

ROMANS CHAPTER ONE

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JT Sessions

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

Since Paul had not yet been to Rome he felt it necessary to state that he was an apostle chosen by Jesus himself.

2 (Which he had promised afore by his prophets in the holy scriptures,)

This gospel was not new but had been promised by the prophets. Paul goes on to quote the Old Testament prophets sixty one times in this book.

Paul established churches in many cities. But he was careful not to upset anyone else's work . The church in Rome was not the result of the work of any one particular person so Paul would not be upsetting anyone's work if he visited Rome. Paul had completed his work in the east and had left the churches there in capable hands. Now Paul wanted to visit Rome on his way to Spain and he would need the help of the Romans in order to make that journey. Again notice how the Holy Spirit works things out. Paul wanted to go to Spain so he wrote the letter to the church at Rome. By that act we have the book that gives us much of our Christian doctrine.

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

The gospel is not about Jesus Christ, the gospel is Jesus Christ. Paul ties Jesus to David to show that Jesus has a rightful claim to the throne. This would be fulfillment of the promise that one from the line of David would sit on the throne of David forever.

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

These two verses show what the good news is. Probably, the Christians in Rome would already know these facts. The proof of the virgin birth and the sinless life of the Lord Jesus is the resurrection.

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

Paul regards his apostleship as a gift from God.

6 Among whom are ye also the called of Jesus Christ:

In other words, if you are saved you are called and you have a ministry.

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

Paul directs this letter to all in Rome who are saved and following Jesus.

Notice that in all the Pauline epistles the words grace and peace are never separated but always appear together. Contrary to the claims of the Catholic church Peter is not mentioned anywhere in this letter to the Romans. The gospel of Romans set forth in verses 16 and 17 set the common people free from the tyranny of the Jewish priesthood.

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

The church at Rome had an excellent reputation throughout the Christian world.

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

I serve God with all my heart as I preach the good news. God knows that I always mention you in my prayers.

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.

I always pray that, somehow, God will give me the opportunity to visit you. I will be glad to come to you, if God allows it.

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

None of the apostles had visited the church at Rome so Paul's visit would

give the church the apostolic stamp of approval.

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

That is, we shall encourage each other. Your faith will make me strong. And my faith will make you strong.

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.

The phrase “I would not have you ignorant “ occurs seven times in scripture. All in the New Testament, six times by Paul and once by Peter. God does not want us ignorant of the scriptures. Satan uses ignorance of the scriptures to hinder witnessing.

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

Paul's concept of the Christian life is that we are all in debt and have been placed there by the sacrifice that the Lord Jesus made. In other words we now owe complete service to Jesus for the rest of our lives. I have heard it put this way; “sold out for Jesus”.

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

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

Paul's words about the gospel were bold and clear. Whatever other people said, Paul would preach the gospel, God's message to mankind. The gospel changes people's lives. It causes people who were God's enemies to become believers. There are other important messages that we teach but the gospel is the most important message.

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

Who are these “just”. That is those of us who are saved and justified by the blood of Jesus. Our instruction is to live by faith. Faith that God will provide for us, care for us and eventually take us home to be with him.

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

19 Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them.

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:

God shows his anger from heaven. He opposes all the unholy and wicked things that people do. They are so wicked that they even oppose the truth. The truth about God is plain to them. God has made it plain to them. We cannot see God but we can see the things that he has made. So we know clearly about his eternal power. And we know clearly that he is God. So people have no excuse for their unbelief.

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.

22 Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools,

23 And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things.

They knew God. But they did not thank Him nor give him the honor that He deserves. Their thoughts became nonsense. Their foolish minds became wicked. They claimed to be wise but became fools. They preferred idols instead of the real God so they made idols in the shape of people, birds, animals and snakes. .

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

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

So God let them carry out their sinful desires. This is a classic case of God giving them over to a reprobate mind. Giving over to a reprobate mind comes up again when we discuss sexual sins in the next few verses. In other words they will no longer be drawn by the Holy Spirit Because of their evil

attitudes, they have reserved a place in Hell. They chose to worship something that God created instead of worshiping God himself.

These next few verses deal with homosexuality and then Paul moves into other wicked sins. I have to admit that I can not tell where, or even if, he intends there to be a division between the sexual sins and the others.

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:

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 recompence of their error which was meet.

We have a period at the end of that verse but the thought seems to continue.

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;

There is a semi colon here so the thought continues to the end of the chapter.

29 Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers,

30 Backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents,

31 Without understanding, covenantbreakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful:

Can there possibly be anything more unnatural than the current rash of people killing their own children? You know I am thinking of that current court case where a man fed his children anti freeze, and he is still alive. How about that pervert who threw his four children off the bridge in Mobile, and he is still alive. The newspapers have new cases every day.

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.

These people just listed know the judgment of God but do these sins anyway.

Pay particular attention to the last part of the verse. To put it another way, we are not to associate at all with people committing the sins listed above.

ROMANS CHAPTER TWO

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

This verse is directed to unsaved people and yes, Romans was written to both saved and unsaved. We know from other scriptures that we are to judge some things. Unsaved people are the biggest judges in the world. When you tell them they are going to Hell they throw Matthew 7:1 back at you. When you tell someone they are going to Hell you are not judging, God has already done that. A Christian has a responsibility to judge the actions of others according to the scriptures.

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

God's judgment is true since he knows everything. The end of the unsaved is complete condemnation.

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?

God's judgment is always fair. We are warned ahead of time. All of God's dealings with an unsaved person are to get him to repent and be saved.

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

When things happen, good or bad, to an unsaved person it is because God does not want him to end up in the Lake of Fire.

Verses five through eleven describe the situation the Gentiles lived under in Old Testament times.

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;

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

There is a colon at the end of verse six so the thought goes on. Verse six is the key to this passage.

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

Pride and a sin filled life cause God to store up his wrath until the day of judgment. If this were not so then God could not deal fairly with the saved man.

8 But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath,

9 Tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile;

Just as the gospel was promised to the Jew first and then to the Gentile so these fruits of unrighteousness are counted against the Jew first then to the Gentile.

10 But glory, honour, and peace, to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile:

Never forget the the Jews are God's chosen people. They are out of the will of God now but will return during the Tribulation .

11 For there is no respect of persons with God.

God deals in both condemnation and salvation without favoritism. Remember that one of the first people saved under grace was a black slave. You could not get lower on the social pecking order than that. If you don't recognize that man it was the Ethiopian eunuch saved in Acts ch 8:27 -38 I will read verse 37 because I want you to know that this important salvation verse is left out of the new "bibles". **And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.** There the eunuch had just asked to be baptised.

There is salvation in one single line; believe with all your heart.

12 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;

13 (For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified.

Hearing the law was not enough for the Jews under the law. They had to act on it and obey the law. The Gentiles did not have the law but they did have a conscience and a few who managed to live a righteous life were blessed by God. All these things will be taken into account at the judgement.

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:

15 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;)

God will always find a way to get a person saved if the person's heart is right.

Read the tract stories from Dr. Ruckman's book on Romans

16 In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel.

And so, on the day of judgment, God will judge everyone's secret life. God's judgment will happen by Jesus.

17 Behold, thou art called a Jew, and retest in the law, and makest thy boast of God,

You call yourself a Jew. You trust in the law and boast about your relationship with God. Paul is being sarcastic here.

18 And knowest his will, and approvest the things that are more excellent, being instructed out of the law;

19 And art confident that thou thyself art a guide of the blind, a light of them which are in darkness,

20 An instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes, which hast the form of knowledge and of the truth in the law.

The new Gentile converts had a real hunger for the word of God. Since the Jewish Christians had a long history and a lot of knowledge of God they felt they were able to teach the Gentiles. Their teaching was often incorrect and contained a lot of the Jewish law.

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

Paul is simply saying that the “teachers” needed to learn the truth about salvation by grace through faith before they presumed to teach others. This was a case of the blind leading the blind.

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

23 Thou that makest thy boast of the law, through breaking the law dishonourest thou God?

Paul is emphasizing their wrong attitudes, not their outer physical acts. These teachers may not have been actually guilty of the wrong deeds that Paul mentions.

24 For the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you, as it is written.

This was directed to the Jews in the congregation but it applies to us as well.

Any time a Christian commits public sin it gives the unbeliever just that much more reason to doubt. A Christian sinning publicly can even cause a person to die and go to Hell through his actions. This is not to say that public sin is worse than private sin but the consequences to others can be much worse.

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

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

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

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

A person is not a real Jew if he is only a Jew on the outside. Real circumcision is no longer a physical act. Real circumcision is by the Holy Spirit and is the cutting away of the spirit and soul from the unsaved body.

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.

If a Jew lives like the devil he is no better than an unsaved Gentile and conversely, if a Gentile lives a righteous life then he is better than the unsaved Jew.

ROMANS CHAPTER THREE

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

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

We have been stressing that both Jew and Gentile are now the same in the sight of God. Now there are only lost and saved. The Jews were, and are, God's chosen people and will be brought back to world leadership after the Tribulation. The question had apparently been asked; "why was circumcision necessary if the only circumcision that counts is the circumcision of the heart by the Holy Spirit. In other words is there any advantage to being a Jew? Paul says yes, because the scriptures were given to the Jews. In the old Testament it was the Jews who preserved the word of God. In the New Testament it is the Church who preserve the word and there are precious few of us left who care to see it carefully preserved. This might be a good place to put my stand on the 1611 King James version. God promised to preserve his word so I believe it is perfectly preserved. I further believe that the KJV translators were guided by the Holy Spirit as they made the translation.

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

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.

Paul asks a question in verse three and gives the answer in verse four. When God's book says one thing and someone else says another you always take God's word. Do notice that this caution is without exception.

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

Our wicked deeds prove more clearly that God is righteous. Since God is sovereign he is not unfair when he is angry with us.

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

Another way to say this is; if God was not fair, he could not judge the world.

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?

The Jews are still after Paul so he turns their own logic against them. According to verse five then, if Paul is lying about salvation by grace then his lie would cause God's righteousness to be more clearly seen. Now the Jews cannot admit that Paul's teachings are true and if false then they cause grace to abound.

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.

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;

The Jews enjoy certain privileges as the chosen people but this will not excuse them at the judgment. We certainly cannot argue that Jews are any better since we have already said that everybody is under the power of sin.

10 As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one:

Think about it this way. Of the seven billion people alive right now there is not one righteous person in all of that number.

11 There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God.

Of all the religions in the world none are seeking after the God of truth. Even in our own denomination everyone seems to be intent on making God in their image and not trying to conform themselves to God's image. God will understand seems to be the way most Christians think. Let me assure you; God will not "understand".

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

This verse is a negative indictment of the human race and that continues

through the next few verses. It sometimes makes me wonder why God bothers with us.

Beginning in verse thirteen Paul describes how the body parts are affected.

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

Dead things go in sepulchres. We discussed the poison of the tongue when we studied the Book of James. A reputation, a career or even a life can be ruined by the power of the tongue. It does not even have to be a lying tongue since there are times even the truth can destroy.

14 Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness:

James said “**Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing. My brethren these things ought not so to be.**” So, you think you don't curse now that you are saved? It does no good to substitute “clean” cuss words for “dirty” ones. Darn for damn, heck for hell and that old southern expression, dad gum it. You all know what that last one is a substitute for.

Think about these sayings the way God would.

15 Their feet are swift to shed blood:

The feet are no good since they are swift to shed blood. Mankind as a whole loves a good war. In Proverbs 6:18 there is a list of six things that God hates and one of them is “**feet that be swift in running to mischief**”.

16 Destruction and misery are in their ways:

17 And the way of peace have they not known:

The peace spoken of here is the peace in a person's soul who follows God. We will see more about this peace when we get to chapter five.

18 There is no fear of God before their eyes.

This is the worst condemnation in the whole passage. When a person or a country forsakes the fear of the Lord they will eventually lose all wisdom and in the case of the country destruction is sure to follow.

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.

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.

