

ceive.

**27** *For the heart of this people has become dull, and their ears are hard of hearing. And their eyes they have closed, lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart and should be converted, and I should heal them.*”

**28** “Therefore, let it be known to you that the salvation of God has been sent to the Gentiles, and they will hear it!”

**29** [Now when he had said these words, the Jews departed and had a great dispute among themselves.]

**30** ¶ And Paul dwelt two whole years in his own hired house, and received all who came to him,

**31** preaching the kingdom of God and teaching those things that concern the Lord Jesus Christ with all confidence, no one forbidding him.

**Hearing you will hear, and shall not understand:**

Isaiah prophesied that even though the Jews would hear of the fulfillment of Messianic prophecies in Jesus, they would not understand because of the hardness of their hearts. They would actually see Jesus but would not accept Him as the Son of God. They had become hardened in heart and understanding because of their own traditions. As a result, Isaiah prophesied that they would not repent and turn to God (Is 6:9,10; Jr 5:21; Ez 12:2; Mt 13:14,15; Mk 4:12; Lk 8:10; Jn 12:40,41; Rm 11:8). **28,29** Paul said that the prophecy was fulfilled which stated that the light of the gospel had gone to the Gentiles (Is 42:1,6; 49:6; Mt 21:41; Lk 2:32; Rm 11:11; see 13:46; 18:6). Such happened in part because of the Jews' rejection of the gospel (13:46-48; 18:6; Rm 9-11).

**30** For the next two years Paul remained in his own rented house in Rome. Many came to him for teaching. He was able also to fulfill one of his desires, that is, to impart to the brethren in Rome the miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit (Rm 1:11). **31** He preached the present kingdom reign of Jesus upon the throne of David (4:31; Rm 8:38; Hb 1:6; 1 Pt 3:22). He taught the life and teachings of Jesus. No one hindered his teaching, neither the Roman guards nor the Jews (See Ph 4:21,22). It was during this time that Paul was remembered and helped by the Philippian church. They sent aid to him by Epaphroditus while he was in Rome (See comments Ph 4:10-18). He also wrote his letter to the Philippians to thank them for their care for him. It was also during this first imprisonment that Paul wrote letters to the churches in Ephesus and Colossi (See introductions to Ep and Cl). Paul was also visited by Tychicus. When Tychicus returned to Asia he carried

the letters of Ephesians and Colossians to the churches (20:4ff; Ep 6:20; Cl 4:7,8; 2 Tm 4:12; Ti 3:12). He also wrote his first letter to Timothy. Paul was also visited by a runaway slave named Onesimus whom he converted in Rome. He sent Onesimus back to his owner, Philemon, with a letter directed specifically to Philemon on behalf of Onesimus.

Luke's defense to or for Theophilus on behalf of Paul through the treatises of Luke and Acts was apparently successful. Paul had prayed and hoped for release from his first imprisonment in Rome (Ph 1:25; 2:23,24; Pl 22). After his release he evidently journeyed on to Crete where churches were established (Ti 1:5). He evidently went on to Ephesus (Ep 1:), Miletus (2 Tm 4:20), Troas (2 Tm 4:13), Dalmatia (2 Tm 4:10), Nicopolis (Ti 3:12), and Corinth (2 Tm 4:20). From Corinth he possibly went on to Spain (Rm 15:24,28).

It is believed that Paul was later arrested again by Nero in A.D. 67 and taken to Rome. It was then that he wrote to Titus and his final letter to Timothy, where he stated, *“For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing”* (2 Tm 4:6-8).

Historians have affirmed that Paul was probably beheaded in Rome around A.D. 67,68. He thus finished the course that Jesus had given to him on a road outside Damascus. He accomplished his ministry to open the door for the gospel to the Gentiles of world. He had fulfilled his ministry.

## Paul's Letter To The Romans

### Author

The author the Holy Spirit used to inscribe this brilliant and classic letter of inspired literature was the apostle Paul. Paul was his Greek name, whereas Saul was his Jewish name. Paul was a Jew (At 21:39; 22:3) of the tribe of Benjamin (Ph 3:5). He was born in the city of Tarsus of the Roman province of Cilicia. Some of his kinsmen are mentioned in the letter (16:7,11,21; see At 23:16). Paul was educated at the feet of the well know Jewish Rabbi Gamaliel (At 22:3; 23:6; 26:5; Ph 3:5). He was educated as a Pharisee. Before his conversion, he was a Jewish authority with a mandate to bind and cast Christians into prison (At 22:4,5). He was well known by chief priests of the Jewish hierarchy (At 26:4) who had given him authority to bind and imprison Christians (At 26:10). However, because

of the nature of His personality and zeal for what he believed, he was personally called by Jesus to be a Christ-sent apostle specifically to the Gentiles (At 9:1-15; 22:3-21; 26:12-18).

Paul wrote that he had been "put into the ministry" (1 Tm 1:12). He was "separated unto the gospel" (Rm 1:1) and made a "prisoner of Jesus" (Ep 3:1). As an apostle, he was "born out of due time" or the time when Christ-sent apostles were chosen (1 Co 15:8). He was made an apostle by Jesus because he was trustworthy in character, and thus, able to assume the responsibility of being one of the major leaders of the church in the first century (1 Tm 1:12). Because of his character and bold personality, he was made God's special apostle to Israel, Gentiles and kings (At 9:15; 22:15). In his work God intended for him to give special emphasis on opening the door for the gospel into the Gentile world (At 22:21; Gl 2:7). Though his emphasis was on the Gentiles, throughout his ministry he never forgot the Jews. Into almost every city he went, he preached in the synagogue of the Jews (At 14:1; 17:1,2; Rm 9:1-3; 10:1).

Of all the New Testament characters, we probably know more about Paul than the rest. For some reason, God chose him to write thirteen of the New Testament letters. Some believe he wrote also the letter of Hebrews. Because of the nature of his character, it is easy to understand why God made the choice that Paul have such great influence on the beginnings of the church. Paul was conscientious (1 Tm 1:3), pioneering (Rm 15:20), intellectual (At 22:3; Gl 1:14), humble (1 Co 15:9; Ep 3:8; 1 Tm 1:15), honest (1 Tm 1:13), obedient (At 26:19), bold (At 9:27-29), zealous (At 22:3; Gl 1:13,14; Ph 3:6), aggressive (At 9:19,20; 19:30), righteous (Ph 3:6), sacrificial (Ph 3:7,8), determined (At 15:37-39), concerned (Rm 9:1-3; 10:1), daring (At 21:13), loving (1 Co 13; Cl 3:12ff), and enduring (2 Co 11:23-28). When considering the life and work of Paul, it is understandable why the Holy Spirit inspired him to write that his life should be an example to others (1 Co 11:1; Ph 3:17). (See "Author" in the introduction to Gl.)

#### Date

Most Bible students believe that the letter of Romans was written from the city of Corinth while Paul was on his third missionary journey (Compare 15:25-27 with At 20:1-3). The date of writing would be between A.D. 56 and 59.

#### Theme

The theme of the letter is expressed in 1:17. "*The just shall live by faith.*" This is a quotation from Habakkuk 2:4 (See Gl 3:11; Hb 10:38). It is not coincidental that Paul quoted this fundamental concept of salvation in the three letters that were written concerning an influence by those who were seeking to return to the Old Testament law and covenant. In Romans, Galatians and Hebrews there was a concerted effort on the part of some to return to a legal system of justification by meritorious works in reference to the Old Testament law. In all three letters, therefore, Paul affirmed that salvation has always been by grace and faith. Before the giving of the Old Testament law and covenant God made with Israel, salvation was by grace and faith. Under the Old Testament law, salvation was by grace and faith. Nothing has changed unto this day. Paul profoundly explains in this letter why salvation is by grace on God's part to stimulate obedient faith on man's part. Therefore, in the very first chapter of the letter he lays the foundation for the concept of salvation that he will defend throughout the letter. The salvation that he will defend is that we are saved by grace and faith (See introduction to Gl).

#### Purpose

The letter to the Romans can be divided into three sections, each with a purpose for which Paul writes.

**1. We are justified by grace and faith (1-8).** Because of the Jewish influence in the church of Rome, the concept of legal justification had entered the church. Judaism proposed that one was justified by meritorious keeping of law in conjunction with atonement for sin by meritorious deeds. This system of justification, commonly referred to by Bible students as legalism, had made significant inroads into the church. This system of religious behavior attacked the grace of God, and thus, Paul writes in chapters 1-8 in order to explain and defend the fundamental principle that men are saved by the grace of God.

**2. National Israel is rejected because of unbelief (9-10).** The gospel came first to the Jews (3:1; 9:4,5; Jn 4:22), but was rejected by them (Jn 1:11). Paul writes in chapters 9-11 in order to explain the problem of the national unbelief of the Jews in reference to the belief of the Gentiles.

**3. Faith establishes law (11-16).** Since Christians are justified by God's grace, Paul explains in chapters 11-16 that Christians must maintain an obedient life response to the grace of God. Grace sets one free from the necessity of perfect law-keeping in order to be saved, however, it does not set one free from law. In chapters 11-16 he applies the principle of 3:31. "*Do we then make void the law through faith? Certainly not! On the contrary, we establish the law.*" Law is established in one's life

when he responds to the grace of God. Therefore, obedient faith is a response to the grace of God. It is a response of a son who pleads to the Father for direction in living.

### Key Words and Concepts

In order to understand the letter to the Romans, there are some key words that Paul uses that express central concepts in the letter. The following are some of those key words and concepts that introduce us to this letter:

**1. Grace:** Salvation by grace is the theme of the letter to the Romans. In the New Testament, the Greek word *charis* is the common word that is used for grace. In the Old Testament the Hebrew words *hesed* and *hen* were used. The Old Testament words were translated either "steadfast love," "mercy," "lovingkindness," "goodness," or "favor." The New Testament word *charis* was normally used to translate the Hebrew word *hen*. *Charis* in reference to man's salvation relationship with God refers to one's justification before God as a result of the loving favor of God that was first unconditionally extended toward man. In other words, God was not obligated to send Jesus as the sacrificial Lamb for the sins of men in response to the meritorious work of man. Nevertheless, He did (Ti 2:11). This thought was expressed by Paul in 5:8. "*But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*" God initiated the action of salvation toward man though man did not desire or earn such. However, though the initiation of God's plan of salvation was extended without meritorious demands on the part of man, conditions exist in order that one accept the free gift. The gift of grace was free, but the acceptance of the gift has conditions. One must obediently respond to the free gift. This response to the free gift, therefore, entails conditions on the part of man. Paul's argument throughout Romans and Galatians is that this response is not meritorious. One does not continue in the grace of God by meritoriously obligating God to continue in His grace toward man. Paul's emphasis is on one's continual response to God's loving favor. "*We love Him because He first loved us*" (1 Jn 4:19). Our response to God's grace is love, and love acts. This is the point of the New Testament writers concerning the grace of God in our lives. Concerning his own life, Paul wrote to the Corinthians that he excelled in obedience through the motivation of grace (See comments 1 Co 15:10). It was grace that motivated Paul into action. His response to grace, therefore, established the law of God in his life (See comments 3:31). His life was not a testimony of meritoriously seeking to earn his salvation. He had received salvation by the grace of God. The remainder of his life after his baptism for remission of sins was in thanksgiving to God for his salvation. He worked because he was saved, not in order to be saved. And so it should be with all who come to a knowledge of and response to the grace of God that was manifested on the sacrificial cross of Jesus.

**2. Faith:** One of the most misunderstood words of the New Testament in reference to salvation is the word "faith." When approaching a study of Romans it is crucial to understand what Paul means by the use of this word. Several definitions are found throughout the New Testament, some of which are used by Paul in Romans. Faith is the mental acceptance of God's revealed word as truth that was given to man (See Jn 4:21; Js 2:19). Faith is one's reliance on God for salvation (See Jn 2:23,24; Rm 9:33; 10:11; 2 Tm 1:12). Faith is a belief in God (Hb 11:6). When we study the epistle of Romans, it is essential to understand each context in which the word "faith" is used.

When we study the letter to the Romans, Paul contrasts faith with works. Through meritorious works of law and good deeds one is trusting in himself. However, through responsive faith to the grace of God one is trusting in God. Therefore, "*we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand ...*" (5:2). It is affirmed, therefore, that faith is an obedient response that brings us into access to the grace of God. A dead faith will not obey, and thus is unproductive in one's relationship with God's grace (Js 2:14-26).

Faith, or trust in God, is the natural reaction of the one who recognizes the grace of God. Grace is God extending the gift of salvation to man through the cross (Ti 2:11). However, one must accept the gift. Nowhere throughout the entire New Testament is saving faith assumed to be a simple mental belief that God is and that Jesus is His Son. Faith certainly includes these essential and fundamental teachings. However, any recognition of God and Jesus as His Son must motivate one into action.

In Jn 8:31 John recorded that Jesus addressed the Jewish religious leaders, some of whom believed on Him. However, by the time the conversation between the Jewish religious leaders and Jesus came to the point where Jesus revealed their true character, Jesus said to them, "*You are of your father the devil ...*" (Jn 8:44). These Jews whom Jesus addressed "believed," however, their belief did not move them into obedience (See Jn 3:36; Hb 3:19). If belief does not move one into action, then one's appreciation for the grace of God is not sincere. It takes more than an intellectual acceptance of Jesus to make application of God's grace in one's life. Throughout the letter to the Romans, Paul will explain this point. He did not have to go into a lengthy definition of faith because he assumed that everyone understood that faith without works is dead (Js 2:14-26).

**3. Sin:** Paul uses the word “transgression” (*parabasis*) in reference to one’s violation of law (4:15; 5:14; 1 Jn 3:4). This Greek word means “to sidestep” or “overstep” the law of God (Compare 2 Jn 9). Paul also uses the Greek word *harmartia* (“sin”) which is the commonly used word in the New Testament to refer to sin. The meaning of this word is “to miss the mark” or “fail to achieve the mark” for which one is striving.

When we sin against God’s law, we miss the mark of justification before God. We must approach God on the conditions that God determines. We cannot approach God on our own conditions. No man has a right to determine his own conditions for justification before God.

Justification cannot be attained on the basis of perfectly keeping the conditions of God’s law or establishing a system of laws whereby one seeks to justify himself before God. In reference to any law, Paul pronounced that all men sin (3:9,10,23). It is impossible, therefore, for one to reach the mark of justification on the basis of perfect law-keeping. Paul’s indictment against all men, therefore, is that all miss the mark. All men are doomed to sin, and thus suffer the consequences of spiritual death. The fact that we cannot keep law perfectly in order to save ourselves, necessitates the grace of God (5:1,2).

Sin is not an entity that exists separate from the existence of man. Satan and his angels certainly sinned against God (2 Pt 2:4; Jd 6). However, when discussing man’s relationship with God, Paul affirms that sin is man’s specific relational problem that all of us have in reference to God. Sin is the willful transgression of law on the part of free-moral agents who have been given the responsibility to respond positively to God’s law (1 Jn 3:4). Sin is the action on the part of men who do not do biblical principles of good (See comments Js 4:17). Therefore, sin would not exist if men did not exist. In Romans Paul sometimes personifies sin. However, we must not miss his point by misunderstanding his use of the concept of sin. Sin exists because men exist.

The result of sin is separation from God (Is 59:1,2), and thus spiritual death (6:23). Therefore, because men exist, sin exists, and all men are therefore spiritually dead before God. Without the grace of God no man could be saved, for it is impossible for men to perfectly keep law in order to justify themselves before God (3:20; Gl 2:16). This brings us to Paul’s use of the word “law” in Romans in reference to man’s dilemma concerning sin and death.

**4. Law:** Depending on the context, Paul uses the word “law” to refer to several different concepts of law. Because Paul uses the word in such a diverse manner, it is imperative that Bible students allow the contexts in which the word is used to be the final commentary as to which of the following meanings he has in mind.

**a.** He often uses the word “law” in a generic manner. When he uses the word as such, he does not use the article “the” with the word. For example, “*Therefore, by the deeds of law no flesh will be justified in His sight ...*” (3:20). In this statement, as well as many others, Paul does not use the Greek article “the” with the word “law”, which some translators have here inserted (See comments Gl 2:16). Therefore, reference is to law in general. In these contexts any religious law would be under consideration, including the law of Christ. Some translators assumed that whenever Paul used the word “law” in these contexts that he was referring to the Old Testament law. But it was the translator’s unjustified assumption which resulted in the addition of the article to the text. With the addition of the article, the force of Paul’s argument is somewhat misunderstood. But not weakened. His principle still stands. However, we must understand that when the article is absent, Paul is warning us that we must not twist the law of Christ into being some type of legal system by which one would seek to meritoriously justify himself before God.

**b.** Paul also uses the word “law” in reference to the ten commandments. He wrote, “*I would not have known sin except through law*” (7:7). In the same verse he refers to one of the ten commandments of the law (See also 13:8-10). Therefore, the ten commandments were a part of the law. When he uses the word “law” in reference to the ten commandments or Old Testament, he always uses the article “the” with the word “law.”

**c.** In 3:21 Paul wrote, “*But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets.*” In this and similar passages Paul uses the word “law” according to the Jewish use of the term in reference to the first five books of the Old Testament (Gn, Ex, Lv, Nm, Dt). In other contexts he uses the phrase “law of Moses” to refer to the same (5:13).

**d.** In 8:2 Paul refers to the law of the Spirit of life. “*For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death.*” Reference here is to that which is in contrast to the “law of sin and death.” The Old Testament did not bring salvation, for no law in and of itself can accomplish justification before God. The problem is not with the law, but with man. Therefore, law was not given to man to be a means by which he would save himself. The reason this is true is that men cannot keep law perfectly in order to save themselves. Therefore, the Old Testament law became a law of “sin and death.” The Jews could not keep it perfectly, and thus, their sin against law condemned them before God. In contrast to the Old Testament law as a means by which one might

justify himself before God, the "law" that was revealed through the Holy Spirit, that is the New Testament law of Christ, is a law of life. The New Testament law of Christ, which is the result of the Spirit's inspiration of men, is a law of life because it is based on grace. It is the law of liberty about which James wrote (Jas 1:25).

The New Testament law of Christ is a law of liberty in the sense that it gives the principles that direct the lives of those who have responded to the grace of God. However, there is liberty in applying the principles to one's life. It is the "law of the Spirit of life" because one responds to establishing law in his life because of his salvation by God's grace (3:31). It is the law of liberty because we have been set free from the necessity of perfect law-keeping in order to be saved.

**e.** In 8:2 Paul refers to the "law of sin and death." Law used as a meritorious means of justification always results in "sin and death." Law results in sin in the sense that no one can keep law perfectly in order to be justified before God. With law comes sin, for all have sinned (3:9,10). And with sin comes spiritual death, for sin separates one from God (Is 59:1,2). Therefore, when discussing law, the concept of "sin and death" must always be in one's definition of law. When we understand this, then we understand that law was never given as a means of salvation. It cannot bring salvation in and of itself because all men sin against law. There is always "sin and death" in reference to law.

The above principle does not mean that law has no place in one's salvation. When one responds to the loving grace of God, he pleads "Abba, Father." As a son he seeks to please the Father. The Father has responded with direction (law) for a loving son. Therefore, our obedient response to the work of God establishes law in our lives (See comments 3:31).

**f.** Paul refers to the Gentiles as having "*a law unto themselves*" (2:14). This was Paul's reference to the moral conscience of those Gentiles who keep the principles of the Old Testament law, though the law was not given specifically to them. Man has always been under a law of God. Though the Gentiles were not given the Old Testament law on Mount Sinai, they continued under the system of law and its principles that God had delivered to man before the giving of the Old Testament law to the Jews on Mount Sinai. God spoke to the fathers of the families before Sinai, and thus continued with the principles of this law with the Gentiles until the coming of Christ (Hb 1:1,2). Therefore, the Gentiles were not without law. Though the principles of God's law were not written, as was the case with the Old Testament law that was given to the Jews, they were written on their consciences. Therefore, the Gentiles were under law.

**g.** In 3:27 Paul refers to the law of faith. "*Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? Of works? No, but by the law of faith.*" This is the principle that one's faith moves him to respond to the grace of God. Faith is not a simple mental acknowledgment that God exists and that Jesus is the Son of God, or that He is one's personal Savior. It is a faith working in response to the love of God (See Gl 3:10-13; 4:5; 5:6; 6:2; 1 Jn 4:19). Paul does not contradict himself in proposing this concept. In the context, his principle is simple. One is not saved by meritorious works, for one cannot keep law perfectly or do enough good works in order to merit eternal life in heaven. Since this is true, then there is no room for boasting on the part of the individual concerning either his works of law or meritorious deeds. He is saved on the basis of trusting (faith) in God's grace. Nevertheless, this trust in God's grace moves one to maintain an obedient faith (See 4:8ff; 5:1,2; 6:14; 7:4-6; 8:2,3; 10:6-10; compare Gl 3:10,13,21-26; 5:18). If there is room for boasting, it is in one's reliance on God for his salvation, not on himself in his meritorious performance of deeds. This is the law of faith. It is the principle that one's faith in God's grace moves him to comply with God's life principles of Christian conduct.

**h.** In 3:27 Paul contrasted the law of faith with the law of works. The "law of works" refers to one's attempt to be justified before God on the merit of one's perfect law-keeping and good works (See 3:20; 4:13ff; 7:1-11; 8:2,3; 10:5; compare Gl 3:10,11,17,18,21; 5:4; 2 Tm 1:9). This is Paul's primary purpose for the letter, and thus the primary use of the word "law" in the letter. He affirms that man cannot be saved on the merit of law-keeping simply because no one can keep law perfectly in order to save himself. The Jews codified the Old Testament law in conjunction with their added traditions in order to use it as a means by which they sought to meritoriously save themselves (3:1-8; see introduction to Gl). The Gentiles also came out of a similar legal system of law-keeping in reference to their own religious laws they had constructed in order to save themselves (Cl 2:20-22; see Rm 1:18-20; 2:14,15). Both Jews and Gentiles came out of legalistic systems of law-keeping in reference to the laws they had constructed for themselves that demanded flawless living in order to be meritoriously justified. The problem with this concept and system of law was that one sin made one a lawbreaker (Gl 3:10,11; Js 2:10). And as a lawbreaker, one was condemned (6:23). Therefore, if one sought legal justification before God on the basis of his performance of law, he stood condemned before God because of his inability to keep law perfectly (3:20; Gl 2:16). This is Paul's definition of the law of works. It is his argument in both Romans and Galatians to prove that the law of grace and faith was necessary in order to bring men to justification before God, because men, by trusting in their own

performance of law, could not keep law perfectly in order to save themselves (See Gl 3:21,22).

**5. Death:** The word "death" always means separation. In reference to man's spiritual problem, it means separation from God because of sin (Is 59:1,2). In reference to man's physical death problem, it means separation from the tree of life (Gn 3:22-24). In the letter to the Romans Paul uses the word in at least five ways in association with these two great problems that man has in his existence as a living being.

**a.** When Adam ate of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, he personally sinned against God, and subsequently, personally died spiritually (5:12). Sin came between him and God in order to separate him from God (Is 59:1,2). The result of his separation from God, therefore, was his spiritual death (6:21-23). Spiritual death is the result of men not being able to keep law perfectly in order to be saved. Because all men sin, therefore, all men suffer the curse of spiritual death as Adam. This is man's greatest problem and the problem that has been solved by the grace of God. Through the cross of Jesus, God offers a solution for the spiritual death problem of men (1 Co 15:1-4; Rm 6:3-6).

**b.** When Adam was separated from the tree of life, he could not eat thereof and live forever (Gn 3:22-24). As a consequence of this separation from the tree, it is appointed unto all men that they should physically die (Hb 9:27). In physical death there is separation of the spirit and body of man (Js 2:26). Physical death, therefore, means the separation of the spirit and body as a result of man's separation from the tree of life (See 5:10; 6:9,10; 7:2-5). Physical death is man's second greatest problem. However, through God's grace God has offered through the resurrection of Jesus an opportunity for men to have eternal life (6:3-6; see comments 1 Co 15:20-22).

**c.** Paul also makes reference to the Christian's relationship to the Old Testament law as a means by which to be saved. *"Therefore, my brethren, you also have become dead to the law through the body of Christ ..."* (7:4). In this sense, the Christian is separated from the Old Testament law as a means of salvation. Because he is married to Christ, he is separated from the requirement of perfect law-keeping in order to be saved. The requirement of law in order to produce justification was perfect law-keeping. Since Christians have been married to Christ, they are thus free from the necessity of perfect law-keeping in order to be justified before God. They are thus dead to the Old Testament law as a means of salvation.

**d.** Paul's theme in chapter 6 is that Christians are dead to sin (6:1,2;4-7). In other words, Christians are to be separated from the practice of sin because they have become slaves of righteousness. Those who are slaves of righteousness trust in God's grace, and thus, they do not give themselves to the lust of the flesh, eyes and pride of life. Grace does not free one to sin (Gl 5:13; 1 Pt 2:16). It frees one to obey in response to grace. It is imperative, therefore, that Christians separate themselves from sin.

**e.** Paul also uses the word "death" in a metonymical sense in reference to one's obedience to the gospel. *"Therefore we were buried with Him through immersion into death ..."* (6:4). Jesus literally died and was buried outside Jerusalem in Palestine. However, in the action of immersion, one comes into union with Jesus through the action of crucifying oneself with Jesus and subsequently being buried in water. One thus dies with Christ in the sense of dying to the old way of life in order to be raised from the tomb of water to walk in a new life. We are thus *"united together in the likeness of His death"* (6:5).

**6. Justification/Righteousness:** Out of the thirty-nine times the verb "justify" is used in the New Testament it is used twenty-nine times by Paul in his epistles. The noun form (*dikaiosis*) is used in 4:25 and 5:18. Understanding Paul's use of this word in reference to man's state of salvation is crucial in order to understand the message of Romans.

Consider first of all that the English words "righteousness" and "justification" originate from the same root Greek word. To some extent, therefore, the translators did not do us a favor in using two English words to translate in some text the same Greek word. In Romans, therefore, the words "righteousness" and "justification" in reference to one's relationship with God cannot be separated. When used in reference to God, Paul says that God is righteous and just (3:5;25,26; 2 Tm 4:8). He is such because He consistently works in harmony with His established laws in order to save the lost (See Gn 18:25). The event of the gospel was a manifestation of the righteousness of God (1:17; see Ti 2:11). The gospel manifested justice in that God offered men a means by which to be saved. The gospel also manifests God's justice in judging those who reject the gospel (See 2:5; 3:5,6).

No man can be righteous before God on the merit of his own performance of law because no man can keep law perfectly in order to be without sin (3:9,10,23). Man is righteous before God on the basis of being justified before God by His grace (Rm 5:1,2). Therefore, we could define the word "righteous" to have reference to one's state of being just before God. The word "justified" would be the legal term that would explain the action of God in reference to man in order to accredit him righteous. In other words, through His grace God takes the action of justification. He forgives men of sin (8:33). As a result of the action, therefore, men stand righteous or justified before God.

There is an inseparable relationship between righteousness and justification in the letters to both the Romans and Galatians. The righteous are justified and the justified are the righteous. Righteousness refers to man's right relationship to God (4:8,9) that was not accomplished through either meritorious deeds (4:1-5; see Ep 2:8,9; Ti 3:5) or law-keeping (3:20,21; Gl 2:16). One is accounted righteous before God on the basis of an obedient response of faith to the saving grace of God (1:17; 4:6; 5:1,2).

On the other hand, Paul speaks of a supposed righteousness that is based on the presumption that one can keep law perfectly and do meritorious works in order to save oneself in the sight of God (9:30,31; 10:1-3). Reference to righteousness in these texts is a supposed righteousness that men would claim on the merit of their performance of law and works in order to save themselves (10:3,5; Gl 3:10,11; Ph 3:9). However, Paul counters by stating that no man can keep law perfectly in order to save himself (3:10,20; 8:3; Gl 2:16; 3:10,11). No one can do meritorious good deeds in order to atone for sin against law.

The Jews sought God after their own "self-righteousness" (Mt 9:13). Some were seeking to bring this system of law-keeping into the church. It was through the letters of Romans and Galatians that Paul stopped the invasion of this "other gospel" (Gl 1:6-9).

**7. *Flesh*:** In Romans Paul uses the word "flesh" to refer to one's life before he became a Christian (7:5; see 2 Co 10:2,4). In other words, when one is outside Christ, he is "in the flesh" (7:5; see Gl 3:3). He is living according to the desires of the flesh (Ep 2:1-3). Walking according to the flesh refers to living after the carnal life (Gl 5:19). However, in reference to the religious person who lived according to the flesh, Paul uses the word "flesh" in a different manner. He speaks of his living according to the flesh before he came to the grace of God. In other words, he sought justification before God through meritorious performance of law and good works according to the ability of the flesh. His emphasis in his religious life was on himself, and not God. Throughout Romans, Paul uses the word "flesh" in this manner. It is used in a manner that is in contrast to living by faith. Through faith one is trusting in God for his salvation. The one who walks according to the flesh, is trusting in himself.

## Chapter 1

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

**2** which He had promised beforehand by His prophets in the Holy Scriptures,

**3** concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord,

who was born of the seed of David according to the flesh,

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

**5** through whom we have received grace and apostleship, for obedience of faith among all

### MINISTRY OF PREACHING

**1 *Bondservant of Jesus Christ*:** The Greek word here (*doulos*) refers to one who is a slave. Paul was Jesus' slave to carry out His commission to the Gentiles (At 9:15,16; see comments Gl 2:20). Paul was personally called to be a Christ-sent apostle (1 Co 9:16,17; 1 Tm 1:11). He was thus separated from all things of this world in order to give himself entirely to the preaching of the cross (At 9:15; Gl 1:15). **2,3** The Old Testament prophets prophesied the coming of the suffering servant Jesus who would give Himself for the sins of men (Is 53; Ps 22). God promised Abraham that in him all nations of the earth would be blessed through the Seed (Christ) who would come from him (Gn 12:3; At 26:6,7; Gl 3:8,16; compare Jr 31:31-35; 1 Pt 1:10-12). ***Born of the seed of David*:** Jesus was born of the family lineage of King David of Israel (Ps 89:34ff; compare At 2:29-35; Hb 2:14-16). **4 *Declared to be the Son of God*:** The power of God that was manifested in the resurrection of Jesus proved Him to be the Son of God (At 9:20; 13:33; Ep 1:19-22; Hb 1:2). The resurrection is thus the foundation upon which Christianity is built. If Jesus were not raised from the dead, then there

is no substance to the biblical claim that there is life after death. If the resurrection of Jesus is denied, then the very foundation upon which Christianity rests is destroyed. The centrality of the resurrection to Christian belief is according to what Paul emphasized to the Corinthians (See comments 1 Co 15:13-15). Jesus was the firstfruits of all those who have died in Christ (1 Co 15:20-22). He was raised never to die again. His resurrection became the guarantee that those who are in Christ will also be raised never to die again (See 1 Th 4:13-18). Therefore, though Jesus was born of the seed of David, He was proved to be the Son of God by the resurrection from the dead. **5 *Received grace and apostleship*:** Paul, as well as the original twelve apostles, received their apostleship by the grace of God (Gl 2:9). It was only by God's grace that they were commissioned to be Christ-sent apostles with the message of the grace of God (Mt 28:19,20; Mk 16:15; see Ep 3:8). They did not earn their apostleship by any meritorious works. ***Obedience of faith*:** This would better be translated, "obedience of faith" since the article "the" is not present before the word "faith." It is faith that moves one to obedience. Paul here defines faith for the rest of

the nations, for His name,

**6** among whom you are also the called of Jesus Christ;

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

**8 ¶** First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, because your faith is spoken of throughout the whole 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;

**10** making request, if by any means now at length I might have a successful journey by the will of God to come to you.

**11** For I long to see you so that I may impart to you some spiritual gift, to the end *that* you may be established,

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

**13 ¶** I do not want you to be unaware, brethren, that I often planned to come to you. But I was hindered until the present, so that I

the letter (See comments 16:26). It is a faith that is obedient as a result of one's faith in God's work on the cross. If one's faith does not respond to the grace of God, then it is dead (Jn 2:14-26). Therefore, throughout the letter of Romans, Paul does not have to redefine what he means by faith. It is assumed that faith responds to the grace of God. **For His name:** Evangelists have gone forth for the sake of the name of Jesus (3 Jn 7,8). They went forth in the first century to all nations with the message of the gospel (Mt 28:19; Mk 16:15). **6 Called of Jesus Christ:** Paul reminds the Roman Christians that they are among all those who have obeyed the gospel, and thus are members of the one universal church of Christ (16:16).

**7 Called to be saints:** Christians have been called by the gospel (2 Th 2:14). They have been called unto sanctification through the blood of Jesus, and thus, they are saints of God (At 9:13; 1 Co 1:2,24; see 1 Pt 2:5,9). Paul reminds the Roman Christians that they were living saints of God, not because of something they had done to merit the right to be called saints, but because of what God had done for them through the sanctifying blood of Jesus. **Grace ... peace:** This is Paul's normal greeting to churches (1 Co 1:3; 2 Co 1:2; Gl 1:3; Ep 1:2; Ph 1:2; Cl 1:2; 1 Th 1:1; 2 Th 1:2). It is God's grace that brings peace between God and man, and thus peace of mind.

#### APPRECIATION FOR THE CHURCH IN ROME

**8 Thank my God ... for you all:** Paul here expressed his thanksgiving for the faithfulness of the Roman church. The reputation of their faithfulness was manifested to others (See 1 Co 1:4). Their faithfulness had encouraged others. It was through Jesus Christ that he thanked God for them (See Jn 14:13,14; 16:23; Ep 5:20; Cl 3:17; Hb 13:15). It was only through Jesus that Paul could have been thankful for them, for it was through Jesus that they existed as part of the body and he as the Lord's apostle. **Your faith is spoken of:** Paul had never met the brethren in Rome. Nevertheless, he wanted to compliment them on their faith which was spoken of throughout the Roman Empire (See comments Lk 2:1,2; see Rm 16:19). **9 God is my witness:** Paul assured the Roman brethren that they were constantly in his prayers (See 9:1; 2 Co 1:23; Gl 1:20; Ph 1:8). **10 By the will of God:** Paul's ministry was by the will of God. He thus walked according to the will of God that he might fulfill his ministry (See At 9:15; compare Lk

22:42). Therefore, he prayed that it would be within the will of God that he go to Rome (15:22-24). This prayer was answered, for in the letter of Acts Paul is found in Rome at the time of the conclusion of Acts (At 23:11).

**11,12 I may impart to you some spiritual gift:** It is certain that Paul here speaks of the miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit that were given to the early church through the laying on of the Christ-sent apostles' hands (See comments At 18:8). The gifts were given for the purpose of edifying the church in its early beginnings, for there was no written word. It was one of the responsibilities of the Christ-sent apostles to lay hands on baptized believers in order that they receive these gifts. In this context, therefore, Paul is desiring to go to Rome in order to accomplish this function of his apostleship. Some of the Roman Christians may have already had these gifts, since some were probably in Jerusalem during one of the of Passover/Pentecost feasts when the apostles were in Jerusalem in A.D. 30 and for about fifteen years afterward (See 12:6). Nevertheless, Paul knew that they had grown in numbers, and thus, there were others in the church who needed to have hands laid on them in order to receive the gifts (15:29). Since Paul had to go to them in order to lay hands on them, such is proof that only Christ-sent apostles could impart the miraculous gifts. This they could do only if they were in the presence of the person upon whom they laid hands. For this reason, no one can claim today to have such miraculous gifts simply because there are no Christ-sent apostles today. **Encouraged together with you:** When Paul would visit Rome, He would be encouraged by the faithfulness of the brethren there who had remained faithful in one of the most hostile environments to Christianity in the first century. Rome would be the seat of persecution against the church in the years to come. At the time Paul wrote, Nero had not yet begun his persecution of the church. However, in the early and mid 60s he would do so. In the latter part of the first century, Domitian would launch State persecution against Christians. Therefore, Paul commends these Christians for their faithfulness and encourages them to continue.

**13 Was hindered until the present:** Paul had in the past made plans to visit Rome. However, for some reason he was hindered from making his desired visit (15:22). He could have been hindered by the work of Satan through evil men (1 Th 2:18). It is certain that the hindrance about which he speaks here was not that

might have some fruit among you also, even as *I have* among the other Gentiles.

