

BOOK OF ROMANS

The book of Romans has been called the hub of the gospel where Paul introduces the depths of the truth. The spokes of truth go out in all directions expounding on the various truths introduced. The theme of the book of Romans is the gospel of God. It is a book that contains everything that pertains to life and godliness that the believer needs to know.

In Romans we read of the simplicity of receiving Christ as Savior, and that it is all by grace, and not by works. We also read that nothing can separate us from the love of God, that we are heirs of God forever, and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ if so be that we suffer with Him we will be glorified together with Him. If we would take all of Romans in, by the grace of God, we would win His best which is Christ Jesus as our bridegroom. Our heavenly Father has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in Christ our redeemer, and the Holy Spirit sheds the love of God abroad in our hearts.

The book of Romans unlocks all Paul's other epistles. It lays the gospel of Christ out in detailed simplicity from beginning to end. This book makes us feel right at home in our Father's house. This book is vital to receive and to understand the whole counsel of God in Christ Jesus.

The order of Romans was divinely placed in the Bible. Paul wrote 14 letters of which Romans was the fifth. But it was placed first in order before the other 13 books. This is not a mistake, because God divinely ordered its placement in His word. Romans is the high water mark, emphasizing the word of God, of faith in grace. Without faith in grace we couldn't even venture into Paul's other epistles, because faith in grace is the key to going on and to growing on with God. We grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ (2 Peter 3:18). It is on the grace path that we go right into the midst of the throne ruling and reigning with Him. Faith in grace is faith in the great love that God has for us, the absolute assurance that we can never be separated from the love of God. When we know we are loved, we appreciate and are thankful for the freedom God has given us – freedom from sin, guilt, and death. Whom God has made free is free indeed. The grace of God is our power source. The Lord is our rock and our quickening. His unmerited, unending, undying love is our joy and our strength. How great is the love wherewith we are loved.

The saints in Rome had faith that was known throughout the world. They were admired by other Christians because they were known to love the Lord. Rome was a wicked and evil city. For those Roman saints to stand in faith, they had to have tremendous grace, faith and love. Paul was encouraged by these sweet saints.

The first 11 chapters are not specifically to the Romans, but contain deep and intense doctrine to all God's people. Chapters 12-16 are written specifically to the Romans, and are specifically about the love of God that works effectually in order to win His best.

Romans is divided into five divisions:

- 1) Declaration of the gospel (Chapter 1:1 - 1:17)
- 2) Need of the gospel (1:18 - 3:20)
- 3) Unfolding of the gospel (3:21 - 5:21)
- 4) Result of the gospel (6:1 - 11:36)
- 5) Practical side of the gospel (12:1 - 16:27)

CHAPTER 1

DIVISION 1: DECLARATION OF THE GOSPEL

Chapter 1 deals with the immoral man who is without Christ.

VERSE 1

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

A servant of Jesus Christ

Paul didn't take his orders from men and was not bound by men. He didn't allow men to dictate what he could speak. He was a servant of Jesus Christ. Any minister of the gospel has to be the same way. They should speak as Jesus speaks, and not as man would have them speak. Paul got his orders and his message from Jesus, and he was accountable only to Jesus. Paul was not a servant like most people consider a servant, but rather he was a prisoner of the love of Jesus Christ. We should follow Paul as he followed Christ.

Called to be an apostle

Paul was called to be an apostle by God. He didn't grow up wanting this, but God plucked him out. Paul was an apostle from the very beginning when God called him and equipped him as an apostle. God sent him to the Gentiles as an apostle.

Separated unto the gospel of Christ

Separated means off limits. Paul was off limits to everyone except God. He was shut up to God, and he was the Lord's own. This is getting into bridal talk immediately. If we really want to be part of the bride, we have to become separated unto Him and be that vessel only for the master's use. We'll either go with God, or we will go with things of this world. The Holy Spirit puts a drawing and a love in our hearts. We just need to join the race to attain God's best, which is Jesus Christ as bridegroom. Love causes us to leave the familiar to follow Him. He provides everything, and He takes care of everything. We have to have the steps of faith all along the way. We must also be separated to Paul's gospel which tells us the Bridal message.

VERSE 2

(Which He had promised afore by His prophets in the holy scriptures.)

The gospel can be said in one word, Christ. He is the gospel, and the gospel means good news, good tidings. It isn't rules and regulations or a list of do's and don'ts. God promised Christ all through the scriptures.

VERSE 3

Concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh;

His son Jesus Christ

This is the person the gospel is all about.

After the seed of David

This shows the humanity of Jesus Christ. He was God, but also human. He became a man in the lineage of David, and God went to great lengths to see to it that He came through that particular lineage. There were some unsavory people in that lineage, but that is the way God chooses to do things. Jesus came from the tribe of Judah, and is known as the Lion of the tribe of Judah.

VERSE 4

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

Son of God with power

Paul is establishing the proof of the Lord Jesus Christ from the words of the prophets, from the seed of David evidenced by the Holy Spirit's power, raised from the dead. This is the very power of His might that He has given to us. Jesus is the Son of God, the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. He is our God, our Savior, our Lord, the friend that sticks closer than a brother. He is the one who created every before-ordained good work for our lives that we should walk therein.

Jesus is God's Son, and has the power to redeem, but when He was born a human of Mary, many people didn't believe the virgin birth. They thought that Mary had gotten herself in trouble, and made the virgin birth story up to cover up her sin. Jesus had to live with that as well as Mary. The Pharisees confronted Jesus and told Him they were not born of fornication, inferring that He had been born illegitimately.

Resurrection from the dead

Jesus' resurrection from the dead proved He was the Son of God, and proved His Spirit of Holiness. It was proven beyond the shadow of a doubt that redemption was complete, and that God had accepted the offering of the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus died for our sins, but was blameless in His life. He was holy and could not sin.

VERSE 5

By whom we have received grace and apostleship, for obedience to the faith among all nations, for His name:

Grace and apostleship

Paul knew it was because of Jesus that he was in that place. When Jesus called him, Paul asked Him who He was, and Jesus said, "I am Jesus whom thou persecutest."

Everything comes from the Lord. He has given us all this great grace, which is the power source of everything in our lives. The full exceeding abundant provision of grace is in us. Christ is in us, and we are in Him, so we have it all. His life is freely given to us by faith, and we have the same access to the Father that Jesus does, because He lives in every believer. The only way we can become believers is if Christ's life comes to live in us.

Obedience to the faith

We receive grace and apostleship because of obedience to the faith. Grace gives us faith, and not only that, God gives us grace to be obedient to the faith. Grace commands us; it doesn't force us to submit to believing God. Grace causes us to surrender and see the love of God, and believe in the love of God. Faith works by love. We will never really believe the Lord unless we see His love for us. God so loved the world that He gave us Jesus. He didn't just give Him, He gave Him to be abused verbally and

physically, hated, mocked, and nailed to a cross to become sin for all men. This is how much God loved us.

John 3:16

For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him, should not perish, but have everlasting life.

God doesn't want to break our necks. He just wants us to see how much He loves us. Our whole walk is for us to see the unmerited, all powerful love He has for us, that transforms us from glory to glory into His very image (2 Corinthians 3:18). Jesus loves me this I know, for the Bible tells me so. This is the child-like faith we need to really grow up in Him.

VERSE 6

Among whom are ye also the called of Jesus Christ:

Ye also

Paul was a Jew, and "ye also" shows he is referring to the Gentiles. In the Old Testament, anybody who wasn't a Jew was considered an uncircumcised Philistine. The Jews thought the Gentiles were different from them, and that the Gentiles were totally out of the scheme of things.

After Christ came into the world and died on the cross, after the day of Pentecost, and after the house of Cornelius was filled with the Spirit, it could no longer be denied that the Gentiles had just as much access to God as did the Jews.

Are the called of Jesus Christ

Paul is acknowledging that the Gentiles are being included in the house of God. This was Paul's ministry, he preached among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ. The Gentiles have been called of Christ to receive the gospel along with the Jews.

VERSE 7

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

To all that be in Rome

The majority of the population of Rome was Gentile. The word Rome means strength, and this is the way we often are when we first receive the gospel of strength. We can't stay this way if we are to learn God's truths, and His ways, if we remain strong in ourselves. We must learn to rely on His strength, not ours. Sometimes He has to take drastic measures to take us beyond our strength. We must be willing to let the Lord change us.

Beloved of God

Beloved means much loved. The saints in Rome were Gentiles, despised by the Jews but beloved of God. Jesus told Peter after the house of Cornelius received the Spirit that he could no longer reject or despise the Gentiles. Jews will always be beloved of God, but after Christ died on the cross for all men, and after the stoning of Stephen (which meant the Jews as a whole rejected Jesus Christ) the Gentiles who believed Christ were then included in God's beloved. Thank you, Lord!

Called to be saints

The words "to be" are not in the original manuscripts, but were added by interpreters. Their addition takes away from the intended meaning. We are not called "to be" saints, we are called saints. Saint means holy one. From the moment we believe we are called holy ones. This is because of the holy seed of Christ is implanted in us by the Holy Spirit when we believe on Jesus. Then God declares us holy unto Him. That seed is the seed that remaineth.

1 John 3:9

Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for His seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.

Grace and peace

Grace always comes before peace for we will never have peace unless we first have grace. God loves us, and in that love He will perform the good work He has begun in us. The word of God is our peace. This duo of love and grace is found again and again in Paul's epistles, and the order is always the same. We receive grace first, and then peace. Peace is a result of grace.

VERSE 8

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

Thank my God through Jesus Christ

The first thing any Christian should do is to thank God through Jesus Christ. Everything we have and all that we hope for is in, and because of, Jesus.

Faith spoken of

These Roman saints had a testimony, and their faith was known of all over the world. They had a great faith, and a great testimony before Paul ever went to them.

VERSE 9

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

Whom I serve with my spirit

In our own lives we must realize real service to God is done in spirit. We will do things in body because our bodies serve as a vehicle for the spirit.

Praying without ceasing

Because of the faith of these saints, Paul never ceases to pray for them. Likewise, we should especially and fervently pray for those of like precious faith. In Paul's message we find he prayed more for saints than sinners. He made mention of these saints always in his prayers.

Paul is thankful for these people because they believed the word of God. He is thankful for their faith, and that they pleased God. Without believing in God, we have no hope. Good thoughts or deeds are useless without belief.

VERSE 10

Making request, if by any means now at length I might have a prosperous journey by the will of God to come unto you.

Making request

Request is the key word, he is not making demands. We cannot demand anything from God.

If by any means

This is Paul wanting to fellowship with that body of believers, who were truly running the race to attain God's best. These saints wanted the whole counsel of God, and Paul loved these people who were the body of Christ. He sees them as the bride of Christ, and there is no hypocrisy in that love. There is a passion that is the very love of Jesus, so matured and grown in a heart that there is no difference in the body and the head in that love, because it is Christ in us the hope of glory. Paul wasn't out to save the world, but he was out to preach the goodly pearl message, which is the bridal message. He was into a ministry that preaches there is a company that will win Christ, and rule and reign jointly with Him in the midst of the throne. Paul preached the message that Christ is looking for a readied wife. God has sent the Holy Spirit to minister to those saints, us included, who want this high calling of God, and He is holding nothing back. Paul preached the strong meat message that was needed to grow us children up into that readied wife. Paul's gospel brings the spiritual gift of an insatiable desire to win Christ. The message Paul preached was the Holy Spirit taking the love of God, and shedding it abroad in our hearts. Like David said of the Lord, "My heart pants after Him." We should want to have a fruitful life to be pleasing to Him, and that is what God is after. To know the height, the depth, the width and the length of God's word, we have to have love's magnified power.

Prosperous journey

By God's will, not by Paul's will. Everything Christians do or say should be by the will of God.

VERSE 11

For I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established;

Spiritual gift

This is the gospel.

To the end

The whole time we are on the earth we will get more and more of the gospel. The Holy Spirit will lead us into all the truth. We must constantly be teachable, and willing to learn. Our hearts must be constantly open to all the beautiful truth found in God's wonderful word.

Be established

Only the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ can establish us, nothing else can. The deeper the message we receive, the more established and steadfast we become. We will stand and withstand, and become immovable as we become established.

VERSE 12

That is, that I may be comforted together with you by the mutual faith both of you and me.

Comforted together

This is being exalted together at the same time and to be exalted with the Lord at the Lord's day. In due time we will be exalted at the first trump, and we have to rely on Him completely that He will have us attain the prize of His high calling. He wants this for our lives a lot more than we could ever want it. It was the love and faithfulness of God that would continue to run Paul down the race course and finish with a full joy. Paul wanted to run the race in mutual faith with the saints who were running also. God does it all. Let go and let God do that work in us.

Mutual faith

We can converse with one another on the basis of the amount of truth each of us know. Some know more truth than others, so the amount of deep fellowship will vary depending on the amount of knowledge of the truth each knows. Paul wanted it to be a mutual faith between both he and the Roman saints.

Verses 11 and 12 are high water marks in the word of God. There is tremendous depth in these two verses for us to receive by His Spirit. Paul is talking about a wedding gift which is divine grace. Paul wants to bring the message and encouragement of love in divine grace. Divine grace established them to the end. Established means to be finished, complete, perfect, and ready to be offered - all by divine grace.

VERSE 13

Now I would not have you ignorant, brethren, that oftentimes I purposed to come unto you, (but was let hitherto,) that I might have some fruit among you also, even as among other Gentiles.

I purposed to come unto you

Paul had some good intentions, but God wouldn't permit him to do what he intended. Just as in our own lives we have very honorable things we want to do, but God won't permit us if what we want to do interfere with His plans. We need to be sensitive to the Lord, and try not to do what he doesn't lead us to do.

Let hitherto

Let means hindered. God didn't allow Paul to go to Rome because He had something else for him to do, or somewhere else He wanted him to go.

VERSE 14

I am a debtor both to the Greeks, and to the barbarians; both to the wise, and to the unwise.

I am a debtor

We have the same debt, and to whom much is given, much is required. We have been given the high calling of God in Christ Jesus message, the very inheritance of the fullness of God, and there is much required in that. If the love of God is really shed abroad in our hearts, and if His love is really sown and grown in our hearts, we won't become reclusive or miserly. We will have the very heart and the passion of Jesus Christ himself, to touch any and all we can when the Lord gives us opportunity to. We need to be ready to give answer to any man about the hope that lies within us. Don't be ashamed of the gospel of Christ, it is our power and salvation.

To the Greeks and barbarians

When God gives us a portion of truth, we then become debtors to others. God makes us responsible to give others what He gave us. When God gave Paul the gospel message, he became a debtor to us all.

VERSE 15

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

How much lies within us? Is Jesus really our life, our first love? Are we so in love with Him that we want to minister so that our lives become a living sacrifice? Is it really Christ in us the hope of glory? Lord help us to not to grow weary in well doing. We want to be a vessel the Lord will use.

VERSE 16

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

I am not ashamed of the gospel

We should never be ashamed of the gospel. The power of the gospel, and only the gospel, is the way to salvation. In the dark day we live in we are proud to go forward with Christ and witness for Him, and tell others about the amazing bridal truth. We need to trust God to give us the right words when we witness to people. We need to be willing to be used of the Lord, and let Him live in us, and speak through us.

Salvation to everyone

The initial new birth is just the beginning of salvation. The word salvation means delivered. The gospel brings salvation to every person that believes. Believing is the only condition to obtaining salvation.

Jew first and also the Greek

Paul followed this order in his life. This gospel came to the Jew first, and when the Jews rejected Jesus, the gospel was given to the Gentiles. The Gentiles were not just an after-thought, they were part of God's plan from the beginning.

VERSE 17

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

Therein

This is referring to the gospel.

Righteousness of God revealed

The righteousness of the gospel is revealed in us by faith as we believe. This is actually saying that Christ is revealed in us. God reveals Christ in us, and we are then able to preach Christ to others. God puts Christ on display in our lives, and we become a testimony to the world.

Faith to faith

This means we don't get the entire gospel all at once. We go from level to level in believing God. We believe more and more as we grow in faith and learn of Him.

Live by faith

This is how the just shall live day after day. This is living and growing in the life of faith. We can't live by works, or by deeds. Faith produces the greatest works and deeds, motivated by the grace and the love of God. The grace and the love of God brings faith to our lives, and everything for us comes from Him. He will have us perform things in our lives, and have us doing exceeding abundantly above all we ask or think. This is how righteousness is revealed, this is how it is made known in its heights, the exalted rank of righteousness, the crown that Paul speaks of, and it's all because the just shall live by faith, the faith of a child. Anything else we try to live by will be a dead end. The life we live is by the faith of the Son of God. We can't live another way. Now is the time to awaken; we are running out of time. We need to mount up on our camels and ride.

DIVISION 2 - NEED OF THE GOSPEL

VERSE 18

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

The wrath of God revealed

This is opposite of what is revealed in verse 17 where righteousness was revealed. In this verse Paul is revealing God's wrath against the ungodliness and unrighteousness of man. Man, by his wicked ways, actually suppresses the truth. We have seen these things happen in the word of God many times, whether it was Pharaoh, or Sodom and Gomorrah, or those withholding things from the Lord, etc. God reveals Himself mighty, and shows us bits and pieces of wrong doing. He will do that which is right.

Ungodliness and unrighteousness

Those who hold down or suppress the truth by their wickedness are those who don't know Jesus as Savior, and they ignore or hide the truth. It doesn't matter how good someone appears, or how much good they do, if they are not a child of God, their lives are working against the truth. Within ourselves we are unable to keep or do anything. We need God's great grace to overcome the wiles of the devil. Paul knew it was by the Lord's Spirit and by the very power of His might and by His grace that He keeps us. If we want victory in our lives, we need God in our lives. Man falls every time because man follows the path of Satan.

VERSE 19

Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God has showed it unto them.

Manifest in them

This should read manifest to them. This is just as pertinent to use today refers as it was thousands of years ago. This addresses the condition of the heart of men today. God is manifest in all His wondrous creation. How can one not see God in everything?

VERSE 20

For the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse:

Creation

Creation is the absolute expression and manifestation of God. It is no accident in our day that men are trying their best to eliminate creationism in the schools. They think if they can get rid of creationism,

they can get rid of God. Any honest scientist will tell us there is no way that creation just happened. It had to have a Creator because it has highly intelligent design all over it.

Without excuse

It doesn't matter how much they deny God, because He has already clearly showed it to them. God made man in His own image, and we are incredibly put together. How can man consider the human body, as complex as it is, and not see God? The things the human body can do are just mind boggling. The beauty of the earth, the beauty of the sunsets, the stars, the planets, the universe, and all the wondrous things Jesus made reflect how incredible He is. There will be no excuse for any of them when they face Him because He can be seen in everything.

VERSE 21

Because that, when they knew God, they glorified Him not as God, neither were thankful, but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened.

When they knew God

This doesn't mean they were saved, it means that God creates every person with the knowledge that there is God. Every country has some form of a god, because God created in man the necessity to worship a god, but many don't worship the one true GOD.

Two essentials in our walk

The word of God points out two items in this verse that are absolutely essential in our walk with Christ:

1) We ask the Lord for help

When we feel puffed up, think we are increasing, or think we have done anything in our own strength, we need the Lord to make us realize that we can do nothing and that He does it all.

2) Be thankful

We need to be thankful always in all things. Only through, and in the word of God, can we give Him thanks. Jesus is the Word.

These two essential things void in a life can defeat the most fully purposed runners, and only by the grace of God can we be fully aware of the subtlety of that which can defeat us so easily.

VERSE 22-23

Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools and and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four footed beasts, and creeping things.

People who are created at the beginning with the knowledge that there is God, had to learn not to worship the God of the universe. There are six steps downward that they took in verses 21-23 when they didn't believe the one true GOD:

1) They glorified Him not as God. They glorified a false god, but not the God of heaven.

2) Neither were they thankful.

3) They became vain in their imaginations.

4) Their foolish hearts were darkened.

5) Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools.

6) They changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image like corruptible man, birds, and beasts, and creeping things.

These are the things that godless men have always done. They are like a dog that returns to its vomit. Nebuchadnezzar was made a beast in the field because God turned Him over to what he was going after. When God turns men over to their lustful, godless desires, it begins with worshipping corruptible images of man and beasts. Any image worshipped is vile. Christians do not look at an image, but rather look at the word of God. By faith we look at Jesus. The atheist has become a god unto himself. If men do not believe the truth, they will believe a lie. This applies to any truth in the scripture, from salvation to the deepest truths.

VERSE 24

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

God gave them up to uncleanness

People are apt to do all sorts of things to themselves to try to get their god's attention. Men literally abused their bodies by cutting themselves, as in I Kings 17. They never got their false god's attention, because the god they worshipped didn't exist.

Dishonoring their own bodies

People can dishonor many things in life, but when they start dishonoring their own bodies, they are near the point of not having natural thoughts. When they hurt or defile themselves, something is unstable in their minds. They keep doing these things because they have changed God's truth into a lie.

In verse 24 God gave them up in their body; in verse 26 God gave them up in their soul; in verse 28 God gave them up in their spirit. This is just opposite of the plan of redemption. First we must believe in our spirit (new birth), and that transfers to the cleansing of the soul, and transfers to the deeds of the body.

VERSE 25

Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.

They worshipped the creature more than the Creator because of changing God's truth into a lie. This brought them right back to self. If we are to go on with Jesus, we have to deny self and pick up our cross. Our personalities have to be checked, because we lay down self to go with Him. True love loves others more than self. Man gave God up, so God gave these men up. Nothing was learned from this because they continued to go down and away from God.

VERSE 26

For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature.

This means because they didn't worship God's Son Jesus.

VERSE 27

And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompense of their error which was meet.

That which is unseemly

Unseemly means indecent and shameful. God gave up man in his affections, and the soul is the seat of the affections. The ungodly immorality that we have in our world today is not just limited to the deeds of the body, it goes down deep in the soul. Something is amiss in the depths of the psyche of men, and this is a perversion. This is absolutely wrong in the eyes of God, and men will pay the price for it.

The relationships between women with women, and men with men shows how mixed up, confused and debased people are without God. They have a deep need for Him and don't find it. These people go against the laws of nature God set up, and that doesn't lead to furtherance of life. More and more of the Lord in our lives flushes out the dross, and keeps us from being entangled in things that control us. The more we have of Him, the less we have with the world. Greater is He that is in me, than he that is in the world.

Recompense of their error

This means there is a consequence for violating God's principles. It is fitting that God's judgment would come upon these people.

VERSE 28

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

Reprobate mind

This means a mind that is unfit, and unable to discern right from wrong. God gives these people over to an unfit mind. This is something that is cast away from nature, because of the decisions they have made concerning their own lives, and concerning God. These things happen all over the world.

Not convenient

Convenient means indecent, unmentionable, improper. The mind of man is running rampant to evil. They dream up things that are corrupt, horrible, and ungodly. This is because God has given them up in their spirits.

VERSE 29-31

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

Verses 29-31 are a catalog of things that men are capable of, and we see it all around us in our world today. The things catalogued describe the fallen nature of man, and this is what men without God have come to. There is no way out of this state except through Christ Himself. Man can't educate himself out of this mess, it can only come through the new birth, and following the pattern of the gospel that Paul lays down in his message throughout the scriptures.

VERSE 32

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

Knowing the judgment of God

These people are not ignorant of the judgment of God, but it is not a deterrent and they have no fear of the judgment. They simply go on doing what they are doing.

Such things are worthy of death

Judgment is coming upon these people. God made it so simple for people to go to paradise, but they chose another path, and denied Christ. This is very sad, but these people chose their way. God has prepared a lake of fire for those who would not accept His Son. God never intended the lake of fire for humans, but rather for the devil and his followers. Humans put themselves there when they refuse to accept Christ. God intended all humans to be saved and Jesus died to save them from the fire. Even though they reject Him, He still loves them.

Any of the sins reigning in our lives that were mentioned in verses 24-28 will keep Christians from God's best. We are not ignorant of the devil's devices, and self-righteousness is one of his biggest. Vanity, pride, judgment, and being condescending are among them. We are encouraged "Ye that are spiritual restore such a one." Remember the prodigal son, and welcome them back with open arms.

Don't miss God's best, tend your own garden, and remember it's the little foxes that spoil the vine. Live a life that lives "It is written." Don't give the devil place. We need to keep our eyes on the prize (Jesus), and off the world. We need to pray constantly for ourselves and others.

CHAPTER 2

In chapter 1 Paul annihilated the immoral man and in chapter 2 Paul annihilates the moral man. These are Pharisees, and the self-righteous in heart who are without Christ. These moral, self-righteous men without Christ will experience the same judgment as the immoral man.

VERSE 1

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

Judge

Judge means to try, decide, punish, and indicates condemnation.

Judging others condemns them

Paul is referring to the self-righteous Jewish Pharisee. This type of Jew denies Christ, and there is no salvation for them. They judged others to be inexcusable, but they are also inexcusable. Those who judge are doing the same things inwardly, so to God it is the same.

A judgmental and condescending attitude can be seen here. The Lord is calling them conceited hypocrites and pronouncing them all guilty. Because of their Jewish self-righteousness they are even guiltier. Thinking that we merit something in our own goodness is disgusting to God. These Pharisees think their wicked ways are hidden, but nothing is hidden from God. Paul's gospel brings all secrets out front and center, especially self-righteousness which is nothing but self-works. Paul's gospel is the gospel of grace, not works, and if it is not by grace it is sin. We magnify the grace of God, and we glory in it. If what we do doesn't magnify our Lord Jesus Christ, and give Him all the glory, it is self-works, flesh, and refuse to God.

VERSE 2

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

God will judge according to His standard of truth, not the opinions of men. Everything should be measured according to God's truth.

VERSE 3

And thinkest thou this, O man, that judgest them which do such things, and doest the same, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God?

Not escape God's judgment

Because they are judging others while being guilty of doing the same things, they won't escape God's judgment. He will not let it slide.

Do the same things

This tells us how the enemy can warp our minds in self-righteousness. Some can be deceived into thinking that exposing their brother's sin will somehow justify their own sin while thinking God will overlook their sin. Romans 13:14 tells us not to judge men because that is God's business. We should pray for people, not judge them. If we get in that condescending and condemning spirit, that is a dark

place to be. That self-righteous, condemning attitude has defeated many of God's people - even some who were running well in the race for the prize of God's calling. Let God do the correcting, not us.

VERSE 4

Or despisest thou the riches of His goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?

This blindness and insanity of legality continues on. When we judge in condemnation, and attack with no love, we are despising the richness of God's goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering. We are going against the greatest expression of God's love to us. His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering is what leads people to repentance. The thing God most magnifies, and that is the most magnificent of His Son, is goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering. This is the love and great grace of God that causes many to be saved. Goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering are all descriptions of great grace. It is grace, and not the law, that leads to repentance. The word of His grace is what convicts us, and causes our hearts to break for Him and respond to Him in love. Grace brings about that broken heart and contrite spirit. The hearts in this verse are completely against that, and have consciences that have been seared with a hot iron. They no longer have a conscience.

VERSE 5

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

In Exodus we read of how Pharaoh hardened his heart. He knew who God was, but he wouldn't yield. When people reject light, more and more darkness sets in.

The people in verses 4 and 5 are Christ-rejecters. It is the rich, or moral, man that despises the riches of God's goodness and His grace. If they persist, there will come a day when God will no longer deal with them, and only God knows when that time will come. The judges without Christ get worse and worse, and develop more and more hatred. Not only do they not soften as far as judging one another, they find pleasure in what they do. They hoard this sin like a treasure. They are corrupted and have addled minds. They think being pious and judgmental a great thing. But it's not a great thing. It is a hateful, ugly mind that continues to grow.

VERSE 6

Who will render to every man according to His deeds;

These are ones who wouldn't accept God's grace, so at the day of judgment they will not be judged by the grace of God, but rather by their own deeds. God views man's works as self-righteousness, and they are like filthy rags to Him. Just as there are degrees of glory, there may be degrees of punishment in hell. None of these punishments will be good, but some may be less severe than others. We Christians will only be judged for rewards we will receive, our riches in Christ.

VERSE 7

To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life:

Glory

Glory is from one place, the very glory of God is in the face of Jesus Christ. Those who see glory see Jesus Christ who is the glory. He is everything.

Romans 16:27

To God only wise, be glory through Jesus Christ forever.

Honor

Jesus is honor.

Revelation 4:11

Thou art worthy O Lord to receive glory, honor and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.

Immortality

If we believe in Jesus we will have life everlasting. Jesus is eternal life.

John 3:16

For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him, should not perish, but have everlasting life.

VERSE 8-9

But to them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation, and wrath. Tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile:

Those who do not obey the truth of God will never be righteous. Honor, glory and immortality can only come through Jesus.

VERSE 10

But glory, honor, and peace, to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile.

These are those who obey God's truth.

VERSE 11

For there is no respect of persons with God.

God has no favorites when it comes to salvation. It is available to all who believe. When Jesus died on the cross He died once for all.

VERSE 12-13

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

Verses 12 and 13 are probably the high water mark of the second chapter. We perish without the law, Christ died on the cross, and we who believe in Him come under grace, and not law.

The doers

The doers are those who love the Lord Jesus. Jesus died on the cross and took the place of the law, i.e. Jesus took the law out of the way. He nailed all of the law to the cross, and He became the way of salvation for us. Therefore the law has no dominion over us.

Romans 6:14

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

Every child of God is under grace, but not all live under it. We are righteous and holy because Jesus Christ lives in us. He is the seed that remains. Jesus is our righteousness, and He has fulfilled the law for us. But we have to know Paul's gospel to live that life, have this treasure, and go on to win Christ as bridegroom. It is not how much we know, but how much we live what we know.

VERSE 14

For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these having not the law, are a law unto themselves:

The Gentiles never came under the law. Only the Jews came under the law. (Acts chapter 15)

VERSE 15-16

Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another;) in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my Gospel.

The secrets of men will be judged by the truth in Paul's gospel. If they don't know Jesus, they will be judged by the law, and not by grace.

Verses 17-28 are in reference to the Jews and their love for the law, and always boasted of it. These Jews have rejected Jesus, and they cling to the law. Even today their praise comes from men, and not God. The law justifies no man.

What God told Cain of the Jews:

Verse 17:

- 1) You rest in the law

This is who Paul was talking about throughout this whole chapter. Jews justified themselves by the law because they had it, they boasted of the law, and thought they were better than everyone else because of it.