Verses 19 and 20 give the purpose of the Old Testament Law. The purpose was that man was to have no excuse. He had a list of rules to go by which no one could keep. Paul did slip in justification in verse 20.

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

Now, God has provided a way for people to be righteous. This way does not depend on the law. Both the law and the prophets, show that this is true.

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:

God gives his righteousness to everyone who trusts in Jesus Christ. It is his gift to everyone who believes. He says again that there is no difference between Jews and Gentiles.

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

This is a verse everyone should have memorized as it is a good verse to use when witnessing. The glory of God now rests in Jesus Christ so what the bible is saying here is that no one measures up to Jesus. The standard of holiness today is not the Old Testament law but the person of our Lord Jesus Christ.

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

We are justified without any prior conditions. In other words it is come as you are. How many times have you heard someone say "I need to stop doing whatever before I accept Jesus as my savior. That's not the way it works. Accept Jesus as your savior and let the Holy Spirit clean up the mess in his own good time.

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;

There's that word propitiation that Bro Danley has such a hard time with.

It's pronounced pro-pish-she-ation and means simply, a substitute. Notice that

these things are for sins that are past. We still need to remember to confess our sins daily when we pray.

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

In verse 26 Christ is both the just and the justifier.

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

There is no room for boasting in our own self righteousness. Brag about Jesus.

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

This is God's work around. It is his way to declare us righteous when we are not. This is the last word on salvation. We are justified by faith and remember that it is His faith that justifies us. Our faith gets us saved and his faith justifies.

29 Is he the God of the Jews only? is he not also of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also:

This now goes without saying. Paul has stressed over and over that Jew and Gentile are the same in New Testament salvation.

30 Seeing it is one God, which shall justify the circumcision by faith, and uncircumcision through faith.

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

Jesus established the law by keeping it perfectly. We ride in on his coattails so to speak. He purchased us and we belong to Him. That is one reason we can't lose it.

ROMANS CHAPTER FOUR

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

2 For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory; but

not before God.

Now we have a problem. The implication is that he was not justified by works. James says he was. Paul says that if he gloried he was glorying in his own works and not in God's grace. James 2:21 says **“Was not Abraham our father justified by works.”** Paul says he was not. Now notice that they are talking about different times. James 2:21 continues **“when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar”**. James is dealing with Genesis 22. Now come back to verse chapter four and skip ahead to verse 11. This gives the time frame Paul is discussing and that is Genesis 15:6. **And he believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness.**

Now with all that said, Abraham's salvation is not our salvation. When you and I were saved we received Jesus by grace through faith. In other words we believed. That same applies to Abraham but there is where the difference begins. We are indwelt by the Holy Spirit, Abraham was not. We go to heaven when we die, Abraham went to Paradise, Abraham was circumcised, we are spiritually circumcised, we are a part of the Body of Christ and Abraham was not. We are saved in an instant when we truly believe. If you want to spend some interesting time, try to find when Abraham was saved, (he was), and prove it with scripture.

Abraham's faith was perfected by his works. Our works have nothing to do with perfecting our faith since it is the object of our faith that is perfect.

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

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

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

When a person works, he does not receive his pay as a gift. He receives it because he has earned it. It is different when a person receives righteousness because of his faith. That person does not work in order to achieve that result. Instead, he simply believes God and God makes someone who was not righteous, to be righteous. By the way, this is not just words on paper but when we are saved we are not just said to be righteous, we are actually made righteous in the sight of God.

Buy now it should be obvious that we are not working to get to heaven. If we

could work for it we would have God in our debt and there is one way and one way only to get God in your debt and even then he won't stay indebted for very long. If you want to know look up Proverbs 19:17 **He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto the LORD; and that which he hath given will he pay him again.** Keep in mind that God always pays back with heavy interest.

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

This is the doctrine of imputation. In other words, this is God giving you his righteousness when you have no righteousness of your own.

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

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

This is what God does for babies.

Here in verses 7 and 8 Paul is quoting from 32:1-2. David is a prime example of God imputing righteousness to an individual who deserves none. David had committed two sins for which there was no sacrifice in the Old Testament. Those were adultery and murder. Remember that David had Uriah the Hittite killed so that he could hide the sin of adultery and have Bathsheba as his wife. This is also a good example of God's chastisement. David and Bathsheba lost their child. We also see from this example that babies are safe and go to Heaven. We know that by David's statement that the child could not return to him but he could go to the child one day. See how these things all tie together. If David had been charged with his sin he would have been put to death.

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.

This happiness, blessedness, peace etc. is not only for the Jews. Now it is also for the Gentiles. We have said that God accepted Abraham's faith, and that is how God made Abraham righteous.

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

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 imputed unto them also:

Paul said all of that to stress the point that Abraham had righteousness imputed to him before he was circumcised as well as before the Law came into effect. Now righteousness will be imputed to everyone who believes.

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

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.

True descendants of Abraham are those who trust God in the same way as Abraham. Whether they are circumcised or not makes no difference. ‘ Abraham is the father of Gentiles who believe. He is also the father of Jews who believe. Circumcision separated Jews from other people but faith unites Jews and Gentiles who trust in Jesus Christ. Abraham did not receive the promise because he obeyed the law. Instead, he received it because he was righteous. And he became righteous because of his faith in God. If God’s promise depended on the law, faith would have no value.

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

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

The law can only bring wrath. If there were no law, there could be no sin against the law.

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

Now there are three branches of humanity. The Jew, the Gentile and the Church. The Jews get the Earth, the Church gets the New Jerusalem.

Remember that the promise was to Abraham and his seed. The seed spoken

of is Jesus Christ so the descendants of Abraham eventually wind up with the entire Earth.

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

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.

There is an oxymoron. When the promise was given Abraham and Sarah were beyond hope of having a child. Nevertheless they had “hope” in God's promise.

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

Abraham and Sarah believed God in spite of the circumstances. Remember that Abraham was one hundred and Sarah was ninety.

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

But he always believed in God's promise. In fact, his faith became stronger. He gave God the glory.

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

This was not just wishful thinking on Abraham's part. He absolutely believed that God was able to keep his promise. He was sure about God's power.

22 And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness.

Now we have the doctrine of imputation mentioned again. The Holy Spirit means for you to get that.

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

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

The words ‘considered to be righteous’ are not only for Abraham's benefit.

They are also for us. We believe in the God who raised the Lord Jesus Christ from the dead so God considers us righteous too.

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

The priests and Judas handed over Jesus to Pilate but actually God the Father delivered Jesus to the cross of Calvary.. The Romans thought that they had control over these events when they killed Jesus. But in fact, these events were part of God's plan. Jesus' death was a sacrifice to cancel the effect of human sin. God accepted his sacrifice and raised him from death. So if we believe in the death and resurrection of Jesus, God considers us at peace with himself. He considers us as righteous.

ROMANS CHAPTER FIVE

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

Here it is again. The Holy Spirit means for us to get this. We are saved, justified and sanctified by faith. We are righteous because of our faith. So we are friends with God because of our Lord Jesus Christ.

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

By Jesus, we receive God's grace. And we remain in this grace regardless of our future conduct. We all know very well that this does not give us license to sin. This is access to the throne of God through prayer

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

This one is hard to do. I do not think many of us today glory in tribulation. Nevertheless that is what the holy Spirit says to do. We should be joyful when we suffer.

4 And patience, experience; and experience, hope:

These things come along with patience and we get them through trouble in our lives.

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.

And hope will never disappoint us. God has filled our hearts with his love by means of the Holy Spirit whom he has given to us. If you feel that you do not have as much love for God as you should then ask in prayer for more. God will give it.

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

Christ died on behalf of really bad people, in other words he died for us. He died for us when we had no power of our own. If you are ungodly Christ died for you. The flip side would be, if you are not ungodly then Christ did not die for you. This is a good verse to show those who claim they do not sin.

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

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

It would be very unusual for someone to die for a good person. God has shown his love for us because Christ died for us while we were yet sinners. This verse does not say that God loves everybody. This verse is part of the "Roman Road" to salvation. Memorize it.

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

The unsaved person is born into the world as a child of God's wrath. Until we are saved we live under the wrath of God. This applies to Hell and the Lake of fire but it also applies to the second coming and to the Great White Throne Judgment. A lost person may have either good or bad in this life but after death it is all horrible.

The blood of Jesus has made us righteous, so we can be sure that Jesus will keep us from God's wrath.

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.

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 were God's enemies but the death of his son has brought us back to

God. God has brought us back to himself by means of Jesus. Notice also in verse 10 that it says “were reconciled”. That is past tense. It has already happened when we were saved.

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 12 is another of those verses used in “Roman Road “ witnessing so it should be memorized. With these next verses we are comparing Adam with Christ.

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

This is a strange verse to me. It says, in plain English, that God did not impute sin to people before the Law was given. I need to spend some more time on this one. It is plain that mankind in general knew the difference between right and wrong before the Law, and that God did punish individual sin. For a case in point check out Abimelec in Genesis 21. He certainly knew that adultery was wrong. Cain knew murder was wrong etc.

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.

Even though sin was not imputed, people still died as a result of Adam's sin.

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.

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.

God's gift is different from Adam's sin. Millions people died, and millions continue to die, because of the sin of one man. In contrast, God's free gift through the sacrifice of Jesus is very different. In that case, millions have been made righteous in the sight of God due to the blood atonement. Judgment followed that first sin and the result was punishment.

17 For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall

reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.)

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.

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

Verses 17 and 18 say the same thing as we had in verse 16. This is still the comparison of Adam and the Lord Jesus Christ. Looking a little deeper here we might also say that a great many people can be affected by the actions of one Christian. If you lead someone to the Lord who, other than God, knows where that will lead? How many lives have been changed, and how many are in heaven because of a man named Hugh Pyle? Now, most of you won't know who Hugh Pyle was. He was the man who led Dr. Ruckman to the Lord and as a result of that Literally hundreds of people are in the ministry, all over the world, trained by Bro. Ruckman and his people. For instance, there is an ongoing correspondence ministry that it takes five secretaries to keep up with.

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

The effect of the law was that sin increased, but where sin increased, God's grace increased even more.

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

Sin had authority, and the result was death, but now grace has authority. The grace of God makes people righteous, and the grace of God brings salvation because of what Jesus Christ our Lord has done.

ROMANS CHAPTER SIX

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

This goes back to the last chapter where Paul said that where sin abounds grace much more abounds. There are scriptural idiots today that actually believe that they should sin more so there would be more grace.

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

Our lives changed completely when we became Christians. It was as if our relationship with sin died, so we must not now live as sinners. The Bible says over and over that we are to live holy lives. That is a hard thing to do and few of us make it. Yet, we have no excuse for not doing so..

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

This is not water baptism. Get this since it is the basis of some heresies. This is the baptism of the Holy Spirit received when we are saved. Water never put anyone “into” Christ. You can not find any water in the book of Romans with the exception of the following 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.

The old nature is dead and buried. At this point in the chapter Paul begins to give us the secret of living a holy, new life, one characterized by being dead to sin. The secret is in three words. Know found in verse 3, reckon found in verse 11 and yield found in verse 13. Lock these in your memory. We tell the world by submitting to water baptism. At water baptism you testify to others about what you have already done.

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

By means of our “baptism” we have been united with Christ in his death. So we shall certainly be united with him in his resurrection. Again this is the baptism of the spirit.

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.

7 For he that is dead is freed from sin.

Death wipes the slate clean. The death of Jesus Christ completely removes the guilt and penalty of our sin. You must know that your old man is dead.

Once you are saved the old man is dead and a dead person cannot sin. This is why Christians will sometimes say “I do not sin since I was saved”. If you do this make very sure you explain yourself. Don't leave a lost person or a new

convert believing you can live a sinless life in this body. You do not sin spiritually once you are saved. 1st John 3:9 says **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.**

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

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

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

It is as if we died with Christ. So we believe also that we shall take part in his new life. We know this fact because Christ rose from death and cannot die again. Death now has no power over him. Because he died, sin has no power over him. Spiritually speaking we died with him at Calvary so now sin no longer has power over us.

