1 Corinthians 1:1; Romans 1:1), *called to belong to Jesus Christ* (Romans 1:6). This is equivalent to Isaiah 48:12 *Listen to Me, O Jacob, even Israel whom I called* (Israel was chosen from among the nations)...see also Isaiah 42:6; 49:1; 51:2.

Therefore, the people who love God are those whom God has chosen and called by His grace to participate in the Redeemer's Kingdom. This call is not because of the merits of men, but *according to His purpose...* who has saved us and called us to a holy life - not because of anything that we have done but because of His own purpose and grace. This grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time:

2 Timothy 1:9 *who has saved us, and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was granted us in Christ Jesus from all eternity,*

Ephesians 1:11 *also we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will,*

Romans 9:11 *for though the twins were not yet born, and had not done anything good or bad, in order that God's purpose according to His choice might stand, not because of works, but because of Him who calls,*

Paul has two reasons for introducing the clause in Romans 8:28: first, to show that the reason that some men love God can be attributed only to His sovereign grace; and second, that if men are called according to the eternal purpose of God, their salvation is secure. Through this second idea, the clause is associated with the following verses, which really contain the message of the chapter. That the calling of men does secure their salvation is proved in verses 29-30.

Those whom God has called are called in line with a pre-settled plan and purpose of God. Those whom He calls he had previously predestined. All of the different stages of our salvation are included in this plan of the unchanging God. If we are predestined and called, we shall be justified and glorified. Thus, all things must work together for good to those who love God, for the plan of God cannot fail; those whom He has called into this state of reconciliation, whom He has made to love Him, He will certainly bring to the final glory prepared for His people.

The term, *foreknow*, and *know*, are used with three different meanings, all of which apply to this passage. The word may mean "to know beforehand." It also may mean, "to approve," in the sense of having special affection. A third meaning would be "to select."

The last two ideas are consistent with this passage. They speak of the general idea of preferring. That is, those whom He loved and selected. Here are parallel thoughts:

11:2 *God has not rejected His people whom He foreknew. Or do you not know what the Scripture says in the passage about Elijah, how he pleads with God against Israel?.*

1 Peter 1:20 *For He was foreknown before the foundation of the world, but has appeared in these last times for the sake of you*

2 Timothy 2:19 *Nevertheless, the firm foundation of God stands, having this seal, "The Lord knows those who are His, "and," Let everyone who names the name of the Lord abstain from wickedness. "*

John 10:14 *I am the good shepherd; and I know My own, and My own know Me, 15 even as the Father knows Me and I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep.*

Acts 2:23 *this Man, delivered up by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put Him to death.*

1 Peter 1:2 *according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, by the sanctifying work of the Spirit, that you may obey Jesus Christ and be sprinkled with His blood: May grace and peace be yours in fullest measure.*

Therefore, the idea obviously is those whom God especially loved, and by loving in this way, He distinguished or selected them from the rest of mankind. Both of these ideas can be expressed in a single term, *elected*. Those whom He *elected* He predestined, etc.

It is evident that "foreknowledge" expresses more than to know in advance. On the other hand, it expresses something different from "predestination." This is seen from the sentence, *Those God foreknew, He also predestined*. Predestination follows and is based upon foreknowledge. If we look over a number of objects, we fix our gaze and our mind on a few that we choose. These are

chosen to the neglect, or the rejection, of the others. The second step is to choose the objects for the proposed plan. God looks on fallen humanity and fixes on some whom He predestines to salvation. This is foreknowledge.

He also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of His Son. To predestine is to destine or appoint beforehand. Note Ephesians 1:5: *He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will;* and Ephesians 1:11: *also we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will,*

Every time predestination is mentioned, it is clear that the reason for the choice does not lie in us. We are chosen in Christ, according to the free purpose of God. This is a *fore-ordination*, a determination that existed in the Divine Mind long before the event and even before the foundation of the world (Ephesians 1:4 *just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before Him.*). When this occurs in time, it shows the eternal purpose of God, and it executes the plan of which it forms a part.

The purpose for which God chose and predestined us is *to be conformed to the image of His Son.* The predestined will be like the Son of God in character and destiny (Ephesians 1:4, again). See also the following:

Ephesians 4:24 *and put on the new self, which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth.*

1 Corinthians 15:49 *And just as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.*

Philippians 3:21 *who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory, by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself.*

1 John 3:2 *Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we shall be. We know that, when He appears, we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him just as He is.*

"I remark here in passing," says Olshausen, "that according to Paul's doctrine... God does not foreknow those who by their own decision will become holy, but He Himself creates that decision in them."

The reason for all of this is *that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.* The purpose in the salvation of men is not that men should be holy and happy, but that to all of the principalities and powers the glory of the Son might be demonstrated. He will stand as chief and head of countless multitude that through Him are made sons of God.

Therefore, *and whom He predestined, these He also called; and whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified.*

What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who is against us? (vs 31). The final salvation of the foreknown, chosen, predestined, called, and justified, is guaranteed.

These will be preserved from apostasy and any deadly sins. That is the goal and essence of salvation. So, any who do turn to apostasy or return to sin, were not foreknown, predestined, chosen, etc. This is the sense of the final verses of the chapter.

NOTE: The above presentation is a summary, containing many direct quotes, from Charles Hodge, one of the classic defenders of Calvinism (Hodge, Charles, *Romans* [Wheaton, IL, Crossway Books, 1993 reprint of the 1835 original] pages 256 - 267)

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NON-CALVINIST VIEW OF FOREORDINATION AND PREDESTINATION

Note: In presenting this view, we will not repeat the Scriptures that are cited, or implied. Most of them are printed or referenced in the section on Calvinism. I make the assumption that the student is familiar enough with these to not require their repetition.-JWG

No passage in the New Testament has given rise to more extended controversy than these three verses (Romans 8:28 - 30). It would not be true to say that no good has come of this strife, but the evil of the strife has outweighed the good. In studying this passage, we must try to discover what was before the apostle's mind when he penned it.

The clue to the entire meaning of the passage is the clause, *to those that are called according to His purpose*. *Those that are called* and *those that love God* are the same people, those who are saved.

Called according to His purpose... What do these words mean? The word rendered, *purpose*, is the word, *prothesis* (**prothesis**), is a noun derived from the verb, *protithemi* (**protithemi**). The noun means, "a placing", or "a setting before." In this verse, the term refers to God's placing things in front of His mind, so as to see them distinctly. It is a mental seeing. It may be assumed that this *prothesis* occurred far back in eternity, long before time and man. It occurred when the vision of man first arose in the Divine Mind.

What things were placed, or set before, in this *prothesis*? Man, including this world with all that in any way pertains to it, from his conception on, to say the least, until his glorification. God set before Him the whole human race with its entire destiny. All that man is or shall be stood before God - sin, redemption, glorification - all were naked and open to His eye. It was there that the Logos was foreordained before the foundation of the world (1 Peter 1:20) to be the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world, and from that moment onward, He was viewed as slain. There, the whole Gospel was ideally perfected. In a word, the whole of time, with all that shall transpire in it, was in vision as completely before God as it will ever be in fact when it is past.

In the *prothesis*, each man was as distinctly before God as saved as lost, as he will be when judgment is past. This was not because God decreed that this man should be saved or lost, but because, leaving each man free to choose his own destiny, he could and did clearly foresee what that destiny would be, as though He Himself had fixed it by unchangeable decree. To assume that God must foreordain what a man's destiny would be in order to foresee it, is a profound absurdity.

It was the complete view of the future, seen in the *prothesis*, that enabled Paul to say so confidently, *all things work together for good to those who love God*.

In the *prothesis*, all things pertaining to man's redemption were set before God, and among them his predetermination that man should be called by the Gospel. Hence, to be called according to God's purpose (*prothesis*) is to be called by the Gospel. It is not to be called by some secret impulse of the Holy Spirit; neither is it to be called "effectually" or "ineffectually," as some Calvinists phrase it. It is simply to be called by hearing the Gospel. This call, each person is free to accept or reject and by so doing, be saved or lost.

For whom He foreknew... refers to knowing before some date or period. This took place simultaneously with the *prothesis* and was a part of it. When God set before Himself the entire human race, long before any man existed, He foreknew. He foresaw in the *prothesis* that certain ones would choose to obey Him and certain ones would not. Those who chose to obey Him or His Son would comply with the conditions of justification and be saved. These were the ones whom He *foreknew*.

Foreknew must be taken with a qualification. It must denote more than just being cognizant of something, because God, in the sense of cognition foreknew everyone. Therefore, it denotes both knowing and accepting. In Scripture, "to know," is one of the expressions that means acceptance or approval. Note the use of the term in Matthew 7:23, *And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness.'*

He also predetermined at the time that He foreknew, and predetermined the people whom He foreknew. All this occurred at the *prothesis*. Those whom he foreknew were the ones whom he foresaw would do His will, whether before or after Christ. These are the redeemed. This did not occur because God predestined them to obey Him; they were left free to choose and it was because he foresaw them making this choice that He predestined them.

He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, is a reference to the resurrection. When the *prothesis* was before God, He foresaw that certain individuals would become His children. These, in purpose, He accepted. He determined that in the resurrection, their bodies would be same as the glorified body of His Son. As the Son was predetermined be like humanity before He went into the grave, so the redeemed were predetermined to be like the Son after they came out of it.

That He might be the first-born among many brethren... Christ is the firstborn from the grave and to Him therefore belong the honors of the firstborn son. Among those is the honor of giving the form of His glorified body to all of the redeemed.

and whom He predestined, these He also called; and whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified. He did not call these in any special sense or in any special way, neither did He call them and not others (such is neither stated nor implied). Before Christ, He called them by the preaching of the prophets and other righteous men. After Christ, men are called by the Gospel. He called everyone, but the group on which this verse focuses are the ones who responded to the Gospel. This is one reason for Judgment Day. In that Day, God will be vindicated, so to speak, from the charge of being arbitrary or of some partiality. All must be called to enable God to foresee who would accept Him and who would not.

He called was God's act. This is what He did in carrying out His predetermination, but after doing this, He paused. Those called accepted the call, not because they were called differently from others, but because they responded differently. What took place *prophetically*, far back in eternity, is precisely what is now taking place every day under Christ.

The two great errors into which many expositors have fallen:

1. Foreknowledge assumes that God predestined in an unalterable way every act of human life.
2. The terms, *called, justified, glorified*, are spoken of actual human beings whom God chose for reasons within Himself, totally apart from any responsibility on the part of humans.

These errors limit God. They limit His foreknowledge to what He predestined. They assume that God could not foresee the course of events in human history, including the response of individuals to His call, but could only see the outcome that he predestined.

NOTE: The above presentation is a summary, containing many direct quotes, from Moses E. Lard. (Lard, Moses E., *Commentary on Paul's Letter to the Romans* [Cincinnati, Ohio, Standard Publishing Co., 1875] pages 279 - 285)

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Personally, I favor the non-Calvinist understanding. There are too many Scriptural concepts that pose problems for me, if I accept Calvinism.

I. The believers triumphant assurance, based on the greatness and constancy of God's love 8:31-39

Verse 31

What then shall we say to these things? Referring to what has just been said about believers.

If God is for us, who is against us? If God is for us, as He certainly is, who can defeat our glorification? Nothing can succeed. All things will work together for our good.

Verse 32

He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things?