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

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

**16 ¶** For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.

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

**18 ¶** For the wrath of God is revealed from

which was communicated to him by the Holy Spirit when he wanted to go into Bithynia and Asia (At 16:6,7). We do not know exactly what hindered him from visiting before he wrote this letter. Regardless of past hindrances, he wanted them to know that he wanted to come to them in order that he might produce growth in the church by the preaching of the gospel in Rome. **14 I am a debtor:** Because of his realization of what God had done for him in saving him, Paul was obligated to work in thanksgiving to God (1 Co 9:16; 15:10). Because God had shown love toward him, he had to love others (2 Co 5:14; 1 Jn 4:19). He thus felt his destiny to complete the ministry that was given to him by God (1:1; At 9:15; Gl 1:15). He was in debt to God for saving him. He was not working in order to put God in debt to him. His very life, therefore, teaches the theme of this epistle that he writes to the Romans. **15 As much as is in me:** There is intensity in these words. There is determination. There is destiny. With such emotions each evangelist is motivated to preach the gospel to the lost (9:1-3; 10:1; see comments 1 Co 15:10). One characteristic of Paul was his self initiative to do the work of evangelism. This is a necessary characteristic of any evangelist who seeks to preach the gospel to the world. Men must arise who take it upon themselves to get the job done of preaching the gospel (See 2 Tm 4:2).

#### THE POWER OF THE GOSPEL

**16 I am not ashamed:** Paul was not intimidated by the pride of the unbelieving world that scoffed at the cross (Mk 8:38; Ps 40:9,10). He had been where they were and knew that education and philosophy could produce no real world view. Reality was not in the mental inventions of men who focused on their own accomplishments. He had experienced on the Damascus road the fact of the resurrection of the One that the world had rejected. He walked by fact in reference to the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus. It was not a matter of faith to him, for he had seen Jesus with his own eyes and experienced the power of the supernatural working through his hands in miracles. Men as this are not intimidated by circumstances or fearful for their lives. **Power of God unto salvation:** Paul's boldness to proclaim the death of Jesus for our sins and resurrection for our hope came from the fact that all men must obey this gospel in order to be saved (See comments 6:3-6; At 4:12; 1 Co 1:18; 15:1-4; 2 Th 1:7-9; 1 Pt 4:17). Therefore, he had set the course of his life to proclaim the glorious gospel (2 Co 4:4; 1 Pt 1:24) of peace (Ep 6:15) and hope (Cl 1:23). It is this gospel that is God's power to save man. Salvation does not lie in the keeping of religious traditions, submission to emotional experiences, or accomplishments of meritorious works. Salvation is accomplished through the grace of God that was revealed through the good news of Jesus' death for

our sins and resurrection for our hope (Ti 2:11). **Gospel:** The Greek word here means "good news." This is the good news of the historical event of the death of Jesus on the cross to solve man's sin problem (1 Co 1:23; 2:2; 15:3; see Is 53). It is the resurrection of Jesus from the dead in order to solve man's problem of physical death (1 Co 15:4,20-22). The word gospel (good news) does not have reference to the teachings of Jesus or the New Testament. The New Testament is the inspired report of the event of Jesus' death, burial and resurrection (See comments 1 Co 15:1-4). It is the purpose of the teachings of the New Testament to direct one's faith unto obedience to the gospel, and then after obedience, direct one's life according to holy living (See 2 Tm 3:16,17). **To the Jew first:** It was the plan of God to originate the gospel from the Jews (See Gn 12:1-3; 22:18; Is 2:2-5; Zc 8:22,23; Lk 2:30; 24:47; Jn 4:22; At 3:24,26; 13:46; Rm 15:27; Gl 4:4; see comments At 13:46; 18:6). But from the Jews, the gospel would go unto every ethnic group of all the world as Israel fulfilled her responsibility of being a priesthood for the world (See comments 1 Pt 2:9; see Mt 28:19,20; Mk 16:15). **17**

**The righteousness of God revealed:** God created man a free-moral agent and placed him in an environment where he could make choices. However, God knew that men would sin, for no man could keep His laws perfectly in order to save himself (3:20; Gl 2:16). Since this was true of the nature of man, then God could not stand just to condemn anyone to hell without Himself being unjust or unrighteous. Through the gospel, however, God has offered to humanity the means by which to escape the condemnation of sin (3:21). God's righteousness is revealed through the gospel because it is God's offering to free-moral individuals who could not escape the dilemma of sin against law (3:9,10,23). **From faith to faith:** The text literally reads, "out of faith unto faith." God has offered His grace through the gospel. Men must respond by obedient faith in order to obey the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus by immersion (6:3-5). This faith response leads to a life of faith in God for saving one through the gospel. The faith response that initiated one's obedience to the gospel continues to respond to the will of God throughout one's life. **The just shall live by faith:** From creation to the culmination of all things this has always been and always will be God's plan of salvation (See Hk 2:4; Gl 3:11,12; Hb 10:38). Salvation has been by man's faith response to the grace of God (5:1,2). This has to be God's plan of salvation simply because no man can keep law perfectly in order to save himself. Good works cannot atone for sin. Therefore, man is in a dilemma from which only grace can deliver him. Throughout the letter to the Romans, Paul will define this concept that is here quoted from Habakkuk in one statement that "the just shall live by faith." He will define this principle as the foundation

heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness,

**19** because that which is known about God is manifest within them, for God has shown *it* to them.

**20** For the invisible things of Him since the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, *even* His eternal power and divinity, so that they

are without excuse,

**21** because even though they knew God, they glorified *Him* not as God, neither were thankful. But they became vain in their imaginations and their foolish hearts were darkened.

**22** Professing to be wise, they became fools, **23** and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like unto corruptible man and of birds and four-footed beasts and crawling things.

upon which all who would be saved must approach God. Obedient faith is in response to the grace of God. Salvation is by grace and faith (5:1,2).

#### SIN AND CONDEMNATION OF THE GENTILES

Paul now begins to build his argument concerning the necessity of the grace of God for the salvation of men. He first begins in verses 18-32 of this chapter to convict the Gentiles. They were lost in sin and unable to save themselves. They conducted themselves after a vile nature that did not deserve the grace of the cross. However, Paul will develop the argument that God poured out His love through Jesus regardless of the spiritual condition of society (5:8). In 2:1-16 he will turn to the Jews. They also were undeserving of the grace of God though they thought that they were righteous before God by their own legal system of justification. However, neither they nor the Gentiles were righteous in a way to put God in debt to offer Jesus on the cross. There were none among the Jews nor Gentiles who were found to be worthy (3:9,10,23). Paul will affirm, therefore, that in order for anyone to be saved, God had to pour out His grace through the sacrificial death of the incarnate Son of God (Ti 2:11).

**18,19 The wrath of God is revealed:** God can stand righteous in revealing wrath upon sinners because He has extended a means by which they can be saved. However, in the context Paul will explain the problem of man. Beginning with this verse and extending through 3:20, Paul presents the spiritual condition of the Gentile world before Christ to have been under sin and death. This state of man resulted from man's unwillingness to accept God's law as it was revealed through the fathers (Hb 1:1). The Gentiles refused to approach God through faith, and thus, they created a god after their own imagination and religions after their own desires. Paul explains that the Gentiles were subject to the law of their conscious realization that there was a God to whom they must be obedient according to their conscience (2:14). The Jews were subject to the Old Testament law. However, both Jew and Gentile stood condemned in relation to God's laws, for all have sinned (3:9,10,23). **Suppress the truth in unrighteousness:** God had revealed His will to the Gentiles (vs 20; At 14:17; Hb 1:1; see Rm 2:12-15). Because they did not have a love of the truth, they invented their own religions, and thus, they rejected the truth (See comments Mk 7:1-9; 2 Th 2:10-12). In their creation of their own religion they suppressed the truth of God in their lives. **That which is known about God:** Paul affirms that it is within men to have enough common sense to know that there is a Designer who is greater than this world (See comments At 17:22-31).

Common sense combined with a humble heart would lead one to search for God. But such is not the case with arrogant men who are determined to live according to their own lusts. **20 Invisible things of Him ... clearly seen:** The word "attributes" is not in the text, and thus, one must not be confused by thinking that the material world reveals the character of God. That which is revealed about God through the physical world is that He is all-powerful, and thus able to create the world. Paul's emphasis here is not on natural revelation being the dictionary of the character of God, but on the fact that He is there (See Ps 8:1; 19:1-6; Jb 12:7-9; Jr 5:22; At 14:17). Those who emphasize nature to be able to reveal the character of God are often driven to idolize nature as the final definition of God. But we must always contend that God is greater than that which was created (See comments At 17:24,25). Therefore, we would not have known the character of God except through His work among men as revealed in the Old Testament. And finally, we would not have known His true character except through the revelation of Jesus. **That they are without excuse:** God affirms that the evidence of His existence is so manifested through the things that are created, that men should come to the conclusion that He exists. If men do not come to this conclusion, then they are being led astray by their own will to reject God (See comments 2 Th 2:10-12). For this reason, all men who reject the one true God of heaven will be without excuse in the day of judgment. **21** When men refuse to accept the authority of God in their lives, their lives digress to wickedness (See 2 Kg 17:15; Jr 2:5; Ep 4:17). The one who rejects God becomes arrogant in his thinking and foolish in reference to his feelings and emotions. His arrogant rebellion against having the control of God in his life will eventually lead to his unjust behavior with his fellow man. **22 They became fools:** Such is the denunciation by the Holy Spirit of all those scientists and philosophers who would trust in their own wisdom and knowledge as opposed to being guided by the wisdom and knowledge of God (See Jr 10:14,23; 1 Co 1:20-25). The one who says there is no God is a fool simply because he cannot objectively deduct from that which exists that there is a Creator and Designer behind all things (Ps 14:1). **23 Made like unto corruptible man:** It is the spirit of idolatry to create a god after one's own image (See Dt 4:16; Ps 106:20; Is 40:18). When men seek to be religious in a manner that justifies the actions of their lives, they will organize a religion that conforms to their behavior. Their next stage of this apostasy is to create a god that agrees with the performance of their religion. And thus, a new religion is born to be added to the thousands in history that have

**24 ¶** Therefore, God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonor their own bodies between themselves.

**25** They exchanged the truth of God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.

**26 ¶** For this cause God gave them up to dishonorable affections, for even their women changed the natural use of *the body* into that which is against nature.

**27** And also in the same way the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another, men with men working what is indecent and receiving in

themselves the penalty of their error that was due.

**28 ¶** And even as they did not like to retain God in *their* knowledge, God gave them over to a depraved mind to do those things that are not proper,

**29** being filled with all unrighteousness, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malice; *they are gossips,*

**30** slanderers, haters of God, insolent, arrogant, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents,

**31** without understanding, untrustworthy, unloving and unmerciful.

**32** Although they know the judgment of God

been the result of men who refuse to seek the truth of God. In this letter to the Romans, Paul's emphasis in his discussion on grace is that men should be driven to God for direction in life. Any supposed "Christian" religion that is not driven by the word of God for God's directions in religious matters is simply not a religion that is based on a fundamental understanding of what grace should produce in one's life. It is a false religion because it is humanly invented and controlled.

**24 God also gave them up:** When one gives up on God, God will give up on him in the sense that God will not submit him to obedience of His will (vss 26,28; see Ps 81:12; At 7:42; Ep 4:18,19; 2 Th 2:10-12). When any religionist is not driven to God's word, then he is driven further away from God. When one is given up by God because he will not repent, his destination of destruction is certain (See Gn 6:5; see comments 2 Th 1:7-9). **To dishonor their own bodies:** When one gives up the moral values of God, he will give himself over to the lusts of the flesh. In this case they had given themselves over to all sorts of immoral behavior (See 1 Co 6:18; 1 Th 4:4; compare Lv 18:22). **25 Exchanged the truth of God for a lie:** Those who seek to follow after the carnal lusts of the flesh will create a religion that conforms to their behavior. They deceive themselves into believing that their behavior is acceptable to the higher power they have created after the lusts of their own flesh. What they think is truth is actually a lie. God will allow one to believe the lies he has manufactured in order to follow after his own desires. However, in the end, He will condemn the man for his unwillingness to love and believe the truth (See comments 2 Th 2:10-12). **Worshiped and served the creature:** The corrupt mind will turn from that which is beyond and above this world in order to focus on that which is of this world. Men make themselves the final authority for human values. Instead of understanding that the created things should point one toward God, their desire to rule their own lives diverts their attention to establish their own rules and values. **26,27** When men forsake direction by God and distort the very nature of God by their vile imaginations, God gives them up because they will no longer be influenced by His will (vss 24,28; see comments Mk 3:28,29). **Changed the natural use of the**

**body:** Homosexuality and lesbianism are the manifestation of their corrupt mentalities in relation to human sexual behavior (See Lv 18:22; Ep 5:12). **What is indecent:** In the eyes of God the Holy Spirit here reveals that in sexual relationships, it is shameful for men to create sexual activity between men and men and between females and females. Homosexuality and lesbianism are the manifestation of a vile society that has given itself over to the fulfillment of the corrupted lusts of the flesh. **Receiving in themselves the penalty:** As a result of their unnatural sexual activity, they reaped the consequences of sexual diseases (See Gl 6:7,8).

**28 A depraved mind:** When one forsakes a knowledge of God, his mind loses a center of reference for establishing moral values. There is thus no standard by which to determine what is either right or wrong. Therefore, society will digress even to self-destruction (See Gn 6:5; compare At 7:42; 2 Th 2:8-12). **29-31** Paul here lists the results of those who are no longer restrained by the fear of God (See comments Gl 5:19-21; 2 Tm 3:1-8). This list could go on. The point is that when one mentally releases himself from conscientiously feeling that he must give account of his behavior before God, he determines what is either right or wrong according to his own selfish desires. When a society does this, that society is doomed to social chaos and destruction. It is not within the power of man to determine his own moral values. **32 Worthy of death:** Paul's point is to uphold the justice of God. Those who give themselves over to that which harms their fellow man are deserving of the second death (See Mt 10:28; 2 Th 1:7-9). Those who consent to the actions of the wicked have lost their restraining influence to control the behavior of the wicked. They are also deserving of the same punishment. Therefore, the justice of God is revealed when punishment is inflicted on the wicked in time by pouring out the consequences of sin on the sinner. His justice will be revealed at the end of time when He pours out His wrath on those who lived in a way that destroyed society (Jd 14-16). Paul's argument is that the sin of man will not escape the justice of God, and thus, when the justice of God is poured out on the wicked in judgment either in time or at the end of time, they will have no excuse because they had a chance to believe.

that those who practice such things are worthy of death, they not only continue to do the same things but also consent to those who do them.

## Chapter 2

1 ¶ Therefore, you are without excuse, O man, whoever you are who judge *another*, for in that which you judge another you condemn yourself, for you who judge do the same things.

2 But we know that the judgment of God is according to truth against those who practice such things.

3 And do you think this, O man, that *when you judge* those who do such things, and *you do the same*, that you will escape the judgment of God?

4 Or do you despise the riches of His goodness and forbearance and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance?

They had the chance to reason that He existed, and thus, they should have reasoned that they were responsible to obey His will.

## Chapter 2

### THE RIGHTEOUS JUDGMENT OF GOD

Paul has finished the discussion of 1:18-32 concerning the spiritual situation of the Gentiles in sin. The conclusion is that they were meritoriously undeserving of the grace of God that was revealed through the cross (Ti 2:11). Because they were in sin, they did not merit the atonement of the cross. He now turns to the Jews. In their self-righteousness he proves in the following context the point that they also were undeserving of God's grace, though they had deceived themselves into believing that all was well in their relationship with God. The problem with the Jews was that they used the Old Testament law as a legal means by which they sought to meritoriously justify themselves before God. By the works of law they assumed that righteousness before God could be attained by a systematic obedience to those laws they thought they could obey in order to be saved. When one sinned, such sin could be atoned for by the performance of good deeds. Paul will answer this erroneous conclusion of the Jews by arguing that no one can meritoriously perform law or use good deeds to justify himself before God (3:20; Gl 2:16; 3:11,12). He will conclude that atonement for sin comes as a result of the grace of God, not the meritorious works of man.

1 **Whoever you are who judge:** It was the Jews who were judging the Gentiles. They were considering the Gentiles wicked and themselves righteous before God because they had been specifically called of God as a nation, and thus, they felt that they had special rights before God as a nation (vs 17). But they were not excused, for they too were under sin. Their self-righteous attitude blinded their eyes to their own sin. Such is the curse of those who are religiously self-righteous in their own eyes. They can see the sin of others while they deceive themselves into believing that their legal system of religion justifies themselves before God (See comments Mt 7:1-5). **Do the same things:** The self-righteous religionist will condemn those who do not conform to his system of religion, but at the same time, practice the sins of those he condemns (See 1:21-32). He has deceived himself into believing that as long as he maintains the outward performance of his system of religion that he is not under the condemnation that is due to all men because all sin (3:9,10,23). In this way

the Jews arrogantly condemned the Gentiles in their sin because they were not of the legal system of justification the Jews had constructed after their own traditions (See comments Mk 7:1-9; Gl 1:13,14). 2 In contrast to the judgment that was pronounced by the self-righteous Jews, God's judgment is just and consistent with truth. He judges with a standard that is above the self-imposed religiosity that men create after their own religious inclinations. Therefore, because God only is righteous (just), He only can be the final standard by which righteous judgment can be made. 3 Paul now identifies the self-righteous Jew who has considered himself to be spiritually above the Gentile. It was this self-righteous Jew who considered himself justified before God because of his supposed special privileges in reference to God. He had deceived himself into believing that he had a special relationship with God because of his heritage. He was a descendant of Abraham, and thus, he assumed that because he was a descendant from Abraham he had a special relationship with God. However, Paul affirms that he will not escape the judgment of God because all men stand condemned because of sin (3:9,10,23). Therefore, one may judge himself righteous before God in his own eyes, but in the eyes of God there is none righteous. 4 **Despise the riches of His goodness:** When one focuses on his own self-righteousness, he despises the grace of God. He despises the grace of God by affirming that his system of religiosity will justify himself before God apart from the grace of God. Such is the curse of those religions that have been manufactured after either the traditions of men or emotions of men, or both. Traditional religions assume that the simplicity of God's revealed will is not sufficient enough to provide men with that which will guide one in correct behavior (See 2 Tm 3:16,17). Emotionally based religions are humanistic in the sense that the emotional experiences of men are always considered to have more authority in the religion than the word of God. One is thus led astray by his feelings that have taken the place of the authority of God. In either of the above religious situations, the adherents of the religions have denied the goodness of God who has acted both in revealing His grace to man and in supplying man with a revealed word by which man can be directed in righteous behavior. **The goodness of God leads you to repentance:** By trusting in their performance of law and good works, the self-righteous Jews denied that they were motivated to repentance by the grace of God. When one depends upon his own system of religion as the means by which to justify himself before God, then his motivation for repentance is not the loving action of God through His

**5** But according to your hardness and impenitent heart *you are* treasuring up for yourself wrath in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God,  
**6** who “*will render to everyone according to his deeds*”;  
**7** to those who by patient perseverance in doing good seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life;  
**8** but to those who are selfishly ambitious and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath,

**9** tribulation and anguish, on every soul of man that does evil, to the Jew first and also to the Greek;  
**10** but glory and honor and peace to everyone who is working good, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.  
**11** For there is no respect of persons with God.  
**12** ¶ For as many as have sinned without law will also perish without law, and as many as have sinned in law will be judged by law,  
**13** for not the hearers of law *are* just before

offering of the Son on the cross (See 9:23; 11:33; Is 30:18; 2 Co 8:2; Ep 1:7,18; 2:7; Ph 4:19; Cl 1:27; 2:2; Ti 3:6; 2 Pt 3:9). Legal systems of religion that are constructed by men always proclaim an insufficiency in any loving acts of God in order to stimulate repentance. On the other hand, the justice of God's grace as it was revealed on the cross leads one to repent (See comments 3:31). **5 Treasuring up for yourself wrath:** The legal systems of self-righteous religions lead one to believe that he is in good standing with God. He has deceived himself into believing that all is well, when actually, he has rejected the grace of God in order to stand on his own merit before God. This is the curse of religions that are based on either the traditions of men or the self-righteous emotions of men. The traditionalist trusts in the heritage of the religious traditions that have been handed to him through the influence and teaching of his father and mother (See comments Mk 7:1-9). Those who focus on their emotional experiences are using the standard of their emotions to prove that they are right before God. Both systems of religion are storing up wrath because both have diverted the worshiper from reliance on God. Both traditionally and emotionally centered religions focus on man. On the other hand, faith moves one to focus on God's grace. Those who focus on their self-imposed religion are headed for the doom of judgment (Mt 7:21-23; 11:22-24; Jn 12:48; Cl 2:20-22). **6,7 Render ... according to his deeds:** God will judge according to deeds (Jb 34:11; Ps 62:12; Pv 24:12; Jr 17:10; 2 Co 5:10). However, this statement is made for our benefit. God is not keeping a checklist of deeds by which to determine the eternal reward of an individual. Paul makes this clear in the next statement. **Patient perseverance in doing good:** It is not by single acts of good deeds that will determine the judgment of the individual, but by the general nature of one's life. The grace motivated life is a living sacrifice that is wholly dedicated to God (See comments 12:1,2; 1 Co 15:10). On the other hand, those who have created their own self-imposed religion seek to perform deeds to atone for sin. They seek to balance out evil deeds with good deeds, and then, they hope for the best when they stand in judgment before God. But such will not be the case. What profits is faith working through love (Gl 5:6), not the performance of legal actions in order to justify oneself. What is important is living one's faith as a result of a positive response to God's grace. It is this active faith that moves one to live the life which is acceptable to God (See Gl 5:6; compare Mt 19:17; Ph 2:12,13; Js

2:17; Rv 2:6). **8,9 Do not obey the truth:** If we allow Galatians to be the commentary on this passage, then “truth” here refers to the “truth of the gospel” (See comments Gl 2:5,14; 3:1). The truth is the death of Jesus for our sins and His resurrection for our hope. This was the grace that Jesus came to reveal to all men. “*For the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ*” (Jn 1:17). This was the grace of God that was revealed on the cross through Jesus (Ti 2:11). This is the truth that one obeys through immersion into the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus (See comments 6:3-6; 1 Co 15:1-4). If one does not obey the truth of the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus, he will suffer the consequences of eternal condemnation (2 Th 1:7-9; 1 Pt 4:17). **To the Jew first:** This judgment will first be executed on those who had the greater opportunity, that is, the Jews. The privileges that God gave them through the revelation of His law and personal guidance through the prophets gave them also greater responsibility in reference to their accountability before God (See Lk 12:47; 1 Pt 4:17). When the Son of God came, their religious heritage should have driven them to the cross. Those who were sons of Abraham by faith, were driven to the cross. However, the hardened Jews nailed Jesus to the cross. **10,11** In contrast to those who do not obey the gospel, there is glory, honor and peace for those who do. This present reward is also to the Jew first and then to the Gentile. **No respect of persons with God:** In order that Paul's readers not misunderstand the justice of God, he here reminds them that God does not look through cultural eyes (Gl 3:26-28). All men are created equal, and thus, they will not be judged through partial eyes (See Dt 10:17; Jb 34:19; At 10:34,35; Ep 6:9). All men can find comfort in the fact that the judgment of God is not based upon His being a respecter of persons. In the context here, he wants to remind the Jews that they do not have a special privilege before God in reference to their salvation.

**12** God will not judge the Gentiles who did not have the Old Testament law by the standard of the Old Testament law. Those who perish without the Old Testament law will do so not because they violated Old Testament law, but because they violated the law of the conscience. **13 Not the hearers ... but the doers:** It is not enough to simply have a knowledge of the law. What is important is one's response to the law. James wrote, “*But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves*” (Js 1:22). Those who respond to God's grace by obedience to His law are the ones who

God, but the doers of law will be justified.

**14** For when the Gentiles who do not have law do by nature the things contained in law, these having no law, are a law to themselves;

**15** who show the work of law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness and *their* thoughts alternately accusing or else excusing one another

**16** in the day when God will judge the secrets of men through Jesus Christ according to my gospel.

**17** ¶ Behold, you are called a “Jew” and rest in law and make your boast in God.

**18** And you know *His* will and approve the things that are more excellent, being instructed out of the law.

**19** And you are confident that you yourself are a guide for the blind, a light to those who

are in darkness,

**20** an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes, having in the law the form of knowledge and of the truth.

**21** Therefore, you who teach another, do you not teach yourself? You who preach that a man should not steal, do you steal?

**22** You who say a man should not commit adultery, do you commit adultery? You who abhor idols, do you rob temples?

**23** You who make your boast of law, do you dishonor God through breaking the law?

**24** For as it is written, “*The name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you.*”

**25** ¶ For circumcision profits if you keep law, but if you are a transgressor of law, your circumcision is made uncircumcision.

will be justified. However, they will not be justified on the basis of their perfect keeping of the law. They will be justified because of God's grace, for no one can keep the law perfectly in order to save himself. Their keeping of law was the manifestation in their lives that they responded to the grace of God (3:31) Paul's argument is that law-keeping is necessary to manifest one's obedient faith, but law-keeping in and of itself will not justify one before God. **14** In obedience to their conscience, the Gentiles kept laws that were written in the law of Moses that was given to the Jews. Though they were obedient unto these laws, they would not be judged by the law of Moses. **Law to themselves:** By being obedient in their conscience to those principles they knew were right, they established the law of God in their lives. Therefore, by nature they established the principles of the law of God in their lives for themselves. Without the law of Moses, they established the principles of moral law that were based on the revelation of God's law to man before the giving of the Old Testament law (Hb 1:1).

**15 Law written in their hearts:** The Gentiles did not establish moral laws by their own invention. They had originally received the law of God as Abraham and all fathers of the families who received instruction directly from God (See comments Hb 1:1). Their conscience became their guide that kept them submissive to God's law, though they did not use the law of Moses as a guide, for such was given only to the Jews. **16** In final judgment, God will judge the world through Jesus (3:6; 14:10; Jn 4:22; At 10:42; 17:31). Therefore, those of this dispensation will not be judged in reference to the law of Moses. Neither will the Gentiles who lived before the cross be judged according to the law of Moses. Everyone after the cross will be judged in reference to whether or not he or she has obeyed the gospel (Compare Jn 5:22; 12:48; At 10:42). Thus one who is outside Christ will not be judged concerning his or her violation of a specific law. Judgment will be on the basis of whether one has come into contact with the blood of Jesus by obedience to the gospel. Those who have not will suffer eternal destruction (See comments 2 Th 1:7-9).

#### THE JEWS AND THE LAW

In this section Paul deals with the spiritual arrogance of the Jews. They believed that their physical heritage from Abraham gave them a special privilege in their relationship with God. They were somewhat puffed up because they had received the Old Testament law.

**17-20 You ... rest in the law:** While Paul writes these words, he knows that a true Jew is not one who is simply a descendant of Abraham. Those about whom he here speaks trusted in the law of Moses that God had specifically given to Israel. The Jews boasted to the Gentiles in this fact. Paul here addresses the self-righteous Jews who looked down on the Gentiles, and thus spiritually exalted themselves above the Gentiles. **21-23** This series of provoking questions were delivered in order to humble the arrogant Jew who boasted of his self-righteousness. Paul's questions were meant to manifest the hypocrisy and dishonesty of those Jews who were so eager to condemn the Gentiles, but they themselves were lawbreakers in reference to the law by which they judged the Gentiles. They were committing the same sins they were judging the Gentiles of committing. **24 God is blasphemed:** This is Paul's final blow in this series of thoughts to bring down the arrogance of the Jews. He quotes Is 52:5 to remind the Jews how they shamed the name of God among the nations because of their rebellion against God in past years (Compare Ph 1:27). As a result of their rebellion, they were taken into captivity by the nations of Assyria and Babylonia. Therefore, the Jews had no grounds upon which to spiritually boast before the Gentiles.

**25** In this context, the Jews are intimidating the Gentiles in the church that they be circumcised (Compare At 15:1; Gl 2:1-5). God instituted circumcision as a sign of the covenant that He had made with Israel. The Jews bound circumcision as an evidence of keeping the law (See comments Gl 5:3,4). However, if one is circumcised as a requirement of the law in order to be justified before God, then he is a debtor to keep all the law perfectly in order to be saved (Js 2:10). But no one can keep the law perfectly in order to justify himself.

**26** Therefore, if the uncircumcised *man* keeps the righteousness of the law, will not his uncircumcision be counted as circumcision?  
**27** And will not the physically uncircumcised, if he fulfills the law, judge you, who *having* the letter of the law and circumcision, transgress the law?  
**28** For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh.  
**29** But he *is* a Jew who is one inwardly, and circumcision *is that* of the heart in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise *is* not from men but from God.

### Chapter 3

**1 ¶** What advantage then has the Jew? Or what profit *is there* of circumcision?  
**2** Much in every way! First of all because to them were committed the oracles of God.  
**3** For what if some did not believe? Will their unbelief nullify the faithfulness of God?  
**4** Certainly not! Rather, let God be true but every man a liar, as it is written, "*That You might be justified in Your words and might overcome when You are judged.*"  
**5 ¶** But if our unrighteousness demonstrates the righteousness of God, what will we say? Is God unjust who inflicts wrath? (I speak as

Therefore, circumcision will profit nothing in reference to one's salvation. **26** Paul questions the Jews. His answer to the questions is that circumcision is of no value if one is not keeping the righteous requirements of the law. The law's requirements are that men respond to God by faith by being obediently led by the law (3:31). The legal act of circumcision does not make one righteous. Obedient faith in reference to law is what is required by God (Gl 6:5; Js 2:14-26). **27** Paul now reverses the role of those who would be judges. In the spirit of obedience, the Gentiles who did not have the law of Moses (vss 12-15) kept the spirit of the law of God. Those who did such could judge those hypocritical Jews who were specifically given circumcision and the law but did not keep the law. **28,29** **He is a Jew who is one inwardly:** This is a profound statement by the Holy Spirit in reference to those God considers to be His children. Throughout the letter to the Romans, Paul will continually reflect on this thought. He was dealing with a Jewish problem in reference to their concept of justification before God, which concept of religion they were seeking to bind on the Gentiles. The outward performance of law and boasting in reference to one's heritage from Abraham generated boasting by the Jews against the Gentiles. However, God is not interested in the circumcision of the flesh, but the circumcision of the contrite heart who seeks God by obedient faith. Under the Old Testament law, circumcision was important and necessary because it was from God and was a sign of a covenant that God established with the nation of Israel (4:11; Gn 17:10). However, it was worthless to keep circumcision under the Old Testament law if one did not keep the conditions for the covenant. But now the old law is past. The Jew must circumcise his heart (See Dt 10:15,16; 30:5,6; Jr 4:4; 9:25ff; Cl 2:11,12). The Jews who were now Christians must not trust in their circumcision of the flesh in order to be justified before God. They are now under the law of faith. They must understand that they have gone from a physical kingdom relationship with God to a spiritual kingdom relationship (7:6; 14:17; Jn 3:5; 18:36-38; Ph 3:3; Gl 5:22,23; Cl 2:11). In this change in covenant relationship, they must understand that being a physical descendant of Abraham had no advantage in one's relationship with God. Under the new covenant, spiritual relationships, not physical relationships, is what binds disciples together in their covenant with God.

### Chapter 3

#### SUPPOSED JEWISH OBJECTIONS

In chapter 1 Paul revealed that the Gentiles were under condemnation because of sin. In chapter 2 he affirms that the Jews were also under condemnation because of sin. He now answers questions that would be going through the minds of the Jewish Christians concerning their relationship with God. He will also in this context pronounce the divine indictment against all men, that there is none righteous before God (vss 9,10). In order to begin, he emphasizes the righteousness and faithfulness of God in reference to objections that some of the Jewish Christians may be having concerning God who gave law to Israel when Israel could not be justified by the law.

**1,2** Some of the Jews may have by now been wondering what point there was in being a Jew. If they were under condemnation because of sin, then they might wonder what was the purpose of the covenant and law that God established with Israel. **To them were committed the oracles of God:** The advantage of the Jews was that God had delivered to them the Old Testament Scriptures (9:4; Dt 4:5-8; Ps 147:19). It was an advantage to have a written law from God as opposed to the law of one's conscience under which the Gentiles lived. **3 The faithfulness of God:** Paul begins here to answer questions the Jews may have had concerning the fulfillment of the promises of God that were made to them during the Old Testament era. At the time Paul writes, the vast majority of the Jews had not believed the gospel. Some of those among his readers, therefore, would be questioning whether or not God had truly fulfilled His promises to the Jews. **4 Let God be true and every man a liar:** Paul begins to answer the doubts of the Jewish Christians by affirming the faithfulness of God in fulfilling the messianic promises regardless of the unfaithfulness of men. They must first understand that the fulfillment was based on promise, not on the righteousness of men. Men may doubt God's faithfulness to keep His promises, and subsequently, become unfaithful. However, their doubts are lies if they lead to questioning the desire and ability on the part of God to fulfill His promises (Jn 3:33; Ps 62:9). To begin his point, Paul quotes David who wrote in the context of his own sin (Ps 51:4). **5,6** David's sin resulted in a manifestation of the justice and righteousness of God when He

a man.)

**6** Certainly not! Otherwise, how then will God judge the world?

**7** ¶ For if the truth of God has abounded through my lie to His glory, why am I also still being judged as a sinner?

**8** And *why* not say – as we are slanderously reported and as some affirm that we say – “Let us do evil that good may come”? Their condemnation is just.

**9** ¶ What then? Are we better *than they*? Not at all. For we have before proved that both

Jews and Gentiles are all under sin,

**10** as it is written, “*There is none righteous, no, not one.*”

**11** *There is no one who understands. There is no one who is seeking God.*

**12** *They are all turned aside from the way. They have together become unprofitable. There is no one that does good, no, not one.”*

**13** “*Their throat is an open grave. With their tongues they have used deceit. The poison of asps is under their lips.*”

**14** “*Whose mouth is full of cursing and bit-*

brought judgment on David for his sin. The judgment manifested the righteousness of God. But the Jew would wonder why the judgmental discipline of God would reveal the righteousness of God. The answer is in the fact that God can stand just only if He justly judges free-moral individuals who violate law. If sin is not judged, then God is not just. **Is God unjust:** The carnal thinking individual would think that God is unjust to inflict wrath upon those who sin because God created them with the ability to choose, which ability is often used to choose sin. However, God is just because all men will be held accountable for their own sin. The point here is that though the unrighteousness of man (Israel) worked to bring about the purposes of God, God is not unjust to inflict judgment upon those who sin. God brought about good from their sin, but this did not relieve them of their accountability for their sin. God always uses the work of Satan against himself. And so it is with the eternal purpose God has in reference to the existence of all things. God could use Israel's unfaithfulness to accomplish His own purpose. He has worked in this manner in the past. And though the vast majority of the Jews rejected Jesus as the Messiah, we must not forget that God is still working His purposes through the church.

**How will God judge the world:** If God does not inflict judgment upon the unfaithfulness of the Jews in time, then He cannot be consistent in inflicting judgment on the unbelieving world at the end of time. However, the truth is that in order for God to be a just God, He must be consistent in judging without respect of persons those who reject His will. We must also keep in mind that God stands just because He has offered man an escape from sin. If men choose to reject the opportunity, then they are accountable for their own condemnation.

**7,8** Paul continues to voice the objections of some Jewish brethren. This may have been the motivation for the writing of this letter. They reasoned that if God's righteousness is increased because of the sin of men, then what is wrong with the sin. They wonder why they are still considered sinners when at the same time the sin magnifies the truth of God. **We are slanderously reported:** Paul mentions the behavior of those who fail to understand the concept of God's grace. They have twisted his previous teachings on this matter in order to bring accusation against him. “**Let us do evil that good may come**”: This would be the absurd conclusion of the argument of those who would question the proposition that Paul here reveals. In 6:1 he will state the reasoning of some, “*Shall we continue in sin that grace*

*may abound?*” (See Jd 4). **Their condemnation is just:** This could have been stated in reference to those who slandered him or those who taught the erroneous doctrines that he here refutes. Regardless of the specific group to which the judgment is here directed, both slanderers and those who teach erroneous doctrines that contradict God's grace, are under condemnation. Their belief that one should sin in order to bring about the goodness of God was certainly erroneous, and would thus, lead to their damnation. Peter may have heard of some of the slanderous brethren who twisted Paul's inspired writings when he wrote, “... *our beloved brother Paul ... has written to you ...in which are some things hard to understand, which untaught and unstable people twist to their own destruction ...*” (2 Pt 3:15,16). It is a serious matter to slander brethren. In this context of Paul's teaching on grace, one puts himself in a state of condemnation if he slanders those who proclaim the grace of God.

#### THERE IS NONE RIGHTEOUS

**9** Paul now continues the thoughts of verses 1,2. **Are we:** Paul includes himself with the Jewish brethren. **Better than they:** He asks the question in order to receive a negative answer. The Jews are not better than the Gentiles in their relationship with God. Though the Jews had the privileges of verses 1,2, this did not mean that they were spiritually superior to the Gentiles. The reason the Jews are not better lies in the fact that all men are sinners (vs 23; Gl 3:22). Sin levels all men in reference to their relationship with God. All men sin, thus all men stand spiritually dead before God because of sin. **10 There is none righteous:** This indictment from the Old Testament places all men under condemnation because of sin (See Ps 14:1-3; 53:1,2). There is no one righteous because of law. Law thus declares one unrighteous because all men transgress law. Therefore, no man can stand before God on the merit of his own obedience to law for no man can keep law perfectly. **11,12** The pronouncement of these Old Testament Scriptures is in reference specifically to the Jews. They thus had no right to elevate themselves above the Gentiles as spiritually special in their relationship with God. Even at the time Jesus came, the Jews had gone astray after their own religion. They had rejected the commandment of God that they might keep their own traditions (See comments Mk 7:1-9; compare Lk 11:52; 16:15; Gl 1:13,14; see Ez 22:30). **13** This vivid metaphorical description of the wickedness of the Jews is an

terness.”