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

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

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.

The final step to victory over sin is found in this verse. Yield yourselves unto God. Do not use your body as a tool to do evil. You are people whom God has brought from death to life. Offer your body to him and he will use it as a tool to do right.

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

Verse 14 restates verse 12. Do not let sin “reign” in your life. There is an old saying; “you can't stop the birds from flying over your head but you can stop them from building a nest in your hair”. This is the same thing we have said before. You can not stop your mind from going where it should not but you can keep it from staying there.

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

We certainly shall not sin just because the law no longer rules us. We certainly shall not sin because we know we are forgiven. We owe a life of clean living to our savior.

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?

Verse sixteen states an obvious truth. If you yield to sin you are a servant of sin. On the flip side, Jesus says “if you love me keep my commandments”.

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.

18 Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness.

Paul is saying a good thing about these Roman Christians. They obeyed from conscience even before they were given the gospel of grace. Verse 18 is the doctrine of the new man. Now watch verse nineteen for a follow up.

19 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.

Verse nineteen is a practical ,day to day, acting out of that doctrine. We are in the Christian's doctrinal book so expect to find doctrines all through the book. Remember that we had the doctrine of imputation in the last chapter.

20 For when ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness.

That's deep. Let's read it again. Before we were saved we belonged to, and served Satan. We had no righteousness and did not serve righteousness. Therefore we were free from righteousness. We were in bondage to sin.

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

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

You did things then that now cause you to be ashamed. You did not receive any benefit from them. The result of these things is death. Christ has freed you from sin, and you are now God's servants. The result of this is that you have eternal life with Christ. I always like to stress eternal life with Christ because everyone has eternal life but not everyone spends it with Christ.

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

This is another of those “salvation” verses and should be memorized. Though this is an excellent verse for witnessing it is really doctrinally aimed at the Christian. The verse is really talking about the result of Christian service.

ROMANS CHAPTER SEVEN

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?

In other words, Christian brothers and sisters, you are people who know the law. You should know that the law has authority over a person but it has authority only while he lives.

Now, these next verses are using marriage/divorce as a way to teach the difference between law and grace but they also have an application to those of us who have been divorced or have lost a spouse through death.

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.

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

Verse three is very interesting. Notice that no divorce, except the divorce by death, has taken place. This is speaking of a woman, who is married to more than one husband at a time. There are three reasons for divorce in the New Testament. They are death, desertion and fornication. Biblically speaking we should stay single if divorced except in the case of death. No one does that

any more so now it becomes a sin that is to be confessed and forgiven. Keep in mind also that it is sin singular. A divorced person does not “continue” in sin if it is forgiven. Note that the verse mentions the woman but the same applies to the man.

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.

When Christ died, you also died in relation to the law. This happened so that you may belong to Christ instead. God raised him from death and now our lives can be useful to God.

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.

Our human nature used to control us. The law showed us our sinful desires. The result of our actions was death. Now you are either “in the flesh”(lost) or “in the Spirit”(saved)

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

The law used to control us but now we are free. It is as if we died in relation to the law. So we can serve God in the new way of the Holy Spirit.

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

We certainly cannot say that the law is sin. But we would not have known about sin except the law told me. For example, without the law I would not know that it is wrong to desire someone else's possessions. But the law said, “thou shalt not covet”.

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

Sin had no existence apart from God's law. The law reveals sin. A seventy mph speed limit sign is not a sin but it shows you what is;seventy one.

Now,backing up for a bit of clarification,verses 1-6 do not mean that the law is sinful. Rather,the law showed us what sin is.

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

At that time, I was living without knowledge of the law. But then I discovered the law and sin began to control my life. When I was saved my own life ended. Paul is using the example of growing out of childhood here. We were born with a sin nature but were innocent. Then we became old enough to understand the law and we were accountable.

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

The commandment ought to bring life. Instead, I discovered that it brought death. The Law does not save but instead brings death since no one can keep it.

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

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

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.

These last few verses are speaking of our sin nature and what God allows. Think about Eve in the garden. She actually committed several sins before she ate the fruit. She resented what God said, she changed what God said. She listened to false accusations against God and she coveted etc. God imputed none of these things to her until she did what she was commanded not to do.

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

The problem is us because of this body of flesh we live in.

These next several verses show the difference in our two natures better than anywhere else. This is the greatest missionary/evangelist who ever lived speaking of his own sin nature and notice that these are in the present tense. They were going on in Paul's life when he wrote this.

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

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

Paul is saying, I do not understand what I do. I do not do what I want to do. Instead, I do what I hate. I am doing things that I do not want to do. So I have to agree that the law is good.

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

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.

Paul makes a distinction here between “in me” and “in my flesh”. He could not just say ,in me dwelleth no good thing because Christ lived in him.

19 For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do.

I love these verses since they show that even someone as close to God as Paul was still had to fight against sin every day of his life.

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

Verses 15 through 20 are the state of every believer between his salvation and the Rapture or death. This is all of us.

21 I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me.

22 For I delight in the law of God after the inward man:

In other words, thank God for my salvation since I am not able to live a sinless life on my own. The New Man loves the things of God. Remember that one and think about it for a while.

23 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.

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

That is the Christian yesterday, today and tomorrow. The only thing that can deliver us is death or the Rapture. As long as we are in this body we are torn between two opposing forces.

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.

ROMANS CHAPTER EIGHT

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

Both guilt and penalty for sin have been removed at the cross. This is one of the greatest chapters in the Bible. This chapter is one of the very best to use to prove the security of the believer. There are many people claiming to be Christians who have trouble believing this verse. They say there is no such thing as this kind of security. Those who can't accept it make God a liar. What part of "no condemnation" is hard to understand.

Because we've been justified by faith, because Christ has died and been buried and has risen from the dead. All of this has been accomplished by an act of God to which we contributed nothing. There was nothing in all of that, that we could do in the flesh. It was all the work of God. That being the case, that we're justified by faith, it's something that you don't work for. So since we're justified by faith, God can come back through this Apostle and say: "**There is therefore now no condemnation**".

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

What does it mean to be "in Christ?" That's an easy phrase to speak, but what does it really mean to be in Christ? Let's go back to the Book of Ephesians Chapter 5 for an explanation. Because this is higher ground this is deeper water, but now in Ephesians Chapter 5 he comes down to verse 25.

Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it.

This is a verse that should speak to every married couple, and that is the responsibility of the man in that marriage relationship but this is also a perfect picture of our relationship to Christ. When we accept Him we are placed "in Him" and we become one with Him. .

Now, in a marriage relationship that is made in Heaven, (some are and some are not), that husband and wife were two people, but they become one. Many wedding ceremonies point that out by blowing out the two candles and

lighting one.

Since we are one with Christ we are spiritually free from 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:

It is true that lost people are headed to a Devil's hell but that is not the Gospel. Hell-fire and brimstone preaching is not the Gospel, and nether is telling folks to come forward and take Jesus into their life. The Gospel is believing for your Salvation that Christ died for you, was buried for you and rose from the dead for you. when you believe the Gospel, who are you taking into your life? Jesus Christ! He becomes your personal Savior.

Notice in verse three that you have three laws at work.”**the law of the Spirit of life**” That is he Holy Spirit.”**The law of sin and death**”,that is the old nature of flesh and then the Law of God..

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

Christ gives you the righteous life He lived. Notice that the righteousness is “**the righteousness of law**”.That is the righteousness of keeping the Law but it is not kept by you. It is fulfilled in you.

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.

Compare verse five with John 3:6.**That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.**

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

Live like the world and you can hasten your own physical death. A carnal Christian, is one who is not Spirit-directed. He's a believer, he's in the Body of Christ, but his priorities are mixed up, and he's still more in the flesh than he is in the Spirit. Paul refers to that kind of person as a carnal believer.I would also add that this is a useless Christian.

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

This verse gives one of the greatest hindrances to the Christian. That is the carnal mind just discussed in the last verse. But that said, this verse and the next are speaking of the lost. As a saved person you have the Holy Spirit living in you. I have never believed that a saved person could have both the Holy Spirit and an unclean spirit living in him at the same time. You can have demonic influence in your life from outside your body.

8 So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.

Keep in mind that we can live like Hell and still be saved and with the Holy Spirit dwelling in us. Think of that saved person told of in Corinthians who was sleeping with his Father's wife. I do hope that was his step mother.

As we are told in the next verse, we are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit.

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

Why does Paul get into all this about how we died with Christ, and how we've been raised from the dead with Him. Do we have to know all these things for salvation? No. You don't expect a new Christian to know about these things. They don't have to know all about the deep doctrinal things to be saved. Once we've become a child of God, what does God expect? That we learn, and that we grow, and we get an understanding of all that God has done on our behalf.

This is what's the problem with most of Christianity. They have the elementary things, but they've never gone into the deeper things. I call this "stuck in the four gospels." They have no understanding of these doctrines that the Holy Spirit has now given us through Paul.

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

I lean on the writings of Paul and I make no apology for it. It's from Paul's writings that we get most of our basic doctrine. All of Christendom that doesn't stick to the Book can't stand Paul because his writings go contrary to everything they teach. This whole idea of Christ indwelling Gentile believers is a Pauline doctrine. In fact let's look at another one that speaks of Christ being in you. Go to Colossians 1:27 **To whom God would make known what [is] the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles;**

which is Christ in you, the hope of glory: This is the mystery that we are indwelt by the Holy Spirit. You do not find this in the Old Testament nor in the gospels.

11 But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.

"But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead (The Trinity is implied here. We have all three mentioned.. God the Father used the power of the Holy Spirit to raise the Son). See how clear that is? So if He dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you."

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

You don't owe the flesh anything. The only debt we owe is to the Holy Spirit. He gives you life now and will bring your body back later.

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

This is related to such passages as Galatians 6:8 which says **For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.** You find Paul repeating over and over.

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

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.

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

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.

In verses 14-17 Paul speaks about the difference between a slave and a son. He describes adoption as it existed when he wrote. A person might choose to adopt a child who would continue their name and inherit their goods. The adoption ceremony had to happen in front of witnesses.(We make our salvation public) The child began a completely new life. He had the same

rights as children by birth. A joint-heir implies equality. So as we come in by being born in the family of God, placed as an equal full-grown son and placed in that position by adoption, we become joint-heirs, with Jesus Christ. These next verses 18-25 are our hope of glory.

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.

When Paul says the sufferings of this time, he knew what it was to suffer. He tells us in II Corinthians some of what he had to suffer. II Corinthians 11:24-27 **"Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice (three times) was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice (three times) I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep (sea); In journeying often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness."**

He suffered all of those things for the sake of the Gospel. We here in America know very little of suffering. Even with all the sufferings that this man went through, he said it's nothing compared with what's waiting for us, the glory that's going to be revealed. And remember, Paul had been there.

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

Everything in nature, the mountains, the rivers, the rocks, the birds, the animals, almost everything is waiting for the day when Christians will be Raptured out of here. We are suddenly going to be translated from this life to the eternal with our new bodies to be with The Lord forever. It is going to happen, and we feel it will be soon. Back up there I said "almost" everything is waiting for his return. What is not waiting? The lost world. They have no clue.

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

Now, what's Paul talking about here? The moment Adam sinned, the curse was placed on the whole Earth. That curse is still in effect today. Everything came under the effect of the curse. Just as soon as that happened, God made

a promise in Chapter 3 of Genesis and that promise was to send a redeemer..

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

The promise of the Deliverer was made not only to mankind but to all of creation.

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

This is not the old nature of man but the whole planet. When is the “now” spoken of here. It has two meanings. First it means until the time Paul is writing. Second, by extension it means until the Rapture.

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.

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?

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

Since the Rapture has not taken place yet we wait for it in hope. Our hope here is the hope regarding redemption of our body.

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 for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.

Let God do it. God can strengthen us in our places of infirmity: There will come times in our lives when we just don't know how to pray. Times of sorrow or times of extreme need. We have an idea of what we want, but we can't put it into words. When you get to that point, just be quiet, and let the Holy Spirit commune for you. This is not a tongues experience but is a quiet thing between God the Father and the Holy Spirit.