His own son (*tou idiou hiou- tou- ijiou uiou*), speaking of His Son in a sense in which He has no other son. This is a synonym for John 3:16 (*ton huion ton monogene - tor uxor tor monogenh*), already discussed in the opening verses of Chapter One.

Verse 33

Who will bring a charge against God's elect? God is the one who justifies... The elect or chosen is not referring back to the prothesis, but to the "here and now believers" who are in Christ. A charge made against God's elect will not succeed, for God is sure to acquit. Should the charge be false, it will not be allowed. Should it be true, God's child will repent and be forgiven. Of one's accord, he may fall away and thus bring about his own ruin, but another cannot do it.

Verse 34

who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus is He who died, yes, rather who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us.

The thought is "Who is He who condemns Christ alone could do it, and He certainly will not do it, because He died for us and now pleads before God to prevent our condemnation.

Verses 35-39

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? Just as it is written, "for Thy sake we are being put to death all day long; we were considered as sheep to be slaughtered." But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

It is impossible to imagine anything more assuring than this passage. When a child of God is overtaken by hardship, there often is the feeling that God has forsaken him. Not so!!! The sufferings are proof of God's presence, not of His absence.

Our sufferings are short-lived. They quickly end. We not only live through them, but we live forever beyond them. We are even crowned over them with immortality and eternal life. All of this is achieved through Christ who loved us and gave Himself for us.

With the conclusion of Chapter Eight, we come to the end of the grand argument that has been running through the book, up this point.

IV. THE PRINCIPLES THUS ESTABLISHED, JUSTIFY GOD'S DEALING WITH JEWS AND GENTILES 9:1-11:36

A. Paul's deep sorrow over the Jews 9:1-5

Verses 1-2

I am telling the truth in Christ, I am not lying, my conscience bearing me witness in the Holy Spirit, that I have great sorrow and unceasing grief in my heart.

Note the extreme transition that Paul makes from the triumph of Chapter Eight to the sorrow in the opening of Chapter Nine. This mixture of joy and sorrow is consistent with the Christian life. It would be difficult to express the depth of sorrow more forcefully than Paul does in these two verses. Those for whom Paul experienced this deep sorrow were those who had declared him to be their enemy.

Verse 3

For I could wish that I myself were accursed, separated from Christ for the sake of my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh,

The term translated, *accursed*, is *anathema* (ἀνάθεμα), which means, "devoted to destruction." It is interesting that the word is derived from the word *anatheyma*, (ἀνάθημα), which means, "that which is devoted to God." In the Septuagint, the translators needed a word to use for the Hebrew that meant, "devoted to God for destruction." The term, *anathema*, is the one that was chosen. Thus, in the New Testament, the writers of which used the Septuagint, this term is used for destruction (Galatians 1:8,9; I Corinthians 16:22).

The emphasis and position of the Greek terms, *autos ego* (αὐτὸν ἐγὼ), translated, by the English preposition *I*, is expressing great intensity. Paul was saying, *I, even I, myself...were accursed...*

Just after writing that *neither life, nor death...nor any other created thing shall separate us from the love God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord*, Paul writes this extreme prayer, wishing that he would be separated from Christ if that would save the Jews.

Paul's spiritual family was the Church. His physical family, was physical Israel.

This reminds us of Moses prayer in Exodus 32:32, *But now, if Thou wilt, forgive their sin-- and if not, please blot me out from Thy book which Thou hast written!* Both Paul and Moses were speaking the language of the heart, not the language of reasoning and reflection.

Verse 4-5

who are Israelites, to whom belongs the adoption as sons and the glory and the covenants and the giving of the Law and the temple service and the promises, whose are the fathers, and from whom is the Christ according to the flesh, who is over all, God blessed forever. Amen.

Paul's grief for Israel arises not only from his personal relationships, but also from his remembrance of their privileged position in the Divine economy.

To whom belongs the adoption as sons, recalls Exodus 4:22 Then you shall say to Pharaoh, Thus says the LORD, "Israel is My son, My first-born.

The glory can be taken in a general way, but it also recalls the many times that there was in Israel the visible manifestation of God's glory.

Exodus 24:16-17 And the glory of the LORD rested on Mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it for six days; and on the seventh day He called to Moses from the midst of the cloud. And to the eyes of the sons of Israel the appearance of the glory of the LORD was like a consuming fire on the mountaintop.

Exodus 16:10 And it came about as Aaron spoke to the whole congregation of the sons of Israel, that they looked toward the wilderness, and behold, the glory of the LORD appeared in the cloud.

Exodus 40:33-34 And he erected the court all around the tabernacle and the altar, and hung up the veil for the gateway of the court. Thus Moses finished the work. Then the cloud covered the tent of meeting, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle.

1 Kings 8:11 so that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud, for the glory of the LORD filled the house of the LORD.

Numbers 7:89 Now when Moses went into the tent of meeting to speak with Him, he heard the voice speaking to him from above the mercy seat that was on the ark of the testimony, from between the two cherubim, so He spoke to him.

Exodus 25:22 And there I will meet with you; and from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubim which are upon the ark of the testimony, I will speak to you about all that I will give you in commandment for the sons of Israel.

Leviticus 16:1-2 Now the LORD spoke to Moses after the death of the two sons of Aaron, when they had approached the presence of the LORD and died. And the LORD said to Moses, "Tell your brother Aaron that he shall not enter at any time into the holy place inside the veil, before the mercy seat which is on the ark, lest he die; for I will appear in the cloud over the mercy seat.

The covenants would refer to the many different covenants that God had made with the Israelites and their ancestors.

Verse 5 requires interpretation to determine whether or not the expression, *who is over all, God blessed forever*, refers to God the Father or to Jesus Christ. The weightiest argument, it seems to me is the way that Paul refers to Christ in all of his writings. He never applies the term, *theos* (θεος), meaning, *God*, to Christ. In all of his writings, Paul reserves this Greek term for God the Father.

Thus, the best rendering of the last portion of verse 5 would be:

...from whom is the Christ according to the flesh. God Who is over all be blessed forever. Amen.

I quote James Denney, in *The Greek Expositors New Testament* (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans Printing Co, reprinted 1976) page 43-44,

If we ask ourselves point blank, whether Paul, as we know his mind from his epistles, would express his sense of Christ's greatness by calling God blessed forever, it seems to me almost impossible to answer in the affirmative. Such an assertion is not on the same plane with the conception of Christ which meets us everywhere in the Apostle's writings; and though there is some irregularity in the grammar, and perhaps some difficulty in the seeing the point of the doxology, I agree with those who would put a colon or a period at *sarx* (flesh), and make the words that follow refer not to Christ but to the Father.

The deity of Jesus Christ does not depend on passages such as this. In many ways, Paul and the rest of the New Testament writers affirm the deity of Jesus Christ.

B. Refutation of false claims and vindication of God's dealing with the Jews 9:6-13

In this paragraph, Paul proves that God is not bound, by His promises, to include all of Abraham's descendants in the promise. He also shows clearly that God's choice is not based on merit. God's only obligation is to be true to Himself.

Verse 6-8

But it is not as though the word of God has failed. For they are not all Israel who are descended from Israel; neither are they all children because they are Abraham's descendants, but: "through Isaac your descendants will be named." That is, it is not the children of the flesh who are children of God, but the children of the promise are regarded as descendants.

There is an Israel within Israel, thus all Israelites are not embraced in the promise. Paul uses Hagar and Sarah as an allegory, here. The Jews in the flesh were typified by Ishmael. Isaac typified the spiritual descendants, whether Jew or Gentile.

There is not one way for Jews to enter the Kingdom and another way for Gentiles to enter the Kingdom (Romans 1:16)

Verses 9-13

The emphasis in these verses is on the fact that the selection was not made on the basis of merit.

for though the twins were not yet born, and had not done anything good or bad, in order that God's purpose according to His choice might stand, not because of works, but because of Him who calls...(Verse 11)

NOTE: The term, *hate*, in verse 13 is used the same way that it is used in Genesis 29:30-31 (Jacob didn't hate Leah, she was, however, less loved) and in Luke 14:26 (we are not to hate our parents, but to regard our love for them as secondary to our love for Christ).

The Messiah was to come through the line of Jacob. God's promise did not bind Him to include all of Abraham's descendants in the Messianic promise. Jacob's line was not chosen on the basis of merit, but on the basis of God's sovereignty. This was a conditional choosing, because God in His foreknowledge knew the right man to choose.

Verse 12 was fulfilled in that the Edomites (descendants of Esau) were subject to Israel, from time to time.

God chose Israel in the interest of His worldwide redemptive scheme. It was an historic function, preparatory to the coming of the Messiah to bless all nations.

Paul has now shown that God is not untrue to any promise when He selects some Israelites and not all Israelites. He is only acting on the principle that He followed in selecting the Israelites and rejecting the Edomites and the Ismaelites. By the phrase, *God's choice according to purpose* (verse 11), Paul suggests the lines on which the argument will proceed.

C. The absolute freedom of mercy as vindication of God's dealings with the Jews 9:14-18

Verses 14-15

God is sovereign and free. The free sovereignty of God is in harmony with His total actions. He is free to have mercy on any whom He chooses.

Verse 16

This is another statement that God's choice does not depend on a meritorious willing or running. We must not make the error thinking that God's mercy never includes conditions:

Isaiah 55:7 Let the wicked forsake his way, And the unrighteous man his thoughts; And let him return to the LORD, And He will have compassion on him; And to our God, For He will abundantly pardon.

Isaiah 57:15, 20 For thus says the high and exalted One Who lives forever, whose name is Holy, "I dwell on a high and holy place, And also with the contrite and lowly of spirit In order to revive the spirit of the lowly And to revive the heart of the contrite...But the wicked are like the tossing sea, For it cannot be quiet, And its waters toss up refuse and mud.

Verses 17-18

Exodus 9:16 But, indeed, for this cause I have allowed you to remain, in order to show you My power, and in order to proclaim My name through all the earth.

God permitted Pharaoh to remain in his position of power until God's divine purpose was fulfilled. If Pharaoh would have responded to the miracles in a positive way, this also would have demonstrated the power of God.

The same heat cooks meat, dries sand, hardens clay, melts wax, etc. The same Gospel effects different people different ways. Some it hardens and some it softens. This is how God hardened Pharaoh's heart. God presented a command. God spoke the truth. The truth and the command produced a hard heart in Pharaoh.

D. Divine sovereignty accompanied with long-suffering as a vindication of God's dealings with the Jews 9:19-29

Verses 19-20

You will say to me then, "Why does He still find fault? For who resists His will?" On the contrary, who are you, O man, who answers back to God? The thing molded will not say to the molder, "Why did you make me like this," will it?

The attitude of the question is wrong. When anyone questions the wisdom of God, something is wrong, basically.

Verse 21

This verse is recalling Jeremiah 18:1-12. Some go too far with this illustration, treating the clay as if it did not have a will. In the Jeremiah figure, the clay, representing the people of Israel, the clay did have a will.

