

Life For Today
Bible Commentary

The Book Of
Romans

Andrew Wommack

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SPECIAL NOTE

These commentary ebooks are just the footnotes from Andrew's Life for Today Study Bible And Commentary. Because these footnotes appear without change from the printed books, there are certain things that may not make sense. For example, the footnotes are numbered in a way that seems confusing in the ebooks; there are references to page numbers and marginal references, etc. These all serve a purpose in the printed books, but not in the ebook. Understanding that the footnotes originated in a printed book will help avoid confusion.

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INTRODUCTION TO ROMANS

The book of Romans is the longest and the clearest exposition by the Apostle Paul on the Gospel. This book contains the doctrinal foundation for the Christian faith, and it is for this reason that it was arranged first in order among the New Testament epistles. The truths presented here must be understood before proceeding to other doctrinal matters.

In this letter, Paul dealt with a larger number of doctrinal issues than in any other of his epistles. His treatment of the doctrine of salvation by grace through faith was so masterfully done that its divine inspiration cannot be questioned. The depth with which Paul treated these great subjects shows that this knowledge was truly given to him by the direct revelation of God (Ga 1:12).

An understanding of the truths in Ro 3 transformed Martin Luther's personal life and ignited the fires of the Reformation that shook the world. Indeed, an understanding of the truths expressed in this book are essential not only to the salvation of every individual but also to the maturing and success of every Christian.

AUTHORSHIP

Paul is undoubtedly the author of the letter to the Romans. The first verse of this epistle clearly states so (Ro 1:1). There is no dissenting opinion of this among the early writings of the

church. The writer also sent greetings to Priscilla and Aquila (Ro 16:3, see note 2 at Ac 18:2), his helpers, and also to Timotheus, his workfellow (Ro 16:21). The book of Acts confirms these people worked closely with Paul.

THE RECIPIENTS OF THE BOOK OF ROMANS

Paul addressed this letter to all the Christians that were in Rome (Ro 1:7). There is no scriptural account of any apostolic mission taking the Gospel to Rome, so it may therefore be supposed that these Christians were converts from the Day of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit was given (Ac 2:10) and from the personal witness of believers as they traversed the empire.

These saints in Rome were a diverse group: Gentiles who had come from pagan worship to trust in Jesus as their Savior, and devout Jews who had believed in Jesus as the Jewish Messiah. This gave rise to many problems among the believers, and these were aggravated, no doubt, by the fact that no apostle had been to Rome to settle disputes and provide doctrinal teaching and guidance.

The Jewish Christians were adamant that the Gentiles had to convert to Judaism through the rite of circumcision. They lacked proper teaching in the revelation of grace that was given to Paul. Therefore, Paul felt an obligation, as the apostle to the Gentiles (Ro 11:13), to instruct them in these matters and hence this letter.

DATE AND PLACE OF WRITING

This letter to the Romans was probably written during Paul's third missionary trip, around A.D. 57-58, when Paul was in Corinth or that vicinity (Ac 20:2-3).

The date can be deduced from some of Paul's statements in Ro 15:25-28 about how he was headed to Jerusalem to take the offering from the saints in Macedonia (see note 1 at Ac 16:9) and Achaia (see note 11 at Ac 18:12) to the poor saints in Judea (see note 1 at Joh 4:3). This places the writing of this book toward the end of Paul's third missionary trip (see note 2 at Ac 18:23) as he headed for Jerusalem.

Phebe, a servant of the church in Cenchrea (see note 1 at Ac 18:18), was the one who carried this epistle to the church in Rome (Ac 16:1, subscript at Ac 16:27). So it can be supposed that Paul was in Phebe's hometown of Cenchrea or in Corinth (see note 1 at Ac 18:1) when he wrote this letter.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Some facts about Paul's persecution of the church, his conversion, and the intervening time until the beginning of his ministry have been dealt with in note 4 at Ac 7:58, note 1 at Ac 9:1, and note 1 at Ac 9:26. Information about Paul's life after the close of the book of Acts is included in note 1 at Ac 28:30. Many notes about Paul's exploits, character, and hardships are found throughout the book of Acts.

ROMANS CHAPTER 1

ROMANS 1:1

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

Note 1 at Ro 1:1: Out of the six Greek words for "servant" used in the New Testament, Paul used one of the most slavish terms possible. The word used in this verse is "DOULOS" and comes from the root word "DEO." DEO means "to bind" (Strong's Concordance). So Paul is literally speaking of himself as being a bondman or slave of Jesus Christ--a slave by free choice yet owned and purchased by Jesus Christ (1Co 6:19-20).

The idea of being a love-slave by choice comes from Old Testament passages such as Ex 21:2-6 and De 15:12-17. When Israelites bought Hebrew slaves, they had to set them free in the seventh year. However, if the slaves loved their masters and didn't want to go free, then holes were bored through the lobes of their ears, pronouncing them bond-slaves forever.

By the use of this word, Paul was declaring Jesus as his absolute Master yet indicating the idea of his expression of love and free choice to the one whom he served.

Note 2 at Ro 1:1: Notice that Paul spoke of his servitude to

Christ before he mentioned his apostleship. This reveals Paul's priorities and humility. These were key factors in his success.

ROMANS 1:2

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

Note 3 at Ro 1:2: The concept of the Gospel (see note 5 at Ac 20:24) was not new. Ga 3:8 says that the Lord preached the Gospel unto Abraham. Also, Moses gave the conditions of the Gospel in De 30:11-14. Paul quoted this passage in Ro 10:6-8 as he explained faith as the only condition to receiving God's grace. Jesus Himself said that the Law of Moses, the prophets, and the psalms were full of prophecies concerning Him (Lu 24:44).

The Gospel was woven throughout the Old Testament scriptures. Indeed, the job of the Old Testament Law was to "shut us up" or constrain us toward the Gospel (Ga 3:23). In this sense, there is no conflict between the Old Testament Law and the New Testament grace. The Old Testament ministry of Law was only temporary (Ga 3:19) until the Gospel could be put into effect by the sacrifice of Jesus.

The conflict between Law and grace comes when people try to mix the two. As Jesus described in His parables about the new

wine in the old wineskin and the new patch on the old garment (see note 1 at Lu 5:36), the two covenants are not compatible.

The Old Testament Law paved the way for the Gospel and pointed people toward the Gospel. If the Law is used to point out people's need and bring them to their knees through hopelessness of self-salvation, then the Gospel is used to provide salvation and relationship; there is no conflict. Conflict arises only when people refuse to use faith in God's grace as the only means of salvation and insist that some degree of adherence to Law is required for justification (see note 2 at Lu 9:55 and note 1 at Lu 16:16).

ROMANS 1:4

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

Note 4 at Ro 1:4: The resurrection of Jesus from the dead is the greatest witness of all to the validity of Jesus' claims (see note 1 at Ac 1:3).

ROMANS 1:5

By whom we have received grace and apostleship, for

obedience to the faith among all nations, for his name:

Note 5 at Ro 1:5: This is the first of 24 times the term “grace” is used in Paul’s epistle to the Romans. The Greek word for “grace” is “CHARIS,” and CHARIS is translated many different ways throughout the New Testament. It is translated in the following ways: “acceptable, benefit, favour, gift, grace(-ious), joy, liberality, pleasure, thank(-s, -worthy)” (Strong’s Concordance). The most common way it is translated is as “grace,” used 130 times in the New Testament.

According to Thayer’s Greek-English Lexicon, “the word ‘charis’ contains the idea of ‘kindness which bestows upon one what he has not deserved’ ...the N.T. writers use ‘charis’ pre-eminently of that kindness by which God bestows favors even upon the ill-deserving.”

Another form of the Greek word CHARIS is “CHARISMA,” and CHARISMA is translated “(free) gift” (Strong’s Concordance). Vine’s Expository Dictionary defines CHARISMA as “a gift of grace, a gift involving grace (charis) on the part of God as the Donor.” In other words, CHARISMA is a specific form or manifestation of the grace of God. It is used to describe as free gifts the following: righteousness (Ro 5:16-17), spiritual gifts (1Co 12:28-31 and Ro 12:6-8), eternal life (Ro 6:23), the five ministry gifts (Eph 4:11), celibacy (1Co 7:7), healings (1Co 12:9, 28, and 30), and miraculous intervention (2Co 1:11).

Note 6 at Ro 1:5: The Greek word used here for "obedience" is "HUPAKOE," and it means "attentive hearkening, i.e. (by implication) compliance or submission" (Strong's Concordance).

Many times in the New Testament, faith and obedience are linked together (Ac 6:7, Ro 16:26, Jas 2:14-22, and 1Pe 1:21). This is because the origin and historical development of the words "believe" and "obey" are closely related. What you believe is what you will do.

If you really believed that the building you were in was on fire, you would do something. Different people might do different things, but it is inconceivable that anyone who really believed the building was on fire would do nothing. The New Testament calls this a "work of faith" (1Th 1:2-3 and 2Th 1:11). This is an action corresponding to and induced by what a person believes. This differs from a work of the Law in that works of the Law require no faith and are works of one's own resources without any reference to, reliance on, or trust in God (Ga 2:16, 3:12, 5:4; Ro 3:28, 4:15-16, and 9:30-32).

ROMANS 1:6

Among whom are ye also the called of Jesus Christ:

Note 7 at Ro 1:6: This verse states that we are "the called of Jesus Christ." The next verse (Ro 1:7) states to what Jesus has called us: He called us to be saints (see note 5 at Ac 9:13). God's grace has extended the call (or invitation) to every person to become a saint through salvation (Tit 2:11), but not everyone chooses to respond positively to this call. If a person rejects God's call, then God chooses to reject that person (Lu 12:9 and 1Jo 2:23), therefore the statement of Mt 22:14, "For many are called, but few are chosen."

ROMANS 1:7

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

Note 8 at Ro 1:7: It is one of the greatest truths of the Bible, and also one of the hardest to comprehend, that we are the objects of God's love. God didn't just pity us or feel some sense of moral obligation to save us; He saved us because of His infinite love for us (Joh 3:16). An experiential understanding of God's love is the key to being filled with all the fullness of God (Eph 3:19).

ROMANS 1:8

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

Note 9 at Ro 1:8: This is quite a statement! It is to be understood that this is speaking of the Roman Empire, but this is still an astounding fact. These believers--who had never had an apostolic visit and, as far as we know, had very little teaching--had such a strong faith in the Lord that stories of that faith had spread throughout the world. This is quite a contrast with many churches today that haven't even impacted their neighborhoods with the Gospel of Christ.

ROMANS 1:11

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

Note 10 at Ro 1:11: Two things are very significant in Paul's statement here: First, we see that spiritual gifts can be imparted or passed from one person to another. This is the whole purpose of the presbytery laying hands on an individual during ordination, as Paul reminded Timothy (1Ti 4:14).

Second, spiritual gifts help establish or strengthen an individual. This is in stark contrast to what some critics of the gifts of the Holy Spirit claim. As Paul said in 1Co 14:3-4, the gifts of the Spirit operating in the church produce edification, exhortation, and comfort. In private use, they edify the individual.

ROMANS 1:13

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

Note 11 at Ro 1:13: The word "let" that was used here is an old English word that means hindered. It is still used in that sense in the sports of tennis and table tennis.

Paul was saying that he had purposed many times to travel to Rome, but he had been hindered up to that point. In Ro 15:21-22, Paul clearly stated what his hindrance was--that others, closer to where he was, had not heard the Gospel yet. In other words, he was hindered from taking the Gospel to Rome because there were so many other places that needed him just as much. However, in Ro 15:23, Paul said he had presented the Gospel to every region in those parts (probably the area of Corinth - see Life for Today Study Bible Notes, Introduction to Romans, Date and Place of

Writing), and he was now ready to begin his journey to Rome.