15 *“Their feet are swift to shed blood.*

16 *Destruction and misery are in their ways.*

17 *And they have not known the way of peace.”*

18 *“There is no fear of God before their eyes.”*

19 ¶ Now we know that whatever things the law says, it says to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be stopped and all the world may become accountable to God.

20 Therefore, by the deeds of law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by law is the knowledge of sin.

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

22 even the righteousness of God *that is by the faith of Jesus Christ* to all those who believe, for there is no difference;

23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God;

24 being justified freely by His grace through

accurate account of their sin against God. Their wickedness was as the stench that comes from an open grave. The deceit of their speech manifested their corrupt hearts (See Ps 5:9; 140:3; Jr 5:16; Mt 3:7). 14 See Ps 10:7. 15-17 See Is 59:7,8; Pv 1:16; see comments Mt 23:37. 18 See Ps 36:1.

19 **Whatever things the law says:** The preceding indictment against the Jews came from the Old Testament Scriptures that were given to the Jews. Therefore, they could not accuse Paul of making unjust charges against them. The charges came from God. **All the world may become guilty:** Not only the Jews fall under the pronouncement that all men are unrighteous, the Gentiles must also face their sin in reference to law. Every man of the world in all history stands guilty before God because of sin. Therefore, all men stand condemned before God. 20 The Jews thought that they had devised a system of law whereby they could justify themselves before God. But the Holy Spirit says that such cannot be done. **By the deeds of law no flesh will be justified:** The Greek article is not in the text in reference to law. Reference, therefore, is not specifically to the Old Testament law, but to the Old Testament law and also the law under which the Gentiles lived (2:15). Thus Paul here, as well as in Gl 2:16, makes an axiomatic statement in reference to law, sin and death. One cannot be justified before God by perfect keeping of law. This proposition is so self-evident that it does not need to be proved. Paul wrote to the Galatians, *“But that no one is justified by law in the sight of God is evident ...”* (Gl 3:11). Paul’s affirmation is that through meritorious keeping of the Old Testament law, the Jews could not save themselves. Neither could the Gentiles establish a meritorious system of law in order to justify themselves (See comments Cl 2:20-22). In view of this self evident fact, one would conclude that law was not given as a means of salvation (See comments Gl 3:19-25). No one can keep law in a way to save himself solely by keeping law. **By law is the knowledge of sin:** Man sees his sin when faced with law. Law reveals to man what is unlawful in reference to what God wills. Instead of bringing one closer to God, law manifests how far away from God one is in his sin (Is 59:1,2). It is not the purpose of law, therefore, to be a means by which one can save himself before God. The reason this is true is because no one can keep law perfectly in order to save himself. All men sin (3:23). Sin brings death (6:23). Therefore, when we think of law we must always think of sin and death.

#### JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH

21 Since law brings sin and death, Paul now changes the discussion to God’s remedy for man’s problem with sin and death. He turns from the gloomy picture of the condemnation of the Jews under the law wherein they could not be justified by the keeping of the law. He also turns from discussing the same dilemma the Gentiles had under the law unto themselves, for neither could they keep law unto themselves in order to be saved. He gives hope to both Jew and Gentile by revealing the righteousness of God. **Righteousness of God ... is manifested:** This is the justification of God that is revealed in order to save men regardless of their inability to keep law (1:17; At 15:11). It is the righteousness which is accredited to those who seek God by faith (4:3). The righteousness of God is the justification of those who obediently respond to the grace of God that was revealed on the cross (Ti 2:11). God is just, therefore, because He has revealed the means by which men can be made righteous. **Witnessed by the law:** God promised that He would send the Savior into the world for the blessing of all nations (Gn 12:3). Through the Law and Prophets the promises were made. Through the faithfulness of God the promises were accomplished. The promises were not fulfilled because of the man’s keeping of law, but because of the grace of God to do such (5:8; see comments Gl 3:15-18). 22 **By the faith of Jesus:** This is sometimes translated “through faith in Jesus.” However, emphasis is on the work of Jesus in the cross, not on those who respond to the cross. It was through Jesus’ faithfulness to go to the cross that the righteousness of God was revealed (See Gl 2:16,20; 3:22; Ep 3:12; Ph 3:9). **To all those who believe:** Justification was also accomplished because of the faith of those who believed in the cross (1:17; 5:1; Gl 3:11; Hb 10:38; see Ph 3:8,9). Both the faithfulness of Jesus in going to the cross and man’s faith response to the cross were necessary to accomplish God’s eternal plan to reconcile men to Himself through Jesus. The righteousness of God that leads to the justification of man, therefore, was not accomplished through the keeping of the law of Moses (4:5; 10:3; Ph 3:9; Gl 2:21; see comments Gl 3:15-21). 23 **All have sinned:** All humanity has fallen short of that which is required for one to dwell in the presence of God (11:32; Gl 3:22; see Rm 2:7; 5:2). The result of law is that all sin. The result of sin is separation from God (Is 59:1,2). And the result of separation from God is spiritual death which will eventually lead to a second death (6:23; 2 Th 1:7-9). 24 **Freely by His**

the redemption that is in Christ Jesus,  
**25** whom God has set forth *to be* an atoning sacrifice through faith in His blood in order to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins in the past because of the forbearance of God,  
**26** to declare at this time, *I say*, His righ-

teousness that He might be just and the justifier of him who believes in Jesus.

**27 ¶** Where then *is* boasting? It is excluded. By what law? Of works? No, but by the law of faith.

**28** Therefore, we conclude that a man is justified by faith apart from the deeds of law.

**grace:** This is the loving favor of God that was extended toward man which man could not have received on the basis of his meritorious performance of law or good works (4:16; Ep 2:8; Ti 3:5,7). This grace was freely given regardless of the spiritual condition of all humanity. It had to be freely given because men could not work in order to earn grace. Sin blocks any efforts to meritoriously earn the gift (5:8). Therefore, the grace was given to legally take care of man's sin problem in order that we could stand just before God. Once justified of sin, we are then reconciled again to His presence and glory (2 Co 5:19). All this was made possible by the sacrificial cross of Jesus whereon God's grace was manifested (Mt 20:28; Ep 1:7; Cl 1:14; 1 Tm 2:6; Ti 2:11; Hb 9:12; 1 Pt 1:19). **25 A propitiation through faith:** In His death, Jesus was God's offering to appease His wrath that would have to eventually be poured out on sinners (1 Jn 2:2; 4:10; see Lv 16:12; Rm 1:8; Hb 10:31; 12:29). In order for God to stand just in judgment of free-moral man, there had to be a choice for men to be saved from condemnation. Through the offering of the blood of Jesus, God gave that choice. Though the offering had to be made at a point in time of human history, the required response to God by faith on the part of man has always been in existence (See comments Gl 3:11). From the beginning of time until the end of time, men have always had to trust in God for their salvation because no man could so work as to earn such from God. **In His blood:** Salvation has come to man by the blood offering of Jesus, not through the meritorious efforts of men (At 20:28; Ep 1:3,7; Cl 1:20; 1 Pt 1:18,19). **Of sins in the past:** The sacrificial blood offering was for the sins of humanity from creation to culmination of this world. Because the sacrifice had to be made at a point in time in reference to man's confinement to time, this did not mean that its effect could not cover sin that was committed before the cross (See At 17:30; Hb 9:15). Though we are creatures of time, God is not so confined in His knowledge and works. Therefore, God could view all the sins of the world through the cross. He can forgive sins through the cross that were committed before the cross just as He can forgive sins that are committed after the cross. We must not use our understanding that is limited to time to limit or confine the work of God through the cross. Animal sacrifice was given to man before the cross in order to lead men to the sacrifice of the cross. Though animal sacrifices could not forgive sins (Hb 10:1-4), such were given in preparation for the final sacrifice to come. Man's lack of knowledge of the event and effect of the cross before it actually happened necessitated the animal sacrifices. However, man's knowledge of the cross after the event occurred did away with the animal sacrifices. Not only were the animal sacrifices terminated because of the sufficiency of the cross sacrifice, our knowledge of the sufficiency of the sacrifice of Christ is also a rea-

son why the animal sacrifices have been done away. God has now fulfilled His promise. His righteousness has now been revealed as to how He has forgiven sins through the cross. He forgives all men who approach Him through faith that moves one to obey the gospel (1:17; see Jr 31:31-35; 1 Jn 1:6-9). **26 That He might be just:** If God condemned to destruction free-moral people who had no opportunity of salvation, then He could not be a just God. In order to be a just judge of free-moral beings, He had to offer them a choice. The response to the choice determines their judgment. **The justifier of the one who has faith:** Since the cross has been revealed, God is now known as the justifier of those who respond to His grace through faith.

**27 It is excluded:** Because of God's grace, He initiated the cross. Therefore, no man can boast in order to claim that he earned God's grace (See 2:17,23; 11:6; 1 Co 1:29; Ep 2:9). Neither can one claim the special favor of God because of race. Paul considered all the special privileges he had as a Jew to be rubbish in reference to the grace of God that was revealed to him (Ph 3:4-6). Though he had the privilege of the law and heritage of Abraham and the fathers, such privileges counted as nothing in reference to meriting salvation. **Of works:** The law of works demanded that man live flawlessly in order to gain his acquittal from sin. Through law one cannot be acquitted of sin simply because he has committed the sin. The Jew reasoned that through law-keeping one could acquit himself of sin that he committed against law. The problem with this system, however, was that one kept committing sin against law. No man could or can keep law perfectly. The law says that one sin makes a sinner (Js 2:10). Therefore, by works of law no man can be justified before God (3:20; Gl 2:16). It was the error of the Jews to construct a law of works whereby they convinced themselves that they could be justified before God by their meritorious keeping of law. Such a system of religiosity led to boasting and to their self deception that they were righteous before God. They had created their own righteousness, and by such rejected the righteousness of God (10:3). **The law of faith:** Faith refers to trusting in God's grace. Works emphasize trusting in one's performance of law in order to save himself. There is no room for boasting when one relies on God as opposed to relying on oneself. In contrast to the law of works, the law of faith emphasizes the response of the individual to the work of God on the cross, whereas the law of works emphasizes God's response to man's work in order to justify himself. **28** Paul is not saying that salvation is without obedience. The point is where the emphasis is concerning one's salvation. If emphasis is on works, then men stand alone in order to meritoriously perform law in order to be saved. If emphasis is on faith, then men are trusting in God who has provided the grace. The law of works would demand flawless

**29** *Is He* the God of the Jews only? *Is He* not also of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also, **30** since *it is* one God who will justify the circumcision by faith and uncircumcision through faith.

**31** Do we then make void law through faith? Certainly not! On the contrary, we establish law.

### Chapter 4

**1 ¶** What then shall we say that Abraham, our forefather, has discovered according to the flesh?

**2** For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something about which to boast, but not before God.

**3** For what does the Scripture say? "*Abraham believed God and it was credited to him for righteousness.*"

**4** Now to him who works, the reward is not credited according to grace, but according to debt.

**5 ¶** But to him who does not work, but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is credited for righteousness,

**6** just as David also describes the blessed-

living in order to be saved. On the other hand, the law of faith demands obedient response to what God has provided. **29,30** God is no respecter of persons (At 10:34,35). He has thus been concerned for the salvation of all men (See Gn 12:3; Dt 32:43; Ps 18:49; Is 11:10; 65:1; 2 Pt 3:9). For this reason, before and after the cross, God seeks to justify both Jew and Gentile through obedient faith that responds to the cross. Since both Jew and Gentile stand guilty before God because of sin, both must now respond to the grace that was revealed through the cross (Ti 2:11). **31** *We establish law*: James assures us that Paul is not talking about faith alone (See comments Js 2:14-26). Paul wants us to know that acceptable faith assumes response to the actions of God to save man. Law, therefore, is not aborted by faith. The fact is that when faith responds to the works of God through the cross, the faithful seek to respond to the directions of God. In this way, therefore, those who are of faith seek God's directions. We love because He first loved us (1 Jn 4:19). Therefore, Jesus said, "*If you love Me, keep My commandments*" (Jn 14:15; 1 Jn 5:3). In this way law is established. It is established in the heart of those who respond by faith because they seek to return the love that was manifested toward them through the cross (5:8). On the other hand, those who use law as a meritorious system of statutes to perform in order to justify themselves, are arrogantly trusting in themselves and not the grace of God. By contrast, those who obediently respond to the grace of God, seek to obey God's directions, and thus law is established in their lives. As one studies through the letters to the Romans and Galatians, it is imperative to understand the principle of how law and grace are connected in reference to one's response to God.

### Chapter 4

#### THE FAITH OF ABRAHAM

**1,2** If any of the fathers of the faith could have been justified by works of law, then certainly it would have been Abraham. In this context Paul proceeds to affirm that Abraham was not justified by meritorious obedience to law. Abraham was justified by works of faith, but not by meritorious deeds of law and good works (See comments Js 2:21-24). James affirmed that Abraham was justified by works of a faith that responded to the righteousness of God. Paul here teaches that Abraham was justified by obedient faith. Both Paul and

James refer to Genesis 15:6 to prove their point. Paul is saying that Abraham was not justified by meritorious works of law. James is saying that he was justified by works of faith. Therefore, justification by works does not mean that one works in Christ in order to meritoriously earn his salvation. **Not before God**: If Abraham were justified by the meritorious works of law, he could boast of his performance of law before men. However, such would be foolishness if one boasted of his works to the righteous God before whom all men have sinned. If Abraham could have lived flawlessly under law, then he could have boasted before God. He would have received glory because of His flawless living under law. But such can never happen on the part of men for all men have sinned (3:23). **3 Abraham believed God**: Contrary to those Jews who trusted in their own performance of law, Abraham, on the other hand, trusted in God. Paul quotes Genesis 15:6 and states that Abraham was accredited to be righteous because he trusted in God through faith (See Gl 3:6). **Credited**: The Greek word that is used here can be translated "accredited," "reckoned," or "counted." The meaning is that through the blood of Jesus one is considered righteous in the eyes of God on the basis of his faith in God's grace to forgive all sin. One is not so accredited with righteousness because he has put God in debt to forgive him by meritorious works of law. One is accounted righteous or justified on the basis of obedient faith. **4** If one seeks to be accounted righteous on the basis of meritorious works of law, then he has put God in debt to justify him. Grace, therefore, would not exist in such a system of salvation (11:6). **5 Who does not work**: The one who seeks God through obedient faith as opposed to meritorious works is accounted justified before God. When one realizes that he cannot put God in debt by meritorious deeds of law, then he is driven to total reliance on the grace of God. Total reliance on God prompts the establishment of law in one's life (See comments 3:31). Paul thus contrasts works of merit and works of faith in our approach to serve God. Those who are motivated by works of merit seek to put God in debt to save them. In their work, their relationship toward their brother is influenced by their attitude. Their attitude is one of arrogance and boasting. On the other hand, those who live by works of faith are looking toward the grace of God and trusting in His grace to save them. Their attitude toward God is reliance on God for they know that they cannot be saved on the merit of their works. Their rela-

ness of the man to whom God credits righteousness without works,

**7** saying, "*Blessed are those whose iniquities are forgiven and whose sins have been covered.*

**8** *Blessed is the man whose sins the Lord will not reckon.*"

**9 ¶** Does this blessedness then come only on the circumcision, or on the uncircumcision also? For we say that faith was credited to Abraham for righteousness.

**10** How then was it credited? 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 that *he had while* being uncircumcised, that he might

be the father of all those who believe, though they are not circumcised, so that righteousness might be credited to them also,

**12** and the father of circumcision to those who are not of the circumcision only, but who also walk in the steps of the faith of Abraham our father that *he had while* being uncircumcised.

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

**14** For if those who are of the law *are* heirs, faith is made void and the promise has been nullified

**15** because the law works wrath, for where *there* is no law, *there* is no transgression.

tionship with their brother is one of humility for they see the sin in their own lives. Their relationship with their brother is one of mercy for they have realized the great mercy God has shown toward them (See Mt 18:21-35; Js 2:13). Their relationship with their brother is one of love for they realize how much love God has shown toward them through the cross of Christ (Jn 3:16; 1 Jn 4:19). **6-8 God credits righteousness:** Paul's quotation of David's statement in Psalm 32:1,2 restates the preceding principles concerning the means by which men have always been saved. God does not account sin to the record of the one who responds to Him through faith. If one turns to his own ability to perform law, and thus, seeks to meritoriously stand righteous before God on the basis of his performance of law, then God must take account of the sin. It only takes one sin to make a sinner (Js 2:10). The whole law pronounces the individual to be a lawbreaker because of one sin which makes one condemned before God.

**9,10** Abraham was a Gentile. He was called as a Gentile and given the promises as a Gentile (Gl 3:15-18). The fact that he received the promises did not mean that he was then a Jew. On the contrary, Christians are sons of Abraham by faith, and thus heirs of the promises made to him (Gl 3:6,7). Paul wants to remind his Jewish audience of this fact, and also the fact that Abraham's justification came to him as a Gentile and before he received the covenant of circumcision. **11 The father of all those who believe:** This point was certainly ignored by the Jewish brethren who claimed to have a special relationship with God because they were the physical descendants of Abraham. The Judaizing teachers both in Rome and southern Galatia were trying to impose circumcision and Old Testament ceremonies on the Gentile Christians as a requirement for salvation (At 15:1; see introduction to Gl). The sign of circumcision (Gn 17:10) came to Abraham who was a Gentile in order that he might be the father of all those who trust in the grace of God for salvation (vss 12,16; Lk 19:9; see comments Gl 3:6,7,15-18). Therefore, Abraham is the father of faith to the Gentiles. **12** Abraham is the father of the Jews, but also the father of those who were not of the Jewish covenant of circumci-

sion (4:18-22). Abraham is the spiritual father of all those who come to God on the basis of obedient faith in response to the grace of God (Gl 3:26-29).

#### JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH

**13 The promise:** There were physical promises made to Abraham. God promised him that his name would become great and from his seed would come a great nation. The great nation of his seed would be given the land of Canaan (Gn 12:1-3). The last promise that was given to Abraham was spiritual in the sense that from Abraham would come that which would spiritually bless all nations (Gn 12:3). The physical promises were fulfilled in the nation of Israel and their possession of the land of Canaan. However, the spiritual promise that in him all the nations of the world would be blessed, had reference to nations beyond the nation of Israel (See At 26:6,7; Hb 11:8-16). **Heir of the world:** Through Abraham's seed, the blessing of the promise would come to all men (Gn 17:4-6; 22:17). **Through the righteousness of faith:** The Old Testament law did not become a condition upon which the promise was to be fulfilled (See comments Gl 3:15-18). Though the law was the contractual condition upon which the covenant with Israel was to remain valid, the giving of the law did not become a contractual condition for the fulfillment of the promise. Neither was the promise fulfilled because of the establishment of the Jewish nation. The blessing of the promise came through faith in Jesus Christ who revealed the promise to all men (6:14; Jn 1:17). Neither the Old Testament law nor the nation of Israel were necessities for God's fulfillment of the promise. The law and the nation, therefore, were only mediums through which God brought the Seed into the world. Once the Seed (Christ) came, then the purpose for the law and the nation of Israel was fulfilled (See comments Gl 3:19-29) **14** If men are to receive the promise on the basis of flawless keeping of law, then there is no room for dependence on God through faith. Trust in one's performance would supersede one's faith in God's grace. Such a religious system leads to arrogance and boasting between brethren. **15 The law brings wrath:** Where there is law, there is sin. And sin must receive just judg-

**16 ¶** Therefore, *it is* of faith that *it might be* by grace, to the end *that* the promise might be guaranteed to all the seed, not only to those who are of the law, but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all,

**17** as it is written, "*I have made you a father of many nations,*" in the presence of Him whom he believed, *even* God, who gives life to the dead and calls those things that do not exist as though they did *exist*.

**18** Who against hope believed in hope, so that he might become the father of many nations according to what was spoken, "*So shall your seed be.*"

**19** And not being weak in faith, he did not consider his own body, already dead, because

he was about a hundred years old, neither the deadness of Sarah's womb.

**20** He did not waver at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strong in faith, giving glory to God,

**21** and being fully persuaded that what He had promised, He was able also to perform.

**22** Therefore, it was credited to him for righteousness.

**23 ¶** Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was credited to him,

**24** but for us also, to whom it shall be credited, if we believe in Him who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead,

**25** who was delivered for our offenses and was raised for our justification.

ment. The presence of law apart from faith leads to the wrath of God (3:20). Though law is holy, just and good (7:12), it becomes a law of sin and death for man because men sin against law. **No law ... no transgression:** The only way to avoid sin in the human race is to take away law. Without law, there would be no law-breaking. However, when there is law, all men sin against law (3:23). But if there is no law to direct society, there would be chaos. Therefore, it was necessary that the Old Testament law be given to the nation of Israel in order to direct them away from giving up the knowledge of God (Gl 3:19; see comments 1:18-32). In this way, the law was a headmaster that was given to the Jews to bring them to Christ (Gl 3:23,24).

**16,17** The fulfillment of the promise was based on God's grace, for Israel did not earn the fulfillment because of her righteousness. The only way that the promise could be fulfilled would be that it come as a result of God's grace, not man's meritorious work, for Israel and all men are under sin (3:9,10,23). If the condition for the fulfillment of the promise was the meritorious works of men, then the promise could never have been fulfilled, for no man could have so lived as to earn the promise. Since the fulfillment came by grace, then the grace of God is magnified because God revealed the blessing of Abraham regardless of the sinful state of man (5:8). **The father of us all:** Abraham is the father of all who would be justified by faith (9:6). The Jews presumed that they had a legal right to justification because they were physical descendants from Abraham. However, Paul is here saying that God is interested in those who are the spiritual descendants of Abraham by faith (See 2 Co 1:9; Cl 2:12; Hb 13:20; 1 Pt 1:21). **Gives life to the dead:** When the promise of a heritage was made to Abraham and Sarah, they had no children, for at the time Sarah could not bear children. In Sarah's old age when she was past the ability to bear children, God brought her womb to life in order that she bear Isaac. Therefore, in her bearing of Isaac, it was manifested that the heritage and blessing came as a result of God's grace and not the work of Abraham and Sarah (See comments Gl 4:21-31). **18 Believed in hope:** Though without children, Abraham continued to believe

in the work of God to bring about a heritage through his descendants. While he was still childless, he continued to trust in God's promise that he would be the father of many nations. **The father of many nations:** God called Abraham the father of many nations before he even had children. Nevertheless, the promise was based on God's work, not Abraham's performance. Therefore, God fulfilled the promise of the heritage of a nation by eventually bringing forth the nation of Israel (See Dt 1:8-11; 10:22; 28:62). The promise concerning the nation was physically fulfilled in the nation of Israel, because Israel grew to be as the stars of heaven in number. However, the secondary fulfillment of the promise is here explained by Paul. The church is the result of the extended fulfillment of the promise, for by faith men and women throughout the world partake of the promise by faith. The church, therefore, is the assembly of those who have responded to the grace of God through the obedience of faith (1:5; 16:26). **19 Did not consider his own body:** Abraham did not trust in the meritorious performance of his body to bring about the heir, for both he and Sarah were old, she being past the age of bearing children. **20 He did not waver:** Abraham hoped against all obstacles. Because he maintained faith in the work of God, he eventually realized the fulfillment of the promise through the birth of Isaac (Compare Ps 115:3; Lk 1:37; Hb 11:17-19). **21** All should be of the faith of Abraham. He believed that if God made the promise, then it was certain that the promise would be fulfilled. **22** Abraham's justification by faith was recorded for his posterity (Gn 15:6). Those who would be sons of Abraham by faith, therefore, must walk according to the faith of Abraham. Christians are sons of God by faith because they have been immersed into Christ (Gl 3:26,27). They now belong to Christ. "*And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise*" (Gl 3:29). We are children of promise by faith (Gl 3:18,22; 4:28). **23-25** The record of Abraham's justification by faith was not recorded in Genesis 15:6 simply for his benefit. It was written for our benefit today. If we live after the faith of Abraham, we will reap the effect of the cross and resurrection of Jesus. We also, as Abraham, must rely on the grace of

## Chapter 5

**1 ¶** Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,

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

**3** And not only *this*, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation works patience,

**4** and patience, experience, and experience, hope.

**5** And hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts

through the Holy Spirit who was given to us.

**6 ¶** For when we were still without strength, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly.

**7** For scarcely for a righteous man will one die, yet perhaps for a good man some would even dare to die.

**8** But God manifests His love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

**9** Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we will be saved from wrath through Him.

**10** For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son,

God for our salvation. **For our offenses:** Jesus was sacrificed because of and on behalf of our sins (3:25; 4:6,8; 8:32; Gl 1:4; 2:20; Ep 5:2; Hb 9:28; Is 53:4,5). If there had been no law, there would have been no need for sacrifice. So why did God give man law if such would condemn him to sin? The answer lies in the fact that man was created a free moral being with the ability to choose evil. His evil choices would lead him to degradation and destruction (Gn 6:5). Thus law was necessary for the direction of society. Law was necessary to direct men's minds toward the necessity of God's grace. Law was necessary in order develop free-moral characters that would be suitable for eternal dwelling in the presence of God. **Was raised:** The text here would best be translated, "was raised to life for our justification" (5:18; 1 Co 15:3,17; 2 Co 5:17; 1 Pt 1:21; see 1 Co 16:17). The fulfillment of the blessing of the promise was the death of Jesus for our sins. However, the death would have meant nothing if there were no resurrection. Therefore, the gospel is the death of Jesus for our sins and His resurrection for our hope (See comments 1 Co 15:1-4). Through obedience to the death, burial and resurrection one comes into contact with the blood of Jesus, and thus is justified of sin (6:3-6).

## Chapter 5

### THE FRUITS OF JUSTIFICATION

**1 Peace with God:** Peace within is only the secondary thought here. Justification by faith has diverted the wrath of God that was due to those who sin against God (See 3:25). Therefore, there is peace between God and man as a result of God's grace, not men's work. It was man's inability to perform law that brought about the wrath. It was grace that brought the peace. Our knowledge of the reconciliation to God through grace in order to divert wrath brings peace of mind and the assurance of one's salvation (See 15:13; Jn 14:27; 16:33; At 10:36; Ep 2:14; Ph 4:7). **2 Through whom also we have access by faith:** We gain entry into the realm of God's grace through Jesus in whom we must have faith (Jn 10:9; Ep 2:18; 3:12; Hb 10:19; 1 Pt 3:18). **Wherein we stand:** It is grace that brings assurance, for upon it we base our spiritual and emotional stability (1 Co 15:1). Upon it we base our salvation. **3,4 Glory in tribulations:** It is the result of God's saving grace that we are able to endure because we are trusting in God, not in

our own ability to meritoriously perform law or do good works (See Mt 5:11; At 5:41; 14:22; 2 Co 12:10; Ph 2:17; Js 1:2,3). **Hope:** For the reasons Paul states here, Christians count it all joy when they fall into trials and tribulations (Js 1:2,3). They understand that trials and tribulations produce persevering characters that have hope in the promises of God (8:24,25; Ph 1:20). Tribulations, therefore, become the occasion for the development of faith and hope (See comments 1 Pt 1:6-9). **5 The love of God has been poured out:** The past tense here emphasizes the fact that God's love was poured out in their hearts when they responded to the love of God on the cross (See 1 Jn 4:19). God's love for man through the cross should generate love in the hearts of men to respond to the cross. It is the work of the Holy Spirit through the preaching of the cross to generate a love response in the hearts of God (See comments 1 Co 15:1,2). Though men throughout the world have not personally experienced Jesus' death on the cross, they see Him there through the Spirit-inspired word of God that now communicates the cross to us.

**6 Without strength:** We were in the bondage of sin and could not deliver ourselves through works of law or meritorious deeds. Since all men were in a situation from which they could not deliver themselves, God sent forth His Son to die on the cross (Gl 4:4). In this way, Christ died for those who were unworthy of His death (Ph 1:20). **7,8 God manifests His love toward us:** The love of God had to be manifested by the death of the Son for those who were unworthy. If the cross were the result of debt which God had to pay for the merit of those who kept law and performed meritorious deeds, then there would be no manifestation of love and grace. Love is not manifested in the payment of debt. However, since the cross came regardless of the spiritual condition of the recipients, then love and grace are manifested. **9 Justified by His blood:** Christians have been acquitted of sin by the sacrificial blood of Jesus (Ep 2:13; 1 Jn 1:7). Now that they are sons of God through the cross, Paul stresses the point that the cleansing continues in order to avert the wrath of God (1 Jn 1:7-9; see Rm 1:18; 1 Th 1:10). **10 While we were enemies:** When Jesus died on the cross, all humanity was the enemy of God because of sin (8:32). All were deserving of death. However, the promise came and reconciliation was offered to all who respond to the gospel (6:3-6; 1 Co 15:1-4). Now that the obedient are

much more, having been reconciled, we will be saved by His life.

**11** And not only *this*, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation.

**12 ¶** Therefore, as through one man sin entered into the world and death through sin, and so death passed to all men because all have sinned.

**13** (For until law, sin was in the world, but sin is not credited when there is no law.

**14** Nevertheless, death reigned from Adam

to Moses, even over those who had not sinned after the likeness of Adam's transgression, who is the type of Him who was to come.

**15** But the free gift is not as the offense. For if by the offense of one many died, much more the grace of God and the gift by grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, abounded to many.

**16** And the gift is not as *it was* through the one who sinned, for the judgment *was* by one to condemnation. But the free gift *that came because of* the many offenses *resulted* in justification.

**17** For if by one man's offense death reigned

sons of God, Jesus works on their behalf (Hb 7:24,25; 8:1; 1 Jn 2:1). **11** *We have now received the reconciliation:* It was sin that separated Adam from God. It was through the sin of Adam that resulted in humanity being driving from the tree of life (Gn 3:22-24). But now through the cross there is reconciliation to God (See comments 2 Co 5:17-19). Because of the grace of God that was poured out on the cross, Christians have a foundation upon which to rejoice. On the other hand, when one walks according to the invention of his own religiosity and performance of ceremonies, he is always in doubt. When one trusts in his own emotional experiences, he is in doubt. Doubt does not give one a reason to rejoice. However, when one trusts in the cross, there is reason for rejoicing. The rejoicing is not founded upon one's meritorious performance of law or good deeds. It is based upon the grace of God that was revealed through the cross.

#### DEATH THROUGH ADAM LIFE THROUGH CHRIST

Many Bible students have approached the following section of Romans with a misunderstanding concerning the nature of sin. It has been assumed that sin is an entity that is passed from one generation to another, from father to son throughout history. This passing of sin supposedly started with Adam after he ate of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and continues unto this day. However, the Bible nowhere teaches such a belief simply because all men stand before God as free-moral individuals who will be held accountable for their own sin. It is a fundamental principle concerning sin that each free-moral individual is responsible before God for himself (See Dt 24:16; 2 Ch 25:4; Ez 18:4-20; 2 Co 5:10). A son may inherit the consequences of his father's sin, but he will not inherit the guilt of his father's sin. In this section Paul emphasizes the fact that the result of individuals' living after the desires of the flesh or religiously after the meritorious performance of law and good works always results in sin (See comments Js 1:14,15). The nature of such a life is opposed to those who live after faith.

**12** In order to understand this verse, one must note that there is a division in the verse in reference to the responsibility of Adam for his personal sin and the responsibility of everyone else for their own personal sin against God. The first part of the verse discusses

Adam's sin and its result. The second part of the verse discusses why all men are now sinners. **Through one man sin entered the world:** Sin was introduced into the world through the personal sin of Adam against God (Gn 2:17; 3:6,19). Adam thus suffered the guilt of his own sin. He did not introduce sin into the lives of every man after him. He only introduced sin because he was the first sinner. **Death passed to all men:** Spiritual death did not spread to all men from Adam through the medium of physical birth. It was spread to all men because all men free-morally violate law. All men spiritually die because of their own personal sin against God, not because of Adam's personal sin. The proposition of Paul's argument in chapter 3 is valid because of the fact that individuals are responsible for the guilt of their own sin. Therefore, sin is not handed down from one generation to another by physical birth. Sin exists in the life of an individual when he so chooses to transgress the law of God. **13** In reference to the Jewish situation, sin existed before the giving of the Old Testament law. There was law before the Old Testament law, and thus, there was sin before the law was given. The law was given in order to manifest the sin of those to whom it was specifically given. In this way, it drove those who were sons of Abraham by faith to seek God for a solution for sin (See comments Gl 3:19). **Sin is not credited when there is no law:** If no law had existed, then there would have been no imputing of sin. But law did exist, and thus, death reigned because of sin. **14,15** Though men were without the Old Testament law before it was given on Mount Sinai, death still reigned because men sinned against the law unto themselves (See comments 2:12-15). **The type of Him who was to come:** The sin of Adam brought his separation from God because of his personal sin against God's law (Is 59:1,2). Therefore, all those who choose to sin after the example of Adam, spiritually die. Since all men have so chosen to sin, then all men have spiritually died (vs 12). **The gift by grace of the one Man:** As men free-morally and individually have chosen to sin, so men now have the opportunity to free-morally and individually choose to respond to the grace of God that was revealed through Jesus. **16** **Not as it was through the one who sinned:** Adam was the first man to sin, and thus, he became the representative of all humanity who would sin after his fashion throughout history. On the other hand, the gift through Christ came about after sin had

through the one, much more they who receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the one, Jesus Christ.)

**18 ¶** Therefore, as through the offense of one, *judgment came* on all men to condemnation, even so through the righteousness of one, *the free gift came* on all men to justification of life.

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

**20 ¶** Moreover, law entered so that the of-

fense might abound. But where sin abounded, grace abounded much more,

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

## Chapter 6

**1 ¶** What then will we say? Will we continue in sin so that grace may abound?

**2** Certainly not! How will we who are dead to sin live any longer therein?

**3** Or do you not know that as many of us as were immersed into Christ Jesus were immersed into His death?

occurred among men. Adam's sin preceded the sin of all men, whereas the gift of grace came after all men had sinned. **17 *Death reigned:*** The influences of Adam's sin affected posterity. All men spiritually die as Adam spiritually died because all men sin (vs 12). Spiritual death, therefore, ruled in the lives of men until the cross. ***Reign in life through the one:*** When Jesus came, there was presented through the cross the opportunity for all men to reign over death in life through Jesus (See 2 Tm 2:12,13; compare Hb 2:14,15). One's reign in life, therefore, is inseparably connected with the abundance of God's grace through which comes the gift of justification. There is no reign in life outside Christ. One comes into Christ through obedience to the gospel (6:3-6; 1 Co 15:1-4).

**18,19** We must keep in mind that Paul is not teaching that all men were universally and unconditionally condemned through the sin of Adam. Neither is everyone universally and unconditionally saved through the cross. Adam introduced sin and condemnation by personally sinning against God. Condemnation passed to all men because all men have sinned (vs 12). Salvation comes in the same way. Through the obedient action of Jesus on the cross (Is 53:11,12; Ph 2:8; Hb 5:9), those who individually accept the gospel will be justified. **20 *The law entered:*** The Old Testament law was not given to be a remedy for the problem of sin (See Hb 10:1-4). It came in order that sin might be made manifest. The law intensified man's realization of sin in his life (3:10-25; See Gl 3:19-25), and thus, it intensified the desires of those who were sons of Abraham by faith to seek for the grace of God. The law was necessary, therefore, in order to make men realize that they were sinners. ***Grace abounded much more:*** When men recognize their sin, they recognize the necessity for grace. The law was good in that it drove men to faith in God's grace (8:2; see comments Gl 2:16-19). **21** When one is spiritually dead, sin is reigning in his life. But when one turns to the grace of God, he is accounted righteous before God. In this way grace reigns in opposition to sin.

## Chapter 6

### DYING TO SIN

In this chapter Paul expands on the righteous condition of the Christian as a result of being in Christ. He

continues the thoughts of chapter 5, but here he is specific concerning the Christian's death to sin. Grace was manifested through the cross (Jn 1:17; Ti 2:11). The application of grace in one's life came when the Roman Christians obeyed the gospel. Paul begins by asking questions in the first three verses that he will answer throughout the chapter. Some of his readers would be asking these questions, especially concerning his statements in 5:20.