The word which came to Jeremiah from the LORD saying, "Arise and go down to the potter's house, and there I shall announce My words to you." Then I went down to the potter's house, and there he was, making something on the wheel. But the vessel that he was making of clay was spoiled in the hand of the potter; so he remade it into another vessel, as it pleased the potter to make. Then the word of the LORD came to me saying, "Can I not, O house of Israel, deal with you as this potter does?" declares the LORD. "Behold, like the clay in the potter's hand, so are you in My hand, O house of Israel. At one moment I might speak concerning a nation or concerning a kingdom to uproot, to pull down, or to destroy it; if that nation against which I have spoken turns from its evil, I will relent concerning the calamity I planned to bring on it. Or at another moment I might speak concerning a nation or concerning a kingdom to build up or to plant it; if it does evil in My sight by not obeying My voice, then I will think better of the good with which I had promised to bless it. So now then, speak to the men of Judah and against the inhabitants of Jerusalem saying, 'Thus says the LORD, Behold, I am fashioning calamity against you and devising a plan against you. Oh turn back, each of you from his evil way, and reform your ways and your deeds. "' But they will say, 'It's hopeless! For we are going to follow our own plans, and each of us will act according to the stubbornness of his evil heart.'"

God is sovereign, but He always is true to Himself. The chapter in Jeremiah contains conditionality. This is the same situation as that faced by Ninevah. Nahum preached doom to Ninevah. Jonah preached doom to Ninevah. Ninevah repented and God extended mercy.

Nowhere in the Bible is God pictured like an oriental despot who condemns and saves, just to show His power.

Verse 22

What if God, although willing to demonstrate His wrath and to make His power known, endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction?

This verse reminds us, once again, of II Peter 3:9, *The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance.* The aim, of God's long-suffering is that more will come to repentance, not that more will go to hell.

The proper understanding of long-suffering makes it difficult to accept the Calvinist position. Recall that 2:4-5 stated,

Or do you think lightly of the riches of His kindness and forbearance and patience, not knowing that the kindness of God leads you to repentance? But because of your stubbornness and unrepentant heart you are storing up wrath for yourself in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God,

The kindness of God leads to repentance. This indicates action and effort on God's part, but man must respond. The hardening of the heart is the result of a decision by man.

The vessels of wrath, prepared for destruction, were so prepared by their unrepentant hearts.

Three points are added to the discussion in this sentence:

- The natural wrath of God against sin and the violation of His law
- The fact that the objects of his compassion were vessels of wrath
- The vessels of wrath were fitted for destruction

These three points intensify the difficulty of divine restraint.

Thus, the point of this verse is that although God's righteous anger might naturally lead Him to make His power known, God's inherent kindness caused Him to delay and to bear with those who had become objects that deserved His wrath.

Verse 23

Here, God is described as the one doing the preparing in contrast to man's hardening his own heart.

2 Timothy 2:20-21 Now in a large house there are not only gold and silver vessels, but also vessels of wood and of earthenware, and some to honor and some to dishonor. Therefore, if a man cleanses himself from these things, he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified, useful to the Master, prepared for every good work.

Paul no longer is confining himself to the special case of Pharaoh, but he now is considering God's dealing with the unbelieving Jews and is laying down the principles which will be worked

out in fuller detail, i.e., that the Jews deserved God's full wrath but that He bore with them for their own sakes as well as the ultimate good of His Church.

Romans 8:28-30 is a good commentary on this verse.

Verse 24

Even us, whom He also called... Paul introduces the calling of the Gentiles, here, because the calling of the Gentiles had come through the rejection of the Jews

Verse 25-29

In these verses Paul proceeds to give additional force to the argument that he has presented by a series of quotations from the Old Testament. This is sort of an appendix to the first main section of his argument.

Verses 25-26 are from Hosea. The principle expressed in the changing of the names of Hosea's children (Hosea 1:3-11; 2:21-23) is the same principle that brought the Gentiles into the promise.

Verses 27-28 are from Isaiah 10. The *remnant* referred, first of all, to those who returned from the captivity, but the term was not exhausted by that event. The true *remnant* encompasses the redeemed of both Jew and Gentile and culminates in the remnant from all nations found in heaven.

Verse 29 quotes Isaiah 1:9.

E. The true cause of the rejection of the Jews and the acceptance of the Gentiles 9:30-33

These verses refer to the Gentiles acceptance of the Gospel and thus attaining righteousness by faith, whereas, the Jews, for the most part, tried to attain righteousness by law and failed.

Verse 30 is a very fine combination of Isaiah 28:16 and Isaiah 8:14.

F. The contrast between unattainable legal righteousness and the righteousness that comes through faith 10:1-13

Verse 1

Brethren, my heart's desire and my prayer to God for them is for their salvation.

Paul returns to the theme of his deep sorrow over Israel's being lost. This verse is another reason for rejecting the Calvinist view. Paul would not have prayed for the salvation of someone already predestined to Hell. If he had done so, it would have been an empty exercise.

Verse 2-3

For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not in accordance with knowledge. For not knowing about God's righteousness, and seeking to establish their own, they did not subject themselves to the righteousness of God.

Zeal for God is the language that the Jews would have used to describe themselves.

In accordance with knowledge refers to an ethical knowledge of God. The basic Greek term for *knowledge* is *gnōsis*. The term here is *epignōsis*, which usually refers to a more perfect knowledge and is used especially for knowledge of God. Sadly, in spite of all of the opportunities that the Jews had, they misunderstood God.

Verse 4

For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.

In the preceding verse, Paul has been contrasting two methods of obtaining righteousness:

1. That ordained by God, *by faith*
2. That pursued by the Jews, *by law*

Hence, the conclusion stated in this verse.

The end (τέλος) can have various meanings:

1. Completion or fulfillment
2. Aim or goal
3. Termination or cessation

In Christ, we have a completion of prophecy, but not a completion of the Law. For example, there are things in the Law that do not refer directly to Christ and thus Christ did not fulfill them.

Christ is the goal of the Law, but Paul is contrasting the two laws and therefore the context would hardly allow the aim, as being the interpretation.

Termination seems the best interpretation. Law as a method of principle of righteousness has been done away with in Christ.

Ephesians 2:15 by abolishing in His flesh the enmity, which is the Law of commandments contained in ordinances, that in Himself He might make the two into one new man, thus establishing peace,

Colossians 2:14 having canceled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us and which was hostile to us; and He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross.

Verses 5-10

In these verses, Paul proceeds to describe the two methods of obtaining righteousness. He uses familiar Old Testament verses, verses which had become so familiar to the Jews that they were proverbial.

Verse 5 For Moses writes that the man who practices the righteousness which is based on law shall live by that righteousness.

This is a quote of Leviticus 18:5, which also is quoted in Galatians 3:12. The original (from the Septuagint) is slightly modified to suit the grammar of the passage. The way to escape condemnation under a system is to comply with that system.

Verse 6-7 But the righteousness based on faith speaks thus, "Do not say in your heart, Who will ascend into heaven?" (that is, to bring Christ down), or "Who will descend into the abyss?" (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead). "

This is based on Deuteronomy 30:11-14, but is not an accurate quotation of either the Greek Septuagint or the Hebrew text.

Moses told the Jew that the Law was there, it was not far away.

What man could go to heaven and bring Christ to us or what man could go into hades and bring Christ back from the dead that we may be saved? No one! The Gospel is feasible and accessible. If the Gospel were for everyone who could run the 100 yard dash in 8 seconds, or fly around the world using only his arms for wings, etc. the Gospel would be neither feasible nor accessible.

Verse 8 word of faith refers to this word that has faith as the principle of righteousness.

The word translated, *word*, in this verse (*the word is near you...the word of faith*) is the Greek term, *rhema* (ῥῆμα). The sense of this term is that of something spoken or communicated. The idea is that the Gospel is spoken by the preachers; the hearers declare that they accept that word as true.

Verses 9-10 that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved; for with the heart man believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation.

These verses indicate the feasibility and accessibility of salvation, corresponding to and applying the preceding verse.

The beginning of the Christian life has two sides:

- *Internally* it is the change of heart implied by faith, which leads to righteousness (the position of acceptance before God)
- *Externally* it is the confession of Christ crucified, which is completed in baptism, and this puts a man into the path by which he attains salvation (he becomes saved)

Verse 11 *For the Scripture says, "Whoever believes in Him will not be disappointed."*

This is from Isaiah 28:16. The idea is one of trust.

Verse 12 *For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord is Lord of all, abounding in riches for all who call upon Him;*

The Gospel is universal. This again points out that there is not one way for Jews and another way for Gentiles to be saved.

Verse 13 *Whoever will call upon the name of the Lord will be saved.*

In Acts 2, this verse is used in the Pentecostal sermon. Here, Paul applies it to the Jews. Christians were known as those who called upon the name of Christ (I Corinthians 1:2; Acts 9:14)

G. The disobedient, whether Jew or Gentile, are without excuse, since the Gospel has been announced to all 10:14-21

Verses 14-15

How then shall they call upon Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach unless they are sent? Just as it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring glad tidings of good things!"

This passage quotes two Old Testament passages:

Nahum 1:15 *Behold, on the mountains the feet of him who brings good news, Who announces peace! Celebrate your feasts, O Judah; Pay your vows. For never again will the wicked one pass through you; He is cut off completely.*

Isaiah 52:7 *How lovely on the mountains Are the feet of him who brings good news, Who announces peace And brings good news of happiness, Who announces salvation, And says to Zion, "Your God reigns!"*

The Nahum passage, is part of a prophecy in which God promises that Judah never again would be punished by the Assyrian nation (God later would use Babylon to punish Judah).

The Isaiah passage is one in which God states that Babylon would not be the continual master of Judah. This also is a Messianic passage.

The *good news* is the possibility of reconciliation to God.

Verse 16

However, they did not all heed the glad tidings; for Isaiah says, "LORD, who has believed our report?"

This is a quote from Isaiah 53:1. The Gospel was universal, but even the prophets prophesied that the Messiah would be rejected. There was some rejection of Isaiah's message in his day, but the ultimate rejection was of the Messiah.

Verse 17

So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.

This shows the connection with verse 14. Faith is not a miraculous gift. If there is no evidence, then one cannot believe. Without evidence, one can have only an opinion. Faith is the acceptance of the evidence. We have evidence in the testimony of the apostles, recorded in Scripture. Faith in its fullest sweep involves the commitment of life.

Verse 18

But I say, surely they have never heard, have they? Indeed they have; "Their voice has gone out into all the earth, and their words to the ends of the world."

Paul is showing that Jewish ignorance is inexcusable. This is a quote from Psalm 19:4. In the first six verses of Psalm 19, the psalmist declares that creation testifies to God's glory. Verse 4 states that the sun calls men to God. This is a note of the universality of the call, in that the sun shines over all of the earth.

Psalm 19:1-6 {For the choir director. A Psalm of David.} *The heavens are telling of the glory of God; And their expanse is declaring the work of His hands. Day to day pours forth speech, And night to night reveals knowledge. There is no speech, nor are there words; Their voice is not heard. Their line has gone out through all the earth, And their utterances to the end of the world. In them He has placed a tent for the sun, Which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber; It rejoices as a strong man to run his course. Its rising is from one end of the heavens, And its circuit to the other end of them; And there is nothing hidden from its heat.*

Paul's use of Psalm 19 poses a problem for us here. Is it accommodated in a literary flourish or is there some literal manner in which the sun calls people to Christ? Paul seems to accommodate Psalm 19, declaring that as the sun has touched every part of the creation, so the Gospel has gone everywhere. This is similar to Paul's statement in Colossians 1:23

...if indeed you continue in the faith firmly established and steadfast, and not moved away from the hope of the gospel that you have heard, which was proclaimed in all creation under heaven, and of which I, Paul, was made a minister.