- 2) You make your boast of God

Verse 18:

- 3) You know his will
- 4) They approve things that are more excellent
- 5) They are instructed out of the law.

Verse 19:

- 6) Confident they are a guide to the blind
- 7) A light to them that are in darkness

Verse 20:

- 8) Instructor of the foolish
- 9) A teacher of babes that boast of the form of knowledge
- 10) Have a form of knowledge
- 11) Truth in the law

VERSE 21

Thou therefore which teachest another, teachest thou not thyself? thou that preachest a man should not steal, dost thou steal?

Paul states that the Jews only looked at the outward appearance and that the Jews were violating these things in their heart before God. These are just as guilty as the man who would go out and steal from his neighbor. In Malachi 3:8, God accused Israel because they robbed him. Self-righteous men rob God of His glory constantly. A self-righteous man is claiming for himself something God has done.

VERSE 22

Thou that sayest a man should not commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery? thou that abhorrest idols, dost thou commit sacrilege?

Over and over in the Old Testament, God assailed them for committing adultery against Him. Committing adultery against God means they take another head other than God and deny Christ His headship over the church.

VERSE 23-24

Thou that makest thy boast of the law, though breaking the law dishonorest thou God? For the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you, as it is written.

The Jews are giving God a bad name among the Gentiles. We see this today when Christians don't let Christ rule in their lives. Whenever Christians are self-righteous, vindictive, and judgmental, others don't want to be Christians. That self-righteous attitude is wrong, and it gives the wrong impression of God and His amazing grace.

VERSE 25

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

The stipulation here is if they kept the law. Saul of Tarsus came the closest to keeping the law, but said after his conversion that he was the chiefest among sinners. He said that by the deeds of the law could no flesh be justified. Christians are not under the law, and should not try to keep the law. If one small part of the law is broken, then all the law is broken.

VERSE 26

Therefore if the uncircumcision keep the righteousness of the law, shall not his uncircumcision be counted for circumcision?

Only through Christ is the righteousness of the law fulfilled in us through the power of the Holy Spirit. The Gentile is no longer considered an outcast.

VERSE 27

And shall not uncircumcision which is by nature, if it fulfill the law, judge thee, who by the letter and circumcision dost transgress the law?

The Gentile didn't ask for the place he held, God just sovereignly chose the Jews to be His people. God chose them because He loved them, not because they were any better than the Gentiles.

VERSE 28

For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh:

When Christians put themselves under the law there is an outward manifestation. They think if they look good on the outside, that's what counts. But that is not true. We must be of a circumcised heart, and we must be of those who find righteousness in Christ. Once we find our righteousness in Christ, we need not worry about fulfilling the law. If we are filled with divine love we don't have to worry about the law. Divine love motivates us to do that which is right in the sight of God. This is the way we must understand this new nature Christ has given us. The old nature to which we were born is absolutely worthless. Our new nature can do nothing but good. God wants the fullness of the righteousness of Christ to flow out of our lives. That can only happen because of divine love.

VERSE 29

But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God.

Letter

This is speaking of the law.

Inwardly

Not one outward expression of a devotion to God means a thing (such as joining a church, or getting baptized) if we haven't given our hearts to the Lord. Once we give our hearts to Him, things like baptism are precious outward expressions and testimony. With Christ within, we can testify without. Any acts of the flesh are an abomination to God. We need Christ because what flesh can do is never enough. We will never please God with what we do in the flesh.

It is of the heart

It is specifically the circumcision of the heart where all the flesh is cut away. Our old man dies, and Christ replaces it with our new man. The new man is Christ in us the hope of glory. Praise Him for His grace.

CHAPTER 3

We read in chapter 1 about the immoral man, and in chapter 2 we read about the immoral man to which the blood of Jesus was not applied. The men in both chapters were without circumcision of the heart. Their 'old man' was not dead, and the 'new man' was not living in them, because they didn't have the blood of Jesus on their lives. There was no goodness in them, and they were dead in trespasses and sins. Chapter 2 concluded that all men are without excuse because God so loved the world that He gave His most precious son Jesus to die for the sins of the world. Salvation is very easy to obtain: Just believe Jesus and be saved from sin and death.

VERSES 1-2

What advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit is there of circumcision? Much every way: chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God.

The 'oracles' of God refer to the word of God. God's word has always come through the Jews. Because of the word of God, the Jews had the potential of being spiritual, but many didn't take that advantage because they clung to the law. Advantage means exceedingly supreme, more excellent.

Deuteronomy 14:2

For thou art an holy people unto the Lord thy God, and the Lord hath chosen thee to be a peculiar people unto Himself, above all the nations that are upon the earth.

Peculiar means special, unique. When the Lord chooses us, we are unique and highly favored.

VERSE 3

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

Whether man believes God's word or not, His word will always stand.

Isaiah 55:11

So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.

God's word will remain true regardless of what man believes. His word will always have an effect. If someone believes, God's word has the effect of changing and enlightening the believer. If a man refuses to believe God's word, it will have the effect of hardening him, and making him dark. Neutral you cannot be. It is up to us what effect God's word will have on our lives. If we believe what God says, our belief is counted to us as righteousness.

VERSE 4

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

Let God be true

God's word is true, and man's unbelief cannot change that. Jesus Christ is the Word, the Truth, the same yesterday, today and forever. He is unchanging. His truth will be magnified in judgment, and no one will ever escape the truth. Paul's grace gospel will judge the secrets, or the intents, of every man's heart

by Jesus Christ. If grace is received, the born-again experience happens. It is by grace through faith that we are saved and become Children of God forever. If God's grace is rejected, there can be no born-again experience, and the eternal judgment is the lake of fire. We are all measured by the word of God. We will either believe it, or not. The choice is ours.

Every man a liar

Men who testify that the word of God is not true are proving themselves to be liars.

VERSE 5

But if our unrighteousness commend the righteousness of God, what shall we say? Is God unrighteous if taketh vengeance? (I speak as a man.)

Paul notes that he is viewing this from man's logic. If man thinks his unrighteousness actually promotes God's righteousness, is God unjust for taking vengeance on that? The answer to that is God most assuredly is just in pouring out His judgment on any unrighteousness, even though it commends the righteousness of God. God's standard will not slacken because of someone's sinful deeds. Thinking that unrighteousness deserves a reward is just human reasoning and doesn't stand up in God's court.

VERSE 6

God forbid: for then how shall God judge the world?

If that were true, how could God judge the world? God will always judge by His righteous standards.

VERSE 7

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

This is still thinking as the natural man. The end doesn't justify the means. Because God is glorified in a wrong doing it cannot be excused.

VERSE 8

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

Verses 5 - 8 are written as if it were men talking, and making their empty arguments. Men, in their foolishness, think they can argue anything with God, as if to get one up on Him. Man's stupid righteousness brings out God's righteousness more clearly. They think if their falsehoods enhance God's truthfulness, then it must increase God's glory, so they want to know why they are going to be condemned as sinners. Even in today's world, so wicked and ungodly, God is gracious. But He won't be mocked. His word is true, and He will do that which is right, and He will always be true to His word. Everything will be judged by His word.

Let us do evil so good will come

The churches that preach divine grace have been accused of that. Others think that we believe that we can sin all we want to and it is alright. This is not the truth of the grace message. Romans 6 tells us there is only one realm where we can dwell where we do not sin, and that is in the realm of divine grace. This is the only place we can be assured that we do not sin.

Whose damnation is just

People who believe this way will get proper damnation, because God will measure everything by His word.

VERSE 9

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

Are Jews better than Gentiles? God leveled the playing field, so to speak, for all men. God was the one who divided Jews and Gentiles, and chose the Jews for Himself, and they became the apple of His eye. God is searching among the Gentiles for a bride for His Son Jesus. All who believe Jesus, Jew and Gentile alike, have the opportunity to win Christ as bridegroom. Both have the same advantage.

VERSE 10

As it is written, There is none righteous, no not one.

Verses 10 - 18 are a picture of the heart of all mankind. There is not a spark of goodness in any of them who dwell in the old creation.

All are under sin. It doesn't matter how sweet, or how good a person is, anybody who denies the blood of Jesus that was freely shed for sin is not righteous in God's eyes. We can't seek after God, He seeks us out. We are either for God, or we are against Him

VERSES 11-12

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

Verses 10, 11, and 12 are an indictment against the entire human race.

VERSES 13-14

Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips: Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness:

Verses 13 and 14 tell us of their evil heart. Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. They utter all these things because of the corruption that is in their hearts.

VERSES 15-16

Their feet are swift to shed blood. Destruction and misery are in their ways:

Verses 15 and 16 deal with their works.

VERSE 17

And the way of peace have they not known:

These verses are the works of the people who refuse to accept Christ as savior. Their works are put on display, and they are rooted in that old Adamic fallen creation that we are possessed with.

VERSE 18

There is no fear of God before their eyes.

Verses 17 and 18 are their attitudes. They don't know peace, because they don't know the prince of peace. They are still enemies of God. They have no awe of God, and they will not bow down before Him.

Verses 1 - 17 culminate in verse 18. The blatant blasphemy and the apostasy that comes out of the public figures in our world is despicable. We are at the place and time where a form of godliness denies the power thereof. The evil of man is waxing worse and worse. We need to grow up in God's word to be able to recognize these things, and not be deceived and led astray. We need to be aware, because we are not ignorant of the devil's devices. We who are in Christ don't need to fear, because perfect love casts out all fear. We need to fix our eyes on the glorious coming of our wonderful Lord Jesus.

VERSE 19

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

What the law says, it says to those who are under the law. We who are in Christ are not under the law.

Romans 6:14

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

The law is wonderful in the work it does. Because it is against all unrighteousness, it stops it and manifests its guilt. It justifies only one thing: the righteousness of God in Jesus Christ.

The law was given to the Jew, and the law speaks to the Jew, and gives its message to those who are under it. The law was given, and it will demand a certain result. It was sent for a purpose, and that purpose will be realized. God gave the law that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world becomes guilty before God. God never gave the law to make men righteous, He gave the law to show all men guilty. Some people think that after they are saved the law was given to make them righteous, but the law cannot make anyone righteous, but only guilty before God.

VERSE 20

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

The law doesn't justify

Man thinks the law is our moral compass. The law was not given to us to live right, but rather the law was given to show us our guilt, and to show us how it is impossible for us to keep the law. The law magnifies the need for the grace of God.

Romans 5:20-21

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

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

Magnify sin

The law was given to magnify sin. God, through Christ alone, could justify a sinner, and He does it by grace. The Pharisees, thinking they were justified by law, constantly pointed to the law, and put themselves on a pedestal above everybody else. Saul of Tarsus was like this because of his adherence to the law. This didn't happen in God's sight, this was in man's sight. Paul when he was Saul was trying to keep the law to be righteous, but God showed him that in no uncertain terms that was not the way things were done. By the law is the knowledge of sin, not righteousness.

DIVISION 3: UNFOLDING OF THE GOSPEL

VERSE 21

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

But now

This indicates after Christ has come. Since the law had absolutely proven that it couldn't bring forth righteousness God sent Christ into the world to save sinners. The righteousness of God is Jesus Christ. He has been made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. We've got it all in Jesus. We have one life in Him, and that life is living in us. This is why Christ in us is the hope of Glory. We have been given everything to super abound to every good work, and to fight the good fight of faith. Christ has met every demand of the law for us.

Without the law

Jesus took the law from us. God manifested righteousness in His people without the deeds and efforts of the law. We are no longer under the law, because Christ nailed it to the cross. We live just as if there is no law. We live as free people. Anyone born of God is not under the law, but under grace. The law points only to Christ as the satisfier.

Acts 10:43

To Him give all the prophets witness, that through His name whosoever believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins.

Salvation can only come to us in no other name but Jesus.

Law and the prophets

These are the two witnesses God had who witnessed the righteousness which is wrought in Christ Jesus. The law that miserably failed to produce righteousness, yet God did produce righteousness through His Son Jesus Christ.

VERSE 22

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

Righteousness of God

Righteousness comes by faith in Jesus Christ - not faith in God, not faith in baptism, not faith in works, or what church we belong to, but faith in Jesus Christ. Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life, and no man comes to the Father except through Him. How much higher or how much purer righteousness could we get than the righteousness of God? There is no higher authority, and the only way to get this

righteousness is by faith of Jesus Christ. This simple act of faith in Jesus Christ will produce righteousness.

There is no difference

There is no difference in salvation to man, it is open to any and all who would but believe in our precious Savior Jesus. Once we are saved we are one, and every one of God's children has the same life in them.

Galatians 2:20-21

- 20) I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live: yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith of the Son of God, who loved me: and gave Himself for me.
- 21) I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness came by the law, then Christ died in vain.

We that believe are all sons of God because Christ lives in us.

VERSE 23

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

All men are born into sin because of the first man Adam. Through Adam, everyone who was ever born into this world was born a sinner.

Romans 5:12

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

VERSE 24

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

Justified

Justified means to render just or innocent, to be acquitted of the very nature of sin. This is why Paul says, "If any man be in Christ he is a new creation." This is how God sees us. This is more than just forgiveness; it is not parole or a suspended sentence. It means we have been declared innocent of all charges. That is what faith in Jesus does for us.

Freely

Freely means undeserved grace. We are justified by His grace. Jesus paid it all. He took our place on the cross and died for all our sins. Redemption means that Christ bought us with His blood, and we will never be bought again, because we belong to Him forever. He paid our ransom and delivered us. Praise the Lord!

By His grace

We are saved by grace through redemption of Christ Jesus. This is the only way we could be justified in God's sight.

Ephesians 2:8-9

- 8) For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God:
- 9) Not of works, lest any man should boast.

VERSE 25

Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God;

Propitiation

Propitiation means an atoning victim. Christ took the penalty, and atoned for all our sin. Christ satisfied it all, and He literally became the mercy seat with His own blood applied. Hebrews 9:22 tells us that without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sin. Christ died for the sins of all men, but it is only through faith in the blood that His sacrifice is effectual for our lives.

1 John 2:2

And He is the propitiation for our sins: and not for us only, but also for the sins of the whole world.

Whom Christ has feed is free indeed.

Through the forbearance of God

In the Old Testament, God's people were always rebuked for waywardness (the golden calf, Sodom and Gomorrah, etc.). The reason God let sin go unpunished was because His sole desire was His Son, and God knew sin was going to be finished at Calvary where the Lamb of God would die for all the sins of the world.

VERSE 26

To declare, I say, at this time His righteousness: that He might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.

God's righteousness

God gave His Son Jesus to die on the cross to make known His righteousness. The righteousness of God is in His Son, and through His Son. This is the magnificent magnifying of His only Son. May we continually rejoice in nothing else but the master plan of the grace of God. God has to finish us, so we must be patient in the process He is bringing us through.

He might be just

God was just in pouring out judgment on sin. This is the first priority God has for His righteous government. He had to judge sin, because His government could not stand if He didn't.

The justifier

God also was the justifier of those who believe in Jesus. God not only forgave our sin, but just like He clothed Adam and Eve with those skins, He also clothes us with the very righteousness of Christ. The righteousness God gave us cannot fail. Jesus fully met all the demands of the law. He did this by giving His life completely, and freely as the law. Justification and salvation were fully finished at Calvary. Jesus took care of it all on the cross.

Romans 8:2-3

- 2) For the law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.
- 3) For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh:

Romans 8:1 tells us there is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus.

VERSE 27

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

Where is boasting

If the only thing we have done to get this righteousness is to believe Jesus, how can we boast in that? How can we glory in something or take credit for something that only Jesus could do? Jesus is deserving of all the glory. The only glory we have is in the cross. Everything is by Jesus, so boasting is excluded.

The law of faith

The law of the Spirit of Life in Jesus Christ is the same as the law of faith. When we believe Jesus, we live by the law of faith. The life we now live we live by the faith of the Son of God. Any other life a Christian tries to live is a lie, and would be stunting the beauty, and the full joy of life God has already given us to live. The joy of the Lord should be our strength, and we should be filled with all the fullness of God. We need to ask the Lord to really confirm these things in our lives.

VERSE 28

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

This negates religions that preach self-righteous good works, and try to bring them to God's altar. God finds these kinds of works putrid and as filthy rags in His sight. Man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law. We are saved by grace, and we grow in grace, and by grace. The path we walk and the good works for us are set up by Him by divine grace. All we can contribute to this process is to take grace and walk with it.

VERSES 29-30

Is He the God of the Jews only? is He not also of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also; Seeing it is one God, which shall justify the circumcision by faith, and the uncircumcision through faith.

The Jews and the Gentiles are all under sin, and yet they are saved by grace through faith. God is not a respecter of persons. Circumcision is by faith, and uncircumcision is through faith. It is all by the faith of the freely-shed blood of Jesus.

VERSE 31

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

Establish the law

We establish what the law came to do: to prove that man absolutely could not obtain righteousness by the law. The law also stands witness that the righteousness God reveals in us. The law can't find one thing wrong with us. The law could never find one thing wrong with Christ, and if we have His righteousness, the law can't find fault with us. God put in us the new nature, the very nature of Christ, and that is what makes us righteous. That righteousness makes us practical in our lives every day in an outward manner.

Through faith

We establish the law through faith. Faith takes the place of the law, and it is always by grace, through faith, by believing. By faith the law is perfected in our lives through the faith in Jesus Christ, and the law is performed in our lives by Jesus Christ. Faith without works is dead. We take the grace to walk in the before ordained good works, that God has made for us to walk in by grace. These are the good works of

faith, and we don't have to invent the good works, because these good works are already made for us by God, and He brings them. The evidence of faith continually growing in our lives gives evidence of good fruit. Every bit of good fruit is all by grace through faith.

God loves His Son, and because of His Son's life in us, God loves us. He wants us to appreciate, and magnify, and glory in the life of His Son. Now are we the sons of God, and nothing can compare to this.

CHAPTER 4

VERSE 1

What shall we say then that Abraham our father, as pertaining to the flesh, hath found?

Paul is using Abraham to teach justification by faith, not by law.

VERSE 2

For if Abraham was justified by works, he hath whereof to glory: but not before God.

If a person is going to glory in their works, it isn't going to be glorying before God. The person doing the works gets the glory, not God. Nothing can ever happen by our own merits. The only that comes from them is glory in self, and that will lead to no reward and death.

VERSE 3

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

Abraham believed God, and that is the key to all his success. His belief was counted as righteousness. Every time we believe God, righteousness is counted to our account. There was no law that was given to Abraham, because he received righteousness by believing God.

Genesis 15:6

And he believed in the Lord; and He counted it to him for righteousness.

The law was given to Moses 430 years after Abraham. The Old Testament, and the New Testament both agree that we receive righteousness by faith. There are multiple times in our lives that we have to believe God. The faith, and the believing is what counts for righteousness.

VERSE 4

Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt.

He that worketh

The reason we hate the doctrine of works is that it robs God of the glory for His grace. This entire church age is all about God's grace. If men seek to boast in their works, they are detracting from grace.

Of debt

If it is because of our works, it means that God has to reward us for our works, and we will be judged by the law, and not by grace. These works are self-righteous works, and God sees them as filthy rags.

VERSE 5

But to him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.

Self-righteous people hate this statement, but it was laid down by God, and this says that righteousness comes by belief in God. This faith is counted for righteousness, and when God sees the blood of Jesus on us, He will pass over us, and see no sin in us. Thank you, Jesus! Faith has to have an object, and the object of faith is Jesus Christ Himself.

VERSE 6

Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works

God delights in the blessings bestowed to Him for the praise that goes up only for His Son. God loves and blesses these praises. We are blessed with all spiritual blessings in the heavens in Christ. We have it all the moment we accept Jesus as Savior. The life of Jesus living in us is given freely, it can't be earned.

VERSE 7

Saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered.

David quoted this in Psalms 32:1-2. This Psalm was written around the time of his sin with Bathsheba. David knew what it was to have his sins forgiven.

VERSE 8

Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin.

Impute means to charge to, or count to the account of. God doesn't count sin to our account, because of Jesus, our sins have been absolved.

He is clearly telling us that we are imperfect, and weak, but the blessing and the beauty are to those that believe that no sin is charged to them. Because of the precious blood of Christ, our sins are covered, and all the guilt and stain of sin is gone from us forever. There is no sin to our account, because Jesus satisfied it completely, and we are debt free. When we begin to see Christ's absolute love for us, it will cause us to have a transformation, and growth in our lives, and we'll want to live for Him. Love changes things, and people. The only true love there really is, is the love of Christ and God.

VERSE 9

Cometh this blessedness then upon the circumcision only, or upon the uncircumcision also? for we say that faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness.

Paul is still trying to bring Jew and Gentile together here, showing there is no difference so far as God's redemption is concerned.

VERSE 10

How was it then reckoned? when he was in circumcision or in uncircumcision? Not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision.

When God came to Abraham at first he wasn't circumcised. God called Abraham out, and he believed God. Abraham's belief was counted to him as righteousness.

VERSE 11

And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised: that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised; that righteousness might be imparted unto them also:

The reason this is so important is because water baptism answers to circumcision, they mean exactly the same thing. Water baptism, and circumcision are a sign of the outward expression of the righteousness

that Abraham had for 25 years. God wanted to show that you don't have to be circumcised to be righteous, it comes by faith.

VERSE 12

And the father of circumcision to them who are not of the circumcision only, but who also walk in the steps of the faith of our father Abraham, which he had being yet uncircumcised.

Not of the circumcision

Abraham was not a Jew, he was a Gentile. The Jews did not come into being until the 12 sons of Jacob were recognized as the Jews, and this was just before they left Egypt when the blood was put on the doorpost. This is when God formed the nation of Israel, or the Jewish nation.

Exodus 6:7

And I will take you to Me for a people, and I will be to you a God: and ye shall know that I am the Lord your God, which bringeth you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians.

Since Abraham, an uncircumcised Gentile, was pronounced righteous, then all the uncircumcised Gentiles can also be pronounced righteous. So Abraham is the father of all who believe, Jew and Gentile alike.

Walk in the steps of the faith

Abraham walked step, after step, after step of faith all his life. God expects the same from us. There is one faith, and that is Jesus Christ. God used Abraham very sweetly, he believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness, before he was physically circumcised. True circumcision is not something that is outward, it is inwardly, and of the heart. Abraham believed God in everything. God promised him a son that didn't come until he was an old man, but Abraham never doubted anything God told him. Abraham believed the impossible, and all that God told him He would do, He preformed it all. Without believing nothing is going to happen. The word works powerfully, and effectually in those who believe, and that is the key. Eyes of faith are enlightened eyes of understanding that believes everything God says. We need eyes of faith that seek the continuing city whose builder and maker is God.

VERSE 13

For the promise, that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith.

Heir of the world

This is referring to Abraham being the father of many nations, Jew and Gentile. Abraham was called and chosen of God by grace alone, not what Abraham did, or did not do. Through the blood of Jesus, all who believe are in God's family. He loves us with a godly jealousy, and we are in His hands. God chooses the lowly, the despised, and those looked down on.

Through the law

The Jews thought it was through the law that they had all their provisions, but it was not. The Abrahamic covenant was given 430 years before the law was ever given, and God gave all the promises to Abraham before the law came into being.

The seed

The seed in this verse is Jesus Christ, and righteousness comes to all through Him.

Galatians 3:16

Now to Abraham and His seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, and to thy seed, which is Christ.

We were blessed in the one seed of Abraham who is Christ. Just by believing God we receive all the glorious promises by the righteousness of faith.

VERSE 14

For if they which are of the law be heirs, faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect:

If by virtue of the law a person is an heir, then faith means nothing. The Abrahamic covenant would mean nothing, but the covenant was given to Abraham by faith, and not works. The inheritance that comes to us doesn't come to us through the law, but through the righteousness of faith by Jesus Christ.

VERSE 15

Because then law worketh wrath: for where no law is, there is no transgression.

No law, no transgressions, until the law came there was no sin. Where there is no law, there is no sin, Christ took the law out of the way by nailing it to His cross. We now come under God's wonderful grace, and not the law, if we are saved by Jesus Christ. The law can only work one thing, and that is wrath, which is the wrath of God, because He gave His Son freely to take the law out of the way. People under law trying to earn their salvation are like filthy rags in the sight of God. Those of us who belong to Christ are justified by His blood. Praise you Jesus.

VERSE 16

Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promises might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham; who is the father of us all.

That it might be by grace

This is the magnified grace. Faith magnifies one thing, and that is not our will power, or our faithfulness, because we don't have any, but rather faith magnifies the grace of God. This is the perfect plan that magnifies Jesus, who is full of grace and truth. All grace, and all truth are only of Him, and from Him. This magnified grace is the only way the promises might be sure. Grace could only bring this, because we cannot abide faithful. Our faith fails every time, but His grace never leaves us or forsakes us. We are saved by grace and kept through grace. Faith and grace go together, faith and works do not go together.

To the end

This means for the desired purpose. This is what God had in mind, and wanted to do. To attain the desired result is this, that the promise might be sure to all seed. The only way God could level the playing field, was to make it the only requirement is to believe, and every person has that ability. Abraham is the father of Jew and Gentile. God insists that the playing field be leveled for all men.

VERSE 17

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

As it is written

Paul sometimes quoted from the Old Testament to justify the statement he made. We must be able to back up what we say by scripture, and that is scripture in the proper context.

Many nations

There is only one Jewish nation, so this has to include Gentile nations.

Before Him whom he believed

That is God. Here Paul introduces a basic principle of redemption and faith, and that is faith must believe the God of resurrection. To believe the God of resurrection is a real separation.

Who quickens the dead

Abraham saw in God one who brought the dead to life. Believing on the God of resurrection means we believe Him beyond just our initial salvation, and raising Christ from the dead. When we were born again we were quickened out of the death state.

Which be not

It is nothing for God to make things happen that nature says can't be done. For an example, Abraham and Sarah having Isaac when nature said they were too old. All that God has promised He will do. This is a simple statement of faith, and God cannot lie. In I Kings 8:56, we read that God has not failed one word of all His good promises.

VERSE 18

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

In Genesis 12:2, God promised Abraham to make him a great nation.

VERSE 19

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

God didn't give them Isaac until after Abraham's body was dead, and weak, and unable to father children. God simply quickened Abraham's body, and Sarah's body, and Isaac was born long after they could have produced offspring in the natural. Isaac was the son of promise.

VERSE 20

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

This is like a full-overcoming power. Abraham never stopped believing God. He was not tossed to and fro by every wind of doctrine. Abraham remained faithful, his faith never wavered, and he gave glory to God, and praised Him for His grace.

VERSE 21

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

Abraham believed that God would keep His word, and make good every promise He made. Abraham believed God in everything.

VERSE 22

And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness.

Imputed means that it was put to Abraham's account. It adds up, it is reckoned, and it is complete, and it is finished.

VERSE 23

Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him,

VERSE 24

But to us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on Him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead;

All the better promises that we have are added to our account. They are summed up and finished the exact same way: when we believe God who raised Jesus from the dead. This is the resurrection power. We will never know Him in that power until we are weak and dead but for God. We are weak, but He is strong, and sufficient for everything.

VERSE 25

Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.

Delivered

His being delivered for our offences was a wonderful gift to us. In Philippians 3 we read, "To know him in the power of His resurrection." This is the quickening power, and Abraham trusted in Him. We have an even better quickening, because we are being quickened for a bridal rapture.

Our offences

Our offences had to be taken care of because God could not dismiss them. Christ died for our offences, but was raised for our salvation. When God raised up Christ from the dead, He raised up all the believers as well, and then we have the new righteous nature because of Christ.

CHAPTER 5

VERSE 1

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

Therefore

Therefore is a connecting word which means we must connect this verse with what has been said before - the beautiful truth of justification through our Lord Jesus. We are saved just by believing. Justification by faith is taught all through the scriptures.

Justified by faith

It is finished! We are justified by faith because of what Jesus endured on the cross. Every child of God is born by the blood of Jesus. Every child of God is justified by faith, and every child of God has peace with God through our precious Jesus Christ. The blood of Jesus is the justifier. We will always be His precious lambs. His deep love for us is forever.

There are 4 major blessings we have as a result of justification by faith:

1) Peace with God

We are no longer enemies of God after we are born again. That enmity we had with God is gone. The only way we can have our peaceful co-existence with God is through Jesus Christ. Jesus is the one door, the only door; there is no other way.

2) Wherein we stand

When we are born again, we have the same standing before God that Jesus does.

3) Rejoice in the hope of God

Before salvation, we had no hope at all. Now we have all hope.

4) Glory in tribulation also

We not only learn to glory in the hope of God, we learn to glory in tribulation also.

VERSE 2

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

Access by faith

All of the promises of God are claimed by faith. Faith is the way to the heart of God, the promises of God, and the provision of God from the time we are saved until we go to glory.

Grace

The glory of God is His grace. Verses 1 and 2 tell us we have peace with God because our justification is complete. Many of God's people spend their time trying to earn their justification, or try to get saved more than once, but it's either justified or not. It's either the blood of Jesus, or we missed it. Justified: just as if I never sinned.

1 John 3:9

Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin, for His seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.

Whom God has made free is free indeed. It is wonderful that we have peace with God, and our justification is complete. We have this peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. One day every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that He is King of Kings, and Lord of Lords.

This is all the grace and provision God has made for us in Christ. It is manifold grace that can never be exhausted. We could never get to the end of the depths of divine grace. What a beautiful thing it is when we start realizing that we are His and that His desire is toward us. We are ravishing to Him because of the grace of God that is growing the life of Christ in us. Oh the depths of His love that will not let us go. Hallelujah! Christ in us, the hope of glory.

Wherein we stand

When we are born again, we have the same standing before God that Jesus does. Why? Because we are accepted in the beloved. The only reason we are accepted is because we are in Christ. The standing we have before God has no limits to the blessings we can receive and the acceptance that is ours before Him.

Rejoice in the hope

As a result of this wonderful grace and justification, we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. Before salvation we had no hope at all.