**1 *That grace may abound:*** If sin magnifies the righteousness of God to act through grace, then some erroneously assumed that sin would result in more grace (Compare Jd 4). At least there were some who were assuming that grace would cover their willful violation of law. Others possibly thought that they could be slack in their Christian duties, believing that God's grace would save them in their laziness (See 12:11; see comments 2 Th 3:6-15). Paul counters such false concepts of the freedom we have in grace by affirming that grace is not a license to sin. Christians have been set free from sin and law by God's grace, but they have not been set free to sin against law. On the contrary, law is established by our thankful response to grace (3:31; see Gl 5:13; Jd 4). **2** Those who died to sin were those who were seeking a solution for sin. The solution they found was the grace of God. It is not reasonable, therefore, that they should go back into that from which they were delivered (vs 17). ***Dead to sin:*** The Greek tense here is aorist, thus emphasis is on the onetime occurrence of a past event. At the time of one's new birth, he dies to a life of sin. The time of conversion is a time when one makes a decision to no longer allow sin to reign in one's life, and thus, responds to the cross of Jesus by his immersion into the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus (vss 16-18). **3** In the following verses Paul explains how one obeys the gospel. The gospel is the death of Jesus for our sins. It is His burial in order that He be raised never to die again (See comments 1 Co 15:1-4). In this context Paul clearly explains how one obeys the death, burial and resurrection (See comments 2 Th 1:7-9). ***Immersed into Christ:*** The question here demands a positive answer. In a declarative statement Paul said the same in Gl 3:27. "*For as many of you as were immersed into Christ have put on Christ.*" "Into Christ" is metaphorical in the sense that through immersion one comes into a saved relationship with God. He comes

**4** Therefore, we are buried with Him through immersion into death, that just as Christ was raised up from the dead through the glory of the Father, even so we also might walk in newness of life.

**5 ¶** For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, we will also be *in the likeness of His* resurrection;

**6** knowing this, that our old man was crucified with *Him* so that the body of sin might be destroyed, that we should no longer be bondservants to sin.

**7** For he who is dead is freed from sin.

**8** Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with Him,

**9** knowing that Christ being raised from the

into a relationship with God where he is declared righteous because he has come into contact with the blood of Jesus. Therefore, only through immersion can one come into this relationship wherein he puts on Christ. **Immersed into His death:** Though the Romans had not seen or experienced the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus, they had participated in such by their immersion into Christ. They were immersed into the atoning results of the death of Jesus on the cross for their sins (1 Co 15:3,4). In this verse Paul asks the question concerning the purpose of their immersion into Christ. In the next two verses he answers the questions by explaining what he means by being "immersed into his death." **4 Buried with Him through immersion:** This statement and explanation should forever answer the question as to what is the mode of the word *baptizo*. The Greek word was unfortunately transliterated into the word "baptize" in the seventeenth century. Many Bible students have since been confused with the definition of the word because of the erroneous theology of sprinkling for immersion that is practiced in many churches. Nevertheless, *baptizo* is a burial, or immersion in water. The Greek word *baptizo* means to "dip, plunge, immerse or overwhelm." The definition of the word is here explained in the action through which the Romans had gone in order to come into Christ. Paul explained that the Colossians were "... buried with Him in immersion, in which you were also raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead" (Cl 2:12). **With Him:** The preposition here indicates that a union is established between the one being baptized and Jesus. As Jesus went to the tomb in a garden outside Jerusalem of Palestine, obedient believers throughout the world can go to the tomb with Him. If one is not willing to go to the tomb with Jesus, then certainly that person cannot come into a covenant relationship with Christ. **Raised up from the dead:** Unless one goes to the cross and tomb with Jesus, he cannot experience the resurrection with Jesus (8:11; 1 Co 6:14). **Newness of life:** The condition for obtaining the newness of life, therefore, is that one go to the cross and tomb with Jesus in order to be raised with Jesus. It is only after the resurrection from the waters of immersion that one comes into a new life with Christ (2 Co 5:17; Gl 6:15; see comments Mk 16:16; At 2:38; 22:16; 1 Pt 3:21). **5** In order to emphasize the seriousness and necessity of the preceding thoughts of verse 4, and to answer again the question of verse 3, Paul here states the same thoughts of verse 4 but in different words. **United together:** Again, emphasis is on the union one establishes with Jesus in the action of immersion in water for the forgiveness of sins (At 2:38). A bond is established in immersion wherein the obedient believer comes into a saved relationship with the One who died for his sins. In order for one to be in the likeness of Jesus' resurrec-

tion, therefore, he must first be in the likeness of His burial. The grace of God was manifested on the cross. When one recognizes his sin problem, he runs to the atonement of the cross. It is at the cross that his faith must move him to respond as the Romans did through immersion. Their immersion, therefore, was not a meritorious work. It was a response to grace. Those who refuse to respond to the grace of God on the cross by immersion, therefore, have missed the point of the motivation that God intends should come as a result of His love that was poured out on the cross (See Jn 14:15; 1 Jn 4:19). For this reason baptism can never be a meritorious work. One is not meritoriously immersed in order to be saved. Immersion is the natural response of the one whose faith has moved him to respond to the grace of God. The point is that if one is not baptized, he does not have the obedient faith about which Paul both introduced and concluded this letter to the Romans (1:5; 16:26). Therefore, in immersion faith is working as an obedient response to the grace of God, not as a meritorious work to put God in debt. By immersion, law is established in our lives because of obedient faith (See comments 3:31). **6 Our old man was crucified with Him:** Before one can go to the tomb with Jesus, he must first go to the cross. Through repentance, the old man who desired to sin was crucified on the cross. To the Galatians Paul said concerning his own journey to the cross, "I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me ..." (Gl 2:20). It is obedient faith that moves us to the cross where we can obtain a good conscience toward God (1 Pt 1:21). Through repentance, the old man that desired to sin and was a slave to unrighteousness is crucified, buried and resurrected a new man that desires to be a slave of righteousness (vss 17,18). When the old man is killed on the cross, he is ready for the tomb. When one comes out of the grave of water, he is thus a new man in Christ (2 Co 5:17). **7** The one who has died to sin by determining not to be the slave of sin has been freed from sin (Compare 1 Pt 4:1). He is thus free from the curse of sin and death, for he is now in Christ wherein he has eternal life (1 Jn 5:11) and the continual cleansing of sin (1 Jn 1:6-9). **8 We will also live with Him:** Through immersion for the remission of sins, the believer has died with Christ. This obedient response on the part of the believer makes him a candidate for not only reigning with Jesus in this life (5:17), but also living with Him in eternity (See 2 Tm 2:11-13). When one is baptized he is raised not only to walk in newness of life in this life, but also he is raised with eternal life and the hope of continuing such in the presence of Christ in eternity (Ti 1:2; 1 Jn 5:1,2). **9 Death no longer has dominion over Him:** Jesus was resurrected never to die again. His resurrection gives hope to baptized disciples that they will also be resurrected never to die again (See

dead dies no more. Death no longer has dominion over Him.

**10** For in *the death* that He died, He died to sin once for all. But in *the life* that He lives, He lives to God.

**11** Likewise also, consider yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**12** ¶ Therefore, do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you should obey the lusts of *the body*.

**13** Neither present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God, as those who are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God.

**14** For sin will not have dominion over you, for you are not under law, but under grace.

**15** ¶ What then? Will we sin because we are not under law but under grace? Certainly not!

**16** Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves as bondservants to obey, his bondservants you are whom you obey, whether of sin to death or of obedience to righteousness?

**17** But God be thanked that *though* you were the bondservants of sin, yet you have obeyed from the heart that form of teaching that was delivered to you.

**18** And having been freed from sin, you became the bondservants of righteousness.

**19** I speak after the manner of men because

comments Hb 2:14,15). **10** *He died to sin once for all*: When Jesus died on the cross, He broke the bondage of sin. Through Him men can also break out of sin in order to be set free. **11** Because one has crucified himself with Jesus and obeyed the gospel through immersion, he no longer is the slave of sin. A conscious decision was made not to allow sin to reign in one's life. Once one has done this, he is alive together with Jesus.

#### SERVANTS OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

**12,13** Paul encourages the Roman Christians to dedicate their bodies to the Lord for they have been born into Christ. The desires of the flesh should not be given occasion to control their lives (7:5; Ps 19:13; Cl 3:5; Js 4:1-4). They should give their bodies as a living sacrifice to God (12:1; 2 Co 4:14; 1 Pt 2:24; 4:2). **14** *Not under law but under grace*: If they were still under a system of law that demanded flawless obedience in order to be justified, then their focus would be on the flesh to meritoriously perform law in order to save themselves (Compare Gl 5:4; 1 Tm 1:9). They would still be focusing on meritorious obedience to law instead of rejoicing as a result of God's grace. Paul wants to remind them that they are no longer under such a system of law. They are under grace that motivates a love response to the will of God. Sin does not reign in the person who has dedicated himself to live the life of thanksgiving to God for saving him through His grace (1 Co 15:10).

#### SLAVES OF SIN OR RIGHTEOUSNESS

**15** *Will we sin*: Paul's question is meant to demand a negative answer. Grace does not liberate one to sin. It gives freedom to obey. It does not become the license to ignore the will of the One who extended the grace (See comments Gl 5:13; 1 Pt 2:16; Jd 4). Those who would not respond to the grace of God are those who do not understand that God meant that grace should stir up love and mercy. We are to love because He first loved us (1 Jn 4:19). We are to have mercy because He first extended mercy to us (Mt 18:24-35; Js 2:13). We are to work more abundantly because He worked abundantly toward us (1 Co 15:10). If there is no love,

mercy and abundant work on the part of one who has been the recipient of the grace, then he has misunderstood the grace. God's grace is in vain in the life of the one who manifests no response to God. **16** *To whom you present yourselves as slaves to obey*: Christians have presented themselves as bondservants to God because they have been set free from sin (See Mt 6:24; Jn 8:34; 2 Pt 2:19). Their expression of thanksgiving is seen in their desire to call on their Father to direct their lives. **17** *You have obeyed from the heart*: Herein is the difference between one's attempt to justify himself before God on the basis of legal obedience to law and the one who works from a heart of appreciation for the salvation he has received as a result of God's grace. The legalist is concentrating on the outward performance of law and good works in order to change the heart. Those who are sons of Abraham by faith are working because of a grateful heart. The legalist is seeking to get by with as little as possible by obedience to a legal system of laws he has constructed to conform to his conscience. On the other hand, those who are motivated by grace are seeking to work more abundantly because of the abundant grace that was extended toward them. **Form of teaching that was delivered to you**: They had obeyed the gospel through immersion into the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus (6:3-5; 1 Co 15:1-4; 2 Th 1:7-9). In their obedience to the gospel, they were thus entrusted to the gospel. They were delivered from law, sin and death in order to establish the law of God in their hearts through an obedient response to the grace of God. They were no longer in bondage to the necessity of flawless law-keeping in order to save themselves. They obeyed the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus, and thus, were entrusted to the gospel of grace. **18** When one realizes his deliverance from the bondage of law, and thus set free from sin, he is motivated to present his life a living sacrifice to God (12:1). The Romans' obedience to the gospel set them free (See Jn 8:32; 1 Co 7:22; Gl 5:1; 1 Pt 2:16). **19** With the same zeal, and more, by which they lived in rebellion against God, they must now serve God. Before Paul was touched by the grace of God, he lived in religious zeal in order to conform to the legalistic reli-

of the weakness of your flesh. For as you have presented your members *as* bondservants to impurity and to iniquity unto iniquity, even so now present your members *as* bondservants to righteousness in holiness.

**20 ¶** For when you were the bondservants of sin, you were free from righteousness.

**21** What fruit did you have then in those things of which you are now ashamed? For the end of those things *is* death.

**22** But now having been made free from sin and having become bondservants to God, you have your fruit unto holiness and the end, eternal life.

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

## Chapter 7

**1 ¶** Do you not know, brethren (for I speak to those who know law), how that the law has dominion over a man as long as he lives?

**2** For the woman who has a husband is bound by law to *her* husband as long as he lives. However, if the husband dies, she is released from the law of *her* husband.

**3** So then, if while *her* husband lives, she is married to another man, she will be called an adulteress. But if her husband is dead, she is free from that law, so that she is not an adulteress, though she is married to another man.

**4** Therefore, my brethren, you also became dead to the law through the body of Christ, so that you should be married to another, *even* to Him who is raised from the dead, so that we should bring forth fruit to God.

gious system of the Jews (Gl 1:13,14). However, when he was called by the grace of God, he worked more abundantly (1 Co 15:10). Such is what grace should do to one's life regardless of whether he formerly lived after the lusts of the flesh or the misguided legal systems of religiosity. Grace moves one to be more obedient than if one were under a legal system of religion. The more one appreciates the grace of God, the more productive he is for God (1 Co 15:10; 2 Co 4:15 **20-22** The result of their former lives was only death (1:32; 7:5). They should be ashamed of the fruit that came forth from a life of rebellion. Now that they have been freed from serving sin (Jn 8:32), they can produce fruit unto righteousness. Every Christian should remember the uselessness of his former life in sin in order to appreciate his present life in the grace of God (See comments Ep 2:1-10) **23 The wages of sin is death:** The end reward for a life of sin is eternal destruction from the presence of God (Is 59:2; 2 Th 1:7-9). **The gift of God:** Eternal life in Christ is a free gift (2:7; 1 Pt 1:4). It is free because men could not live enough lifetimes in order to accumulate enough good works to trade God for heaven. What we will receive as a result of God's grace is far more than what we can pay for with a lifetime of good works. Eternal life is thus the gift of God to imperfect beings who by faith trust in the grace of God for their deliverance from this world.

### Chapter 7

#### FREE FROM LAW

Paul now makes an analogy between the marriage law and the Christian's relationship to the Old Testament law. The point of the analogy is that the Jewish Christians have been made dead to the Old Testament law by the body of Christ. The analogy would apply to the Gentiles in the sense that all men are dead to the necessity of flawless law-keeping by the cross. When one obeys the gospel, he submits himself to the law of Christ. He frees himself from all man-made religious laws, as well as the Old Testament law, in order to be

liberated by his responsive faith to the grace of God under the law of Christ. He is not set free to be brought again into the bondage of another legal system of law. He is set free to obey his Father in heaven, and not the restrictions of a man-made religion or interpretation of laws (See comments At 15:1,10; Gl 5:1,2).

**1** As long as a man lives under the bondage of law, the law has control over his life, and thus brings him into death because of sin. In order that legal obligations to law be cancelled, there must be death. **2,3** In order to illustrate the Jewish Christian's freedom from the bondage of the Old Testament law, Paul uses God's original marriage law of one man for one woman for one life (See Gn 2:23,24; see comments Mt 19:1-9). As long as the husband lives, the woman is bound by law to the husband. However, if the husband dies, the wife is released from her marital obligations to the husband. The marriage contract is dissolved by the death of the husband. The woman is free to marry again. However, if while the husband is still alive she marries another man, then she has acted against the law in that she has broken her contract with the first husband. She has thus committed adultery against her first husband because she has broken the marriage contract with the first husband. Only if the first husband is dead does she become dead to the law that bound her to the husband. Only when she is dead to the law that binds her to the first husband is she set free in order to marry another without being an adulteress according to the law.

**4 Dead to the law through the body of Christ:** When the believer has died with Christ (6:3-5), then he is set free from the law. Jewish believers must understand that when they married Christ they died to a law that God had taken away. Paul's application in this context is in reference to the Jewish believer's relationship to the Old Testament law. It is true that in other texts the New Testament clearly teaches that the Old Testament law and covenant have been taken away. When Jesus came He took "*away the first that He may establish the second*" (Gl 2:19; Hb 9:16,17; 10:9; see comments Mt 5:17,18). When one comes to Jesus he becomes dead

**5** For when we were in the flesh, the sinful passions that were *aroused* by the law were at work in our members to bring forth fruit to death.

**6** But now we are delivered from the law, having died to that wherein we were held, so that we should serve in newness of spirit and not *in* the oldness of the letter.

**7 ¶** What shall we then say? *Is* the law sin? Certainly not! On the contrary, I would not

have known sin except through law, for I would not have known coveting except the law had said, "*You will not covet.*"

**8** But sin, taking occasion by the commandment, produced in me every lust. For without law sin *is* dead.

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

**10** And the commandment that *was meant to*

to the binding obligations of the Old Testament law in order to be married to Christ. Those who bind portions of the Old Testament law on Christians as legal ordinances of justification are committing the action of spiritual adultery in reference to law. In the context here, the Jewish brethren were seeking to bring over into the church Old Testament regulations in order to legally bind on Christians. In other words, they were seeking to legally bind portions of the law as requirements for salvation (See comments At 15:1). In doing such they were committing adultery against the body of Christ by seeking to be married to two laws (See introduction to Gl).

**Bring forth fruit to God:** If one seeks to bind regulations of the law on Christians, then he cannot bear fruit to God because he has compromised his obligations to Jesus. **5 In the flesh:** Paul here defines this phrase that he commonly uses throughout the contexts of the material of chapters 7 & 8. Before they came to Christ and enjoyed the liberty by which their obedience to the gospel set them free, the Romans were in the flesh. While in the flesh they were seeking justification before God by meritorious performance of law (Gl 3:3). Their emphasis of religious belief and behavior, therefore, was on the outward performance of law in an effort to meritoriously make themselves righteous before God. However, their performances under the law were lacking. The Jews could not keep the Old Testament law in order to save themselves (See comments Mk 10:17-22). Neither were the Gentiles flawless in their obedience to the law unto themselves. All were sinners, and thus stood condemned before God (3:23; 6:23). While they were in the flesh, therefore, they did not stand justified before God. **The sinful passions:** This would be the same as the "body of sin" in 6:6 and the "sinful flesh" of 8:3. It was through the instrumentality of the body that they sinned against God by breaking His law. When law was given, these passions were exemplified in our lives. The law demanded flawless living in order for one to stand justified before God. However, the law manifested our spirit of arrogance and rebellion, and thus, we discovered that no perfection could be attained under law. The passions of the body, therefore, resulted in spiritual death (6:21,23; Gl 5:19; Js 1:15). **6 Delivered from the law:** All Christians have been set free from the law by the body of Christ (vs 4). They are free from the necessity of perfect law-keeping under the law in order to be justified before God. Paul thus restates the principle that he first set forth in 6:14. **The newness of spirit:** When the believer came out of the waters of baptism, he began a walk in newness of life (6:4). Because God has saved him through His grace, he has been regenerated to serve God out of thanksgiving in-

stead of obligation. His focus is on obedience to God because he has been saved. Paul wrote, "*For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works ...*" (Ep 2:10). We have been created in Christ for good works. We are not created in Christ by good works.

**Oldness of the letter:** The law demanded flawless living in order for one to be justified before God. However, no man could so live in the presence of God. Therefore, instead of producing life, the law produced death (See comments Gl 3:21). However, under the law of Christ one is justified before God without the necessity of a perfect record of sinless living for he has been justified freely by the blood of Christ (See comments 1 Jn 1:7).

#### LAW, SIN AND DEATH

**7 I would not have known sin except through law:** Paul says that he would not have known that sin existed in his life unless the law stated that his behavior was against the law. Therefore, the law "*was added because of transgressions*" (Gl 3:19). **Law:** The article is not present in the Greek text, and thus, Paul is expanding his application beyond the Old Testament law. Reference here is to the Old Testament law for it was one of the ten commandments that stated one should not covet (Ex 20:17; Dt 5:21; At 20:33). However, reference is beyond just the Old Testament law. He builds on this point as he continues. **8** When men followed after the lusts of the flesh, the coming of the law exemplified the sinful behavior of the individual. When there was no law, one would not be aware of the intensity of the sin of his life. Where there is no law, there is no violation of law (4:15). **9** Without the presence of the written law, one is deceived into thinking that his life is right with God. Conscience is a good guide, but the problem with conscience is that it is often molded around the desires of the flesh. One thus creates religious behavior that conforms to the passions of the body. However, when law is revealed from God, one can clearly see the sin of his life. Sin is thus revealed and one is knowledgeable of his spiritual death. **10 Life ... death:** One's first impression upon receiving the law of God, is that it was given as a means by which one was to save himself. In this way the Jews viewed the Old Testament law. However, the law was never given as a means of salvation. Once one begins applying the law to his life, he immediately realizes that he cannot keep law perfectly in order to live righteously before God. He sins. And the sin brings death. Therefore, instead of the law bringing life, it brings death. God knew this when He gave law to man. Therefore, the law was never given to man as a means of salvation (See comments Gl 3:19-

bring life, I found to *bring* death.

**11** For sin, taking opportunity through the commandment, deceived me and through it killed *me*.

**12** Therefore, the law *is* holy, and the commandment holy and just and good.

**13 ¶** Therefore, has that which is good become death to me? Certainly not! But sin, that it might be manifested *to be* sin, was working death in me through what is good, so that sin through the commandment might become exceedingly sinful.

**14** For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am carnal, sold into *bondage* to sin.

**15** For what I do, I do not understand. For what I would *do*, that I do not. But what I

hate, that do I.

**16** If then I do what I do not want *to do*, I agree with the law that *it is* good.

**17** But now, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me.

**18** For I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, dwells no good thing; for to will is present with me, but *how* to perform what is good I *do* not find.

**19** For the good that I would *do*, I do not. But the evil that I would not *do*, that I do.

**20** Now if I do what I do not *wish to do*, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me.

**21 ¶** I find then the law, that when I want to do good, evil is present with me.

25). **11** Paul personified sin by saying that it led him to believe that life was accomplished through meritorious obedience to law. The personified "sin" deceived him into thinking that all was well in his relationship with God, but in reality, he was spiritually dead because of the commandment. **12** The problem of sin and death is not with the commandment. God's Old Testament law was holy, just and good. "*For if there had been a law given which could have given life, truly righteousness would have been by the law*" (Gl 3:21). But a law can never be given that will produce justification in the sight of God. The problem is not the law but the man to whom it is given. We must never, therefore, judge the law to be evil simply because of our desire to do evil (See Ps 19:8; 119:138; 1 Tm 1:8; 1 Jn 5:3). The law is holy, just and good because it drives us to recognize our sinfulness, and thus, we are driven to the grace of God.

#### THE DESIRES OF THE FLESH

**13 That which is good:** The preceding verse 12 introduces this section. The law was holy, just and good. Simply because the law pointed out sin does not mean that it was evil. It is the sin that is evil, not the law. The law came in order to exemplify the sin. **14** The law is from God. It is thus spiritual in contrast to the flesh which it judges to be evil. In the following statement, Paul uses the first person singular pronoun with a present tense in the verb in order to illustrate the struggle that morally-minded people have with themselves in reference to law. He is picturing the Jew or Gentile who is religiously seeking to justify himself before God in reference to law. He begins by stating that as carnal men – those in the flesh (vs 5) – we are sold to the bondage of sin that reigns over us simply because the morally-minded person cannot live a perfect life. **15** Herein is the frustration of the morally-minded person who seeks to meritoriously justify himself in reference to law. One struggles to do that which he believes is right. However, though he seeks to do that which is right, he sins. The law thus manifests his inability to accomplish that which is his goal. **16** If one does that which is wrong according to the law, then the law is confirmed as good. The law arouses his conscience, and thus, he is convicted of being a sinner. Therefore, law is good for di-

recting one's behavior. It is good in that it brings awareness of sin (See comments Mt 5:3-10). We must not condemn the law because it points out the sin in our lives. **17** Paul's personification of sin here is meant to portray sin using his body contrary to the will of the morally-minded man. One sins, though he knows the law speaks against the sin. One's knowledge of the law concerning what is sinful does not mean that he will not sin. **18** The morally-minded person has a knowledge of the law. He knows what is right. However, since all men sin, one's knowledge of the law does not guarantee that he will not sin. Knowledge and behavior do not always work in agreement with one another. We know to do good, but do not do it (Js 4:17). All men have sinned by either violating the precepts of law (1 Jn 3:4), or by failing to do biblical principles of good (Js 4:17). **19** Though we desire to do what is right, our performance does not measure up to our desire. We often end up doing that which we know is wrong according to either law or conscience. **20** Though we seek to do that which is good, the nature of our being as free-moral individuals in a world of choice, does not have the ability to live flawlessly. Paul's whole argument in this context is that the individual cannot live without committing sin. His argument is against those who would claim that the Holy Spirit subjects the free-moral agency of the Christian in order to guard one from sinning. Though the conscience of the Christian is made sensitive by the law of God as revealed through the Holy Spirit, the Spirit does not directly control the behavior of the Christian in reference to law in order to guard him from sin. Therefore, because we know we sin, we are driven to the grace of God. Our arrogance is crushed by our knowledge of realizing that without God's grace we have no hope of deliverance from this life of sin.

**21 I find then the law:** The law here refers to the principle of all men living with the inability to flawlessly perform in order to stand righteous before God. It is a simple fact that all men cannot live in order to be justified before God solely on the merit of their behavior. **22 The law of God:** In contrast to the law of our human behavior wherein we cannot live a flawless life, there is the law from God that is meant to direct our behavior (Ps 1:2). It is our moral conscience that desires this law

**22** For I delight in the law of God according to the inward man.

**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 that is in my members.

**24** Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from the body of this death?

**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.

## Chapter 8

**1 ¶** *There is* now, therefore, no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, [who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.]

**2** For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has freed you from the law of sin and death.

## Chapter 8

### LIFE IN THE SPIRIT

Paul has discussed in chapters 5-7 the life in the flesh. He now turns to the "life in the Spirit" which is opposed to the life in the flesh. The life that is directed by the Spirit is not under the condemnation of the law because the Spirit has freed one from the law of sin and death.

**1 No condemnation to those who are in Christ:** "In Christ" is a metaphor that refers to one's close spiritual relationship with Christ. When one has been immersed into Christ (6:3), he comes into a saved covenant relationship with God wherein he is not in a state of condemnation because of sin (Mk 16:16; see 3:24,26; 5:1,11,17; 6:11,22). In this state wherein there is no condemnation, one is free from the bondage of sin. In Christ one is not directing his life according to the desires of the flesh but according to the directions of the Spirit (Gl 5:16). He is not walking according to the pride of meritorious conduct, but according to his submission to the word of God. We must not understand our walk to mean that one is directed by inner nudges of what one would interpret to be a supposed subjective direction of the Spirit. Nor should we misunderstand Paul's meaning to refer to the emotional outburst of misguided religious hysteria. To follow such directives is to return to the bondage from which the Spirit has set us free by obedience to the gospel (See comments Gl 5:1,2; Cl 2:20-22). In Christ we are no longer guided by our own emotions that focus on the emotional performances of the individual apart from a knowledge of God's will. When one is guided by the Spirit he is directed by the Spirit-inspired word that comes from God (See comments 2 Tm 3:16,17). Therefore, walking according to one's performance of law and meritorious deeds is opposed to one's walking in response to the grace of God.

**2 Freed you from the law of sin and death:** Paul explains why one is not under the sentence of condemnation when he walks according to the Spirit. The "law of the Spirit of life" is the gospel of God's grace through Jesus that has set us free from the necessity of meritorious obedience to law (6:18,22). The "law of sin and death" is in contrast to the law of the Spirit. In one's effort to obey law flawlessly, he sins (7:24,25). Sin brings death (6:23). Therefore, in reference to one's performance of law in order to be justified before God always means sin and death (See 1 Co 9:21; Gl 6:2; Js 1:15; 2:8,12). The Christian has been delivered from the law of works. He has been delivered because no one could flawlessly keep either the law of Moses or the law of the conscience in order to escape sin and death (See 3:20;

in order that our lives be directed by God. **The inward man:** This is the inner moral conscience that seeks to do that which is right (See 2 Co 4:16; Ep 3:16; Cl 3:9,10; 1 Pt 3:4). **23 Warring against the law of my mind:** It is the law of sin in ourselves that struggles against our desires to do that which is right. Herein is the principle that because men are free-moral individuals, they have been created with the ability to make choices. Because God did not create us as robots with programmed minds that could not make wrong choices, we often do wrong. The ability of men to make wrong choices wars against the knowledge we have of doing that which is right. The ability to make wrong choices wars against our desire to do right. Thus, we are brought into captivity by this "law of sin" which is present in every individual. Man is thus in a dilemma. He cannot keep law perfectly, though he may desire to do so. **24 Wretched man that I am:** One's honest recognition of his spiritual dilemma leads him to frustration. The morally conscious person who seeks to do right realizes the law of his own natural fallibility to live flawlessly in reference to law. Every man must come to this point of self-recognition. He must recognize that his life is a "body of death" because we cannot perform in a manner to justify ourselves before God. **Body of this death:** Sin resulted in man's separation from the tree of life, and subsequently the consequence of physical death (Gn 3:22-24; 1 Co 15:20-22). Personal sin has also resulted in the individual's separation from God, and subsequently, brought spiritual death into the lives of every man (5:12). We are thus with the curse of sin and death in a body of death, from which only God can deliver us (See 6:4,5; 8:11; 1 Co 15:51,52; 1 Th 4:14-17). **25** In recognition of our inability to perform behaviorally in order to stand just before God, we are driven to thank God for the revelation of His grace through Jesus Christ (Ti 2:11). **So then:** Here is the point why Christians establish law in their lives by recognition of the grace of God (3:31). Their recognition of their inability to stand just before God on the basis of their own meritorious performance leads to one's frustration in his efforts to justify himself before God. However, once one recognizes the grace of God, he is driven to serve God. God's deliverance from sin and death through the cross of Jesus moves one to obedient appreciation of the grace of God. **I myself serve the law of God:** It is the law of God to trust in His grace and be motivated to follow His directions for moral behavior. **The law of sin:** Though the nature of free-moral behavior lends itself to sin, the Christian can find comfort in the fact of what John wrote. *"But if we walk in the light as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin"* (1 Jn 1:7).

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

**4** so that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

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

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

**7** Because the carnal mind *is* hostile toward God, for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can it be.

**8** So then those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

**9 ¶** However, you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His.

**10** And if Christ *is* in you, the body *is* dead because of sin, but the spirit *is* alive because of righteousness.

**11** But if the Spirit of Him who raised up

Gl 2:16). **3 *Weak through the flesh:*** The laws by which God expected both Jew and Gentile to live were sufficient for the purpose for which they were given. Concerning the Old Testament law which encoded the principles that were given to the Gentiles by word of mouth, Paul wrote that it was holy, just and good (7:12). The problem of sin, therefore, is not with the law of God. The problem is with the flesh (See comments Hb 8:6-8). It is impossible for the flesh to perfectly obey law. Therefore, law always brings us into sin and death. Law could never free one from sin, and thus, law was never given as a means of salvation. For this reason, God sent forth His Son to free us from law, sin and death (1:3; Ph 2:7; 1 Tm 3:16; Hb 2:17). ***The likeness of sinful flesh:*** Jesus was incarnate into the flesh of men (Jn 1:1,14). *"For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on behalf of us, so that we might me made the righteousness of God in Him"* (2 Co 5:21; see Gl 3:13). **4** Jesus died in order to make our obedience acceptable to God. Law requires flawless living in order to produce righteousness. But no one can keep law in order to stand righteous before God. However, because of the grace of God revealed through Jesus, the righteousness that is required by law is made perfect through the grace of God in the cross of Jesus. ***Walk according ... to the Spirit:*** Those who behave according to the Spirit-inspired directions of God are not living according to their desires to live after their own wills. Walking in the Spirit is the same as walking in the light. By walking in the light, the blood of Jesus cleanses us from all sin (1 Jn 1:6-9). **5** The person who lives after the Spirit has crucified the old man of sin (6:6; Gl 2:20). He has put to death the desire to allow the lusts of the flesh to direct his life (Compare comments Ep 2:1-3). On the other hand, the person who lives according to the lusts of the flesh in order to follow his own will is headed for eternal condemnation (See Gl 5:19-21; 6:8). **6 *Carnally minded:*** This is the mind of the one who focuses on his own desires. In a religious context, it is the one who focuses on his own ability to perform law in order to save himself. The carnally minded person is walking in sin, though he may not recognize the fact that he is in sin. ***Spiritually minded:*** This is the person who focuses by faith on the cross and God's grace. He has life and peace of mind because he is trusting in the grace of God and not in his abilities in reference to law-keeping. **7 *Not subject to the law of God:*** The individual who persists on remaining "in the flesh," or is focusing

on his own meritorious performance of law, is actually working against the plan of God to have all men trust in Him for direction. Such a person is focusing on himself and not on God's grace. This is the man who seeks to walk by sight without the faith that is necessary to please God (Hb 11:6). This person will not subject himself to God's law for he does not have a desire to do so. He has created his religion after his own desires, and thus, he is focusing on himself rather than the commandments of God (See comments Mk 7:1-9). **8** As long as one seeks to approach God on his own terms, he will not allow God to direct his life. In the world of religions there are countless religious people who are seeking to worship God on their own terms. They are walking in the flesh because they are seeking God either by following after the security of their own traditions or the assurance of their own emotions. Such religions are "after the flesh" because they are not founded upon the direction of God. Those who are victims of such religions will not walk after the Spirit until they seek God's directions through His word (See comments Mk 7:1-9; Cl 2:20-23).

**9** Those to whom Paul is writing have crucified the old man of sin by repentance and immersion into the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus (6:3-6). They have thus begun in the Spirit. And since they have begun their new life in the Spirit, the Spirit of God is in them because they have given themselves over to the direction of God (Gl 5:24). The sons of God are identified by their obedience to the gospel. By their obedience they have crucified their desire to walk after the flesh. It is for this reason that God claims them as His sons. Paul explains, *"For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were immersed into Christ have put on Christ"* (Gl 3:26,27). **10 *If Christ is in you:*** The metaphorical meaning here is synonymous with the indwelling of the Spirit of verse 9. The meaning is the same. The Christ-directed life is Spirit-directed, and thus, one is spiritually dead to sin but alive in Christ (5:17; 6:5; Gl 2:20). Though the body is subject to sin and death because one cannot control himself to live flawlessly according to law, the spiritual side of man is alive because of Christ. The spiritual part of man is alive, not according to flawless living, but because of the grace of God through the blood of Jesus (1 Jn 1:7). It is in this way that Christ, though at the right hand of God, can be in the person who conducts his life according to the will of God. **11** Paul now turns to the

Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised up Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies by His Spirit who dwells in you.

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

**13** for if you live after the flesh you will die. But if you through the Spirit put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.

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

**15** For you have not received a spirit of bond-

age again to fear, but you have received a spirit of adoption by which we cry, "Abba, Father!"

**16** The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are the children of God,

**17** and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ; if indeed we suffer with *Him* in order that we may also be glorified with *Him*.

**18 ¶** For I consider that the sufferings of this present time *are not worthy to be compared* with the glory that will be revealed to us.

physical body of man. God has taken care of the sin problem of man through His grace that was revealed on the cross (1 Co 15:3). But the gospel also includes God's care for the physical body through the resurrection of Jesus from the dead (1 Co 15:4). God raised the body of Jesus from the dead through the work of the Holy Spirit (6:4; At 2:24; 1 Co 6:14). Through the work of the Holy Spirit that now dwells in Christians He will bodily raise the Christian from the dead at the final coming (1:4; Jn 5:28,29; 2 Co 5:1-8; 1 Th 4:13-18).

**12 *We are debtors:*** Paul now applies to all Christians that which he applied to his own life in 1:14,15. We are debtors to God for all that He has done for us through the cross and will do through the resurrection. It is thus foolish to think that we can in any way put Him in debt to us. What Paul teaches here manifests the fallacy of any system of religion that binds meritorious works as requirements for salvation. Being created in Christ Jesus for good works does not have reference to working in order to merit what God will give to us (See comments Ep 2:8-10). It refers to realizing one's debt for all that God has done for us through the cross (1 Co 15:10). **13** If the Roman brethren return to a legal system of justification by perfect-law keeping, they will spiritually die, for their sin against law apart from grace will cause death (3:23; 6:23; Gl 6:8). If they live according to the direction of the Spirit, then they will resort to faith, and thus trust in God (See Gl 5:19-22). They must make a free-moral choice not to live according to the deeds of the flesh (Ep 4:22; Cl 3:5-10). **14 *Led by the Spirit of God:*** Those who have submitted to the will of God are identified as the sons of God (Gl 5:18; see 2 Tm 3:16,17). Keep in mind that this is not a subjective urge supposedly given by the Spirit, else we return to the very thing Paul is refuting in the context. Those who are led by the flesh are following after the inventions of human emotional religion that lead men away from dependence on God for direction. Those who are led by the Spirit of God seek the will of God in order to determine the direction of their lives (3:31; see Ps 119:105; Pv 6:23; compare Jn 14:15; 15:14). **15 *A spirit of bondage:*** By living according to one's invented religious beliefs, he brings fear into his life. If his religious beliefs are based on the superstitions of the religion that has been handed down from his fathers, he lives in fear of supposedly unexplained spirits and humanly devised fables. The minds of the adherents of such religions are held in bondage by imagined powers that do not exist (See comments At 8:14-25; 19:11-20). If one follows after reli-

gion that has been invented after emotionalism, then he is in bondage to the fear of uncertainty. He often seeks for a miracle to confirm his faith. He desires to walk by sight instead of faith because he is in doubt concerning his faith. He walks in the spirit of bondage, fearing that when the emotionalism is gone, his religious convictions will also vanish away. Those who walk after the spirit of traditional religion are also in bondage because they have put their trust in the traditions of their fathers (Mk 7:1-9). Those who devise meritorious religions walk in the spirit of bondage because they never know if they have performed well enough in order to merit the righteousness of God. All such religions manifest the spirit of bondage. ***A spirit of adoption:*** In contrast to the religions of human imaginations, the Spirit-led man cries unto the Father for direction. He does not trust in the direction of his traditions. He does not trust in the directions of his emotions. He does not trust in the imagined superstitions of false gods he has created after this own imagination. He trusts in God. As a son he cries "Abba, Father" to the One who will direct him through inspired words (Mk 14:36; Gl 4:6). He thus worships his Father in spirit and truth (See comments Jn 4:24). "Abba" is Aramaic and is a Jewish child's endearing term that he would use to address his father. In such a way the obedient believer who has responded to the grace of the Father pleads for the direction of the Father. One does not cry "Abba, Father," and then go off into his own religious inventions. "Abba, Father" implies trust in, reliance upon, and direction from the Father in all aspects of one's life as a son. **16** When we bring our lives into conformity with the inspired instruction of the word of the Spirit, then we have the witness of the Holy Spirit that we are truly the sons of God (Ep 1:13). **17 *Heirs of God:*** The obedient son of God inherits what the Father has promised for His sons (See At 26:28). When we put on Christ in baptism (Gl 3:26,27), Paul explains that we belong to Christ and are Abraham's seed "*and heirs according to the promise*" (Gl 3:29; see Gn 12:3; 18:18). ***Suffer with Him:*** All who would live the committed life after the Spirit will suffer persecution (Mt 5:10-12; At 14:22; Ph 1:29; 2 Tm 2:12; 3:12).