Verse 19

But I say, surely Israel did not know, did they? At the first Moses says, "I will make you jealous by that which is not a nation, by a nation without understanding will I anger you."

What is it that Israel didn't know? The clause is parallel with *have they not heard...* and since there is no hint of any change of topic, it must be the same, i.e., the message concerning the Messiah. From the very beginning of the history, Hebrew prophets had warned them of the divine plan and tried to pull them away from mere religious observance.

The quote in this verse is from Deuteronomy 32:21. They were provoking God with idols. Moses prophetically looked to the time when Gentiles would be included in His Kingdom.

Verses 20-21

And Isaiah is very bold and says, "I was found by those who sought Me not, I became manifest to those who did not ask for Me." But as for Israel He says, "All the day long I have stretched out My hands to a disobedient and obstinate people."

The quote is from Isaiah 65:1. God wanted Israel saved, but they rejected the Messiah.

Reviewing this section, Paul makes the following points as to why the Jews are responsible for their rejection.

- | | | |
|----|----------|--|
| 1. | 9:30-33 | they sought the wrong way |
| 2. | 10:4 | the legal system was abolished |
| 3. | 10:5-10 | the new way is feasible and accessible |
| 4. | 10:11-13 | the universality of the Gospel |
| 5. | 10:14-21 | they had opportunity |

In Chapter 9, he speaks of God's sovereignty

In Chapter 10, he speaks of Israel's sin

In Chapter 11 he speaks of God's sovereignty and Israel's sin together. The sin of Israel became an opportunity for the salvation of all mankind.

The citations in this section are numerous. Note that Paul cites every major section of the Hebrew Bible. Isaiah is the dominant section cited. Here are the citations in order

Isaiah 29:16

Isaiah 8:14

Leviticus 18:5

Deuteronomy 30:12ff

Isaiah 28:16

Joel 2:32

Isaiah 52:7

Isaiah 53:1

Psalm 19:4

Deuteronomy 32:21

Isaiah 65:1

Isaiah 65:2

H. A remnant of Israel will be saved through election of grace while the rest are rejected because of their blindness 11:1-10

Verse 1

I say then, God has not rejected His people, has He? May it never be! For I too am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin.

This chapter plainly teaches that in a sense, Israel was cast off (verse 15, 20, 23). However, God did not cast off anyone just because he was a Jew. Paul argues that if the Jews *in toto* had been cast off, then he would have been too.

Verse 2

God has not rejected His people whom He foreknew. Or do you not know what the Scripture says in the passage about Elijah, how he pleads with God against Israel?

The foreknowing includes foreknowledge. Most would argue that this has reference to Israel as a nation. The Jews were God's chosen people because of God's interest in the entire human race. The Jews were broken off and the Gentiles were grafted in.

Paul does not refer to the future nationalization of the Jews, but the Christianization of the Jews. There is one Gospel for both Jew and Gentile. God will do wonderful things someday for the Jews. The same is true for Gentiles. In the light of Paul's teaching it is difficult to agree with those who consider the Jews still to be God's chosen people.

Verses 3-5

Lord, they have killed Thy prophets, they have torn down Thine altars, and I alone am left, and they are seeking my life." 4 but what is the divine response to him? "I have kept for Myself seven thousand men who have not bowed the knee to Baal. " In the same way then, there has also come to be at the present time a remnant according to God's gracious choice.

On Mt. Carmel, Elijah was the only functioning prophet of Jehovah. He saw all as lost, then God told him that there was a remnant. In Paul's day there was a remnant, as prophesied by Isaiah, an Israel within Israel. These were the one's who had become Christians.

Verse 6

Again the emphasis on grace.

Verse 7-10

Quoting Isaiah 29:10, Isaiah 6:10, and Psalm 69:23. The preaching of the Gospel is the occasion of stumbling for many.

I. The rejection of Israel is not irrevocable 11:11-24

Verse 11

I say then, they did not stumble so as to fall, did they? May it never be! But by their transgression salvation has come to the Gentiles, to make them jealous.

The purpose of the stumbling was not in order to cause them to fall. It was not God's intent that the Jews should become hardened. However, they did stumble, but not in a way that would keep them from repenting.

The fact that they did reject the Gospel hastened the preaching of the Gospel to the Gentiles.

Acts 18:6 And when they resisted and blasphemed, he shook out his garments and said to them, "Your blood be upon your own heads! I am clean. From now on I shall go to the Gentiles."

Paul always preached to the Jews first, when he entered a city to plant a church.

To make them jealous involves emulation, not anger.

Verse 12

Now if their transgression be riches for the world and their failure be riches for the Gentiles, how much more will their fulfillment be!

If the fall of the Jews resulted in the conversion of the Gentiles, how much more glorious will be the conversion of the Jews.

Verse 13 - 14

I am speaking to you who are Gentiles. Inasmuch then as I am an apostle of Gentiles, I magnify my ministry, if somehow I might move to jealousy my fellow countrymen and save some of them.

These two verses are somewhat parenthetical. Paul interrupts his flow of thought and returns to it in the next verse.

From this statement, it is clear that Paul expected most of his readers to be Gentile. This shows that the dominant constituency of the Roman Church was Gentile. Note that in the long exposition on the Jews (almost two and one-half chapters), the Jews always are spoken of in the third person. However, in the half chapter that follows, the Gentiles are spoken of in the second person. Exposition passes into exhortation and is addressed to Gentiles. There is no word here for Christians who had once been Jews.

Paul hoped that his preaching to Gentiles would result in the salvation of some Jews.

Verse 15

For if their rejection be the reconciliation of the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead?

Life from the dead refers to the spiritually dead Jew, who through accepting the Gospel becomes a living spirit.

The point that Paul is making is that the conversion of the Jews, as a whole, would be a tremendous influence on the world. Think of the good that would come if every rabbi in Israel became a Christian.

Verse 16

And if the first piece *of dough* be holy, the lump is also; and if the root be holy, the branches are too.

The two figures, *first piece* and *root* are emphasizing one truth. Some seek to make it two arguments, i.e., the first Jewish converts are first fruits and the root refers to Abraham. Paul, however, is not dealing with two churches, but two different states, favorable and unfavorable.

Paul is arguing, "Abraham was justified by faith; doesn't it follow that his descendants, the Jews, could be accepted by faith?"

Verse 17-18

But if some of the branches were broken off, and you, being a wild olive, were grafted in among them and became partaker with them of the rich root of the olive tree, 18 do not be arrogant toward the branches; but if you are arrogant, remember that it is not you who supports the root, but the root supports you.

Paul seems to have in mind Gentile Christians who despised Jews, both unbelievers and believers. We are reminded of the Corinthian Church, which had many new converts who were carried away by a feeling of excessive confidence, partly on the grounds of race and partly because they thought that they understood mercy. They were full of contempt for Jewish Christians and the Jewish race. Paul takes the opportunity to rebuke this attitude. He tells the Gentile Christians that all of their spiritual strength comes from the stock onto which they have been grafted. They are grafted onto a stock whose roots are the patriarchs and to which the Jews belong by virtue of their natural birth.

Verse 19

You will say then, "Branches were broken off so that I might be grafted in."

A Gentile Christian might argue that he is of more value than the Jew, because the Jew was cut off from the tree to allow him to be grafted in.

Verse 20 - 21

Quite right, they were broken off for their unbelief, but you stand by your faith. Do not be conceited, but fear; for if God did not spare the natural branches, neither will He spare you.

Paul admits the statement, but then reminds the Gentile that there were conditions on which he was admitted. He argues, "Don't be high-minded, but fear. If you trust in your merit instead of showing faith in Christ, you will suffer as the Jews, because of their self-confidence and want of faith."

Verse 22 - 24

Behold then the kindness and severity of God; to those who fell, severity, but to you, God's kindness, if you continue in His kindness; otherwise you also will be cut off. And they also, if they do not continue in their unbelief, will be grafted in; for God is able to graft them in again. For if you were cut off from what is by nature a wild olive tree, and were grafted contrary to nature into a cultivated olive tree, how much more shall these who are the natural branches be grafted into their own olive tree?

Paul begins summing up his argument by deducing from this instance the two sides of the divine character. God is full of goodness and loving kindness and that is shown in His action toward the Gentiles. That goodness always will be shown if they trust in it and do not in any way trust in their own merits.

On the other hand, the severity of God is shown in how God has responded to the Jews who trusted in themselves.

God can show the same severity toward the Gentiles if they cease trusting in God's goodness and begin to trust in themselves (through pride in race or any other element).

The grafting of the Gentiles onto the root of the cultivated olive tree is totally unnatural. The way that grafting of olives takes place is a graft from a cultivated olive tree is grafted onto a wild trunk. If a wild olive branch is grafted onto a cultivated trunk, then the production is very sparse. So, Paul is emphasizing how unnatural was the grafting of the Gentiles (wild olive branches) onto the cultivated root. Therefore, they should realize how unusual was God's action toward them and they should be grateful and humble, rather than boastful. The restoration of Israel, in this figure, is an easier process than the call of the Gentiles.

J. The prophetic announcement that there will be a final restoration of Jews into divine favor 11:25-36

Verses 25-27

For I do not want you, brethren, to be uninformed of this mystery, lest you be wise in your own estimation, that a partial hardening has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in; and thus all Israel will be saved; just as it is written, "The Deliverer will come from Zion, He will remove ungodliness from Jacob..." "and this is My covenant with them, when I take away their sins."

The problem in interpreting this passage is the problem that we face with all unfulfilled prophecy. We may think that we are understanding it, but God also may surprise us.

The term, *mystery*, is not used in the sense of something that is incomprehensible. There are plenty of incomprehensible things in Scripture, for example, the miracles. The expression here refers to truth which once was hidden but now is known by revelation. This is the way that the term is used in I Corinthians 2:6-12 and Ephesians 3:1-9.

Lest you be wise in your own estimation, refers to their imagining that it is in any way through their own merit that they have been accepted. Instead, it has been a part of God's eternal purpose.

Hardening in part reiterates what Paul has emphasized throughout this chapter, i.e. that the fall of the Jews is only partial. However, he now adds a new element. The hardening is only temporary and that the limitation in time will end when the *fullness of the Gentiles has come in*. This expresses the same truth uttered by Jesus in Luke 21:24,

and they will fall by the edge of the sword, and will be led captive into all the nations; and Jerusalem will be trampled under foot by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.

It also contains echoes of Matthew 24:14

And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world for a witness to all the nations, and then the end shall come.

The fullness of the Gentiles conveys the idea of the full-completed number. This refers to the Gentile world as a whole, just as in verse 12 *their fulfillment* (literally, *their fullness*) refers to Jewish nation as a whole.

Has come in (Greek: *eiselthe* - εἰσεῖλθῃ) came to be a technical term used in Scripture for entering into the Kingdom of God or the Divine glory and life (Matthew 7:13, 21; 18:8; 23:13; Mark 9:43-47; Luke 13:24).

And thus, all Israel will be saved, refers to the Jews being roused to jealousy by the Gentile world's coming into the Kingdom.

In what sense is the term *all Israel* to be understood? This cannot be used in the sense of spiritual Israel (Calvin) or the remnant according to the election of grace, or all who at the end of the world will return to the Lord. The whole context shows that the actual history of Israel is being referenced. This is quite clear from the contrast with *all the fullness of the Gentiles* in verse 25, the use of the term, *Israel*, in the same verse, and the drift of the argument vv. 17-24. *All* (Greek: *pas* - πᾶς) must be taken in the proper meaning of the word (Israel as a nation, or Israel as a whole, rather than referring to every individual Israelite. For similar language, see I Kings 12:1; II Chronicles 12:1; Daniel 9:11, which uses identical terms in the Septuagint).