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.

The one who searcheth the hearts is Jesus and he knows the mind of the Holy

Spirit. What you really have when you reach that point of desperation that you can't even put into words is action on your behalf by both the Son and the Holy Spirit.

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.

This is one of the greatest promises in the Bible. Notice that it is unconditional. There are other great promises but most are conditional. Look at 2 Cor 9:7-8 for a conditional promise. This promise is conditioned on your giving. **Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, [so let**

him give;] not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver. {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: So, let's not go around quoting 9:8 for God's blessing without quoting verse 7 that goes with it.

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.

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.

This is a great pair of verses. They are great for Calvinists' who try to use them to prove that we really have no say in our salvation. They teach that God has chosen you already for either Heaven or Hell. Do I even need to say that that is a devil's lie and a serious heresy.

It's a great verse for us Christians since it shows us we are predestinated to be adopted and to be conformed to the image of his Son. Always be careful not to add words that aren't there. Heaven and Hell are not mentioned in those two verses.

Check out Ephesians 1:4-5

"According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world (that is, before anything was created God had us all marked. Now, watch verse 5:

Ephesians 1:5

"Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will,"

No Heaven or Hell anywhere in any of these verses.

Paul teaches that the moment we become a believer we are immediately placed as an heir with the Father and Son. We were predestined, not to heaven or hell, but we're predestined as a believer to this position right there with Christ from day one as a joint heir in the process of the adoption.

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

This does not mean that nothing can happen to us if we are a believer. All we have to do is look around to see that plenty of bad things happen to all of us. I believe Paul was greatest servant that God ever had even more than Moses. Think of all Paul went through and yet he says , **If God be for us, who can be against us?**

Rest assured that regardless of what anyone or any powers may do to the flesh, they can never touch that invisible eternal part of us, because that is in God's hand.

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?

God did not lose control. This was all determined before anything was created, that Christ would go to that Cross. Everything rests on that cross and His death,burial and resurrection.

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

The obvious answer to that question is no one and the reason is that God did the justifying.

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.

Everything revolves around that finished work of the Cross? The fact that Christ died, His divine blood had to be shed, because always remember:

Hebrews 9:22 "**...and without shedding of blood is no remission of sin**

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

This is another good eternal security verse. God has guaranteed that because of the work of the Cross we are secure. Not because of what we have done, not because of what we deserve but only because of what He has done, and let's never lose sight of that. We do not obtain our assurance of salvation and security because of who we are or what we are, or what we have done. What keeps us secure is the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ. Memorize this verse you will never be troubled again about losing your salvation.

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

This is a quote from Psalm 44:22 and there it is a Tribulation verse looking forward to the Tribulation and picturing the Jews being killed like sheep. Paul uses that verse on the New Testament Christian and indeed, Christians are being killed like sheep right now all over the world.

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

Nay means it doesn't matter if we are tortured or killed. We are now conquerors through the blood of Jesus and the next two verses tell us why. These are probably the two greatest verses on eternal security. I suggest you memorize them.

38 For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come,

39 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.

To be persuaded means to be totally convinced. Do notice that when it says "any other creature" that includes you.

ROMANS CHAPTER 9

Chapter 12 could easily follow chapter 8 . So chapters 9-11 may seem like an interruption but these are known as parenthetical chapters. Paul had explained the gospel in chapters 1-8. Now he discusses why his own people,

the Jews, did not accept the salvation of the gospel. There were now many Gentile Christians in Rome and these two groups may have had the wrong idea about each groups importance to God. Paul needed to write about this.

God's blessings for the Jews are given in verses 1-5

1 I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost,

Paul says, the Holy Spirit guides my conscience and the Spirit agrees that I am telling the truth.

2 That I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart.

3 For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh:

This is serious. Paul has great sadness that most of his people are rejecting the gospel. He says he would be willing to suffer the punishment of Hell if the Jews would accept Christ.

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;

Paul now gives us eight distinctive statements. Remember that 'seven' is always God's number of completion, and when you follow that with an eighth, it is always a new beginning. Now I know that when the Apostle Paul was penning the Book of Romans, and he came here to verse 4, he didn't sit there and meditate for hours on end saying, "Now how can I find seven things, and then come up with an eighth." He didn't do that. Paul just wrote as the Holy Spirit was giving him utterance. Now we can look at it and say, isn't it a miracle how he comes up with seven things then gives us an eight for a new beginning. That's just the Holy Spirit at work.

Now let's look at the first seven, and then we'll take a look at the eighth one. Now look at verse 4, and I will list these, then we will come back and look at them. He is speaking of his kinsmen the Jews that he mentioned in verse three.

We have the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the Law, the services of god and the promises made to the fathers. That is seven and then we have the eight for a new beginning. That is Jesus Christ come in the flesh. That is the new

beginning. See how the Holy Spirit works.

5 Whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen.

What's the first thing you think of when you speak of the, "fathers?" You think of the forefathers of the nation of Israel. Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, the twelve Patriarchs and so on through the prophets. Now we have come up through seven things and the eighth is the coming of the Messiah, a new beginning.

6 Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect. For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel:

God's word has not failed. Not all the people who came from the family of Israel really belong to Israel.

7 Neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children: but, In Isaac shall thy seed be called.

Not all the descendants of Abraham are his true children. He has more descendants from Ishmael than from Isaac.

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.

This is ironic after verse 7. Many of the saved now do come from descendants of Ishmael. Most of Paul's converts come from paganism. The world around Paul was steeped with paganism, mythology, idol worship and so that is what he is referring to in verse 8. To these people who had recently been in idolatry and now come out of the darkness, and into the light of Paul's Gospel. The one who hung on that Roman cross was the one who created the wood it was made of.

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

There are two kinds of Abram's children here. There is the physical kind, the Jews and the spiritual kind the saved believers in Jesus Christ. We don't hear it much but it is proper to call yourself a spiritual child of Abraham.

10 And not only this; but when Rebecca also had conceived by one, even by our father Isaac;

11 (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;)

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

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

In these verses we have rejected sons of Abraham. Just because you came from the lineage of Abraham and Sarah did not mean you were automatically accepted by God. God rejected the sons of Ketura, and he rejected Esau and Ham. In the case of Ketura's sons and Esau it was for intermarrying with Ishmael's or Ham's descendants and for Ham it was sexual perversion.

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

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.

Now then, did you ever wonder why God did not simply wipe out the human race and start over? Are you sure he didn't? For that matter are you sure we aren't human race number 100? I'm joking of course but.....He was ready to wipe out Israel in the desert of Sinai and did wipe out everyone but Noah and his family. We are here by the mercy of God. John Darby said, "Here in all of His Holiness and Righteousness, He had every right to destroy the nation of Israel, but He withdrew into His sovereignty," and in His sovereignty He poured out mercy." Now Darby was referring to Israel but the entire human race has always been just as bad.

16 So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy.

Our relationship to God does not depend on what we want or what we do. It depends on God's mercy.

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

The Lord says to Pharaoh , 'I had a special reason why I made you king. I used you to show my power. I wanted people everywhere in the world to know my name.'

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

So God shows mercy to anyone whom he chooses. He even makes a person unwilling to change when he wants to. The Bible contains many passages that warn people not to have the same hardness as Pharaoh. Pharaoh made his heart hard against Moses and the Israelites, so God let his heart stay hard.

19 Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth he yet find fault? For who hath resisted his will?

Someone might say, 'God should not still blame us. Nobody can oppose what God wants to do.' Think of the trial of Jesus for example. The Jews said "let his blood be upon us and our children" and God took them at their word. They lost their land and were persecuted all over the world, six million died in the German concentration camps and even after their return to their land the persecution goes on. Be careful what you ask for.

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

21 Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour?

Paul reminds people that God is the Creator. People exist because God created them and here Paul is talking about people who do not want to obey God. They look for excuses to question God's authority. Paul uses an example from the work of a potter. He says that the potter has the right to make different kinds of pots, some beautiful, others may be ordinary and still others pots toilets.. So God has the right to deal with people as he chooses. He does not have to explain His actions to us. His decisions are always right. And His judgments perfect.

22 What if God, willing to shew his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction:

23 And that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory,

Who's he talking about? Every believer, whether it was back in Israel, or Christ's earthly ministry. Every born again child of God today is a vessel of

mercy, none of us deserve anything, it's all of His mercy. Now we have appropriated it by faith.

24 Even us, whom he hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles?

Paul includes himself in that statement. Remember Paul is the poster child of a sinner saved by Grace isn't he? If there was ever a man that God had every right in the world to kill it was Saul of Tarsus. Saul didn't suddenly come to his senses and repent. No. Saul was on his way to Damascus to carry more Christians off to prison. God just literally knocked him down, blinded him and spoke to him" That was Paul's conversion. Isn't it ironic that our apostle wasn't saved by grace through faith? What?What? No he wasn't. He was saved by sight. He met and talked to Jesus on that Damascus road.

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.

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

"As he saith also in O-see, that's the Book of Hosea. Who are these people who are now beloved of God but were not before? Gentiles! Who were the people who would finally come to the place where they would say, "You're my God," and He would say, "You are my people. It's you and I in this age of grace. That was all foretold back in the Old Testament in the Book of Hosea.

27 Esaias also crieth concerning Israel, Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, a remnant shall be saved:

God always has a remnant. There is what might be called the doctrine of the remnant all through Scripture. God has the majority. It's always been that small remnant. Now I guess the first one that you could refer to would be the flood. Out of all those billions of people I think that were on the earth at the time of the flood, how many remained true to God? Eight, only eight. When finally the nation of Israel comes along how many out of Jacob would believe? Just the few and they were usually referred to as Israel. God has always had His remnant even within the nation of Israel. Remember that account of Elijah, after he heard the threat from Jezebel. He ran and finally sat under a juniper tree and asked God to kill him as he was the last believer

left in Israel. He is having a pity party. God told Elijah that he had a remnant, 7000 left who had not worshiped Baal. God always has a remnant. That sometimes makes me wonder how many real Christians there are. Is it just a remnant?

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

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

God finishes what he starts. He started a work with Israel in 2000 B.C., and He hasn't forgotten them, and He is yet going to finish what He started with Israel. There has been a 2000 year gap but he will finish His work during the seven year tribulation. In other words, once that seven years of Tribulation starts He will deal with the Jews. By the time the seven years have ended the unbelieving will have suffered His wrath, and His judgment, but the believers are going to come with Him into His kingdom.

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.

They have. There are two absolutes that need to be stressed because that is how we attained our righteousness. Hebrew 9:22 which says;

"And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission.

It's the last part of Hebrews 9:22 and the first part of 11:6 that are our absolutes.

Hebrews 11:6 says **But without faith [it is] impossible to please [him:] for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and [that] he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.**

31 But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness.

The Israelites were trying to become righteous by obeying the law. They did not succeed because they could not obey the whole Law.

32 Wherefore? Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the

works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumblingstone;

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

Psalm 118:22 speaks about a stone. The builders thought that it had no value, but it became the most important stone in the building. So we know who the Stone of all Scripture is. It's Christ, but here He is a Stone of stumbling. This Stone is a stumbling block for some and a place of refuge for the saved.

ROMANS CHAPTER 10

Remember from the last chapter that Paul would have been willing to go to Hell himself if the Jews could be saved. Chapter ten is about the nation of Israel. In verse 1 you have Israel, verse 5 Moses, verse 19, Israel again and verse 21, Israel yet again. But with that said 10 is the Gentile number and this is the greatest chapter on Gentile salvation.

9 and 10 are the most often used salvation verses and Paul uses that to the Jews he loves..

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

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

You know how religious the Jews were, the Pharisees with their self righteousness, their robes, their praying in public. We see plenty of that in the four gospels. They thought they were doing God a favor but they were totally ignorant of the things of God.

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.

Mans main problem is sin.