#### SUFFERING OF THE WORLD

**18 *The glory that will be revealed to us:*** Paul wants us to consider the eternal heaven of which the Christian is an heir (2 Co 4:17; 1 Pt 1:6). One would certainly be arrogant if he assumed that he could exchange in a fair deal with God a lifetime of good works

**19** For the anxious expectation of the creation waits for the revealing of the sons of God.

**20** For the creation was made subject to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who has subjected *it* in hope,

**21** because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.

**22** For we know that the whole creation groans and labors together until now in pains

of birth.

**23** And not only *that*, but ourselves also, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body.

**24** For we are saved by hope, but hope that is seen is not hope, for what a man sees, why does he still hope for *it*?

**25** But if we hope for what we do not see, *then* with perseverance we wait for *it*.

**26** ¶ Likewise, the Spirit also helps our weak-

for the eternal riches of heavenly glory. In order to put God in debt for eternity in heaven, we would have to live an eternity of doing good works on earth. But such cannot be done. Because it cannot be done, we must depend on God's grace. Since one man's lifetime cannot be exchanged for an eternity of heaven, then there is certainly no possible way by which we can earn heaven. In this verse Paul even says that we could not live a lifetime of sufferings for Jesus in order to merit the glories of heaven. Sufferings for the name of Jesus cannot be meritorious in reference to our inheritance of heaven. What we shall receive is more than we can buy with either good works or sufferings. **19 *The anxious expectation of the creation:*** Though there are different views concerning what "the creation" is, it seems that anything other than a reference to the physically created world has textual problems. Paul seems to personify the creation as is done in other biblical texts (See Ps 98:8; Is 55:12; Ez 31:15). He does so in an effort to illustrate for Christians that even the physical world was affected by the sin of Adam, and thus, is in expectation of deliverance for the benefit of the sons of God (See Gn 3:17,18; compare 2 Pt 3:13). **20 *Subjected to futility:*** We do not live in the original environment of this world that was in existence before the flood of Noah's day, nor before the fall of Adam. Before the ground was cursed after Adam sinned, the garden of Eden environment was possibly destined not only to support Adam, but all humanity in a garden of Eden environment. But that environment was changed when Adam sinned. It was the Creator, God, who cursed the ground and all creation because of the sin of Adam (Gn 3:17-19). **21 *The creation itself also will be delivered:*** Paul seems to indicate in his personification of creation that there will be a time of rejuvenation. It will be a rejuvenation of the world for the benefit of the sons of God as they move into a heavenly environment that is meant for the dwelling of a resurrected spiritual body (See comments 2 Pt 3:10-14). Some commentators have affirmed that "the creation" which is introduced in verse 19 refers to the creation of the unbelieving world. The word "creation" is so used in Mk 16:15 and Cl 1:23. There is some validity to this interpretation. However, there seems to be a problem with this understanding because Paul affirms that "all creation" will be delivered from the bondage of corruption. The meaning may be, therefore, that when Adam was driven from the tree of life, he brought on humanity the curse of physical death in a cursed environment. All men will be delivered from such by the resurrection of all the dead at the end of time (Jn

5:28,29). However, the unrighteous will be delivered to condemnation, not life or the environment that is prepared for the righteous (2 Pt 3:13). The promise of resurrection to life is only for those who are in Christ (2 Co 5:10). **22** It is true that the morally sensible of humanity groan for a better life than what this world presents. However, if they do not obey the gospel, their hope for a better world beyond this world will be dashed when Jesus comes with His angels to condemn the disobedient to the destruction of hell (2 Th 1:7-9). Therefore, reference in this context is probably to the personified physical world that Paul refers to as groaning from present existence for that new heavens and earth to which the saints will be delivered (See Jr 12:4,11; 2 Pt 3:13). **23 *The firstfruits of the Spirit:*** The early Christians received the first blessings of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit that occurred in At 2:1-4 (See comments At 2:38,39). From the miraculous baptism of the Holy Spirit, the apostles received and transmitted the miraculous gifts to all believers with whom they had personal contact (See comments Mk 16:14-20; At 8:18). Therefore, all the early Christians participated either directly or indirectly in the outpouring of the Spirit on the apostles (See comments Hb 6:4,5). ***The redemption of our body:*** It is the glorious hope of the Christian, not to be delivered from embodiment in order to be naked, but to be embodied with the habitation that is from God (See comments 1 Co 15; 2 Co 5:1-8). Christians seek to be as Jesus (1 Jn 3:2) in a spiritual body that is suitable for eternal dwelling (Ph 3:21; see Ep 1:14; 4:30; 1 Jn 3:2). **24,25** Hope is the foundation upon which we continue our response to the grace of God. His grace has delivered us from sin and death, and consequently, will deliver us unto the new heavens and earth that are to come (2 Pt 3:13). For this reason, Christians obediently walk by faith in order not to give up their eternal possession that they have as heirs of God (4:18; 2 Co 5:7; Hb 1:1,6; 6:18,19). If the Christian's hope is strong for that which God will give, then he will have inner strength to persevere through the struggles of this life. It is the hope of heaven that gives Christians the strength to remain faithful and strong through the trials and persecutions of this world.

**26,27 *The Spirit also helps in our weaknesses:*** Some have affirmed that reference here is to the Holy Spirit carrying the Christian's prayers to God. It is affirmed that the Christian cannot convey inner thoughts that are necessary for God to understand. It is assumed, therefore, that God needs the intercession of the Spirit in order to understand the inner feelings that Christians

nesses, for we do not know how to pray as we should, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession with groanings that cannot be uttered.

**27** And He who searches the hearts knows what *is* the mind of the Spirit, because He makes intercession for the saints according to *the will of God*.

**28 ¶** And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to

those who are the called according to *His* purpose.

**29** For those He foreknew, He also predestined *to be* conformed to the image of His Son, so that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.

**30** Moreover, those whom He predestined, He also called. And those whom He called, He also justified. And those whom He justified, He also glorified.

would like to express in words of prayer. Such a belief does bring into question the omniscience of the Father, and possibly, pushes the Father away from His close fellowship with the Christian. However, the Father is not distant from the Christian so that He cannot know our inner most feelings, for in Him we live and move and have our being (At 17:27,28). What Paul expresses here is the problem of the Christian, not the difficulty of the Father to know the Christian's inner feelings. God does not need a verbal translator. **We do not know how to pray:** During His ministry, the disciples came to Jesus and asked, "*Lord, teach us to pray*" (Lk 11:1). These godly Jews had been with Jesus long enough to understand that they needed direction in their prayers. They needed teaching on how to pray in harmony with the teachings of Jesus. This request of the disciples for instruction concerning prayer is a possible key to understanding what Paul is saying here concerning the prayers of the early disciples. In the first century, the gospel went into ungodly areas of pagan beliefs. These formerly idolatrous people were certainly less prepared to utter correct prayers to the Father than the Jewish disciples that followed Jesus. Therefore, one of the miraculous gifts of the firstfruits of the Spirit was the gift of prophecy. Such included inspired preaching, teaching, singing and prayer. Seated in the context of a discussion on the miraculous gifts in 1 Co 12-14, Paul spoke of the gifts of inspired singing and prayer (See comments 1 Co 14:15). Because the first Christians in idolatrous cultures did not know the word of God, they needed the direction of the Holy Spirit to pray according to the will of God (1 Jn 5:14). They thus prayed in the Spirit, that is, by the direction of the Spirit (Jd 20). **According to the will of God:** The Holy Spirit worked on behalf of the new disciples who had no New Testaments to direct their prayers according to the will of God. After the churches were established, the miraculous gifts of the Spirit were left by the apostles to direct the preaching, teaching, singing and prayers among them. After they had grown in a knowledge of the word of God, then the miraculous gifts were no longer needed (See comments 1 Co 13:8-10). But until that time, they needed direct help from the Spirit in order that they conduct their lives after the Spirit.

#### MORE THAN CONQUERORS IN CHRIST

**28 All things work together for good:** We often cannot see the good that comes from immediate trials and sufferings. Therefore, we must assume that the good that God brings is within our lifetime. God views things from His eternal perspective. The final good of God will come with the reward of eternal heaven. In this

context, Paul is asking us to view the final results of our sufferings from the eternal perspective of God. Though there is good that comes from God in suffering in our lifetime, there is the final good of glory that will come after the end of this world. **Called according to His purpose:** The final "calling" of God of Christians out of the world will occur at the end of time. The finality of all things, therefore, will end in good for the Christian when he is called into eternal glory. Through the preaching of the gospel, men are also called out of the world of sin through their obedience to the gospel (2 Th 2:14; 2 Tm 1:9; see Rm 6:3-6). It is the eternal purpose of God to bring obedient free-moral individuals into the realm of heavenly and eternal dwelling in His presence (See 16:25; 1 Co 2:7; Ep 3:5,10,11; Cl 1:26). Therefore, we are called into the plan of God's purpose which is good. We do not call God into our purpose. He calls us into His. **29,30** We must not assume that the foreknowledge of God presupposes the individual predestination of individuals to either heaven or hell. In the context here, reference is to those who will be glorified (vs 21; Jn 17:22). Before the creation of the world, God foreknew the body of believers He would glorify in eternal heaven (See comments Ep 1:7-14). He foreknew the body because He predestined the existence of the church. Therefore, those who would free-morally choose to be a part of this group (the church) by voluntary obedience to the gospel in order to conform to the image of the Son (2 Co 3:18), would also be destined to glorification in eternal heaven. It is the group of believers, the church, that God before the creation of the world predestined to be glorified. It is the responsibility of individuals to free-morally choose to become a part of this predestined group. Therefore, the group of believers God predestined to be glorified, were first justified by the predetermined plan of the cross (Rv 13:8). Those who were justified He called through the gospel (2 Th 2:14). At the end of time, He will call out those of the world for eternal glory. These who will be called out of the world are now predestined because they are a part of the predestined group of believers who will be called out of the world for eternal glory. God foreknew this plan because He foreplanned the scheme of redemption before the creation of the world (See comments Ep 3:8-13). **Firstborn among many brethren:** When people conform to the image of the Son, then they make the Son the firstborn among those who have conformed to His image. When we seek to conform to our own religion, whether emotional or traditional, we are denying the right Jesus has to be the firstborn. As the firstborn among those who have conformed to His image, Jesus is the first to be resurrected never to die again.

**31 ¶** What will we then say to these things? If God *is* for us, who *can be* against us?

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

**33** Who will lay anything to the charge of God's elect? *It is* God who justifies.

**34** Who *is* He who condemns? *It is* Christ who died, yes, rather who was raised again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us.

**35** Who will separate us from the love of Christ? *Will it be* tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril,

or sword?

**36** As it is written, "*For Your sake we are killed all day long. We are considered as sheep for the slaughter.*"

**37 ¶** But in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us.

**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, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

He is the firstborn who has legal rights to the heritage of the Father. Since He partook of humanity in the likeness of men (Jn 1:14; Ph 2:5-7; Hb 2:11,12,18; 4:14-16), He has the right to lead the saved into eternal glory (See comments Rv 5).

**31** Paul now leads to the conclusion of his arguments of chapters 1:1 - 8:30. The conclusion is, "*If God is for us, who can be against us?*" When one understands all that God did through His grace, the answer to the question is obvious. No one or anything can stand against the sons of God. **32** When we comprehend the extent to which God went to bring us into eternal glory, then we begin to understand the love of God. When we understand how far Jesus had to come and get us, then we can appreciate the extent to which God had to go to save us. If the magnitude of God's love does not motivate us into action, then certainly, we will not be lost because we failed to do a required agenda of good works or because we failed to live flawlessly in reference to law. We will be lost because we are loveless. We are loveless when we do not respond to God's love on the cross. And loveless characters have no place in eternal glory (See comments Mt 18:21-35; 1 Jn 3:10-23; see Js 2:13; 1 Jn 4:19). **33,34** Paul's rhetorical question here demands a negative answer. No one can bring a charge against the church except the One to whom the church belongs. No one has a right to condemn the church except the One who saved the church. However, since God loved the church by the giving of His own Son, it is not logical to believe that He would turn in order to charge the church with sin. If Jesus gave Himself on the cross to save the church, it is not logical to believe that He would turn and condemn that for which He died. **Makes intercession for us:** Jesus is at the right hand of God (Cl 3:1; Hb 1:3; 8:1). However, He is not there for the purpose of condemnation, but for the work of intercession on behalf of the saints (Hb 7:25; 9:24; 1 Jn 2:1). His continued intercession means that the Christian has the continual cleansing of sin by the sacrificial blood of Jesus (1 Jn 1:7). It is through His blood and intercession, therefore, that we stand justified before God. **35** In this verse, Paul asks another rhetorical question. The answer again is obvious. No one can separate the sons of God from their Father, for He is God of all things. All the hardships that Satan would unleash upon Christians cannot separate the sons of God from their Father if they remain faithful unto death (Rv 2:10). **36 Killed all**

**the day long:** Paul's quotation from Psalm 44:22 is indicative of the life of persecuted Christians. As saints of God, Christians endure the onslaught of the wicked world that would seek to kill them (See At 14:22; 20:24; 1 Co 4:9; 15:30; 2 Co 1:9; 4:10; 6:9; 11:23). Through these words, the Holy Spirit is possibly preparing the Roman Christians for the horrific persecution that is about to be unleashed on them through the personal vendetta of Caesar Nero who would persecute Christians in Rome (See comments in introduction to Rv). If Paul does not have this in mind, then certainly He is preparing them for the decades of persecution that the Roman Empire will eventually launch against Christianity. This persecution would continue on and off until the Edict of Toleration and Edict of Milan that would eventually be issued by Constantine in 311 and 313 to relieve Christians of State persecution. When Nero died at his own suicidal hand in A.D. 68, there was a period of peace for Christians. However, under the reign of Domitian at the end of the first century, persecution of the church by the Roman State was revived. **37 More than conquerors:** Christians have not only conquered sin and death, they have also conquered the world because nothing of this world can separate them from the love of God (See Jn 16:33; 1 Co 15:57; 2 Co 2:14; 1 Jn 5:4). **38,39** Paul here goes beyond the physical sufferings that are launched against the Christian by forces of evil in an effort to separate him from the love of God. Paul moves into the spiritual realm. He affirms that Satan has no subjective power over the Christian. Satan cannot of his will snatch the Christian from the love of God (See comments Jn 10:27-30). He may go about in the world as a roaring lion (1 Pt 5:8), but his power of deception is not effective in reference to those who know and love the truth (See comments 2 Th 2:10-12). He does not have the power to subject against their will, any Christian who has given himself to God. Those who believe this can have confidence, not arrogance, for they trust in the power of the gospel, not in the flesh. Because they stand in the grace of God, they have confidence to stand against all that Satan would launch against them. Arrogance stems from those who have confidence in the flesh, or their ability to perform law and works in order to save themselves. Such arrogance leads to boasting. Paul reminds those who are of such a religious behavior, "*For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of*

## Chapter 9

1 ¶ I say the truth in Christ, I do not lie, my conscience also bearing witness with me in the Holy Spirit,

2 that I have great sorrow and continual grief in my heart.

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

4 who are Israelites, to whom *belongs* the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises;

5 whose *are* the fathers, and from whom according to the flesh, Christ *came*, who is over all, God blessed forever. Amen.

6 ¶ Not as though the word of God has failed. For they *are* not all Israel who are *descended* from Israel;

7 nor because they are the seed of Abraham *are they* all children; but, "*In Isaac will your seed be called.*"

8 That is, those who are the children of the flesh, these *are* not the children of God, but the children of the promise are counted for the seed.

God; not of works, lest anyone should boast" (Ep 2:8,9). Grace is the source of confidence of all Christians. They stand justified by what God has done and is doing for them, not by what they are doing for Him.

### Chapter 9

#### THE ELECTION OF NATIONAL ISRAEL

Paul has concluded the first section of his argument concerning salvation by grace and faith. Through this plan of salvation, the Gentiles were accepted. However, because national Israel sought justification by works, the majority of the Jews rejected Jesus. They rejected Jesus because they were not sons of Abraham by faith. In chapters 9-11 Paul answers the Jews' questions concerning why Israel stumbled over Jesus. Because the vast majority of Israel rejected the fulfillment of the promise, he answers questions as to whether God has fulfilled His promise. His answer concerning why the majority of Israel did not accept the fulfillment of the promise is in 9:6. The answer lies in the fact that at the time Jesus came, the majority of the Israelites were not the true Israel of God by faith. God had raised up the Prophet, but they had constructed a religion of works that drove them to reject the Prophet (See Dt 18:15ff; At 3:21ff).

1,2 **I lie not:** Paul begins by telling the Romans how sincere he is concerning the hope of Israel and his concern for the present situation of Israel. He grieved over those of Israel who rejected the promise that God had fulfilled in Jesus. **3 Accursed from Christ:** Like Moses before him (Ex 32:30-32), Paul was willing to sacrifice himself in order that His fellow Jews be saved (10:1). The Greek word "accursed" (*anathema*) was used to translate the Hebrew word *herem* which had reference to that which was devoted to God (Lv 27:28ff; Nm 21:3). When something was devoted to God it was doomed to destruction. It is here certainly possible that Paul is offering himself as a sacrifice for the salvation of national Israel. **4** Israel was adopted or chosen by God (Ex 4:22,23; 19:5ff; Dt 14:1,2; Am 3:2). Israel was glorified before God as His adopted son (Ex 24:16,17; 1 Sm 4:21; 1 Kg 8:10,11). God established a covenant with the nation (Gn 17:2-21; Dt 4:13,23; 4:2,3; 29:14; Lk 1:72; At 3:25; see Jr 31:31-34). With the covenant God made with Israel, He gave the Old Testament law (Dt 4:13; Ps 147:19). Therefore, in conjunction with both the law and covenant God affirmed that through Israel

He would bring about the promises that He had already made to the fathers (At 2:39; 13:32; Ep 2:12; compare Hb 8:4; 9:1; 13:10). From Israel, therefore, came service to God (Hb 9:1,6). **5** The great fathers of faith came from Israel (Dt 10:15). And finally, from Israel came the Messiah who was the blessing of all humanity (Lk 1:34,35; 3:23; Gl 4:4; Hb 7:14). **Who is over all:** Jesus is presently reigning over all things (Mt 28:18; Ep 1:20-22; 1 Pt 3:22). He is King of kings and Lord of lords (1 Tm 6:15). **God blessed forever:** As the Son of God, Jesus was the manifestation on earth of the Godhead who dwells beyond the physical world. Because God manifested Himself through Jesus, does not mean that there are a plurality of Gods. God is not separated into pieces, but maintains the unity of God regardless of the manifestations of Himself through the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Since Jesus was the manifestation of God on earth, the Scriptures refer to Him as God. This is one of those many passages in the New Testament where Jesus is referred to as God (See Jn 1:1; 20:28; At 20:28; Ph 2:6; Cl 2:9; Ti 2:13; Hb 1:8; 2 Pt 1:1; 1 Jn 5:20). **6** Some in Paul's audience are certainly questioning as to whether God has fulfilled His promise. Since the majority of national Israel rejected Jesus, the reasoning was that the promise had not been fulfilled. However, Paul answers the questions by stating that God is not concerned with national Israel, but with those who are the Israel by faith. **They are not all Israel who are descended from Israel:** Paul's argument in this section is based on the fact that the true descendants of Abraham and heirs of the promises are those who are descendants of Abraham's faith (See Jn 8:39; Gl 6:16). God's emphasis was on the faithful of national Israel, not the physical nation. This true Israel did accept the Prophet Jesus. This Israel accepted Him through faith. The receiving of the blessings of the promises, therefore, was conditioned on faith, not physical lineage from Abraham. Paul's point is that all true Israel by faith did accept the Messiah. At the time he was writing, they were accepting Jesus as the Messiah by obedience to the gospel. **7 In Isaac your seed will be called:** It took more than being of Abraham's seed to be an heir of the promise. There were physical descendants of Abraham through the other children of Abraham. However, the promise through the physical lineage would continue through Isaac (Gn 21:12). **8 The children of the flesh:** Paul makes it quite clear here that the fulfillment of the promise was not dependent on the physical

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

10 ¶ And not only this, but when Rebecca also had conceived by one man, 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 who calls,

12 it was said to her, "The elder will serve the younger."

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

14 ¶ What will we say then? Is there injus-

tice with God? Certainly not!

15 For He says to Moses, "I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion."

16 So then it is not of him who wills nor of him who is running, but of God who shows mercy.

17 For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, "Even for this same purpose I have raised you up, so that I might show My power in you, and that My name might be declared throughout all the earth."

18 Therefore, He has mercy on whom He

Israel. God's work with physical Israel was that the nation be a vehicle that would sustain the spiritual Israel by faith. It was the spiritual Israel through whom He brought forth the Messiah. **The children of the promise:** These are those who were sons of Abraham by faith (At 3:25; Gl 4:28). Though all the children of promise were of Israel by physical lineage from Abraham, only those who were of the spiritual descendants of Abraham's faith were considered to be the true Israel of God, and thus the children of the promise. These were the true seed of Abraham through whom God fulfilled the promise of the seed, who is Christ. "Therefore know that only those who are of faith are sons of Abraham" (Gl 3:7). And "now to Abraham and his Seed were the promises made. He does not say, 'And to seeds,' as of many, but as of one, 'And to your Seed,' who is Christ" (Gl 3:16). It was through the spiritual seedline of Abraham that the Seed (Christ) came into the world. When He came, the spiritual seed of Abraham accepted Him. Therefore, the promises of God to spiritual Israel by faith were fulfilled in Christ. **9 The word of promise:** Isaac came forth as the result of God's grace, not by the work of Abraham and Sarah (Gn 18:10). The conception of Isaac was miraculous in the sense that Abraham and Sarah were past the age of child bearing. Therefore, the promise was the result of grace. The fulfillment of the promise was on the same basis. It was not fulfilled by meritorious works, but by the grace of God. Physical Israel at the time of Jesus sought the fulfillment of the promise by works. On the contrary, acceptance of the fulfillment of the promise was by faith. Jesus, therefore, was accepted by spiritual Israel because those of spiritual Israel accepted Him on the basis of faith. Men of faith as Andrew, Peter, John and a host of other Jews fled to Jesus as the hope of Israel (See Jn 1:29-51; see comments Gl 5:15,16). They fled to Jesus by faith, whereas those who were not of Israel by faith, rejected Jesus, and thus, they did not receive the promise.

10,11 Paul continues the preceding argument with reference to God's work through Jacob and Esau. God made His choice of Jacob over Esau before either was born and could manifest either good or evil in their lives. God's choice, therefore, was not based on the merit of their lives, but on His predetermined plan to continue the seedline of Abraham through Jacob (See Gn 25:21-23). Therefore, God's work to continue the seedline,

and thus the fulfillment of the promise, was not based on the work of men, but on the work of God. **12,13 Serve the younger:** Jacob was the younger who was served by Esau the older (Gn 25:23). In other words, Jacob was the one through whom the promise of the blessing would come to all mankind. **Jacob I have loved:** This is not an expression of emotion in reference to God's respecting the nature of Jacob over Esau because God considered Jacob a better person. Paul is not referring to God's rewarding of Jacob with the seedline because He respected him over Esau. What is in view is God's choosing a nation over another nation. The nation that came from Jacob was chosen over the nation that came from Esau (Mt 1:2,3). Jacob is used as the father of the nation of Israel, and Esau is used as the father of the nation that came from his seedline. Thus God chose Israel over the nation that came from Esau.

#### THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD

14 Paul is here assuming that some are questioning the fairness of God in choosing Jacob over Esau. In the context of verse 6, some may be questioning the fairness of God in choosing those He knew were Israel by faith over those who were Israel after the flesh. **15** In Exodus 33:19 God reminded Moses that He had chosen Israel, though Israel was a stiffnecked people. In this discussion, therefore, Paul reminds his audience that God has the sovereign right to make these choices regardless of the thinking of men. **16 Him who wills:** God does not work according to what we think He should do. **Him who is running:** As a participant in God's plan, it is not our choice to determine what God should do. **Of God who shows mercy:** Our decisions are often prejudiced. In reference to Paul's audience of Jews, they would be prejudiced toward Israel after the flesh. But God did not owe the promise to those who were descendants of Jacob through the flesh. The salvation of the promise does not come as a result of being a descendant of the flesh nor by the works of the flesh. It is according to the mercy of God. **17 For this same purpose:** God foreknew the defiant attitude that would be maintained by Pharaoh when He confronted him with His work. Therefore, God raised up Pharaoh and used his defiant disposition as the occasion to manifest His power over him in His work to deliver the nation of Israel (See Ex 9:16). **18 He hardens:** God does not

desires, and whom He wills He hardens.

**19 ¶** You will say then to me, "Why does He still find fault? For who has resisted His will?"

**20** On the contrary, O man, who are you who *would* reply against God? Will the thing formed say to Him who formed it, "Why have you made me this way?"

**21** Has not the potter power over the clay to make from the same lump one vessel to honor and another to dishonor?

**22 ¶** What if God, willing to show His wrath and to make His power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath pre-

pared for destruction,

**23** and that He might make known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy, that He had before prepared for glory,

**24** even us, whom He has called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles?

**25 ¶** As He says also in Hosea, "*I will call them My people who were not My people, and her beloved who was not beloved.*"

**26** "*And it will come to pass that in the place where it was said to them, 'You are not My people,' there they will be called the children of the living God.*"

harden the heart of a righteous man for a righteous man has submitted his heart to God. Pharaoh's heart was not of such a nature. Therefore, his heart was hardened by the occasion of his confrontation with the will of God (See Ex 8:15,32; 9:34). God hardens those who have set their rebellious minds against His work. God's will hardens evil hearts, but melts righteous hearts. His will only presents the occasion or obstacle against which disobedient minds continue to harden. The will of God offers the obstinate the opportunity to manifest the nature of their hardened hearts.

**19** Paul supposes that some in his audience might question God's justice in presenting the occasion to harden individuals of His work to carry out His plans. They may possibly think that it is wrong for God to find fault by presenting an occasion for men as Pharaoh to rise up in rebellion against the work of God. Paul's answer is that God can use the free-moral choice of rebellious men to accomplish His plan. God can use the work of Satan through deceived men in order to accomplish His purposes. We must also conclude that God's work is not regulated or determined by the hardness of men's hearts. Jesus came to the Jews. But the Jews rejected Him (Jn 1:11). God foreknew their hardness. However, their hardness would not deter His plans to bring the cross to humanity. In the case of national Israel, God used their stubbornness and hardened hearts in order to take the incarnate Son of God to the cross.

**20 Who are you:** There were evidently some in the Roman church who were arrogantly questioning the work of God to fulfill His promises in the cross. Paul asked a question here to deliver a just rebuke of such thinking. He indirectly identifies such thinking as unrighteous. It would be unrighteous thinking to suppose that God was unjust by using the rebellious attitude of the wicked against themselves and for His work (See Is 45:9). One cannot blame God for his own stumbling over the work of God. Man was created a free-moral individual to live in the best of all environments for the dwelling of a free-moral person. In order to be truly free, one must have the ability and freedom to choose good or evil. When one chooses evil, God is not to be blamed for such choices. Neither is He to be blamed for the consequences of evil choices. **21** God has the right to bless those who have yielded to His work and will. On the other hand, He has the right to condemn those who have refused His work and will. He is God, the Creator of all that exists. Our questions must not attack His sover-

eignty over all things and work to carry out His eternal purposes. We must not be so arrogant that we bring the God's work down to the level of human reasoning.

**22 With much longsuffering:** The fact that God is patient in allowing opportunity for repentance exemplifies the justice of God. Men would rain down immediate judgment upon the wicked. However, God is not willing that any should perish, and thus, He gave Israel time for repentance (See 2 Pt 3:9). He has offered the Jews of national Israel every opportunity to repent (See Mt 23:37; Jn 5:40). Because He offered them every opportunity, they have no reason to blame God for their judgment. **Prepared for destruction:** It is apparent that here the Holy Spirit is reminding the Roman Jews of the impending in-time judgment that is soon to come upon the nation of Israel. Jesus had prophesied the destruction of the Jewish State, and such was coming in A.D. 70 (See comments Mt 24). We would do injustice to the interpretation of these thoughts of Paul concerning the situation and destiny of national Israel if we ignored the prophecy of Jesus that national Israel was coming to a close by the will of God in A.D. 70. Therefore, verse 22 speaks of God's wrath that will be unleashed upon those who have been prepared for destruction. They have been prepared for judgment by their rejection of the Son of God. Therefore, it is superfluous to imagine that Paul here speaks of a special blessing that God would supposedly have in store for national Israel in view of the fact that national Israel is headed for its destruction by the Roman State about a decade from the time of the writing of these words. **23,24 Make known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy:** The church would come forth from the ashes of the destruction of national Israel as the glorified people of God (See comments Mt 21:33-46). However, Paul's thought is beyond the manifestation of the church of the true sons of God after the destruction of national Israel. He views the glory of the vessels of mercy as the finalization of the work of God through the church, which church was composed not only of Jews by faith, but also of the Gentiles. **25,26** Paul concludes the preceding questions and proceeds to quote Old Testament prophecies that prove that God always intended to call the Gentiles into covenant relationship with him (See 3:29). The prophecies of Hs 2:23 (vs 25) and Hs 1:10 (vs 26) clearly state that the Gentiles would be included in the fulfillment of God's promise. They would be included, not because they were physical descendants of

**27 ¶** Isaiah also cries out concerning Israel, “*Though the number of the children of Israel is as the sand of the sea, a remnant will be saved,*

**28** *for He will finish the work and cut it short in righteousness, because the Lord will make a short work on the earth.”*

**29** And as Isaiah foretold, “*Except the Lord of Sabaoth had left us a seed, we would have been as Sodom and would have been made like Gomorrah.*”

**30 ¶** What will we say then? That the Gentiles who followed not after righteousness have attained to righteousness, even the right-

eousness that is of faith.

**31** But Israel, who followed after the law of righteousness, has not attained to the law.

**32** Why? Because *they* did not seek it by faith, but as if it were by works. For they stumbled over the stumbling stone,

**33** as it is written, “*Behold, I lay in Zion a stumbling stone and rock of offense, and whoever believes in Him will not be ashamed.*”

## Chapter 10

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

**2** For I testify of them that they have a zeal

Abraham, but through being the spiritual descendants by the faith of Abraham. In fact, one of Israel's works as a whole, which work they refused to do, was to be a priesthood nation to the Gentiles (See comments 1 Pt 2:9). **27,28 A remnant will be saved:** The Jews to whom Paul was writing in Rome understood the remnant concept. National Israel had gone into Assyrian and Babylonian captivities in their historical past. However, a physical remnant returned from the lands of their captors in order to resettle the land (See Is 1:9; 10:22,23). But in the context of Paul's argument here, reference is not to a remnant of physical Israel. His focus is on the spiritual Israel by faith that believed on Jesus. They were the spiritual remnant that came out of physical Israel at the time Jesus came. This was the “election” that came out of physical Israel (vs 6; 11:5,7,28). **29 Left us a seed:** In reference to the fulfillment of the promise, the seed was not a specific reference to national Israel. It was spiritual Israel, the spiritual seed of Abraham by faith (See comments Gl 3:7-9).

### WHY NATIONAL ISRAEL FELL

**30,31** Paul now comes to a conclusion. The Gentiles who did not have the privilege of the Old Testament law, or the privileges that were given to national Israel (3:1ff), were able to attain righteousness by faith, but not by works of the Old Testament law. On the contrary, national Israel failed to attain righteousness because they sought such through meritorious law-keeping. **32,33 Because they did not seek it by faith:** Paul gives the reason why national Israel stumbled over the fulfillment of the promise. They used that which was only a means to the end (the Old Testament law) as the end in itself. Through a meritorious system of law-keeping that they had constructed after the traditions of the fathers, they were unable to accept the grace of God through faith (See comments Mk 7:1-9; Gl 1:13,14). **They stumbled:** Jesus was the One over whom they stumbled because He did not fit into their system of theology of works, nor did He conform to their idea of who the Messiah would be (See Is 8:14; Lk 2:34; 1 Co 1:23). Therefore, because He would not conform to either their theology or expectations, He was rejected (Jn 1:11). Jesus thus became the occasion that manifested the hardness of their hearts in reference to the work of God. **Stumbling stone:** When God sent Jesus to the Jews, because of their hardness of heart, they treated Him

the same way they had treated the prophets before Him. They persecuted Him, and eventually, they nailed Him to the cross (See comments Mt 23:29-32; see Ps 118:22; Is 8:14; 28:16; Mt 21:42; 1 Pt 2:3-8). Because of their hardness of heart, national Israel stumbled over Jesus. They rejected Him as the Messiah of Israel, and thus, the Son of God (Jn 1:11). Since He was not the Messiah they thought He should be, they rejected Him. However, those who were sons of Abraham by faith received Him. The sons of Abraham by faith received Jesus as both the Messiah and Son of God (Jn 1:12,13). The Gentiles also accepted Him by faith. Jesus, therefore, became the cornerstone upon which the church was built (1 Co 1:23,24; 3:11; see comments Mt 16:13-19). He was the cornerstone because He fulfilled all Old Testament prophecies concerning the Messiah. He was proved to be the Son of God by the miraculous works He did (Jn 3:2). Jesus remains the cornerstone of the church because of the faith of those who believe that He is the Christ and Son of God. He is the cornerstone for those who build their faith upon Him.

## Chapter 10

**1** Paul again manifests his inward emotions concerning the lost condition of national Israel which is at the time of his writing, still outside Christ (See 9:1-3). **2 Not according to knowledge:** The religious state of national Israel is typical of all religions that have not allowed themselves to be directed by the word of God. They may be religiously zealous, however, one's religious zeal must be directed by the word of God (See At 21:20; Gl 1:14; see comments Mk 7:1-9; Gl 4:17,18). If one could be saved on the basis of meritorious zeal, then certainly Israel could have been saved without believing in Jesus. But God gives no provisions for their salvation on the merit of good works. Only in Christ is there salvation (See comments At 4:12). In their zeal to be righteous before God after their own meritorious system of works, the religious Jews of national Israel did not attain unto the righteousness of God by faith (9:31,32). They thus stumbled at the stone of stumbling (9:32). **3 Seeking to establish their own righteousness:** Those religions of the world as Judaism that are ignorant of or reject God's plan for righteousness, will always create their own system of religion (See comments Mt 15:1-9; Mk 7:1-9). However, one cannot

for God, but not according to knowledge.

**3** For they being ignorant of God's righteousness and seeking to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves to the righteousness of God.

**4** For Christ is the end of law for righteousness to everyone who believes.

**5 ¶** For Moses describes the righteousness that is of law, "*The man who does those things will live by them.*"

**6** But the righteousness that is of faith thus speaks, "*Say not in your heart, 'Who will as-*

*ced into heaven?'*" (that is, to bring Christ down),

**7** or, "*Who will descend into the abyss?'*" (that is, to bring up Christ from the dead).

**8** But what does it say? "*The word is near you, even in your mouth and in your heart,*" that is, the word of faith that we preach;

**9** that if you will confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and will believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.