So, Paul means simply this: The people of Israel as a nation (no longer just a few) will be united to the Church, just as the Gentiles have been. This does not mean that every Israelite will be

saved. Paul is not thinking here about individuals, nor is he commenting on those who die before the salvation takes place. He simply is considering God's dealings with the nation as a whole. Paul is dealing with classes of men. He looks forward in prophetic vision to a time when the whole earth, Gentiles and Jews, shall be united into the Kingdom of God.

The two quotations in vv. 26-27 are Isaiah 59:20 and 27:9. This is a free quotation of the Septuagint. The Isaiah 59 passage comes from the later portion of Isaiah in which the section where Isaiah dwells most fully on the high spiritual destinies of Israel. Paul's application of this passage is in keeping with the spirit of the original as well as with Rabbinic interpretation, i.e., that this is Messianic.

The Rabbinic view of Paul's day was expressed by R. Jochanan (*Tract. Sanhedrin*, f.98.1), "When thou shalt see the time in which many troubles shall come like a river upon Israel, then expect the Messiah himself as says Isaiah 59:19." The Jews looked forward to a Messianic Kingdom in Palestine. This would be preceded by a general resurrection, as well as a gathering of all living Jews from all nations, so that Israel as a whole might share in this Messianic kingdom. Even though later Judaism denied entirely any hope for Gentiles, in Paul's day many of prophecies were understood as predicting an inflow of Gentiles into the Kingdom (Isaiah 14:1-2; 66:12, 19-21; Daniel 2:44; 7:14, 27)

And this is My covenant with them, when I take away their sins, is another way of saying, "When I forgive their sins, then my side of the covenant will be fulfilled."

Verses 28-29

From the standpoint of the gospel they are enemies for your sake, but from the standpoint of God's choice they are beloved for the sake of the fathers; for the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable.

They are treated as enemies and therefore shut off from God. This is for the sake of the Gentiles.

Two parallel expressions when translated literally, help in understanding this verse:

According to the Gospel (~~kata~~ ~~men~~ ~~to~~ ~~eu~~ ~~ag~~ ~~ge~~ ~~l~~ ~~l~~ ~~o~~ ~~n~~: *kata men to euangellion*)

According to the election (~~kata~~ ~~de~~ ~~th~~ ~~e~~ ~~s~~ ~~e~~ ~~k~~ ~~o~~ ~~g~~ ~~h~~ ~~a~~: *kata de ten ekogen*)

Thus, to paraphrase, "as regards the principle of election" (because they are the chosen race). This is the ground upon which the chosen people were beloved. They were beloved because they came from the beloved patriarchs, God's chosen.

The expression *the gifts and calling of God are irrevocable*, speaks of the very nature of God. He does not repent Himself of the choice that he has made. God's feelings of mercy toward the Jews are assured.

Verse 30-31

For just as you once were disobedient to God, but now have been shown mercy because of their disobedience, so these also now have been disobedient, in order that because of the mercy shown to you they also may now be shown mercy.

This is an interesting parallelism between the cases of Gentile and Jew. The Gentile converts were disobedient at one time. God showed mercy on them, using the occasion of the disobedience of the Jews to do so. If the Jews had kept the covenant, God would have shown fidelity to the covenant and that would have been the end of it. However, by the disobedience of the Jews, an occasion was presented for showing mercy to Gentiles. Since God showed mercy to Gentiles, He also can show mercy to Jews.

Verse 32

For God has shut up all in disobedience that He might show mercy to all.

This refers to the conclusion that God reached, all are disobedient, and this gives God an opportunity to show mercy. If there had been a perfect covenant keeping people, there would not have been an opportunity to display this characteristic of God.

Verses 33 - 36

Paul has concluded his argument. He has vindicated divine justice and mercy. He has shown how even the reign of sin leads to a gracious result. Now, carried away by the contrast between apparent injustice and the real justice of God, he bursts forth in a grand hymn of praise. It is our knowledge and not His goodness that is at fault, whenever we criticize Him.

V. PRACTICAL INSTRUCTIONS AND EXHORTATIONS GROWING OUT OF THE FOREGOING DOCTRINAL EXPOSITIONS 12:1-15:13

A. Exhortations concerning Christian duties 12:1-8

Verse 1-2

I urge you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.

This is one of the most memorized passages in the Bible. Paul displays a beautiful tenderness by beseeching them by the mercy of God.

Our body cannot be sanctified apart from our spirit. They are sanctified together.

Present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God. Our body is a member of Christ (I Corinthians 6:15), a temple of the Holy Spirit (I Corinthian 6:19), weapons of righteous to God (Romans 6:13), and we are to be pure in body and spirit (I Corinthians 7:34). In every ancient religion, the sacrifice had to be clean and without blemish.

Hebrews 13:15-16 presents additional material on the sacrifice that is pleasing to God:

Through Him then, let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that give thanks to His name. And do not neglect doing good and sharing; for with such sacrifices God is pleased.

Praise to God and good deeds flowing out of holy life are the sacrifice that Christians offer in worship of God. This is contrast to the animal sacrifices that were commanded under law.

The expression *spiritual service of worship* sometimes is translated, *reasonable service*. The Greek, *ten logiken latreian humon* (τὴν λογικὴν λατρείαν ὑμῶν) refers to something that befits reason (*logos: λογος*). Hence it refers to a reasonable or spiritual sacrifice, something that cannot be given by an irrational animal that is sacrificed. Understanding is involved.

The two terms, *conformed* and *transformed* present an interesting play on words.

Conformed is the word, *susxematizesthe* (suschmatizesqe). It is a compound built upon the word, *skema* (σῆμα), which has as its basic meaning a *form* or a *mold*. The term refers to outward appearance. It can be rendered, *fashion*. Thus, in the passive sense, as here, it means, *conform or be fashioned*.

Transformed is the word, *metamorphousthe* (metamorfousqe). This is a compound word built upon *morphe* (μορφή), indicating the inner basic nature. This is the word used in English to describe the "metamorphosis" of the caterpillar into a butterfly.

What Paul is saying by the use of these terms, is to not change one's fashion, but to be totally changed. This is not reformation, but a remaking.

This change can take place only by the renewing of the mind. The mind is no longer to be enslaved by fleshly passions, but to be remade and purified by the Holy Spirit.

Titus 3:5 He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit,

2 Corinthians 4:16 Therefore we do not lose heart, but though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day.

Colossians 3:10 and have put on the new self who is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him

This emphasis on the mind harks back to the chapter on Baptism, which urges us to consider ourselves dead to sin, referring to our self-perception:

Romans 6:11 Even so consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus.

That you may prove (dokimazein - dokimazein), refers to the seat of moral judgment, which will be true and exact in judging on spiritual and moral questions. The result of this judging is ascertaining what is in harmony with God's will. This is further defined by three adjectives:

- That which is good
- That which is acceptable
- That which is perfect

Verses 3-8

Sanday and Headlam, in *The International Critical Commentary*, have an excellent summary of these verses:

Let every Christian be content with his proper place and functions. The society to which we belong is a single body with many members all related to one another. Hence the prophet should not strain after effects for which his faith is insufficient the minister, the teacher, the exhorter should each be intent on his special duty. The almsgiver, the person in authority, the doer of kindness, should each cultivate a spirit appropriate to what he does.

It is important that we remember that the source of our abilities is God, for *God has allotted to each a measure of faith*. It also is important to remember that each member has some spiritual gift.

Because of the character of the community, each person has his own duty to perform for the good of the whole. The picture is of an organism, with each member supplying a necessary element to the life of the organism.

Verse 6 has an important emphasis, *according to the grace given us...according to the proportion of his faith*. One's gifts depend upon the measure of faith allotted to him by God. He must exercise these gifts in proportion to the faith given to him. One who is carnal will try to distinguish himself vaingloriously and this disturbs the peace of the community.

The contrasting ideas of verse 7, present the idea, "if we have the gift of serving, let us use it in serving the community and not to attempt, ambitiously, to prophesy or to exhort."

Of special note is the *one who gives*. The Greek term here, *ho metadidous* (ομεταδιδου), refers to one who gives from his own resources. If this referred to one who distributed other people's gifts, the word would be *ho diadidous* (οδιαδιδου). This man is urged to give with "simplicity." The NAS term, "liberality," could be misunderstood, although the Greek term, *aplotes* (απλοτη) does come close to that meaning in II Corinthians 9:11,13. The idea is one of a generous unselfish character.

B. Exhortations to love and the various manners in which love is exemplified 12:9-21

These verses are so straightforward that they need little comment. Again, Sanday and Headlam have a good summary:

The general principles of your life should be a love which is perfectly sincere, depth of moral feeling, consideration for others, zeal, fervor, devoutness, hopefulness, fortitude under persecutions, prayerfulness, eagerness to help our fellow-Christians by sharing what you possess with them and by the ready exercise of hospitality.

Bless, do not curse, your persecutors. Sympathize with others. Be united in feeling, not ambitious but modest in your aims. Be not self-opinionated or revengeful. Do nothing to offend the world. Leave vengeance to God. Good for evil is the best requital.

C. The duty to obey civil authorities 13:1-7

Paul moves from the duties of the individual Christian to mankind in general, to his duties in one definite sphere, duty toward civil rulers. Note that the closing portion of Chapter Twelve and this section have a common thread running through them, the promotion of peace in all situations of life. It also should be noted that the condemnation of personal vengeance in Romans 12, does not apply to the action of the state in enforcing law. The state is God's minister and it is the wrath of God which is acting through it.

The truth presented in this section has been one of the most important elements in the development of the West. A society of law and order has come about, largely because Christians have been committed to civil obedience. This is in contrast to those areas of the globe where Christianity was not foundational in the formation of society. Law, in which every individual is considered important and equal before the law, has been the greatest contributor to a peaceful society. God has ordained order in society and that order is executed by government.

Verses 1-2

Let every person be in subjection to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those which exist are established by God. Therefore he who resists authority has

opposed the ordinance of God; and they who have opposed will receive condemnation upon themselves.

Let every person is a Hebraism (pasa psuche - pasa yuxh) that suggests the idea of individuality. These rules apply to everyone, regardless of how privileged they might be. This is a matter of individual duty.

This speaks of the civil government. Government is ordained by God. This does not mean that God ordains a particular kind of government, but the government which exists. Those who take the side of the divine order of kings or of a particular man in power as being God's man press this too far. Governments can be atheistic and displeasing to God. However, in all instances, the Christian is to be a law-abiding citizen.

The concept that believers must submit themselves to wicked and unbelieving rulers was a concept that was foreign to Judaism. The Jewish view is expressed in John 8:33, *They answered Him, "We are Abraham's offspring, and have never yet been enslaved to anyone.*

Peter penned the same injunction as Paul presents in this paragraph. *Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether to a king as the one in authority, or to governors as sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and the praise of those who do right. For such is the will of God that by doing right you may silence the ignorance of foolish men. Act as free men, and do not use your freedom as a covering for evil, but use it as bondslaves of God.*

(1 Peter 2:13-15)

Jesus submitted to Pilate as a pattern for His followers. He did this while acknowledging the source of Pilate's authority: *Jesus answered, "You would have no authority over Me, unless it had been given you from above; for this reason he who delivered Me up to you has the greater sin."* (John 19:11)

Of course, when one has to choose between loyalty to the civil government and loyalty to God, there is but one choice, to obey God. However, it must be done in the right spirit. Note how the apostles handled this.