VERSE 3

And not only so, but we glory in tribulation also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience;

Tribulation

This is a change from what we were in the flesh. As members of the flesh, people usually moan and groan constantly, and blame others for their miseries. When we are born again, we learn there is more to life, and we learn of the glorious hope that we have. We not only glory in the hope of God, but we actually come to the place that we can glory in tribulation also. The tribulation in our lives brings forth hope. When we stand we grow in grace and the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. This is the intimate knowledge in the ways of the Bridegroom. When we stand in grace, grace begets more grace, and as this grace continues to come forth, we get love knowledge. We grow in grace, and love knowledge glories in infirmities and tribulation. Jesus wants a wife, and she will suffer together with Him.

Tribulation works patience

Patience means cheerful endurance. We need this kind of attitude in order to endure. When we can glory in tribulation, this shows we can only know this by faith. Our lifetime is spent learning to look at things from God's point of view. The adversities we have are actually working for our good. Faith will take hold of this.

VERSE 4

And patience, experience; and experience hope:

Experience

Experience means proof of soundness. Experience is the proof that we have passed the test. It is the benchmark of whether we have it, or whether we don't. Experience is for the good soldier who endures hardness. We become vessels to the praise of the glory of his grace.

Hope

Experience works even more hope. There is hope in Christ for all eternity and experience proves this to us.

VERSE 5

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

The Holy Spirit has many ministries, and the proof of the infilling by the Holy Spirit is speaking in tongues. One of the most important ministries of the Holy Spirit is the shedding the love of God abroad in our hearts. The fruit of the spirit can be summed up in one word: love. It takes the power of the Holy Spirit to spread and grow this love in our hearts.

VERSE 6

For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.

For

This means that verses 6-8 connect directly to what Paul just wrote about the love of God. These verses describe exactly what love is. Natural man thinks He knows what love is, but he doesn't. Until God gets hold of us we aren't able to understand divine love. This is the type of love God wants shed abroad in our hearts. Verses 6-8 show us what kind of love we are talking about.

Yet without strength

This means we had absolutely no power to bring forth righteousness unto God, or give anything in our lives that we could present to God. Not only were we helpless, but there is no thought of God, and we were all guilty sinners.

In due time

In due time means according to the time that God had in mind long before we were ever created. The only reason God could accept the sacrifice of His Son for sin before Calvary was because the sacrifice pointed to Calvary. When it came to the period of time God had selected, Jesus died on the cross to save the ungodly. He became the perfect sacrifice.

If Adam had obeyed God, there wouldn't have been any need for Christ to die. God had a plan and a purpose: Adam was going to fall, and Jesus would come forth. The first Adam was helpless and guilty, but the second Adam saved us from wrath.

VERSE 7

For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die.

If a man is righteous, why would he need anyone to die for him? Some men through history have given their lives for the greater good. There is none righteous, no not one. We were all dead in sin, and nothing was good in us before Jesus.

VERSE 8

But God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

God's love toward us

God's love came forth because of Jesus. God's grace, His love, His plan, and His heart are all about magnifying His Son in us. This is gets right at the very heart of God and His magnificent magnifying of His pure grace.

Ephesians 2:4-5

- 4) But God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us,
- 5) Even when we were dead in sins, He hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)

The Holy Spirit will shed the same divine love in our hearts. We can have the same degree of love that God and Christ have.

VERSE 9

Much more then, being now justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath though Him.

There are five "much more's" in this chapter in verses 9, 10, 15, 19, and 20. Five is the number of grace, and five brings out this beautiful complement of divine grace. The much more's mean that when God redeemed us, He didn't put us back in the garden of Eden. God gave us much more than Adam ever had in the garden. Adam had a human righteousness, but God gave us a divine righteousness. The five much more's tell us of the awesome magnitude which God has restored to us what Satan took away.

One of the offerings in the Old Testament is called the trespass offering. The main point that this offering brings out is that if someone trespasses against someone else and damages his property, that person not only had to restore what was damaged, but had to add a fifth part more. God not only had stopped the damage Adam and Satan had done to all humanity, He added the fifth part of grace - much more.

Verses 9-11 show that our standing is very secure and will never change. Full wrath is coming for anybody not justified by the blood of Jesus. Hell is a horrible place, but the lake of fire is worse, and it is coming if the blood of Jesus isn't applied. Jesus loves every soul, no matter how ornery, and died to save them all.

VERSE 10

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

The second much more

God is in the business of salvation forever. He loves sinners, but much more His saints. He loves His own much more because we are born again, justified by faith, and part of the family of God. Much more we will be saved from hell by His life, and live the rest of our lives learning much more of His love. There is no way we could ever imagine the wonderful glories He has for us.

This is magnifying much more grace. Grace increased to us now that we are the sons of God. We have joy and peace in believing God. That is the only way we can get true peace and joy. God gave us

everything when He gave us Jesus. We have His grace and we have all sufficiency in all things. We can do all things through Christ who strengthens us, and this is the grace of God. The enemy wants to get us into guilt and self-righteousness. He wants to side-track us away from God. But we are God's sons, and He will withhold nothing good from us. He will never leave us or forsake us.

VERSE 11

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

We joy in God

We have joy with God and perfect love. Perfect love casts out all fear, and our fear was replaced with joy and full confidence in Jesus Christ. The very same joy Jesus has with the Father is there for us also, because we have His life, and the full enjoyment of everything He possesses. We need the Holy Spirit to shows us these things as He leads us into all the truth, the full counsel of God. We have been blessed with all spiritual blessings in the heavens. What a contrast to the misery, darkness, sadness, gloom and hopelessness that was the benefit of sin before we were saved. Now we are born again, and God has added much more besides deliverance. He has added wondrous joy.

Atonement through Jesus Christ

We joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have received the atonement. The atonement of His blood is:

- 1) He took our place so we could take His place
- 2) We share in everything because of Him
- 3) This is the covenant: everything is exchanged. Our old man for a new man, death for life, to grace from disgrace to a chance to rule and reign with Jesus.

We don't have to try to live this, it is in us. The power of God is in us, and He is our strength and our life. We are prisoners of His love by His blood. This is the first love call. Everything depends on what Christ has done.

VERSE 12

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

Sin entered into the world

Sin entered into the world by Adam. All the damage done by one man brought death by sin. Every man ever born has been born with a sinful nature, under the penalty of death. At the time of Adam all were doomed as man was in a sinful state. We are born in sin, and shapen in iniquity. Judgment came upon all unto condemnation through Adam's sin, and all died.

Sin was introduced in the garden of Eden by the first man, Adam, and God allowed it. God's perfect plan could not have come about without the fall of man. God's divine plan was that Christ's blood would be poured out for all mankind. The law of Moses came later, so even though there was no law yet, Adam broke a commandment of God by disobeying God, and eating from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, and sin was born. From the fall of the first man Adam, we are guilty, and none are righteous. The second man Adam, Jesus Christ, died for our sins and iniquities, and covered all of them for those who believe. Now grace reigns. Jesus freely gave His life for all of the sins of guilty mankind, and His

death on the cross takes care of all the disobedience of man. Universal death became universal justification by faith. We are now the sons of God if we believe on Jesus for salvation.

I Corinthians 15:22

For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.

VERSE 13

For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law.

God didn't give the law until He gave it to Moses on Mt. Sinai 430 years after Abraham came on the scene. Sin is not charged where there is no law. If the wrong can't be defined, how can it be punished? God sent the law in order for man to know sin was present.

VERSE 14

Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of Him that was to come.

Death reigned

Because death reigned from Adam to Moses, we know sin was in the world. Death is the result of sin.

Similitude of Adam's transgressions

This means that sin doesn't take just one avenue. All Adam did was partake of the forbidden fruit, but that was like opening Pandora's box. The root of sin is there, and as long as the root is there, there death will be, and death will conquer.

Figure of Him that was to come

Paul is referring to the first man Adam, and the second man Adam, which is Jesus Christ.

I Corinthians 15:45

And so it is written. The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening Spirit.

The first Adam was only a representative, or a picture, of the second man Adam, Jesus Christ. The first man Adam brought sin and death; the second man Adam brought everlasting life through redemption.

VERSE 15

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

Much more

This is the third much more, and it shows the gift of grace abounded unto many by Jesus Christ.

The offence

Paul is telling us that God did not just neutralize the offence. Since we are of the Adamic race, we are all under the sentence of death. No one is excluded.

God's free gift by grace

God sent Jesus to die for the sins of mankind. Believing Jesus negates the fear of death to believers, because all believer's sins are washed away, and now we are sons of God forever. God restored in Christ much more than Adam took away.

Death

When the Bible speaks of death it is usually speaking of the eternal second death, which is the lake of fire. Christians will die in the natural unless we are raptured first, but our eternity will be spent in heaven. We won't have any part of that second death.

VERSE 16

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

The offence

Paul keeps emphasizing the thought that the offence is not just neutralized. The gift and the offence offset one another, but the gift far outweighs the offence.

By one to condemnation

Adam's one offence brought about all the condemnation we see in the world today, but the free gift is of many offences. This means that any offence man has ever done against God or man that could be called sin, Jesus took care of at the cross.

Many offences unto justification

Justification means, just as if I had never sinned. God gives us a completely clean slate. The judgment was by one offence to condemnation, but the free gift was for many offences to justification.

VERSE 17

For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the free gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.

Much more

This is the fourth much more, and it means we receive an abundance of grace, and the free gift of righteousness in Christ.

One man's offence

One offence caused all the misery, but Christ triumphed in all of the offences to restore us, and much more. Adam, through sin, lost his dominion over the earth but Christ restored it.

Abundance of grace

This is the acquittal given for the whole human race. Jesus died for the sins of all, and for those who believe Him, their sins are washed away forever.

John 1:29

The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and he saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world.

This should make us rejoice greatly. He who is free is free indeed. Jesus died, covered our sins, nailed the law to His cross, and now we are under grace, not law. We can come boldly to the throne of grace to find mercy and help in time of need.

They which receive

This means us, the redeemed of God. We go to Him empty handed, and He keeps filling us up. Not only are we saved and atoned for, but we receive an abundance of grace. The gift of the righteousness of God is multiplied grace.

Gift of righteousness

The gift of righteousness shall reign in our lives by one, Jesus Christ. This doesn't just pertain to our everlasting life; this is for more abundance now as well. This is the righteousness of God to grow up in us.

VERSE 18

Therefore as by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life.

Adam sinned and we were a part of it automatically. We were called the Adamic human race and we inherited condemnation just by being born. Christ brought righteousness, and the free gift came upon all men. The free gift is truly free. We don't have to work for it, or jump through hoops for it, it is absolutely free to all who believe our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

VERSE 19

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

Disobedience made sinners

Man has no trouble falling into the heritage passed down by Adam. Judgment came on all men because of Adam. All have sinned and come short of the glory of God. In the first man Adam all die, but in the second man Adam, Jesus Christ, all have eternal life. In Adam we were sinners, but in Christ we are righteous.

Obedience made righteousness

God gave us the gift of His Son Jesus freely, and all who believe on Him will be saved. By the obedience of the second Adam, many are made righteous, and the atonement was made for every man. We choose to believe the Lord, or reject Him. The believers go on to heaven, but the non-believers to doom and punishment. Whosoever is born of God does not belong to the devil. Christ's seed remains in us, and we are forever His. Christ lives in us.

If we leave the path God put us on, and the fellowship we had with God is severed, our eternal life is still, and will always be, intact. We should, by His grace, love Him and not follow after idols. We might bark like dogs if we leave God's fellowship, but we will always be sheep.

VERSE 20

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

Much more

This is the fifth much more. Five is the number of grace, and it is fitting for this to be number five because it tells us that grace abounded much more than the offence.

The law entered

The law was not given as a moral compass, it was not given for us to have something to work for and attain. The only reason the law was given was to magnify sin. This showed how absolutely impossible it was for man to obey the law in its entirety.

Where sin abounded

Where sin abounded to the uttermost and the law was a witness, is at the cross. God took all sin for all time and laid it upon Jesus. This includes sins not yet committed. We could not ever imagine the weight of the sin that was forced down on Christ. Praise His holy name. Thank you Jesus!

Grace did much more abound

God's master plan was not to magnify sin, it was to magnify His Son, Jesus Christ. The only thing that can ever save us is His grace, and our Jesus is full of grace and truth. The law was magnified so that grace could be much more magnified. Sin never had a chance with Jesus Christ. The law illuminated our complete guilt, and that we were total failures. Grace covers our sins, and we are part of the family of God. If we are in Christ, we are forgiven and we are free of sin and guilt forever. Sin abounded greatly at the cross, but divine grace abounded more. God's divine grace will always prevail over sin.

VERSE 21

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

Sin reigned

Sin and ungodliness was brought upon man by Satan and Adam. By birth sin and death had every man.

Grace reigned

God is stacking up redemption, and His much more redemption is measuring up far more than the sin and ungodliness that was brought upon man. Even though sin and death had us, abundant grace reigned, and has freed us from the grip of sin and death. We need to be lovely to one another for His sake, and walk in newness of life.

CHAPTER 6

DIVISION 4: THE RESULT OF THE GOSPEL

Paul tells us in this chapter what we must believe. We can't just believe what we want, because the scripture teaches otherwise. We will eventually act on what we believe, and we will put into practice what we believe. Paul lays the foundation for what we must believe, and these are the facts as God has laid them down concerning us.

VERSE 1

What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?

This isn't what Paul taught, but some people take everything out of context. He is showing here what foolishness some men come up with.

VERSE 2

God forbid. How shall we that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?

We could never find one person who can sin while he is dead. Colossians 3:3 tells us we are dead, and our lives are hid with Christ in God. Whether we know it or not, all Christians live in the realm of grace, and we have no condemnation if we are in Christ. We are not just in the realm of grace, we have a power of grace within us. We are dead to sin, and not identified any longer with the old creation, we are brand new. Christians shouldn't spend time dwelling on sin, when there is no remembrance of sin to God. It's not about sin once we are born again; it's about fellowship with Jesus. We are living in a realm forever where sin and law do not exist. Jesus nailed all sin to the cross, it is no more. To say otherwise is denying the power of the cross.

VERSE 3

Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death?

This is a reference to water baptism. When we go underwater symbolically we go down into death with Christ, under all the judgment of God. Our coming up out of the water is symbolic of the newness of life we have in Jesus by the resurrection power of God, which is the same power that raised up Christ. God wants us to be baptized, because it is a symbol of us dying in Christ, and being raised in newness of life.

Water baptism cannot save us; it is just the outward expression of what has already happened on the inside. The same is true of circumcision. Abraham was righteous long before God ever gave the outward sign of circumcision. These symbols do teach wonderful lessons. When Christ died, we died with Him, and God counted Christ's death as our death. Christ died for our sins, but we were the ones who deserved to die. It is appointed unto man once to die, and we met that appointment in Jesus, so we have already met our appointment in death. When the Christians die in the natural, they are asleep in Jesus.

VERSE 4

Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

Buried with Him

When men die their bodies are buried, and this is what God did: He took our old man down into the depths of the ocean, God's ocean so to speak, never to be remembered again. A good illustration of this is when God took Israel across the Red sea on dry ground, but the Egyptians sank like lead in that sea, never to be seen again. The old man is taken down into death, and the new man comes up out of the death with Christ forevermore.

Newness of life

Verses 3 and 4 assure us that we died to sin in Christ, and that we were raised in newness of life. The new life we have is the life of Christ in us, and we become more than conquerors in the realm of grace to live it, to grow in it, and to appreciate it. All of God's grace is given to us freely, so we may have faith and full confidence in that life of Jesus Christ within us. To fully overcome and qualify for the bride, we have to be fully persuaded that He is able.

VERSE 5

For if we have been planted together in the likeness of His death, we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection:

This is like planting wheat that dies before it brings forth new life. If we are planted with Him in His death, we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection. Paul is not talking about being raised up, and going to heaven after we die. Paul is talking about our lives right now. We have to believe that we are dead in Christ right now, and that we have been raised in newness of life with Him right now.

VERSE 6

Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.

Knowing this

It is what we believe that is going to make a difference in our lives. It is what we believe that will accomplish any victory over unrighteousness, and we will act on what we believe, and it will be manifested outwardly in us, either good or bad.

Luke 6:45

A good man out of the good treasure of His heart bringeth forth that which is good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is evil: for of the abundance of the heart the mouth spaketh.

What we believe in our hearts is what will be translated outwardly. This is why it is so important to believe the right things. Our old man was crucified with Christ over two thousand years ago when Jesus died on the cross. Our old man does not mean our fleshly bodies; it means our old nature that Adam gave to us. Our old man is dead as far as God is concerned.

Body of Sin

This means the whole bulk of sin, the nature of sin that God had to destroy. This body of sin includes all the sins from Adam to the present day, and even to the end of the millennium. God killed all of it at the cross. He eradicated it by crucifying it.

We shall not serve sin

We as individuals are not in the bondage of sin. We do not have to sin in our fleshly bodies, because God has given us the power to live a life free of sin. This is speaking of our bodies, not our spirits.

VERSE 7

For he that is dead is freed from sin.

This is one of the first premises we must learn to believe about ourselves. He that is dead is justified from sin. How can a dead man sin? Once we are born again, we have two natures: the old Adamic nature (which is dead in God's eyes,) and the new nature which is in Christ. If the old man rules, sin will surely prevail. If the new man rules, sin will not prevail because of the life of Christ in us. Christ was always without sin, and could not sin. He has given us the exact same nature.

Speaking of our natural lives, if Christians don't go on with God, the old man will dominate, but the salvation of those Christians will never be in question. Their salvation was settled forever when they believed Jesus Christ as Savior. They won't, however, live the beautiful and victorious life full of joy they could have had if they had gone on with Jesus. They are considered baby Christians who didn't grow up in Him. They will miss a wonderfully deep fellowship with a very loving Godhead and fellow Christians in their natural life. They will go to heaven, but they will always be subjected to the lusts of the old nature.

VERSE 8

Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him:

If we want to go on with Christ, we must identify with Him and be one with Him. This is not just talking about living with Him when this life is over. We must learn that we are living with Him right now, and that He is our life right now. Faith makes this a reality.

VERSE 9

Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over Him.

Jesus came into the world to die only one time. Likewise we die one time, and that is with Him. Christ being raised from the dead won't die again. Death has no more dominion over Christ, because He is alive forevermore. Because He lives, we live too.

VERSE 10

For in that He died, He died unto sin once: but in that He liveth, He liveth unto God.

Christ is alive for all eternity, and so are we.

VERSE 11

Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Likewise

This is important because it points back to the last 10 verses. Verses 1-10 give us the absolute facts that God says this is how it is. This is how God says it is, and it is not open to debate.

Reckon

We are to believe the same facts God has set forth in verses 1-10. Believing this is our part to do. In Romans 6 we find facts we must believe. In Romans 7 we'll find the battle that ensues when we believe. In Romans 8 we find the experience of it, after the power of the Holy Spirit makes it a reality in our bodies. Nothing happens unless we first believe that we died to sin, and that our old nature is dead.

Alive unto God through Jesus Christ

Sin is finished and it doesn't exist in the new creation life. We are alive to God because Jesus lives in us. Our old nature is dead to God, so we need to stop dragging it around. We need to grow up in the righteousness of God, and that righteousness will grow up in us until we become fully mature in the Lord. We need to be filled, and be full of the Holy Spirit, to enlighten the eyes of our understanding more and more as we grow up in the Lord.

II Corinthians 9:8

And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work:

Grace and faith make it all happen. We can do all things through Christ.

VERSE 12

Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof.

Let not sin reign

This is speaking to where sin is manifest in the deeds of the mortal body. Christ frees us from sin, but we are still in the presence of sin as we fight our good fight of faith. We are in the realm of grace, and in the state of grace. Faith comes alive in us, and we quit letting sin reign in our bodies. When Christ starts growing up in us, we give in less and less to lusts. The old creation becomes less and less dominant until it is fully overcome. This happens when we let Christ rule in our lives.

Lusts

If you can stop the desire for sin, you can stop sin altogether in its tracks. This is where we must believe, and God gives us victory over the desire to sin.

VERSE 13

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

Neither yield your members

This tells us we have a choice. We are going to have temptations and battles. Even though we are in the realm of grace, and have the very righteousness of God that Jesus imputed to us, we are still in weak bodies of flesh and we will fail. This body will yield just as quickly to the old nature as it will the new nature. The battles going on inside our bodies are between the two natures. The winner of the battle will be the one you feed the most. If we feed the new man with all of God's beautiful truths of divine grace, then the new man gets stronger, and takes dominion over the old man. It is the new man that conquers the members of our bodies.

Instruments of righteousness unto God

We yield our members of righteousness unto God. We serve in the newness of life, and that is the life of the Lord Jesus Christ. The more we grow in Jesus the less important the lusts of the flesh become. In Christ we have total victory that the devil can't steal, kill, or destroy. Until we yield, there is no power in us, because love turns it on. Truth in love is that power that works within us.

VERSE 14

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

Sin shall not have dominion

What a powerful verse. There comes a time in our lives, if we are struggling with some kind of temptation that we have to remember that sin shall not have dominion over us. Many people struggle with sin because they try to eradicate sin in their lives by the law. It can't be done because sin thrives under the law, and those trying to keep the works of law become susceptible to the law, and the burden of trying to keep the whole law. The law can never give us victory over sin, only the blood of Jesus can do that. Men trying to keep the law will find failure to do it, and discouragement sets in.

Not under law, under grace

Sin won't have dominion over Christians because they are under grace, and the grace message is the only message that frees us from sin. The foundation of grace is the complete freedom from sin. We know without any doubt that we are not under the law but under grace. Christ took the law out of the way when He died on the cross. He took the place of the law.

The full grace message is rarely preached in Christianity today. One reason for this is because man likes to control man. Some want to control by guilt; others by fear or ignorance because they are not trusting in the word of God. God never intended for man to control other men where faith is concerned. Many don't want to go the grace way, because they always think they can add something, or bring something more to save them. There is nothing they can bring or add that will be acceptable to God. The only thing acceptable to God for our salvation is the blood of the Lamb, His precious Son Jesus Christ. God won't recognize anything else.

VERSE 15

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

All things may be lawful, but all things may not be beneficial. We can't sin, and think we will get away with it. We will always be saved, but sinning willfully has no benefit to the body of Christ. We need to take up the cross, deny self and thus keep from being a stumbling block to our brothers. If we truly love Christ, we will love our brothers as ourselves and put them before ourselves. We either serve God, or we serve mammon.

VERSE 16

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

What freedom is it to say we are free to sin? Sin is bondage and only divine grace can free us from the bondage of sin. If you are going to sin, you'll be a slave to sin. If you are going to be under the law, and be a slave to the law, it will only lead to sin.

VERSE 17

But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you.

Obey from the heart

Obedience is from the heart. We don't have obedience to God just because He is God, or because we fear Him, or because it is the right thing to do. Obedience comes from the heart, because it is love. When God grows His love in our hearts, we will want to obey Him. Love makes obedience and yielding a pleasure. When we really love the Lord, He causes us to will and to do of His good pleasure. All the old things pass away as His mind begins to develop in us.

That form of doctrine delivered

This is speaking of Paul's gospel. Paul's gospel reveals all the secrets God has kept hidden from ages past that have been revealed to the church age, the age we are now living in. It is in this age that God is searching among the Gentiles for a bride for His Son Jesus. Paul's gospel reveals the meat of God's word, yea the deep things of God, His full counsel.

VERSE 18-20

Being then made free from sin, ye become the servants of righteousness. I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh: for as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness. For when ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness.

Servants of sin

Verses 18, 19, and 20 are saying we know how easy it was to sin before we were born again. We had no trouble at all committing sin; it just came as a matter of course. When we sinned we were free from righteousness. The natural man is devoid of righteousness and bound by sin.

Servants of righteousness

Paul is telling us that when the new man reigns, it becomes just as easy to conduct our lives in righteousness as it was to conduct it in sin. God says we must be free from sin, from the bondage and rule of sin. Being overtaken in a fault is not the same as having to sin every day, and bring in the bondage of sin. We become the servants of righteousness.

VERSE 21

What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things is death.

We cannot give ourselves to sin, and expect to come out unscathed. God didn't intend that, because He intended that we should live lives free of sin with fruits of righteousness. We should want to live in an offensive and positive mode, and not in a defensive and negative mode.

VERSE 22

But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.

Made free from sin

God says we have been made free from sin through death. When we believe we died with Christ, sin had no dominion over us. Now we are raised and seated together with Him. When we know that message, Satan can no longer torment us.

Servants to God

It is not just the stopping of sin; the positive victory is that we become servants to God. We are servants of righteousness, which means we are yielding to something worthwhile, something good and righteous before God. This servant means a prisoner of the love of Jesus Christ. We obey because we love. We will become true worshipping vessels to God. We will be vessels tuned to Him, and add to His usefulness.

Fruit unto holiness

When we become servants of God, then we have our fruit unto holiness and everlasting life. Everlasting life is not just talking about going to heaven and living forever. Everlasting life is all the fullness of Christ, and what He has to offer in this life as well.

VERSE 23

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

Wages of sin

Wages means you have to work to sin. When we are born again, and we get our new nature, we have a battle with our old nature. The result for the wages of sin is death.

Gift of God

God has given us Christ, righteousness, a new nature, and eternal life in Jesus. Jesus always did those things that pleased His Father. Pleasing God becomes a privilege in our lives.

Everlasting life

Everlasting life is the life of Christ in us, and we need to start living it now. The Holy Spirit is the one who takes the things of Christ and makes them ours. More Holy Spirit and more joy and we will praise the Lord even more. The readied wife rules and reigns with Him now, and allows His life to be fully exercised in her now. Full grace and full love is power, and it is alive and living in us.

CHAPTER 7

In chapter 6, the focus was on grace and how sin was defeated. Now in chapter 7, grace turns its sight on the law.

Galatians 3:13

Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written. Cursed is everyone that hangeth on a tree.

This establishes what we have seen many times in the first 6 chapters of this book: Christ became sin for us, and ransomed us with His blood.

John 8:36

If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.

Christ died for us on the cross. When we believed, in the eyes of God our old nature died and we became new creatures in Christ. The life of Christ became the new nature in us.

Ephesians 2:15

Having abolished in His flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances for to make in Himself of twain one new man, so making peace;

This new man in us is Christ. He lives in us and we are His body. The enmity He abolished was sin, and the law. Everything we find out in chapters 7 and 8 begins in chapter 6. Nothing will happen in our lives if we don't believe. When we believe the truth in Romans 6, it will ultimately be translated into our lives.

The truths Paul writes about and the transition Paul went through in chapter 7 refer to Paul's experience as a Christian when he had been born again and filled with the power of the Holy Spirit. To the honest heart, and to the person searching for victory, Romans 7 is extremely comforting. The battles we go through are not unique to us. Some Christians think that if they fail or commit a sinful act, that salvation didn't work for them. They didn't have the instruction of what was going to happen in their lives after they got saved.

We will never get to Romans 8 as far as our walk is concerned, unless we first go through Romans 7. Romans 8 is the mighty victorious chapter, and Romans 7 is typically called the wilderness experience, and corresponds with Israel's trek through the wilderness. Even though the Israelites were safe, and freed from bondage, they had failure after failure in their walk. Many never got to the land of Canaan, and didn't enter into God's rest. Some Christians are like these children of Israel, spending their whole lives in the land of Canaan and never knowing the way of complete victory.

VERSE 1

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

Brethren

Paul is speaking here to Gentile brethren that had Pharisee influence in their teaching. The Pharisees were a Jewish religious sect that strictly adhered to all of the law. They believed in an afterlife, and the coming of a Messiah.

The law has dominion

This is true of any law. The law of the land, after a person dies, has no more jurisdiction. When we believed Christ, and became new, our old man (old nature) died, and the law had no more dominion over us. The proper place for the 10 commandments is nailed to the cross, and this is our rejoicing to God. We were delivered from sin when the captain of our salvation died, and when we died with Him, and arose to newness of life. Now Christ lives in us and we rejoice in the freedom and liberty wherewith we are called.

When people hear the word 'law', they automatically think about the 10 commandments, which is the law of Moses. There are in fact four laws found in this chapter:

- 1) Verses 1-6 tell of the law of life that bound us to Adam. This is not the law of Moses.
- 2) Verse 7 is the law of God, which includes the law of Moses and all the righteous standards of God.
- 3) Verse 23 is the law of sin. Like the law of Moses, it just expresses the power of sin exerted upon the flesh, which has power over flesh.
- 4) Verse 23 also shows us the law of the new creation life. This law is more powerful than the law of sin. This is the law we must learn to live by and submit to in our lives if we are to get victory over the flesh.

VERSE 2

For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband.

Woman bound to husband

This is not to prove marriage and divorce truths. Paul is simply using this as a pattern to illustrate the truth between two heads, or two husbands. The point Paul was making is that our first husband, or head, was Adam, and we were bound by life to Adam as long as he lived. We were loosed from Adam by the death of Christ. When Christ died on the cross, Adam died too. The first man Adam stayed dead, the second man Adam (Jesus) was raised in newness of life.

If the husband be dead

If the husband dies, the woman is loosed from that husband. This is the same truth Paul brought out in Romans 6 when he explained that once we have died to sin, the old husband went down into death.

VERSE 3

So then if, while her husband liveth, and she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband be dead, she is free from the law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man.

If one woman lives with two men, how would they know whose fruit she produced? This is what can happen in the lives of Christians. Christians have two natures – the old nature and the new nature. Some Christians are trying to bear fruit with two husbands, but God will not permit that. In the case of the adulterous affair between David and Bathsheba, whose husband was Uriah, when the child was born from this affair, God didn't permit it to live. After Uriah was killed, and David married Bathsheba, their second child was Solomon. This is a unique example of what can happen in the lives of Christians.

After we are born again we don't automatically begin to bear spiritual fruit. When we are first saved, our old nature is still very much alive, and we don't know how to make him dead. We don't yet know Romans 6 to the degree that he is no longer a part of our lives. There is fruit born into our lives when the old man is rendered powerless. God wants the fruit of Christ in our lives.

Galatians 5:22-23

- 22) But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith,
23) Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.

The fruit of the Spirit is not just what we do, but what we are. A great attitude can only come from the new husband, Jesus Christ.

VERSE 4

Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to Him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God.

Wherefore

This means 'because of what has gone before.' Because of this fact, we also become dead to the law by the body of Christ. Christ became a man to assume all the responsibilities of the first man Adam, and all of those responsibilities demanded death. Christ took that place, and took that old first husband down into death with Himself.

Fruit unto God

In order for us to bring forth fruit unto God, we have to let the fact of Adam being dead become a reality in our lives. The old man, or old first husband, has to be dead to bring forth the fruit God wants in our lives.