**10** For with the heart man believes unto righ-

establish his own system of religion in order to justify himself before God. If one does such, he is not submitting to the righteousness of God. And such is what the religious leaders of Israel did. "*All too well you reject the commandment of God, so that you may keep your tradition*" (Mk 7:9). A most profound truth is here revealed through Paul by the Holy Spirit. At the time Jesus came, the religious leaders of Israel had established their own righteousness, that is, their own religion. It was a religion that was constructed after the traditions of men (Mk 7:1-9). They sought to be justified before God on the merit of keeping their religious traditions. The world is full of similar religions today. But religion that is formulated after the "*commandments and doctrines of men*" is not acceptable to God (See comments Cl 2:20-23). Such religions are erroneous simply because God must be the standard upon which our beliefs are to be based. When men leave the truth, their source of authority is only themselves. Throughout the history of the world there have been thousands of religions that have been imposed on men that go to the extreme of manifesting the base desires of carnal thinking. There have been and are religions that justify murder and fornication. Such religions have given up a knowledge of truth and have sought to construct a system of religiosity that is after the desires of carnally minded men. We should be repulsed at such religions. However, the beginning of the formulation of such religions starts first with a rejection of the final authority of what should be the foundation of all belief, the word of God (See comments 2 Th 2:10-12). When one rejects the word of the one true God, then there is no end to the religious systems he will develop in order to please his own desires.

**4** Israel sought righteousness after a legal system of meritorious obedience to the Old Testament law and their religious traditions which they had added to the law. However, when grace and truth came through Jesus (Jn 1:17), men were justified by faith in response to God's will (See comments Mt 5:17; see Rm 6:14; 7:1-4,6; Gl 3:24; 4:5). It was the purpose of the law to bring Israel to the righteousness that was revealed through Jesus (Ph 3:9). Once Israel was brought to Jesus, the purpose of the law was fulfilled (See comments Gl 3:19-25). "*But after faith has come, we are no longer under a headmaster*" (Gl 3:25). Therefore, everyone who has come to Jesus by obedient faith is no longer under the necessity of justification by perfect law-keeping.

**5 Will live by them:** When Moses originally delivered the Old Testament law to Israel, he stated in Lv

18:5 the curse of law. It is the curse of law that no man can keep it perfectly in order to save himself (See comments Gl 3:10). Law cannot save, therefore, because no one can keep it perfectly (See comments Js 2:10). The man who rejects the grace of God that was revealed through Jesus has condemned himself to the law of sin and death. Under law he must flawlessly keep law in order to attain unto righteousness. However, all men sin (3:23). And the consequence of sin is spiritual death (6:23). The law which was believed to bring life, therefore, has become that which condemns one to death. The religiously zealous of Israel were in this spiritual state of sin at the time Paul wrote this letter. **6,7** Paul quotes Dt 30:12-14 in reference to the new relationship that we now have with God. No one has to go to heaven and personally bring Jesus down from His exalted state in order to be justified before God. Neither does one have to ascend to Jesus in order to be justified. That which is necessary for salvation is faith. And obedient faith in response to the grace of God can exist anywhere in the world. **8 The word is near you:** From the time of the giving of the Old Testament law on Mount Sinai, God conveyed to Israel that the just shall live by faith (Hk 2:4; see Dt 30:12-14). God did not make this principle difficult to understand in the Old Testament law. If Israel had sought the righteousness of God through faith, then they would not have constructed a legal system of works in order to justify themselves. They would also have readily accepted Jesus when He came. Those who were sons of Abraham by faith, did accept Jesus. But the majority of Israel had by the time Jesus came, constructed their own legal system of justification, and thus rejected faith. **9 Confess with your mouth:** In the context of Paul's argument this statement is understood. The confession of Jesus as Lord was the manifestation of making Jesus the Lord of one's life wherever he is in the world (See comments At 2:36,37). Paul is not talking about a mere speaking of words from the mouth that "Jesus is Lord." He is talking about obediently giving oneself over to faith in Jesus as opposed to meritorious works (See comments Mt 7:21,22; compare Mt 10:32; Lk 12:8). Once one makes Jesus his Lord, then his life is brought into subjection to the will of Jesus, for one cannot claim Jesus as his Lord if he does not submit to the word of Jesus (Jn 14:15:15:14; 1 Jn 5:3). **10 With the heart ... with the mouth:** Herein is the motivation for justification by faith. Faith motivates the heart and mouth. The parallelism of Paul's statement emphasizes that the law of faith motivates one unto obe-

teousness, and with the mouth confession is made to salvation.

**11** For the scripture says, "*Whoever believes on Him will not be ashamed.*"

**12** For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek, for the same Lord over all is rich to all who call on Him.

**13** For whoever will call on the name of the Lord will be saved.

**14 ¶** How then will they call on Him in whom

they have not believed? And how will they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how will they hear without a preacher?

**15** And how will they preach unless they are sent? As it is written, "*How beautiful are the feet of those who bring glad tidings of good things!*"

**16 ¶** However, they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, "*Lord, who has believed our report?*"

dience. As opposed to motivation that is generated after meritorious desires to justify oneself by law-keeping, inward faith generates obedience in response to the grace of God (See 1 Co 15:10). Once one has given himself to the lordship of Jesus, then it is his desire to follow after the directions of God's word and not the religious instructions that have been established by man. One cannot accept the lordship of Jesus and then remain in his own legal system of religious righteousness. Jesus said, "*If you love Me, keep My commandments*" (Jn 14:15). One cannot love Jesus and keep his own religious commandments that were given to him through the traditions of the fathers (Mk 7:1-9). When one comes to grace and faith, he must come out of those systems of religion that are constructed after the traditions and emotions of men. Paul wrote to the Colossians concerning religious traditions from which Christians have been delivered by obedience to the gospel (See comments Cl 2:20-22). He encouraged disciples to come out from among practices that formerly led them astray (2 Co 6:17; see Nm 33:51-56). **11 *Whoever believes:*** The invitation of the gospel is to all men (Mt 28:19; Mk 16:15; Jn 3:16). It is both to the Jew and the Gentile (At 10:36; 1 Tm 2:5). Paul's quotation of Is 28:16 emphasizes that salvation by faith has always been God's plan of salvation (See Is 49:23; Jr 17:7; Rm 1:17; 9:33). Those who believe will put their trust in God, and thus, God will account them righteous. They will not fall short of salvation. **12 *There is no difference:*** Even before the coming of Jesus, there was no distinction between Jew and Gentile in reference to salvation and spiritual matters. If such were true before the cross, then certainly it is true after the cross (See 3:22,29; At 15:9; Gl 3:28). One's connection with national Israel before the cross did not give one an advantage in reference to salvation. Salvation for all men since the beginning of time has been, "*The just shall live by faith*" (1:17; Hk 2:4; Gl 3:11; Hb 10:38). Therefore, it was not the purpose of God in establishing the nation of Israel to establish a system of salvation that was based on physical heritage as a Jew (See comments Gl 3:15-18). **13** Salvation is to all those who realize the curse of living after a system of justification by works. In order to come to the cross, one must first come to the realization that there is no salvation by meritorious religiosity. When one is frustrated with such religiosity, then he is driven to the grace of God (See Gl 2:16). Once one reaches this point, then he will humble himself before God who will lift him up (See 1 Pt 5:6,7). Until one comes to this point in his religious life, he will not call on the Lord for direction in his life (See Jl 2:32; At 2:21). In order to trust in God's grace one must become frustrated with trusting in himself.

#### ISRAEL REJECTED OPPORTUNITY

##### **14 *How then will they hear without a preacher:***

The medium through which God works in order to proclaim the gospel to the lost sheep of the house of Israel is through the work of preaching (Mt 28:19; Mk 16:14). God does not send angels to proclaim the gospel to the lost. Neither does He send the Holy Spirit (See comments At 8:26,29). The gospel will go into all the world, therefore, if preachers are sent to preach (See 1 Co 1:21). **15 *Unless they are sent:*** Since salvation is through obedience to the gospel (At 4:12; 2 Th 1:7-9), then it is imperative that the proclaimers of the gospel be sent forth into all the world. Those who do not understand the nature of salvation through the gospel, will not be motivated to carry out this great commission of Jesus. Those who believe that men can be saved on the merit of their own self-imposed religions will be indifferent about the plea of Paul that preachers be sent forth to all the world. Churches who covet preachers for themselves will not send their preachers out to preach the gospel to the lost (See comments Lk 4:42-44). ***The feet of those who preach:*** Before the coming of Jesus, the Holy Spirit commended the bearers of good news during the days when He inspired Isaiah to inscribe these words Paul here quotes (Is 52:7; Nh 1:15). The work of preaching the gospel to the lost is the work of the evangelists. It is here commended by God because of the purpose for which it is done. Souls are saved by obedience to the gospel when the gospel is preached. Unless preachers are sent into all the world, the world cannot be informed concerning the cross and resurrection of Jesus (See comments Ph 4:10-20; 3 Jn 5-8). The greatest work any man or woman can do on earth is to take the news of the death of Jesus for our sins and His resurrection for our hope to the ears of those who have not yet heard. We must affirm that no man has a right to hear the gospel twice when there is another who has not yet heard it once. For this reason, disciples must be stirred into action to preach the gospel to the entire world.

**16 *Obeyed the gospel:*** The gospel is the good news of the historical event of the death of Jesus for our sins and His resurrection to give us hope of resurrection (See comments 6:3-6; 1 Co 15:1-4; 2 Th 1:7-9; 1 Pt 4:17). Those who respond to the report of the grace of God as it is revealed through the cross, obey the gospel by immersion into the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus. Paul affirms that the gospel was reported to national Israel. However, most of national Israel did not believe. If they would have believed, they would have obeyed the gospel. The lost state of Israel, therefore, is not the fault of God who sent out the preachers. It is the fault of unbelieving Israel (See Is 53:1; Jn 12:38). They did not

**17** So then faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of Christ.

**18** But I say, have they not heard? Yes indeed, for *“their sound went into all the earth and their words to the ends of the world.”*

**19 ¶** But I say, did not Israel know? First, Moses says, *“I will provoke you to jealousy by those who are no people and by a foolish nation I will anger you.”*

**20** But Isaiah is very bold, and says, *“I was found by those who did not seek Me. I was*

*made manifest to those who did not ask for Me.”*

**21** But to Israel He says, *“All day long I have stretched forth My hands to a disobedient and obstinate people.”*

## Chapter 11

**1 ¶** I say then, has God cast away His people? Certainly not! For I am also an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin.

**2** God has not cast away His people whom

believe the message of the preachers, and thus, they did not accept Jesus as the Messiah. And because they did not accept Jesus as the Messiah, they did not obey the gospel. Their unbelief in the preachers' report of the gospel event resulted in their disobedience (See 1:5; 16:26). **17 Faith comes by hearing:** It is the word of God that produces faith, and faith produces obedience to the gospel (See Js 2:14-26). Most of national Israel did not listen to the preaching of the gospel. Therefore, national Israel refused to hear the report of the gospel, and thus, they did not have faith in the gospel (See Hb 11:6). The system of legal justification that was practiced by the Jews led them to religious arrogance. They were religiously arrogant because they assumed that they had a special blessing of God's righteousness as a result of their physical heritage with Abraham. Their religious arrogance, therefore, hindered them from hearing and believing the report of the gospel event.

**18 Their sound went into all the earth:** From the time of the outpouring of the Spirit in At 2 to the time Paul wrote these words, the report of the gospel had gone out to the far extremities of the Dispersion of national Israel throughout the Roman Empire (Ps 19:4; see Mt 24:14; Mk 16:15; Cl 1:6,23). It went to all Israel because those Jews who visited Jerusalem during the Passover/Pentecost feasts each year saw the miracles of the apostles and heard their teaching. They returned to synagogues throughout the world and reported what they heard (Is 2:1-4; see comments At 2). National Israel, therefore, could offer no excuse for not having the opportunity to hear and obey the gospel. **19** God prophesied that He would use the saving of the Gentiles as a means of provoking the Jews to jealousy. He wanted to provoke them to jealousy in order that they accept Jesus (11:11; Dt 32:21). However, those who were self-righteous after their own legal system of justification, stumbled over the proclamation of the gospel to the Gentiles. The Gentiles' turn from idolatrous religions did not move the arrogant legalistic religious leaders of national Israel into obedience of the gospel. **20** The gospel was preached to the Gentiles, who were led to believe by the Jews that they had no special consideration from God. However, when the gospel was preached to the Gentiles, they gladly accepted and obeyed it (Is 65:1; see At 13:46-48). They rejoiced that they could be accepted by God on the basis of faith, and not their keeping of the Old Testament law. **21** Though God had exercised great patience with the Jews, they were without excuse in their lack of obedience to the gospel (Is 65:1,2; 2 Pt 3:9). However, the arrogance of their self-righteousness led them to scoff at Jesus as the King of

Israel and Lord of their lives (See Mt 21:38; 22:5). Their rejection of Jesus, therefore, was in a few years going to lead them into the destruction of national Israel (See comments Mt 24). Before introducing His proclamation of the doom of national Israel, Jesus bewailed Jerusalem for her rejection of the prophets (See comments Mt 23:37). Paul's words in Romans in reference to national Israel, must be understood in the historical context that in only a few years, God was going to bring judgment on national Israel in the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70.

## Chapter 11

Paul concludes chapter 10 with the fact of national Israel's rejection of the gospel. In this chapter it is Paul's affirmation that God did not cast off His people without first giving them a chance to obey the gospel. His promises were fulfilled by the sending forth of the gospel to the Jews throughout the world between the time of the establishment of the church in A.D. 30 and the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. Paul affirms also that God has not postponed the fulfillment of His promises until a later date. When we come to the discussion of the contents of this chapter, it is necessary to restate Paul's definition of the two Israels. First, there is the national Israel that as a whole was hardened against Jesus as the Christ (See 9:6-9). It was this Israel that rejected the cross and stood in disobedience at the time he wrote. Second, there is the true Israel by faith. As sons of Abraham by faith, this Israel accepted Jesus as the Christ and obeyed the gospel. It is with this Israel that God has fulfilled His promises to the fathers. It was this second Israel that God always considered to be the heirs of His promises. This was the Israel that was redeemed in Christ at the time Paul wrote these final words in reference to their salvation.

### GOD FOREKNEW THE SPIRITUAL REMNANT

**1** Paul was an Israelite by faith. He was not only an Israelite by faith, but an Israelite by physical heritage (8:29; 2 Co 11:22; Ph 3:5; compare Jn 1:47). He and many other Jews stood righteous before God because of faith (See comments Gl 2:14-16). Therefore, God has not cast off the Israel by faith because Paul and other Jews who had obeyed the gospel were a testimony to the faithfulness of God to fulfill His promises. **2-4 Whom He foreknew:** God foreknew the Israel by faith who would obey the foreplanned gospel, and thus come into the church by faith (See comments 8:28-30; Ep 1:9-12; 3:8-12). It is the community of God, the

He foreknew. Or do you not know what the Scripture says of Elijah, how he pleads to God against Israel, saying,

**3** “*Lord, they have killed Your prophets and torn down Your altars. And I am left alone, and they are seeking my life*”?

**4** But what is the divine response to him? “*I have reserved for Myself seven thousand men who have not bowed the knee to Baal.*”

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

**6** And if by grace, then *it is* no more by works, otherwise grace is no more grace. [But if *it is* by works, it is no longer grace, otherwise

work is no longer work.]

**7** ¶ What then? Israel has not obtained that for which it seeks, but the elect have obtained it, and the rest were blinded.

**8** According as it is written, “*To this day God has given them the spirit of stupor, eyes that they should not see and ears that they should not hear.*”

**9** And David says, “*Let their table become a snare and a trap and a stumbling block and a retribution to them.*”

**10** *Let their eyes be darkened that they may not see and bow down their back always.*”

**11** ¶ I say then, have they stumbled that they should fall? Certainly not! But *rather* through

church, that God foreknew in this context. Reference is not to national Israel. **Elijah:** As God had seven thousand faithful Jews by faith in Elijah's day (1 Kg 19:10-18), so He had a remnant by faith in the days of the early evangelists. This remnant had not been forsaken by God for they had not forsaken Him. This was the true Israel by faith that accepted Jesus as the Christ and Son of God (9:6,7). This was the remnant by faith that had not created a religion after their own desires (See comments Mk 7:1-9). Therefore, when the Messiah came they accepted Him with eagerness (See Jn 1:32-51). **5 A remnant according to the election of grace:** This is the remnant of Jews who were the true Israel who believed the report of the gospel. This is the Israel that God foreknew would obey the gospel (9:27). It was with this remnant that God established His new covenant on the day of Pentecost in Jerusalem (See Jr 31:31-34; Hb 8:7ff; 10:15-17). Those of this remnant were elected by grace. The grace of God was manifested on the cross and they accepted such through faith (Ti 2:11). They were thus elected as a result of their choice to respond by faith to God's grace. Therefore, their election was by grace, not by the works of law or meritorious deeds. **6 No more of works:** Since the election was by the grace of God, then it was not as a result of their meritorious works of law. If God had saved the faithful remnant because of their meritorious works of law, then there would have been no grace (4:4). If their salvation was by works, then God would have been in debt to save them. Paul's argument here is that national Israel sought the fulfillment of God's promises through meritorious works of law. On the other hand, Israel by faith (the remnant) sought grace through faith (5:2). The Israel by works was rejected and the Israel by faith was justified.

**7** National Israelites by the flesh sought to obtain the promises by establishing their own righteousness (10:3). They thus missed that for which they sought by works because of the nature of the promise, that it was of grace and not works. On the other hand, the Israelites by faith attained the fulfillment of the promises and the righteousness of God because they sought it through faith. Fleshly Israel was blinded by their system of works (9:18; 10:16; 11:25; Mk 6:52; 2 Co 3:14), but Israel by faith could see through their trust in God. **8 God has**

**given them a spirit of stupor:** God did not predestine the Israelites by works to be hardened. He did not make them hardened against their will. As with Pharaoh, God presented the occasion by which they would manifest their hardness of heart and blindness in reference to faith (Is 6:9; 29:10; Dt 29:4; Ps 69:22,23; Jr 5:21; Ez 12:2; Mt 13:14; Jn 12:40; At 28:26). God will provide an opportunity for the hardened to believe error (9:14-18; 2 Th 2:9-12). It is not that He manufactures the error. He only allows Satan to deceive those who are willing to be deceived. But because He allows Satan to deceive, God is willing to accept the final responsibility. One might question why God would do such. The answer lies in the fact that God created the best of all possible environments in which a free-moral individual could live. Within this environment there had to be the opportunity for choices of good and evil. For one to be truly free, he had to be allowed by God to make choices. And so God worked in Israel in a manner to allow those who were of the flesh to make their own choice concerning Jesus. Since they have been allowed to make their own choice, they must be held accountable for their choice. Therefore, in judgment God stands just because He created man a true free-moral individual with the freedom to choose. Unbelieving Israel must bear the responsibility of their rejection of Jesus. **9,10 Let their table become a snare and a trap:** God will let those who do not love the truth carry on with their self-deceptive religious beliefs (Ps 69:22,23; see 2 Th 2:10-12). The gospel that was reported to Israel could have given them hope and a foundation upon which to build a spiritual house. However, because of their hardness of heart, that which was to give hope became a stumbling block over which they religiously fell. Their hardness of heart blinded them to the truth of God. Therefore, the gospel became the occasion by which they manifested their rebellion against God. They judged themselves because they rejected that which God meant to draw them unto Himself. Such is the case with everyone who rejects the gospel. One judges himself to have a hardened heart when he rejects the gospel.

#### SALVATION TO THE GENTILES

**11** It was not God's desire that the hardened Jews (fleshly Israel) be lost because of their hardening. He

their fall salvation *has come* to the Gentiles in order to provoke them to jealousy.

**12** Now if their transgression *is* the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles, how much more their fullness?

**13** ¶ For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle to the Gentiles, I magnify my ministry,

**14** if by any means I may provoke to jealousy *those of my flesh* and might save some of them.

**15** For if the casting away of them *is* the

reconciling of the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead?

**16** ¶ For if the firstfruit *is* holy, the lump *is* also *holy*. And if the root *is* holy, so *are* the branches.

**17** And if some of the branches were broken off, and you, being a wild olive tree were grafted in among them, and with them became a partaker of the root and fatness of the olive tree,

**18** do not boast against the branches. But if you boast, *remember that* you do not support the root, but the root you.

did not predestine them to be hardened, neither did He cause them to be hardened. Thus God did not cause them to stumble so that they might fall. Their hardening did not endanger the salvation of the spiritual Israel, for the spiritual remnant accepted Jesus and continued on. In fact, those who were the spiritual remnant of Israel were also Jews by heritage. It was this remnant that proclaimed the gospel to national Israel. The good that came out of the hardening of fleshly Israel was that the gospel was speedily preached to the Gentiles (See At 13:46-48; 18:6). **Provoke them to jealousy:** The Gentiles were trapped in idolatrous worship. However, when the message of the grace of God came to them to deliver them from their own imagined fears and ceremonial religions, they eagerly accepted the freedom of the gospel. Their conversion sparked jealousy in the minds of those who thought they were more righteous than the Gentiles (10:19; Dt 32:21; At 13:46). **12** Paul argues that if the fall of Israel, who sought righteousness through works, accomplished the evangelization of the Gentiles, then their fullness or acceptance of Jesus would work toward greater things. They had lost the blessing of the promises because of their unbelief. In order to regain the blessing, they must believe. **Fullness:** Paul is not here discussing a supposed number of Jews who might be obedient to the gospel in the future. Emphasis is on evidence of faith and the blessedness of those who would turn to God by faith. Their evidence of faith would be identified by their obedience to the gospel. Paul assumes that there are still more in national Israel who will become obedient to the faith. The Gentiles, therefore, must not reject those Jews of Israel who are still misled by meritorious works. They must continue to plead with them until all who would believe and obey the gospel have a chance to do so. The fullness will come only when the last Jew who is disposed to obey the gospel has done so in response to the preaching of the gospel of grace.

**13,14** Paul has been directing these statements to the Gentiles lest they become puffed up and hardened against the Jews. The Gentiles should be rejoicing for any possibility that there are others among national Israel who might yet be obedient. **Apostle to the Gentiles:** Paul was called specifically for the reason of taking the gospel to the Gentiles (See At 9:15; Gl 1:16; Ep 3:2,3,8; 1 Tm 2:7). **Magnify my ministry:** Paul witnessed before the Jews that Jesus had personally called

Him into apostleship and given him the ministry to the Gentiles (At 9:1-16; 22:6-11; 26:12-18). The divine sanction and commissioning of his ministry proved that God wanted the blessing of the promises to go to the Gentiles. He gave testimony to his personal calling by Jesus for the purpose of provoking some to obedience (1 Co 9:22; 1 Tm 4:16; Js 5:20). **15 Life from the dead:** Jews were cast off because they had rejected the gospel (see vs 12). Nevertheless, they could still obey the gospel in order to be resurrected to newness of life (6:3-6). Once they obeyed the gospel they would transition out of spiritual death into spiritual life (See Is 26:16-19). It is Paul's desire here that the Gentiles in Rome not become puffed up over the "casting off" of the Jews who were hardened. The belief and obedience of those who had and would obey the gospel should be an occasion for rejoicing. **16 The firstfruit:** See Lv 23:10; Nm 16:17-21. National Israel was holy because she was separated from the nations of the world. The firstfruits were the patriarchs of national Israel. They were holy because of faith. The holiness of the descendants, therefore, was based on the holiness of the patriarchs. The descendants were blessed because of the establishment of Israel as a nation in the land of Canaan in fulfillment of God's promise to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (Gn 12:1-3). In conjunction with this, the spiritual descendants of national Israel were blessed because of the obedience of the patriarchs who believed God. **17 Broken off:** These were Jews who were cast off because of unbelief (Mt 8:11,12). **A wild olive tree:** By faith the Gentiles were grafted into the fatness of the olive tree of spiritual Israel (See At 2:39; Ep 2:11-22). **Partaker of the root:** The spiritual Israel was founded upon the faith of patriarchs as Abraham. When the Gentiles were grafted in by faith, they partook of the blessings of the promises to the fathers (See comments Gl 3:6-9,26-29). **18 Do not boast:** The Gentile brethren must not boast against those Jews who were broken off because of unbelief (1 Co 10:12; see Is 2:2ff; Jn 4:22). They also could be cut off if their arrogance led them to trust in themselves. **You do not support the root:** The Gentiles were grafted in because of the fulfillment of the promises that were made to the fathers. Therefore, because of the faithfulness of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the root was strong by faith in order to bring about the olive tree of Israel. From Israel came the Messiah and fulfillment of the promises. By their faith in the

19 ¶ You will say then, "The branches were broken off so that I might be grafted in."

20 Quite right! Because of unbelief they were broken off, but you stand by faith. Be not arrogant, but fear.

21 For if God spared not the natural branches, *take heed* lest He also not spare you.

22 Therefore, behold the goodness and severity of God; on those who fell, severity; but to you *the goodness of God*, if you continue in *His* goodness. Otherwise, you also will be cut off.

23 And they also, if they do not continue in

unbelief will be grafted in, for God is able to graft them in again.

24 For if you were cut out of the olive tree that is wild by nature, and were grafted contrary to nature into a good olive tree, how much more will these who are the natural *branches* be grafted into their own olive tree?

25 ¶ For I do not want, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own minds, that blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in.

26 And so all Israel will be saved as it is

Messiah, the Gentiles were grafted into the olive tree.

19 Paul here assumes what the Gentiles might be thinking concerning the unbelief of Israel. They might assume that God planned the unbelief of Israel in order that they be grafted in. 20 God did not cause the Jews to stumble over the fulfillment of the promises. Jesus was a stumbling block to them because they were trapped in their own legal system of religion (See comments Mk 7:1-9). They were blinded to truth because of the hardness of their hearts. Therefore, they were lost because of their own choice to reject Jesus. Since the Gentiles were grafted in because of their faith, they must not boast lest they be broken off if they fall into unbelief. They were not once saved, always saved. They were grafted in, but they stood by faith in the grace of God, not by their meritorious works. There is thus no room for a haughty spirit on the part of the Gentiles whose relationship with God was based on grace, not their meritorious works. 21 But if God did not spare those of Israel who had a knowledge of the one true God, but sought justification according to their own righteousness, then He will not spare the wild branches (the Gentiles) if they fall into unbelief by trusting in their own meritorious deeds. It was by belief that the Gentiles reaped the blessings of God's goodness. It was by unbelief that the natural branches were cut off (See Jn 15:2). 22 **If you continue:** The security of the believer is conditional. It is conditioned on the fact that he continue in obedient faith (See comments 1 Co 15:1,2; Hb 3:6,14). Because of unbelief, national Israel was going to reap the severe judgment of God. Their judgment in time would be the destruction of the Jewish State in A.D. 70 (See comments Mt 24). On the other hand, the Gentiles reaped the goodness of God by obedient faith. 23 **If they do not continue in unbelief:** The Gentiles were grafted in by obedient faith to the gospel (6:3-6). If there are those of Israel who come to their senses that Jesus is the Messiah, then they can be grafted in again to the spiritual Israel of God. God will graft them in if they will only believe in Jesus and obey the gospel. 24 The believing Gentiles came out of the idolatrous religions that they had created after their own desires. They were once of those who did not have a knowledge of the true and living God. The conversion of the Gentiles was as the conversion of the Thessalonians. It was reported how they "turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God ..." (1 Th 1:9). The Gentiles had previously "walked according to the ways of this world, ac-

cording to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that now working in the sons of disobedience ..." (Ep 2:2). They were not, therefore, of the spiritual heritage of Israel who had a knowledge of the true God. They were truly wild olive branches. Nevertheless, God grafted them into the heritage of spiritual Israel because of their belief in Jesus and obedience to His death, burial and resurrection (6:3-6). **How much more:** If the wild olive branches of the Gentiles were grafted into the spiritual community of God by faith, then surely God would graft in those of Israel who come to faith in Christ.

25 **This mystery:** Paul now concludes the argument against those who feel that God has not fulfilled his promises in reference to Israel. He also wants to correct those Gentiles who may have become somewhat spiritually arrogant because of the casting off of the Israel that did not believe and obey. It was true that the majority of national Israel did not believe. They rejected Jesus. However, the spiritual remnant (vss 5,7), about which God has always been concerned, eagerly received Jesus. They, with the Gentiles who also believed, are now the true Israel of God. **Blindness in part has happened to Israel:** There was that part of physical Israel that was blinded because of the gospel (2 Co 3:14). They fell because of unbelief in Jesus. **Until:** This word must not be understood in the sense of something that is terminated, and then from the time of termination something else started. Emphasis is on the continuation of something that is parallel with the occurrence of another process or happening (See the use of the word in 5:13; 8:22; Gn 8:5; 46:34; Jn 5:17). In this case the process that is continuing is the conversion of the Gentiles as a result of the preaching of the gospel. This process was happening even as Paul wrote. However, in conjunction with this, there were also Jews being converted as a result of the preaching of the gospel. Both Jews and Gentiles were being simultaneously evangelized and grafted in by the preaching of the gospel. **Fullness of the Gentiles:** This would be the grafting in of all those who were disposed unto obedience to the gospel (See vs 12). Reference is not to a specific number of Gentiles. Emphasis is on the conversion of all those who will obey if they have the opportunity to hear the gospel (See comments At 18:8,9). We cannot dispel the thought that Paul has in the back of his mind the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 as a sign of God's judgment on national Israel. In view of the fact that this event was to happen in about a decade from

written, "*There will come out of Zion the Deliverer who will turn away ungodliness from Jacob.*

**27** *For this is My covenant to them, when I will take away their sins."*

**28 ¶** Concerning the gospel, *they are* enemies for your sakes, but concerning the elect, *they are* beloved for the sake of the fathers.

**29** For the gifts and calling of God *are* irrevocable.

**30** For as you in the past have not believed God, you have now obtained mercy through their unbelief,

**31** even so these also have now disbelieved, so that through the mercy shown to you they also may obtain mercy.

**32** For God has committed them all to disobedience so that He might have mercy on all.

**33 ¶** Oh, the depth of the riches both of the

the time of writing this epistle, Paul knew the event was drawing near. His last trip to Jerusalem in At 21 was an effort to reach out to national Israel because he knew the tragedy was coming (See 9:1-3; 10:1). Once the destruction occurred, everyone could see that God had rejected national Israel in order to focus on the spiritual Israel of God (See comments Mt 13:36-46; 21:33-46).

**26** *And so all Israel will be saved:* If this statement is understood in its historical context, then there is no difficulty in understanding what Paul is saying. Consider the historical work of the early evangelists in reference to the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. We must keep in mind this time of ministry and the destruction of Jerusalem as we understand what Paul is writing here in reference to Israel. When Jesus began His ministry, there also began the hardening of Israel. The Jewish religious leaders hardened themselves against Jesus being their Messiah, and thus being the Savior of the world. Their hardening was at its peak at the time of the cross, for it was the Jewish religious leaders who put Jesus on the cross. Beginning from the conversion of those who were Israel by faith in At 2, the gospel went out to all the Roman Empire (At 8:4). The early evangelists went to the synagogues, but were rejected by those Jews who were trapped in the legal religion of national Israel (See comments Mk 7:1-9; Gl 1:13,14). The evangelists, therefore, turned to the Gentiles, though they did not forget their ministry to Israel (See At 13:46; 18:6). The Jews' rejection of the gospel, therefore, motivated the evangelists to go to receptive Gentiles. However, in the back of the mind of every evangelist was the prophecy of Jesus that national Israel was headed for destruction (See comments Mt 21:33-44; 24). Throughout the writings of the New Testament this warning is in the minds of the inspired writers (See comments Js 5:7,8; Jd 14,15). The destruction of national Israel would be God's last sign to Israel that they turn to Jesus as the Messiah. Therefore, from the time of the establishment of the church in A.D. 30 until the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70, preaching was continuing throughout the Gentile world. When the destruction of Jerusalem came, many Jews throughout the Roman Empire were shocked into realizing that God had brought down judgment on Israel (See comments Mt 24:30). As a result, all those who were of the spiritual Israel, and thus, inclined to obedience to the gospel, were grafted into the community of God. Therefore, Paul uses the phrase "and so" as a reference, not to a national conversion of Israel, but to a conversion of Jews in the same manner that the Gentiles were converted, that is, through obedience of the gospel. He proceeds to explain this in the following closing arguments. **The Deliverer:** At the time

Paul wrote to the Romans, the Deliverer had already come (Ps 14:7; Is 59:20,21). Jesus, as the Deliverer of Israel, came out of Israel. He came to deliver men from their sin problem and physical death problem (6:3-6).

**27** God established a new covenant with those who were delivered out of sin and death (See Is 27:9; Jr 31:31-34). This is the New Testament covenant that is established with those who obey the gospel (Hb 8:6; 9:16,17). These things had already taken place by the time Paul wrote this letter to the Romans. Those who would desire to come into a covenant relationship with God must obey the gospel. Only in this way will any of physical Israel be saved.

**28** *Enemies for your sake:* The Jews who were hardened against Jesus, put Him on the cross. However, what they did not know at the time was that they worked in a way to bring about the fulfillment of the promises. Their rejection of the gospel encouraged the preaching of the gospel to the Gentiles (At 13:46; 18:6).

**The election:** The obedient faithful remnant is beloved because of God's promises to the fathers that through the fathers' seed the Redeemer would be brought into the world (See vss 5,7; 9:10-13). **29** *Irrevocable:* What God had promised would come to pass. All the promises that God made to the fathers concerning the Deliverer came to pass in Jesus (See comments 2 Co 1:20).

**30** Before the coming of Jesus and the gospel, the Gentiles had a spirit of disobedience (See Ep 2:2; Cl 3:7). The spiritual remnant of Israel was obedient. However, after the cross this has reversed. The Gentiles became obedient to the gospel and the Jews generally became disobedient. **31** *They also may obtain mercy:* In this verse Paul refers us back to the good that came from Israel's disobedience that he explained in verses 11-15. If the once disobedient Gentiles received God's mercy as a result of the Jews' rejection of the gospel, Paul is affirming that the present disobedient Jews will receive God's mercy as a result of the mercy that the Gentiles are now receiving. **32** *Committed ... to disobedience:* It is not that God had predestined them to disobedience. God has pronounced that all men are disobedient simply because all men sin (3:9,10,23). Those Jews who rejected the gospel are committed to disobedience because they are a part of all those who have sinned against God. However, the fact that all have sinned presents the occasion for God to show mercy on all those who would obey the gospel of grace that He was revealed through Jesus (Ep 2:4-9; Ti 2:11).

**33** Paul concludes this marvelous section of inspired Scripture concerning the grace of God with a praise to God (See Ps 36:6; 92:5; Jb 11:7; 15:8; 35:7; 36:22; Is 40:13; Jr 23:18). God's grace to save both

wisdom and knowledge of God. How unsearchable *are* His judgments and His ways past finding out.

**34** “*For who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has been His counsellor?*”

**35** “*Or who has first given to Him and it will be repaid to him again?*”

**36 ¶** For of Him and through Him and to Him *are* all things, to whom *be* glory forever. Amen.

## Chapter 12

**1 ¶** Therefore, I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, *which is* your reasonable service.

**2** And be not conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what *is* that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

**3 ¶** For I say through the grace given to me,

Jew and Gentile through grace is beyond the invention of men to create such a theology. The concept that God so loved the world that He gave His Son as a love offering for the salvation of all is not of the nature of religions that are created after the fleshly desires of men (See Jn 3:16). Evidence of the divine origin of Christianity is in the fact that the very nature of Christianity – mercy and grace – is contrary to the nature of those who are motivated by religious systems of meritorious performances and ceremonies. God's ways are unsearchable by man because He does not deal with men after the nature of the flesh. He does not deal with man after the nature by which men often deal unmercifully with one another in man-made religions. **34,35** Paul's affirmation is that no man can know the mind of God. No finite mind of this world can understand the infinite mind of God. Concerning the mystery of God that He has revealed in the previous discussions, such could not be known by the inventive minds of religious men who are controlled by the flesh. If Paul, Peter, John and the other apostles could have worked out the plan of God according to the religious mental powers of men alone, then there would be no need for the work of God in these matters nor the writing of this book. Paul's claim here is that men could not work out this plan of God to save both Jew and Gentile. The religious leaders had not accomplished the reconciliation of all men into one body since the establishment of the nation of Israel. They would have never worked it out by their own religious invention. Only by the work of God could such have been accomplished (See comments Ep 2:11-18). In fact, men would not have known the significance of the cross unless God had revealed that Jesus' death was for the atonement of the sins of all men (See comments 1 Co 2:10-13). The gospel was the revelation that the crucifixion of Jesus was for the sins of mankind. **36** All things that exist originated from God (Cl 1:16; see 1 Co 8:6; 11:12; Hb 2:10). Nothing that now exists is indigenous of itself in existence (Hb 1:3). That is, nothing is eternal in existence separate from God. All things that now exist are for His purpose. They remain in existence because of His power. Since the totality of our existence and the purpose of all things is being directed toward God's ends. It is to Him, therefore, that all glory must go.