ROMANS 1:14

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

Note 12 at Ro 1:14: Paul was making this statement in a spiritual sense. He was expressing his sense of obligation to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ with all. This was one of Paul's attitudes that motivated him to travel to the ends of the known world and constantly lay his life on the line for the sake of Christ. Likewise, those who seek to be used of God today need to recognize that their duty to share Christ with a dying world is not optional.

Note 13 at Ro 1:14: In Paul's day, the term "barbarian" was not an offensive one. It was simply used to distinguish anyone who did not speak the Greek language or, later, to identify anyone who was not of the Hellenic race.

ROMANS 1:15

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

Note 14 at Ro 1:15: Paul had now dispensed with the preliminaries and was beginning to present his defense of the Gospel, his primary purpose of writing.

ROMANS 1:16

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

Note 1 at Ro 1:16: The Gospel is the power of God that releases the effects of salvation in our lives. Salvation is much more than just being born again. This refers to every benefit that the believer is entitled to through Jesus. Therefore, if we are not experiencing the abundance that Jesus provided for us--in any area of our lives--then we are having a problem understanding and/or believing the Gospel.

The term "Gospel" has become so familiar to Christians that the true meaning and understanding have been lost. As discussed in note 5 at Ac 20:24 and note 7 at Mt 24:14, the truths of the Gospel are not commonly preached or understood in many churches. This is the reason that so many Christians are not

walking in all the benefits of their salvation. They don't have the power of the Gospel working in them.

If a person needs healing, it's in the Gospel. If deliverance is needed, it's in the Gospel. Prosperity, answered prayer, joy, peace, love--they are all found through understanding and believing the Gospel.

Note 2 at Ro 1:16: In the Bible, most English words that end with the suffix "-eth" carry the idea of an act or process that continues. So, the person that "believeth" is a person who has believed and is continuing to believe.

In the Greek language, the word that was translated "believeth" here is a present participle that expresses the idea of a continuous and repeated action. Therefore, the faith that results in salvation cannot be abandoned and still produce its results (Heb 6:4-6, 10:29; and Col 1:21-23). It may appear to be abandoned, as in the case of Peter when he denied the Lord (Lu 22:57-62), but Jesus had prayed that his "faith fail not" (see note 2 at Lu 22:32).

The Scriptures present true Bible faith as an ongoing experience, not a one-time action.

ROMANS 1:17

For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith

to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.

Note 3 at Ro 1:17: The expression "from faith to faith" describes the means whereby righteousness is given and retained. God's righteousness cannot be earned; it can only be acquired through faith. As proof that righteousness received by faith is not a new idea or concept, Paul quoted Hab 2:4, "The just shall live by his faith" (also quoted in Ga 3:11 and Heb 10:38).

Note 4 at Ro 1:17: The just shall live by faith. They don't just visit faith every once in a while or vacation there once a year; they live in and by faith.

ROMANS 1:18

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

Note 1 at Ro 1:18: Paul's purpose in writing Ro 1:18-20 was to explain why the Gospel is the power of God unto salvation (Ro 1:16). The problem was that then, just as now, most people felt the way to get others to come to God was to condemn them and scare them out of hell. People doubted that Paul's good news of the love of God would be enough to cause repentance.

Therefore, Paul began to prove that every person already has an instinctive knowledge of God's wrath against their sin. We don't need to prove God's wrath; God has already done that. What people need to know is the good news that God placed His wrath for our sins upon His own Son so that we could be completely forgiven. This good news will draw people to God more than the bad news will ever drive people to God.

Note 2 at Ro 1:18: In Ro 1:18-20, Paul was declaring that God has revealed Himself to all mankind. Old Testament scriptures proclaim that God has revealed Himself to everyone through nature (Ps 19:1-3), but Paul was stating here that there is an intuitive revelation of God within every person.

There are five words used in these three verses to describe the extent to which God has revealed Himself to mankind, and they are worth special note. Any one of these five words used by itself would have made a strong argument for Paul's case. However, the combination of these words in just two sentences emphasizes the certainty of Paul's claims.

The use of the word "all" in Ro 1:18 shows the extent to which God has revealed Himself. God has placed a witness within every person against all ungodliness and unrighteousness.

In Ro 1:19, the Greek word that was translated "manifest" is the Greek word "PHANEROS," and it means "shining, i.e. apparent" (Strong's Concordance). The Greek word translated "shewed" in this verse is "PHANEROO," which is derived from

PHANEROS. PHANEROO means "to render apparent (literally or figuratively)" (Strong's Concordance). These words make it very clear that this instinctive or intuitive knowledge is not so subtle that it can be overlooked. God gives every individual the right to choose, but there can be no doubt that every person has, at one time, clearly seen and understood (Ro 1:20) the basic truths of God's existence.

In Ro 1:20, Paul said this inner witness of God causes the individual to clearly see the invisible things of God and even understand the Godhead. The Greek word that was translated "clearly seen" is the word "KATHORAO," and it means "to behold fully, i.e. (figuratively) distinctly apprehend" (Strong's Concordance). This leaves no doubt that every person who has ever walked the earth has had a clear revelation of God. The use of the word "understood" emphatically states that God gave man not only knowledge but also the understanding to use that knowledge.

Therefore, no one will be able to stand before God on the Day of Judgment and say, "God is not fair." He has given all people who have ever lived, regardless of how remote or isolated they may have been, the opportunity to know Him. They are without excuse.

Someone might say, "If all this is true, then why can't we observe more of this intuitive knowledge of God in the lives of those who have not heard the Gospel?" Paul gave the answer to this in Ro 1:21-23 (see note 1 at Ro 1:21).

ROMANS 1:20

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

Note 3 at Ro 1:20: The Easton's Bible Dictionary definition of the word "Godhead" is "the essential being or the divine nature of God." Therefore, Paul was stating that God has given every person an intuitive revelation of His divine nature. What a statement! And what a responsibility when people will have to stand before God and answer for the perversions they have perpetrated in the name of God. In their hearts, they knew better.

ROMANS 1:21

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

Note 1 at Ro 1:21: As Paul explained in Ro 1:18-20 (see note 2 at Ro 1:18), all people who have ever lived have had God

reveal Himself to them, but this verse is explaining that revelation is not always received. Each individual has the freedom of choice.

In Ro 1:21-23, Paul described different characteristics of those who reject God's revelation. These could also be descriptive of progressive steps that one takes away from the true revelation of God.

The first step in rejecting God is not to glorify Him as the supreme, all-knowing, unquestionable God. This was what happened with Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. They questioned God's intent behind His command (Ge 3:1-6). They ceased to magnify and honor God like they once did. Submission to God as supreme is always humbling, and therefore "self" rebels. This is very prevalent today.

Second, they were not thankful. This is always a sign that self is exalting itself above God. A selfless person can be content with very little. A self-centered person cannot be satisfied. Thankfulness is a sign of humility, and cultivating a life of thankfulness will help keep "self" in its proper place.

After these first two steps have been taken, then the individual's mind is free to begin imagining foolish, wicked, and idolatrous thoughts. This leads to a hardened heart ("foolish heart was darkened," see note 10 at Mr 6:52) and being reprobate (see note 6 at Ro 1:28).

ROMANS 1:24

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

Note 2 at Ro 1:24: This phrase "God gave them up" is used twice in this passage (here and in Ro 1:26), and the phrase "God gave them over" is used once (Ro 1:28). These phrases are drawing on the fact that there is a God-given, intuitive knowledge inside of all people that would prevent them from committing such depraved acts (see note 2 at Ro 1:18). However, because of our free choice, God will not continue to force that restraint upon us against our will. If people persist in their rebellion against this conviction of God, He will give those people up to their own hearts' lust.

Therefore, those who are committing some of the terrible acts spoken of here (idolatry, homosexuality, etc.) and say that they have no conviction about it are either lying (Ro 1:18-20) or have been given over to a reprobate mind (see note 6 at Ro 1:28) by God.

ROMANS 1:26

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

Note 3 at Ro 1:26: Ro 1:26-27 is speaking of lesbianism and homosexuality. If anyone could doubt the clear statements of the Old Testament scriptures that this is an abomination to God (Le 18:22, 20:13; and De 23:17-18), then these scriptures should forever settle the question.

ROMANS 1:27

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

Note 4 at Ro 1:27: This is speaking of the emotional and physical consequences of homosexuality. Paul here said these consequences are "meet." The word that Paul used (Greek - "DEI") is found in 104 verses, but it is only translated "meet" one other time (Lu 15:32). All other times the translation clearly denotes something that is necessary ("behoved, must (needs), (be) need(-ful), ought, should" [Strong's Concordance]).

This implies that these consequences (such as disease) are prescribed payment for such acts. Add to this the use of the word "recompense" (meaning payment or compensation for an act) in this same verse, and it clearly looks as if physical and emotional scars are God's judgment upon this sin.

These natural consequences of sin are not necessarily God's direct punishment on the individuals who commit these acts. Those who participate in homosexuality, which is expressly forbidden by God, are bringing punishment on themselves. It's like the law of gravity. Many people are killed when they violate this God-given law, but it is not accurate to say God killed them. They killed themselves. There was no malice on God's part.

Likewise, God established natural laws governing sexual behavior. Marriage was given while man was still in a perfect state (Ge 2:21-24), and it is very possible that God never imagined man perverting such a beautiful gift (Jer 7:31). When people violate God's sexual order, they are destroying themselves just as surely as someone who tries to breathe underwater or walk off a cliff.

This verse is saying that the devastation that many homosexuals experience in their bodies is an appropriate payment for those who have willfully perverted the perfect gift of marriage that God gave to us before the Fall. But this does not mean that God hates all homosexuals and is personally punishing them. If that were so, some of the diseases we see would not be selective.

All homosexuals would contract these diseases.

No, these maladies occur naturally when God's perfect order is perverted. God hates homosexuality, but loves the homosexuals. If homosexuals will turn to God and put faith in Jesus as their Savior, they can be saved just the same as anyone else.

ROMANS 1:28

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

Note 5 at Ro 1:28: The reason they did not like to retain God in their knowledge is because the knowledge of God would have convicted them and restrained them from committing such acts. This is the same motivation behind the actions of those who oppose Christianity so strongly today. People want to sin without anyone convicting them.

Note 6 at Ro 1:28: The Greek word translated "reprobate" is "ADOKIMOS," and it means undiscerning, not distinguishing, and void of judgment. In this text it may be understood as "an abominable mind, a mind to be abhorred by God and man" ("The Hebrew-Greek KeyWord Study Bible" by Dr. Spiros Zodhiates).

This is describing the state of a person who has "passed the point of no return" with God. As the context explains, God has revealed Himself to every person who has ever walked the earth. But there comes a point when God's Spirit will not strive with man any longer (Ge 6:3). When that happens, individuals are hopelessly damned because people cannot come to the Father except the Spirit draws them (see note 8 at Joh 6:44 and note 6 at Ac 24:25).

Therefore, reprobate people are people whom God has abandoned, and there is no hope of salvation for them. Paul applied this term to Christians who had renounced their faith in Christ (2Co 13:5-7, 2Ti 3:8, and Tit 1:16; see note 5 at Ac 5:5).