VERSE 5

For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death.

The law in the old life could do nothing but sin and bring forth fruit unto death. As Christians, we should refuse to be identified by the old man. We need to allow Christ to live His life in us. If we believe this, our lives will be translated to the new creation.

VERSE 6

But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, not in the oldness of the letter.

But

The word 'but' in the scriptures indicates that a change is coming. In this case, a welcome change. We are delivered from the law of life, which joins us to Adam. God says we are no longer tied to him because death has separated us from the law.

The letter

The letter in scripture, more often than not, is referring to the law. The law of Moses thrives with the old man. We who are dead should serve in newness of life, not in the letter.

Being dead

Until our old man died, all the fruit that we had in our sinful state was dead fruit. All our members could do was bring forth death. But God delivered us from the law by the blood of Jesus, and we got our new man. Once this happens we should not serve the letter of the law.

Romans 8:3-5

- 3) For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh:
- 4) That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.
- 5) For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit, the things of the Spirit.

When Christians try to perform the law it only brings weakness. If we are of the law, there is no more grace, but if we are of grace, there is no more law.

Newness of Spirit

When we rely on the power of the new man, it is finished. This is the power of Christ living in us. Christ will perform the good work which He has begun, but He has already lived all of that. He completed it all, He put down the law, and now it's grace. Every power of His life is in us. We need to be full of the Holy Spirit because we are weak. We can grow up fully in His righteousness by yielding to the new man, and not be led around by the lusts of the flesh.

VERSE 7

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

Is the law sin

Verse 7 is speaking of the law of God, and does contain the law of Moses. There is nothing wrong with the law, there never was, and there never will be. The law was never meant to make a man righteous. God gave the law not to make men righteous, but to magnify, and bring to the light, our sins.

Galatians 3:23-25

- 23) But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed.
- 24) Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.
- 25) But after the faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster.

No justification in law

The law can bring sin to light, but can't do anything about it. When Paul first became a Christian the spotlight of sin not only shined outwardly, but also inwardly, down to the area of lust which is the deep motivation.

VERSE 8

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

Concupiscence is not a favorable term. It means a longing, or a lust for evil. This is something that we don't want, yet the law brought this to light in Paul. Without the law sin is dead.

VERSE 9

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

Paul realized if he was guilty as charged, he deserved to die. This is exactly what every Christian must realize. When Christ hung on that cross, He was taking our place. We are the ones who should have been hanging there. "Sin revived and I died" means Paul knew he was worthy of death. Paul is referring to the life he had when he was so self-righteous and thinking he could keep all parts of the law. When the law finally magnified his sin, he knew in reality he deserved death.

VERSE 10

And the commandment, which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death.

This is man's idea of the law. Scripture never says the law was sent to give life. This law was sent to execute judgment. It did its job very well, and still does. Paul found the law not to be unto life, but rather unto death. The law cannot justify us, and give us a clean bill of health, because its purpose is to magnify sin.

VERSE 11

For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew me.

It is the law that stirs up sin rebellion and unbelief. When people are told they can't do something they want to do, they are being rebellious.

VERSE 12

Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good.

The law magnifies sin, and does it beautifully. Paul was the chief of sinners, because he was the most devout in his perseverance to keep the law in his own strength, not because he killed Christians. The law showed Paul what he really was: the king of self-righteousness, which is putrid to God. We don't try to keep the law when we are in Christ because we count Him as the one who does it all.

VERSE 13

Was then that which is good made death unto me? God forbid. But sin, that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good: that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful.

The law is good

Is it the law's fault that a person is found guilty? The law is holy, and just, and good, and cannot be blamed for our failures. God uses the law to make sin appear what it actually is, and that includes religious sin. Religious sin has a fine facade on the outside, but can be shown to be black on the inside.

But that which is good

That which is good is the holy law of God. The law shows evil, but it isn't evil or defiled in any manner. The greatest reason for the law is to magnify Christ, and how much we need Him. It is all by grace, and

not our works. It is because of what He did, not what we do. By spirit, or by flesh, there is no in between, and they can't be mixed. It is either by grace or by law. It can't be both. The law was established to magnify the only one who could keep it, Jesus. It takes His life living in us by grace through faith, in the name of Jesus, to be imputed with His very own righteousness, and have a life that is free from sin and death.

That sin by the law might become sinful

This is why God gave the law, that there be no doubt in man that sin is there.

VERSE 14

For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin.

The law is spiritual

The law is spiritual, but it can't make us spiritual. The law is not capable of doing that.

Carnal

There are three major classes of people:

1) The natural person

This includes everyone born into the world who are of the seed of Adam.

2) Spiritual person

This is the person born of the Spirit, who walks in the Spirit. These people live yielded lives.

3) Carnal person

'Carnal' only applies to a Christian. There are some Christians that can't be called neutral, because they are born again. But they are not walking after the Spirit, so Paul coined the word carnal, which means fleshly. A carnal person is born again, but does not walk after the Spirit. Carnal is certainly better than natural, because natural people are hell-bound unless they believe Christ. A carnal Christian is a baby Christian. They need to grow to maturity and become a spiritually-mature Christian. Paul called himself carnal until he learned the truth of Romans 8.

Verses 15 - 25 are very important because they show the battle between the two natures. A carnal Christian is a Christian trying to serve two masters. Before salvation we only have the one nature, the old sinful life. But every believer has two natures: the old nature and the new nature. We are sinless in Christ, but sin is still in our flesh.

The rest of this chapter, and part of chapter 8, tells us how to put that old nature down. This has to happen in every Christian life. These two natures, or husbands, are in every believer, and each husband is trying to give orders. One husband represents Christ, and the other husband represents Adam. Our bodies are the battleground. If we want to grow in righteousness, we look to Christ, and we yield to Him, and not yield to sin in our flesh. We need to feed the new man with the word of God, and not yield to the old man. Jesus does it all, and He can help us live the life of an overcomer.

The members Paul will be talking about are those that have to be brought into submission. This is where it is important for us to identify and understand, the "I's" in these next chapters, both refer to Paul and it simply means ourselves. We need to know which "I" is speaking, and which "I" should be eliminated. This is the battle Paul had after he became a Christian and it is the battle we have as Christians.

VERSE 15

For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that I do not; but what I hate, that I do.

That which I do I allow not

This refers to the old flesh that is still reigning. The old man will initially be stronger than the new man. The new creation is just in infancy here. He hasn't yet been fed and allowed to grow up. "That which I do" shows the deeds accomplished by the flesh.

What I would do, that I do not

This is the new creation life wanting to do right and please God, but the body is still yielding to the old nature received at birth.

What I hate

This shows the new creation hating that which is evil, but the old man still carries out fleshly deeds of the body.

VERSE 16

If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good.

If the old man does that which the new man would not allow, under the law this seems good.

VERSE 17

Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.

We must realize where the evil is coming from. Our bodies are just a neutral battleground, and our bodies will yield to the flesh just as quickly as it will to the Spirit. These bodies are capable of committing all manner of sins, and all that can keep our bodies from committing sin is the new man. In Christ we have no sin, but it is still in our flesh. We need to be recognized as new creations in Christ Jesus, and we have to make that distinction. We have to take responsibility of which creation, old or new, that we yield to.

VERSE 18

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

In me dwells no good thing

Every Christian needs to know this verse. We have to know that within us – in our flesh – is no good thing. Naturally speaking, we have no goodness, and if we think we are good, we will be defeated. If we are trying to hold onto whatever good we think we have, we are hanging on to self-righteousness. We are taught that there is some good in every man, but God says, "There is none good, no not one." The only true anything we have comes from the Lord. God is pleased when we magnify His Son, Jesus Christ.

To will is present

From the moment we are born again, the new man wants to do good, but how to perform it is often the problem. We want to do good but we are powerless. We will never be able to do this in our own power. It must be our new nature of Christ in us that dictates how to do good.

VERSES 19-20

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

Do that I would not

Paul is encouraging himself in Christ, and we can rejoice because the bad things we do are not charged to our account. Paul knows it is a battle, and it is frustrating. He sees what he should do as a Christian, but the flesh is so strong, and desires are so overwhelming, but he understands that Jesus is his life, and the flesh is but a lie.

Our flesh carries around the reminders of the law of sin and death. It is always present with us. It is the camel we journey through life on. We have to ride this camel; it is one big trial. We won't ride any other camel but our own. We have to ride our camel across the desert to win the bridegroom, and conquer the flesh by the power of the grace in the new man. Our camel is obstinate; he stinks, he bites, he hisses and spits, but he is just what we need to get across the desert.

Sin that dwells in me

Paul keeps coming back to the fact that sin is in the flesh, not in the new creation. It is absolutely impossible for the new man to sin. We can't sin because of the seed of God that abides in us, that life of Christ which is in all Christians.

VERSES 21-23

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

Warring against to law of my mind

The old nature we received at birth is at war against the new nature we received from Christ. This is the law of sin against the law of our minds. The law of sin is what causes the battles within us.

Bringing me into captivity

The law of sin has been in our members since we drew our first breath. That law continues by itself until we are born again. The old man always has a head start on the new man.

VERSE 24

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

This is how the Apostle Paul felt as a Christian. He was a miserable human being when he wrote these words. This statement shows deep inner pain and suffering in Paul. He had to sink to the depths to find the answer in verse 25. This is where we have to go to find the answer in our lives too.

VERSE 25

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

Paul was a Jew that depended only on himself. He thought himself so righteous and so good. But he had to be reduced to a condition like this and come to this place to discover the reality of Christ. He believed on Christ on the road to Damascus, but the rest of his life (and our Christian lives) was spent learning to

trust Christ more and more. It is not a fantasy, but a reality, when we find that Christ is actually our life. Our power comes from Christ, which is the Word of God. The word - the sword - is all powerful. We begin to realize how much He loves us, and we want more. If we lack love, we will never win Him.

With the mind

The mind is the inner man, and the inner man serves the law of God. With flesh is the law of sin, because flesh can't serve anything but sin, and will never serve God. The two creations are separated here. The new man will always serve God, but the old man will serve nothing but the flesh.

CHAPTER 8

This is one of the high water mark chapters of Romans. Everything is in this chapter. The increase of encouragement goes to a whole new level. This is now the realm of grace with the Holy Spirit in us, and the transforming grace God has for us. In this chapter there is salvation, eternal security, the infilling, and the fullness of the Holy Spirit. The sum of all that grace is ruling and reigning jointly together and being glorified together as husband and wife with Jesus Christ. All scripture is glorious, but this portion is especially glorious.

VERSE 1

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

Therefore

This means everything we have discovered up to now:

- 1) We are justified by faith - this is why there is no condemnation.
- 2) We died with Christ - we found this in chapter 6.
- 3) We have been loosed from our old husband - we found this in chapter 7.
- 4) We are joined unto Christ - this is also why there is no condemnation.

No condemnation

Paul must have been feeling some condemnation in chapter 7, verse 24. He felt an unjust and undeserved condemnation because he hadn't learned the way of victory in chapter 8. What we believe will ultimately be converted into our lives.

To those who belong to Christ there is no condemnation. It is very important that we understand these words. Nothing can condemn us once we accept Christ. When Christ justified us, all our sins, past, present, and future were taken away forever. We became new in Christ, and judgment is gone. When Christians will stand before the judgment seat of Christ, they will be judged for rewards. They will not stand before the great white throne as those who never believed Christ. Their judgment will be for what rewards they will receive. Christians have their names recorded in the Lamb's book of life, because the debt for sin has been fully paid by Jesus. Thank you precious Jesus!

We have no condemnation, but if we commit sin in our flesh we will pay the consequences connected to that sin. We need to grow up in love and truth, and not concentrate on sinning. As we grow in grace, we grow in love and we become like Him. Jesus is incredible. He loves always, and He loves the unlovable. If we grow up in Christ we'll become like Christ. We are in the realm of grace, and we are precious sons of God. Our Father thrills over every one of His sons because we have Jesus in us and the Father thrills over Jesus.

Who walk not after the flesh

The phrase "who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit," should not be in this verse. The translators took this phrase from verse 4 and duplicated it in this verse. This phrase was not in the original text. It is a contradiction in terms. We have no condemnation because we are in Christ Jesus. The moment we believe in Christ we are free from condemnation because of our faith, not because of our walk.

VERSE 2

For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.

The law of the Spirit of life

There are two laws laid out before us here. Sin is the first, and we all know this one. We are born in sin and shapen in iniquity, and the result is death. The greater law is the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, and the spirit is the Holy Spirit. This same Spirit lives in us. The life of Jesus freed every Child of God from the law that ends in death. Law means "the order enforced." The law of the Spirit of life in Jesus is the new order, and it is enforced by God. There is nothing more powerful than God. He is the ultimate authority, so this is truly divine law and divine order. In this new order in the new inner man, all the sin is gone, and the old man is gone as far as God is concerned. The new man is what lives, and we are a brand new creation in Christ.

2 Corinthians 5:17

Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away, behold, all things become new.

God gives grace to the humble, not the hardened. The hardened are those who refused Christ, who was given by God's grace, and this makes His grace void in their lives. We have to let Christ take us over, believe God, and we will receive grace. We need grace to have faith, and faith works by love. The more of God's word we believe, the more love grows, and in turn more faith to see more of God's word.

The law of sin

This is a very powerful verse because this is what Paul was battling against in chapter 7, the law of sin. Paul discovers a new power in chapter 8, and that is the law of the Spirit of life, which is in Christ Jesus, and is the Holy Spirit.

VERSE 3

For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh:

What the law could not do

The law could never produce righteousness, and was never intended to do so. The law was weak through the flesh, of no effect, and could not make the flesh do good. Man could never keep the law. If he could it would justify him. No one but Jesus was ever able to keep all the law. The purpose of the law is to magnify sin in the flesh, and this magnified the need of a Savior. There was only one Savior who could save mankind, and that was the precious Lamb of God.

God sending His only Son

The magnificent plan of the Father is to magnify His precious Son, Jesus. Jesus condemned sin in the flesh. He died, and by His sacrifice we were without condemnation. Christ bore the condemnation that was due to us. He finished it; the old man was then dead. The foundation was laid for us to build on, and the Holy Spirit is there to do it.

VERSE 4

That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

Righteousness of the law

When we were saved, God didn't lower His standards, He found a way to bring us up to His standards. He didn't make us righteous by putting us under the law, but rather by putting us in Christ. With the Spirit of the life of Christ living in us, the righteous requirement of the law was fully met. The righteousness in our new man can grow, and lead us to the crown of rejoicing Paul speaks of. We need to have our new man be strengthened in the deeper things of God. Those who grow up and fully mature are those who let the Holy Spirit reign in their lives. The Spirit does everything, and we just take a sweet walk by faith. We need to awaken to the fullness of how blessed and privileged we are. How wondrous it is to be one of His sheep, a son of the living God. Let us grow to maturity to be the bride of Christ. This is our calling.

Who walk after the Spirit

The only way the righteousness of the law can be fulfilled is if we walk after the Spirit, and not after the flesh. Christ is the only one who could fulfill the righteousness of the law. We need Christ.

VERSE 5

For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit, the things of the Spirit.

If people go their own way in their own thoughts, putting themselves first, their lives will produce more flesh. Flesh begets flesh. Some Christians mind the things of the flesh; but those of us who are after the Spirit mind the things of the Spirit. Our lives grow with the wine of the fullness of the Spirit.

VERSE 6

For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.

Carnally minded

This is not talking about the death of hell, but the death of fruit in Christians who walk after the flesh. Some people are born again and never produce spiritual fruit. These people will be in heaven for eternity, but there will be no fruit. They can mind the things of the flesh and entertain the things of the flesh; they can bark like dogs and act like dogs, but they will always be His precious sheep.

Spiritually minded

To be spiritually minded brings life and peace. Jesus came that we may have life, and have it more abundantly. This comes from being spiritually minded. To be spiritually minded is to believe things in the Spirit. When we yield to the precious Spirit, nothing good is ever held back from us.

VERSE 7

Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can it be.

Enmity

This word means enemy, hostile. If a Christian has a carnal mind they are hostile to God. They are children of God but they are hostile toward God. These people always put themselves first. They are proud, and God sees the proud afar off. A carnal mind is a rebellious mind. God hates rebellion.

Not subject to the laws of God

The carnal mind is an enemy to God, because it is not subject to God's law. The carnal mind is dead to the word of God. When people seek the things that are not beneficial to them – the things of the flesh and not the word of God – it is not faith. They are not living the life that God has so divinely given them.

VERSE 8

So they that are in the flesh cannot please God.

This is flesh and religious flesh. Some people are very religious, but if they are in the flesh, none of that religion is going to please God. Choosing to live that lie does not please God. Even though they are in the Spirit, they can still have sin reigning in their lives. They live in defeat by living a lie.

VERSE 9

But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His.

Flesh or Spirit

In John 3, Jesus told Nicodemus, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is Spirit." People are divided into two great divisions: flesh or Spirit. If they are never born again, they are flesh. In the Spirit if they are born again. The Holy Spirit is the agent of the new birth.

The Spirit of Christ

The Holy Spirit is not the Spirit of Christ. Christ is His own Spirit. The Holy Spirit plants the Spirit of Christ in those who believe. The moment we believe, we have the Spirit of Christ within us and we are part of that Spiritual realm. Those who are in the flesh are none of His. Jesus doesn't pray for the world, He prays for those that are His. Sound doctrine is not "good God, good devil, good everybody." The Prince of the power of the air is Satan and he is our enemy. He is a counterfeit, and counterfeit cannot stand against the word of God. We who are children of God are no longer flesh because we have the Spirit of Christ in us.

Many people think a Christian is automatically filled with the Holy Ghost when they are born again, but this is not so. Jesus said in the book of John:

John 7:39

But this spake Jesus of the Spirit, which they that believe on Him should receive: For the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.

If Jesus was talking about salvation in that verse, then none of the believers were saved until after Pentecost. The fact that these people were believers shows they were already saved. Salvation and the infilling of the Holy spirit are two distinct and separate steps. When Jesus was translated to heaven, the Holy Spirit didn't come for ten days thereafter. This also shows that salvation and the infilling of the Spirit do not happen simultaneously. Salvation comes first, then the infilling. In the Old Testament Tabernacle the blood was applied first, then the oil. These two were never mixed together or applied at the same time. Jesus saves us, and the Holy Spirit implants the Spirit of Christ in us. Then the Holy Spirit fills us, and leads us into all things. The infilling of the Holy Spirit is evidenced by speaking in an unknown tongue.

VERSE 10

And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.

If Christ be in you

This verse is talking about the Spirit of Christ that is implanted in us at the new birth. If Christ is in us the body is dead because of sin. This means that even after a Christian is born again, their mortal bodies are still subjected to death, because of sin. We are still physically in the realm of sin where death prevails because of the sin.

The Spirit is life

Even though our bodies die, the Spirit lives forever more, because of the Spirit of Christ in us. Once we are saved we are forever saved because we have the Spirit of Christ in us.

VERSE 11

But the spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in you.

Spirit that raised up Jesus

Jesus didn't raise Himself up from the dead, the Holy Spirit did. The Holy Spirit manifested His power by bringing forth Jesus on the third day.

If that Spirit dwell in you

This is the Holy Spirit, and the result of the infilling. There are many ways the power of the Holy Spirit quickens the body. His quickening power causes us to rise up and renew our minds, and gives us strength. Christ causes us to live for Him, to fight and not let sin control our lives. It's Christ in us, the hope of glory. He will take care of everything in our lives. He is all powerful, and knows what we need in all aspects of our lives. He does it all, and we can know the power of His resurrection.

VERSE 12

Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to lie after the flesh.

Once saved, we owe the flesh nothing.

VERSE 13

For if you live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.

After the flesh

Our old man is dead when Christ comes in, so we owe it nothing. Not only does the old man not exist anymore, we can live the abundant Holy Spirit life, and grow up in the power of the resurrection.

Mortify

Mortify means to "make it die." The greatest gift we can experience through the power of the Holy Spirit is when He gives us actual living power to live a sinless life. This can give us victory over any habit or weakness in our bodies. If we are filled with the Holy Spirit, we have the power within us to overcome any illustration in the flesh. Anything facing us has already been overcome in that power. "Make to die" the deeds of the body, and ye shall live.

VERSE 14

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

Led by the Spirit

This verse doesn't question our standing, but it enhances that we are sons of God because of Jesus, and the Holy Spirit is there to lead all sons. All sons won't follow that leading, but this is the way we should take. We can do all things in Christ. This is what the Holy Spirit points us to.

Sons of God

We are the sons of God indicates growth and maturity, which happens when we are led by the Spirit of God. These are mature sons, not infants or children. We grow and mature when we learn to submit our lives to the Spirit of God. Then we are on the road to maturity in Christ.

Paul moves into the provision of the fully-purposed plan of the power of the love of God to us. The Spirit speaks to our hearts and makes this real to us. Our sonship with God is because of Jesus. We are sons because God sees the Spirit of Christ in us. We begin with no condemnation, and end with no separation because it is impossible to be separated from Him and his love for us. Our standing with God is sure and steadfast. Nothing can change our standing with the Lord.

VERSE 15

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

Spirit of bondage again to fear

We already know we have no condemnation, and verse 15 declares there is no fear. God says when we are filled with the power of the Holy Spirit and when we have the new life within us. God didn't give us the new life free from sin so we would return again to bondage. Whom He has made free is free indeed, and we don't have to be in bondage to fear. When we realize how much He loves us, and we begin to truly love Him, perfect love casts out all fear. We trust Him for everything because He is able for everything that pertains to our spiritual or natural needs. He will never leave us or forsake us; He is with us all the way.

The Spirit of adoption

The Spirit of adoption means we have been grafted into the family of God, we are in that vine (Jesus.) We are all blood relatives in God's family by the shed blood of our precious Lord Jesus. Adoption actually means "placing as a son."

Abba, Father

To utter "Abba" was forbidden in a household except by the master's children. When we learn to call God our Father, we enter into the relationship of a Father and a son. Abba Father brings our relationship with God to the most intimacy we can have, and the most understanding of what our Abba Father is to us, and how caring He is. He wants us to come boldly to Him to find grace and help. He appreciates that confidence we have in His Son, Jesus. He delights when we come in the name of Jesus, the only name we can come to Him in. This is all because of the new man, Christ, living in us. Praise the Lord!

These two words, Abba and Father, actually bring out the stages of growth in a Christian life. We start out with Abba, which is a title of reverence to God, addressing the same person (God.) As we go on with the Lord, we find out who our Father is, and the intimate relationship with Him that is associated with it.

VERSE 16

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

Itself

The Spirit itself should be the Spirit Himself. The Spirit is a living being, not an 'it.'

Spirit beareth witness

We are completely dependent on the Spirit to lead us into God's full counsel. The Spirit bearing witness with our spirit shows that the Holy Spirit ministers to the Spirit of the life of Christ in us. We are all sealed by the Holy Spirit, and are now forever the sons of God. Our citizenship is in heaven, we are just passing through this life. For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.

VERSE 17

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

God brings us to the heights of His love, and His aspirations for us. His heart is fully open to us, and He lets us know it is His high calling for us is to win Christ Jesus as our bridegroom.

Heirs of God

All of God's children are His heirs. If they never grow up in God's word, they stay children, and that is what it will always be for them. Heaven is assured for all of God's born-again children, and in different stage of growth there will be greater rewards. Every person born again is a potential heir of all the glorious blessings of God, and to all the wealth He has. If we want to attain God's best we can't stay children. We have to grow in grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

The central theme of the Bible is for the sons of God to grow up in Him in all things; in the deeper things and in the high calling. Just feeding on the milk of the word, not strong meat, we stay babes and won't be able to be part of Christ's bride. If we remain children, wrestling with the truth, there will be no growth. Those who wrestle with the salvation question will never grow up. We must be settled in our hearts that Jesus saved us forever, and it is finished forever. Our sins are gone as far as the east is from the west. Christ said "It is finished!" at the cross.

Joint-heirs with Christ

This means we can share in the same glory as Christ. We have to come to a full and intimate knowledge of the truth by hearing Paul's gospel rightly divided. All God's children are heirs, but joint-heirs are those who will be full-overcomers and be in the bride of Christ. These will be the first portion saints that run the race for the prize of God's high calling, and win His Son as bridegroom. We can only be heirs of God because we are born again, but the joint-heirship comes about by marriage. Joint-heirship means equal sharing as with husband and wife. Our children are our heirs, but our spouse is our joint-heir.

Joint-heirship is with Jesus Christ, not with the Father, because Jesus Christ is the one who will take a wife to rule and reign with Him. Jesus will take the throne in the millennium, and rule as almighty God. But He won't do that until His wife meets Him in the air and is with Him. After the marriage and the wedding feast, He will take the throne with her. The joint-heirship comes with an "if" which shows there is a condition with this, and also shows there is more beyond salvation when you asked Jesus to come into your heart. Salvation was free and was open to all. God's best is also open to all, but the condition is that we suffer together with Jesus.

Suffer with Him

To suffer with Christ means we must surrender to everything God sends or allows to come into our lives. We turn the leadership of our lives totally over to Christ. We have to allow the Holy Spirit to lead us into all things, to take the things of Christ and make them ours. We have to allow Him to take us down the path to the bridegroom, just as Rachel did in Genesis 24. She didn't hesitate for a moment. She immediately said "I will go." We have to immediately say "I will go" just as she did.

We need to take in God's full counsel rightly divided, and not wrestle with anything. We grow in grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ (2 Peter 3:18) and trust, trust, trust. The Holy Spirit will lead us where we need to go no matter what we encounter along the way. He is able for everything.

VERSE 18

For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.

Suffering

Jesus says to know Him in the fellowship of His suffering.

Philippians 1:29-30

29) For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on Him, but also to suffer for His sake

30) Having the same conflict which ye saw in me, and now hear to be in me.

If we suffer with Him, we'll reign with Him. Paul doesn't want us to keep our eyes on the suffering, but rather keep our eyes on the prize, which is Jesus Christ as bridegroom.

Not worthy to be compared

Whatever sufferings Christ would allow and bring into our lives for our perfection, are not worthy to be compared to the glory that shall be revealed in us, Paul says. It's there for us, all we have to do is believe and take hold of the promise, and the Holy Spirit will take us all the way to the throne room on the day our bridegroom will be crowned. This is all about the power of Christ in us, the hope of glory, and just letting the truth live in us. The bride will have the full glory. She will be filled with all the fullness of His glory. This is because of the benefit of His love, and the pricelessness of His love is beyond comprehension. He can change us from glory to the very image of Him. Glorified together with Him means exalted to the same glory to which Christ has been raised. All of God's children are being offered His complete and total victory. This is the proposal to us. The question to us is, do we have the faith to believe in that magnificent grace?

VERSE 19

For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God.

The creature

This means all of creation.

Manifestation

This means the unveiling of the bride, all of creation is waiting for this to take place.

2 Thessalonians 2:7-8

- 7) For the mystery of iniquity doth already work; only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way.
- 8) And then shall that wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the Spirit of His mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of His coming.

The bride is hindering the devil and his plan for an antichrist. Verse 8 won't happen until she has been snatched away at the first trump. She will be spared going through the tribulation. Revelation 3:10 tells us He will keep her from the hour of temptation. Once she is gone from the earth, the tribulation will begin. She is holding back the full wrath of Satan. The things that are coming to pass in the world today are exciting for God's children, who are expecting to hear the trumpet blast at any moment. These are the people who know God's plan and are rejoicing in it.

VERSE 20

For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of Him who hath subjected the same in hope.

The creature

Creation was caught in the fall of Adam. All that God had put under the dominion of Adam were caught in the fall. All of God's creation fell the day Adam did.

Subject to vanity

God reduced creation to vanity.

Hope

When God reduced creation to vanity, He also presented the hope that is in Christ for us. Then creation is going to be part of that. Nothing gets by God; He is in total control of all things always. He orchestrates everything so wonderfully. He has even appointed the wicked unto the day of evil.

VERSE 21

Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption in the glorious liberty of the children of God.

Today creation preys one upon another, but when God delivers creation, the lion shall lay down with the lamb.

VERSE 22

For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now.

All creation is still under the curse of Adam. There is a lot of groaning, pain and screaming in man and animals. Humans are growing farther and farther apart, and the love of many is waxing cold. As beautiful as this world is it is still under a curse. There will be a new heaven and a new earth. What God is going to create is going to sing and praise the Lord.

There is even a groaning in the universe, because the heavens are making more noise than they ever have. The earth also is groaning and rumbling more and more. This all points to the coming manifestation of the sons of God. All of nature and all of the heavens realize it is near, and are reacting to it. All of the noise is the orchestra tuning up for the blast of the ages! Hallelujah!! Everything will give Him praise.

VERSE 23

And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.

Firstfruits of the Spirit

Firstfruits of the Spirit is the infilling of the Holy Spirit. We groan waiting for the redemption of our body. One day it will be shown outwardly that we are Christians, but today it is just the Spirit bearing witness with our spirit. We will look like Christians outwardly when we are glorified like unto Christ into one degree or another.

Groan within ourselves

Some of these groaning are from the lovesick ones, and they are groaning within and waiting for His appearing. These are the ones who have allowed the word of God to come in and take over their lives. The mind of Christ is in them. These are the full-overcoming Christians who desire to rule and reign with Him. They are joint sufferers with Christ who are expecting him at any moment, and looking forward to their (our) departure.

VERSE 24

For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for?

We are saved by hope, the hope of glorification and deliverance from our bodies. If we had our glorified body we wouldn't be hoping for one.

VERSE 25

But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it.

Hope

Hope is the precious, earnest expectation of 'when', not 'if.' We continue in hope and living our lives unto the Lord because of that hope. We are earnestly hoping to see Him at any moment. Paul's gospel is the only gospel that will bring forth that geyser-like life and build it glory to glory. This earnest expectation proves the love of God in us. We are completely confident that the promises of God will be revealed in us, and this proves His faithfulness in our lives.

What we see not

What is being spoken here is putting off the corruptible and being clothed with the incorruptible, our new bodies that are coming. This will be the glorified-body moment, and we will be able to praise Him fully. Having a body like unto His very own body will allow us to praise Him and love Him with no hindrance.