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

Another word for believing is faith! They were trying to do it by their works, leaving faith out of the picture. Isn't that exactly where most people are today? They'll do this and that, and do whatever a denomination prescribes, and they do it according to ritual, without faith. It will count for nothing at the Judgment. Israel was no different, they kept the feast days, they did the sacrifices, they followed the law to the letter, but with no faith. "Without faith it's impossible to please God." That was just as true in Old Testament times as it is today. Christ came proving who He was, and they should have known who He was since He fulfilled over 360 distinct prophecies out of the Old Testament. If they knew their Bible like they thought they did, they should have recognized Him the moment He began His ministry. But they didn't know their Bible.

5 For Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, That the man which doeth those things shall live by them.

Paul is saying again, "if you keep the Law you must keep the whole Law.

The Law was legalism, but it also had to have faith. It wasn't faith plus nothing as it is in this age of grace. In other words, they had to do the things that God said to do under the Law, because they believed that it was what God said. But most of them left the faith element out completely and just did the works, and again that's where we are today. People are doing the things that they think need to be done, but without faith, and God will not accept it.

6 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:)

7 Or, Who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead.)

People receive a right relationship with God by faith in Christ. It is not hard to find God. You don't have to search for God in heaven or in the depths of the sea. God has left us an instruction manual that makes it easy to find Him.

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;

9 That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.

10 For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

Now these two verses should be committed to memory as they are the most used salvation verses. Verses 9 and 10 have absolutely everything you need to know to be saved. If anything needs to be explained to a new convert it is the matter of confessing and the business about the heart. Confessing, in this case, is confessing that Jesus is the Son of God and that you accept Him as your Lord and Savior. Believing from the heart is simply putting all your trust in Jesus and believing that he is truly able to keep you and get you to Heaven one day.

11 For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.

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.

13 For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.

In the Old Testament, after the call of Abraham, God dealt primarily with the Jews. There were a few exceptions like Jonah going to Nineva, Naman the Syrian who was cleansed of leprosy, Ruth and Rahab but very few others. Now it has turned 180 degrees. In this Age of Grace God is primarily calling out Gentiles. There are not many Jews saved, but it's open to them. So there is now in this age of grace, no difference.

14 How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?

Obviously people cannot call upon the name of the Lord unless they believe in him, and they cannot believe in him if they have not heard about him. They cannot hear about him unless someone preaches to them.

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!

This is a great missionary verse. Nobody will preach unless someone sends that person. The scripture says, ‘It is wonderful when someone goes to declare a good message’ and that is as close as I can come to explaining that business about the “beautiful feet”. I have known a lot of preachers and none of them had beautiful feet. Feet are used to travel and traveling carried the Gospel.

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

Paul had the same problem Isaiah had. Most people who heard it did not believe it. We Christians have the same problem today.

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

Remember we can't hear until God speaks. We are never expected to believe anything until God speaks it. Here is a verse from Deuteronomy 29:29 **"The secret things belong unto the LORD our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children forever,..."**

He doesn't tell us everything. He tells us every thing that we need to know, and He tells it in His own time. There are those that teach that Adam and Eve as well as others in the Old Testament were saved by believing the Gospel. That is utter nonsense because God hadn't revealed it yet. It was kept secret, and was held in the mind of God. You can't believe something until God reveals it.

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.

This is Israel he is writing about in this verse. When Jesus came they should have known who He was. But Israel did not know. The Old Testament has over three hundred and sixty distinct prophecies concerning His first coming. The Jews of that day knew their Old Testament but refused to apply those

prophesies to Jesus.

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.

Did you get that piece of prophecy? Moses prophesied of God turning to the Gentiles to make the Jews jealous. Look at how the Holy Spirit describes us;

“a people that are no people” and “a foolish nation”. I still say we are the scrapings from the bottom of the barrel. Aren't you glad we have the righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ?

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.

Contrasting the Jew and Gentile again. The Gentiles did not seek God but they found Him. It might be better to say He found us.

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

All through the ages I have appealed to these people to obey, but they refuse to obey and continually oppose me. You can almost feel the sadness in that last verse.

ROMANS CHAPTER 11

Remember as we get into this chapter that in chapters 9,10 and 11 Paul is addressing Jewish Christians. Though they are addressed to Jewish Christians they have equal application to us Gentiles.

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.

During Old Testament times it was predominately to the Jews with a few exceptions. Now it has turned 180 degrees and is predominantly Gentiles, again, with exceptions. Most of the calling out of the Body of Christ is Gentiles. We have seen several problems crop up between Jew and Gentile

converts the most often seen was the business of keeping the Jewish Law which Paul has been teaching against in the previous chapters. Now he has a new problem. Some of the Gentiles are beginning to claim that they had completely replaced the Jews. This is a heresy still taught today in some denominations. So, is this true? Has the Church replaced the Jews as God's chosen people? No. We know that from verses like Psalms 89 v 34-37 which says; **My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips. Once have I sworn by my holiness that I will not lie unto David. His seed shall endure for ever, and his throne as the sun before me. It shall be established for ever as the moon, and [as] a faithful witness in heaven. Selah.**

That is a good verse to mark in case you ever run into this false teaching. That verse is plain and impossible to misinterpret unless you believe God lies.

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

3 Lord, they have killed thy prophets, and digged down thine altars; and I am left alone, and they seek my life.

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.

Notice in verse two that the Holy Spirit makes it plain that intercession, that is prayer, can be made against something as well as for something.

Paul is using the example, in these three verses, to remind the Jewish Christian there even though the nation had not accepted the Messiah there was still a remnant. The nation of Israel has now been in spiritual blindness for more than 2000 years and will remain that way until the Tribulation when He will have a remnant of 144,000, 12,000 from each of the 12 tribes. You can be sure that the Lord knows where all of these twelve tribes are today.

5 Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace.

This remnant he is speaking of is the small amount of Jews who had accepted Jesus as the Messiah. This also applies to the Jewish situation today.

6 And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then it is no more grace: otherwise work is no more work.

This is a scary verse to me. If I understand this one right then anyone works to either get, or keep, their salvation then that person is lost. I do hope God has some middle ground there, otherwise a lot of good Christians are going to wind up in Hell. The Holy Spirit says again through Paul that you can't have it both ways. So, a lot of my Christian friends, who walk the talk, believe they can lose their salvation. Think about it. If you believe you can lose it then you must work to keep it. Do good works, don't sin etc. Makes you say hhhmmmm.

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

In verse seven we have three different groups of Jews. We have Israel as a nation. We have "the election", that's those Jews chosen by God, and we have "the rest". Israel as a nation searched for something and did not find it. The "election" found it, (that is they accepted the Messiah), and obtained salvation. The "rest" were blinded and we are told in the next verse that God did the blinding because they rejected Christ.

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

The end of that verse says "unto this day". It meant unto this day in Paul's day and it also means unto Sunday, the 23rd of November, 2014. This will continue until God lifts the blindness during the Tribulation.

9 And David saith, Let their table be made a snare, and a trap, and a stumblingblock, and a recompence unto them:

10 Let their eyes be darkened, that they may not see, and bow down their

back alway.

Here is another of those ironies the Holy Spirit sticks in from time to time. Because of the spiritual blindness put on Israel the whole world benefits. The Gentiles have received salvation. God wants to make the Jews jealous so the whole world benefits.

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.

Now concerning that spiritual blindness we can also go to 2Cor 4:4 to see it caused in a different way. That verse says; **In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.**

We know that “the god of this world is Satan so he is also able to cause spiritual blindness. Satan can only do this because God allows it. I think these two tie together in that God has allowed Satan to blind Israel. We also know from scripture that all of the lost world is blinded until the Holy Spirit opens their heart to receive Jesus as Savior.

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 fulness?

So God's temporary turning away from Israel is going to bring about the riches of the world. Now this is not the riches of wealth, money, gold and silver Paul is speaking of. This is the spiritual riches, that we Gentiles have enjoyed. If we're poor as church mice, we still have unlimited spiritual riches.

We are joint heirs with The Lord Jesus Christ.

13 For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office:

Now what if ,and this is strictly hypothetical, Israel had accepted their Messiah? What would have happened? They would have had their King and

Kingdom, and where would we Gentiles be? Israel could have gone out and evangelized the Gentiles. That would have been hard for Jews to do but God would have forced the issue as He did with Paul.

14 If by any means I may provoke to emulation them which are my flesh, and might save some of them.

The Holy Spirit says once more that he is going to the Gentiles in order to make the Jews jealous.

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?

By the temporary casting away, the whole world benefits. When the Jews are brought back in even death will be done away. That's the Millennium I'm speaking of there. There is also a big spiritual application here. We are spiritually dead and are made spiritually alive when we are saved. Remember that Paul has been teaching spiritual circumcision in his letters. The Holy Spirit has cut the spirit loose from the flesh and made it alive again.

16 For if the firstfruit be holy, the lump is also holy: and if the root be holy, so are the branches.

I look at things realistically as well as spiritually. Did you ever wonder why western civilization expanded like it did and brought the common persons standard of living up to where it was so much better than any place else on earth? The answer is Christianity. As Paul, and others spread the gospel across Europe it became the breeding ground science, inventions, technology etc.

God did this for a reason. He knew that Western civilization would spread the gospel across the world and He gave us the means to do it. If you doubt the influence Christianity has on a country you can look at countries in Africa or South America and check out the standard of living there. Now you might say, well there is Christianity in South America. Only because we have protestant and Baptist missionaries there and they are too scattered to have much influence except in their immediate neighborhoods. There is a form of Pagan influenced Christianity there but it keeps the people poor and in subjection. We need more missionaries, of the right kind, out there on the

field.

17 And if some of the branches be broken off, and thou, being a wild olive tree, wert grafted in among them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive tree;

This is the olive tree and it's used here as a type of the nation of Israel. Some of the branches were broken off. That's the unsaved Jews. Not all of the branches were broken as some Jews believed and were saved. Then the believing Gentiles were grafted in. Some incorrectly interpret this tree to be the Church. In the Old Testament trees were often used to represent nations. The only time a tree is used to represent the Church is in John 15 and there it represented the Christ and the 12 apostles and that one was a grape vine. So leave this tree as the nation of Israel.

18 Boast not against the branches. But if thou boast, thou bearest not the root, but the root thee.

Cutting some branches did not harm the nation of Israel ,the root is still alive. We grow on the root of Israel. If we build on others today we say “we are standing on their shoulders.” Standing here now I'm “standing on the shoulders” of those who taught me and those who wrote the books I study.

19 Thou wilt say then, The branches were broken off, that I might be grafted in.

20 Well; because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith. Be not highminded, but fear:

Spiritually we are ahead of the Jews now;that's as a nation. Paul is just reminding us not to be highminded about that since after the Rapture the Jews will be in charge again.

21 For if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee.

These last four verses are not talking about individual salvation but do realize that many other denominations use them to prove you can lose it. Paul is

speaking here of groups of people. In other words just because he has broken off some of the branches (Jews) and grafted you in (Gentiles) do not use that as an occasion to boast. He might just decide to bring on the Tribulation sooner than He originally intended. That could well be one of the reasons He doesn't give us a clearer time.

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 shalt be cut off.

This verse clearly shows the two sides of the Lord. All we hear preached in most major churches and on TV is “God is love”. That makes a pretty message that everyone likes to hear but it does not show the whole nature of God. It leads people to think that God will overlook whatever sin they are engaged in at the moment. Christians need to read the Old Testament and the Revelation to get a clearer picture of the two natures of God. Christians also have an unfortunate tendency to separate Jesus as meek and mild and God as wrathful. We need to keep in mind that the meek and mild savior is also Jehovah of the Old Testament as well as the returning conqueror at the second advent. Look at it this way. God has a positive side for those who love Him and a negative side for those who do not. Notice also that last part of verse 22. Again this is not individual salvation but is addressed to Gentiles in general.

23 And they also, if they abide not still in unbelief, shall be grafted in: for God is able to graft them in again.

Now the new covenant is applied spiritually to anyone who trusts in the shed blood of Jesus. Keep in mind that this new covenant was originally promised to the house of Israel and the house of Judah. God will bring them back through the preaching of the 144,000 and the two witnesses during the Tribulation period.