Some people may fear that they are reprobate because of some sin or blasphemy (see note 1 at Mt 12:31) that they have uttered. However, as these verses describe, reprobate people are past feeling remorse or conviction. If people are repentant over some terrible action, then that itself is proof that the Spirit of God is still drawing them and they are not reprobate. Reprobate people wouldn't care.

ROMANS 1:29

Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication,

wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers,

Note 7 at Ro 1:29: It is very interesting to see some of the things included in this list of abominations that many people would not consider sin, or certainly not a "bad" sin like others on the list. For instance, the word "debate" means "a quarrel, i.e. (by implication) wrangling" (Strong's Concordance). Some people think quarreling is perfectly okay, but Paul lists it right along with murder and sexual sins.

The word "whisperers" means "a secret calumniator" (Strong's Concordance). A calumniator is a slanderer or maligner. A "backbiter" is someone who slanders the character or reputation of another when that person is not present. Pride is listed among these sins that are an abomination to God, as well as being disobedient to parents. A "covenantbreaker" is a person who cannot be trusted to keep his or her word.

The truth is that there are no little sins or acceptable sins. All unrighteousness is sin (1Jo 5:17) and should be rejected.

ROMANS 1:31

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

Note 8 at Ro 1:31: Although this phrase "without natural affection" has been interpreted by many to mean homosexual acts, the Greek word suggests something different. The Greek word used is "ASTORGOS," and it literally means "hard-hearted towards kindred" (Strong's Concordance). This describes someone who is unloving and without the natural tenderness that a mother would express toward a child. Therefore, Paul was describing a hardhearted person who is void of love and tenderness.

ROMANS 1:32

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

Note 9 at Ro 1:32: When God turns individuals over (see note 2 at Ro 1:24) to a reprobate mind (see note 6 at Ro 1:28), those people do not lose their knowledge of what's right and wrong; they just lose God's conviction about it. They still know they are wrong, but they don't care.

ROMANS CHAPTER 2

ROMANS 2:1

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

Note 1 at Ro 2:1: In the preceding chapter, Paul had conclusively proved that the Gentiles were guilty before God. They had no excuse for their vile actions (Ro 1:20). This, no doubt, pleased the Jews. That's exactly what they believed and what they had been arguing. They maintained that unless these Gentiles converted to Judaism and observed the Law of Moses (specifically the law of circumcision), they could not be saved.

However, after Paul had taken full advantage of the Jews' prejudice, he turned his arguments to the Jews, showing them that they were just as guilty or even guiltier than the Gentiles. He ended this chapter with statements about the Gentiles' faith being superior to the Jews' circumcision and concluded a true Jew is born of faith, not of the flesh (Ro 2:28-29).

Thus, the second chapter proves the Jews, or religious persons, are just as guilty before God as the heathen. Then in the

third chapter, Paul drew this all together by proclaiming that since everyone--Jew and Gentile--was in "the same boat," then all could be saved by one method of salvation, through faith.

Note 2 at Ro 2:1: From a human perspective, some people have obtained a level of holiness that gives them the right to judge others. However, when viewed from God's standpoint, we are all sinners, and one sinner has no justification for condemning a fellow sinner (see note 46 at Mt 7:1). We may not be doing the exact same transgressions, but we are guilty of being lawbreakers (Jas 2:10) and are therefore disqualified from being the judge.

Also, whenever people condemn one another, they are showing that they have a knowledge of right and wrong and therefore can no longer claim ignorance for their own offenses. As Ro 2:2 explains, we are better off to leave the judging to God.

Note 3 at Ro 2:1: The Greek word that is rendered "judgest" three times in this verse and once in Ro 2:3 is the word "KRINO." It is speaking of a harsh, condemning type of judging that was warned against in Mt 7:1. There is a Greek word, "ANAKRINO," that signifies discernment, which is encouraged in Scripture (see note 46 at Mt 7:1).

ROMANS 2:3

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

Note 4 at Ro 2:3: These pious Jews could have argued with Paul that they were not committing the same sins that these heathens were, but in reality they were. They may not have worshiped idols, but they were covetous. Col 3:5 reveals that is idolatry. They may not have committed adultery, but they had lusted in their hearts. Jesus said that was equal to adultery (Mt 5:28). They may not have murdered anyone, but they had hated. Those both come from the same root sin (Mt 5:21-22).

When viewed in this way, judgment for others disappears and mercy comes to light.

ROMANS 2:4

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

Note 5 at Ro 2:4: This is a radical statement that the Jews of Paul's day and the religious legalists of our day reject. They

refuse to accept that the goodness of God is sufficient motivation for people to turn from sin. They insist that fear of punishment is a superior motivator.

It is true that fear is a more familiar motivator to most people. Even a lost person or carnal Christian can identify with fear and respond to it. But as 1Jo 4:18 states, "Fear hath torment." Those who respond to God through fear will also be tormented with thoughts of doubt and condemnation as to whether they have done enough. Fear will move some toward God, but it is inferior to love. There is nothing that fear can do that love can't do better and without the side effect of torment.

Those motivated to seek God because of fear if they didn't will cease to be motivated when things are going well. They become the ones who only pray when they are in trouble. Those who come to God because of His goodness will see God as the source of their success and continue to serve God in the good and the bad times.

The world, and especially religion, has used negative reasons to motivate us. The Gospel uses the positive reason of God's great love to draw us unto God. We need to renew our minds to line up with God's thinking.

ROMANS 2:5

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

Note 6 at Ro 2:5: The Apostle James said, "For he shall have judgment without mercy, that hath shewed no mercy; and mercy rejoiceth against judgment" (Jas 2:13). Those who show mercy will be shown mercy, but those who are hardhearted and unmerciful will reap the same when they stand before the judgment seat of God.

ROMANS 2:6

Who will render to every man according to his deeds:

Note 7 at Ro 2:6: Ro 2:6-16 is speaking of the final judgment of God at the end of this world. The Lord will judge us and render a due reward according to every person's work. Although this is true, some have taken these scriptures to mean the opposite of what Paul was saying in context here.

From the context, we see that Paul was preaching that Jews and Gentiles alike have sinned and come short of the glory of God (Ro 3:23). Therefore, we cannot be saved by our actions (Ro

3:20). The only way to be saved is through faith in Jesus and what He did for us (Ro 3:24-28). Therefore, these verses cannot be contradicting everything else that Paul was saying by proclaiming that acceptance by God is based on performance.

No, the action that will be rewarded with eternal life is the action of faith (Joh 3:16). Faith alone saves, but saving faith is never alone. True faith has actions (Jas 2:17-20). The Greek word that is translated "do not obey" in Ro 2:8 means "to disbelieve (willfully and perversely)" (Strong's Concordance). So it is faith that is the issue, even though actions are being spoken of.

Therefore, those whose faith is causing them to patiently continue in well doing (Ro 2:7), they will receive eternal life. But those whose rejection of God's mercy causes them to disobey (disbelieve) the truth, they will receive indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish (Ro 2:8-9).

ROMANS 2:14

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

Note 8 at Ro 2:14: This is speaking of the intuitive knowledge of God described in Ro 1 (see note 2 at Ro 1:18).

ROMANS 2:15

Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and [their] thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another;)

Note 9 at Ro 2:15: The conscience is the part of us that bears witness as to what is right and wrong. This happens through our thoughts either accusing or excusing us. The conscience is a part of the soul (see note 2 at Mt 22:37). This can be deduced from the fact that even a Christian's conscience can be defiled (1Co 8:7), evil (Heb 10:22), and weak (1Co 8:7 and 10), but the born-again spirit cannot be (see note 3 at Mt 26:41).

A good conscience is essential to faith. Without a good conscience, our faith is made shipwrecked (1Ti 1:19). A good conscience produces confidence (1Jo 3:21 and Heb 10:35). An evil conscience condemns us (1Jo 3:20).

It is possible that God created man without a conscience and that the conscience was acquired through the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. The name of that tree is descriptive of the function of the conscience.

The conscience is referred to by name thirty-one times in

twenty-nine verses in the New Testament (Joh 8:9; Ac 23:1, 24:16; Ro 2:15, 9:1, 13:5; 1Co 8:7, 10, 12, 10:25, 27-29; 2Co 1:12, 4:2; 1Ti 1:5, 19, 3:9, 4:2; 2Ti 1:3; Tit 1:15; Heb 9:9, 14, 10:2, 22, 13:18; 1Pe 2:19, 3:16, and 21)

ROMANS 2:16

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

Note 10 at Ro 2:16: This is quite a statement of authenticity for the Gospel Paul preached. God didn't get His understanding of the Gospel from Paul, but Paul received his revelation of the Gospel from God. He was so sure of this that he could make statements like this and like that of Ga 1:8-12.

ROMANS 2:17

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

Note 1 at Ro 2:17: It is true that the Jews had been given the Word of God, and this gave them a superior knowledge of God.

However, since they had not kept the Law, their superior knowledge had just made them more accountable than other people (see note 5 at Lu 12:48).

ROMANS 2:21

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

Note 2 at Ro 2:21: The Jews took pride in their keeping of the Law, but no Jews could boast that they had kept the Law perfectly (see note 4 at Mr 10:20). "All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Ro 3:23). Paul highlighted three areas where they boasted of their own holiness, but he revealed that they were actually sinners in these very things.

They boasted that they didn't steal, but Paul revealed that they did steal. Jesus also rebuked the Pharisees for stealing. This was not the typical type of theft, but what we would call "white-collar crime."

Paul said that they were adulterers, even though they prided themselves on not committing adultery. They were guilty of spiritual adultery if nothing else (Jas 4:4), and Jesus had revealed that adultery was also a sin of the heart, even if there was no

action (Mt 5:28).

They also thought they were not idolatrous, but Paul convicted them on this count also. He used the word "sacrilege". This referred to them being temple robbers, thereby making direct reference to their covetousness, which is idolatry (Col 3:5).

Therefore, even though they had a form of godliness, they were sinners just like the Gentiles, and their hypocrisy gave the Gentiles a reason to blaspheme God. This led Paul to proclaim that the Jews' claim to some kind of special covenant with God was made void through their breaking of the Law. In the third chapter of Romans, he went on to draw the conclusion that everyone, Jew and Gentile, is in the same condition of sin and needs the same salvation through Christ.

ROMANS 2:25

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

Note 3 at Ro 2:25: If Jews could keep the Law perfectly, then the Jewish covenant that was sealed with the sign of circumcision would give them an advantage over others. But that has never, and can never, happen. No one can keep the Law, and

the Law was not given to provide a way to God (see note 2 at Mt 19:17). Therefore, because Jews have never kept the Law perfectly, they are the same as uncircumcised in the sight of God.

ROMANS 2:26

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

Note 4 at Ro 2:26: Notice that Paul did not say that the uncircumcision kept the Law. Instead he mentioned them keeping the "righteousness" of the Law (this verse) and "fulfilling" the Law (Ro 2:27)--there is a difference. A person can fulfill the righteousness of the Law through faith in Jesus, but no one, Jew or Gentile, can keep the Law.

ROMANS 2:28

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

Note 1 at Ro 2:28: As with so many commandments of the

Old Testament, circumcision was an outward sign of a greater inward reality. Paul used this term "sign" in referring to the circumcision of Abraham in Ro 4:11. The Jews of the first century had ignored the circumcision of the heart and had focused all their attention on the flesh (1Sa 16:7). Paul was clarifying that it is the condition of the heart--not the flesh--that makes someone a child of God.