The moment of the ages is the revealing of His bride, the highest praise to the working of the grace of the Sons of God. When she is revealed, she is the masterpiece of His grace, and it is all because of Him. We see the four living ones as they represent the bridal company, ruling and reigning in the midst of the throne with Him. They will all have His glory, and they are all just like Him. They allowed Him to take over their lives. They grew up in Him and ran the race to win with patience. They learned to rejoice in all the infirmities and suffered with Him.

Patience

True faith gives precious patience to those who are gladly waiting for His coming, and it will be worth the wait. The love of God in us proves patience, enduring, abiding, and our confidence in Him. The patient waiting can only be done with the faith that works by love. Love makes us wait with joy. The waiting is not worthy to be compared with the glory that will come.

VERSE 26

Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities; for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession of us with groanings which cannot be uttered.

Likewise

Likewise means moreover, and also means the Godhead is continuing on in completely faithful manner to us.

Pray as we ought

We don't always pray as we ought because our tendency is to pray in such a fashion as to deliver us from suffering and pain. This is only natural. Elijah prayed that God would take His life, but that wasn't God's purpose. When we are filled with God's Spirit, the Spirit actually goes beyond our human emotion. He prays with groanings that can't be uttered, groanings we can't put into words. Groanings even our minds can't assimilate. The Spirit prays, and God understands. God doesn't always answer our emotional cries, but he does hear the power of the Holy Spirit.

The Spirit helps our infirmities

The Holy Spirit helps our infirmities by giving us hope. We need the Spirit in our lives to keep us from the brink of disaster. He makes this hope real in our lives, and God will sustain us even in this present day.

The Spirit intercedes for us

The Holy Spirit intercedes with groanings that can't be uttered. He is the one who takes the things of Christ, makes them ours, and sheds the love of God abroad in our hearts. He gets us ready to meet the King of King and Lord of Lords by leading us into all truth, and enlightening the eyes of our understanding. He will lead us all the way to the bridegroom if we are willing to go.

VERSE 27

And He that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because He maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.

Searches the hearts

The Father is the one who searches the hearts looking for the true worshippers, those who worship Him in Spirit and truth. The Father then sends the Holy Spirit out to find those who are willing, and He will minister to them and guide them into all truth.

Hebrews 4:12

For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two edged sword, piercing to dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and the joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

It is the powerful word of God that searches the heart. The powerful word of God is Paul's gospel to us who believe, and Paul's gospel proclaims the proposal of being the Lamb's wife to the ones who have the first love. Paul's gospel is truly the message for the high calling of God.

Mind of the Spirit

God searches the heart and the Holy Spirit make intercession, but it is the word (Jesus) that searches the true feelings and sincerity to see if anyone has the first love. The Word knows the mind of the Spirit, and this shows the perfect oneness of the Trinity. The harmony they have is beyond comprehension. We need to be willing to be a vessel that praises, and blesses the Lord with all that is in us. There is nothing lacking to us, so we can grow up in Him in all things.

VERSE 28

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

All things work together

It is no accident that this verse follows the prayer of the Holy Spirit in verse 27. Verse 28 is one of the most glorious verses in the word of God, and this verse has been called the rocking chair of the scriptures. Everything works together for our good, because the Holy Spirit is praying for the will of God. When the Holy Spirit begins to pray in our lives, this is when all things work together for our good. We don't always see it or feel it, but the Holy Spirit makes intercession according to the will of God, even things distasteful and detrimental. He works all these things for our good according to the will of God. The trials He sends or allows to come into our lives are necessary for our growth. He carefully prepares our raceway, and He is there for us all the time we are running to supply whatever we need to complete the race and win Christ as bridegroom. He takes all of our mistakes, and all of our unbelief, and works them together for our good.

To them that love God

This precious message is going forth right now to those who truly have the agape love, and who truly want God's best. This verse assures us and gives us complete confidence in His devotion, never ending love, and His backing for us forever. We can be confident in His deep love for us, it will never waver.

Called according to His purpose

God's purpose for all His children is to grow up in all things, and run the race to win the prize of His high calling, which is in Christ Jesus. All things work together for good to them that love Him first, and then are the called according to His purpose. Our love for God will be tested again and again if we are among the called. God called us to rule and reign with Christ, and to enjoy the very fullness of the blessings of God. God wants this for our lives even more than we want it ourselves. This can come about because there is nothing lacking for us to grow up in Him in all things. It is all there for us, God will not hold anything good from our lives. He is working His greatest work in the saints of the most high, the ones willing to let Christ completely rule their lives, and to suffer together with Him. Those who take God's love and want to grow up in it have that love power working in their lives.

VERSE 29

For whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.

Whom He did foreknow

This is God's overall calling and purpose. Whom He did foreknow refers to the new creation. God knew us in Christ before we were ever born in the natural, let alone born again. God saw us in the heights of what we should be, the constant backing of who we are, and the love that met us all the way back in ages past. God had in mind for us to be conformed to the image of Jesus Christ all along, because the only way God could see, or look at us, was in His Son Jesus Christ.

God has freely given us His Son, and Christ in us, the hope of glory, has always been, and always will be everything that God will see, or invest in. God is not a respecter of persons. The new man born of God is one life, and that is in His Son. Our only boast is in the cross, only in the life of the Son of God.

Predestinate

This doesn't mean that some are marked for salvation, and others to doom, because the scriptures tell us that God is not willing that any should perish, but all come to repentance. This predestination is collective. The new creation was chosen over the old creation before God ever made the old or new creation. Anyone who comes to Christ will become part of the new creation. Christ rejecters make up the old creation.

Conformed to the image of His Son

Conformed means the very same image as His Son. Day after day, after day, God is conforming us to the image of Christ, and every day we begin to look more and more like Him. We grow into that image from glory to glory. All that glory is growing us into the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. We are vessels to the praise and glory of His grace.

Firstborn

To be the first born among many brethren, He has to have brethren. That is us; we are sons of the Father. Christ being firstborn is the head of the new creation. Christ died in the old creation, and was resurrected in new creation. Since He was the first to resurrect in new life, He is the firstborn of the new creation. We became members of this new creation the moment we believed Christ.

VERSE 30

Moreover whom He did predestinate, them He also called: and whom He called, them He also justified: and whom He justified, them He also glorified.

Moreover

This means much more. We live in the time of much more; from glory, to glory, to glory into His very image. The church age we now live in is the age that the bridal message came forth for us through Paul's gospel. This bridal truth offers us much more than salvation, because we can become part of the bride of Christ, if so be that we suffer with Him.

Those He called, He justified and glorified

We who believe in the Son of God were predestinated and called, the justified and glorified, and this is who we are to Him. God deals with all believers as sons, not servants. God deals with the life of His Son, Jesus Christ in us. Glorified is in the past tense, so it is already done. Although not everyone will share in the same glory, everyone who is justified will experience some measure of glory.

VERSE 31

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

Paul is going back over truth already stated from chapter one on. Especially the truth in chapters 6, 7, and 8 when we begin to lay hold of the provision God has made for us.

Since God deals with us as sons, it is like He is interacting with Jesus. He is for us as much as He is for Jesus, because we are now sons of God, and we are required to embrace the fact that Jesus' life lives in us. The Father receives us on that basis and He treasures the life of Jesus in us. Not only are God's eyes upon us, we are in His hands, and He'll never let us go. Thank you, Lord! He is always for us, and will withhold nothing from us. His desire is for us to run and win the race for His best. We are more than conquerors through Christ Jesus. All we will need to be fully purposed will be provided. In faith our fight is to believe.

VERSE 32

He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things.

Paul begins to describe who God is. God's love for us was proven when He gave His Son Jesus to die for our sins. This also proves that He is for us. God gave His Son for us to show in no uncertain terms that He is for us. By the sacrifice of His precious Son Jesus, He has already paid the most horrific price that could ever be paid. Everything God has done He centered around Christ. Jesus didn't come into the world just to settle the sin question, and release us from all our guilt. Many people believe that once they are saved, they can lose that salvation. These people never see the matchless grace that God gives to us after we are born again. The riches we have in Christ are so magnificent that there is no comparison between just being saved, and going on to discover even more riches in His deep truths. He wants us to have all His riches, and gave us all things, and that means spiritually as well. He has enriched us beyond our wildest dreams.

VERSE 33

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

Who can charge anything to God's elect

There is now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus. Whom He has made free is free indeed, and this starts to grow the grace of God in our lives and transform us from glory to glory into the very image of Jesus. Nothing can be charged against our lives, because Jesus paid it all. Free means free, and the debt has been fully paid by the blood of Jesus

God's elect

We belong to God and we are the apple of His eye. He dares anyone to touch us if He hasn't ordered it for our lives.

God justifies

If God is the one who justified us, who can say anything is wrong with us? Who is puny man to charge us if God says we are free? God justifies us by faith.

VERSE 34

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

He that condemns

This statement looks the devil square in the face and says, "Get out of here!" We are not ignorant of the enemy's devices. All he wants to do is to steal, kill, and destroy. He wants to lay our failures up against us, but he can't because Jesus paid our debt and our sins, failures are gone forever. Christ covers all our sin – past, present, and future.

Is risen again

Because Christ arose again in the new creation, He brought all the marvelous blessings with Him when He arose.

Sits on the right hand of God

Christ sits on the right hand of God making intercession for us. If there is wrong doing in our lives after we are born again, Jesus is there making intercession for us. There are many reasons that He would intercede for us, and He is the great intercessor on our behalf. This is for anything we would need to go to Him for.

VERSES 35-36

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril or sword? As it is written For thy sake we are killed all the daylong; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.

We may be going through some of the things in verse 35 or 36 because of Him. We will go through these because of our surrender to the Lord, and because we are willing to submit to Him. Satan knows he can't get to God, so he takes it out on God's people. He is only allowed to do this if God permits it, and if it is for our good. In the midst of all these situations, it is God who brings His love to bestow upon us in the hard times.

There are a lot of things in front of us to defeat us. The grace of God allows things to come into our lives to get us ready for the crown, and to wear the bridal gown. He is cutting His diamonds, and making beautiful jewels of us for His glory. He is tailoring us to fit the gown, not the gown to fit us.

VERSE 37

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

Him that loved us

Loved is past tense. God loved us in eternities past, and will love us through all the eternities to come.

We are more than conquerors

In all the trials we are more than conquerors through Jesus. His love conquered the grave and we have already overcome because of His love. We are good soldiers enduring hardness in His strength. We conquer because of His love, and He is always for us. Instead of being separated from the love of God because of difficulty, we are even more joined to Him and His love literally becomes a power in our lives. God so loved us; that is why He did so much for us. If His love operates in our lives, it will cause us to

conquer. It will motivate us, too. More than conquerors shows we conquer with a margin, rather than getting by with the skin of our teeth. Those who are 'more than conquerors' are the full-overcomers.

VERSES 38-39

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

Nothing can separate us from God's love. Paul is not just talking about God's love for us, he is also talking about God's love in us. All the things mentioned in verses 38 and 39 cannot separate us from God's love, but rather His love becomes an intricate part of us. Because of God's love we can overcome any obstacles. God has reached down into our hearts, arrested us, and His love literally takes over our lives. God's love floods our entire beings with His love, and we become conquerors.

Some Christians think they can be separated from God's love. This is very tragic. These people won't embrace the deep teachings of the apostle Paul. Where there is no faith in what God has done for mankind, there will be no growth. Embracing and believing all that God has done for us is what will make us grow and transform us into Christ's very image and we will be glorified together with Him.

CHAPTER 9

The next three chapters of Romans form a parenthesis as Paul turns from what he has been talking about to focus on Israel. Chapter 9 refers to Israel's past; chapter 10 is the present Israel; and chapter 11 is the future Israel. Even though the next three chapters are about Israel, there are glorious truths we can learn about in the glorious plan of redemption God has for Jew and Gentile alike.

VERSES 1-3

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

Paul is talking about his own Jewish people. Paul was an apostle to the Gentiles, but he was very much concerned about the Jews, all of those law keepers.

Paul is not saying he would have a burden to be willing to go the hell to save them, he is saying is that he has the Spirit of Christ, and Christ was accursed. When Jesus was accursed and said, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" God had turned His back on Jesus when all the sins of the world were piled on Him. But that was not forever, it was just for three hours from noon to 3 in the afternoon.

When Paul says he could wish himself accursed from Christ, he is not talking about an eternal separation. If it had been possible for Paul to bear the burden for Israel, just as Jesus did, he would have been willing to do that. Paul is talking about bearing the burden for his brothers. True intercession is when we are willing to bear the burden for others. But in reality we could never do that because Jesus – and only Jesus – can.

God has given us Gentiles a special love for the Jews. God loves everybody, and that is why He gave His Son, but there is something special about the Jews to Him

VERSE 4

Who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises;

Israel was divinely chosen by God and God has a lot of promises wrapped up in the Jews. They knew they were God's elect people. He chose them and called them out.

Deuteronomy 7:6

For thou art an holy people unto the Lord thy God: the Lord thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto Himself; above all people that are upon the face of the earth.

The Gentiles didn't have the rights the citizens of Israel did being the people of God. They didn't have the covenants of promise, and having no hope, they were without God in the world.

Ephesians 2:12

That at the time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world.

VERSE 5

Whose are the Father's, and of whom as concerning the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, God blessed forever. Amen.

In verses 4 and 5 there are eight points of excellence that Israel has. Paul wrote these things to tell them what a special people they are.

- 1) To whom pertaineth the adoption, or sonship - they were intended to be the sons of God
- 2) The glory
- 3) The covenants - especially the Abrahamic and Davidic covenants
- 4) The giving of the law
- 5) The service of God

The Jews were chosen as God's special messengers and still will be. People get the truth mixed up and try to apply to the church what God says to Israel. The church is trying to evangelize the world, but that is not the church's mission. There has never been even one nation converted to God, not even in Paul's day. Only Israel is going to have that kind of success during the Millennium. They have yet to be messengers of God throughout the whole world. Israel for the most part will convert this world unto Christ. Entire nations are going to believe in the Lord through their ministry during the Millennium.

- 6) The promise
- 7) Whose are the Father's - this includes all the Patriarchs who passed down this message
- 8) Of whom is concerning the flesh, Christ came - Jesus was a Jew who came through the line of the fathers Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and was not only a man, but very God of very God.

Jesus is over all, and is divine. He is the original, the only begotten Son. Everyone else claiming to be Christ is counterfeit. The Jews, as a whole, turned away from this promise that God had so freely given them, and became the most persecuted people in the history of the world. But they will never be completely wiped out. God will always have a remnant.

VERSE 6

Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect; for they are not all Israel, which are of Israel:

Hath taken none effect

With all these points of excellence, with all these things going on in the life of Israel, the Jews did not come to the place God intended for them. This does not mean the word of God was of none effect.

Not all Israel

When Israel as a nation becomes a new creation in Christ, God will fulfill all He had planned for Israel. There will be no wonder why they are going to have such a worldwide ministry in the Millennium. Some in Israel are of the old nature; some are spiritual and have a new nature. The spiritual nature always comes through the blood of Jesus.

VERSE 7

Neither, because they are of the seed of Abraham, and they are all children; but, in Isaac shall thy seed be called.

Seed of Abraham

Being the children of Abraham didn't make them special, although they gloried in it. They thought this was a big deal, but Jesus didn't.

In Isaac

When God said, "In Isaac shall thy seed be called," He was talking about Christ Jesus, who is the fulfillment of all the promises given to Israel through the Abrahamic covenant.

VERSE 8

That is, They which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed.

The children of the promise counted for the seed are the new creation.

VERSE 9

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

Abraham fathered two different lines, Ishmael and Isaac. Ishmael speaks of the fleshly line, the son of the bondwoman who was cast out. Abraham was also the father of Isaac, who was the father of the promise to all them that believe. Isaac represents to all believers that whosoever will believe, will receive the precious seed which is in Christ. Though Christ's seed, believers receive all blessings.

The blessings came through Isaac because of Sarah's womb. Sarah's dead womb speaks of grace, and the promise that could only come through death. Abraham and Sarah were literally dead to being able to bear children, and for the promise to come forth, the death of the flesh is required. This is a precious type of the promise that would come through the death of Christ. Because of Christ's death all that would believe are promised everlasting life.

Isaac speaks of the new creation, and Ishmael speaks of the old creation. Isaac's sons were Jacob and Esau. Jacob, who was birthed by grace, and was later re-named Israel, and was the father of the twelve tribes. Jacob's brother Esau speaks of the flesh. Jacob's life manifested grace, even though he bungled again and again, and at times didn't trust God. Yet grace was magnified because he was in the new creation. Esau despised his birthright as the eldest of the two, and sold it for a mess of pottage. The line of Christ came through Isaac. The line of Ishmael, even though he was a son of Abraham, was not the chosen seed. Those after the flesh are like Ishmael, and those after the Spirit are like Isaac.

VERSES 10-11

And not only this; but when Rebecca also had conceived by one, even by our father Isaac; (For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of Him that calleth;)

The Old Testament scriptures are not just dry history. God uses them to portray redemption. There are many types and shadows in the Old Testament. If we miss them, we miss so much of what God intended for us to know.

Not yet born

God chose Jacob before he was ever born. God chose the new creation over the old creation, and He chose it even before either Jacob or Esau came forth.

According to election

'By election' shows that God sovereignly chose the new creation (in Christ) over the old creation which is in Adam. The purpose of God, according to election, might stand not of works, but of Him that cometh. It was all done God's way, and not by works.

VERSE 12

It was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger.

Elder serves the younger

This was determined by God before they were ever born. The elder is the old creation (born first), and the younger is the new creation.

Ephesians 1: 4

According as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love.

God chose us before the foundation of the world in Christ Jesus. Christ came unto His own (Israel) and His own received Him not. He came to the older, elder nation, and when they didn't receive Him, He turned to the younger Gentile nation. He now has a wonderful plan for us in Christ Jesus.

VERSE 13

As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated.

This was not spoken until after Jacob and Esau had manifested their works. But God knew exactly what Esau would do, because God foreknew what was going to be. It is God's will that all men be saved, but a majority of men will go after the flesh and reject grace and the saving blood of Jesus. God always rejects the old creation, because He always has, and always will magnify His precious Son and His Son's sacrifice for mankind. The efforts of the flesh are an abomination to God. We are justified by faith. We should never put confidence in the flesh.

VERSE 14

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

God doesn't go by man's way by letting man prove himself first and then let God choose. God doesn't work that way. He is not bound by human reasoning.

VERSE 15

For He saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.

In the next few verses Paul answers questions that have been asked through the years. When we learn these lessons, people can't stump us with their questions. We will be able to give them the gospel, and point to the Lord Jesus Christ, and this is exactly what God wants to do. God sovereignly chooses whom He will to show mercy and compassion to. Everything God says needs to be put in proper context.

Exodus 33:19

And He said, I will make all my goodness before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the Lord before thee; and will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and show mercy on whom I will show mercy.

VERSE 16

So then it is not of him that willeth, or him that runneth, but God that sheweth mercy.

Not of him that wills or runs

God is bringing out that "he that wills and he that runs" are traits of the flesh. Man always tried to do it in his own power.

God shows mercy

God set it up so that only His mercy will count. Men must realize that they can do nothing, and they must be in the position and condition to receive of the grace of God. No flesh can glory in His presence. God will only magnify His grace, and He has made the way to His Son a narrow way, the ways of grace. The narrow way is the only way, the free way. There is no other way.

Man was found guilty, and executed on Calvary. Our precious Jesus paid all the ransom for all mankind. Man can do nothing; all is done by Jesus. Those who don't accept Jesus will miss out on all of it. God will only show mercy to those who know they don't deserve it. In Jesus, we can go boldly to the throne of grace and deserve it all. Praise the Lord!

VERSE 17

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

This shows a twofold purpose:

- 1) God shows His power in Pharaoh
- 2) God's name is to be declared throughout the earth.

God showed His mighty power in judgment, and His name has been glorified ever since. Pharaoh is an example of the self-willed old creation that is stiff-necked, and will not yield to God. Pharaoh was this way due to his own choosing, and God foreknew this. If people stay in the state of being at enmity with God, they hate the truth even more as they go on. Proverbs 16:4 says that God appoints the wicked for the day of evil. God raised up the devil to use him as a perfect tempter. God uses the wicked to magnify His faithfulness to those who believe.

VERSE 18

Therefore hath He mercy on whom He will have mercy, and whom He will He hardeneth.

Mercy on whom He will

God is a debtor to no one. He is only bound by His promises. If a person stays in the state of unbelief, only judgment and death await them.

Whom He hardens

God does not harden anyone's heart sovereignly. When God hardened Pharaoh's heart, God brought Pharaoh to a place of decision, and the decision Pharaoh made was "no." God brings people to the

crossroads of decision. If they will not turn, but continue to reject Him, their hearts harden. We are all given a choice to how we will react to God's word. Neutral you cannot be. The choice is yea or nay.

VERSE 19

Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth He yet find fault? For who hath resisted His will?

Why does He find fault

Men ask the question, "If God made me the way He did, then why does He hold it against me?" This verse sounds of wickedness, as though men are mocking God. The sinner cannot please God. We either love God, or we hate Him.

Yet find fault

This is the response of a defiant heart that says, "If God gives grace to some, and not others, why would He find fault in those He denies grace to?" Plain and simply, God gives grace to those who believe in His Son.

VERSE 20

Nay, but, O man who art thou that replieth against God? Shall the thing formed say to Him that formed it, "Why hast thou made me thus?"

God replies quickly and says, "No, O man, it doesn't work that way." God wants to know who they think they are to talk back to Him. We cannot question the act that God created man with the potential to harden his heart.

God's one requirement for salvation is that we believe on His Son. God sent His Son to the cross to die, so that not one would perish. God never intended that hell would be for anyone but the devil and His angels. If men go there it is because they refused to believe in Christ, the only way of salvation. Adam failed when he sinned, but it was all for a divine purpose God had planned in His Son. God made a way for all to escape hell: accept Jesus.

VERSE 21

Hath not the potter power over the clay; of the same lump to make one vessel unto honor, and another unto dishonor?

The vessel unto honor is the new creation, and the vessel unto dishonor is the old creation. Man has a choice as to which creation he becomes.

VERSE 22

What if God, willing to show His wrath, and to make His power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction.

Show wrath, make His power known

Why did God make Adam when He knew Adam was going to fail and plunge himself and all of creation into chaos? He made Adam because He wanted to manifest His wrath against sin, unrighteousness, and rebellion, and to make His power known. The power here is the power of divine grace to bring forth the new creation.

Endured with longsuffering

God has endured the old creation with much longsuffering. These are the vessels of dishonor that He made, and that will be destroyed. The Lord has endured all the defiance, ungodly behavior, and rebellion of the old creation. He did it for the purpose of "Christ in us the hope of glory."

VERSE 23

And that He might make known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy, which He had afore prepared unto glory.

Vessels of mercy

Paul is talking here about the new creation in Christ Jesus. These are vessels of mercy because they recognize their need for God's mercy. They knew that they couldn't save themselves. They could not will themselves to do better and they could not run to make themselves any better. They could not do anything to improve their condition except depend on the mercy of God. God wanted to sanctify His wonderful grace and mercy and to make known the riches of His glory. All believers are now sons of God and we have all the privileges of Jesus. We are vessels of mercy, and we have all victory in Jesus who finished it all.

Which He had afore prepared

When Adam fell, God wasn't surprised because God knew Adam would fall. God did it this way so He could bring forth a new creation, based strictly upon His mercy and grace, not on man's ability. When that happens, there is but one that can receive the glory - and that is God. There will not be one person in heaven boasting and rejoicing about how he pulled himself up by the bootstraps and got to heaven on his own. No flesh is going to glory in God's presence.

VERSE 24

Even us, whom He has called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles.

Whether Jew or Gentile, we all start out in the old creation as vessels headed to destruction. But we when we choose to fall on our faces and accept the mercy of God we become a new creation in Christ Jesus.

VERSE 25

As He saith also in Osee, I will call them my people, which were not my people; and her beloved, which was not beloved.

Osee is Hosea. This verse especially applies to Israel, but also to the Gentiles, who God brought into His family.

VERSE 26

And it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people; they shall be called the children of the living God.

The Gentiles were not God's people until Christ was rejected by the Jews. When this happened, salvation through Christ was opened to the Gentiles. Not only could Gentiles be saved, but through Paul's gospel it was learned that the Gentiles were offered the better place, to be part of the bride of Christ, if so be that we suffer together with Him. We became children of the living God.

Israel failed because they tried to retain righteousness in their own strength. By the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified. God's plan was to magnify Jesus, not the law. God wants us to embrace Christ.

VERSE 27

Esias also crieth concerning Israel, Though the numbers of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, a remnant shall be saved:

Out of all Israel a faithful remnant will lead the charge. This is before the time when a nation will be saved in a day. It starts out with this faithful remnant.

VERSE 28

For He will finish the work, and cut it short in righteousness: because a short work will the Lord make upon the earth.

The 'work' is judgment. There is judgment coming upon Israel because of their unbelief.

VERSE 29

And as Esias said before, except the Lord of Sabaoth has left us a seed, we had been as Sodom, and been made like unto Gomorrah.

Sabaoth refers to the Lord of Hosts. God's judgment would have annihilated them, but because of Christ, this remnant is going to be saved. They will survive the tribulation.

VERSE 30

What shall we say then? That the Gentiles, which followed not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith.

Paul makes this point again and again. The Gentiles didn't have the law and all its advantages, yet they found salvation. Their salvation came by faith, not by the law. The only way to righteousness is faith in the Lord Jesus.

VERSES 31-32

But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained the law of righteousness. Wherefore? Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumblingstone.

The stumblingstone is Jesus Christ himself. Israel sought salvation through the works of the law, not by faith. The only way to salvation is by grace through faith. God set man up to fail to make him recognize that he needed Christ.

VERSE 33

As it is written, Behold I lay in Sion a stumblingstone and rock of offence: whosoever believeth on Him shall not be ashamed.

Jesus Christ the rock is still there today, and Israel as a nation is still stumbling over Him. There is no way Jew or Gentile will ever be saved without Christ.

CHAPTER 10

VERSE 1

Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved.

As a nation, Israel will not accept Jesus, so there is no salvation for them. This chapter shows Israel at the present time. They must find the salvation in Christ just like anyone else. The Jews are the same way today as they were when Jesus was on the earth.

VERSE 2

For I bear them record that they have zeal of God, but not according to knowledge.

Paul, who formerly had been Saul of Tarsus, knew exactly where these orthodox Jews were coming from. When Paul was Saul he had plenty of zeal, but not according to the knowledge of the scripture. Paul was also one of those who tried to establish their righteousness by the law. In fact, he calls himself "the chief of sinners" because he had zeal in trying to keep himself righteous. When he encountered Jesus on the road to Damascus, Paul learned the only righteousness was in the blood of Jesus. Before that event, he had a false zeal to self-works, which are an abomination to God. Our zeal needs to be to magnify the cross as Paul did.

VERSE 3

For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.

Being ignorant

God's righteousness comes through Christ, but they don't know it. Not only the Jews, but the entire old creation has attempted to establish their own righteousness, and self-righteousness is as filthy rags to God. There is much ignorance in a religion that promotes self-works in order to find favor with God. This is most abominable to God.

Submit themselves

These ignorant people simply refuse to submit to the simplicity that brings salvation. That simplicity is in no other place but Jesus Christ. Every remission of sin is by His shed blood. They haven't submitted to God's righteousness because they have refused Christ himself.

VERSE 4

For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone that believeth.

The end of the law

This means that Christ met all the demands and judgment the law required at Calvary. God's righteous government is satisfied. Christ is the end of the law to all believers. Romans 3:20 tells us the same thing. The law can't save us. Its purpose is to magnify our sin, not to give us something to live by, because we can't. The law shows our absolute need of God's Son, the precious Lamb, our Savior.

For righteousness

By the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified. But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets. (Romans 3:20-21)

The law was taken out of the way at the cross. If there was any other way to find justification in the eyes of God, He would not have had to sacrifice His dear Son to set us free. God let His beloved Son become sin for us. He watched Him getting beaten, tortured, mocked, and ridiculed for our sakes. Why would God endure all that if there was any other way? Christ is the end of the law, and when the law ceased, grace began. By grace we are made righteous by the blood of God's slain Lamb. We who believe in Jesus our sins are forever gone, and we are free from the second death. Christians don't die, we fall asleep in Jesus.

Hebrews 10:19

Having therefore brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus.

Hebrews 4:16

Let us therefore come boldly before the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

VERSE 5

For Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, that the man who doeth these things shall live by them.

The law says "do or die." There is no doing "the best you can." The law was a hard taskmaster, and had to be kept to the letter.

VERSES 6-7

But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise, Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (That is to bring Christ down from above:) Or, who shall descend into the deep? (that is to bring Christ up again from the dead.)

We don't have to go back 2,000 years to bring Christ back to do it all over again. We don't have to go to the depths (Sheol) to bring Him back. He finished it on the cross, once for all.

VERSE 8

But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith which we preach.

Christ is so accessible to everyone, if they will but open their heart to Him. Jesus is "nigh thee" and doesn't need to come up or come down. Salvation is so simple that people will literally have to work to go to hell. Christ died for the sins of all mankind. He wants all to be saved and enter into God's holy family.

VERSE 9

That is thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God has raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.

It is so easy to attain salvation and to live in eternity with Jesus Christ. People think they have to do, or have some great thing to attain salvation. The devil has convinced them of this. Anyone who calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. This is simple and it is everlasting. Man can do nothing to attain righteousness. He needs merely to believe on Jesus.

VERSE 10

For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

This is a twofold truth:

- 1) If thou confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus

Some people think when they come to the Lord they have to confess every sin they can possibly remember. They don't need to confess sin, they need to confess Christ as their Savior. Bringing up every sin ever committed doesn't edify them or anyone else. When we confess Christ we don't need to confess sin because Jesus already knows all about us and what we have done.

- 2) Believe in thine heart that God raised Christ from the dead.

This is something the majority of Jews could not do – and still don't do. They will not accept the resurrected Christ,

and go to great lengths to show it didn't happen. Jews won't acknowledge that Christ was raised from the grave because if they do, they have to confess that Jesus is the Son of God. They can't deny He was here, but they deny the fact that Jesus is God's Son. A person can believe in his heart and be saved. With the heart man believeth unto righteousness and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. There is something about confessing it with our mouth that makes it a reality to us. This is true of any truth if we believe in our hearts. If we want real deliverance, we confess Christ with our mouths.