Acts 4:18-22 And when they had summoned them, they commanded them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus. But Peter and John answered and said to them, "Whether it is right in the sight of God to give heed to you rather than to God, you be the judge; for we cannot stop speaking what we have seen and heard. " And when they had threatened them further, they let them go (finding no basis on which they might punish them) on account of the people, because they were all glorifying God for what had happened; for the man was more than forty years old on whom this miracle of healing had been performed.

Acts 5:27-34, 40-42 And when they had brought them, they stood them before the Council. And the high priest questioned them, saying, "We gave you strict orders not to continue teaching in this name, and behold, you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching, and intend to bring this man's blood upon us." But Peter and the apostles answered and said, "We must obey God rather than men. "The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom you had put to death by hanging Him on a cross. "He is the one whom God exalted to His right hand as a Prince and a Savior, to grant repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins. "And we are witnesses of these things; and

so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey Him." But when they heard this, they were cut to the quick and were intending to slay them. But a certain Pharisee named Gamaliel, a teacher of the Law, respected by all the people, stood up in the Council and gave orders to put the men outside for a short time... And they took his advice; and after calling the apostles in, they flogged them and ordered them to speak no more in the name of Jesus, and then released them. So they went on their way from the presence of the Council, rejoicing that they had been considered worthy to suffer shame for His name. And every day, in the temple and from house to house, they kept right on teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ.

Observe that the apostles did not start a riot or a protest movement. They did not promote civil disobedience. Neither were the apostles disrespectful. In a sense, they said, "We respect you, but we must respectfully disobey. We will quietly accept the consequences of our behavior." The consequences in the second instance included a lashing.

And those who have opposed will receive condemnation upon themselves, refers to human condemnation, but it is divine, since it has its origin and source in God. This does not refer to eternal punishment.

Verses 3-5

For rulers are not a cause of fear for good behavior, but for evil. Do you want to have no fear of authority? Do what is good, and you will have praise from the same; for it is a minister of God to you for good. But if you do what is evil, be afraid; for it does not bear the sword for nothing; for it is a minister of God, an avenger who brings wrath upon the one who practices evil. Wherefore it is necessary to be in subjection, not only because of wrath, but also for conscience' sake.

One thing that is displayed in these verses is capital punishment. Capital punishment is enforced in every dispensation.

The Christian obeys law for conscience sake. It isn't enough just to obey the law.

- A Christian has no right to take advantage of a law that would permit him to do something against biblical teaching (casual divorce, for example).
- Christians do not obey the law just to stay out of jail, but to be obedient to God.

Verses 6-7

For because of this you also pay taxes, for rulers are servants of God, devoting themselves to this very thing. Render to all what is due them: tax to whom tax is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honor to whom honor.

A Christian pays his taxes. *Tribute* usually refers to the direct tax. *Custom* usually is an indirect tax.

Honor means that the Christian respects the office. This must be true even if the office holder does not deserve respect.

D. Morality and the law fulfilled through love 13:8-10

Owe nothing to anyone except to love one another; for he who loves his neighbor has fulfilled the law. For this, "you shall not commit adultery, you shall not murder, you shall not steal, you shall not covet," and if there is any other commandment, it is summed up in this saying, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." Love does no wrong to a neighbor; love therefore is the fulfillment of the law.

This falls back on the Mosaic Law, but the truth is broader than this. The debt of love never is completely paid.

Don't beat your debts, is the point that Paul is making. He is not teaching against buying a farm or a house on payments. If one is buying a home on payments, Paul is saying, "make the payments."

The heart of what Paul is saying is that we should fulfill, what James calls, "The Royal Law of Love," on the horizontal plane.

James 2:8 *If, however, you are fulfilling the royal law, according to the Scripture, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself," you are doing well.*

Paul cites four of the second group of the Ten Commandments. The Royal Law is not fulfilled by just keeping the negative rules. Learning to do good also is necessary for the Royal Law.

Love is the fulfillment of the law. The word *fulfillment* is *pleroma* (πλήρωμα), which carries the idea of complete fulfillment. Love embraces both the positive and negative aspects of the law.

E. Exhortation to holiness in view of the nearness of eternity 13:11-14

Verses 11-12

And this do, knowing the time, that it is already the hour for you to awaken from sleep; for now salvation is nearer to us than when we believed. The night is almost gone, and the day is at hand. Let us therefore lay aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light.

The night is used figuratively for our time on earth, our time of probation. Day is used figuratively for eternity.

This could refer either to the time of one's death or to the return of Christ. The idea is that the end is closer than it was when the believer first came to Christ... some time has passed.

Since the day is close, behavior should reflect the character of that day. We need to be attired for the day.

Verses 13-14

Let us behave properly as in the day, not in carousing and drunkenness, not in sexual promiscuity and sensuality, not in strife and jealousy. But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh in regard to its lusts.

The exhortation is to put on Christ, as an actor puts on the garments and character of the personality which he portrays. In Galatians and I Corinthians Paul gave similar exhortations.

Galatians 3:27 *For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.*

I Corinthians 11:1 *Be imitators of me, just as I also am of Christ.*

F. Christian freedom and tolerance in matters of opinion 14:1-12

The issue in this chapter is one's conscience. The contrast is between the strong brother, who has a properly instructed conscience, and the weak brother, who has an incorrectly informed conscience. The point of the chapter is that we should not tempt each other to violate our consciences. This chapter does not deal with tempting someone in an area where there is temptation to real sin.

Verse 1

Now accept the one who is weak in faith, but not for the purpose of passing judgment on his opinions.

It will be seen as we progress through the chapter that *weak in faith* refers to one whose conscience has labeled certain things right and wrong, which in reality, are neither right nor wrong. So, the weak in faith are those who still labor under a legalistic mentality. The strong brother is doctrinally right and the weak brother is doctrinally wrong.

The Church should accept those who still are not free from the need to make their salvation certain by keeping of formal rules. They should be fully accepted as brothers. They should not just be received, perhaps tolerated, but constantly criticized for their scrupulous mentality. If they want to impose restrictions on themselves for conscience sake, they should be allowed to do so.

Verses 2-3

One man has faith that he may eat all things, but he who is weak eats vegetables only. Let not him who eats regard with contempt him who does not eat, and let not him who does not eat judge him who eats, for God has accepted him.

Some thought that certain foods were sinful. For example, on the basis of the Mosaic Covenant, some converts from Judaism continued to have conscience that would be troubled if they ate pork. These should not be judged because of their incorrectly instructed conscience. Those whose consciences allowed them to eat pork should not be judged for their behavior. It is not our place to judge one another in these matters. It is God's business.

This is an important point in today's church. Because of the various backgrounds of Christians, many have a conscience concerning dress, diet, music, dance, recreational activities, etc. Some of these are very appropriate, given the spiritual condition of the times. Some are just tradition. Christians must judge one another in these areas of opinion. Such matters are between the believer and God.

Verses 4-12

These verses elaborate on this principle. They are so plain that little comment is needed.

Let it be noted that a congregation does not have to adhere to every old crank that comes along. Cranks usually are not weak; they are not going to be tempted to violate their standards.

Colossians 2:16 Therefore let no one act as your judge in regard to food or drink or in respect to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath day--

G. The law of brotherly love takes precedence over personal feeling 14:13-23

Verse 13-15

Therefore let us not judge one another anymore, but rather determine this-- not to put an obstacle or a stumbling block in a brother's way. I know and am convinced in the Lord Jesus that nothing is unclean in itself; but to him who thinks anything to be unclean, to him it is unclean. For if because of food your brother is hurt, you are no longer walking according to love. Do not destroy with your food him for whom Christ died.

We never should do anything to tempt someone to violate his conscience. If one believes that something is evil and he does it, he has chosen evil, even if what he chose is not evil. In his heart he was choosing evil. Should we entice someone to eat pork whose conscience is troubled over the act, we have enticed that brother to sin. Thus, we would be destroying a brother for whom Christ died.

For whom Christ died emphasizes the importance of each believer. It also emphasizes Christ's example. Christ was willing to die for the brother. Can we not sacrifice a moment of pleasure in order to avoid destroying the brother?

It is important to realize that this is a discussion of behavior in matters where there is no true evil in the act. This is not talking about drinking a glass of wine in the presence of a brother who is an alcoholic, thus tempting him to fall off the wagon and return to a life of drunkenness. This is talking about enticing someone to drink a glass of wine whose conscience would bother him if he imbibed.

Verses 16-17

Therefore do not let what is for you a good thing be spoken of as evil; for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.

This deals with the subjective aspect of the Kingdom, the Kingdom principles in the heart of a Christian. Paul lists three characteristics of a citizen of the Kingdom of God

- *Righteousness* - Moral righteousness, not judicial righteousness
- *Peace* - Not only reconciliation with God, but a corresponding disposition, involving love and accord with brothers who disagree in matters of opinion
- *Joy* - This is the logical result of righteousness and peace. This does not refer to having the giggles, but the inner joy, which may be a very quiet joy.

Verse 18

For he who in this way serves Christ is acceptable to God and approved by men.

A Christian with this disposition is one who will be approved by his neighbors as well as his brothers in Christ. This is one of the requirements for eldership (I Timothy 3:7).

Verses 19-23

So then let us pursue the things which make for peace and the building up of one another. Do not tear down the work of God for the sake of food. All things indeed are clean, but they are evil for the man who eats and gives offense. It is good not to eat meat or to drink wine, or to do anything by which your brother stumbles. The faith which you have, have as your own conviction before God. Happy is he who does not condemn himself in what he approves. But he who doubts is condemned if he eats, because his eating is not from faith; and whatever is not from faith is sin.

This is an elaboration and a continuation of that which already has been presented.

Again, note that *faith* in this passage refers to belief about certain behavior. If one believes that something is good, for that person it is good. If one believes that something is evil, for that person it is evil.

The following are criteria that are involved in decisions about behavior:

- Mandatory Law
 1. Prohibition
 2. Precept

- Permissive Law
 1. Expedient
 2. Inexpedient

- The Law of Love

- Apostolic Precedent

In whatever we do, we must not add to the Word of God, but because of other people's conscience, and their inability to resist violating it, we may go along with something for expedience sake.

Note Paul's behavior concerning circumcision of two of his team members. This illustrates another dimension of expediency.

Acts 16:3 Paul wanted this man to go with him; and he took him and circumcised him because of the Jews who were in those parts, for they all knew that his father was a Greek.

This describes Timothy, whom Paul chose to join his apostolic team. The team was going to be working in an area where there were many Jews. In order to remove the stumbling block of having an uncircumcised person on their team, Paul circumcised Timothy.

Paul had a different response concerning Titus.

Galatians 2:1-5 Then after an interval of fourteen years I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, taking Titus along also. And it was because of a revelation that I went up; and I submitted to them the gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, but I did so in private to those who were of reputation, for fear that I might be running, or had run, in vain. But not even Titus who was with me, though he was a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised. But it was because of the false brethren who had sneaked in to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, in order to bring us into bondage. But we did not yield in subjection to them for even an hour, so that the truth of the gospel might remain with you.