ROMANS 2:29

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

Note 2 at Ro 2:29: This is a remarkable statement. Paul was saying that those who have been born again through faith in Jesus have been circumcised in their hearts (Col 2:11-12) and are the true Jews. They aren't Jews in nationality or religion, but they are the true people of God. Paul dealt with this in more detail in Ro 9 and clearly made a case that Gentiles who are united with Christ in the new birth are now God's people. Paul made the same point in Ga 3, saying that those who are saved through faith in Jesus are now Abraham's seed and heirs according to the promise (Ga 3:16, 22, and 26-29). This leaves no doubt that the church is now God's chosen people on earth.

This does not mean that God has forsaken the Jews. Paul dealt with that issue in Ro 9. There are still prophecies that apply to the physical nation of Israel, and they will be fulfilled. However, the New Testament church, composed of Jews and Gentiles, is now God's kingdom on earth.

Note 3 at Ro 2:29: Paul's statement here definitely places the spirit in the heart of man. This has led some to believe that the heart and spirit are the same. However, 1Pe 3:4 refers to the spirit of man as the hidden man of the heart, implying that the spirit comprises only a part of the heart. The heart of man is actually made up of two parts: The soul and the spirit. This is the reason the Scripture speaks of having two minds in our hearts (Jas 4:8) and why we must believe with all our hearts (Ac 8:37), not just a part (see note 3 at Mt 12:34).

Note 4 at Ro 2:29: The Greek word that is used here for "letter" is "GRAMMA" and literally means "a writing, i.e. a letter, note, epistle, book, etc." (Strong's Concordance). Paul was saying that circumcision is spiritual rather than natural. True circumcision is a born-again nature and not a mark in the flesh.

ROMANS CHAPTER 3

ROMANS 3:1

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

Note 1 at Ro 3:1: Paul had just proven that the Jews were as guilty as the pagans whom they disdained (see note 1 at Ro 2:1). This led to the question, "What advantage is there in being a Jew?" Paul gave the most important answer to that question in Ro 3:2 (see note 2 at that verse) and then addressed the issue more in Ro 9:4-5.

ROMANS 3:2

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

Note 2 at Ro 3:2: The main advantage that the Jews had over others was that God had committed His Word unto them. They not only had the intuitive knowledge of God (see note 2 at Ro

1:18), but they also had a written record of God's instructions that should have served as an added restraint from departing from God. They, however, had missed the true intent of God's Law and therefore were not taking advantage of the benefits God's Word afforded them.

Note 3 at Ro 3:2: The Greek word for "oracles" is "LOGION," and it means "an utterance (of God)" (Strong's Concordance). Therefore, this is speaking of the Word of God that was committed to the Jews. In the Old Testament, the word "oracle" was also used to designate the innermost part of the temple, since the Ark of the Covenant was kept there (1Ki 6:5, 16, 19-23, 31, 7:49, 8:6, 8; 2Ch 3:16, 4:20, 5:7, 9; and Ps 28:2).

The word "oracles" is used four times in the New Testament (Ac 7:38, this verse, Heb 5:12, and 1Pe 4:11). In each of these instances, the word is clearly referring to the Word of God.

ROMANS 3:3

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

Note 4 at Ro 3:3: Paul was using the phrase "the faith of God" in this verse interchangeably with the phrase "the oracles of God" in Ro 3:2. He was saying that the unbelief of the Jews did

not make the Word of God, or the promises of God, without effect. Therefore, the Word of God is the faith of God. No wonder faith comes by hearing God's Word: God's Word contains His faith.

Note 5 at Ro 3:3: Paul was asking the question, "If some of the Jews did not believe God's Word, does that make God's Word of no effect?" The answer to this question is a resounding "no" (Ro 3:4). However, Mr 7:13 says we make the Word of God of none effect through our traditions. What's the harmony between these two verses?

People can make God's Word of no effect in their personal lives. Heb 4:2 says God's Word will not profit people unless they mix it with faith. So the Word will not profit anyone who doesn't believe it, but God's Word itself doesn't lose any power. That is what Paul was stating here. The unbelief of the Jewish nation as a whole did not void the promises of God concerning salvation through a savior. The promises of salvation were of no effect to the individuals who rejected Jesus, but to those who will put their faith in Jesus as Messiah, the Word of God still has its power to save.

ROMANS 3:4

God forbid: yea, let God be true, but every man a liar; as it

is written, That thou mightest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou art judged.

Note 6 at Ro 3:4: This is the first of ten times that Paul used the expression "God forbid" in the book of Romans (this verse, 3:6, 31; 6:2, 15; 7:7, 13; 9:14; 11:1, and 11). He also used this expression four other times in his other epistles (1Co 6:15; Ga 2:17, 3:21, and 6:14).

The Greek words that are used here for "God forbid" are "ME GINOMAI" meaning "let it not be...God forbid...far be it" (Vine's Expository Dictionary) and express emphatic denial of the false conclusion that someone might draw from his teaching.

Note 7 at Ro 3:4: This phrase "let God be true, but every man a liar" is given in response to the question of Ro 3:3 (see note 5 at that verse). Paul was stating that God and His promises are always true even if people don't believe Him. However, other applications of this truth can benefit us greatly.

When anyone or anything contradicts a promise made to us in God's Word, we need to reckon God to be true and that person or thing to be lying. We need to believe that what God's Word says about our prosperity is true (2Co 8:9 and 3Jo 2), instead of what our checkbooks say. We need to believe that we were healed by His stripes (Isa 53:5, Mt 8:17, and 1Pe 2:24), instead of believing what the x-rays show. In every aspect of our lives, we need to believe God's Word above what we see or hear.

Note 8 at Ro 3:4: This is a quotation from David out of Ps 51:4 when he was repenting of his sin with Bathsheba and the murder of her husband. David was admitting his sinfulness and proclaiming God's complete justification in judging his sin in whatever way He saw fit. David's sin had not made God unholy; it made David unholy. In his sinfulness, David saw the holiness of God more clearly than ever.

This is what Paul was drawing from this Old Testament passage. He was saying that in a similar manner, God retained His holiness even when His people were unholy. It was the Jews, not God, who suffered from not believing God's Word.

ROMANS 3:5

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

Note 9 at Ro 3:5: Paul had just explained that the Jews' faithlessness did not make God unfaithful to His Word (see note 5 at Ro 3:3). Therefore, when you consider how unfaithful we have been to God, it makes God's mercy and faithfulness appear even greater. So this brings up new questions: If our unrighteousness reveals God's righteousness or causes it to be seen in an even greater way, then are we actually helping God? Would it be right

for God to judge us for something like that? Of course, Paul's answer to that is another "God forbid."

It is true that we would never have seen the love and goodness of God as clearly if we had not sinned, but that does not mean our sins were a good thing. This is one piece of information that the Lord never wanted us to know by experience. None of us will be able to tell God on the Day of Judgment that our sins just helped Him reveal how great His mercy was. The Lord will be totally just in bringing His judgment on all those who refuse His offer of mercy given through Jesus, His Son.

Note 10 at Ro 3:5: Paul was saying that the logic he had just been using was not from God but was carnal logic. He was not saying this as God's spokesman; he was expressing a thought held by opponents of the Gospel so that he could expose the error in it. Therefore, he gave a disclaimer in parentheses that this was not God's wisdom but man's.

ROMANS 3:6

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

Note 11 at Ro 3:6: Paul was saying that if this were true (Ro 3:5), God couldn't judge the world, and it is a well-established fact in Scripture that God will judge the world. Therefore, this

argument has to be rejected.

ROMANS 3:8

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

Note 12 at Ro 3:8: Paul preached the grace of God as no one else recorded in Scripture (see note 2 at Ac 15:1). This led many people to slander him and his teaching by accusing him of encouraging people to sin. This was totally untrue. The grace of God teaches us to deny ungodliness and worldly lust (Tit 2:11-12). Here Paul showed his total rejection of those allegations by saying that the damnation of those people was just. He also "raised the stakes" for anyone who wants to criticize those who proclaim the grace of God. According to Paul, they will be damned.

ROMANS 3:9

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

under sin;

Note 1 at Ro 3:9: In Ro 1:18-32, Paul proved that the Gentiles were guilty before God for their actions because of an intuitive knowledge of God (see note 2 at Ro 1:18). In Ro 2, Paul proved that the Jews were even worse off than the Gentiles because they had been given the Word of God and yet had not kept it (see note 1 at Ro 2:1).

Here in Ro 3, he brought all this together and concluded that every one (Jew or Gentile, religious or pagan, moral or immoral) is guilty before God. Paul cited many Old Testament scriptures to verify this claim and to show that this was not some new doctrine. Faith in the sacrificial death of a savior was God's plan of redemption all along.

Paul's arguments in Ro 3:9-18 provide the reason for salvation by grace through faith (Eph 2:8) and refute the doctrines of every other religion.

People are so destitute that they cannot save themselves; they have to have a savior. Therefore, all other religions are wrong, because they don't provide a savior. To some degree or another, the other religions of the world teach that the burden of salvation is upon people's own shoulders.

In contrast, Christianity has a Savior, and not just some man: God Himself provided salvation for mankind. Within the ranks of

those who claim Christianity, this is also the pivotal issue. Any deviation from trust in Jesus and His imputed righteousness, to reliance on our own holiness for right standing with God, is error.

Therefore, the truth expressed in these verses is critical to understanding God's plan of salvation. Since people could never "make up" for their sins, God did what people could not do; He paid the price Himself. No other method of payment is acceptable.

ROMANS 3:19

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

Note 2 at Ro 3:19: Paul had conclusively proven that both Jews and Gentiles were sinners (see note 1 at Ro 3:9) and therefore incapable of saving themselves through their own works of righteousness. They both needed a savior. Here Paul began to reveal that the means of that salvation is through faith in Jesus the Messiah and not through people's moral goodness.

Note 3 at Ro 3:19: This very clear statement by Paul comes as a complete shock to most Christians. Christianity as a whole has embraced the Old Testament Law, and most Christians have

never thought that the Law was not intended for them. However, Paul was saying that the Law was given to the Jews. The purpose of that Law was to produce guilt (see note 4 at this verse); therefore, those who deny their guilt before God can profit from its condemning effect (2Co 3:9 and 1Ti 1:9). But Christians who embrace the Old Testament Law (not everything that is in the Old Testament is Law) as God's gift to them have misunderstood its purpose.

That is not to say that we as Christians should reject the Old Testament as God's holy Word--God forbid. It certainly is God's Word and is, therefore, profitable for doctrine, reproof, etc. (2Ti 3:16). However, it needs to be interpreted in light of the New Covenant. Jesus didn't only set us free from the curse of the Law (Ga 3:13); He also set us free from the Law itself (Ro 4:16, 6:14-15, 7:4-6, 8:2; 2Co 3:7; Ga 2:19, 3:24-25, 4:21, 5:18; Eph 2:14-15; Col 2:14; 1Ti 1:9; Heb 7:18-19, 8:7-13, and 10:8-9). A desire to live under the commands of the Old Testament Law is a return to bondage and a misunderstanding of our New Covenant in Jesus (see note 2 at Lu 9:55, note 1 at Lu 16:16, and note 6 at Lu 19:8).

Note 4 at Ro 3:19: Here Paul began to make a series of radical statements. They were radical because the Jews of his day, just like many church people of our day, thought that the Law of God was given so that they could earn their salvation through keeping it. That wasn't its purpose. The Law was not given for the purpose of producing justification (Ro 3:20, 28, 4:13; Ga 2:16, 3:11, 5:4; and Tit 3:5).