24 For if thou wert cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature, and wert grafted contrary to nature into a good olive tree: how much more shall these, which be the natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree?

We are fast approaching that place where God is going to finally get fed up with the Gentile world . We are rejecting his offer of grace, we are rejecting His blessings, we are rejecting believing who He is and what he is. So he's going to do the same thing to the Gentiles that He did to Israel. He's going to break off the Gentile, and put back the Jew. God is still going to fulfill all the promises made to Abraham. We are just lucky enough to have been brought into a place of having the simple requirement of believing.

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

Verse 25 gives us one of the seven mysteries. In other words, one day their unbelief is going to be removed and a nation will be born in a day. This will be the third time Israel has been “born in a day”. Once when they left Egypt, once in 1948 and again when the Lord returns. But this time we are talking about the second advent when they see Him coming in the clouds of glory. What is left of that remnant down there in the mountains of Petra that went out in Matthew 24). God has protected them down there for three and one half years. He keeps them just like He did Israel in the wilderness under Moses.

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

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

This will make my covenant with them become true, when I take away their sins.’ Paul, by inspiration of the Holy Spirit, is making it plain that God is not through with the Nation of Israel. Israel has been set aside for the past 2000 + years. They have no temple, no priesthood, no sacrifice , and no homeland until this generation. The saved Gentiles have now been placed over the root of the father Abraham. Remember from the last chapters that we are now the “spiritual” children of Abraham. Gentiles have been under that blessing of having the Gospel and the opportunity for salvation. Our day is fast coming to a close.

28 As concerning the gospel, they are enemies for your sakes: but as

touching the election, they are beloved for the father's sakes.

Right now, unbelieving Jews are enemies of the Gospel. Unless things have changed recently you can't go to Israel as a Christian missionary. They want our military help and our money but nothing to do with the Lord Jesus Christ.

29 For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance.

Throughout history God has repented of many things. To name just a couple; In Genesis 6:6 He repented that he had **“made man on the earth”** and in 1 Sam 15:35 He repented that **“He had made Saul king”**. These were things God could change His mind about. What he does not do is lie, so when a promise is made as it was to the nation of Israel he can not go back on it. He made unconditional promises to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob as well as the later promises to David.

30 For as ye in times past have not believed God, yet have now obtained mercy through their unbelief:

This is still directed to the Gentiles. For the last 2000 years now the Church is being formed mainly by Gentiles who are becoming members of the body of Christ. As soon as that began, the Jews got jealous and began to oppose it everywhere that Paul went. God put a blindness upon the nation. But remember, God deals with the Jew on two levels: national and personal. Now, He has blinded them nationally, but that does not take away their personal opportunity for Salvation. The individual Jew still has the same opportunity for salvation that we do, but it's on a personal basis. So God is now calling out Gentiles as a people for what we refer to now as The Body of Christ. I believe He is almost through.

31 Even so have these also now not believed, that through your mercy they also may obtain mercy.

32 For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all.

This is Paul's convoluted way of saying that in the past, the Gentiles did not obey God. Then, because the Jews did not obey Him, the Gentiles get God's

mercy. Later, as the result of God's mercy to the Gentiles, it goes full circle and the Jews themselves will will again receive God's mercy.

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

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

We cannot understand this.. How could He take a people like Israel, give them all that He gave to the patriarchs and the prophets, then send them the Messiah, and then see them crucify the One He gave them, and let his blood be upon us and our children. Because they did that God sent salvation to the Gentiles. How can the human mind understand this?

35 Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again?

The answer, of course, is nobody. In the first place He owns it all anyway. Everything we have was first given to us by God.

36 For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen.

All things" in this verse exclude sin and the Devil. It covers everything else. All of it came from Him and through Him and all will eventually return to Him. He has the glory forever.

ROMANS CHAPTER TWELVE

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.

The "therefore" in this verse refers back to Romans 11:36 and that says ;For of him, and through him, and to him, [are] all things: to whom [be] glory for ever. Amen. If I can put this in the language of today, it means "get over yourself". It is not about you but rather about

the Lord Jesus Christ and everything we do in this life we should do with that in mind. Notice here that you are to give Christ your body, not your life. "Give your life to Christ" is found nowhere in the Bible. Life is that period of time between birth and death and Christ is in your life from beginning to end. If all you have is Christ in your life you will go to Hell. You need Christ in you, "the hope of glory". Notice also that Christ wants your living body. A dead body is no good to anyone.

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.

Paul has already explained the gospel and now he gives practical advice. He describes how a Christian should live in the world. You should no longer live like the world lives and you should even allow God to change the way you think. These last five chapters of Romans are just practical Christian living. It's common, ordinary, everyday living. There isn't anything in these five chapters that would take you out of the mainstream, and make you different. If we could live in a community where 99.9% of the people lived like these last five chapters of Romans suggest, it would be close to heaven on earth. But we don't do it, none of us do. If Satan can get you to conform to this world then no one can tell you apart from the world. Modern Christianity has no problem adjusting itself to "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life". Remember those three things from our study of First John? If you remember that teaching then you should also remember that those three things encompass all the sins of humanity. Now, that part of the verse "the renewing of your mind" needs some comment. At salvation you were saved instantly and indwelt by the Holy Spirit. Your mind did not change completely at that time. This is what we mean when we say we are growing as Christians. As God continues to work on us our mind is being renewed daily as we study and pray. This renewing of the mind brings us closer to God. Always keep this in mind. Some Christians, like Lot, who conformed to this world, will arrive in Heaven with absolutely no rewards. Now you might say, "well, at least I will be there". True, but this is for eternity and there is nothing in scripture to indicate that we can change our status once we are in Heaven and eternity is going to be a

long, long time to be stuck working at the bottom of the food chain. And yes, the New Jerusalem is headquarters. We will have work to do and a chain of command to follow. How do I know that? That is the way it is set up now. The angels have a hierarchy. Who is the boss angel? Michael whose title is Archangel.

3 For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.

Paul just got through telling you to change the way you think. Now he tell you exactly the change he expects. If you conform to the world you will think of yourself more highly than you ought. What kind of person is this? Have you ever met the “worlds leading authority”? Authority on what? On everything. It has been my misfortune to have known several of these in my lifetime. These are the people who must be the center of attention. Those who pretend to knowledge they don't have. That kind usually gets their foot in their mouth sooner rather than later since they don't know what you may have knowledge of.

4 For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office:

5 So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.

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;

Here Paul is stressing the importance of each part of the Body of Christ. What if you lost a hand in an accident. You would certainly miss it. That's the illustration Paul is using. Each of us is equally important to the “Body”. The Body doesn't function as well without any part. This illustration of the Body of Christ is going to have some members that are just as unseen, and unknown as your appendix, but are they important? Absolutely, that believer is important, he's a member of the Body of Christ. Others are going to be more visible, you're going to have your Billy Sunday, Billy Graham, Dr. Ruckman or any famous evangelist, but are they more important than you and I? No. They are no more important than that believer who is represented

by the appendix, so never say, "God can't use me because I'm a nobody." If you're in Christ, you're a somebody and Christ will use you if you allow it. Before we leave these verses notice in verse six that God gives different amounts of grace to each believer. He matches the grace to the task he calls the believer for. He said to Paul, "my grace is sufficient for thee", and it was sufficient through all of those trials that Paul went through up to and including his execution by beheading.

7 Or ministry, let us wait on our ministering: or he that teacheth, on teaching;

8 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.

Now these are gifts continuing from verse six. They are prophecy, ministering, teaching, exhortation, giving, ruling, and mercy. There are several things we need to notice about these gifts. These are all service gifts and are unlike the sign gifts listed in Corinthians. Notice that these service gifts are not showy. Most of them, with the exception of prophecy and teaching are done quietly and in the background. Most of these gifts don't need any explanation but a couple do. Prophecy, in our day is preaching and teaching about the things to come. We get those from the Bible not from any private revelation. There will be no new prophecies added since that would be adding to the scriptures and we are forbidden to do that. The other gift that needs clarification is the gift of exhortation. We would say motivation. In other words these are people who can motivate others to do service for God.

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

When you study don't just skim over a big word like that. If you don't know, the word get your dictionary. This means don't be hypocritical, and just try to use your gift with the wealthy people, but you've got to be able to do it with those on the bottom of the social scale as well. Your gift has to be without dissimulation, that is, without hypocrisy... Abhor that which is evil; simply means to hate that which is evil. This is one of the main failures of Christianity today. Christianity is

no longer showing it's hatred for evil. We are allowing it, accepting it and watching it get worse all the time. You might say "so what? There's nothing I can do about it." Listen we are never to stop abhorring that which is evil. Think of what the blacks do to change things. I'm not talking about the rioters and looters, the criminals but I am talking about those voting in a block. When they want change they get it from politicians who want that huge vote. Think of what Christians could do if we voted that way. There are enough Christians in America today to swing any election in the country if we all voted as a block.

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

You are to love each one equally whether you like them or not. Keep in mind that verse from the Book of 1 John 3:14 which says; **We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren.** That's one of the ways you know you are saved. You love to be in the company of the brethren. You enjoy fellowship with like minded Christians.

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

Don't be lazy in your business or at your job. Keep a good spirit about your work and do it as if you were working directly for the Lord.

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

Wait for the Lord's return and be joyful while you are waiting. This is the "blessed hope spoken of elsewhere. How many of you know Christians who are just old sour grumps. These, shall we say, less than joyful Christians aren't showing much thankfulness to the one who saved them. Patient in tribulation. That's a hard one. We are to wait patiently on the Lord to change our situation. Continuing instant in prayer. Paul put it another way when he says pray without ceasing. Keep an open line to God and be ready to pray at a moments notice should the need arise. Keep your sins confessed so they don't hinder those prayers.

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

This is giving to needy brethren. This is not lending money. Give it as a gift if you can afford it. It can be food, money or time. Given to

hospitality is keeping your home as a place of refuge for those brethren in need. This day and time be careful with that one. Given to hospitality calls to mind that verse in Hebrews 13. **“Be not forgetful to entertain strangers:for thereby some have entertained angels unawares”**.

14 Bless them which persecute you: bless, and curse not.

This is another hard one. Our first reaction is the desire to get even. You are to go beyond not getting even and go so far as to bless those who persecute you. I confess I have not mastered this one yet.

15 Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep.

Rejoicing with those who rejoice is easy. What about that second part of the verse? “Weep with them that weep”. Sometimes the best thing you can do is just to sit quietly with the grieving person. Just your presence is a help. This is a case where silence can be golden. Think about Job's three friends. They sat with him for seven days before anyone spoke a word. It was only after they began talking that they got in trouble.

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.

Don't play favorites. This is another hard one to do. Mind not high things. Don't try to be a big shot and don't look up to those who think they are. Remember what we were told about the parts of the Body of Christ. All saved people are equally important to the Lord.

Condescend to men of low estate means to meet them at their level and do not talk down to them. Be not wise in your own conceits means ;do not think you know it all. You do not. Not even close on that one. You do not know who the Lord will use. He may use a fisherman,a tax collector or the lowest skid row bum. He has used all of those in the past.

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

Verses 17 through 21 tell us how we are to react when someone does us wrong. Verse 17 tells us not to try to pay them back in kind. In other words,let it go. Get over it. The second part is;be honest in all your

dealings. Take a loss if necessary so as not to provide an excuse to a non Christian. Remember that famous excuse, "the Church is full of hypocrites" ? It is of course, but we don't have to add to the number.

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

Paul gives us two loopholes here. He says "if it be possible" and "as much as lieth in you". If you cannot live peacefully with one of the brethren then avoid contact as much as possible. You can not control what the other person will do but you can control your own actions.

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.

That verse is plain as day. Let the Lord handle it. Turn it over to Him and have the patience to wait for Him to take care of it.

20 Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head.

The way I see this verse is that the enemy is probably going to Hell anyway so feeding him and giving him water won't really make a difference in the long run. On the other hand, if this person gets saved you get to spend eternity with him so as was said in verse 17, get over it and move on.