When Paul took uncircumcised Titus with him to Jerusalem, James and the other mature leaders did not compel Titus to be circumcised. However, there were Judaizing teachers in the Jerusalem Church who insisted that Paul circumcise Titus. Paul refused. Why the difference between Paul's circumcision of Timothy and his refusal to circumcise Titus?

In Timothy's case, Paul chose to remove a barrier to evangelism. It was a choice freely made for expediency. In Titus' case, there were those who were trying to add something to the Gospel and Paul refused to give them one inch of ground. Thus, there are times when we will refuse to give in to a weaker brother's improperly instructed conscience. That would be when the weaker

brother is trying to impose a rule on us in order to make us Christians. This would not be a situation in which our behavior is tempting this brother to violate his conscience. He probably is so rigid that we never could tempt him.

Much of what Paul wrote in the First Corinthian Letter, dealing with women and other cultural matters fall into the realm of expediency.

An illustration of how some Christians have forced certain behaviors upon others in order to make them Christian is the way some missionaries have insisted that converts become westernized. In Hawaii, the missionary wives developed the mumu as dress for Christians. They thought that the native attire was not appropriate for believers. Now, the mumu is so much a part of Hawaii that its origin is forgotten. In country after country, converts began wearing suits and other western attire, because the missionaries westernized them. Western customs equaled, "saved."

H. Christ's example of demonstrating love through self-denial for the good of others 15:1-13

Verse 1

Now we who are strong ought to bear the weaknesses of those without strength and not just please ourselves.

Note Paul's seemingly contradictory statements in Galatians 6:

Galatians 6:2 *Bear one another's burdens, and thus fulfill the law of Christ.*

Galatians 6:5 *For each one shall bear his own load.*

There is a sense in which each one must bear his own burden. Each person will stand before the judgment seat of God and be judged concerning our response to opportunities and responsibilities. However, we are to help one another in the time of trouble.

Verses 2-3

Let each of us please his neighbor for his good, to his edification. For even Christ did not please Himself; but as it is written, "The reproaches of those who reproached thee fell upon Me."

Christ did not incarnate for a pleasure jaunt. He came for a noble purpose. These verses remind us of Hebrews 10:24-26, which state that the reason for attending worship services is to stimulate one another to faithful living.

...and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more, as you see the day drawing near. For if we go on sinning willfully after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins.

Verse 4

For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction, that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.

The Old Testament was written for our instruction. The Old Testament was the Bible of the early Church. The lessons taught therein are for our instruction (Romans 4:23ff; 2 Timothy 3:16; I Corinthians 10:6, 11).

The Greek word translated *encouragement* is the word *paraklesis* (**para**κλῆσις), which means, "to call alongside." Picture a man fighting through a severe snow storm, trying to reach shelter. He is weak and weary, just ready to fall. Suddenly, a strong man comes along and puts his arm around his shoulder and guides him to safety. The helper doesn't take away the storm or darkness, but his encouragement gives the traveler the extra strength needed to go on.

The noun form of this Greek word is used to describe the Holy Spirit and in one instance, Our Glorified Lord.

John 14:16 "And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another **Helper**, that He may be with you forever;

John 14:26 "But the **Helper**, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you.

John 15:26 "When the **Helper** comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, *that is* the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, He will bear witness of Me,

John 16:7 "But I tell you the truth, it is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the **Helper** shall not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you.

1 John 2:1 My little children, I am writing these things to you that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an **Advocate** with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous;

Thus, we have three *paracletes*:

- *Scripture* which speaks to us objectively
- *The Holy Spirit* who speaks to us subjectively
- *Our Lord Jesus Christ* who intercedes for our forgiveness before the Father, when we sin.

Verse 5-6

Now may the God who gives perseverance and encouragement grant you to be of the same mind with one another according to Christ Jesus; that with one accord you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

We will not all have the same opinion about matters. However, we are to have the same affection for one another. Unity is of prime important in the Kingdom.

When praise to God comes out of a united congregation, it brings joy to God's heart and joy to the congregation giving the praise. A divided congregation can praise, but it is an individual matter of praise. A united congregation praises God as a unit.

Verse 7

Wherefore, accept one another, just as Christ also accepted us to the glory of God.

The Church is a society of the redeemed. It should be a foretaste of heaven. Unfortunately, in some congregations, it is a foretaste of hell. When we have a problem with our attitude toward someone, we should stop and ask how Christ could have accepted us.

Verses 8-12

For I say that Christ has become a servant to the circumcision on behalf of the truth of God to confirm the promises given to the fathers, and for the Gentiles to glorify God for His mercy; as it is written, "Therefore I will give praise to Thee among the Gentiles, and I will sing to Thy Name." And again He says, "Rejoice, O Gentiles, with His people." And again, "Praise the Lord all you Gentiles, and let all the peoples praise Him." And again Isaiah says, "There shall come the root of Jesse, and He who arises to rule over the Gentiles, in Him shall the Gentiles hope."

Two reasons are given here for Christ's coming to the earth:

- To confirm the promises given to the fathers (to the Jews)
- To glorify God for His mercy (to the Gentiles)

In these verses, Paul quotes the Septuagint at Psalm 18:49; Deuteronomy 32:43; Psalm 117:1; Isaiah 11: 1, 10.

Verse 13

Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Paul prayed that the Romans might abound in hope. Two sources for this hope are given:

- The joy and peace that is experienced as a result of belief
- The power of the Holy Spirit

Belief produces inner joy and peace. Inner joy and peace produces hope which is enhanced by the Holy Spirit. God is described here as *the God of hope*. The hope is not specified, but the term usually refers to the resurrection.

Note that *belief* in this verse does not refer to believing in Christ, but in believing what the apostle has just been saying. By such belief the disciples would be caused to desist from judging one another and would be led to accept and love one another in Christ.

VI. CONCLUSION OF THE EPISTLE, INCLUDING PERSONAL COMMENTS AND GREETINGS 15:14-16:27

A. Personal comments, including reference to Paul's labors and plans 15:14-33

Verse 14

And concerning you, my brethren, I myself also am convinced that you yourselves are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, and able also to admonish one another.

Paul had not written to them because of their ignorance. On the contrary, he knew the state of their knowledge and it was high. Neither had he admonished them because they were not capable of admonishing one another. He was influenced by other reasons, which he immediately presents.

Verse 15-16

But I have written very boldly to you on some points, so as to remind you again, because of the grace that was given me from God, to be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles, ministering as a priest the gospel of God, that my offering of the Gentiles might become acceptable, sanctified by the Holy Spirit.

Paul states that he has written boldly on some points. The Greek expression, *apo merous* (ἀπο< με<ροῦς) carries the idea of "in part." So Paul is saying that he was bold here and there, or in certain parts of the letter. He did not, in these sections, impart anything new to them. He was reminding them of what they already knew.

He states that he had written to them boldly because of his apostleship, as he had the right to do. This was his duty and he was fulfilling it.

The expression, *ministering as a priest*, is the Greek term, *hierourgeo* (ἱε<ρου<ργε<ω). The term is borrowed from the Temple service and denotes to officiate as a priest or to perform priestly duties. It is an interesting turn of phrase for Paul to use the term here. Nowhere in the New Testament is the concept of a priesthood displayed in Christianity. The concept that grew into Roman Catholicism & Greek Orthodoxy is post-biblical. Paul pictures himself as being a priest offering up to God the Gentile converts as a pure offering.

My offering of the Gentiles, also is Temple language. *He prosphora* (ἡ<προ<σφο<ρα) the offering, continues the same sacrificial image as was used in 12:1-2. The sacrifices offered in the New Covenant are not dumb animals, but human beings, in this instance, the great body of Gentile Churches. The old sacrifices are no longer pleasing to the Lord. These are acceptable, made so by the Holy Spirit which indwells the offering.

1 Peter 2:5 *you also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.*

1 Corinthians 6:11 *And such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the Spirit of our God.*

Verses 17-21

Therefore in Christ Jesus I have found reason for boasting in things pertaining to God. For I will not presume to speak of anything except what Christ has accomplished through me, resulting in the obedience of the Gentiles by word and deed, in the power of signs and wonders, in the power of the Spirit; so that from Jerusalem and round about as far as Illyricum I have fully preached the gospel of Christ. And thus I aspired to preach the gospel, not where Christ was already named, that I might not build upon another man's foundation; but as it is written, "They who had no news of Him shall see, and they who have not heard shall understand. "

Paul indicates that he has a feeling of self-confidence in his position, which arises from the fact that he is a servant of Christ and of the Gospel. He is defending his authority on two grounds:

- His apostolic mission, as proved by his successful mission (vs. 18-20)
- The sphere of his labors, the Gentile world, more especially that portion of it in which the Gospel had not been officially preached.

The emphasis is on *in Christ* and *things pertaining to God*.

Paul states that it is only works done through him that he cares to mention. Yet, the value of such work is the result of the fact that it is not his own, but Christ's working through him. The work is among the Gentiles and so this gives Paul a right to exercise authority over a Gentile Church like the Roman Church.

In the power of signs and wonders is language used often in the New Testament to express "miracles."

2 Corinthians 12:12 *The signs of a true apostle were performed among you with all perseverance, by signs and wonders and miracles.*

Hebrews 2:4 *God also bearing witness with them, both by signs and wonders and by various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit according to His own will.*

1 Corinthians 12:28 *And God has appointed in the church, first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, various kinds of tongues.*

In the combination, *signs and wonders*, (*semeia kai terata*- *shmeia kai τέρατα*), both words have the same denotation, but different connotations.

- *Teras* (wonders), implies anything marvelous or extraordinary in itself
- *Semeion* (signs) represents the same event, but not just a purposeless event; it is a sign or token of the agency by which it is accomplished.

When the third word, *power* (*dunamis* - *δύναμις*), is added, the implication is that these "works" are the exhibition of more than natural power.

Paul is stating that his work was accomplished in the power of signs and wonders. They are looked upon as a sign and external exhibition of the apostolic grace. They are a sign that the Holy Spirit which filled him was active in his ministry.

From Jerusalem and round about as far as Illyricum has caused considerable discussion. Many of the commentators of the late 1800's took the term, *round about*, to be tied to Jerusalem, thus they would render the phrase, *from Jerusalem and round about*. As Sanday and Headlam point out, this is not the best rendering of the Greek. The translation before us is best.

The next question about this phrase is what is meant by *as far as Illyricum*. Does this include or exclude Illyricum? The Greek is ambiguous. The reason that this is of interest is because there is some question as to the extent of Paul's labors. Did they include Illyricum? Acts 20:2 and Titus 3:12 in combination suggest that Paul may have preached in Illyria, but leave it uncertain. It has been suggested that Jerusalem and Illyria represent the limits of Paul's ministry.

Paul strove eagerly (the meaning of the Greek term) to preach where no one had preached before. He was averse to preaching where someone else had already laid a foundation. He used Isaiah 52:15 to explain his passion.

Verses 22-24

For this reason I have often been hindered from coming to you; but now, with no further place for me in these regions, and since I have had for many years a longing to come to you whenever I go to Spain-- for I hope to see you in passing, and to be helped on my way there by you, when I have first enjoyed your company for a while--

The reason why Paul had been prevented from coming to Rome was not the fear that he would be building upon another man's foundation, but because he was so occupied in preaching in the districts through which he had been traveling. Now there was no region in these districts untouched by his preaching.

We do not know if Paul ever got to Spain. His hope was that he could visit Rome for the first time and that the Roman Church would help him to travel on to Spain.