### Chapter 12

#### GRACE PROMOTES THE NEW LIFE

**1** *Therefore, I urge you:* In view of the fact that God's grace was poured out for our salvation, our natural response is to obediently comply with the directions

of the One who has offered the grace. Therefore, Paul pleads with the Roman Christians to now be motivated to respond to all that God has done (2 Co 10:1). His plea is that they give themselves totally to the One who gave His only begotten Son to them (Mt 22:37). **Present your bodies a living sacrifice:** Such is only the natural reaction of the spiritually-minded individual who has come to a knowledge of the grace of God. As the Levitical law called for the total sacrifice of the burnt offering upon the altar of sacrifice, so must Christians give their lives totally to God (See Lk 9:23; 14:25-35; Mk 12:30; see comments 6:3-6; Gl 2:20). Sacrifice refers to offering. The disciple of Jesus has given his body as an offering to God because of what God has done for him. **Your reasonable service:** Some translations read “reasonable worship.” It is only reasonable to assume that because God manifested grace through the sacrifice of His Son on the cross, that we should in turn offer our lives in sacrificial worship and service to Him (See 1 Pt 2:5,9). Those who have not given their lives totally to God have not appreciated the grace of God by which He totally gave His Son for them. If because of His grace, God was willing to give His Son who was eternal in heaven for our sins, then certainly, it is not unreasonable that we give the totality of our short life on earth to Him. It is the mind of the flesh to believe that one can work in order to earn heaven on the merit of his own performance of law or good works. It is also the mind of the flesh to reason that one can give anything less than the totality of his life and still believe that God's grace will reward him for his lukewarm commitment (See Mt 6:24; Rv 3:15,16). **2 Be transformed by the renewing of your mind:** The committed mind is directed by purposes that are higher than the material world and the ambitions of the selfishly driven individual (Ep 4:23; Cl 3:1-3). The thinking of the Christian is to be on those things that will last beyond the existence of this world. Therefore, he is not to engage his thinking in those things that would divert his life from the eternal purposes of God (See Mt 6:24; 13:22; Gl 1:4; Js 4:4; 1 Jn 2:15). He must not center his thoughts and actions around those things that pertain to the desires of the world (Ep 4:23; Ti 3:5). The mind of the sacrificed individual is different from the mind of the one who is consumed by the things of this world.

**3** Beginning with this verse, Paul describes the behavioral characteristics of the transformed life that has been sacrificed to God. He explains the identity of the Christian who has truly allowed the grace of God to work in his life in order to motivate him to present his body a living worship to God. **Not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think:** Disciples must

to everyone that is among you, not to think of *himself* more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, according as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith.

**4** For as we have many members in one body, and all members do not have the same function,

**5** so we, *being* many, are one body in Christ, and everyone members one of another.

**6** Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether proph-

ecy, *let us prophesy* according to the proportion of faith;

**7** or ministry, *let us use it* in our ministering; or he who teaches, in teaching;

**8** or he who exhorts, in exhortation; he who gives, *let him do it* with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness.

**9** ¶ *Let love be without hypocrisy.* Abhor what is evil. Cling to what is good.

**10** *Be* kindly affectionate to one another with

not be conceited or puffed up (11:20; Pv 25:27). **Think soberly:** Disciples must be mature in their thinking (1 Co 10:12). **Measure of faith:** Reference is not to faith in God, but to the ministries he is about to present. God has dealt to every Christian abilities they must activate in order to minister to God by ministering to the Christian community. **4 All the members do not have the same function:** It is contrary to the nature of God's gift of ministries to conform every member to the same ministry. Not everyone has the same abilities. Wise church leadership encourages members to discover their abilities in order to use them in service to others as members of the body of Christ (See 1 Co 12:12-14; Ep 4:4-16). **5 We ... are one body in Christ:** Note that Paul uses the pronoun "we" in this and other contexts when discussing the body of Christ. He was personally in Macedonia or Achaia when he wrote this letter to disciples who were in Rome. Nevertheless, all disciples, regardless of where they are in the world, are the one body of Christ. The body is not denominated into separate autonomous groups. The body is one. The members of the body throughout the world are all members of the one organism of Christ. The unity of the members, therefore, is assumed because of the submission of every member to the one Lord (See 1 Co 10:17; 12:12-27; Ep 4:16). Though members have different abilities, or live in different places, the abilities of all members work in a worldwide unity as the functioning body of Christ. The members not only work in unity within local communities, but also globally. What is assumed in this context concerning membership of the church is that membership is not with a local congregation. Membership is with the global body of Christ with Jesus as the universal head. When the members thus concentrate on their membership in the universal body of Christ, then they enjoy the blessing of fellowship that they have with all the members of the church throughout the world.

**6** Since all the gifts originated from God, whether miraculous or not, then they must be used according to the will of God. **Prophecy:** In the first century this gift referred specifically to inspired preaching, teaching, singing and prayer (See At 13:1; 21:10; 1 Co 14:3). There were those in the Roman church who spoke by the direction of the Holy Spirit. These would have received this miraculous gift by the laying on of the apostles' hands when some of them visited Jerusalem during the A.D. 30 Passover/Pentecost feasts, and subsequent Passover/Pentecost feasts after A.D. 30. The apostles stayed for several years after the establishment of the church in At 2 in order to teach and impart gifts to those who

travelled to Jerusalem for the annual Passover/Pentecost feasts (See comments At 8:18). It was Paul's desire to travel to Rome in order that he might impart unto them more miraculous gifts (1:11). We must assume, therefore, that the Roman church, as well as all other churches of the first century who had members that had come into contact with a Christ-sent apostle, also had the miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit. It was the content of the prophecy that was inspired. One might have the natural gift to teaching, but he would not know what to teach unless directed by the Spirit. **7 Ministry:** There are those who have the special gift of ministry to the needs of others. A compassionate and patient heart is needed for the work of gently caring for the needs of others (See comments 1 Co 16:15,16). **Teaching:** There are those who have the ability to clearly explain the word of God to others. Though all Christians can teach in some capacity, there are those who have a special gift of conveying thoughts of God's revelation to the church (See 1 Co 12:28; Ep 4:11-16). In the first century context, the teacher was given through the laying on of the apostles' hands that which was to be taught. **8 Exhortation:** This is the gift of being able to build up the church through the speaking of God's word (At 15:32). **He who gives:** There are those who have the ability to earn and give money for the work of the church in benevolence and evangelism (See 3 Jn 1-8). **Leads:** There are those Christians who have the ability to direct men according to what God would have the church do. One would have the natural gift to lead, but the Spirit through the laying on of the apostles' hands, would direct what to do in leading. **Mercy:** There are special people who have the emotional disposition and personality skills to minister to those who are suffering heartache. These special ministers of understanding bring comfort to those who are in times of physical or emotional need. **9 Love:** Ministers that give the pretense of love are only hypocritical in their legal actions of performing their duties. However, sincere love of the heart should be the motivation for the exercising of our ministries to one another (See 1 Co 13; Hb 13:1; Ph 2:2,3; Cl 3:12-14; 1 Jn 4:19). **Abhor what is evil:** Christians should not allow the evil of the culture in which they live to desensitize their view of that which is evil (2 Co 6:6; 1 Tm 1:5). They should not allow evil to become commonplace. If evil becomes accepted in their thinking, they will not abhor it as evil (Ps 34:14). **Cling to what is good:** When it comes to determining what to do, Christians should do right according to the directions of God's word. Regardless of the cost, one must do that

brotherly love, in honor preferring one another;

**11** not lagging behind in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord,

**12** rejoicing in hope, persevering in tribulation, continuing steadfastly in prayer,

**13** contributing to the needs of the saints, given to hospitality.

**14** Bless those who persecute you. Bless and do not curse.

**15** Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep.

**16** *Be* of the same mind toward one another. Do not set *your* mind on high things, but associate with men of humble position. Be not wise in your own opinion.

**17** ¶ Repay to no one evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men.

**18** If it is possible, as much as lies within your *power*, live peaceably with all men.

which is right in the eyes of God. **10** **Kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love:** Brethren must deal gently with one another. Harsh words or actions have no place in the fellowship of brothers and sisters in their interpersonal relationships as the family of God (See Jn 13:34; Cl 3:12-17; 1 Th 4:9; Hb 13:1; 2 Pt 1:7). **Giving preference to one another:** It is the nature of the spirit of Christianity to exalt one's brother above himself (See 13:7; Ph 2:3; 1 Pt 2:17). Christians are not to harbor a spirit of selfish ambition in order to compete with one another. They should seek to encourage their brothers by putting them first. **11** **Not lagging behind in diligence:** There should be no such thing as a lazy Christian (See comments 2 Th 3:6-12). Throughout these instructions Paul gives, he is setting forth behavioral patterns of life that should characterize Christians. In reference to this particular personality characteristic, Paul seeks to direct Christians never to lack in zeal in their work for others or for the Lord (See comments Ep 2:10; 6:5-9). **Fervent in spirit:** The disciples of Jesus should be known or being diligent workers. When one has a zealous spirit within, he will manifest active service for the Lord. But we must not limit this character of spirit to those things we would call service to the Lord. Christians must be characterized by a working spirit. Inactive Christians have not discovered the responsibility of the child of God to be a productive citizen of society. It is the Holy Spirit's purpose in these direct words of Paul to remind all who would call themselves after Christ that they have a responsibility to maintain an active life insofar as they are physically capable (Ti 3:8). **12** **Rejoicing in hope:** Because of their hope, disciples have every reason to rejoice (Lk 10:20; Ph 4:4; Hb 6:19; Js 1:2,3). Pessimistic and fatalistic attitudes should not be characteristic of the disciples of Jesus. The transformed mind must change from such negative attitudes of life. **Persevering in tribulation:** In times of trial, Christians are not to be pessimistic or fatalistic. They endure trials because they know that all things are working together for good (8:28; Lk 21:19). **Steadfastly in prayer:** It is the nature of the spiritual life to maintain communication with God (Lk 18:1; 1 Th 5:17). Christians should not allow themselves to be trapped in circumstances or mental attitudes that would hinder their communication with God (See Ph 4:9). **13** **Distributing to the needs of the saints:** Christians must be diligent in helping those of the brotherhood who are in need (Gl 6:10; see At 2:44,45; 4:32-37; 1 Co 16:1,2; Hb 13:16; 1 Pt 4:9). It is the responsibility of every Christian to work in order to provide for his own necessities (2 Th 3:6-15). However, there are times when circum-

stances take away the opportunity for brethren to supply their own needs. In these times brethren work together in order to make sure everyone's needs are filled.

**Given to hospitality:** Christians take care of one another. They are diligent in welcoming the brothers into their homes for mutual fellowship and spiritual growth (Mt 25:35; 1 Tm 3:2; see comments 3 Jn 1-8).

**14** **Bless and do not curse:** It is not the business of Christians to retaliate against those who either wrong them or persecute them (Mt 5:10-12,44; Lk 6:28; 1 Co 4:12). **15** **Rejoice ... weep:** Christians maintain brotherhood in times of rejoicing and sorrow. When a brother rejoices, others rejoice with him. However, when a brother mourns, the rest of the saints are there for his comfort (1 Co 12:26). **16** **Of the same mind:** The saints are to live in harmony with one another (15:5; 1 Co 1:10; 2 Co 13:11; Ph 2:2; 4:2; 1 Pt 3:8). They are to work to maintain peace among themselves as the community of God. **Not set your mind on high things:** The goals of the Christian should not be the possession of the things of the world lest the things of the world possess them (See Jr 45:5; 1 Tm 6:17-19). It should not be the disciples' goal to fulfill the pride of life by seeking recognition. **Condescend:** A Christian should never think himself to be too good to be with those who are poor in the things of this world. Neither should he think that he is in any social status above the most humble in society. God is no respecter of persons and those who would be godly must not assume a character of arrogance that would separate them from any person. **Do not be wise in your own opinion:** He should not be conceited (See 11:25; Pv 3:7; 1 Co 10:12). Those who exalt themselves in their own minds have deceived themselves into believing that they are something which they are not. Such attitudes always lead to one's inability to relate with other people. **17** **Repay no one evil for evil:** No Christian should seek to get even with someone who has wronged him. It is not the place of any Christian to seek revenge (See Mt 5:39; 1 Pt 3:9). **Provide things honest:** The Christian should always do that which is right in his dealings with all men. He should conduct all aspects of his life in an honorable and honest manner (See 2 Co 4:2; 8:21; 1 Tm 3:7). **18** **Live peaceably with all men:** In times of strife, the Christian should be the one who is working for peace (Mt 5:9; Hb 12:14; Js 3:17). Paul instructs that if it is at all possible, Christians should make every effort to be at peace with all men, though some unbelievers will not allow this to be done at times. **19** **Do not avenge yourselves:** Revenge is not the work or behavior of the Christian. Revenge upon those who have wronged the innocent is

**19** Dearly beloved, do not take revenge, but give place to *God's* wrath, for it is written, "*Vengeance is mine, I will repay,*" says the Lord.

**20** Therefore, "*If your enemy hungers, feed him; if he thirsts, give him drink, for in so doing you will heap coals of fire on his head.*"

**21** Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

### Chapter 13

**1 ¶** Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God. The authorities that exist are ordained by God.

**2** Therefore, whoever resists authority, re-

sists the ordinance of God. And those who resist will receive judgment on themselves.

**3** For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Do you want to be unafraid of authority? Do what is good and you will have praise of the same,

**4** for he is the minister of God to you for good. But if you do what is evil, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword in vain, for he is the minister of God, an avenger to *execute* wrath on him who does evil.

**5** Therefore, it is necessary to be subject, not only because of wrath, but also for conscience sake.

**6** For because of this you also pay tribute, for they are ministers of God, attending con-

the work of God (See Lv 19:18; Dt 32:35; Ps 94:1; 1 Th 4:6; Hb 10:30). **20,21 Heap coals of fire on his head:** Paul is not here speaking of revenge. He is talking about returning good for evil (Pv 25:21,22). Paul's illustration comes from one giving hot coals to his neighbor in order that his neighbor start his cooking fire. The practice was to do a good deed to one's neighbor though the neighbor might be unloving. What we are tempted to do is the opposite. In the world men are taught to seek revenge. But Christians are to behave differently. When they are wronged by their enemies, they repay with good (See 1 Pt 4:12-16). The good they do is not determined by the evil behavior of others toward them. Such a reaction to evil will surely stir remorse, or at least embarrassment on the part of the enemies of the Christian. If Christians seek to retaliate, they will only engender more strife (See comments Gl 5:22-26).

### Chapter 13

#### THE CHRISTIAN AND THE STATE

Paul knew that the church in Rome was in what would become the seat of persecution against the church. He wrote this letter between A.D. 56 and 59. He knew that the persecution of the Roman state was not far in the future. During the early 60s, Nero launched a personal vendetta against Christians. At the end of the century, the Roman state rose up against the saints of God with an effort to try them for treason, and subsequently, send many to their death (See introduction to Rv). It is not without purpose, therefore, that Paul wrote these words to the Romans concerning the Christian's relationship with civil government.

**1 Be subject to the governing authorities:** Every individual, including the Christian, must submit to civil government, insofar as government does not demand obedience to laws that contradict the laws of God (See Dn 2:21; At 5:29). When a civil government works against the principles of God, then the Christian is not obligated to submit to that which will cause him to lose his soul. However, the Christian must submit to civil government, for it is God who has ordained that civil government exist among men in order to prevent anar-

chy (See Ti 3:1; 1 Pt 3:13-17). God has instituted that civil government exist. He is not to be blamed for the evil actions of any one specific government. Governments often go wrong because they are sometimes controlled by wicked men who have no concern for God or the people. God is not to be blamed for the wickedness of any particular government. He has simply instituted civil government among men. In this context Paul certainly has in mind those governments that are of the moral structure that recognize and uphold good, and at the same time, condemn evil. **2 Whoever resists:** Those who would resist civil government are actually resisting God who instituted government to exist in order to maintain order in society. The fact that rulers of civil government become corrupt and wicked does not invalidate the necessity of civil government and one's obedience to the laws of the land. Civil government exists for the purpose of keeping wicked men under control. Civil government is good for the Christian because it maintains order and control of society. The Christian is protected from having to live in a society of anarchy. In an ordered society, Christians can carry on with their work. **3 Do what is good:** The Christian's responsibility as a citizen is to do that which is good in society and right in reference to the law of the State (See Ep 2:10; Gl 6:10). Christians should never be known for willingly violating law that does not conflict with the principles of God. Christians should be known for being model citizens. **4 He is a minister of God to you for good:** Paul personifies government as the one who exercises order by punishment of those who disobey the law of the land. In such environments of order, Christians are able to go about doing their work of evangelism. Therefore, in reference to good government, the wicked should be in fear and the righteous thankful for the control the government exercises over the wicked. **5** Fear of punishment is a motive for stimulating obedience to civil government (Ec 8:2). Knowing that one is doing God's will is another reason for submission (1 Pt 2:13). Those who submit to government are doing the will of God (See At 24:16; 1 Pt 2:13,19). **6 Pay taxes:** Civil government serves the purpose of preventing anarchy in society. Therefore, when Christians pay their

tinually to this very thing.

**7** Render to all their dues, tax to whom tax *is due*, custom to whom custom, fear to whom fear, honor to whom honor.

**8 ¶** Owe no man anything, except to love one another, for he who loves another has fulfilled *the law*.

**9** For this, "*You will not commit adultery,*"

"*You will not kill,*" "*You will not steal,*" "*You will not covet,*" and if *there is* any other commandment, it is summed up in this saying, namely, "*You shall love your neighbor as yourself.*"

**10** Love works no harm toward his neighbor, therefore, love *is* the fulfillment of law.

**11 ¶** Knowing that *it is* now high time to

taxes they are benefitting from a governed society that suppresses the evil of wicked men (Mt 22:21; Lk 20:25). **7** Paul is saying here that Christians should be good citizens. They should fulfill their civic duties in order to reap the benefit of government.

### LOVE IN ACTION

**8** Verses 8-10 discuss the foundation upon which Christian behavior rests. All interpersonal relationships and actions that have been discussed in chapters 12 and 13 to this point find their source of motivation in the principle, "*You shall love your neighbor as yourself*" (vs 9; see comments Gl 5:14,22-26). One loves his neighbor as himself because God first loved him (1 Jn 4:19). Love is the engine of Christian behavior, and thus, it is the glue that bonds the fellowship of the church (See Mt 7:12; 22:39; Jn 13:34; 1 Tm 1:5; Js 2:8). **Owe no one anything except to love one another:** The Christian should pay for the things he receives. He should not expect a handout, but should give due payment to those who render either things or service to him (Compare Pl 17,18). **He who loves ... has fulfilled the law:** The one who loves does not view the law as a legal set of rules one accomplishes in order to relieve himself from further obligations. The one who loves his neighbor as himself will go far beyond what is stated by the requirements of law. Therefore, in carrying out the principle of loving one's neighbor as himself, he will do what the law requires, but go beyond the requirements of law. Jesus said, "*And whoever compels you to go one mile, go with him two*" (Mt 5:41). A Roman soldier could compel a citizen to carry his armor for one mile. The citizen was obligated according to law to do such. However, love compels the citizen to go beyond the requirement of law. James stated that pure religion is "*to visit orphans and widows in their affliction ...*" (Js 1:27). The principle of law is to care for orphans and widows. However, James does not specify how orphans and widows are to be "visited," that is, cared for. He knows that "loving one's neighbor as himself" will take care of the specifics. Love fulfills law in that it takes one beyond law (See comments 1 Tm 1:9). **9** In reference to the revealed law of God, Paul here states those statutes of the ten commandments that give principles that have always been in existence since the creation of the first two people (Ex 20:13-17; Dt 5:17-21; Mt 19:18). One should keep these laws in reference to our interpersonal relationships with one another. However, love will carry one beyond the limitations of law. **Any other commandment:** Paul could have listed an infinite number of commandments that would regulate our behavior with one another. We could keep all the commandments, but still be limited in our relational behavior with our neighbor. Love always goes beyond a list of commandments. Commandments limit; love expands. Commandments

restrict; love frees. Commandments lead us to believe how little we can do; love opens the door to unlimited possibilities. For this reason Paul said, "*For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this, 'You will love your neighbor as yourself'*" (Gl 5:14). Love of God is the first commandment because if we love God we will keep His commandments (Jn 14:15; 1 Jn 5:3). The second commandment is to love one's neighbor as himself (See comments Mt 22:37-40; Mk 12:29-32). Therefore, our vertical relationship with God is established on love. Our horizontal relationship with our fellow man is established on love. The principle of love permeates and identifies the very nature of Christianity. This principle separates Christianity from a host of false religions that have been developed throughout history. It is in this way that we identify the truth among men. John wrote, "*Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God. And everyone who loves is born from God and knows God. He who does not love does not know God, for God is love*" (1 Jn 4:7,8). This is the principle by which one can determine both the true God and those who serve him. This is the new commandment of Jesus by which His disciples are determined (See comments Jn 13:34,35). Any faith that does not maintain this principle cannot be the true faith that has originated from a God who is love. The Old Testament affirmed that we love others as we love ourselves. However, Jesus gave an example of unconditional love. We are to love the unlovely as He loved us.

**10 Love does no harm to a neighbor:** A code of laws could never list all the restrictions that one should not do in reference to harming his neighbor. If one were restricted by a list of laws that prevented him from harming his neighbor, then the Bible would be an encyclopedia of rules and regulations that we should not do in order to not harm our neighbor. If one guided his relationship with his neighbor on the basis of a list of preventative laws, then one might reason that he could harm his neighbor in those areas where no preventative law is mentioned. But the principles with which God deals in law with man are not after such a system of legal statutes. The principle of loving one's neighbor as himself takes care of all that is necessary for one to behave in order not to do harm to his neighbor. The principle to love as Jesus loved us takes care of all those things we should do for our neighbor even though he does not respond to our love. Therefore, when one behaves in a loving manner toward his neighbor, at least he does the requirements of law. But he does more. Love always takes one beyond the requirements of law.

**11 Our salvation is nearer:** It is not probable that Paul is here speaking of an imminent return of Jesus in His final coming in the lifetime of the Romans. The Holy Spirit did not deceive the first readers of the inspired documents of the New Testament to believe that Jesus was coming in His final coming in their lifetime.

awaken out of sleep because now our salvation *is* nearer than when we believed.

**12** The night is almost over, the day is at hand, therefore, let us cast off the works of darkness and let us put on the armor of light.

**13** Let us walk honestly as in the day, not in revellings and drunkenness, not in sexual promiscuity and lewdness, not in strife and jeal-

ousy.

**14** But put on the Lord Jesus Christ and make no provision for the flesh to *fulfill its* lusts.

## Chapter 14

**1 ¶** Receive him who is weak in the faith, *but* not to judgments of *disputable* thoughts.

**2** For one believes that he may eat all things,

However, there are several statements in New Testament Scripture concerning the coming of Jesus in time in judgment on those who persecuted the saints of God (See comments Mt 24; Js 5:7,8; Jd 14,15; introduction to Rv). When God comes in judgment on the wicked, it is deliverance for the righteous. And thus, in this text, Paul was probably referring to an in-time deliverance of the saints. There are two such possibilities of interpretation concerning their salvation from persecution that was in the near future. The first had reference to the persecution of Nero, Caesar of Rome, who had launched a personal assault against the Christian community. Nero would eventually commit suicide in A.D. 68, and thus, his persecution of the church in the area of Rome would be terminated. The second coming in judgment would be relief from Jewish persecution which would come with the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. Nero had unleashed persecution against Christians about thirty years after the establishment of the church. However, the Jewish religious leaders had done such since the establishment of the church. Both the death of Nero and destruction of Jerusalem would happen within two years of one another and about a decade after the writing of the letter to the Roman Christians. This would possibly be the salvation to which Paul makes reference in the text here. **12 *The day is at hand:*** "At hand" refers to that which is near (See comments Js 5:7,8). The night of persecution was about to dawn to a new day of relief from persecution. Once the day has come, the church would have a great opportunity for world evangelism in the social atmosphere of peace. It would be a time to take every opportunity to bring more into the fold of hope. ***Cast off the works of darkness:*** Disciples must lay aside any sin that hinders their efforts to live a godly life (See comments Hb 12:1). It is sin that hinders our Christian witness to the world (2 Co 6:7; 10:4; Ep 6:11,13; 1 Th 4:8). Not only is the light of our Christian behavior darkened by sin, but also our outreach to others through preaching and teaching the gospel (Ep 5:11). The Roman Christians must awake in their Christian responsibilities to the opportunity that is before them (Mk 13:37; 1 Co 15:34; 2 Co 6:1,2; Ep 5:14; 1 Th 5:6). ***Armor of light:*** They must put on the whole armor of God in order to launch their battle against the forces of darkness (See comments Ep 6:13-17). **13 *Let us walk honestly:*** The Christian should conduct his life in a manner that would not bring shame to the name of Jesus if everyone knew all his dealings (Ph 1:27; Ti 2:1). For this reason, Christians must conduct themselves honestly in all things (Ph 4:8). Those who walk properly will not involve themselves in revelry, drunkenness, lewdness, lust, strife, envy and a host of other sins that are after the flesh (See 1 Co 6:9; Gl 5:19-21). **14 *Put on the Lord Jesus Christ:*** When one is baptized he puts on Christ (Gl 3:26,27; see Jb 29:14;

Ep 4:24; Cl 3:10,12). He puts on Christ who is the Christian's Savior through His blood. Here Paul urges them not to allow the clothing of Jesus to slip off. Christians should continually keep on the righteous clothing of Jesus lest they be drawn away by the lusts of the flesh. When one is concentrating on being continually clothed with Christ, his mind is not on the gratification of the flesh (Gl 6:16; 1 Pt 2:11). When one's mind is set on those things that are above, his mind is kept off those things that are on this earth (Cl 3:1,2). In keeping our minds on those things that are above, we keep our focus of life on Jesus.

## Chapter 14

### CONSIDERING ONE ANOTHER IN LOVE

In the discussion of this chapter Paul reveals how Christians are to interrelate with one another on matters of opinion. The "strong" in the context are those Christians who have spiritually grown to understand areas of liberty wherein they can act. They understand that they have liberty in those areas they formerly considered wrong because of past religious beliefs. In this context, the "strong" were probably those who had been Christians for four to six years, as the "strong" Corinthians, who were not encumbered with mental or emotional relics of past religious restrictions. The "weak" in the context are those who have been Christians for only a brief time. These would not be those who had been Christians for many years. It is the weak whose conscience is troubled by participation in false religious actions of their past out of which they had come in their conversion. Their past religious beliefs still controlled their consciences in regard to eating meat. Some of the Jewish brethren were possibly keeping certain Jewish feasts which to the Gentile brethren would be considered an indication of returning to the Old Testament law. It is in this context of these matters of opinion that Paul encourages the strong not to be inconsiderate of the weak. These were areas of nonessential beliefs that did not have reference to salvation, and thus, these were not areas over which division should be caused. The stronger brethren must not despise the weak for their beliefs. On the other hand, Paul charges the weak not to judge the strong to be liberal in those areas where Christians have liberty. All must receive one another in a spirit of love.

**1** Keep in mind that in the following discussion, it is the weak brother who would be doctrinally wrong if he binds on the church his vegetarianism which is not a biblical issue. He is still growing out of past religious restrictions that he practiced in an idolatrous religion. He has not grown to the point of understanding that eating meat is a liberty that Christians can enjoy. However, in the historical context here, eating of meat was

another who is weak, eats herbs.

**3** Do not let him who eats despise him who does not eat. And do not let him who does not eat judge him who eats, for God has received him.

**4** Who are you to judge another man's servant? To his own master he stands or falls. Indeed, he will be made to stand, for God is able to make him stand.

**5** ¶ One man regards one day above another,

connected with idolatrous sacrifices. Therefore, the weak brother could not eat meat without thinking of the idolatrous sacrifices out of which he had recently come. Nevertheless, he was binding where God had not bound. But in the context of the situation, his conscience must be nurtured until such a time that he grows out of the mental restrictions he has in reference to meat. The context assumes, therefore, that there will be a time when he spiritually grows out of the restrictions of his past religious beliefs. All that is said in the context here, therefore, assumes this growth. **Receive:** It is the responsibility of the strong brother to accept the weak brother who is dealing with a problem concerning the eating of meat. In areas of opinion, brethren must receive one another. It is the specific responsibility of the strong brother to seek fellowship with those new converts who may still be emotionally and intellectually sensitive to the religious practices of their former life. In receiving the weak brother, however, Paul does not say that the vegetarian beliefs and practices of the weak brother are to be bound on the church. Paul is simply saying that the emotional and intellectual opinions of the weak brother must be respected (Compare Mk 7:19; At 10:14; 1 Co 8:8,9; 10:25,26; 1 Tm 4:1-5). In respecting the opinions of the weak brother in reference to the eating of meat, the stronger brethren must not create an environment in which the weak brother is intimidated to act against his conscience. We must remind ourselves that the weak brother here is not one who had been a Christian for several years. The weak brother is the new convert. Older Christians who behave as weak Christians in binding those things that are not biblically bound are contentious brethren who are warped and sinning (See comments Ti 3:9-11). **Disputable thoughts:** That over which there is dispute in this context does not have reference to those things that are required for salvation. These are matters of opinion. And in such matters, the principle of loving one's brother as himself must be the foundation upon which decisions are made and fellowship is maintained. **2 Eat all things:** It is the strong brother who believes that he can eat all meats. He has this liberty in Christ (See comments Gl 5:1,2). **Who is weak:** It is the new convert who has not yet been set free from the mental bondage of his past religious beliefs and practices. As a new Christian, he is in the process of growing out of past beliefs that kept him in bondage to religious beliefs that were created after the desires of men. As a new Christian, he is in a growing process. It is the responsibility of the stronger brother to lovingly nurture him to grow in order to disconnect his religious conscience from those things that have no religious significance. **3** The strong brother who understands that there is no religious significance in meat, must not look down on the vegetarian brother who is still living with his religious past. On the other hand, the weak brother must not judge as liberal the strong brother because he is eating meat. In other words, the weak brother must not make vegetarianism a doctrine by which he judges others. One judges an-

other only when something has been bound either by God or man. In this context, it is man who is binding, for the weak brother is trying to bind his vegetarianism on the strong brother. The weak brother must remember that God has received the strong brother. When one is received by God, therefore, those who receive God must receive those whom God has received. Therefore, it is the responsibility of the strong brother to receive the weak brother. It is the responsibility of the weak brother to receive the strong brother. Because God has received both, there is no reason for either to reject fellowship with the other. God is the one who has determined the fellowship between the two brothers. It is only God who can break that fellowship. When brethren break fellowship with one another over areas that are matters of opinion, they are transgressing against the fellowship that God has established between the members of the one body. Therefore, it is a serious matter to bind on the brethren nonessential beliefs that God has not bound, and to do so in a manner that destroys fellowship between brethren. In this context, the weak brother is binding something in the area of liberty where God has not bound. It is he who is in error if he would so bind his vegetarianism on the church in order to continue to judge and divide from the strong brother who has liberty in this area. **4 Who are you:** The question is to the weak brother. It is he who is judging the strong brother in the area where the strong brother has liberty to eat. **To his own master he stands or falls:** The master of the strong brother is the Lord. He is accountable only to the Lord in reference to those things that deal with salvational matters. The strong brother, therefore, must not be intimidated into allowing nonessential matters of opinion to be bound on the church. He is to respect and consider the weak brother by not intimidating him to do that which is against his own conscience. However, Paul is not restricting the strong brother from eating meat. He can eat meat, but not in a manner or environment in which the weak brother is intimidated to eat. Paul's instructions in this context, therefore, are not for the purpose of binding vegetarianism on the church. His instructions deal with guarding the liberty of the strong brother and the conscience of the weak brother. This is accomplished by both brethren regarding the rights of the other, especially the strong brother considering the situation of the weak brother who is only a new Christian. **God is able to make him stand:** The strong brother has the backing of God. When one refuses to bind where God has not bound, he is walking in the fear of the Lord. He is fearful of stealing away the lordship of Jesus by bringing people into subjection to his opinions. Those who bind where God has not bound are stealing the sheep from God, for they are bringing brethren into the bondage of their opinions. One stands before God by knowing what God has spoken in His word. Therefore, the strong stand on the fact that God has not bound vegetarianism on the church.

**5** The Jews came into the church with a cultural heritage of many feast days that had originally been in-

another regards every day *alike*. Let every man be fully convinced in his own mind.

**6** He who observes the day, observes *it* to the Lord. He who eats, eats to the Lord, for he gives God thanks. And he who does not eat, to the Lord he does not eat, and gives God thanks.

**7** For none of us lives to himself and none of us dies to himself.

**8** For whether we live, we live to the Lord, and whether we die, we die to the Lord. Therefore, whether we live or die, we are the Lord's.

**9** For to this end Christ died and lived *again*, so that He might be Lord both of the dead and of the living.

**10** But why do you judge your brother? Or why do you show contempt to your brother? For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God.

**11** For it is written, "*As I live, says the Lord, every knee will bow to Me and every tongue will confess to God.*"

**12** ¶ So then every one of us will give account of himself to God.

**13** Therefore, let us not judge one another

stituted by God in the Old Testament (See Gl 3:8-11; Cl 2:16-19). We would also assume that there were possibly some Gentiles who honored various days of the year with religious significance. The feast days of both Jews and Gentiles were a part of their culture and past religious beliefs and heritage. **Fully convinced in his own mind:** Paul's emphasis here is not to violate one's conscience in the matter of feast days or the eating of meats. He is not stating that the honoring of one day over another was a requirement for salvation. It is thus not morally or religiously wrong for a Christian to honor a particular day of the year. This would even involve the honoring of a particular day in a religious context. Simply because one brother honors a particular day does not mean that he is binding such on the church. Paul emphasizes the principle of Christian liberty in these matters. The fact that brethren have the right to honor certain days above others throughout the year emphasizes the liberty all Christians have in Christ (Gl 5:1,2).

**6 Observes it to the Lord:** If a Jewish brother honors a particular feast day, he is free to do so "to the Lord." If a Gentile brother does not want to honor the same day for the purpose that the Jewish brother does, then he has the freedom to not honor the day. If one brother eats meats, then to the Lord he can do such without the restrictions of the vegetarian brother. And if the vegetarian brother does not eat because eating meats troubles his conscience as a result of past religious beliefs that were attached to meat, then to the Lord he does not have to eat. One brother does not have the right to bind on another brother those things that are in the area of liberty. However, no brother has a right to intimidate another brother into doing that which is against his conscience. **7 None of us lives to himself:** Though Christians are set free, they must control their freedom when it comes to doing those things that affect their brothers. In all these matters, Paul states a principle of consideration that must be honored. Because of the nature of the fellowship of the church, every member must be aware of the consciences of one another, and especially, the consciences of the weak (See comments Gl 6:1,2). **8 We are the Lord's:** Since we have been crucified with Christ, we are no longer our own (6:6; Gl 2:20). We are the Lord's. Therefore, when it comes to dealing with matters of opinion, we must behave according to how the Lord would have us behave. We must submit our opinions to what the Lord would have us do in order to nurture and edify the flock of God. **9**

**That He might be Lord:** Those who would divide the brethren in areas of their own opinions as here defined by Paul, are stealing away the right of Jesus to maintain lordship over the sheep. When one enforces his opinion on the brethren, then he is subjecting the flock to his beliefs. He steals away the lordship of Jesus. He forgets that Jesus paid the price of His sacrifice in order to bring all men together in one body under His headship (See comments Ep 2:11-18). Jesus' sacrifice gave Him the authority to be the judge of both those who are living in Christ and those who are dead in Christ (2 Co 5:15; see Mt 22:32; At 10:36). No man has a right to infringe on the authority of Jesus by setting himself up as a judge and lawgiver of the body that Jesus purchased with His own blood (At 20:28). **10,11 Do you judge your brother:** Paul directs this question toward the weak brother who is judging the strong brother. The fact of his judging affirms that he believes the strong brother is not following the will of God. In his conversion to Christ, the weak brother had forsaken idolatry and anything associated with it. He viewed the strong brother to be conforming to the religions from which he fled. The weak brother was thus allowing the beliefs of the idolatrous religions around him to influence his behavior and thinking as a Christian. **Show contempt to your brother:** This question is directed to the strong brother who was manifesting a lack of consideration for the beliefs and consciences of the newly converted weak brother. He showed contempt because he assumed that the weak brother should understand that there is nothing in meats or particular feast days. **We will all stand before the judgment seat of Christ:** Those brethren who would seek to judge or show contempt for their fellow brethren must remember that Jesus is the Lord of all before whom we shall give account (Mt 25:31; At 17:31; 2 Co 5:10; Ph 2:10,11). We are not the judge of one another in areas of opinions. Christ is the judge and it is before Him that all will stand in judgment.

**12** Since each man stands accountable before Jesus on the basis of his own behavior in reference to the lordship of Jesus (Mt 12:36; 16:27; Gl 6:5; 1 Pt 4:5), then it is not the business of one brother to either despise or judge another brother in reference to "disputes over doubtful things" (vs 1). **13** In view of our certain accountability before the Lord of all, brethren must cease judging one another. No Christian should exalt himself to the position of being the judge of his brother in areas of opinion. **No man put a stumbling block or an oc-**

any more. But judge this rather, that no man put a stumbling block or an occasion to fall in *his* brother's way.