21 Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.

This is Paul's final warning in chapter twelve. Don't let evil get the best of you. Keep yourself separate from evil or it will rub off on you.

So, this chapter has pretty much been a list of do's and don't's for the Christian. It would do us all good to go back and reread this chapter from time to time.

ROMANS CHAPTER THIRTEEN

We continue in chapter thirteen with more instructions in Christian behavior.

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.

Whether we like it or not we are subject to, and must obey, Barack Obama. Now, that is unless of course the orders from the powers that

be directly contradict the word of God. For instance, you are to obey the Obama care law, and the local speed limit laws, but you are not to obey the laws regarding abortion. Notice also in this verse, that Paul isn't only talking to Christians. He addresses "every soul". This addresses every living person, lost or saved. Governmental authorities are put in place by God himself for His purposes. We are in a mess. People like Mr Obama and Mr Putin, Mr Bagdadi and Hitler were put there by God. Meanwhile Luke 4: 5 says of Satan ;"**all this power is delivered unto me**" and Paul calls Satan "the God of this world".

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

Satan is in charge of this present world system. There is a paradox here. Though Satan is god of this world, the earthly government should be set up to enforce the laws of God. It doesn't always work that way of course. Think about Cyrus, king of Persia. See Daniel 10 for the story. Cyrus was named by God more than 200 years before he was born. He was called God's shepherd and the Lord's anointed was used by God in the rebuilding of Jerusalem. All this in spite of the fact that the Bible says he did not know God. He was lost as a goose but used for God's purpose.

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

This verse begs the question; what if a ruler does become a terror to good works? Daniel was put in the Lions den for refusing to pray to Darius and God delivered him. Shadrach, Meshac and Abednego faced up to Nebuchadnezzar and were thrown into the fiery furnace.

Notice what they said to him. Daniel {3:17} **If it be [so,] our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver [us] out of thine hand, O king. {3:18} But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up.**

They did right in the face of a ruler who was "a terror to good works", and God delivered them. This is certainly not always the case. God did not deliver John the Baptist and the apostles and they did

right. In the face of a government which is a “terror to good works”, do the right thing and leave the outcome up to God.

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.

The ruler is God’s servant who will do good things for you. But if you do evil things, you ought to be afraid. The ruler carries a sword for a good reason. He is God’s servant. He is acting for God.

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

You must obey the rulers. This is not merely because an evil person will receive punishment. You must also obey them because it is the right thing to do.

6 For for this cause pay ye tribute also: for they are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing.

You should pay taxes for the same reason. The rulers are God’s servants who give all their time to govern and play golf. We are not to decide whether, or not, to pay taxes based on how they will be used. Pay them so as not to have your property seized or your head blown off. God has told you to pay taxes if the government requires it. Think about it this way. If the people in Paul's time had not paid taxes Paul would not have had those nice Roman roads to use to carry the gospel all over the known world. Paul faced more trials than most but bad roads weren't one of them. God always has the right reason.

7 Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour.

Because the *Romans were the government, the Jews had to pay taxes to them and they hated paying them. They paid tax on anything they produced, they paid a personal tax, they paid an income tax and they paid many local taxes. Paul tells the Christians to pay all these taxes and this same thing applies to us today. Avoid everything you can legally and pay the rest.

8 Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law.

This is the most violated commandment in the Bible. It is a tough one and one that almost all of us break. Owe no man anything is an absolute. You don't know for sure that you will even be here to pay that bill. According to this verse we do owe love to each other and we will never get that debt paid off. We are told elsewhere not to lend to a brother in need but to give it as a gift if possible. In those cases where it is impossible to give as a gift then we are to lend without interest.

9 For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

Notice that Paul covered the entire ten commandments with this verse. The only one not covered is keeping the Sabbath. He actually listed half of them and covered the rest with the last phrase of the verse.

10 Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.

This is Paul's application of the golden rule. It comes from the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew. If we love others as we love ourselves then we will do nothing to harm them. This verse deals with the Christian after salvation, not for salvation.

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

You need to be aware of what is happening. Our final salvation, that is the salvation of the body, is nearer now than when we first believed. The time is getting shorter all the time. The charge here is for Christians to wake up and do what the lord has called them to do.

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

The night is nearly over. The day when Christ will return is almost here. So we should be free of too many cares of this world and be waiting and working for His soon return.

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

and envying.

Paul tells us to walk honestly. In Romans 6:4 we were told **to walk in newness of life** and in Galatians 5:16 we are to **walk in the Spirit**. This list in verse thirteen is a list of how Christians should not behave. Rioting and drunkenness are self explanatory. Chambering and wantonness are lewd and immoral behavior.

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

Stay away from places and things that would tempt you. Do not put yourself in a place that could cause you to fall. Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ would be like putting on a new set of spiritual clothes when you were saved. To me it goes one step further and means putting on the armor of God each morning before you face the day.

ROMANS CHAPTER FOURTEEN

This chapter deals with the Christians relationship to other Christians on an individual basis. The Christian in verse one is a new Christian or an immature Christian.

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

Receive this person into the fellowship but do not ever get into big arguments about things you can not prove from the scriptures. Lead them slowly and carefully into correct doctrine. When Paul wants to give an example of a weak Christian he moves on to verse two.

2 For one believeth that he may eat all things: another, who is weak, eateth herbs.

If God has given you the ability to eat anything, that is often called a cast iron stomach, then thank God for it and enjoy your food. This freedom to eat anything we want is part of our Christian liberty.

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.

There is always discussion about whether we should stick to the Old Testament dietary laws. The answer is simple. Keep that law if it pleases you but don't try to put that on anyone else. We should never be unkind to these people who are vegetarians or who refuse to eat pork or anything else. Ignore

it and eat what you feel comfortable with.

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

God has given us a job to do and we answer to God and not to man about how well we do that job. My job, at the present time is to teach and I will answer to God about how well I stick to the Book. In other words we will all answer to our own Master.

5 One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind.

This is a good one for the Seventh Day Adventist. If you like to keep special days such as Christmas and Easter do it and don't pay too much attention to the Christmas haters. If you want to believe reindeer can fly and rabbits lay eggs then that is between you and God. Enjoy those days and keep the real reason for each in mind.

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 are talking about observing days and food and objects like Christmas trees. A Christmas tree is something some hard nosed fundamentalists wouldn't have in their house but Christmas trees are harmless. Let's look at the famous Christmas tree passage in Jeremiah. That starts at 10:3 and goes as follows. **For the customs of the people [are] vain: for [one] cutteth a tree out of the forest, the work of the hands of the workman, with the axe.** (this is pagans he is speaking of) **They deck it with silver and with gold; they fasten it with nails and with hammers, that it move not. They [are] upright as the palm tree, but speak not: they must needs be borne, because they cannot go.**(it has to be carried because it's dead) **Be not afraid of them; for they cannot do evil, neither also [is it] in them to do good.** In other words they are neither good nor evil, they are dead trees. Verse six is also the "proof" verse for giving thanks for your meal.

7 For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself.

This verse tells us our life is not our own in regards to other people. The life or death of any person among us affects all of us. As Christians we look forward to seeing our Christian brethren. When one of us dies it is hardest on

the immediate family but all of us miss the person.

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.

This verse tells us we are not our own in regards to God. There are ways we can judge questionable actions. Would it cause a weak Christian to stumble? Will it please God? Would I like God to find me doing this when He returns? Can I ask God's blessing on it? Finally, and perhaps most important, would it cause an unsaved person to reject the gospel?

9 For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living.

You belong to the Lord in life and you belong to the Lord in death.

10 But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ.

Verse ten is the first mention of the judgment seat of Christ. This is the Christians judgment for rewards. Notice that this is a seat, not a throne.

Things that are different are not the same. The Great White Throne Judgment is a what? The judgment in verse ten is a judgment against a fellow believer and concerns those things we have been talking about. Those things are days and "meat". Leave the Seventh Day Adventists alone if they want to say they keep the Sabbath and are vegetarians. If there is a problem there they answer to God, not to you and I.

11 For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God.

We shall all stand before God when he acts as judge. Scripture says, "You can be sure that I live", and "So you can be sure that everyone will kneel before me.

12 So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God.

If you memorize only two verses, let one of them be John 3:16 and the other be this verse. We should have it printed in bold, block letters and have it taped to our bathroom mirror.

13 Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in his brother's way.

Keep in mind the context of the passage. We are to judge in some cases and the wise person learns to tell the difference. Judge actions so that we do not cause others to stumble.

14 I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that there is nothing unclean of itself: but to him that esteemeth any thing to be unclean, to him it is unclean.

This is a loaded verse. According to Paul, who has it directly from Jesus himself, alcohol, tobacco and marijuana are ok. Now think about it. All of these things have a proper use. Alcohol is a good disinfectant, tobacco is a great insecticide and marijuana has legitimate medical uses. It is us that twist things into something unclean.

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 you have people in for dinner and you know that one of your guests truly believes that eating pork is a sin, then don't serve pork. That's simple. It is also the charitable thing to do. If you feel it's ok to take a drink, or to go to the casinos, don't you dare to offer these things to your brethren. They can actually destroy a person. We have both friends and relatives who have been in bankruptcy because of those casinos over in Mississippi. One husband and wife even lost their house due to gambling.

16 Let not then your good be evil spoken of:

There is an old saying; a lie left unchallenged soon is accepted as the truth. Case in point. Years ago, I think it was in the early seventies, it was published that a couple of babies had died from botulism poisoning from honey given to them in their formula. No beekeeper challenged that since no one wants babies dying for whatever reason. It soon came out that the botulism was from a popular variety of corn syrup but the damage was done. No one had challenged it so today mothers are advised not to give their infants honey.

17 For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.

Here is the verse on the Kingdom of God. It is a spiritual Kingdom. Notice that it is not about physical things such as those you can put in your body. Do be aware that the Kingdom of God and the Kingdom of Heaven are different. The Kingdom of Heaven is a physical kingdom and it contains the Kingdom of God.

18 For he that in these things serveth Christ is acceptable to God, and approved of men.

If you serve the Lord in a righteous manner, and have peace and joy, while you do it, then you are accepted by God as a good servant.

19 Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another.

So let us work hard to have a peaceful and content attitude. That word edify means to encourage.

20 For meat destroy not the work of God. All things indeed are pure; but it is evil for that man who eateth with offence.

Paul is saying the same thing again. Let your conscience be your guide but take care not to lead a weak Christian astray. Concerning the “all things are pure” statement take it in context. This verse is talking about food.

21 It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor any thing whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak.

What do we say about the Holy Spirit repeating as He is doing here over and over. He means for you to get it. Do nothing to cause another Christian to “stumble”.

22 Hast thou faith? have it to thyself before God. Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth.

I believe this verse means you should not be bragging about the amount of faith you have. Whatever amount you have it is never as much as it should be. This verse is also speaking of conscience. If your conscience condemns a thing then leave it alone. Do the things that you believe to be right. Act in the way that your conscience directs.

23 And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith: for whatsoever is not of faith is sin.

A person should not eat anything that is against his conscience. If a person eats, he is guilty because faith does not direct his actions and everything not of faith is sin. This last verse has nothing to do with losing your salvation. The entire context is eating meat. The “damnation” spoken of here is like the damnation in 1 Cor 11:28 concerning the Lord's supper. That verse says; **But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of [that] bread, and drink of [that] cup. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body.** Looking at these verses the same way tells us that the damnation spoken of can make you sick or, if severe enough it can kill you. Therefore, if your conscience says don't eat it then don't eat it. I think it is fair to extend this to all areas of your life. Follow your conscience. If you are in tune with the Holy Spirit He will use your conscience to keep you straight.

ROMANS CHAPTER FIFTEEN

1 We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves.

A Christian becomes strong through prayer, study and listening to the word. Furthermore a strong Christian has learned discernment and how to treat others. Listen to the Holy Spirit as it is entirely possible to study, pray and listen to the word but miss the mark as a strong Christian. I am thinking of those who do nothing to aid the cause of Christ. If you are not doing what God has called you to do then you will never be a strong Christian.