The Law was given to kill (2Co 3:7) and condemn (2Co 3:9). The Law strengthened sin (1Co 15:56) and made sin come alive (Ro 7:9). The Law gave sin an occasion against us to deceive us and work all manner of lust in us (Ro 7:8 and 11). In short, the Law strengthened our enemy, sin, not us.

Why would God give us something that strengthened our enemy? It's because sin had already beaten us, and we didn't know it. Mankind was deceived into thinking that although we weren't perfect, surely our sins weren't that bad. We really were pretty good people, and the outcome would be "okay." The only thing wrong with that thinking is that God doesn't grade on a curve. It doesn't matter if we are better than someone else. All have sinned and come short of the glory of God (Ro 3:23), and the wages for sin (any sin) is death (Ro 6:23).

Jas 2:10 says, "For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all." If we commit any sin, we are guilty of them all. It's similar to breaking a window. It doesn't matter how big a hole is made in the window. If it's broken, the whole window has to be replaced. If we break even the slightest command, we are guilty of breaking them all.

So God had to break the deception that people had fallen into, of thinking they were surely good enough to be accepted by God. The way He did this was to give the Law. It made sin and its lust come alive in people. To those who would receive it, it became obvious that if this holy perfection of the Law was what

God demanded, people could not be saved by their own goodness.

That was the point that God wanted to make, and that was the point that Paul was making here. No one can be saved by keeping the Law, because all have sinned and come short of the Law's perfection (Ro 3:23).

Therefore, the Law stripped people of every excuse and made them guilty before God. The Law gave them knowledge of just how sinful they were and removed any deception of them ever being saved because they were such "nice guys" in comparison to others. As Paul said in Ga 3:23, "But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed." The Law took away every hope of salvation except faith in a savior. That was the purpose of the Law.

Romans 3:21

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

Note 1 at Ro 3:21: This was another one of Paul's radical statements (see note 4 at Ro 3:19) that was diametrically opposed to the Jewish thinking of his day. Mercy and grace were present in the Old Testament, but they were typified in the Old Testament

sacrifices that were incorporated in the Law. Therefore, the Jews had come to think that the only way God would grant any forgiveness was through them fulfilling the Law as much as possible and then offering the appropriate sacrifice prescribed in the Law for any sins. For Paul to say that a person could be righteous apart from the Law was unthinkable.

Paul didn't end there though; he went on to say that this method of receiving right standing with God was promised under the Old Testament Law and Prophets. This means Paul was not putting forth a new doctrine but expounding the true doctrine that the Old Testament Law and prophets had advocated all along. This left no doubt that the Jews' trust in the Old Testament Law for justification was never God's intent. They had misunderstood and misapplied the Law in this area.

Likewise today, many religious people misunderstand the true intent of the Old Testament Law (see notes 3 and 4 at Ro 3:19).

ROMANS 3:22

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

Note 2 at Ro 3:22: Paul made an even clearer presentation of

this truth in Ro 9:30-10:9. The Jews were seeking to produce their own righteousness according to their holy actions that conformed to the Law. Paul was speaking of a different type of righteousness--not a human righteousness that was flawed but the perfect righteousness of God Himself.

Through faith in Jesus, we can receive the very righteousness of God as a gift (2Co 5:21). God's righteousness is infinitely better in quality and quantity than man's puny righteousness (Isa 64:6). People can never be justified in the sight of God based on a righteousness that comes from their own acts of holiness. They must have God's righteousness, and that only comes through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior. Paul said in Php 3:9, "And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith." This is "the righteousness of God" that Paul was referring to here.

Note 3 at Ro 3:22: Notice that Paul did not say that this righteousness of God came by faith in Jesus Christ. No, it comes by the faith of Jesus Christ. There is a big difference.

Our faith does not produce our righteousness. Jesus obtained righteousness (the perfect righteousness of God) through His faith and offers it to everyone who will believe on Him as Lord. Therefore, our faith (which is also a gift from God, Eph 2:8) just receives what Jesus has already obtained for us through His faith. Jesus obtained our justification and righteousness through His faith (Ga 2:16).

Note 4 at Ro 3:22: The only difference between Jew and Gentile, or the moral and immoral, is in the sight of people. From God's point of view, there is no difference. All have sinned and come short of the glory of God (Ro 3:23 and Jas 2:10).

ROMANS 3:23

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

Note 5 at Ro 3:23: As explained in note 1 at Ro 3:9, this is one of the pivotal doctrines of Scripture. Jesus only came to save sinners (1Ti 1:15). Unless people acknowledge that they are sinners, they cannot be saved. Ro 4:5 says that God justifies the ungodly. Therefore, until people admit they are ungodly, they cannot be saved.

People have to be stripped of all other means of salvation (Joh 14:6) before they can receive Jesus as their Savior. That was the purpose of the Old Testament Law (see note 4 at Ro 3:19), and that was the argument Paul gave in Ro 1:21-23. Therefore, the truth of universal guilt before God that is expressed in this verse is true in all its applications.

However, in context, this verse is just a steppingstone to an even greater truth, expressed in Ro 3:24-26. Because the whole

world is guilty before God, He has provided one way of salvation for everyone. In the same way that everyone is guilty, so everyone has already been justified freely by God's grace.

That does not mean everyone is saved. All people have had the sacrificial offering of Jesus made for their sins by grace (1Ti 4:10 and 1Jo 2:2), but grace alone doesn't save. They have to put faith in what God has provided for them by grace (Eph 2:8). Therefore, although the price has been paid for the sins of the whole world, only those who receive it by faith will benefit from the salvation that Jesus offers.

Note 6 at Ro 3:23: The Greek word that was translated "glory" here is "DOXA," and according to Vine's Expository Dictionary, it means "the manifested perfection of His character, especially His righteousness, of which all men fall short." A simple way of saying this is that all people fall short of Jesus. Jesus is the glory of the Father (Joh 1:14, 2Co 4:6, Heb 1:3, and Re 21:23).

A common mistake that people make is comparing themselves with other people (2Co 10:12). Nearly everyone has heard, "If the hypocrites down there at church make it, then I'll make it." The only thing wrong with that thinking is that the hypocrites down there at church aren't God's "measuring stick." Everyone is going to be compared to Jesus, the glory of God, and therefore everyone will come up short. We all need a savior.

ROMANS 3:24

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

Note 7 at Ro 3:24: Justification is not something to be earned but a gift to be received. Seeking to earn salvation is the only sin that will prevent people from being saved, because they cannot submit themselves to the righteousness of God, which comes as a gift through faith, as long as they are seeking to establish their own righteousness (Ro 10:3).

Note 8 at Ro 3:24: Grace is God's ability given to us on an unearned, undeserved basis. However, this grace comes through the redemption that Jesus provided. Therefore, there can be no grace in our lives apart from faith in Jesus. Ro 5:2 says, "By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God."

ROMANS 3:25

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

Note 9 at Ro 3:25: This verse is speaking of the sins that were committed under the Old Covenant, before the sacrifice of Jesus was made. Those sins were also paid for by the blood of Jesus. The Old Testament sacrifices were only types and shadows of the true sin offering that Jesus made. It was impossible for the blood of bulls and of goats to ever take away sins (Heb 10:4).

The Lord dealt with sins under the Old Testament through His forbearance. In a similar way that a person gives a check or credit card in exchange for the real currency desired, so the Lord gave the Old Testament sacrifices. However, just as these substitutes would be unacceptable if there was no reality to back them up, so the Old Testament sacrifices only served as a token of the real sacrifice of Jesus that would pay for sin (Heb 9:13-14).

ROMANS 3:26

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

Note 10 at Ro 3:26: Here Paul restated this amazing fact that it is the righteousness of Jesus that has been given to us (see note 2 at Ro 3:22). We don't just have enough righteousness to let us slip into heaven; we have been given Jesus' righteousness. 1Co 1:30 says, "But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made

unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption." Jesus is our righteousness! 2Co 5:21 says, "For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."

ROMANS 3:27

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

Note 11 at Ro 3:27: Boasting, bragging, and pride about our holiness or spiritual accomplishments are sure signs that we don't understand justification by grace through faith like Paul was teaching it here. If we acknowledge that we are no better than anyone else regardless of our conduct and that the only way we obtained peace with God was through putting faith in what Jesus did for us, then there is no room for boasting about our achievements. It was the accomplishments of Jesus that saved us.

Pride is the root of all divisions in the church today (see note 11 at Ac 20:30). Therefore, the prevalence of division in the church is a painful testimony to the lack of this foundational truth of justification by grace through faith.

Note 12 at Ro 3:27: Notice that Paul referred to the law of faith. Faith is governed by law, just as gravity or electricity is. If

we would view faith as a law, rather than as something that sometimes works and other times doesn't, we would begin to get very different results.

The law of electricity has been here on earth since creation. Man has observed it in such things as lightning and static electricity, but it was not until someone believed that there were laws that governed the activity of electricity that progress began to be made in putting it to use. Likewise, none deny the existence of faith, but it is only when people begin to understand that there are laws that govern faith and then begin to learn what those laws are that faith begins to work for them.

ROMANS 3:30

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

Note 13 at Ro 3:30: There is no reason to believe that Paul was making any distinction between the way the Jews and the Gentiles are justified by his use of the words "by" and "through." The same end (justification) is achieved, and faith is the way for both Jew and Gentile to receive it.

ROMANS 3:31

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

Note 14 at Ro 3:31: Paul had just systematically taken away the Jews' trust in the Law for the purpose of justification. This led to the question, "Is the Law useless?" Paul emphatically answered, "God forbid."

The real purpose of the Law was established by the Gospel (see note 5 at Ac 20:24). The problem with the Jews was that they were using the Law for something that God never intended. The Law was useless to produce justification. God didn't give the Law so that they could keep it and thereby earn justification. The Law was given to reveal to them that they could never live up to such a holy standard and thereby drive them to God to call out for mercy (Ga 3:22-24).

The true purpose of the Law is still functional today (see note 4 at Ro 3:19). As 1Ti 1:8-9 say, "But we know that the law is good, if a man use it lawfully; Knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man." The Law is God's way of revealing to people their need. It is powerless to make provision for that need. It's the Gospel that provides the power to produce salvation (see note 1 at Ro 1:16).

In Ro 4, Paul went on to use two great men of the Old

Testament (Abraham and David) as examples of how justification came through faith, not through the Law.

ROMANS CHAPTER 4

ROMANS 4:1

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

Note 1 at Ro 4:1: The question is, "What good, then, were Abraham's works?" Paul answered this indirectly. He stated what Abraham's works were not good for. They were not good enough to grant him justification in the sight of God; that came by faith. He showed that Abraham's works, or efforts, didn't earn him anything from God. Abraham was justified by faith for over thirteen years (see note 3 at Ro 4:10) before he performed the act of circumcision that the Jews were insisting was necessary for right standing with God (Ro 4:10-11).

ROMANS 4:2

For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath [whereof] to glory; but not before God.

Note 2 at Ro 4:2: Our own good works will only allow us to

boast if we're comparing ourselves with other people (2Co 10:12). However, in the sight of God, not one of us has anything to brag about. We have all come short of the glory of God (see notes 5 and 6 at Ro 3:23).

ROMANS 4:3

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

Note 3 at Ro 4:3: Paul was showing an inspired revelation of the Old Testament scriptures. All devout Jews knew the story of Abraham, but they had missed this simple truth that Paul brought out. In Ge 15:6, the Scriptures clearly say that Abraham believed God and God counted Abraham's faith for righteousness. It can't get any clearer than that. Later in this same chapter, Paul referred to the interval of time (over thirteen years) between when the Scriptures state Abraham was counted righteous and the time when he was circumcised, as further proof that Abraham's righteousness was given to him before he performed the righteous acts of the Law (see note 3 at Ro 4:10).