**14 ¶** I know and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus that *there is* nothing unclean of itself. But to him who regards anything to be unclean, to him *it is* unclean.

**15** But if your brother is grieved with *your* meat, you are no longer walking according to love. Do not destroy him with your meat for whom Christ died.

**16** Therefore, do not let your good be spoken of *as* evil,

**17** for the kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness and peace and joy in

the Holy Spirit.

**18** For he, who in this thing serves Christ, *is* acceptable to God and approved by men.

**19 ¶** Therefore, let us follow after the things that make for peace and things by which one may edify another.

**20** For *the sake of eating* meat, do not destroy the work of God. All things indeed *are* pure, but *it is* evil for the man who eats with offense.

**21** *It is* good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor *do anything* by which your brother stumbles.

**22** The faith that you have, have *it* to yourself before God. Happy *is* he who does not

**occasion to fall in our brother's way:** In all matters, Christians should seek not to discourage one another (1 Co 8:9). Their behavior with one another should be for the purpose of edifying and provoking one another unto love and good works (Hb 10:24,25).

#### CONSIDERING YOUR BROTHER

**14** *There is nothing unclean of itself:* That which determines whether a food is either clean or unclean is not the food itself. It is whether the one who eats it has consciously determined whether it is clean or unclean in his mind. If a man eats and violates his conscience by thinking he is sinning against God, then it is wrong for him eat (See 1 Co 10:25). **15** *No longer walking according to love:* It is a lack of love to encourage a weak brother to eat that which he has determined is unclean for him to eat (1 Co 8:11,12). Christians are responsible for the influence that their actions have on others if their actions encourage someone to violate his own conscience. **16** If one eats in order to intimidate another brother to eat against his conscience, then one's liberty to eat meat will be used for the wrong (Rm 12:17). Christians have been set free, but they have not been set free in order to walk without consideration of others. **17** God's kingdom does not exist in order for men to fulfill the lusts of the flesh through eating and drinking. The kingdom reign of Jesus in the hearts of men exists in order that the will of the Father be done on earth as it is done in heaven (See comments Mt 6:9,10). In this way, the kingdom reign of Jesus promotes doing right, social peace and joy among men (See Jn 17:20,21). **18** *He who ... serves Christ:* It is the concern of the Christian to serve Christ and work in order to edify the body of Christ. If one is self-willed, he serves himself and does not consider his brother. The one who behaves out of brotherly love is acceptable to God because his behavior is after the nature of God. He is approved by men because he has put others before his own rights.

**19** *Pursue ... peace:* In all things Christians should work toward peace among men, especially among brothers (12:18; Ps 34:14; 1 Co 7:15; 2 Tm 2:22; Hb 12:14). **Edify another:** It is the work of Christians to build one another up in the Lord (1 Co 14:12; 1 Th 5:11; Hb 10:24,25). If a brother behaves in order not to accom-

plish these responsibilities toward his brother, then he is not walking in love. If he is walking in order to please himself, then he will sacrifice peace in order to get his own way. If he is concerned about his own way in all things, then he will not walk in order to edify his brother.

**20** *Do not destroy the work of God:* One may have the freedom to eat all things. However, if eating meats encourages the weak brother to eat against his conscience, then the one who encourages the brother to act against his conscience has become a stumbling block to the work of God. It is the work of God to build up the weak. But if the weak are discouraged by a group that is not at peace wherein there is edification, then those who are serving their own self-interests are working against God (See 1 Co 8:9-12). **21** Though things in the area of opinion are right within themselves, it is wrong to do such things if the weak brother is encouraged to violate his own conscience (1 Co 8:13). Anything that leads a Christian brother to compromise his conscience must be sacrificed in order that the weak brother grow. Since things as eating meats are in the area of opinion, then neither the position of the strong brother nor weak brother are matters of doctrine. In these areas, therefore, love is the primary concern that must be maintained. It is assumed that the weak brother will grow in his knowledge that there is nothing in meats. Until that time, the strong brother must forego his rights in order not to discourage the weak brother (vss 14,15; 1 Co 10:27-29). **22** *Have it to yourself before God:* In the area of liberty, if one's conscience is not troubled by something that is a matter of opinion, then he must keep the practice of such between himself and God. Happy is the brother who considers his brother first before doing that which would cause his weak brother's conscience to be troubled. **23** The weak brothers who still associate idol worship with the eating of meats, should not be intimidated to eat meat against their conscience. If they eat, they sin. If they ignore their consciences, they sin because they have compromised their faith by doing something they believe is wrong. To "eat from faith" is to eat without one's conscience being troubled. The strong brother must encourage the weak brother not to eat in a manner by which he would trouble his own conscience. He also has the responsibility to

condemn himself in that thing which he approves.

**23** And he who doubts is condemned if he eats, because *he does* not eat from faith, for whatever *is* not from faith is sin.

### Chapter 15

**1 ¶** We then who are strong ought to bear the weaknesses of the weak and not to please ourselves.

**2** Let every one of us please *his* neighbor for *his* good, to *his* edification.

**3** For even Christ did not please Himself, but as it is written, "*The reproaches of those who reproached You fell on Me.*"

**4** For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, so that we through patience and encouragement of the Scriptures might have hope.

**5** Now the God of patience and encouragement grant you to be of the same mind toward one another according to Christ Jesus,

**6** so that you may with one mind *and* one mouth glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

**7 ¶** Therefore, accept one another as Christ also accepted you to the glory of God.

**8** Now I say that Christ was a servant to the circumcision for the truth of God to confirm the promises *made* to the fathers,

aid the weak brother in his growth in the knowledge of what the will of God is concerning such things (See comments 1 Tm 4:3,4).

### Chapter 15

#### CONSIDERING OTHERS

**1 *Bear with the weaknesses of the weak:*** "Scruples" of the King James Version refers to "weaknesses" or "failings." It is the responsibility of those who are mature in the Christian faith to be patient with those who are growing up in the Lord. These exhortations, as well as those mentioned in the preceding chapter, assume that the weak brother is growing. A weak brother who does not grow in those areas which are matters of opinion becomes cantankerous and opinionated, seeking to have his own way. However, in the growth process, the stronger brothers are not to seek their own way at the expense of the conscience of new converts.

**2 *Please his neighbor:*** Strong brethren should do those things that will encourage and edify the new converts (1 Co 9:11; 10:24,33; 2 Co 13:9; Ph 2:4; see comments Gl 6:1,2). ***Edification:*** Edification refers to building up one's brother (14:19). Such is the responsibility of the stronger brothers in their relationship with the weaker brothers who are growing up in the knowledge of the word of God. **3 *For even Christ:*** Jesus had every right to exalt His rights over those whom He had created (Mk 10:45; Cl 1:16). However, He lowered Himself to be the servant of man (Mt 26:28; Mk 10:45; see Ps 69:9). In the same manner, the stronger brethren should seek to be the servants of the new converts in order that they grow up in the Lord. **4 *Written for our learning:*** The Old Testament Scriptures were written for our instruction (Jn 5:39; 1 Co 10:11). Though the Old Testament law is not binding on Christians today (7:4), the moral principles of the law continue through the principles that Christ taught. The examples of behavior in the Old Testament are to be studied by Christians in order to gain direction and application of God's moral values (See 4:23,24; 2 Tm 3:16,17). ***Patience and encouragement of the Scriptures:*** Old Testament events encourage us to have patience concerning the work of God in the lives of brethren. They give us

encouragement by revealing that God is faithful in His promises and work. **5 *The God of patience and encouragement:*** As God worked with His people in the Old Testament, so He works today with Christians. He is the God who is patient with the growth of the church. He is patient with brethren who are learning to relate with one another in a spirit of love. As God worked patiently in the Old Testament, so Christians must behave themselves with one another in the church (Cl 3:12-16). **6 *One mind and one mouth:*** The purpose of these instructions of Paul is to maintain the unity of the church (At 4:24; 1 Co 1:10; Ph 1:27). When brethren are considerate of one another in love, unity is maintained. When unity is maintained, then there is an atmosphere for spiritual growth within the hearts of members. When an atmosphere of unity and spiritual growth exists, then members will give praise to God.

**7 *Accept one another:*** In view of what Paul states here, Christians are under obligation to accept one another. He reasons that if the Son of God received sinful men into His fellowship, then certainly sinful men can receive one another (5:2,8; 14:1,3). The Christian who refuses to receive his brother when there is a difference of opinion is exalting himself above Jesus who received us even though we were sinners (5:8). Christians should be willing to overlook one another's differences in order to maintain unity in fellowship with one another. **8,9 *To confirm the promises:*** Jesus became the *diakonos* (servant) for the Jews in order that He might accomplish the scheme of God's redemption of Israel. He was a servant to die on the cross for the salvation of the Jews (Mt 15:24; Mk 10:45; At 3:26). ***To confirm the promises:*** Jesus became the servant of the Jews in order to fulfill the promises that God had made to the Jewish fathers (4:16; see Gn 12:1-3; Lk 24:44; 2 Co 1:20). ***That the Gentiles might glorify God:*** The fulfillment of the promises to the Jewish fathers would include the gospel going to the Gentiles (Ps 18:49). The Gentiles now have reason to rejoice because God's promises and covenant were not only for the Jews but also for the Gentiles (See Jr 31:31-34; Hb 10:15ff). Because the promises were made also to the Gentiles, the proclamation of the gospel went forth to the Gentiles (Mt 28:19; Mk 16:15). ***Sing to Your name:*** The

9 and that the Gentiles might glorify God for His mercy, as it is written, "For this cause I will confess to You among the Gentiles and sing to Your name."

10 And again he says, "Rejoice, O Gentiles, with His people."

11 And again, "Praise the Lord all you Gentiles and laud Him all you people."

12 And again, Isaiah says, "There will be a root of Jesse and He who will arise to reign over the Gentiles, in Him will the Gentiles trust."

13 Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope in the power of the Holy Spirit.

14 ¶ And concerning you, my brethren, I myself am convinced that you are also full of goodness, filled with all knowledge and able also to admonish one another.

15 Nevertheless, brethren, concerning some points I have written more boldly to you in order to remind you, because of the grace that was given to me from God,

16 that I should be the minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God, so that the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, having been sanctified by the Holy Spirit.

17 Therefore, I have reason to glory in Christ Jesus in those things that pertain to God.

18 For I will not dare to speak of any of those

reception of the gospel would generate inner praise of God that would come forth in songs of praise to God (Ep 5:19; Cl 3:16). Such is what happened when the evangelists went to the Gentiles (See At 13:46-48). **10-12** Paul quotes the Old Testament to affirm that God had always intended that the fulfillment of the promises include the Gentiles. The fulfillment of the promises that were made to the Jews would cause the Gentiles to give praise to God (Dt 32:43), sing praise to His name (Ps 117:1), and have hope for the future (8:24,25; Is 11:1,10). Since the fulfillment of the promises included both Jews and Gentiles, then there is no reason for the Jews to believe that they have exclusive rights to the fulfillment of the promises. When a Gentile became a Christian, it was no longer like it was when a Gentile became a proselyte to Judaism under the Old Testament law. When a Gentile became a proselyte under the Old Testament law, he had to accept the Jewish religious beliefs as well as religious culture. In doing such, he was always considered a second rate Jew (Compare comments At 6:1). But such thinking has no place in reference to the Gentiles who have become Christians. There are no second rate citizens in the kingdom of God (See At 10:34,35; Gl 3:28). **13 Fill you with all joy and peace:** Through the process of the Holy Spirit inspiring Paul to write these words, God was filling the hearts of both Jew and Gentile with joy (Lk 2:10) and peace (12:12; 14:17; Lk 1:78,79). **Abound in hope:** When brethren have peace among themselves, they can rejoice. It is necessary to have peace among brethren in order that hope be encouraged.

#### THE MINISTRY OF PAUL

14 Paul turns to complementing the brethren in order to reassure them that they can carry out their own responsibilities to one another. **Filled with all knowledge:** They had all the necessary knowledge to be able to deal with the problems in the Roman church (12:6; 2 Pt 1:3). They now had the Spirit-inspired letter that he has just written. They simply needed to put into practice that which they knew. We could also assume here that they had the miraculous gift of inspired preaching and teaching. They simply needed to put to work the

teaching that they now knew. **Admonish one another:** Instead of thinking either selfishly or considering one's race superior to another, they must consider their spiritual responsibilities to one another as individuals. They must relate to one another culturally as one man in Christ, not as Jews or Gentiles (1 Co 1:5; 8:1,7,10; see comments Gl 3:26-29). **15 Remind you:** The brethren already knew the things about which he wrote. However, in case there were some in the church who were despising the teaching of the word of God, the Holy Spirit knew that they needed an inspired document from the hands of an inspired man in order to bring their behavior into conformity to the word of God (12:6). **Because of the grace:** The grace of God to which Paul here refers is the inspiration of himself as a man who did not desire the right to be the inspired messenger of God (1:5; 12:3). From the point of view of men, such would be true. However, God deals with men through grace. He has to deal with men in such a manner because all men are unworthy because of sin. Paul did not deserve to be called of God in order to be a Christ-sent apostle. However, it was through God's grace that he was called. **16 Minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles:** By the grace of God, Paul had been personally commissioned by Jesus to minister the gospel of God's grace to the Gentiles (11:13; At 9:15). By the grace of God, Paul was given his apostleship to the Gentiles (1:5). **Offering up of the Gentiles:** Paul preached the gospel of God's grace to the Gentiles in order that the worship the Gentiles offered to God might be made acceptable to God by being directed by God's word. Therefore, only when one is sanctified is his worship and service of God acceptable (See Jn 17:17; At 26:18; Ep 5:26; Hb 10:29; 13:12). **17 I have reason to glory in Christ Jesus:** When one has come into a covenant relationship with Jesus through baptism into His death, burial and resurrection, he has reason to glory. He can glory, not because of the merit of his own performance of law or good works, but because of the grace of God that made his labor not in vain in the Lord (See comments 1 Co 15:58). The offering of our service to God is acceptable to God only because of the grace of God that brought us into Christ. **18** Because the conversion of the Gen-

things that Christ has not worked through me, to make the Gentiles obedient by word and deed,

**19** through powerful signs and wonders by the power of the Spirit of God, so that from Jerusalem and round about to Illyricum I have fully preached the gospel of Christ.

**20** And so I have made it my goal to preach the gospel, not where Christ was named, lest I should build on another man's foundation,

**21** but as it is written, "*To whom He was not announced, they will see, and they who have not heard will understand.*"

**22 ¶** For this reason I have been greatly hindered from coming to you.

**23** But now, having no more place *to work* in these regions, and having a great desire these

many years to come to you,

**24** whenever I make my journey into Spain, I hope to see you in my journey and to be supported on my way there by you, if first I may enjoy your *company*.

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

**26** For it pleased them of Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor saints who are in Jerusalem.

**27** It pleased them *to do so*, and they are debtors *to them*. For if the Gentiles have shared in their spiritual things, their duty is also to minister to them in material things.

**28** Therefore, when I have accomplished this, and have sealed to them this fruit, I will go by you *on my way* to Spain.

tiles through his ministry was by the grace of God, Paul would not glory in what was accomplished through him to bring the Gentiles to God. The result of his work was not in his power or ability to perform, but in the drawing power of the gospel (1:16). Therefore, bringing people to Christ does not lie in the ability of the evangelist to perform his duties well or organizationally preach his sermons. The power is in the gospel. When one is timid about presenting the gospel to others, he is ashamed of the gospel because he is focusing on his own inadequacies and not on the power of the gospel. It is the gospel of the grace of God that brings people to God, not the abilities of those who present it (Compare comments 1 Co 1:18-31). **19 Powerful signs and wonders:** Paul here gives credit to God alone for the impact the gospel had on the lives of those to whom he preached. God worked with the evangelists by the confirmation of miraculous works (Mk 16:17-20; At 19:11; 2 Co 12:12; 1 Th 1:5; Hb 2:3,4). **20,21 Preach the gospel, not where Christ was named:** The focus of Paul's ministry to the Gentiles was to go where the gospel had not been preached. Such is a worthy goal of evangelists who seek to evangelize the world after the nature of the commission of Jesus to go into all the world (Mt 28:19; Mk 16:15). The church needs men who have the goal of Paul to rise up and to preach the gospel in those areas where it has not been preached. Other religious groups may have gone into such areas. However, they have created "another gospel," a gospel that is based on either the traditions of men or the misguided emotions of hysterical fits. There is thus a need for men to arise to take the gospel of God's grace unto every ethnic group of the world. Paul here quotes Is 52:15 to prove that God had this mission for evangelists in mind even before the event of the gospel.

**22-24** Paul would have gone to Rome by the time this letter was written. However, he had been hindered from doing such because there were other places that demanded his presence for the preaching of the gospel (See 1:10,11,13-15; At 19:21; 23:11; 1 Th 2:17). But now he feels that he can go to Rome, for he has plans to travel far beyond Rome to the country of Spain (See

At 28:30,31). **Supported on my way there by you:** The Greek word (*propempe*) that is used here refers to being financially helped by another (See At 15:3; 20:37,38; 1 Co 16:16; 2 Co 1:16; see comments 3 Jn 5-8). In this case, Paul is raising funds from the Roman brethren in order to accomplish a mission trip to Spain to preach the gospel where it had not yet been preached.

**25,26 Going to Jerusalem:** It is believed that Paul wrote this letter from Corinth. He was in Corinth for the purpose of receiving the contribution the Corinthian church had collected for the famine stricken victims in Judea (See 1 Co 16:1-3; 2 Co 8:1; see comments 2 Co 8,9). **A certain contribution for the poor saints:** The Gentile brethren in Macedonia and Achaia had purposed to minister physical things unto the Jewish brethren in Judea who had originally ministered unto them spiritual things (2 Co 8:1-15). **27 They are debtors:** The Gentile brethren felt obligated to give to the poor Jewish saints in Judea because it was originally from the Jerusalem church that the gospel went forth into all the world. Paul is here reaffirming a principle of support for those who preach the gospel (See comments 1 Co 9:11-14; Gl 6:6). Churches or individuals that do not support those who preach and teach the gospel are not fulfilling their responsibilities in the kingdom. They do not realize their debt to God and the ones who first gave of themselves to preach the gospel to them. They have freely received the gospel, but they have not freely made it possible for it to be preached to others. They have selfishly received the free gift of the gospel, but have not freely given to those who preach the gospel. God will not spiritually reward spiritual beggars (See comments 2 Co 12:14 - 13:6). **28** Paul thus ends his fund raising appeal to this congregation that has now received the spiritual blessing of his inspired letter. They have reaped by the grace of God what was given to Paul who freely gave to them. Now the burden of appreciation is on their shoulders. It is the nature of the free gift of grace, that it generate within the hearts of men the willingness to freely give to others. **29 I am sure that when I come to you:** Paul's confidence here in his coming is probably seated in the fact that by the time he

**29** I am sure that when I come to you, I will come in the fullness of the blessing of Christ.  
**30 ¶** Now I urge you, brethren, through the Lord Jesus Christ and through the love of the Spirit, that you strive together with me in prayers to God for me,  
**31** that I may be delivered from those in Judea who do not believe, and *that* my service to Jerusalem may be acceptable to the saints,  
**32** so that I may come to you with joy by the will of God and may be refreshed with you.  
**33** Now the God of peace *be* with you all. Amen.

## Chapter 16

**1 ¶** I commend to you Phoebe our sister, who is a servant of the church that is at Cencrea,  
**2** that you receive her in the Lord in a manner worthy of the saints and that you assist her in whatever business she may have need of you, for she has been a helper of many and also of myself.  
**3 ¶** Greet Priscilla and Aquila, my helpers in Christ Jesus  
**4** who have risked their own necks for my life, to whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles.

wrote this letter, God had already revealed to him that he was going to Rome (See At 23:11). And for this reason, he appealed to appear before Caesar's court in At 25:11. **Fullness of the blessing of Christ:** Paul is confident that the Roman church senses their obligation to support the preaching of the gospel in Spain. He knows that they will allow him to live of the gospel in order to preach the gospel (1 Co 9:14). In this way they will have fellowship with the truth of the gospel (See comments 3 Jn 5-8). Any disciple, therefore, who wishes to have fellowship with evangelists in preaching the gospel to the world will support those who preach the gospel to the lost. This is God's means by which evangelists may go into all the world.

### AN APPEAL FOR PRAYER

**30 Strive together with me in prayers:** Paul pleaded for the prayers of the saints (See 2 Co 1:11; Cl 4:12). If there were no power in prayer, then certainly these would have been vain words. But the very fact that the Holy Spirit inspires him to write this request is evidence that God wants His children to ask of Him. **31,32** Paul asked that they mention three things in their prayers. (1) **That I may be delivered from those in Judea who do not believe:** Paul was on his last trip to Jerusalem. He knew the hostility of the rebellious Jews there who had crucified His Lord. This prayer on his behalf was answered because Paul survived the hostility of the unbelieving Jews in Jerusalem (See comments At 21 - 23:22). (2) **My service for Jerusalem may be acceptable to the saints:** Paul was going to the church in Jerusalem in order to carry out his work as a Christ-sent apostle. He asked the Roman brethren to pray that God work in order to make his ministry on the trip beneficial to the saints. (3) **That I may come to you with joy:** Paul asks that his desire to come to them be fulfilled. He asks that they pray that his coming be by the will of God in order that he might have some fruit in them. **33 The God of peace:** The blessing of having obeyed the gospel and come into a covenant relationship with God is peace of mind because of our peace with God (See 16:20; 1 Co 14:33; 2 Co 13:11; Ph 4:9; 1 Th 5:23; Hb 13:20). Peace of mind with God is the serendipity of obedience to the gospel. There is no peace if there is no obedience. It is a natural mental attitude. One does not feel right in his or her relationship with God unless there is obedience to God. We feel assured with God when we do what God says.

## Chapter 16

### PAUL'S PERSONAL CLOSING

**1,2** Phoebe is here referred to as a servant (*diakonon*) of the church. She is one who has given her life to service the needs of others (See 1 Co 16:15,16). Though in some translations this word is translated "deaconess," we must not assume that there is a special designation in the church for women to be deacons. There are no qualifications mentioned for such a designated work as there are for men who serve as special menservants (See 1 Tm 3:8-13). The word *diakonon* is correctly translated servant in this context, though the word could also be translated "minister." It is possible that she carried this letter of Romans to the church in Rome, and thus, she is referred to as a servant of the global church for this special work. **Church:** This was an assembly of disciples who met in Cencrea. **Cencrea:** This city was about ten kilometers east of Corinth. It was the seaport city for Corinth and the region (At 18:18). **Receive her:** The church in Rome is to accept Phoebe on behalf of Paul. To receive her meant that they must take care of her in all her physical needs (Compare Ph 1:27; 2:29). **3,4 Priscilla and Aquila:** This missionary couple was originally from the city of Rome, though they had to flee as refugees when Claudius commanded all Jews to leave Rome (See At 18:1-3,18,26; 19:1ff; 1 Co 16:19; 2 Tm 4:19). **Risked:** We are not told, but on some occasion both Aquila and Priscilla put their lives in danger for the sake of Paul. **Churches of the Gentiles:** As Jews, Priscilla and Aquila accepted the task of evangelizing the Gentiles. And thus, they received the recommendation of the Gentile churches. **5 The church that meets in their house:** The early church met in the houses of the members. The church, therefore, is not the building in which members meet. The word "church" refers to the assemblies of God's people. The common place for the members to meet on Sundays was in the homes of the members (1 Co 16:19; Cl 4:15; Pl 2). **Epaenetus:** With the household of Stephanas, Epaenetus was one of the first converts Paul made when he established the church in Achaia (See 1 Co 16:15). **6,7 My kinsmen and my fellow prisoners:** Andronicus and Junia were from Cilicia and were converted before Paul was converted. Many translations refer to these two as Paul's "kinsmen" or "relatives." The Greek word can be so translated. He does not identify how they were related to him. If

**5** Greet the church *that meets* in their house. Greet my beloved Epaphroditus who is the firstfruits of Asia to Christ.

**6** Greet Mary, who labored much for us.

**7** Greet Andronicus and Junia, my kinsmen and my fellow prisoners who are notable among the apostles, who also were in Christ before me.

**8 ¶** Greet Amplias my beloved in the Lord.

**9** Greet Urbanus, our helper in Christ, and Stachys my beloved.

**10** Greet Apelles, the approved in Christ. Greet those who are of Aristobulus' *household*.

**11** Greet Herodion, my kinsman. Greet those who are of the *household* of Narcissus, who are in the Lord.

**12 ¶** Greet Tryphena and Tryphosa who labor in the Lord. Greet the beloved Persis who labored much in the Lord.

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

**14** Greet Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermas, Patrobas, Hermes, and the brethren who are with them.

**15** Greet Philologus and Julia, Nereus, and his sister, and Olympas, and all the saints who are with them.

**16** Greet one another with a holy kiss. All the churches of Christ greet you.

**17 ¶** Now I urge you, brethren, mark those who cause divisions and offenses contrary to the teaching you have learned, and turn away from them.

they were Christians before Paul, then they may have had a tremendous influence on Paul before his conversion. They also suffered imprisonment for their commitment to evangelism. As a result of their labors, they were well-known among the apostles who had gone out to preach the gospel. **8-15 Greet:** These tender salutations of Paul in an inspired letter concerning specific persons certainly credit them with having been special fellow-workers with him in his ministry of the Lord to preach the gospel to the world. **Greet Rufus:** In some translations, the mother of Rufus is spoken of as also being the mother of Paul. This could possibly be true. However, the meaning is probably that Rufus' mother cared for Paul as a mother. **16 Greet one another with a holy kiss:** He commands them here to accept one another with the "holy kiss" that was a common cultural greeting of the day (1 Co 16:20; 2 Co 13:12; 1 Th 5:26; 1 Pt 5:14). We do not know exactly how this greeting was carried out. It was obviously a most tender and affectionate greeting that was practiced by the early Christians. **The churches of Christ:** This is not given as a title or name of the church. Emphasis is on the assemblies of the members of the universal church of the Lord that are carried on throughout the world. Through this statement, all the churches with whom Paul was associated, sent their greetings to the assemblies of the disciples in Rome. Paul's emphasis is on the universal fellowship of the disciples. Every group of Christians who assemble in any one location anywhere in the world is a part of the church of Christ throughout the world.

#### WARNING OF HERESY

**17 Mark those who cause division:** It is necessary here to understand the actual person who was causing the division. The one who was causing the division was the person who was adding to the teaching that the Roman disciples had already learned. Emphasis is on the person that, with the motives identified in verse 18, is behaving in a dictatorial manner over the church in order to bind his opinions on the church. These disciples, as well as all the early disciples, had been delivered the truth of the gospel (Jd 3). However, there were

those who sought to add circumcision, ceremonies and a host of other teachings to the body of truth that was delivered to the disciples (See comments At 15:1; Gl 1:6-9; 2 Jn 9,10). The one who causes the division is the brother who is adding his opinions to the truth. The brother who refuses to allow someone to bind where God has not bound is not the one causing the division. Those brethren who stand against those who would add their opinions or traditions in order to restrict the liberty Christians have in Christ, are to be commended for their stand. They have understood that unity is not conformity to the traditions and doctrines of men. Unity is based on freedom to obey the will of God, while at the same time allowing liberty in matters of opinion. **Mark:** Paul here says that those who would divide the disciples by binding where God has not bound, must be identified as such. They are to be identified in order to be watched so that they are not allowed to go among the members to cause division. They are thus identified, but not disfellowshipped. **Turn away from them:** Once the individual has been identified by the disciples as one who seeks to bind where God has not bound, then the rest of the disciples are to keep away from his influence. This would certainly assume that such a one not be allowed to influence others in a divisive manner (See comments Ti 3:9-11). **18 Serve ... their own belly:** These graphic words of Paul identify the true motive of those who are seeking to regiment the church into conformity to their own beliefs. They seek to steal the lordship of Jesus over the sheep by intimidating the flock into submitting to their opinions. Those who are of such a nature, are not calling men to the cross, but to their desire to lord over the church through the enforcement of their opinions (See comments At 20:30; 3 Jn 9,10). **Appealing words and flattering speech:** By eloquent speeches those who would lord over the flock of God lead astray those who do not know their Bible well enough to determine the difference between Bible and that which is after the nature of Baal. Disciples who have grown ignorant of the word of God are fertile soil for the leadership of these leaders (Hs 4:6). When the people of God are ignorant of the word of God, they are easily led astray by the opinions and personalities of

**18** For they who are such serve not our Lord Christ but their own belly, and by appealing words and flattering speech deceive the hearts of the innocent.

**19** For your obedience is known to all *men*. I rejoice therefore on your behalf, but I want you to be wise to what is good and innocent to what is evil.

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

**21** ¶ Timothy, my fellow worker, and Lucius and Jason and Sosipater, my kinsmen, greet you.

**22** I, Tertius, who wrote *this* letter, greet you in the Lord.

**23** ¶ Gaius my host, and *host* of the whole church, greets you. Erastus, the city treasurer, greets you, and Quartus a brother.

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

**25** ¶ Now to him who is able to establish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery that was kept secret since ages past,

**26** but now is manifested, and by the Scriptures of the prophets, according to the com-

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men. When churches stop studying the Bible, they are laying the groundwork for Satan to do his work through men who seek to use the church as their platform for exalting themselves over their fellow man (Compare comments Mk 10:35-45; Ep 4:11-16). **19** *Known to all*: As the Thessalonians in the regions of Macedonia, the obedience to the gospel by the Roman disciples had been proclaimed throughout the Roman world (1:8; see comments 1 Th 1:6-10). *Wise to what is good*: Paul wants the Roman brethren to be wise in areas of doing and knowing that which is good (Jr 4:22; Mt 10:16; 1 Co 14:20; Gl 6:10). *Innocent to what is evil*: He wants them to be innocent concerning those things that are evil. They should stay away from evil in order that their Christian nature not be desensitized by the wicked world. **20** *The God of peace will crush Satan*: They had already crushed Satan under their feet in the spiritual realm, for they had already obeyed the gospel (See comments 6:1-6). Paul possibly refers here to Satan's working against the Christians through the persecution of Nero who as Caesar of Rome would persecute the church. The heat by Nero's personal attack against Christians had not yet begun. However, in a few years Nero would launch his vendetta against the Christians in Rome in order to persecute them. The Holy Spirit's final comfort to these particular saints, therefore, is to reveal to them that Satan's use of Nero will shortly be crushed (See comments in introduction to Rv). It was in A.D. 68 when Nero committed suicide. *Grace ... be with you*: The theme of this epistle is grace. With reference to grace, Paul concluded this monumental message of the Holy Spirit to the church. It would be and is this grace that brings comfort to millions throughout history. When one realizes that it is by grace we have been saved (Ep 2:8), then it is comforting to know that we have peace with God through Jesus (5:1,2).

**21,22** Timothy was a young man when he began his labors with Paul (See introduction to 1 Tm). Lucius (At 13:1), Jason (At 17:5) and Sosipater were possibly relatives of Paul. *Tertius*: Tertius wrote the letter as Paul dictated the message to him. **23** *Gaius*: In considering the great commendation and work of the Gaius of 3 John, this could possibly be the same Gaius here. However, if 3 John were written at a much later date than Romans, then this could have been another Gaius. However, the nature of the two were the same. John commended the Gaius of 2 John for his great fellowship

of receiving and sending out evangelists (1 Co 1:14; see comments 3 Jn 1-8). *Erastus*: See At 19:22; 2 Tm 4:20. **24** Paul had written his farewell in verse 20. Tertius writes his here.

**25** These final words are a glorious praise of God who has now revealed the eternal plan of salvation to all men through Jesus. Through the grace of the gospel that was revealed on the cross (Ti 2:11), God is able to establish our hearts in Christ Jesus. Therefore, it is upon the foundation of the event of the death of Jesus for our sins and His resurrection for our hope that we are to emotionally and spiritually stand justified before God (See comments 1 Co 15:1-4). *Kept secret since ages past*: Before the world was created, God had planned the events of the cross and resurrection (Cl 1:26; 2:2; Ep 1:9; 3:3-5,8-13; see comments 1 Pt 1:10-12). The mystery of the gospel, however, was not revealed to man until the coming of Jesus. **26** The Lamb who was slain before the creation of the world has been manifested to man (Rv 13:8). *Make known to all nations*: It was the commission of Jesus to the apostles that they preach the gospel to all nations (Mt 28:19; Mk 16:15; Lk 24:47). *Obedience of faith*: It was the gospel of the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus that was preached to all the nations (Mk 16:15). This was the historical event that was the central message of the early evangelists, for it was through obedience to the gospel that one would come into a covenant relationship with God. Through immersion into the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus, one obeys the gospel, and thus, comes into a covenant relationship with the Father, Son and Holy Spirit (6:3-6; 1 Co 15:1-4; 2 Th 1:7-9). Thus "obedience to the faith" in this context refers to one's faith moving him to obedience of the good news of Jesus' death for our sins and resurrection for our hope (See 1:5; At 6:7). The Roman Christians had obeyed the gospel by immersion into Christ. The word "faith" here does not refer to a body of doctrine, but to the event of the gospel wherein God's grace was poured out on a cross outside the city of Jerusalem almost two thousand years ago. One's faith must move him to obey the gospel by immersion into Christ (6:3-6; Mk 16:16; At 2:38; 22:16). **27** Because of the manifestation of God's grace on the cross, to Him alone must go all praise and glory for our salvation through Jesus Christ (Jd 25). To God must go all glory simply because there is no other way we could possibly be saved other than through the

mandment of the eternal God, has been made known to all nations for the obedience of faith, **27** to the only wise God *be* glory through Jesus Christ forever. Amen.

saving grace of God that was revealed on the cross. If men seek to establish their own systems of salvation, they are at the same time seeking glory for themselves. If one is saved by meritorious deeds or works of law, then all glory cannot be given to God for our salvation.

The fact that salvation is by the grace of God assumes that all glory must be given to Him for our salvation. No greater statement could have been made by the inspired writer to conclude such a letter as Romans. Grace gives glory to God.

## Paul's Letter Of 1 Corinthians

### Author

The apostle Paul was the author of this letter. He identified himself as the author in 1:1 and 16:21 (See "Author" in introduction to Rm). With the aid of Aquila and Priscilla, Paul established the church in Corinth, and thus, writes to correct some problems of behavior and belief in these developing disciples (See At 18:1-3). Throughout the centuries there has been little question concerning Paul's authorship of both 1 and 2 Corinthians. The church of the second century accepted the Pauline authorship of the letter, and thus, there is today no reason to doubt the fact that he actually wrote both letters.

### Date

In 16:8 Paul wrote, "*But I will tarry in Ephesus until Pentecost.*" When Paul left Corinth in At 18 on his second missionary journey after establishing the Corinthian church with Aquila and Priscilla, he did not tarry in Ephesus. He stayed in Ephesus only a short time before going on to Jerusalem (At 18:19-23). Therefore, we would not conclude that the statement of 16:8 was written from Ephesus on the At 18 visit of the second missionary journey.

The only other time Paul was in Ephesus when he could have written this letter was on his third missionary journey. The 16:8 statement, therefore, was made on his visit to Ephesus on his third missionary journey. It was made in view of the fact that he was on his way to Corinth, both to finalize the correction of specific problems among the disciples (4:14-21), as well as to pick up the special contribution they were making for the famine victims of Judea (16:1-4). He tarried in Ephesus because of a great opportunity for evangelism that opened up to him, which opportunity probably referred to his teaching in the school of Tyrannus for two years wherein all Asia heard the gospel (16:9; At 19:8-10). The date of the writing from Ephesus would thus be around A.D. 53,54. It would have been a year or two later that he wrote the second letter.

### Historical Background

Corinth was located on the isthmus that connects Peloponnesus with the mainland of Achaia. The city of Corinth was the political capital of the province of Achaia (At 18:12). It was a Roman colony, and thus a center of trade because of its location. Its residents consisted of Jews who had migrated there for trade. Romans lived there who had come for political and military reasons. Greeks also lived in Corinth who had moved there from the countryside of Achaia. Therefore, the city was a center of great economic wealth and trade.

Corinth was also a religious center. The temple of Aphrodite was located in the city. At one time in the history of the Aphrodite temple worship, the temple itself housed around one thousand priestesses or temple prostitutes. Fornication, therefore, was a part of the temple worship. As a result, the religious fornication of the priestesses played a significant part of the sociological behavior of the Corinthians. Since fornication was an accepted religious practice, it was thus an accepted sociological practice among the Corinthians.

It is often assumed that the church in Corinth was established by Paul, Aquila and Priscilla on Paul's second missionary journey. We must keep in mind that Aquila and Priscilla had just come to the city when Paul arrived (At 18:1-3). We do not know if they were Christians when Paul arrived. If they were, then they as disciples existed in the city before Paul arrived. In this letter, however, Paul