VERSE 11

For the scripture saith, whosoever believeth on Him shall not be ashamed.

VERSE 12

For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon Him.

No difference

There is no difference in receiving salvation, it is all by the blood of Jesus, there is absolutely no other way. The enemy gets into Christianity, and start separating people into groups. Anyone saved is a Christian, there are no Jewish Christians, Baptist Christians, Methodist Christians, etc. We are all in a group called Christians, and there are no divisions or groups.

Lord over all

God brings us all together through the blood of Jesus, and there is none too wicked to become saved. No man comes to the Father, but by Jesus, and He is the only way to the Father. Christ in us, the hope of glory.

VERSE 13

For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.

This verse is good for now, and will be good all through the tribulation, and the end of the millennium. This is one of those verses that rules out individual predestination, because it says whosoever shall call upon the Lord shall be saved.

VERSE 14

How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they had not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?

VERSE 15

And how shall they preach except they be sent? As it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!

Preachers

Preaching is what God uses to get the gospel out. The word of God never changes, and we need to hear and be taught God's word. We need to gather together, and fellowship with one another in the glorious gospel, and talk about His love for us, and ours for Him.

Except they be sent

Preachers and teachers must be sent of the Lord, and there is an anointing. God chooses them, and calls them, and He anoints the ones He chooses.

There is a calling coming for the Jewish remnant that survives the tribulation, and are returned to the Lord. In the millennium these survivors will have a calling, and they will be the evangelists in the world. Preaching the gospel to all the world will come when Jesus Christ takes the throne as God. This church age is being used to search out a bride for the Son of God. When the bride is snatched away, the millennium and the tribulation will begin simultaneously.

How beautiful are the feet

How beautiful are the feet of those who bring the good tidings of the gospel of peace! If these preachers and teachers stand in the truth, they will preach the full counsel of God, which is the gospel God gave to Paul. In the full counsel of God, the strong meat of the word, we will grow in grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, and if we suffer with Christ, we will be glorified together with Him, and rule and reign with Him in the midst of the throne. Nothing of His precious word will be withheld from us. We will be more than conquerors through Christ, and He will make us like Him from glory to glory into His own glorious likeness.

VERSE 16

But they have not all obeyed the gospel, for Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report?

Esaias is referring to Isaiah.

Have not all obeyed

It is a matter of fact that the majority of mankind have rejected Jesus.

Who hath believed

For believers, verses 14 - 17 show us a process by which the word comes so we can have faith. In these verses are the sequence of events that happens, and tells us the process God uses in our lives. First the preacher is sent, and he delivers his message. People hear and believe, and then they call on the Lord, and are delivered. People can't believe if no one ever brings them the gospel. Isaiah asked the Lord, "Who hath believed our report?" Isaiah was faithful to deliver the message, but there were those who rejected the message. Many people today are rejecting the message of the gospel of Peace.

VERSE 17

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

Faith comes by hearing

if we want more faith, the scriptures tell us we are going to have to hear and accept more of the word of God. A constant digging into the scriptures, and through these scriptures, God speaks faith to our hearts. In any given situation, when God speaks His word, and we believe that message, we receive faith. Faith will come just as God said, by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

The word of God

Jesus is the word. Man wants peace, grace, rest, etc., but they don't want Jesus. Without Jesus, none of what man wants is possible. Without hearing Jesus, who is the word, faith won't grow.

VERSE 18

But I say, Have they not heard? Yes, verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world.

The problem is not that the word isn't among us, the word of God is here.

VERSE 19

But I say, Did not Israel know? First Moses saith, I will provoke you to jealousy by them that are no people, and by a foolish nation I will anger you.

This is speaking of the Gentiles.

VERSE 20

But Esaias is very bold, and saith, I was found of them that sought me not; I was made manifest unto them that asked not after me.

This verse is also speaking of the Gentiles. Sadly, the disobedience of Israel was our grand opportunity. We are the wild olive branches that got the opportunity to be grafted into that true vine, Jesus. This was always in the plan of God, and the reason is that Christ's bride would be taken out of the Gentile nation. Time and time again, God has showed us this; Joseph's wife, Ruth, Rahab, etc. These women were all Gentiles.

VERSE 21

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

The choice is ours, just as it is with Israel. People can hear the message, especially the message of the deeper things of God, and yet they don't reach out and take it. God can't do anything about that, because He has given us the choice, whether we take of any message we hear that is according to the scripture. The message of the scripture is what we need in our lives.

As far as Israel, God is still stretching forth His hand, and offering that message of divine grace. The gospel is still going forth, and is available to the Jews today if they will just receive it. Not all Jews reject

it, because some of them are reaching out to Christ, and those who accept Him are very zealous about getting the gospel to others.

CHAPTER 11

This chapter deals with the future of Israel. The future of Israel, simply stated, is the salvation of Israel as a nation. All through this chapter Paul is speaking about nations, and not individuals. Israel is one nation, and the Gentiles make up multiple nations.

Israel's future finds them preaching to the world, and we see the restoration of the nation. The United States has always stood with Israel until recently. We see a wavering in the support for them in the last few years, and this is due to ungodliness that has all but taken over the United States. Each time the U.S. tries to get Israel and Palestine to work things out, which usually involves Israel giving up land, and that is against the word of God, something devastating happens in the U.S.. This has gone on for 50 or 60 years. The remnant of Israel that survives the tribulation, will rise up and rule the earth.

VERSE 1

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

Has God cast away His people

Has God cast away the nation of Israel for their disobedience and rejection of Him? No. In chapter 10, verse 21, we see the condition of national Israel today. There are individual Jews that have accepted Christ, but this refers to Jews as a nation. God will keep His promises He gave to Israel, He will always be faithful to that nation, and there will always be a remnant that will return to the Lord. God will never cast away the Jews, and He will always have a nation of Israel.

Of the seed of Abraham

Paul says he is of the seed of Abraham, and of the tribe of Benjamin. Paul uses himself as proof that God will not cast off His people. Paul said at one time he was one born out of due time. What this means is that Paul was born again as a Christian before the rest of the nation of Israel.

Paul's ministry was to the Gentiles, and throughout the millennium the nation of Israel will be worldwide evangelists. When Jesus gave the disciples the great commission of taking the gospel into all the world, the commission was given to the Jews and not the church. The word of God will always come through the Jews. In the millennium entire nations will be converted to Christianity, and the Jews will be the ministers. The Jews will be the ones to convert nations, not the church. Even the apostle Paul never converted an entire city, let alone a nation. The commission to the church was to go to every church, or individual, not nations.

VERSE 2

God has not cast away His people which He foreknew. Wot ye not what the scripture saith of Elias? how he maketh intercession against Israel saying,

This foreknowledge is a collective thing. God knew the nation of Israel before there was an nation of Israel.

VERSE 3

Lord they have killed thy prophets, and digged down thine altars; and I am left alone, and they seek my life.

In I Kings verse 18, Elijah was discouraged and wanted to die. He thought he was the only one left that believed in God.

VERSE 4

But what saith the answer of God unto him? I have reserved to myself seven thousand men, who have not bowed the knee to the image of Baal.

Elijah wasn't the only believer left as he supposed. God had a seven thousand man remnant. God will always have a remnant, even in the great tribulation. With that remnant God is going to fulfill every promise He ever made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Elijah saw the disobedience of Israel time and time again, but God reached out to them in great grace time and time again. When that great grace is refused, there are consequences. There is a remnant today who believe Christ, and have received the blood. They did not make God's grace of salvation void in their lives.

In verses 2-4, we can get the exact same analogy in Elijah's time as all the players in the great tribulation. The seven thousand man remnant God had in Elijah's time, is figurative of the remnant that makes up the nation of Israel in the great tribulation. This remnant will remain true to Christ despite all the opposition that will be manifest at that time. Elijah is very much typical of the two witnesses, in that he called fire down from heaven, and did other signs and wonders, just as the two witnesses will do in the tribulation. Ahab is figurative of the antichrist, the false king, and Jezebel is typical of the false church who will be stirring up the antichrist and riding the beast. In this time of horrible declination in the tribulation, God will still have His remnant.

VERSE 5

Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace.

The election of grace is another way of saying they are a new creation in Christ Jesus. The word election just means selection, and God selects us in Christ. God will make the remnant in the end time into the nation of Israel. Israel will never be totally destroyed, because this remnant is by God's grace.

VERSE 6

And if by grace, then it is no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace, but if it be of works, then it is no more grace: otherwise work is no more work.

Paul is quick to point out that Israel has been known for their works down through the ages, and self-works is what Saul of Tarsus was established on. God introduced Paul to His grace, and Paul saw the fallacy of works. Israel as a nation has to see the same thing. Their deliverance will be by grace, not on the works of the law. It can't be that you get salvation by grace, and then work hard to try to keep it. It is grace alone that saves us, and grace keeps us saved; works have no part in grace.

VERSE 7

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

As a nation

Israel as a nation has not attained what they are looking for. Individuals have, but not the nation.

Election has obtained it

Election is just another name for the new creation, because that is the way God selected, or elected all of us. That also applies to Israel as a nation.

The rest were blinded

The rest were blinded refers to the bulk of Israel. Election is always God's choice, and God's choice is always in His Son, Jesus Christ. We are called and chosen in His Son in the election of God. The life of God's only begotten Son lives in each one of us who believe Him.

The rest being blinded shows they were either saved, or they were not. It's either the new creation, or the old creation. The old creation can only be one thing, blind. As a matter of fact, dead. Pharaoh and Moses were a type of this. Moses was a type of the new creation, and Pharaoh was a type of the old creation. Israel saw all the miracles that God did through Moses, and their hearts were no different than the heart of Pharaoh. Even after they witnessed all the miracles they stayed stiff-necked. The old man cannot change. They can see the acts of God, but the old man always follows in unbelief. They hardened their hearts just as Pharaoh did.

VERSE 8

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

Again, this is not pointing to individuals. God is not tempted of evil, neither does He tempt anyone.

Eyes that see not

God would not sovereignly blind any man. When God shows a man the light, and the man rejects it, the man becomes blind. Just because a person doesn't respond to God's word, it doesn't mean that God's word will return void. God's word will always have an effect.

Ears that hear not

If God brings a man face to face with His word, and it is rejected, that man becomes deaf. If God offers truth, and people don't believe it, they will believe a lie. If people will not believe the truth of being filled with the Spirit, they will believe the lie of not being filled with the Spirit. If people will not believe the truth of being justified by faith, they will believe the lie of being justified by works. If a person does not submit to God's word, he becomes blind, deaf, and rebellious. God brings people to a place of decision, and many make the wrong one.

VERSE 9

And David saith, Let their table be made a snare, and a trap, and a stumblingblock, and a recompense unto them.

This is taken from Psalms 69. This means that God provides them a way of deliverance, and a way out, but when they reject it, it becomes a stumblingblock to them, because they rejected Him. God doesn't make anyone do anything, these attitudes men have has created these things in their hearts.

VERSE 10

Let their eyes be darkened, that they may not see, and bow down their backs alway.

Their eyes were darkened because they wouldn't accept the light. If we don't open our eyes and see the light, we become blind, and bow down our back to sin and unrighteousness.

VERSE 11

I say then, Have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid: but rather through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy.

They have stumbled

This again is speaking of Israel as a nation. Has Israel as a nation stumbled so badly that the nation of Israel will be forever in oblivion? God forbid. Israel as a nation has done this, but the remnant of Israel will return to the Lord in the millennium.

Through their fall

Through Israel's fall the Gentiles were brought into the family of God. God did this to make Israel jealous, and get them to come back to Him. Every Gentile should feel indebted to the Jews. This is why we Gentiles must love them. They are not only God's people, but it was also because of their rejection that we became a part of God's plan. God knew the Jews would rebel, they didn't catch God by surprise. The gospel was to the Jew first, and also to the Gentiles. The Gentiles accepted the gospel that the Jews rejected.

VERSE 12

Now if the fall of them be the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles; how much more their fullness.

The fall of them

We know that Israel has been set aside during this age. God set aside His dealings with Israel in order to deal with the Church. After the church age, God will turn to them again, and they will return to Him. They will open themselves wide as a channel to God's blessings.

Enrichment of the world and Gentiles

It will be nations that will be recipients of God's blessings through the nation of Israel. Their fall was certainly an enrichment to the rest of the world. If by their fall this negative idea, and this negative act of rebellion against Christ, if that is what brought glory and benefit to the Gentiles, how much more glory and benefit will come to the Jews when they are brought to where they ought to be? Israel is God the Father's wife.

VERSE 13

For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office:

Paul is saying this is the commission God gave to him. God sent him to preach to the Gentiles. When Paul says he magnifies his office, he is telling us that he has the right and authority from God to speak to the Gentiles. The apostle Paul was chosen, not Peter. Paul was part of the church age, and Peter was part of the kingdom age. Israel will have the same mission as Paul, but it will be in the millennial age.

VERSE 14

If by any means I might provoke to emulation them which are my flesh, and might save some of them.

Paul is saying if he can make the Jews jealous, he may be able to save some of them. If he can get them to see how much the Gentiles will have, it would be worthwhile for the Jews. Paul was a Jew, and he dearly loved that nation.

VERSE 15

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

We can't imagine the magnitude of the world wide revival that is going to take place during the millennial period. It will be wonderful for earth dwellers to live on earth when the devil is chained for a thousand years. Israel will have a wonderful time ministering then, because they will be where God intends them to be. It will be life from the dead for the entire world.

VERSE 16

For the firstfruits be holy, the lump is also holy, and if the root be holy, so are the branches.

The firstfruits of orthodox Israel today is, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. These patriarchs are their roots, and it was divine grace that chose them. The beginning of Israel, the firstfruits, was spiritual with the patriarchs. The lump was holy. Christ is the root, and He is holy, so the branches will be holy. Some of the branches were broken off because of rebellion, but in God's reckoning, Israel is still well and good, and they will be restored as the nation He always envisioned.

VERSE 17

And if some of the braches be broken off, and thou, being a wild olive tree, wert grafted in among them, and with them partook of the root and fatness of the olive tree;

The wild olive tree represents the Gentiles, and we have been grafted into this olive tree to replace some of the branches that were broken off. We will partake of the root which is Christ, and the fatness of the olive tree represents all the wonderful blessings in Christ.

VERSE 18

Boast not against the branches. But if thou boast, thou bearest not the root, but the root thee.

We are not to say how horrible that Jewish nation is. They are, and always will be, God's chosen people. We don't have anything to boast in but Christ the root. The root is holding us, we are not holding Him.

VERSE 19

Thou wilt say then, The branches were broken off, that I might be graffed in.

This is true.

VERSE 20

Well; because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standeth by faith. Be not high minded, but fear:

Paul is saying to the Gentiles that they didn't come into God's plan because they were good. We Gentiles get to share in the plan, because of Israel's rejection of the gospel. Don't be conceited and prideful about it. Fear, which means to stand in awe and reverence, because God brought us into this wonderful place.

VERSE 21

For if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee.

Paul is talking about nations being cut off, not individuals. Some nations may be cut off and not even be nations during the millennium. The sheep nations are those who regard Israel favorably, and supported

them. The goat nations are those that hated them, and wanted to destroy them. Those hating Israel will not be nations in the millennium. God will not spare these nations. Sheep and goat nations are spoken of in Matthew 25:31-46.

VERSE 22

Behold therefore, the goodness and severity of God; on them which fell, severity; But toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in His goodness: otherwise thou also shall be cut off.

Again speaking of nations. Severity and goodness are in the same act. On them which fall, severity or judgment, with God cutting off Israel as He did. That act was severity to Israel, but it was goodness to the Gentiles. His goodness is simply the way of grace and redemption, otherwise thou (nations) will be cut off if they don't support Israel.

VERSE 23

And they also, if they abide not still in unbelief, shall be grafted in: for God is able to graff them in again.

When Israel believes in Christ, God is going to graff that nation back into their original place, which is the head of the nations. This shows grace upon grace. When Israel is grafted back in, she will be a faithful wife to God, and trust Him forever. No individual believer will ever be grafted out.

VERSE 24

For if thou wert cast out of the olive tree which is wild by nature, and wert grafted contrary to nature into a good olive tree; how much more shall these, which be the natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree.

The Gentile nations were cut out of the wild olive tree, and were grafted into a good olive tree. It will be much easier for God to graff Israel, the natural branches, back into the good olive tree.

VERSE 25

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

Wise in your own conceits

He is telling the Gentiles not to be proud and arrogant, and think they are better than the Jews.

Israel's blindness

Israel for the most part were blinded because of unbelief, but there will always be the remnant of Jews who stay faithful to God. The blindness will last until the fullness of the Gentiles come in.

There are two phrases we need to understand because they are not to same:

1) Time of the Gentiles

In Luke 21:24 Jesus mentions the times of the Gentiles, when Israel will come under Gentile rule. These Gentile times began in 606 BC when Nebuchadnezzar defeated Israel, and forced her into captivity. This is when God gave the worldwide government to the Gentiles.

2) The fullness of the Gentiles

This refers to the time known as what God is doing spiritually in the church. God set the nation of Israel aside, after they fully rejected Jesus, and this is after the stoning of Stephen in Acts 7. God then focused on the church. He is searching among the Gentiles to find a bride for Jesus.

When God has finished His dealings with the church, He will turn again to Israel. Blindness in Israel will be restored when God finishes His dealings with the church.

VERSE 26

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

Israel shall be saved

This is taking again about the nation of Israel being restored to the place God wants them to be. This will be the reinstatement of Israel.

The Deliverer

The deliverer, of course, is Christ, and Israel will at long last look upon Him whom they have pierced. They will accept Christ as their Savior, and will know Him as the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. When they do that, Israel as a nation will be born in one day, and will be the head of the nations.

Isaiah 66:8

Who hath heard such a thing? Who has seen such things? Shall the earth be made to bring forth in one day? or shall a nation be born at once? for as soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth all her children.

Turn away ungodliness

Their spiritual condition has to be made right before God can restore them to their political position in the world. The Deliverer from Sion will turn away all ungodliness from Jacob (Israel.) God will establish that spiritual atmosphere in Israel, and it will be the time of the Jews, not the time of the Gentiles. After the last 3 1/2 years of the tribulation, Israel will reign upon the earth as a nation.

VERSE 27

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

The nation of Israel will have to accept Christ as Savior for this to happen.

VERSE 28

As concerning the gospel, they are enemies for your sakes: but as touching the election, they are beloved for the Father's sake.

Enemies for your sakes

This means they are enemies of God, and God set them aside for our salvation as Gentiles.

Touching the election

As touching the election (new creation) they are still beloved for the Father's sake. Regardless of what they have done to God, and to Christ, God never stopped loving them. God's grace is amazing, and it is all because of God's promise. God will restore Israel who is right now the unfaithful wife, to the faithful wife. God's promise and mercy is greater than their sin. What a beautiful testimony to the faithfulness of God. Their blindness has made them a wicked nation in many ways, but God's grace will restore them.

VERSE 29

For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance.

This statement applies individually or collectively. When God gives a gift he doesn't take it back. When He gives us eternal life He doesn't take it back. All the gifts God gives us are lasting. His word is true, and His promises can't be broken.

VERSE 30

For as ye in times past have not believed God, yet have now obtained mercy through their unbelief.

The Gentiles were just as bad as the rebellious Jews. God brought the Gentiles in because of Israel's unbelief, and Israel had to turn away for the Gentiles to come in.

VERSE 31

Even so have these also now not believed, that through your mercy they also may obtain mercy.

VERSE 32

For God has concluded them all in unbelief, that He might have mercy upon all.

Our mercy is something we discovered by experience when Israel turned away. This isn't the mercy of the Gentiles, but rather God's mercy they learned of by experience. The mercy belongs to God, and it will always be only His grace and mercy. His promises of grace and mercy will always be magnified.

VERSE 33

O the depths of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out.

Wisdom and knowledge of God

God wants us to know the love of Christ whereby we grow. By His Holy Spirit we know the deep things of God. We will never see anything unless we have a knowledge, and a vision of the grace of God in Christ Jesus. We have to see Jesus who is the word.

His ways past finding out

God's ways are not our ways, and our ways are certainly not His. His ways and thoughts are far above ours. By faith we can believe and receive the knowledge to know Him.

VERSE 34

For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been His counselor?

Who did God have to consult when He came up with His plan? God doesn't have to consult with anyone. He is the ultimate divine decision maker. Who in the world is God actually indebted to? Nobody. God does everything on His own.

VERSE 35

Or who hath first given to Him, and it shall be recompensed unto Him again?

VERSE 36

For of Him, and through Him, and to Him are all things: to whom be the glory forever. Amen.

This is why God designed His matchless plan of redemption which just exploits His grace. There is nothing higher than God. Period. We can never understand God, or call Him Father without His Son, so again, it is all Jesus. All things consist and hold together because of Him, and He made everything. Everything has to be in Christ. For Him, through Him, and to Him, are all things. No man will ever be able to boast about anything, because Christ has done it all. To Him be glory forever. Amen.

CHAPTER 12

DIVISION 5: PRACTICAL SIDE OF THE GOSPEL

This chapter launches into the practical side of the gospel. The first 8 chapters of Romans are glorious provisional truths God gave us to tell us what He has made us in Christ. Chapters 9, 10, and 11 mainly concern Israel. The rest of Romans pertains to the experiential (practical) results of the gospel. Chapter 12 is wonderful when we begin to apply this to our lives and experiences.

1) Verses 1-5

Paul lays the foundation for the seven gifts that God has given to the church. These gifts are for us. There are seven points to the foundation for the seven gifts in these verses that Paul gives leading up to announcing those gifts:

- 1) By the mercies of God (verse 1.)
- 2) Present your bodies a living sacrifice (verse 1)
- 3) Be not conformed to this world (verse 2)
- 4) Be ye transformed (verse 2)
- 5) That you may prove what is good (verse 2)
- 6) Not to think of ourselves more than we ought (verse 3)
- 7) We have many members in one body (verses 4 and 5)

2) Verses 6-8 define the gifts as to what they are.

3) Verses 9-15 demonstrate the control needed for these gifts to be profitable.

4) Verses 16-21 are Paul's final exhortations concerning our spiritual growth.

VERSE 1

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.

Beseech

Beseech means that Paul is literally begging them.

Present your bodies

In studying the two creations, we find that the body will yield just as quickly to the old nature as it does the new nature. Paul wants us to present our bodies in order that God might manifest the gift He has given to us in and through our bodies in practical ways.

A living sacrifice

Christ was a living sacrifice at Calvary. Paul says we need that same mindset in our own lives, but in a living way, not as a sacrifice unto death. This is a *living sacrifice* day after day, offered up on the altar of God to let Him do what He wants to do, when He wants to do it. To be a living sacrifice is to surrender our bodies unto God so He can operate through it in any way He sees fit. We are flesh and blood and we are limited. But as we present our bodies unto the Lord they are indeed holy, consecrated unto Him, and completely given over to His hands. We have been bought with the precious blood of Jesus Christ, so it is reasonable that God should expect us to give our bodies completely unto Him.

Your reasonable service

Our reasonable service is simply to yield completely to His great love. When we see and receive His great love, we realize the privilege of His mercy and grace. We are free, and don't have to be imprisoned by a mind that is in this world.

VERSE 2

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

Be not conformed

We were conformed to this world from the time we were born into it. God's ways and thoughts are so much higher than man's ways and thoughts. His grace draws us away from the things of this world. We who are in Christ will not live fully until our minds are renewed. 'Renewal' means completely changed, renovated. Let this mind be in you that is also in Christ Jesus. The mind of Christ is the Word, and the Word transforms us from glory to glory.

Be ye transformed

This is what must take place in the life of every believer. The moment we are saved we are not automatically brought to perfection and mature. Some think when we are born again the old man is taken out root and branch. If they do something wrong, they believe they have to go through the whole process again. This is not what the scripture teaches. To be transformed is a slow, meticulous, and sometimes very painful process by which we are changed, transformed from what we were to what God wants to make of us. This transformation happens by the renewing of our minds. This is why the study of God's word is so tremendously important. Only the scripture is able to transform us and renew our minds. When God renews our minds He changes our belief system and translates that into our lives. Then we are transformed into what God wants.

That you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will

To prove means to test with expectation of approval. God will test us in our lives to show that our bodies are truly surrendered unto the Lord. This brings out three major expressions of the will of God.

1) The good will of God

It is good to be saved, but God doesn't want us to stay in a state of carnality.

2) The acceptable will of God

This is a time of ups and downs as the old creation and new creation still battle.

3) The perfect will of God

This means we always walk in the ways of the Lord, continually as we take our place in the heavenlies in Christ.

These things are proved by our daily living by what we do, and what we allow in our own experience.

VERSE 3

For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.

Don't think of ourselves too highly

Paul is speaking to us about humility. If we want to get close to God, there is only one way: grace. The word of God tells us very clearly that He gives grace to the humble. When we are stiff-necked and

proud, or when we think we are something more than what we are is the most putrid thing to God. Man's self-righteousness and self-works are as filthy rags to God. We constantly battle this flesh that wants to always be patted on the back. Jesus is the one we should magnify because He is the one our Father in heaven magnifies.

When we receive God's gifts, we shouldn't get puffed up and arrogant. We must always remember from whence these gifts came: from God. We didn't do anything to manufacture these gifts on our own. God did it all.

Think soberly

We should think of ourselves in lowliness. To think soberly means thankfully, and with wisdom. Being thankful is the evidence of faith, the evidence of knowing how undeserved His love is. How thankful that we know that anything good and profitable for us is all by God's grace. This should encourage us to condescend to men of low estate and to submit one to another as unto the Lord. If we want to go the heights, we have to first go to the depths.

The measure of faith

The measure of faith means He has made a perfect vessel. Every part of the body, no matter its use, is a perfect vessel. Each one of us is a gift for the body, and that gift is Christ in us. The gifts are for the edifying of the body. Jesus did it all for us, and we must realize it is according as God has dealt to every man.

VERSES 4-5

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

Verses 4 and 5 together form the 7th plank of the foundation.

We have many members in one body

We have to realize that other members in the body of Christ have gifts, too. These gifts were given that we might complement one another. No member of the body can stand on its own. We are not isolated, and we are not complete unto ourselves. Every Christian is a member of the body of Christ. All the gifts work together to form the whole, and every member is extremely important. We should care deeply one for another. There should not be envying, strife, fighting, etc., amongst the members of the body of Christ. Each part edifies the body, and the joints supply one another when we allow the truth in love to flow from the Head, Jesus.

Have not the same office

We being many are one body in Christ. There are many members, but just one body. Every one is a member one of another. We are part of each other, we interact with each other, we are dependent on one another.

Verses 4 and 5 are so important because some people believe all Christians are to manifest all of these seven gifts. If we had all seven gifts we wouldn't need each other. Each member will have a gift that is a predominate gift. We may manifest some of the different characteristics and traits of the other gifts, but our lives are motivated by, and literally revolve around one gift. This gift becomes a part of our personalities, the way we think, the way we feel, and what motivates us.

VERSE 6

Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith;

Different gifts

We are all different people, so the gifts God gives us are different. We are not all the same gift in the body. Since we differ from one another, in order to function in the place God has placed us we have different gifts. These gifts and callings of God are without repentance. When God gives a gift, He gives it, and He doesn't take it back. Once we are born again, God heads us in the right direction to cultivate our gift.

1) Prophecy

One part of prophecy involves foretelling future events. Prophecy is for exhortation, edification, and comfort. The word prophecy actually means an inspired speaker, one who is persuasive in speaking. The one with the gift of prophecy is obsessed with declaring the truth. Black is black and white is white. Prophecy is imperative because we need to see the truth of God's word. Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. (John 8:32)

“Let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith” means that what a prophet says absolutely must be in accordance with God’s word. The truth should not be used to destroy people, but rather to edify them. The person who has the gift of prophecy must search out scripture, and know that he is scripturally sound. He must be absolutely sure what he is saying is backed up by scripture.

VERSES 7-8

Or ministry, let us wait on our ministering; or he that teacheth, on teaching; Or he that exhorteth, on exhortation; he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness.

2) Ministry

This is the second gift. It might be better translated as serving. People often serve in very menial, sometimes mundane, but very practical ways. Some find their fulfillment just in serving others. These kinds of people are needed in the body of Christ. The person with the gift of ministry is one that doesn't delegate to others, but does the task themselves. These people are obsessed with their service, and making things right.

3) Teaching

The major point found in a teacher is that they are very concerned with details. When they give lots of details, others lose sight of the story being told. The details need to be controlled. Sometimes details are necessary in order for everything to make sense. Balance is the key. A preacher who doesn't control the gift he has to teach may bore or overload others with details that are insignificant. On the other hand, a good teacher with control goes into detail, but not in an overbearing way.

4) Exhortation

The exhorter is one who persuades, encourages, or helps. Paul had this gift because he wanted to move people.

Exhortation can be misused. Some people can use this gift to persuade others to do wrong. God says we are to persuade, or encourage others to do that which is right. The person with the gift of exhortation in the body of Christ is one like the apostle Paul who wanted to provoke Israel to do what was right and yield to the Lord. Some people with this gift can become obnoxious at times because of the tactics they might use in their persuasion.

5) Giving

We can all in some measure exercise all of these gifts. Whatever our gift is, it doesn't exclude us from giving, although our lives won't revolve around giving. Some people are fixated on giving. People with the gift of giving will deprive themselves to give to somebody else. They are more than willing to give what they have. A person with the gift of giving always has something to give because God makes sure they have something to give. If they see a need, and they have nothing to give, they begin to believe God and it isn't long until they do have something to give. This gift has to be controlled, because there are those who give all they have for the wrong reason, and think nothing about it. Sometimes they give all they have to buy the affections or favors of others. God intends every member of the body of Christ to give. To give with simplicity means to give without pretence, or self-seeking. People with the real gift of giving don't want to make it known. Their fulfillment comes in the act of giving.

6) Ruling

The one who rules is more properly called an organizer. These are the people who know how to give orders, and are known as the real leaders. Corporations look for people who can take leadership. They know what needs to be done and how to do it. They are amazing people, and are necessary. The person with the gift of ruling can be obnoxious as they can tend to be bossy. Rulers are a blessing in the church when they let Christ rule through them.