2 Let every one of us please his neighbour for his good to edification.

Here is a problem. This verse seems to contradict what Paul says in Galatians 1:10 which says. **For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ.**

So what we look at here is the context. In Galatians Paul was talking about preaching to the unsaved. We do not preach to please men but to please God. In this verse in Romans we are being told how to conduct ourselves in regard to other Christians.

3 For even Christ pleased not himself; but, as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me.

Even Christ did not please himself but said 'the people, who are insulting you, are insulting me.' Paul did not mean that we should praise a person in an untrue way. We should always act to help him and to encourage a young, that is a new, Christian as this helps his, or her, faith to grow. Our young people did a wonderful job with the Christmas play. They should be encouraged for that.

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

Paul quoted the Old Testament frequently and this shows us that we are not to take just the Pauline epistles and ignore the rest. Where do we go when we have great sorrow in our lives. I don't know about you but I head straight for the twenty third Psalm.

5 Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be likeminded one toward another according to Christ Jesus:

Verse five speaks directly to those who would fellowship with others with

different doctrines. Keep in mind that the bad always pulls the good down to it's level. A good example is a young lady who marries a useless bum thinking she can reform him. It never happens. It has been said here before ,and I totally agree, that a young member of our church should date,and marry, only another Baptist. If I were in an area with no other Baptist churches within driving distance then I could attend a Presbyterian or Nazerene church provided I could find one that was straight and used the KJV. Otherwise it would be church at home for me. God sometimes overlooks ignorance on the part of a Christian but He never overlooks wrong, if you know better and do it anyway.

6 That ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Paul's wish was that members could agree on even the little things. Human nature being what it is, this just does not happen. Churches split and fight over small matters like what color to paint the walls. Floridatown mission once split over whether or not to leave the Southern Baptist Convention. That split gave us Solid Rock church. Something like that, or maybe whether or not to use the King James Bible, are issues worth arguing about even to the point of leaving a church.

7 Wherefore receive ye one another, as Christ also received us to the glory of God.

If a person comes and asks to join our fellowship they are to be received provided they are saved and have no major doctrinal differences. On the other hand,unsaved people or people with major doctrinal differences,or people living in open sin, are not to be received into the fellowship. For instance,if a person comes and claims to be saved but also says they believe in speaking in tongues,then that person is not to be received into the fellowship.

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 fathers:

Verses eight and nine give us Jesus's ministry. Get this because it is important. His ministry was primarily to the Jews. Outside of the atonement for our sins,His ministry was to confirm the promises made to the fathers. But then Paul follows immediately with verse nine showing us that Christ did sometimes minister to Gentiles.

9 And that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy; as it is written, For this cause I will confess to thee among the Gentiles, and sing unto

thy name.

Matthew 15 21-28 is one good example. **And, behold, a woman of Canaan came out of the same coasts, and cried unto him, saying, Have mercy on me, O Lord, [thou] Son of David; my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil. But he answered her not a word. And his disciples came and besought him, saying, Send her away; for she crieth after us. But he answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Then came she and worshipped him, saying, Lord, help me. But he answered and said, It is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast [it] to dogs. And she said, Truth, Lord: yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters' table. Then Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great [is] thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt. And her daughter was made whole from that very hour.** Mark this verse since it is one of the very few times we are told of Jesus ministering directly to Gentiles. I understand, of course, that he now ministers to all of us through the ministry of the Holy Spirit. We have now been given two of the reasons for the first advent. Verse eight gives the reason, "to fulfill the promises made to the fathers" and verse nine tells us he is come only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Lest anybody miss that let me back up and read this again; I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel. It doesn't get any plainer than that.

10 And again he saith, Rejoice, ye Gentiles, with his people.

11 And again, Praise the Lord, all ye Gentiles; and laud him, all ye people.

Verses ten and eleven are two more verses assuring the Gentiles that they are now as much "in Christ" as any born again Jew.

12 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.

Here is the prophecy from 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. The Gentiles will put their hope in Him.** In other words, the Gentiles will seek Jesus even more than the Jews. So now, we have a predominately Gentile Church even though it is open to all.

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.

The Holy Spirit does not want you to just have hope. He wants you to abound in hope and He wants to fill you with all joy and peace.

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.

There will be times when mature Christians must correct the doctrine ,or behavior of immature Christians. This must be done with care and never in a way of “talking down” nor “putting down” another. Correction must be done in the right spirit and in the right manner. Verses fifteen and sixteen go together. Notice the comma between them.

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,

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.

Paul says that God has given him grace to be a servant of Christ Jesus among the Gentiles. I take the gift that is God’s good news. Then I want to offer the Gentiles to God in a way that pleases him as the Holy Spirit makes them holy. Compare verse sixteen to verse eight. In verse eight Christ was a minister to the Jews while in verse sixteen Paul is sent to the Gentiles.

17 I have therefore whereof I may glory through Jesus Christ in those things which pertain to God. Because I belong to Jesus, I can take a certain amount of pride in my work on God’s behalf.

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,

19 Through mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God; so that from Jerusalem, and round about unto Illyricum, I have fully preached the gospel of Christ.

Again, verses eighteen and nineteen go together, there's that comma again. I will not speak of anything except what Christ has shown me. He has led the Gentiles to obey God. He has done this by means of my words and actions. He has given to me the power of the Holy Spirit to do signs and miracles. So I have traveled the entire distance from Jerusalem to Illyricum and declared the gospel.

20 Yea, so have I strived to preach the gospel, not where Christ was

named, lest I should build upon another man's foundation:

This is another verse that proves that Peter was never in Rome. Had Peter been there preaching then there would not have been a need for Paul to go there. The phrase “lest I should build upon another man's foundation:” settles that once and for all. Neither of them had preached there yet.

21 But as it is written, To whom he was not spoken of, they shall see: and they that have not heard shall understand.

Verse 21 is a quote from Isaiah 52:15 which says; **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.** This is speaking about the blood of Jesus cleansing many nations. Then there follows a chapter, Isaiah 53 which is a direct prophecy of the “gospel of the grace of God which was preached by Paul in Acts 8:27 and following. Chapter 53 is one that you are all familiar with and leads us directly into God's grace. I will read only the first couple of verses to jog your memory. Beginning at verse one. **Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed? For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, [there is] no beauty that we should desire him. He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were [our] faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not.** Read this chapter often.

22 For which cause also I have been much hindered from coming to you.

23 But now having no more place in these parts, and having a great desire these many years to come unto you;

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.

Paul had a great desire to go to Rome and then on to Spain. He determined to do this even before leaving Ephesus. This is one instance where Paul disobeyed the Holy Spirit. He was told not to go to Jerusalem and went anyway. For this act he did go to Rome but he went chained to a Roman guard. Take the next three verses together.

25 But now I go unto Jerusalem to minister unto the saints.

26 For it hath pleased them of Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain

contribution for the poor saints which are at Jerusalem.

27 It hath pleased them verily; and their debtors they are. For if the Gentiles have been made partakers of their spiritual things, their duty is also to minister unto them in carnal things.

Here we have one of the only two reasons given in the New Testament for taking up collections. They are for support of the ministry and to help the poor. Things have changed now. Now we take offerings for building funds, tv and radio ministries and other things which were not a part of Paul's ministry. You have no business sending your tithes anywhere but to your local church because this benefits your church and your church family. Offerings sent to Benny and Joyce benefit no one but Benny and Joyce and their paid staff.

28 When therefore I have performed this, and have sealed to them this fruit, I will come by you into Spain.

We do not know if Paul ever made it to Spain. There is a period of about eight years which is unaccounted for in the scripture. In Acts 28 Paul is in prison in Rome. Second Timothy 4 has him in prison again, so between those times there is a gap of about eight years. There is one reputable source that believes Paul even made it into England since the early church there showed no Catholic influence until Pope Gregory sent Augustine to England to destroy the Bibles and force the bishops there to submit to the Pope.

29 And I am sure that, when I come unto you, I shall come in the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ.

30 Now I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, and for the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with me in your prayers to God for me;

In this verse and the next ones Paul asks the brethren to pray with him for certain things.

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;

That he might be delivered from those who were unbelievers in Judaea. These were the ones who wanted to kill him and he needed to get around this bunch in order to bring the offering to Jerusalem. The second prayer here is that the offering might be accepted by the saints at Jerusalem. The only reason that I can see for not accepting the offering would be false pride since these were Jews and the money was coming from Gentiles.

32 That I may come unto you with joy by the will of God, and may with you be refreshed.

The last prayer was simply that they might enjoy their time together without any friction. Then verse 33 the blessing.

33 Now the God of peace be with you all. Amen.

ROMANS CHAPTER SIXTEEN

What we have here in chapter sixteen is a wrap up of Paul's letter to the Romans. He has a lot of greetings to individuals and praise for some. You will also see a few names that you might recognize from other books.

1 I commend unto you Phebe our sister, which is a servant of the church which is at Cenchrea:

This Phebe is the one who delivered the letter to the church at Rome. She is a helper and not a church leader.

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.

3 Greet Priscilla and Aquila my helpers in Christ Jesus:

This is the same Aquilla and Priscilla from the book of Acts. They were helpers and good friends to Paul.

4 Who have for my life laid down their own necks: unto whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles.

All three mentioned so far have risked their lives to carry the gospel. The next few verses are more greetings to other members.

5 Likewise greet the church that is in their house. Salute my well-beloved Epapnetus, who is the firstfruits of Achaia unto Christ.

6 Greet Mary, who bestowed much labour on us.

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.

Come on down to verse seven and notice something peculiar here.

Andronicus and Junia were apostles. There were other apostles than the twelve. There were probably nine others, and these two were part of that bunch. There were at least twenty apostles that had the apostolic signs. We will cover these extra apostles when we get into Corinthians. According to this verse both Andronicus and Junia were saved before Paul.

8 Greet Amplias my beloved in the Lord.

9 Salute Urbane, our helper in Christ, and Stachys my beloved.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Now we get back to some instruction.

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

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.

Other scriptures go so far as to recommend expulsion for troublemakers.

Some of the trouble spoken of here may not be as serious as some. This may be speaking of things like gossip or deliberately trying to cause trouble between members.

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

The church at Rome was well spoken of by the other churches in the area.

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

This verse is a direct cross reference to Genesis 3:15. Notice also that the actual ending to this letter is at the end of this verse. From here through verse 27 seems to be what we would call a post script.

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

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

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

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

Paul begins his conclusion with this short prayer for the members, and finishes the next few verses with what amounts to a doxology

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

The words “my gospel” are very important. This separates the gospel Paul preaches from the gospels preached before and the gospels that will be preached during the tribulation. There is a difference. Everyone from Genesis to Revelation is saved by God's grace but let's look at just one of the differences. Peter preached “repentance and baptism”. See Acts 2:38 and others; Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. This was the gospel of Peter and the other apostles before the revelations given to Paul. Then Paul preached; **That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.** Now let's go to First Corinthians for some reinforcement. **{15:1} Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; {15:2} By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. {15:3} For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; {15:4} And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures:** Notice the difference between Paul's gospel and the gospels that were preached before and after that time like the one that comes in Revelation. That is why that little phrase “my gospel”, is so important. That is not Paul being arrogant but rather it is the Holy Spirit speaking through Paul. Now the gospel that comes later, “the everlasting gospel. Rev 14:6 **And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and**

kindred, and tongue, and people, Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters. This gospel then, called the everlasting gospel, is one of fear, and giving glory and worship. With all the awful things going on in the world during the tribulation how could it not be one of fear.?

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

“Made manifest” is the key to this one. The church was hidden in the Old Testament but there were a few prophecies concerning the coming church. God chose to keep the church secret until Paul revealed the mystery, that is, made it manifest. This mystery, in a nutshell, is this: that Jew and Gentile would be one body, that the Holy Spirit lives in us, that we are now adopted into the family of God, and that we would have eternal security. None of that was revealed until it was given to Paul.

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