Note 4 at Ro 4:3: Paul had just made a series of radical statements (see note 4 at Ro 3:19 and note 1 at Ro 3:21) that were hard for these Jews to swallow. Here he went back to Old Testament scripture and the founder of the Jewish nation to prove his assertions. He skillfully used the very scriptures they had

misunderstood to verify his Gospel of grace. He also quoted David to draw on two of the most revered men of the Old Testament as examples of salvation by grace through faith.

Note 5 at Ro 4:3: Heb 11:6 says, "But without faith it is impossible to please him." It was Abraham's faith that pleased God. The Lord promised Abraham that his seed would be as numerous as the stars in the sky and the sand on the seashore, and Abraham believed God. That pleased God so much that He counted Abraham righteous right then, even though Abraham had not yet fulfilled the rite of circumcision and was not living such a holy life.

According to Le 18:9, it was an abomination (Le 18:26) for a man to marry a half sister. Sarah, Abraham's wife, was his half sister (Ge 20:12). Therefore, Abraham's marriage to Sarah was not what pleased God. Abraham had already lied about Sarah being his wife so that he could save his own neck. He was willing to let a man commit adultery with his wife with no objections from him. Immediately after this instance where the Lord counted Abraham's faith for righteousness (Ge 15:6), Abraham tried to accomplish God's will in the flesh with Hagar (Ge 16) and then repeated this terrible sin with Sarah again (Ge 20).

Anyone who really looked at the life of Abraham and the favor that he found with God would have to conclude that it was Abraham's faith that pleased God. It's the same with any of us. The only thing that we can do to please God is put faith in Jesus as our Savior.

Note 6 at Ro 4:3: The Greek word that was translated "counted" in this verse is "LOGIZOMAI," and it means "to take an inventory, i.e. estimate" (Strong's Concordance). It is an accounting term that means "to enter in the account book" ("Linguistic Key to the Greek New Testament" by Fritz Rienecker). This same word is used eleven times in this chapter. It was translated "counted" twice (Ro 4:3 and 5), "impute" once (Ro 4:8), "imputed" four times (Ro 4:11 and 22-24), "imputeth" once (Ro 4:6), and "reckoned" three times (Ro 4:4 and 9-10). By comparing the different ways this same Greek word was translated into English, it becomes very easy to discern an accurate meaning for it.

ROMANS 4:4

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

Note 7 at Ro 4:4: Paul was saying that if an individual could be saved by works, then God would be providing salvation as a payment to that person, and of course, that doesn't make sense. God is not under obligation or debt to save anyone. Trust in our own works voids grace, and likewise, trust in God's grace makes faith in our own efforts useless. This was repeated by Paul again in Ro 11:6--"And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it

no more grace: otherwise work is no more work."

ROMANS 4:5

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

Note 8 at Ro 4:5: What a statement! Paul had countered the false doctrine that acting righteous could make people righteous. Here he dropped the bomb that God justifies the ungodly! We might add from the context that this is the only kind of people whom He justifies. That's because He doesn't have any other kind of people to justify. All people have sinned and come short of the glory of God (see notes 5 and 6 at Ro 3:23). This verse should forever dispel any delusions that people might have of trying to earn God's favor by their performances.

Note 9 at Ro 4:5: Faith in the atonement of Jesus grants us righteousness; our actions don't. However, true faith will produce actions (Jas 2:17-18), and these actions, or lack thereof, can be used by others to determine where we stand with the Lord (1Jo 3:7-10). Although our actions are indications of our inner faith, they can be misinterpreted, and therefore any judgments made based on actions need to be for the purpose of discernment only and not condemnation (see note 46 at Mt 7:1).

ROMANS 4:6

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

Note 10 at Ro 4:6: King David (see note 8 at Ac 13:22) was living under the Old Covenant of Law (see note 3 at Ro 3:19). However, this scripture that Paul quoted (Ro 4:7-8) from Ps 32, as well as the things David wrote in Ps 51 when repenting for his sins against Uriah and Bathsheba, shows that he had a tremendous revelation of the salvation by grace through faith that was coming with the Messiah.

ROMANS 4:8

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

Note 11 at Ro 4:8: The Greek words that are translated "will not" in this verse are what is called "a double negative, strongly expressing a negation" (Vine's Expository Dictionary). This is the strongest language possible stating that those who receive forgiveness will not ever have their sins held against them. He didn't just say "did not" or "does not" but "will not," implying that

even future-tense sins have been dealt with through the sacrificial offering of Jesus, once for all (Heb 10:10 and 14).

Most Christians have the concept that the sins they committed before they professed faith in Christ were forgiven at salvation, but any sins that are committed after that time are not forgiven until they are repented of and forgiveness is asked. That is not the case.

All our sins--past, present, and future--were forgiven through the one offering of Jesus. If God can't forgive future-tense sins, then none of us can be saved, because Jesus only died once, nearly 2,000 years ago, before we had committed any sins. All our sins have been forgiven.

Why, then, 1Jo 1:9? "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." This is not speaking of the eternal salvation of our spirits but rather the salvation of our souls (Jas 1:21 and 1Pe 1:9). It's our spirits that become born again at salvation, and sin will never be imputed to our born-again spirits. They have been sanctified and perfected forever (Heb 10:10, 14; and 12:23) and cannot sin (1Jo 3:9).

However, we are still in the process of saving our souls (Jas 1:21 and 1Pe 1:9). When we sin, the devil has a legal right to bring his forms of death into our soulish area (Ro 6:16). How do we get the devil out once he has gotten in? We confess it, and God brings out into the soulish realm that forgiveness that is

already a reality in our born-again spirits, and the devil has no right to stay.

If we had to confess every sin committed after our born-again experience in order to maintain our salvation, no one would ever make it. What if we forgot to confess some sin? That puts the burden of salvation back on us.

We must remember that "God is a Spirit" (Joh 4:24), and we must worship Him through our new born-again spirits. Therefore, we truly are blessed because God will not hold any sin against our spirits. Our spirits are clean and pure (Eph 4:24, Heb 12:23, and 1Jo 4:17) and will not change due to our performance.

ROMANS 4:9

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

Note 1 at Ro 4:9: Paul had previously shown in this chapter that Abraham's faith was what granted him right standing with God (see notes 3 and 5 at Ro 4:3), and he used a quote from David to verify salvation by grace through faith (see note 10 at Ro 4:6). Here he returned to the story of Abraham and used the

very religious act that the legalists were demanding compliance with (i.e., circumcision) to further certify that salvation is by grace through faith.

ROMANS 4:10

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

Note 2 at Ro 4:10: The time between when God counted Abraham's faith for righteousness and when Abraham was circumcised was over thirteen years. This can be deduced in the following way: The instance when God counted Abraham righteous took place in Ge 15:6, before the birth of Ishmael (Ge 16:15). Abraham circumcised Ishmael the same day that he was circumcised (Ge 17:26), and Ge 17:25 says that took place when Ishmael was thirteen years old. Therefore, the circumcision of Abraham was at least thirteen years and nine months after his justification by faith in Ge 15:6.

Note 3 at Ro 4:10: This truth is so simple and obvious that it is amazing that the legalistic Jews had missed it. Paul explained that God said Abraham was righteous (Ge 15:6) over thirteen years (see note 2 at this verse) before he performed the rite of circumcision (see note 2 at Ac 15:1). Now if circumcision was

necessary for justification with God, as some Jews were advocating, then Abraham could not have been righteous until after the performing of this act. But God Himself said Abraham was righteous. Therefore, the rite of circumcision (or any other act of obedience) cannot be a prerequisite for justification.

In our day, religious people no longer contend that circumcision is essential for salvation; Paul conclusively disproved that. However, many people are still making the same mistake. They have just substituted some other act of holiness for circumcision. They may have changed cars, but they are headed down the same road to the same destination.

For instance, entire denominations are built around the doctrine that water baptism is essential for salvation. There is no disputing that water baptism is a command of Jesus' (Mt 28:19-20), just as circumcision was a command under the Old Testament (Ge 17:9-14). However, the same logic that Paul used here to disprove circumcision as a prerequisite to justification can be used to prove that water baptism is not required before a person can be saved (example - Cornelius; see note 9 at Mr 16:16, note 4 at Joh 3:5, and note 1 at Ac 10:44).

Any condition that must be met for salvation, except faith in what Jesus did for us, is error (Ro 3:28). This is what Paul called "another gospel" or, more accurately, a perversion of the Gospel (Ga 1:6-7).

ROMANS 4:11

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

Note 4 at Ro 4:11: The rite of circumcision was a confirmation of the righteousness that Abraham had already attained by faith. It was meant to be a constant reminder to him of the covenant between God and himself. It was never intended to be something that Abraham would boast about or use to show others his holiness. This was private!

No doubt one of the reasons the Lord chose this act as a sign of the covenant instead of some other act was to prevent the very thing that the Jews were doing. How was one to tell if someone else was circumcised? That's not the kind of thing that is public knowledge. It's between God and that individual. God gave the sign of circumcision because it is a very private act; therefore, He never intended circumcision to be used to judge the righteousness of anyone.

Romans 4:12

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

Note 5 at Ro 4:12: Note that Abraham had faith before he had the action of circumcision. Many people have mistakenly thought that actions produce faith, but that's not so (see note 21 at Mt 23:26 and note 2 at Lu 11:42). Faith produces actions (see note 55 at Mt 7:21 and note 26 at Mt 25:40). Acting right doesn't make people right; they have to be born again (see note 2 at Joh 3:3).

ROMANS 4:13

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

Note 1 at Ro 4:13: There is no Old Testament scripture that states in these words that Abraham would be heir of the world. The closest scriptures would be when the Lord told Abram that all the families of the earth would be blessed through him (Ge 12:3) and that he had made Abraham the father of many nations (Ge 17:4-5).

The Jews had interpreted God's promises to Abraham as being to his physical descendants only. However, the Apostle Paul's wording of the Old Testament promises to Abraham removed any doubt about the Jews being the only ones to be blessed through God's covenant with Abraham. Abraham's true seed is anyone of any nation or language who places faith in Christ as his or her Savior.

ROMANS 4:14

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

Note 2 at Ro 4:14: We are either justified by faith in our works without faith in Christ or we are justified by faith in Christ without faith in our works, but not a combination of the two (Ro 11:6). Trusting in our own goodness as the reason that God would grant us salvation neutralizes faith and renders God's promise to Abraham useless.

There are Christians who have put their faith in Christ for their eternal salvation, but then they fall back into the deception that God is going to bless them and use them based on their performance. This is what happened to the Galatians. Paul told them that Christ had become of no benefit to them if they were

trusting in what they did in order to be justified with God (Ga 5:4). Likewise today, many Christians do not experience the full effect of their salvation because they are making faith void by trusting in their own goodness.

ROMANS 4:15

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

Note 3 at Ro 4:15: The Law of God released the wrath of God (see note 4 at Joh 3:36). Without the Law, there was no wrath because without the Law, there was no transgression. 1Jo 3:4 says, "Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law." Therefore, before the Law of God was given, people's sins were not being held against them (see note 2 at Ro 5:13).

This was why Abraham was not killed for marrying his half sister (see note 5 at Ro 4:3) and Jacob for marrying his wife's sister (Le 18:18). God had not given the Law concerning these things yet, and therefore there was no willful transgression on the part of these men. So when the Law of God was introduced, sin revived and we died (see notes 3 and 4 at Ro 7:9). The Law produced death by releasing God's wrath against our sins (see note 4 at Ro 3:19).