7) Showing mercy

There is a great gift in showing mercy. These are very compassionate people. People with the gift of showing mercy have compassion. Others can sense that they will listen to them.

VERSE 9

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

Verses 9-15 are the verses that tell us how to control our gifts. They are in the same exact order as the gifts. This verse goes with the gift of prophesy.

Let love be without dissimulation

Love without dissimulation means without pretence or hypocrisy. The person who has the gift of prophecy, as well as preachers and teachers, must declare truth in love. We are all to preach the truth in love, but this is especially applicable to the person who has the gift of prophecy. Truth can cut to the core because the word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two edged sword. Truth can cut, and truth can hurt. Those who prophesy don't see any gray, it is always black or white. One of the greatest things a prophet has to have is diplomacy. The people with this gift have to learn the art of diplomacy, because they can be extremely harsh when they go right to the heart of things. John the Baptist is a good example. People more readily identify with the positive than the cutting negative, and diplomacy is something God has to work in the heart of a prophet.

Abhor that which is evil

Down deep inside a prophet has a tremendous hatred for evil.

Cleave to that which is good

This means that a person who has the gift of prophecy has to display good in his life. If he preaches one way, and does another, he is not an effective minister.

VERSE 10

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

Kindly affectionate

These people must serve from a loving point of view. If they look on what they do as a duty, they'll find out not everybody appreciates what they do. Often these servers will do things and nobody notices, but it would certainly be noticed if they didn't do it. This is why the person who serves has to be kindly affectioned toward others.

With brotherly love

Their service has to be motivated by divine love. They serve just because they love to serve people, and they don't always have to have recognition. It is important for us to give people who do these things for us some kind of recognition. The person who serves should still serve willingly, even though they may not get any recognition. True brotherly love loves others more than self, and we love each other in Christ.

In honor preferring one another

This means that the server doesn't want to be in the limelight.

VERSE 11

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

Not slothful in business

The teacher can be so addicted to detail that they lose sight of the whole picture. They are not to be slothful in business. If a teacher's gift is not controlled, they can become very boring.

Fervent in spirit

A good teacher is one that is vibrant and excited about what they are saying, and that they are conveying something wonderful. Those teachers who are fervent in spirit are serving the Lord. It is not their agenda they are teaching, but rather God's agenda.

VERSE 12

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

Rejoicing in hope

This fits the exhorter who works better one on one with people. When an exhorter works with people they want to see some results. Often he has to rejoice in hope. Paul and others down through the ages found out results are not always instantaneous. They try to exhort people to accept the Lord, do what is right, and to go in the right direction. Sometimes it seems their words fall on deaf ears. They have to hope in the Lord that He is going to do something for that person.

Patient in tribulation

The person who has the gift of exhortation can also make people angry and annoyed at times. They can tell people exactly what to do and when to do it, almost like ordering people. They have to learn to be patient in that tribulation, because it may not always go smoothly.

Continue instant in prayer

These people must continue instant in prayer. God is the only one that is going to make the words of exhortation worthwhile and effective. The exhorter must trust the Lord to bring about the desired results.

VERSE 13

Distributing to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality;

Necessity of saints

This pertains to the giver. An authentic spiritual giver learns to spot real needs vs. wants. The giver can give many things, but what they are giving has to meet a need.

Given to hospitality

These give to the needs of the saints, and they must be given to hospitality. This means opening their hearts to other people.

VERSE 14

Bless them which persecute you: bless and curse not.

Bless them that persecute you

This pertains to the rulers. A person who is over others has many people who may want to harm him simply because he is over them and has the authority to order people around.

Bless and not curse

The ruler will take flack because others hate to take orders. Those who oppose the authority figure need to learn to submit themselves to authority.

VERSE 15

Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep.

Rejoice with them that rejoice

This speaks to the ones who show mercy. The people who have this gift have an amazing ability to identify with and to rejoice with people in their joy and in their victories.

Weep with them that weep

They rejoice with some, but cry with others. Those with this gift tend to be very despondent if someone needs compassion, or are in dire need, because the mercy people will identify with those in that dire need. If the mercy givers are not rejoicing in the Lord, those needy people will bring them down. The people with the mercy gift have to learn not to be so compassionate with those downtrodden. People with the gift of mercy can sometimes let their feelings go from one extreme to the other.

The next exhortations are given to all of us regardless of what gifts we might have. It is important for us to know what gifts we have, so that we do not transgress by trying to do something that God did not give us a gift for.

VERSE 16

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

Be of the same mind

“Be of the same mind” means to have full sympathy for one another. We have to learn to be tolerant of other people's gifts. These gifts differ for everyone, and that can cause conflict when people with other gifts see things differently and then act differently than we do. This doesn't mean they are wrong. But it takes all parties coming together in the Lord. That is the right choice. Each gift has to be tempered with the other gifts so that they blend together. Husbands and wives are exercised daily in being tempered with one another for balance.

Mind not high things

This means to get rid of our pride. We can't be prideful and arrogant because of our gifts, or any other things we think we should be set aside for.

Condescend to man of low estate

This means we must be humble. God resists the proud, but He gives grace to the humble. It is in the humble state that God is able to give us grace, so we can be a blessing and benefit to other people.

Be not wise in your won conceits

Yes, we have a wonderful gift, but we can't become conceited or arrogant about it, as if it were the only gift that exists. We must realize that other people have wonderful gifts, too. One gift is not more important than the others. God set them in us, and they are equally important. It gets easier not to be wise in our own conceits as God in His faithfulness afflicts us. Sometimes He allows us to afflict ourselves which can bring us a sweet humility.

VERSE 17

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

Evil for evil

It can be a human tendency for us to retaliate for various reasons, but God says no.

Provide things honest

Honesty must be a trait that must be on display in every member of the of the body of Christ.

VERSE 18

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

This will sometimes put us to the test. When people have no peace within themselves it is almost impossible to have peace with them. They will seek out and find a way to pick a fight with others. Paul encourages us to use all that is in us to help peace prevail with all men.

VERSE 19

Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath; for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.

Avenge not yourselves

In our day of gross injustice and iniquity, we might have a tendency to take matters in our own hands. That is a mistake.

Give place unto wrath

Giving place to wrath is talking about God's wrath, not ours. We are exhorted not to give in to wrath or anger. Anger includes feelings of displeasure. Wrath is strong, fierce anger. The person who is motivated by, and operates out of anger is providing fertile ground for the enemy.

Ecclesiastes 7:7

Surely oppression maketh a wise man mad; and a gift destroyeth the heart.

A gift destroyeth the heart is like someone buying their way out of trouble and not getting the justice he deserves. In Ecclesiastes 7:8-10 there is an outline as to what we are to do if we get into a situation where we might be controlled by anger:

- 1) Better is the end of a thing than the beginning.
It is going to pass. Vengeance belongs to God. He will take care of it.
- 2) The patient in spirit is better than the proud in spirit.
Patiently wait for God to take care of the injustice in His time. He will punish the wicked and make sure they get what is coming to them. Be patient in spirit, and wait for the Lord. The proud in spirit take things into their own hands.
- 3) Be not hasty in thy speech to be angry.
This gets us into trouble. "Be angry and sin not," Paul says. This means we cannot be motivated and controlled by anger. Anger rests in the bosom of fools, those who deny God and His ways.
- 4) Say not thou, 'What is the cause that former days were better than these? for thou doth not inquire wisely concerning this.'
Some want to go back to the good old days, but going back takes us farther away from the coming of the Lord. Let us keep looking forward!

VERSE 20

Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him, if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shall heap coals of fire on his head.

This is just opposite of what man would do. We need to do these things for those who persecute us and despitefully use us. We are to give our enemy what he needs, not what he deserves. This heaps coals of fire on his head; it builds a fire in him and encourages him to yield to the Lord. We can't do this if we alienate him.

VERSE 21

Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.

If we respond in kind we just keep evil going, but if we can find grace and love in our hearts to minister to people, we can break the cycle of violence. This is what God intends for us to do. Let God perform all of it, and it will work effectually and powerfully.

CHAPTER 13

Chapter 13 continues with the practical side of the gospel, and the things that get down to our conduct in this world, away from church. Verses 1-7 in this chapter give us our attitudes and responsibilities to the powers that be. None of us can escape the fact that there are some powers that be. Verses 8-10 include the attitude we must display toward our neighbor. We must learn to always conduct ourselves in love.

VERSE 1

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

Let every soul

Every soul means that none are excluded. No matter how big a person might be, or how much authority he might have, every soul is subject to the higher powers which is speaking of governmental authority that has been established over us.

Higher power

This is an encouragement to let the love of Christ rule in us in all things, not choosing those things that are convenient for us. We submit to the Lord in all things.

The apostle Paul lived at a time during the reign of the very wicked Roman ruler Nero but never mentioned it. Paul was concerned with God ruling his life, not Nero. That was a time of corrupt government and of anti-Christianity. Our lives are not about trying to get things straightened out on this earth. God will do that in due time. Our mission in life is about growing up in Him in all things, and living the reality that our citizenship is in heaven. Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and unto God the things that are God's. We obey all the laws of the land just like we obey our parents when growing up.

No power but of God

God is the one who sets up kings and takes them down. When certain people are in power, we must know that God put them there. We obey God before we obey man. Obeying God is submitting to authority. Respecting those in authority is not unto man, but unto God. This gives honor to Him.

Ordained of God

If the power is set up by God and we are bound to abide by that. We should respect those in authority because they are God's appointed. It doesn't mean they are God's anointed or that they are always Christian, but they are where they are because God put them there to fulfill His plans.

Daniel 2:21

And He changeth the times and the seasons: He removeth kings, and setteth up kings: He giveth wisdom unto the wise, and knowledge to them that know understanding.

Psalms 75:7

But God is the judge: He putteth down one, and setteth up another.

The powers that be are ordained of God. God raises these evil men up to magnify himself, and He demonstrates His power in their lack of obedience. One good example was wicked Pharaoh when he wouldn't let Israel go out of Egypt.

Proverbs 16:4

The Lord hath made all things for himself: yea even the wicked for the day of evil.

All those in authority today are being used to accelerate the coming of the Lord.

VERSE 2

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

Resist the power

To resist the power and authority of the government over us is rebellion against God.

Receive to themselves damnation

Damnation means a judgment. If we rebel against the government, we pay for it. God's word tells us not to become entangled in the affairs of this life, but to instead focus on and begin living on the other side. We need not fear what man can do to us, because God is for us always. Pray for those God has put authority that give out His word.

VERSE 3

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

Not a terror to good works

We may question this statement, but we have to remember that God put all those in power in the offices they hold.

Do that which is good

God's instructions to us as Christians are to do that which is good, for we shall have peace by doing that. We must always be very mindful of doing that which is good. Having people see we are Christians outwardly is a good testimony to them.

VERSE 4

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

Minister of God

These ministers are the ministers of God, and God intends that they be for good. We must understand the powers that be, however wicked, are still ministers of God.

If thou do evil

If you do that which is evil, you should be afraid. You can't rebel against the government and expect God to extricate you out of that, because you are a child of God.

1 Peter 2:20

For what glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God.

Bears not the sword in vain

He bears not the sword in vain means he is not bluffing; he does have the authority to bring hurt and pain on you. This will happen if you don't subject to this power and authority, because he is the minister of God. We pray for those in power so we can lead quiet and peaceful lives.

To execute wrath

This power is an avenger to execute wrath on those who do evil. Hopefully they have wisdom to know who the guilty party actually is. Many times throughout history the good and innocent have been wrongfully punished.

VERSE 5

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

This may be the most important verse in this chapter, and we need to understand it and abide by it. We refrain from doing evil not just to escape the wrath of the ruler, and escape the consequences that would fall on us, but because of the sake of our conscience. If we do wrong, and don't get caught, we still have to deal with our conscience. We don't want to break the law, because it will violate our conscience. If we do what is right, we'll not have to deal with our conscience, and we'll have the peace and complete rest of God.

VERSE 6

For this cause pay ye tribute also: for they are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing.

This means that we must indeed pay our taxes, i.e. render unto Caesar what is due him. We must abide by the laws of the land. God always pays His ministers in government, and this is done through taxes. They use these taxes to take care of the responsibilities that God has entrusted to them.

VERSE 7

Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honor to whom honor.

This covers a wide scope of things, and means those of any kind of authority. Regardless of who it is, pay tribute to whom tribute is due. Custom to custom means to who the money is due. Fear means respect, and God requires us to be respectful to all of them. Some are to be honored.

VERSE 8

Owe no man anything, but to love one another: for he that loveth one another hath fulfilled the law.

Love one another

Love is a debt we must always pay on, but we can never pay off. We will never pay love to the degree that we never owe any more. As long as we are in this world we must continue to be in debt to pay divine love.

Fulfill the law

He that loves one another has fulfilled the law. We saw in Romans 6:14 that we are not under the law. We can't keep the law; it can't transform us into anything good. When God says we are not under the law, this doesn't mean He lowered His standards by any degree. God simply found a way to produce the law in us through love. He that loves another has fulfilled the law. Love must be perfected in us in order that the righteousness the law demanded is fulfilled in us. What we owe one another is to love one another.

VERSE 9

For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witnesses, Thou shalt not covet, and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.

Paul focuses on the side of the law that affects man. Ten commandments were given. The first four commandments tell us our responsibility to God: believe in God, do not worship anything or anyone but God, do not take God's name in vain. Observe the Sabbath to keep it holy is not really a commandment, but an expression of divine grace. When God gave man's responsibility to God in the first four commandments, he gave this respite of divine grace. Then God gave man's responsibilities to man with the other commandments. This is the side Paul is dealing with in this verse. We are dealing with man's responsibilities to man in this chapter as well as his responsibility to the authorities that God has placed over him. Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself will fulfill all the law. Love keeps us from doing wrong against parents and others in our lives.

We have the very life of Jesus living in us if we are born again. If we yield to that life, the reservoir of grace pours through us to perform the good work. We will do of His good pleasure, and love with His love. As we read this verse it is fulfilled because of His love for us. In John 3:9, we read that we cannot commit sin, so all of this verse has been fulfilled. Whosoever is born of God cannot commit sin, because we are now under grace, and the law has been taken away because of what Christ accomplished on the cross. He took the place of the law, and now he operates through love. He finished it all.

VERSE 10

Love worketh no ill to his neighbor, therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.

Again, love is the fulfilling of the law. The key component in the Christian life is divine love. If we are controlled by divine love, everything else simply dissolves. We can't try to work for this, it can only be accomplished in love. Love takes care of it all.

VERSE 11

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

Awaken out of sleep

Awaken out of sleep means to realize and implement a walk of love. The person who is asleep is the person who will just let things slide. They won't have a walk of love, or have regard for people or government. Sleeping in view of the coming of the Lord is a very dangerous thing.

Our salvation is nearer

'Our salvation' means the time we will be taken out of this world, the deliverance we are looking for. Every day that salvation gets nearer and nearer. It is time to awaken out of sleep!

VERSE 12

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

The night speaks of the night of the church age. The dawning day speaks of a new era, the dawn we will enter in a new day with the Lord.

Paul gives some exhortations:

1) Cast off the works of darkness

This means to walk in the light. We cannot ignore the light of God's word in our lives.

2) Put on the armor of light

This means preparing a thing, and the light means the power of understanding. We put on the armor of light by taking the light of the word of God. To stop doing works of darkness is for outward things. The only way to cast off the works of darkness entirely is to have the power of God's word in our lives. The armor of light (God's word) protects against the ways of darkness.

VERSE 13

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

Walk honestly

This is the day when we must absolutely be honest before God, and indeed honest with ourselves. We must live in a way that we are transparent before the Lord. God won't force us to do anything, but we should surrender to what He is saying.

Paul mentions some very specific "nots." The Holy Spirit knows exactly the condition that will prevail before the coming of the Lord, and we see it in our day.

Let us live honestly as in the day

1) Not in rioting

This is a letting loose, even among Christians, who want no restraints. People don't want any kind of control, but want to do whatever they want. They don't want anyone telling them they can't have, or can't do anything they desire. This is letting the flesh rule and reign. We need to be controlled by divine love, and this is the restraint God intends for us to have.

2) Not in drunkenness

Drunkenness can mean many things. It can mean natural intoxicants as well as many religious intoxicants that dull men's minds to God's word. Many people just like to be oblivious to the things that are going on around them. We are not to be in drunkenness of any kind.

3) Not in chambering and wantonness.

This means exactly what it infers. We are to avoid prostitution and fornication and not engage in such things. In our day, even in the Christian world, this is common place. Christian society has adopted the ways of the world. Many Christians think that if society accepts it, it must be alright. Wantonness means indecent, and there is a degree of indecency even in the Christian world. The Christian community wants to look like the world, and the world is absolutely indecent.

4) Not in strife and envying.

In the Christian world there is often strife among brethren, because one wants the place the another has. Strife and envying are very dangerous characteristics for a Christians to allow into their lives. We are to put on the armor of light, because this is the only thing that will remove these dangerous characteristics from lives.

VERSE 14

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

Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ

Put ye on means to sink into the Lord Jesus, and this is the only way we will ever overcome the traits mentioned in verse 13. 1 Thessalonians 5:1-8 is about those of the light, the day. To put on Jesus simply means we walk after the light of the new creation we became when we were born again.

Make not provision for the flesh

If we try to not make provision for the flesh on our own, we will fail miserably. If we put on Jesus Christ, we are enabled to make no provision for the flesh to fulfill the lusts thereof. Any evil deed starts with lust, and if lust isn't judged, it will lead to the outward fulfillment of it. God has to go way down in the heart to change the lust. This can only happen when we put on the Lord Jesus Christ.

CHAPTER 14

This chapter deals with our conduct before other people. We find out in this chapter we might have to limit our liberty for the sake of someone else. We read in 1 Corinthians 10:33 that all things are lawful (possible to do) but not all things are expedient (profitable or advantageous).

The Christians in Rome were passing judgment on one another based on what someone was eating, or what they were observing. This is a good example of how the little foxes spoil the vine. Their disputing did not pertain to doctrine, because there is nothing in the word of God that can be disputed.

This is about love and whether or not to exercise our liberties. It is about praying for saints, and not trying to push our liberties, or lack of them, on another brother or sister in the Lord. When we tell other how to live their lives, we are making a big mistake. We are all changed from the inside out and our liberties will be different.

VERSE 1

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

We are not to judge another's doubtful thoughts, or stir up a controversy trying to make him measure up. The strong in faith should never belittle the one who is needy in faith. We should receive everyone in the love of God. If we have a board in our eye, and are trying to get a splinter out of our brother's eye, we need to get on our knees and pray. Be strong in faith and strong in love always.

VERSE 2

For one believeth that he may eat all things: another who is weak, eateth herbs.

Those weak in the faith think they can only eat certain things. Those strong in faith believe they can eat anything. We should not try to make a big deal out of his weakness, or try to bring someone out of it. Only God can bring them out.

VERSE 3

Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not; and let not him which eateth not judge him that eateth; for God hath received him.

If a person is strong in the faith, he is not to look down on those weak in the faith. By the same token, the weak one is not to judge the strong in faith, who eat what they want. Usually the weak in faith are more apt to judge others than those who are strong in faith. God has received them both.

VERSE 4

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

God is asking both the weak, and to the strong, "Who are you to judge what another eats or drinks?" This is no one's business but God's. It is not up to anyone to convince the weak or the strong to eat or not to eat. God is able to make them stand. The individual, whether strong or weak, is God's responsibility, not ours.

VERSE 5

One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind.

The Jews believe Saturday is the Sabbath, and insist on it. Because Christ rose from the dead on Sunday, the Christian community has adopted Sunday as their holy day. The truth of the matter is that every day is to be holy unto the Lord. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind.

VERSE 6

He that regardeth the day, regardeth it unto the Lord; and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it. He that eateth, eateth to the Lord, for he giveth God thanks; and he that eateth not, to the Lord he eateth not, and giveth God thanks.

We should regard every day to the Lord. Whether we eat certain foods or don't eat certain foods, we do that unto the Lord, and give Him thanks.

VERSE 7

For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself.

We are before the Lord.

VERSE 8

For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord; whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's.

We are all, as individuals, responsible before the Lord. We all assume that responsibility ourselves, and can't do it for others. We should always magnify the Lord above all else. We need to be spiritual ones.

VERSE 9

For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and received, that He might be Lord both of the dead and living.

Christ died, was buried, and rose again so he might be Lord of all. Whether alive or dead, we are the Lord's. Christ has established lordship over all things living or dead.

VERSE 10

But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at naught thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ.

Why judge thy brother

Judging thy brother is referring to the brother who is weak in faith. It is very wrong to judge other people. Those strong in faith can sometimes be very condescending. Sometimes the strong think they are better than the weak.

The judgment seat of Christ

The judgment seat of Christ is one of the most important truths in the scripture. The major point we need to understand about the judgment seat of Christ is that it is taking place right now. We as Christians won't be judged at the end of our lives. We are judged now while we are living. John saw

Jesus as the judge in Revelation chapter 1, but where He was when he saw Him is important. John was taken in the spirit to the end of the church age, to the day of the Lord. When John heard the voice, and turned around to see Jesus the judge in the midst of the churches, it was during the church age. Jesus is walking amidst the candlesticks right now, judging Christians unto reward, not unto condemnation. The judgment seat of Christ is the greatest friend we will ever have in our Christian life. It is at the judgment seat of Christ that God reveals to us what needs to be repented of in our lives, and to change it. Repentance is now for we are being judged now.

The judgment seat of Christ is not the same as the great white throne judgment. Everyone that stands before the great white throne judgment is dead, and being judged for sin. Those before the judgment seat of Christ have everlasting life, and are in the Lamb's book of life. Everyone who ever lived will stand either before Christ's judgment seat or before the great white throne. The choice is ours.

VERSE 11

For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue confess to God.

This verse is used to support the judgment seat of Christ. When do we bow before the Lord? Right now. Jesus is walking amongst the candlesticks today, and as Christians we bow before Him now. If men do not bow to Him now, they will definitely bow to Him before the great white throne. Now is the time to bow, and confess to God.

VERSE 12

So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God.

We do this now as we give account of our lives now. If things are wrong, they need to be corrected now. We grow up in all things in Christ now.

VERSE 13

Let us not therefore judge one another anymore: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumbling block or an occasion to fall in his brother's way.

It is not our place to judge anybody else; that is Christ's place. He is the only one that is qualified for that place of judgment. He is sitting on the judgment seat now. We need to be on the mercy seat. We don't have any right to judge, because we are all standing before Christ's judgment seat. We are responsible to and for our brother, and we should be sure never to stumble him or cause him to fall. This pertains especially to the strong in faith that they not put a stumbling block in front of those of weaker faith. If we have the love of Jesus ruling in us, we won't want to stumble one another, but rather to consider our brother even before we consider ourselves.

VERSE 14

I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that there is nothing unclean of itself; but to him that esteemeth anything to be unclean, to him it is unclean.

According to Jesus, all food is clean. Paul, a Jew, knew what the Kosher menu consisted of, yet he wrote these words. All the foods that were forbidden under the old covenant, there is nothing wrong with them. This is not just Paul's opinion, this came from Jesus Christ himself. To him that thinks anything is unclean, it is unclean to him to him. It's not what goes in the body that defiles the man, it's what comes

out that defiles him. This can be said of activities as well as food. God will convict our hearts as to what is profitable for our lives, and what is not.

VERSE 15

But if thy brother be grieved with thy meat, now walkest thou not charitably. Destroy not him with thy meat, for whom Christ died.

If our brother is offended by something we do or by something we eat, scripture tells those of stronger faith not to tempt them. We don't want to deliberately offend a brother by doing something we know he doesn't like. We cannot force our liberties on someone else. If we cherish our liberties more than we love our brother, we've missed it. If we don't have love we profit nothing.

VERSE 16

Let not then your good be evil spoken of:

Don't think that everything that is good for you should be good for everybody else. Don't judge everyone else's experiences by your own.

VERSE 17

For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.

We must get away from dwelling on outward things and thinking that everything we say or do on the outside determines our spirituality or righteousness. All the wickedness that comes out of the body is what defiles the body, not the food we eat. The important thing is not what our faith allows us in liberties, but how much we let love rule our faith. Christ never had his mind on himself, but on the will of the Father, who is love. This is the life that lives in us. We have the very mind of Christ operating in us.

VERSE 18

For he that in these things serveth Christ is acceptable to God, and approved of men.

In these things

These things are referring to righteousness, joy, and peace in the Holy Ghost. These are the things that serve Christ and that are acceptable to God. This is the life we need to engage in before God and men.

Acceptable

The word 'acceptable' in the Greek means "well pleasing to God" and indicates bridal talk. This particular word was only penned by the Spirit through Paul. No other writer used it.

VERSE 19

Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another.

By living a life of peace and joy, we can be ministers of edification to others. This is one of the great keys to ministry concerning other Christians. We are to be ministers and vessels of edification, ones who uplift others spiritually. Spiritual encouragers are mature ones.

VERSE 20

For meat destroys not the work of God. All things indeed are pure; but it is evil for that man who eateth with offence.

We shouldn't flaunt our liberties in front of weaker brothers just because we have them. There is nothing unclean of itself, but if someone thinks it is, then it is unclean to them. All things indeed are clean, but not to the man who thinks they are evil. It will offend his conscience. It matters what we impress upon our brother.

VERSE 21

It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor anything whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak.

If a person offends his conscience he is made weak, there is no spirit left in him. When we do something we know we shouldn't do and our conscience is offended, we literally are made weak. We must be determined not to offend someone else with our liberties.

1 Corinthians 8:13

Wherefore if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend.

Stand in the word and don't compromise. This verse is not speaking of doctrine or rightly divided truth. This means that he doesn't have to give up meat totally, but take care not to eat it in the presence of the weaker brother who thinks it is wrong.

VERSE 22

Has thou faith? have it to thyself before God. Happy is he that condemneth not himself in the things which he alloweth.

'Happy is he that doesn't condemn himself in the things he allows' means we are happy we can do these things that are not going to offend our conscience. If we are not going to feel any conviction or condemnation for doing it, then happy are we that we won't suffer the effects of a guilty conscience. We can't judge another man's conscience by our own. God has to deliver us from the mold of self condemnation. We can allow ourselves some fun as long as it doesn't offend others. This isn't speaking of sin, because there is no green light for sin.

VERSE 23

And he that doubteth is dammed if he eat, because he eateth not of faith: for whatsoever is not of faith is sin.

If a person doesn't have to have the faith to enjoy a certain activity, or a certain food, he doubts and condemns himself. If it offends his conscience, he doesn't have the faith. Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. It is the scripture that builds up faith in our lives. We can partake of these things without feeling a constant burden of guilt because of a guilty conscience.

Righteousness doesn't come from what we do or don't do, or what we abstain from. Righteousness comes from Jesus Christ, and we thank Him that we are justified. We should know limits in what we allow and not overdo any of the liberties. What is most important is that we belong to the Lord.

CHAPTER 15

Paul is bringing his letter to the Romans to a close, but still has much to say about Israel. Paul seems to balance things out by indicating that he really is the apostle to the Gentiles.

VERSE 1

We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves.

We that are strong

Paul is addressing the strong spiritual person while still talking about the weak. If we have strong faith, God helps us not to be arrogant, but to know that the faith we have comes from Him. The more we go with Christ, the more like Him we become.

Bear the infirmities

Infirmities can point to a couple of things, but in this case they are most likely referring to thinking that righteousness comes from what we do, or what we take into our bodies. Sometimes infirmities can mean weaknesses of the flesh.

Galatians 6:1

Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such a one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.

It is important how we deal with the missteps of others. Encourage those of little faith, don't belittle them. Encouragement will build them up in the faith.

Not to please ourselves

We need to consider our brother before ourselves. In doing this we will encourage and edify our weaker brothers. There may be times when we will have to show an interest in someone else, and it may be at the expense of ourselves. It is not always easy to be interested in someone else's welfare. But how can we say we love the Lord whom we can't see, when we can't love our brother whom we have seen. Considering others before ourselves shows proof of Christ's love in us.

VERSE 2

Let every one of us please his neighbor for his good to edification.

Sometimes it may cost us personally in order to contribute to the edification of another brother.

VERSE 3

For even Christ pleased not himself; but as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me.

Christ pleased not himself

The zeal Jesus had was to please the Father first, and then He was zealous to help other people even at the expense of himself. This same quality is to prevail in our own lives.

The reproaches

The things men had against God, all the sin and corruption, were laid on Christ. The key is that Jesus was not doing things to please himself. Sometimes helping others may create a burden on us, but Jesus took on a much greater burden.

VERSE 4

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

Written aforetime for our learning

Times when we must bear reproaches are the times when the scriptures are so valuable to us. The scriptures are there to let us know we are on the right track.

Patience and comfort

The scriptures give us patience and comfort as we learn of God's word, and as the Holy Spirit leads us into all the truth of what God planned for us before the beginning of time, and gives us new hope. The bridal truth was not revealed to the prophets, but the Holy Ghost revealed it to Paul.

VERSE 5

Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be like minded one toward another according to Jesus Christ;

God of patience and consolation

2 Corinthians 1:3

Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort.

When we are bearing each other's burdens, the God of patience and consolation will be right there with us.

Likeminded

We need to be likeminded with Jesus. The Spirit of Christ is to be manifest in our lives just as Jesus was when He was accommodating the needy. We have been blessed with all spiritual blessings in Christ, and all the transformation to be like Christ is living in us as a child of God. The new man grows and starts to reign, and the mind of Christ takes over in us controlling our very thoughts. There is nothing we can do or earn for this to transpire in our lives. Christ does it all. He even has to open our hearts to receive it all. The patience He gives us makes us likeminded toward one another. The Lord does this individually in each one of us who are in His body.

VERSE 6

That ye may with one mind, and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

We need to glorify God with one mind and one mouth, and be completely purposed with one another, truly loving with one another and praying for one another. We can help others out of their misery, that they along with us may with one mind and one mouth glorify God.

VERSE 7

Wherefore receive ye one another, as Christ also received us to the glory of God.

We know God received us long before we were perfect. He continues to receive us because we are not even perfect yet. Shall we not then receive others who are in need and want our help? There are people who don't want to be helped, and those we can't do anything about. To those who recognize they have a problem and need a friend, we need to be willing to be there for them and receive them as Christ also received us, to the glory of God. We are vessels prepared afore unto glory, vessels to the praise of the glory of His grace. He is building in us the joy to receive one another, so His joy might be full.