Verses 25-28

but now, I am going to Jerusalem serving the saints. For Macedonia and Achaia have been pleased to make a contribution for the poor among the saints in Jerusalem. Yes, they were pleased to do so, and they are indebted to them. For if the Gentiles have shared in their spiritual things, they are indebted to minister to them also in material things. Therefore, when I have finished this, and have put my seal on this fruit of theirs, I will go on by way of you to Spain.

For the time being, Paul had to head in the opposite direction to take the offering to Jerusalem. The references to this offering in such a wide scope of Scripture is one evidence for the credibility of the writing (I Corinthians 16:1-3; II Corinthians 8-9; Acts 24:17).

The Gentiles received the Gospel from the Jews and Paul felt that the Gentiles owed the Jews a debt. Therefore, during the difficult financial times in Jerusalem, it was appropriate for the Gentiles to send an offering

Galatians 6:6 *And let the one who is taught the word share all good things with him who teaches.*

Verses 29-33

And I know that when I come to you, I will come in the fullness of the blessing of Christ. Now I urge you, brethren, by our Lord Jesus Christ and by the love of the Spirit, to strive together with me in your prayers to God for me, that I may be delivered from those who are disobedient in Judea, and that my service for Jerusalem may prove acceptable to the saints; so that I may come to you in joy by the will of God and find refreshing rest in your company. Now the God of peace be with you all. Amen.

This is a passionate appeal for prayer.

- For personal safety
- For the effectiveness of his ministry. He feared that the Jewish Christians might refuse to accept the offering from the Gentile Churches.
- A prayer that he might reach Rome
- A prayer that he might be refreshed

B. Introduction of Phoebe 16:1-2

I commend to you our sister Phoebe, who is a servant of the church which is at Cenchrea; that you receive her in the Lord in a manner worthy of the saints, and that you help her in whatever matter she may have need of you; for she herself has also been a helper of many, and of myself as well.

The chapter begins with Paul's commendation of Phoebe, described as "a servant of the church at Cenchrea." Even though Phoebe was visiting Rome and had contact with the Roman Church, her identity was as a member of the Cenchrean Church. The name, *Phoebe*, means "bright," "pure," or "radiant." We know nothing about Phoebe, except for what is stated here.

The Greek term translated, *servant of the church*, is the same language used for men who are given the title, *deacon*. It is reasonable to consider Phoebe to be a *deaconess* of the Church at Cenchrea. Phoebe had been a helper of Paul while he was at Corinth, for which Cenchrea was the port.

C. Salutations addressed to believers in Rome 16:3-16

- *Greet Prisca and Aquila, my fellow workers in Christ Jesus*, who for my life risked their own necks, to whom not only do I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles;
- also *greet* the church that is in their house.
- Greet Epaphroditus, my beloved, who is the first convert to Christ from Asia.
- Greet Mary, who has worked hard for you.

- Greet Andronicus and Junias, my kinsmen, and my fellow prisoners, who are outstanding among the apostles, who also were in Christ before me.
- Greet Ampliatus, my beloved in the Lord.
- Greet Urbanus, our fellow worker in Christ,
- and Stachys my beloved.
- Greet Apelles, the approved in Christ.
- Greet those who are of the *household* of Aristobulus.
- Greet Herodion, my kinsman.
- Greet those of the *household* of Narcissus, who are in the Lord.
- Greet Tryphaena and Tryphosa, workers in the Lord.
- Greet Persis the beloved, who has worked hard in the Lord.
- Greet Rufus, a choice man in the Lord, also his mother and mine.
- Greet Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermes, Patrobas, Hermas and the brethren with them.
- Greet Philologus and Julia, Nereus and his sister, and Olympas, and all the saints who are with them.
- Greet one another with a holy kiss.
- All the churches of Christ greet you.

These fourteen verses (3-16) are punctuated with the constant refrain, "greet...greet...greet." Paul urges the Roman Church to extend his greetings to twenty-six individuals and to five groups. The picture clearly is one of a church that had a sense of community. These people knew each other and were involved with one another.

Three house-churches are mentioned:

Vs 3-5 the house-church that met in the home of Prisca and Aquila

V 14 the house-church that included Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermes, Patrobas, Hermas and the brethren that are with them

V 15 the house-church that included Philologus, Julia, Nereus, his sister, Olympas, and all the saints who are with them.

At the heart of the Christian faith is its meeting, the assembly of the faith community. The early Christians, like the Jews, met in open places (Pliny, *Letters*, 17; Acts 16:13,16) and in hired halls (Acts 19:9). However, it seems that the most common meeting place was in the homes of believers (Acts 2:46; 12:12; etc.) The earliest example of a church building to be discovered by archaeologists is a house in the city of Dura-Europos (located in modern Syria). The original house was remodeled to accommodate a house-church between 232 and 256, the year that Dura-Europos fell to the Sassanians.² Churches located in homes are specifically mentioned six times in Scripture. In addition to the three instances before us, reference also is made to house-churches in I Corinthians 16:19; Colossians 4:15; and Philemon 2. In such house-churches, intimacy, identity, and bonding would be the expected norm.

Two other groups of interest to our study are mentioned in Romans 16:10-11. These verses probably do not refer to house-churches. Notice that neither Aristobulus nor Narcissus are greeted. The Greek says, "Greet those of the Aristobulus," and "Greet those of the Narcissus."

²For an excellent and detailed article on the Dura-Europos house church, see: Graydon and Snyder, *Ante Pacem*, Mercer University Press, Macon, GA, 1985, pg 67-71.

The KJV translators added the word, "household," in an effort to make the sentences more understandable to English readers. Most modern translations followed suit. However, the Greek text does not contain the word for "household," (οἰκεῖον, οἰκεθῆν, οἰκία οἰκιακόν, are the Greek terms that express various concepts of a household, all derivatives of οἶκος, meaning, "house").

The custom in Rome was for the slaves of a deceased prominent figure to be referred to thereafter, as "the (name of deceased master)," regardless of who owned them in the future. For example, the famous Roman historian Livy (BC 59 - AD 17), had among his slaves the Maecenatiani (slaves from the household of the deceased Maecenas), Amyntiani (slaves from the household of the deceased Amyntas), Agrippiani (slaves from the household of the deceased Agrippina), and Germaniciniani (slaves from the household of the deceased Germanicus).

The consensus of classical New Testament scholars, especially from Lightfoot onward, is that the language of verses 10 & 11 *ton aristoboulou* (τῶν Ἀριστοβούλου), "the of Aristobulus," probably refers to the slaves of the deceased grandson of Herod the Great, Aristobulus.³ Aristobulus was a friend and political supporter of Emperor Claudius. Because of his nationality, Aristobulus' household slaves presumably would have included Jews and other Palestinians. Upon his death, the normal thing would have been for his slaves to have been added to the slaves of the Imperial household. In that setting, these would have been called, "those of Aristobulus."⁴

The same would be true of the *ton narkissou* (τῶν Ναρκίσσου), "the of Narcissus." This Narcissus probably was the wealthy and influential freedman who was the secretary to Emperor Claudius. It was at his orders that Claudius' wife, Messalina, was put to death. Two years after Nero succeeded Claudius, Agrippina, Nero's mother, fearing the threat of Narcissus' political power, ordered the execution of Narcissus. Nero would have confiscated Narcissus' slaves and added them to his household.

Interestingly, in between these two groups is mentioned Paul's kinsman, Herodion. Both by his name and the fact that he is Paul's kinsman, we know that Herodion was a Jew. Since he is mentioned in conjunction with *the of Aristobulus*, he probably was one of the Jewish/Christian slaves of Aristobulus that were transferred to the ownership of the Caesar.

The thing to observe in all of this is that even though brothers and sisters were slaves in the palace of Caesar, they were known and were considered to be a part of the local church.

D. Warning against those who cause divisions 16:17-20

Now I urge you, brethren, keep your eye on those who cause dissensions and hindrances contrary to the teaching which you learned, and turn away from them. For such men are slaves, not of our Lord Christ but of their own appetites; and by their smooth and flattering speech they

³For a brief discussion, see, Sanday, William and Headlam, Arthur, *The International Critical Commentary*, THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS, Charles Scribner and Sons, New York, 1896, pgs 425-426.

⁴Lard is a notable exception (Lard, Moses E., *Commentary on Romans*, Standard Publishing, Cincinnati, 1875, pg 457)

deceive the hearts of the unsuspecting. For the report of your obedience has reached to all; therefore I am rejoicing over you, but I want you to be wise in what is good, and innocent in what is evil. And the God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet. The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you.

There are honorable divisions. Christ came to bring a sword. Homes will be divided over Christ. There also is ungodly division.

Keep your eye on is a translation of *skopein* (σκοπεῖν), which means "to mark."

Hindrances is the translation of *skandala* (σκάνδαλα), which has the basic meaning of "trap" or "snare." These are the hindrances to Christian progress caused by the divisions.

To Titus, Paul wrote *Reject a factious man after a first and second warning, knowing that such a man is perverted and is sinning, being self-condemned.* (Titus 3:10-11)

Paul warned the Corinthians, in the light of their dissensions, *Do you not know that you are a temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? If any man destroys the temple of God, God will destroy him, for the temple of God is holy, and that is what you are* (I Corinthians 3:16-17). The topic in this passage is the local church, which Paul calls the temple of God.

The description of the Romans as *innocent in what is evil*, reminds us of the Garden of Eden. The divisive members are like Satan in the Garden.

With that figure in mind, verse 20, *And the God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet. The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you*, becomes more meaningful.

E. Salutations from Paul's companions 16:21-23

Timothy my fellow worker greets you, and so do Lucius and Jason and Sosipater, my kinsmen. I, Tertius, who write this letter, greet you in the Lord. Gaius, host to me and to the whole church, greets you. Erastus, the city treasurer greets you, and Quartus, the brother.

- Timothy, of course is Paul's constant companion.
- Lucius probably is the Lucius of Cyrene mentioned in Acts 13:1
- Jason probably is the one mentioned in Acts 17:5-9.
- Sosipater may be the one mentioned in Acts 20:4, who was a native of Berea.

These all were Jews.

Tertius was Paul's amanuensis for this letter. He sends his own greetings. It was Paul's custom to employ one of his disciples in this manner, when writing a letter (I Corinthians 16:21; Colossians 4:18; II Thessalonians 3:17; cf. Gal. 6:11).

Gaius was Paul's host in Corinth, from which the letter was sent. In the introduction we mentioned that a paving stone was found in Corinth in which an Erastus is mentioned as supervisor of public works (cf. II Timothy 4:20).

F. Concluding doxology 16:24-27

{The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.} Now to Him who is able to establish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery which has been kept secret for long ages past, but now is manifested, and by the Scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the eternal God, has been made known to all the nations, leading to obedience of faith; to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, be the glory forever. Amen.

A number of manuscripts do not contain the portion in { }. The epistle concludes with a doxology that is somewhat unusual for Paul. Incidentally, all of the great thoughts of the epistle are summed up in this doxology. One author stated, "This is the most condensed, yet the most comprehensive doxology ever penned." The tremendous theology in the salutation and the theology in the doxology are fitting bookends for this epistle.

APPENDIX

The material in the Appendix was presented in the Romans class taught at Tulsa Christian Fellowship, Tulsa, Oklahoma. Much of the material is copyrighted, and may be legally distributed in a classroom, but not as a part of a document on the internet.

JWG