Those who seek to keep the Law of God for the purpose of being justified in God's sight will also release the wrath of God in their lives. Praise God for Jesus who brought us out from under the Law and put us under grace (Ro 6:14).

ROMANS 4:16

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

Note 4 at Ro 4:16: Paul made it very clear here that the seed of Abraham included more than his physical descendants. Jesus taught on this (see note 10 at Joh 8:33, note 14 at Joh 8:37, and note 16 at Joh 8:41), and Paul mentioned this a number of times (Ro 2:28-29, 4:11-12, 16, 9; and Ga 3).

Note 5 at Ro 4:16: Since God made salvation available on the basis of faith in what He did, then everyone can be saved. If He had made our holiness the basis of salvation, then no one could have been saved, "for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Ro 3:23, see note 6 at that verse).

ROMANS 4:17

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

Note 6 at Ro 4:17: The phrase, "and calleth those things which be not as though they were," is referring to the instance Paul had just cited when God changed Abram's name to Abraham (Ge 17:5). According to Strong's Concordance, the name Abram means "high father," and the name Abraham means "father of a multitude." The Lord changed Abram's name to Abraham one year before the birth of Isaac, thus confessing that Abraham was the father of a multitude before it happened in the physical.

This illustrates God's faith. God says things are so before there is physical proof that they are so. The same thing was done at creation (Ge 1). God spoke everything into existence, and then it was so. He spoke light into existence and then four days later created a source for that light to come from (Ge 1:3 and 14-19).

God has given us the power to create with faith-filled words (Pr 18:20-21, see note 4 at Mr 11:14 and note 4 at Mr 11:23). If we are going to operate in God's kind of faith, we have to learn to call those things that are not as though they were.

ROMANS 4:18

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

Note 7 at Ro 4:18: There was no hope in the natural for Abraham or his wife, Sarah. They were both as good as dead when it came to having children at their age. Therefore, they rejected the natural and believed God with a supernatural hope. There is a natural hope that everyone has, and there is a supernatural hope that is imparted by God (1Co 13:13). To receive miracles, we have to reject the limitations of natural hope and press on to obtain God's supernatural hope through faith.

Note 8 at Ro 4:18: Abraham's faith was based on God's Word. Every word of God is powerful and contains the faith of God to bring that word to pass (see note 4 at Mt 14:29). If we will only consider God's Word, then we will only believe (Ro 8:6, see note 9 at Ro 4:19).

ROMANS 4:19

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

Note 9 at Ro 4:19: This verse is telling us how Abraham kept from being weak in faith. The key is what he focused his attention on.

Some translations and many commentators turn this verse around to say the opposite of what the King James Version says. For instance, the New International Version says, "Without weakening in his faith, he faced the fact that his body was as good as dead." However, that type of reasoning is missing one of the great scriptural keys to strong faith.

The word "consider" is defined as "1. To think carefully about. 2. To regard as. 3. To take into account" (American Heritage Dictionary). The Greek word that was used here for "considered" is "KATANOEEO," and it simply means "to observe fully" (Strong's Concordance).

Therefore, we can see that Abraham did not think carefully about his age and Sarah's and the impact that would have on the promise God had given him. He did not take those things into account or make any allowance for them. That was not what he paid attention to.

That is amazing, and that is exactly the reason many of us would not be able to receive the same miracle. We consider every negative thing that looks contrary to God's promises, and then we try to use our faith to overcome the fear and unbelief that come through those thoughts (see note 3 at Mt 17:20). That's not the way Abraham was strong in faith.

Abram was seventy-five years old when the Lord first promised him that he would have a child and that all the nations of the earth would be blessed through him (Ge 12:1-4). He was ninety-nine years old in this instance that Paul cited (Ge 17:1), and Sarah was ninety years old (Ge 17:17). Yet he didn't even take into account the impossibility of what God had promised him.

It is true that Abraham was strong in faith (Ro 4:20), but the thing that made him strong in faith was the fact that he kept his mind stayed on God's promise. Equally important was that he kept his mind off anything that would have been contrary to God's promise. Many people desire the same strong faith that Abraham had, but very few desire to control their thinking the way Abraham did.

Faith is a direct result of what you think on. If you think on God's Word, faith comes (Ro 8:6 and 10:17). If you think on other things, unbelief and fear come (Ro 8:6, see note 39 at Mt 6:22 and notes 40 and 41 at Mt 6:23). If you want the faith of Abraham working in you, then think the way he thought and never consider anything except God's Word, and you will be

strong in faith.

ROMANS 4:20

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

Note 10 at Ro 4:20: From the context of this statement, we can see that the unbelief that Abraham refused to consider was the unbelief that would have come through thinking on the natural facts (see note 9 at Ro 4:19). Many of us don't perceive facts as generating unbelief. We have been led to believe that we have to consider all the facts to make a proper decision, but that's not so with God's Word.

When we have clear direction from God's Word, we shouldn't consider anything else. Considering "facts" contrary to God's promises will make us stagger in our faith.

Note 11 at Ro 4:20: Jesus had equated praise with strength (see note 3 at Mt 21:16). Here we see that this was one thing that made Abraham strong in faith. Praise keeps your mind stayed on God and what He is doing. You cannot praise God and keep your mind on the problem. You will fall into complaining every time. This is why praise makes you strong in faith (see note 9 at Ro 4:19).

Note 12 at Ro 4:20: A person who believes the promises of God brings glory to God. Conversely, a person who disbelieves the promises of God dishonors God.

ROMANS 4:21

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

Note 13 at Ro 4:21: Notice that Abraham wasn't just persuaded; he was fully persuaded. Many people have been persuaded that the promises of God are true, but they stop short of meditating on God's Word until they become fully persuaded. Strong faith belongs to those who continue in God's Word until all doubt is removed.

Note 14 at Ro 4:21: This is so obvious that it should go without saying, but the truth is, we really do doubt that God can perform His promises to us. How could this be? The answer lies in the way God made our hearts.

Whatever we focus our attention on is what our hearts will believe, and whatever we neglect is what our hearts will disbelieve (see note 10 at Mr 6:52). If we allow ourselves to meditate on our problems and all the reasons it looks impossible

for God to move in our situations, then we will believe that our problems are bigger than God. However, when we keep our minds stayed on the promises of God, nothing is too difficult for Him (Jer 32:17 and 27).

ROMANS 4:23

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

Note 15 at Ro 4:23: Here in Ro 4:23-24, Paul applied to us all these truths he had discussed about Abraham. God is no respecter of persons (Ro 2:11). If He justified Abraham by faith, He will do the same for us.

ROMANS CHAPTER 5

ROMANS 5:1

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

Note 1 at Ro 5:1: The word "therefore" means "for that reason; consequently" (American Heritage Dictionary). Paul had just proven through the life of Abraham that justification came by faith. He then made the statement that these truths about Abraham were not written in Scripture for his sake alone but so that we could also be justified by faith (Ro 4:23-24). So, having established justification by faith, here he moved on to some of the benefits of being justified by faith instead of works.

Note 2 at Ro 5:1: The first benefit of being justified by faith, instead of works, that Paul mentioned is peace. Peace can only come when we relate to God on the basis of faith in what He did for us instead of what we do for Him. Those of us who are thinking that we must perform up to some standard to be accepted by God will have no peace. That puts the burden of salvation on our shoulders, and we can't bear that load.

We were incapable of living holy enough to please God before we were saved, and we are incapable of living holy enough to please God now that we are saved (Heb 11:6). We were saved by faith, and we have to continue to walk with God by faith (Col 2:6). Not understanding this has caused many Christians who love God not to enjoy the peace that was provided for them through faith in Jesus. This is the Gospel of peace (Lu 2:14, Ro 10:15, and Eph 6:15).

ROMANS 5:2

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

Note 3 at Ro 5:2: The Greek word that was translated "access" here is "PROSAGOGÉ," and it literally means "admission" (Strong's Concordance). It was only used three times in the New Testament, and it was translated "access" each time (this verse; Eph 2:18, and 3:12). Faith is our admission, or ticket, into the grace of God. No one is allowed in without a ticket. Our own good works won't grant us admission. God's grace can only be accessed by faith.

Note 4 at Ro 5:2: The Greek word that was translated "rejoice" here is the same word that was translated "glory" in Ro 5:3 and "joy" in 5:11. That Greek word is "KAUCHAOMAI,"

and it means "to vaunt (in a good or a bad sense)" (Strong's Concordance). It is derived from an obsolete root word, "AUCHEO," meaning "to boast" (Strong's Concordance). Paul was rejoicing because of the grace that had been given him and the hope of being glorified with Jesus.

Anybody could rejoice because of those good things, but Paul went on to say that he had the same rejoicing even in the midst of tribulation. Not many people rejoice during the hard times. But Paul could make this boast because he was totally convinced of the faithfulness and unconditional grace of God. Those who can't rejoice during tribulation are not convinced.

Note 5 at Ro 5:2: Rejoicing and hope are very closely related. We cannot rejoice in trying times if we have no hope. Therefore, hope is very important in the Christian life (see note 12 at Ro 5:4).

Note 6 at Ro 5:2: The hope that Paul was rejoicing in here was probably what he called the "blessed hope" in Tit 2:13. In that instance, Paul was clearly referring to the Second Coming of Jesus. Therefore, what Paul was probably speaking of here was the return of Jesus and becoming like Him (1Jo 3:1-2).

ROMANS 5:3

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

Note 7 at Ro 5:3: Paul had just expressed the joy that he had concerning the Second Coming of Jesus and the glory that would be revealed in us (Ro 8:18, see note 6 at Ro 5:2). Anybody can rejoice about heaven, but here Paul began to say that he had that same rejoicing in the midst of tribulation. This is something that very few people can say, and Paul was presenting this as a direct result of justification by faith.

When we believe that God loves us because of our faith in Him, and not because of our performance for Him, then we rejoice--not only in the good times and pleasant things, like thoughts of heaven, but also in the hard times. Our faith remains steadfast. However, those who trust in their own efforts will be devastated in times of trouble because they will know they are getting what they deserve, and they will feel that they have to clean up their act before they can expect any help. Their attention will be on self instead of Jesus, the Author and Finisher of their faith (Heb 12:2).

Paul continued this same thought on through Ro 5:10. In 5:6-8, he illustrated how great the love of God was for us in that He died for us when we were ungodly. Then he drew a conclusion by way of comparison: if God loved us when we were His

enemies, then how much more does He love us now that we are His children? That's the reason Paul could rejoice even in tribulation. If God could work in his life to bring him to justification while he was a sinner, then how much more, now that he was reconciled to God, will God work whatever comes against him for his good!

Note 8 at Ro 5:3: People have taken these scriptures to say that God is the one who brings tribulations to accomplish these positive results in our lives. That is not what these scriptures say.

Tribulations exist, not because God creates them, but because there is a battle between the kingdom of God and the kingdom of the devil. And when we operate in faith, God can grant us such victory that we are actually better off because of the battle (see note 9 at this verse).

It's just like when an army goes to war. If they win, there are spoils to be gained. But if those soldiers embraced their enemy because of the spoil they were expecting to receive, they would be killed instead of blessed. First, they have to fight and win the war. Then, and only then, will the spoils be available. The enemy doesn't come to be a blessing, but a blessing can be obtained from the enemy if their opponents are victorious.