VERSE 8

Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the Father.

In this verse, Paul starts speaking of Jesus' ministry to the circumcision, whereas Paul's ministry was to the uncircumcised Gentiles. When Jesus came to the world His primary ministry was to the Jews. Jesus tried to confirm the promises of God to them, and to convey the wonderful truths that had passed down from the Father but the Jews were so blind and dull of hearing that they didn't understand His message. They were so fixated on the outward expression of the law that they completely missed the real (spiritual) message Jesus had for them.

VERSE 9

And that the Gentiles might glorify God for His mercy; as it is written, For this cause I will confess thee among the Gentiles, and sing unto thy name.

Gentiles might glorify God

Jew or Gentile, there is but one way to approach God, and that is through His Son Jesus Christ. Both Jew and Gentile needed Jesus, but the Jews refused to see their need.

As it is written

Paul uses this Old Testament verse to show that God didn't consider the Gentiles as an afterthought. Gentiles were always included in God's purposes.

Psalms 18:49

Therefore I will give thanks unto thee, O Lord, among the heathen, and sing praises unto thy name.

We must also understand that God always has an order, and that order is to the Jews first and then to the Gentiles. The Jews always had the responsibility to minister unto the Gentiles, and they will yet fulfill that ministry.

VERSE 10

And again he saith, Rejoice ye Gentiles, with His people.

The Gentiles will be brought right into the kingdom along with the Jews.

VERSES 11-12

And again, Praise the Lord, all ye Gentiles; and laud Him, all ye people. And again Esaias saith, There shall be a root of Jesse, and He that shall rise to reign over the Gentiles; in Him shall the Gentiles trust.

Root of Jesse

Isaiah prophesied there would be that trust and rest for the Gentiles that would come out of the root of Jesse.

Isaiah 11:10

And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek: and His rest shall be glorious.

All along, the Gentiles were a part of God's plan. While Jesus was on the earth, His ministry was to the Jews. He will preside over the Gentiles when He becomes King of Kings, and Lord of Lords. Jesus is the root of Jesse. The root is that which comes before Jesus.

VERSE 13

Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost.

God of hope

Christ is the object of our hope, and he gives us hope.

Titus 2:13

Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ.

Not just the hope of the coming of the Lord, but all the hope we have is in Christ, and everything that God has given to us in His Son.

Joy and peace in believing

God will fill us with joy and peace, and it only comes one way: by believing. The more we believe Christ, the greater the joy and peace we will have in our lives. The joy and peace in believing also brings us to that wonderful hope in Christ.

Abound in hope through power of Holy Spirit

We may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Ghost who gives us an understanding of God's marvelous truths. The Holy Spirit takes the things of Christ and makes them ours, and He sheds the love of God abroad in our hearts so that we have faith. That faith becomes the most holy faith, and is unwavering. The more scripture that we read and take in, the more hope and faith we have in any area of our lives. When the Holy Spirit begins to take over our lives, our lives will transform us from murmuring and complaining to worshippers who worship Christ in Spirit and in truth.

VERSE 14

And I myself also am persuaded of you my brethren, that ye also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another.

Full of goodness

The only goodness comes from God. The goodness these people had came as a result of their relationship with God and what He has planted in their hearts.

Ephesians 5:9

(For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth;)

This is what is acceptable to the Lord. God's passion for the body of Christ is for them to grow up in all things, and thank the Lord for the Philadelphia brotherly love. This is the love of the fully purposed ones, those who are racing to attain God's high calling.

Filled with all knowledge

They also are filled with all knowledge. This doesn't mean they knew it all, but rather that they knew Paul's gospel. We must be filled with knowledge to admonish one another. As we are filled with the knowledge of God, we are able to build up and encourage one another.

VERSE 15

Nevertheless, brethren, I have written the more boldly unto you in some sort, as putting you in mind, because of the grace that is given to me of God.

The more boldly

Paul wrote more boldly to these Roman saints, because the faith of these Roman saints was known all over the world. 'More boldly' means paying more earnest heed to things we have heard, and not letting them slip. The Holy Spirit gives us power in believing, and being encouraged in these things. There is no new truth; it has all been preached through Paul's gospel.

Because of the grace given

The grace Paul is talking about is the ability and opportunity to minister unto the Gentiles. Paul knew very early in his ministry that God had chosen him to be a vessel unto the Gentiles. Paul, no doubt, had to get over some prejudices against the Gentiles because he was a Jew, and as far as the Jews were concerned, the Gentiles were despised. Paul received great grace from God.

VERSE 16

That I should be the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God, that the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Ghost.

Minister of Jesus Christ

Paul received the grace of God so he could fulfill the ministering of Christ to the Gentiles. Paul was not preaching some cause, or reform, or preaching against something. He was preaching Christ himself, and that must be our message. Paul was a chosen vessel to minister to the Gentiles for the purpose of the mystery of Christ and the church. Paul was called to reveal the bridal truth that Christ's bride will come out from among the Gentiles.

Ministering the gospel

The word ministering means to minister as a priest. Paul was a spiritual priest ministering the gospel to the Gentiles. As far as Paul's gospel, Gentile means any Jew or Gentile who is a born-again believer in Jesus. We all have the opportunity to be part of the bride if so be that we suffer together with Christ.

Offering up the Gentiles

This isn't offering the Gentiles up in sacrifice, but offering up as an offering to God for good that which is going to be beneficial to Him, and be a blessing to Him. Paul did this through the gospel. These people were saved, and would go on with the Lord.

Acceptable and sanctified

Being acceptable means being purified for an event, such as Esther who was prepared beforehand to marry the king and become the queen. We who are in the race to win God's best want the grooming and the growth from the Holy Spirit to make us ready to be presented as the bride of Christ, without spot or wrinkle. The 'grow up' message was what Paul preached. Fully-purposed saints desire to win Christ Jesus as bridegroom.

VERSE 17

I have therefore whereof I may glory through Jesus Christ in those things which pertain to God.

Paul realized he couldn't glory in anything, because his preaching the gospel was God's idea, not his. Paul's life is just a tiny picture of what the nation of Israel will be during the millennium. Paul's gospel was to the Gentiles; likewise in the Millennial period the burden of the Jewish nation will be to preach the gospel unto to Gentiles worldwide. The Jews will have fantastic success ministering Christ to the Gentiles. This will be when Satan will be chained up.

There are many parallels between the life of Saul of Tarsus and the Jewish nation. Saul went forth killing and imprisoning Christians. He thought he was doing God a favor but the opposite was true. It was Saul of Tarsus that had to be knocked down in the dust on the way to Damascus, and hear the voice of Jesus.

On a grander scale, the nation of Israel will be knocked down in the dust in the great tribulation where they will hear the voice of Jesus. Just as Saul, they will be asking Jesus what he would have them to do. The Jews will come to the place where they will glory in Christ rather than the law.

VERSE 18

For I will not dare to speak of any of those things which Christ hath not wrought by me, to make the Gentiles obedient, by word and deed.

Paul's message in Acts chapter 15 is very appropriate here. They had a conference with the disciples in Jerusalem to ascertain whether the Gentiles should come under the law. They knew the Gentiles were being saved and filled with the Holy Ghost. The Gentiles had a tremendous transformation, not only in word, but also in deed. It was agreed at this conference that the Gentiles should not come under the law of Moses. Christ nailed that Mosaic law to the cross, and all who are saved come under grace, and not under law. Only one man who ever lived could keep the law, and that was Christ. Thank God that Christ loved us enough to die for our sin, otherwise we would be hell-bound by being being unable to keep the law. He is visiting the Gentile nation to take out a people for His name – a bride who will come out from among the Gentiles (and saved Jews).

VERSE 19

Through mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God; so that from Jerusalem, and round about Illyricum, I have fully preached the gospel of Christ.

Signs and wonders

Paul is giving all glory to the Spirit's working power. This is Paul's evidence of his apostleship, and we know why he was called of God. First, he was called by the word of God - by deed, which means manner of life. Then he was called by mighty signs and wonders by the power of the Holy Spirit. The power of Holy Spirit is always on His vessels of mercy, and He will show himself mighty. When we come in the precious name above all names, Jesus, in the power of His might, and by the power of the Holy Spirit, we have the joy of the Lord which is our strength. The joy of the Lord is more than a conqueror through Christ Jesus, and this joy carries us all the way along. We find this joyous power when we are in the dark valleys, not when we are on the mountain tops. Joy is the treasure that will win God's best.

Fully preached the gospel of Christ

Paul fully preached the gospel. He never withheld a thing. Paul gave the full gospel and trusted God for the increase. We can fight the good fight of faith in joy because we know Paul's gospel, and the Holy Spirit will shed the love of God abroad in our hearts. Without love nothing profits us. We should not grow cold and complacent or take love for granted.

VERSE 20

Yea, I have strived to preach the gospel, not where Christ was named, lest I should build upon another man's foundation:

Not where Christ was named

When Jesus was here, His entire message was centered around Jerusalem and to the Jews. Paul went away from Jerusalem into the Gentile land on his missionary journeys. The places he went were teeming with Gentiles, not Jews. Paul went where people had no religious foundation, where they had never heard the truth.

Not build on another foundation

The Gentiles Paul went to were hearing the gospel for the first time. So Paul didn't have to tear anything down, as the people didn't have anything to unlearn. Paul didn't have to build on another foundation.

VERSE 21

But as it is written, To whom He was not spoken of, they shall see: and they that have not heard shall understand.

This verse was taken from Isaiah 52:15:

Isaiah 52:15

So shall He sprinkle many nations; the kings shall shut their mouths at Him: for that which had not been told them shall they see, and that which they had not heard shall they consider.

To whom He was not spoken of were the Gentiles, and they did see and hear and understand. The Gentiles in this verse refers to all who are saved, whether Jew or Greek.

VERSE 22

For which cause also I have been much hindered from coming to you.

Paul delayed from going to Rome because he was preaching the full gospel in places where it had not been heard, and these were people who was on his heart.

VERSE 23

But now having no more place in these parts, and having a great desire these many years to come unto you;

Paul was in a place that he felt had run dry. He had accomplished what God wanted him to accomplish, and he had a great desire for many years to preach to the people of Rome, but he waited on God to tell him when to go. Paul commends those Roman saints about their love and faith, so they were the least in need. These people were in a good state spiritually, and they were very thankful for Paul's gospel. They were waiting patiently to be able to fellowship with Paul.

VERSE 24

Whensoever I take my journey into Spain, I will come to you: for I trust to see you in my journey, and to be brought on my way thitherward by you, if first I be somewhat filled with your company.

Be brought on my way

This is the closest Paul ever gets to asking for some kind of assistance. Paul was going to stop in Rome on his way to Spain, and was going to give them the opportunity to give a contribution to his missionary journey. Paul never put the emphasis on funds from people, but he gave them the opportunity to help.

Filled with your company

If first I be filled with your company shows that Paul put the fellowship with the saints ahead of any offering he might receive.

VERSE 25

But now I go unto Jerusalem to minister unto the saints.

I go unto Jerusalem

Before going to Rome, Paul had to stop in Jerusalem first. When Paul finally got to Rome he came in chains and was imprisoned. So when he finally got to fellowship with these Roman saints, it had to be from a jail cell. Paul's path was never strewn with rose petals; it was strewn with trials and infirmities, which Paul said allowed the power of Christ to rest upon him and which he gloried in. The power of Christ rests on our lives in our infirmities too. As we go on with God we learn to thank Him for our weaknesses.

Ministering

The ministering Paul is talking about is for the poor Jews at Jerusalem. These people had no sustenance so there was a need to take up an offering for these poor Jews. This money was not for Paul's ministry, but for the poor at Jerusalem.

VERSE 26

For it hath pleased them of Macedonia, and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor saints which are at Jerusalem.

Macedonia and Achaia

Those in Macedonia just gave and gave – even out of their poverty – but Achaia was very lax about collecting funds for the poor in Jerusalem.

Poor saints at Jerusalem

After the day of Pentecost, these people sold everything they had, and gave the proceeds to the apostle to distribute as he saw fit. (Acts 4:34-35)

VERSE 27

It hath pleased them verily; and their debtors they are. For if the Gentiles have been made partakers of their spiritual things, this is also to minister unto them in carnal things.

Every Gentile is indebted to the Jews. It was because of the rejection of Christ by the Jews that the gospel came to the Gentiles. Paul says it is the duty of the Gentiles, since they now partake of the spiritual things of the Jews, to minister to the Jews in their worldly things.

VERSE 28

When therefore I have performed this, and have sealed to them this fruit, I will come by you into Spain.

After Paul stopped by Jerusalem on his way to Spain, he intended to go to Rome. Paul was warned by his disciples through the Spirit about going to Jerusalem in Acts 21. They pleaded with him not to go. The prophet Agabus, who was sent by the Lord, showed him what would happen to him there. Paul was convicted, and convinced in his heart that the Lord would bring him through it. When he got to Jerusalem he was wonderfully received, but within a week he was beaten, and wanted dead. The Roman saints are the ones who saved him. The Jerusalem saints were not grounded in God's love because they turned on Paul.

VERSE 29

And I am sure that, when I come unto you, I shall come in the fullness of blessing of the gospel of Christ.

Paul makes it clear that he is not coming empty handed. He is full of the gospel of Christ and ready to preach to the saints of Rome.

VERSE 30

Now I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, and for the love of the Spirit, that you strive together with me in your prayers to God for me;

For Jesus Christ's sake

It is for Christ's sake, and not to put a feather in Paul's cap.

Love of the Spirit

Passionate love is the love of the Spirit. The love of the Spirit means the love of the Spirit in Paul. We know that the Spirit loves the saints, and He puts that same love in the hearts of His ministers.

Strive together in prayer

Paul is asking them to earnestly pray for him. Strive means to struggle in company with; to be a partner. Paul wanted very much for them to pray on behalf of him and the gospel. We need to pray for the furtherance of Paul's gospel in people's lives, and to truly want all saints to grow up in all things in Christ.

VERSE 31

That I may be delivered from them that do not believe in Judaea; and that my service which I have for Jerusalem may be accepted of the saints.

Nonbelievers in Judaea

These Jews were those who constantly tore down what Paul was trying to build up. They were always undermining everything Paul tried to do. These are the ones he needs prayers to be delivered from.

Service to Jerusalem

Paul wanted them to pray that the offering he was bringing to those poor Jews would be accepted. People are sometimes too proud to take a hand-out.

VERSE 32

That I may come unto you with joy by the will of God, and may with you be refreshed.

Come in joy

Paul wanted to come to them in joy by the will of God. Whatever we do must be predicated on the will of God. Paul had been told what was coming and he trusted the Lord. He wanted to go to Jerusalem with full joy, because he knew he would be bound and taken to Rome. He wanted to be united with the brethren in Rome that passionately loved the Lord. (Acts 20: 22-25)

Refreshed

Paul wanted to be refreshed with fellowship with the saints at Rome. He wanted them to pray to have a profitable and edifying time.

VERSE 33

Now the God of peace be with you all. Amen.

God of peace

The God of peace is the power of the Holy Spirit.

Romans 8:11

But if the Spirit of Him who raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in you.

Hebrews 13:20

Now the God of peace that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of His everlasting covenant.

The entire Trinity is called to minister in this chapter. In verse 5 we see the God of patience and consolation which is the Father. In verse 13 we see the God of hope which refers to Christ, because all hope is in Him. In verse 33, the God of peace which is the power of the Holy Spirit. These three are always together in harmony with one another in order to bring about this complete ministry to God's people.

CHAPTER 16

Verses 1-20 in this chapter are said to belong to the Ephesians letter. No one knows how this ended up in the Roman letter. The people Paul mentions are associated with Ephesus, and not Rome. Whether this was written to the Ephesian saints or to the saints at Rome, what matters is that it was written to the saints of the high calling of God. What matters are who those people are in Christ. This is also encouragement of the love of God and the spiritual perfection that is being poured out through Paul as he encouraged the saints in the love of the truth. This is about agape love – bridal love – and to embrace it and win Christ.

We are yokefellows with Paul in the love of the truth by the Spirit and in the Spirit. Even though we have never met Paul, we know his heart and his gospel.

There are eight women mentioned in this chapter, and these women express the bride of Christ as eight is the number of new creation and of the bride:

- 1) Phebe
Her name means shining or radiant one. The bride will shine brightly for Jesus.
- 2) Priscilla
Her name means ancient one. She shows the character of God on display in the bride of Christ.
- 3) Mary
Her name means rebellion or bitter. This doesn't mean she is a bitter or rebellious person, but rather it is indicative of some of the bitter experiences that full overcomers must go through.
- 4) Junia
Junia means youthful. She is the picture of the vibrance and vitality of this bridal company. Her youth is renewed like the eagle's.
- 5) Tryphena
Her name means luxurious. This and tells us of the bridal company that just flourishes in Christ.
- 6) Tryphosa
Her name means illuminating. She speaks of the illuminated body that lets her light shine, just like the bride of Christ.
- 7) Persis
Her name means one who divides. The bridal company rightly divides the truth. The word of truth cuts right through scripture.
- 8) Julia
Her name means downy. This is a hint of the power of the Holy Spirit. The bride of Christ is controlled by the power of the Holy Spirit.

There are 19 men mentioned and are representative of Christ himself:

- 1) Aquila
His name means eagle. The eagle is figurative of Christ as leader and protector, and this is what God intends Jesus to be. This shows a battle-seasoned full overcomer who is experienced in soaring and who has a far-seeking eternal vision.
- 2) Epaphroditus
This name means praiseworthy. He had a love for the truth.

3) Andronicus

His name means victory of man. This shows us the victory and dominion Christ had as a Man, and the victory He still has today.

4) Amplias

This name means enlarged. This speaks of the fully grown Christ and/or the stretching of the wineskins.

5) Urbane

This name means the end of the way; i.e. the bottom of the barrel. Those rejected by men are the very type God loves to work with.

6) Stachys

This name means ear of corn, which tells us of the fruitfulness of Christ and His resurrection. Each kernel of corn has to die when planted to bring forth fruit, just as Christ had to die to bring forth much fruit.

7) Apelles

This name means without receptacle, or the called, which shows Christ has no room except for the will of God. He is so full of the word He has no room for anything else.

8) Aristobulus

This name means best counsellor or encourager. This shows Christ as the counsellor, the Prince of Peace who encourages us through the Spirit.

9) Herodion

This name means valiant. He testifies of Christ as the outstanding warrior.

10) Narcissus

This name means narcotic, and shows Christ addicted to the will and ways of God.

11) Rufus

This name means red. In the Greek it means to saturate. This speaks of the blood of the Lamb that saturates and cleanses us from all sin.

12) Asyncritus

This name means incomparable. Christ is the incomparable one.

13) Phlegon

This name means burning and shows us the burning zeal of Christ; how he was completely burned up with zeal and passion.

14) Hermas

This name means gain and speaks of the gain which is in Christ himself.

15) Patrobas

This name means colonel, father-like. This expresses the very character and Spirit of Christ.

16) Hermes

This name means teacher, bringing good tidings for gain. Jesus is that teacher for our gain. He sends good tidings of great joy.

17) Philologus

This name means lover of the word. Jesus is the Word and we love Him.

18) Nereus

This name means water nymph and speaks of Christ coming out of the waters in resurrection.

19) Olympas

This name means celestial and brings out the heavenly character of Christ and His ministry.

VERSE 1

I commend unto you Phebe our sister, which is a servant of the church which is in Cenchrea:

Servant

The word servant literally means pastor, minister, or deacon. Phebe was not silent. She had a very active place as a pastor in the church.

Commend unto you

Commend her means to stand with her. Paul is endorsing her in the Lord.

VERSE 2

That ye receive her in the Lord, as becometh saints, and that ye assist her in whatsoever business she hath need of you: for she hath been a succourer of many, and of myself also.

Support and assist

Any pastor is to be supported and assisted. Phebe was a front rank protector, on the front lines with Paul. She took the heat right along with him. Paul appreciated this woman of faith.

Phebe was from a church in Corinth. Despite that, the Lord grew her up amongst those in this church, proving that nothing is hard for God. She had to have been filled with all the fullness of God, because Paul would never recommend anyone unless they were preaching the fully purposed gospel, the whole counsel of God, and the bridal message.

VERSE 3

Greet Priscilla and Aquila my helpers in Christ Jesus:

These two attended to and preached Paul's gospel. They knew and understood the truth, and were the ones that instructed Apollos more perfectly in the ways of the Lord. After Apollos was instructed, he wouldn't preach anything but God's full counsel.

VERSE 4

Who have for my life laid down their own necks: unto whom not only I gave thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles.

These two stood for the love of the truth, and even laid down their own necks for the gospel. This couple had a reputation of fighting the good fight of faith and preaching the gospel of the Lord Jesus.

VERSE 5

Likewise greet the church that is in their house. Salute my well beloved Epaphroditus, who is the first fruits of Achaia unto Christ.

Church in their house

Priscilla and Aquila had a church in their home, as many of the churches were in homes in that day. This was a little band of fully-purposed saints, and Paul boasted about them. Because of their love of the truth, they had a passion for God's full counsel, and a passion for souls.

Firstfruits

Firstfruits means superior to others of the same class. We are all children of God, but some will be a portion that is ready before the others, ready for the first trump rapture.

VERSE 6

Greet Mary, who bestowed much labor on us.

It is not known which of several Marys this is, but it is known that she was a faithful servant. Acts 12:12 sheds some light on who this Mary might be. After the angel freed Peter from prison, he went to the house of Mary, the mother of John, and the aunt of Barnabas. This Mary also loved Paul's gospel.

VERSE 7

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

Andronicus and Junia were some of the ones in prison with Paul for the gospel. Being of note among the apostles shows they were respected by the apostles although it is not known whether they were apostles or not. In any event, they were making a stand and suffering for Christ's sake.

VERSE 8

Greet Ampilas my beloved in the Lord.

This is the name usually given to slaves at that time.

VERSE 9

Salute Urbane, our helper in Christ, and Stachys my beloved.

Urbane means bottom of the barrel and these are the ones God works with. Stachys means an ear of corn and speaks of fruitfulness.

VERSE 10

Salute Apelles approved in Christ. Salute them of the house of Aristobulus' household.

Apelles means the called, or without receptacle. Aristobulus means best counselor, and it is believed that he was the grandson of Herod. Some of Caesar's household loved the Lord.

VERSE 11

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

Herodion means valiant, an outstanding warrior. Narcissus was the secretary of the emperor Claudius. Even in a house of chaos, the grace of God can come in.

VERSE 12

Salute Tryphena and Tryphosa who labor in the Lord. Salute the beloved Persis, which labored much in the Lord.

Tryphena means luxurious, and Tryphosa means illuminating. There are those who labor, but then there are those who labor much in the Lord. Those who labor much are those who were tireless in the devotion to the truth in love. Persis means one who divides.

VERSE 13

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

Rufus means red, and is noted as 'chosen in the Lord.' He was the son of Simon of Cyrene who carried the cross of Christ. (Matthew 27:32) Simon pictures the bride of Christ entering in unto His suffering.

VERSE 14

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

Asyncritus means incomparable; Phlegon means burning; Hermas means gain; Patrobas means father-like; and Hermes means teacher.

VERSE 15

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

Philologus means lover of the word; Julia means downy; Nereus means water nymph; and Olympus means celestial.

VERSE 16

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

Holy kiss

The holy kiss is encouraged to us five times in scripture, five being the number of grace. We need to take all the grace of God to give and receive holy kisses. This holy kiss was a great symbol of love through biblical times. Even in the Old Testament the love of God was present, and those kisses were common among the lovers of the truth, such as Joseph and his brothers, Jacob and his father, and Moses and Aaron to name a few. And of course, the Shulamite's desire, "Let Him kiss me with the kisses of His mouth, for His kisses are sweeter than wine." (Song of Solomon 1:2) In the New Testament we have examples such as the kiss of the father on the prodigal son, and of Paul and the elder saints of Ephesus when Paul had to leave them.

The holy kiss is a kiss of divine agape love. The word worship means to draw nigh in fervent love to kiss. This is the cherubim worship, the true worshipper that worships God in spirit and in truth. These worshippers are the ones the Father is searching for to be a bride for His Son Jesus. The Holy Spirit takes all the things of Christ and makes them ours when we accept the sweet bridal calling, when we rise up and say, "I will go." Truth in love causes us to grow up in all things. The holy kiss is all about the state of the heart.

Salute

Salute means to draw oneself and this is a double salute. We are always drawn in by the love of Christ.

VERSE 17

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

Mark them

Paul doesn't say fight with them, or go out and try to convince them. God never intended for arguments to break out over the scriptures. We try to point them to, and instruct them in the truth.

Divisions and offences

If there are those who are going to cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine, avoid them. There are those who simply will not accept the rightly divided truth which is the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

VERSE 18

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

Such serve not our Lord

To fight with someone about the gospel edifies no one. If some are not open to the truth, we won't be able to convince them of it. Their own desires are more important to them than being enriched by the gospel of Christ. These deceive others with their wrong doctrine. We should always feed on Paul's gospel, and nothing else. Our spiritual bodies need more than milk to grow. We need strong meat, the full counsel of God.

Good words and fair speeches

Those in opposition to this gospel create division and dissension. These are to be avoided, because they preach what they feel and add to the gospel things that shouldn't be added. This type of preaching can keep people in fear, hate, judgment and guilt. It gets people's focus on natural things instead of faith, which is spiritual. Staying in preaching like that tends to bend people and dry them up spiritually.

Hearts of the simple

The only truth that will ever come out of us is when we are yielding to the Lord. Truth will come out of our lives when we allow ourselves to be the Lord's vessels.

VERSE 19

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

Obedience

Complete surrender to the Lord has come abroad unto all men. These saints were sincere lovers of Paul's gospel, and their notoriety was not because of their works, or giving, or deeds; it was because of their faith and submission to Christ.

Wise unto that which is good

Rome was very evil in Paul's time. Paul didn't tell the saints in Rome to leave that awful place, he told them to be wise concerning what was good. The word wise means to plant and cultivate. He wanted them to get in the Word of God and stay in it. The Word cultivates more good and more faith.

Simple concerning evil

Simple means to not intermingle. Paul is simply telling them not to study into evil, or all the religions of the world. God doesn't want us to give our time to these but rather to studying the truth.

VERSE 20

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

God of peace

The God of peace is the power of the Holy Spirit. The peace that passes all understanding is being built up in our lives and strengthening us to have more confidence. When we cease from our own works and enter into God's rest, we find the peace that passes all understanding.

Bruise Satan

The peace that passes all understanding defeats the enemy every time. In Ephesians chapter 6 we read of the whole armor of God. We must take on that armor and the sword of the Spirit to bruise Satan. We need to keep our eyes on the things above, not on the things of this world. If we live by faith, we will not be moved.

VERSE 21

Timotheus my workfellow, and Lucius, and Jason and Sosipater, my kinsman, salute you.

Timotheus means honoring God. Timothy was Paul's successor. Jesus is the one who magnifies the Father. Everything He did was to the will of the Father. Lucius means bright white light, and this is speaking of the wonderful light of the gospel, and Jesus is the light of the world. Jason means healer, and Jesus is our healer; for it is by His stripes that we are healed. Sosipater means saving Father, this is God. These are the ones who worked with Paul presenting the gospel, and he is giving credit where credit is due.

VERSE 22

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

Tertius means the third. In these five salutes of grace in verses 21 and 22, we find the entire Trinity represented. In these verses and all through scripture, this is a pattern. The three members of the Godhead always work in conjunction with one another. The Trinity is always represented in those parts of scripture concerning the bridal calling. In these salutes, Paul is encouraging us to continue to grow, to remain in his gospel which is Christ Jesus, and to continue to fight the good fight of faith. It's the little foxes that spoil the vine. This is an encouragement that we need to keep our eyes on Jesus and off the distractions.

VERSE 23

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

Gaius has three meanings: reverence for God; devout; and full of prayer.

1) Reverence

This shows the reverence of the wife to the husband.

2) Devout

The bride is a chaste virgin devoted to the Lord.

3) Full of prayer

This shows the true worshipper who worships God in Spirit and in truth.

Erastus means beloved. He was the chamberlain of the city, the finance manager, or treasurer. The meaning of his name brings to mind the love shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit. The chamberlain that prepared Esther for the king gave her all she needed to win the king's heart. The Holy Spirit does the same for us.

Quartus means four or fourth. He is the unknown brother. Four in scripture means complete human weakness. In our complete weakness the grace of God is magnified. Christ in us is the hope of glory. We are vessels only of grace, and when we truly are weak we are strong in Him. In our weakness the power of Christ rests upon us.

Eight lives are mentioned in verses 21-23. This is the second set of eight names in this chapter, a double portion and sufficient witness. Eight being the number of new creation and the bride should indicate to us how important this bride is to the Trinity.

VERSES 24-26

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen. Now to Him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery which was kept secret since the world began. But now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith.

Paul makes it clear that we cannot establish ourselves; we must be established by God. There are four major reasons for this:

1) According to my gospel

We will never be established unless we take in the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ in its fullness, which is Paul's gospel. Jesus introduced Paul's message, but Paul enlarged on it. This doesn't take away from the words of Jesus, but rather confirms them. Established means settled, firm, and grounded. We stand, withstand, and having done all, we stand.

2) Preaching of Jesus Christ

We can never be established without this preaching.

3) According to the revelation of the mystery

Many in the church today do not understand the mystery of Paul's message, the mystery of Christ and His bride was what was revealed to Paul that was kept secret since before the world began, to be revealed in the last days. This mystery surrounds the very existence of the church.

4) By the scriptures of the prophets

We are established by the scriptures in the Old Testament because every one of them points to Christ who is the subject of the entire Bible. This is according to the commandment of the everlasting God, and made known to all nations for the obedience of faith.

VERSE 27

To God only wise, be glory through Jesus Christ forever. Amen.

The beauty of God's wisdom is planned beyond the power of Christ in us, the hope of glory. God is pleased beyond words when He sees the mature sons readying to take flight. All is glory through Jesus Christ forever. Paul makes a point constantly to give all glory to God to magnify and extol the praises of the Lord Jesus Christ for all redemption and for all of our lives. It is all in Him, of Him, and through Him and due Him. It is one sweet circle, which speaks of a wedding band. We are one with Christ!