Likewise, tribulations and adversities are not blessings from God (see note 2 at Joh 9:2); they are attacks from the enemy intended to steal away the Word of God from our lives (see note 5 at Mr 4:16). No one should say that the temptation came from

God, for God is not the one who tempts anyone (Jas 1:13). However, there are spoils to be gained when we fight and win over our problems.

If problems were what perfected us, then most Christians would have been perfected long ago and those who experience the greatest problems would be the greatest Christians, but that's not the way it is. God's Word is given to make us perfect and thoroughly furnished unto every good work (2Ti 3:17). God's Word does not need to be supplemented with problems to accomplish its work.

This is a pivotal point. Those who believe God has ordained the problems in their lives to work some redemptive virtue will submit to those problems and therefore to Satan, the author of those problems (see note 3 at Lu 13:16). They have to or else, in their way of thinking, they would be rebelling against God. Yet Jas 4:7 tells us to submit ourselves to God and resist the devil. If Satan can reverse our thinking on this issue and get us to submit to the problems he brings into our lives, he's got us (Ro 6:16).

Paul was simply rejoicing that even in tribulation, he had the opportunity to use, and therefore strengthen, his patience that had already been given him as a fruit of the Spirit (Ga 5:22-23) and through the Word of God (Ro 15:4). And as he believed that, as he stood in patience, he would gain experience that would cause him to hope even more the next time the devil attacked.

Likewise, we can rejoice in tribulation, knowing that

regardless of what the devil does, we will win and reap the spoils of victory.

Note 9 at Ro 5:3: The word "worketh" was translated from the Greek word "KATERGAZOMAI," and that Greek word means "to work fully, i.e. accomplish; by implication, to finish, fashion" (Strong's Concordance). Paul was not saying that tribulations produced patience. Patience comes from the Scriptures (Ro 15:4). But tribulations cause us to use what God has already given us through His Word, and we therefore become stronger as a result (see note 8 at this verse).

Note 10 at Ro 5:3: According to the American Heritage Dictionary, "patience" means "the capacity, quality, or fact of being patient." One definition of "patient" is "persevering; constant" (AHD). The Greek word used for "patience" here is "HUPOMONE," and it means "cheerful (or hopeful) endurance, constancy" (Strong's Concordance). Patience is not a passive word, as many people use it, but it is an active word.

Patience is actually faith--faith that is sustained over a long period of time. Patience comes from the Scriptures (Ro 15:4), just as faith does (Ro 10:17). Patience is a fruit of the Spirit, just like faith (Ga 5:22-23). It was by faith that Moses endured (the definition of patience, Heb 11:27). It was through faith and patience that Abraham received the promises (Heb 6:12-15), and not just faith, but a faith that was constant over a twenty-five-year period of time.

Therefore, patience is not just passively waiting on God to do something, but it is actively believing for the manifestation of God's promise against all odds, regardless of how long it takes. That kind of faith will make you perfect and complete, not wanting for any good thing (Jas 1:4).

Patience is a byproduct of hope. Ro 8:25 says, "But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it." When people have hope firmly established in them, then no obstacle or length of time can keep them from enduring. That's why the Scriptures produce patience, because they give people hope (Ro 15:4).

Therefore, patience, hope, and faith are all intertwined. People can't have one without the others. Those who say they are patiently waiting on God yet have lost their hope are deceived. Likewise, those who don't believe God are not operating in patience. First comes hope from a promise of God's Word. Then faith begins to give substance and evidence to those things that were hoped for (Heb 11:1). And if time is involved before the manifestation comes, then patience does its work (Jas 1:4).

ROMANS 5:4

And patience, experience; and experience, hope:

Note 11 at Ro 5:4: The Greek word used for "experience" here is "DOKIME," and it means "approved character; the quality of being approved as a result of test and trials" ("Linguistic Key to the Greek New Testament" by Fritz Rienecker). Sanday and Headlam also defined this word in this verse as "the temper of the veteran as opposed to that of the raw recruit." Therefore, this verse is speaking of the character that is produced as a result of having fought battles and won.

Note 12 at Ro 5:4: Hope by itself will never give people victory. Many people have hoped for things and yet have never realized those hopes because they never moved into faith. Faith is the victory that causes people to overcome the world (1Jo 5:4), yet faith won't work without hope.

Just as a thermostat activates the power unit on an air conditioner, so hope is what activates our faith. Faith only produces what we hope for (Heb 11:1). Therefore, hope is the first step toward faith.

The word "hope" means "a desire accompanied by confident expectation" (American Heritage Dictionary), so desiring the things of God with some expectation of obtaining them is the first step in walking in faith. Once this hope is present, then faith begins to bring the desired thing into manifestation. If a delay is encountered, patience completes the work (see note 10 at Ro 5:3).

In context, Paul was saying that our experience "worketh" (see note 9 at Ro 5:3) hope. However, he also said in this same

epistle (Ro 15:4) that hope comes through the Scriptures. Therefore, it is to be understood that the character that is developed through tribulations just adds to the hope that we have already received through God's Word.

ROMANS 5:6

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

Note 13 at Ro 5:6: Notice the terms that Paul used to describe us before the transformation of the new birth. We were weak (this verse), ungodly (this verse), sinners (Ro 5:8), and enemies (Ro 5:10). The Lord didn't save us because we deserved it; it was an act of grace.

As great as this truth is, Paul didn't stop here. He continued on to make a comparison that if God loved us enough to die for us when we were weak, ungodly, sinners, and enemies, then much more now that we are justified (Ro 5:9) and reconciled (Ro 5:10), He is willing to save us in spite of our actions.

ROMANS 5:7

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

Note 14 at Ro 5:7: Paul was attempting to explain the great love of God shown to us through grace. To illustrate it, he drew on the greatest expression of love known to man: laying down your life for another (Joh 15:13). However, Paul took it a step further.

It is possible to imagine people giving up their lives for others. That has happened many times. But it is inconceivable that they would sacrifice their lives for their enemies. Yet that was exactly what God did (Ro 5:10). Since this is so, how could we ever doubt God's goodness to us now? On our worst days as Christians, we love God infinitely more than our best days as unbelievers.

ROMANS 5:8

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

Note 15 at Ro 5:8: This verse is commonly quoted to illustrate the unconditional love that God has toward sinners.

While that is certainly true and this verse does clearly teach that, this is not the point that Paul was making. In context, Paul was talking to Christians about the grace of God. He was making a comparison, and Ro 5:9-10 are the point of his comparison. He was using this truth here about God commending His love toward us while we were still sinners as a step to another truth.

Not viewing this verse in context has caused many people to accept salvation by grace but then come back under the deception that they have to live good enough for God to use them as Christians. While realizing one truth, they completely missed the whole point of what Paul was saying. These verses, taken in context, conclusively prove that we begin and continue our walk with God through faith in His grace (Col 2:6).

ROMANS 5:9

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

Note 16 at Ro 5:9: The phrase "much more" that is used in Ro 5:9-10 is amazing. It would have been wonderful to think that after salvation, God continued to love us with the same love that was manifested toward us through the death of His Son. But Paul was saying that once we are justified by grace through faith, God loves us much more. Being loved the same would be great, more

would have been awesome, but much more is beyond our ability to comprehend.

Many Christians accept the love of God for the sinners. They extend love toward the drunks or adulterers as long as they are lost, but if the drunks or adulterers receive the forgiveness of God and ever commit one of those sins again, they show no mercy. They actually believe that God loves us much less now that we are saved. We got by with things before we were saved, but now we have to be holy or else.

These verses clearly teach that is not the truth. God loves us much more now than He did before our salvation. And before our salvation, He loved us so much that He died for us. He loves us even more now.

Does this mean that living a holy life is not necessary? It means that our own holiness is not a requirement. We are acceptable to God by grace through faith. But those of us who are truly born again have had a change of heart. We want to live holy (1Jo 3:3). However, we all fail to be as holy as we want to be. When we fail, this knowledge that God loves us more now than when He sent His Son to die for us will keep us from being condemned and draw us back to serving God.

ROMANS 5:12

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

Note 1 at Ro 5:12: Paul had already made a strong case for salvation by grace through faith. He used a comparison that illustrated just how great God's grace is (see note 14 at Ro 5:7). Here he used another comparison to make this same point. He began making this point in this verse but inserted a parenthetical phrase in Ro 5:13-17. Therefore, to get the complete thought Paul was expressing, it helps to skip from Ro 5:12 to 5:18.

He was saying that in the same way that we inherited the sin nature independently of our actions, we also inherit God's righteous nature, not based on our actions, but through the new birth. The reasoning is that if we became sinners through what one man did, then we can also become righteous through one man, the Lord Jesus Christ.

ROMANS 5:13

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

Note 2 at Ro 5:13: Ro 5:13-17 is a parenthetical phrase. In

Ro 5:12, Paul began likening imputed righteousness to imputed sin. He interrupted that thought to briefly explain how God dealt with man's sin nature from the time of Adam until the time of the Law of Moses. Therefore, the point that Paul was making can be received by skipping directly from Ro 5:12 to 5:18. However, some very important information is revealed in this parenthetical phrase.

Paul said that until the time the Law was given, sin was not imputed unto people. As explained in note 6 at Ro 4:3, the most-used Greek word for "impute" is "LOGIZOMAI," an accounting term meaning that God was not entering people's sins in the account book. In this instance, a different Greek word was used ("ELLOGEO" - used only one other time in New Testament, Phm 18), but it has virtually the same meaning. This is a radical statement.

Most people have interpreted God's dealings with man after Adam's sin to be immediate rejection and banishment from His presence. In other words, it was an immediate imputing of man's sins. However, Paul was stating just the opposite. God was not holding people's sins against them until the time that the Law of Moses was given.

With this in mind, it should change the way we think about God's dealings with man between the Fall and the giving of the Law. Adam and Eve were not driven from the Garden of Eden because God could not stand them in His presence anymore. God's dealings with Adam and Eve and their children in Ge 4

prove His presence was still with them. The reason He drove them from Eden is clearly stated in Ge 3:22-23; it was to keep them from eating of the Tree of Life and living forever.

Instead of this being a punitive act, it was actually an act of mercy. It would have been terrible for people to live forever in sinful bodies, subject to all the emotions and diseases that sin brings. God had a better plan through Jesus.

In accordance with what Paul was revealing here, God was merciful to the first murderer (Ge 4:9-15), even to the point of placing a mark on his forehead and promising vengeance if anyone tried to kill him. In contrast, once the Law was given, the first man to break the ordinance of the Sabbath was stoned to death for picking up sticks (Nu 15:32-36). That doesn't seem equitable. But the answer is that before the Law, God was not imputing people's sins unto them as He was after the giving of the Law (see note 3 at Ro 5:14).

It would appear that the Flood and the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah were two notable exceptions to this. Actually, these were not exceptions. While these two acts of judgment were punitive on the individuals who received the judgment, they were actually acts of mercy on the human race as a whole. In the same way that a limb or organ will sometimes be sacrificed to save a life, so God had to destroy these sinners to continue His mercy on the human race. The people in Noah's day and the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah were so vile that they were like a cancer that had to be killed.

So, for the first 2,000 years after man's Fall (approximate time between the Fall and the giving of the Law), God was not holding people's sins against them. That was why Abram was not killed for marrying his half sister nor Jacob for marrying his wife's sister (see note 3 at Ro 4:15).

Therefore, we can see that God's immediate reaction to man's sin was mercy and not judgment. It was over 2,000 years before God began to impute people's sins unto them, and according to Ga 3:19 and 23-24, that was only a temporary way of dealing with sin until Jesus could come. Through Jesus, God is once again reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing people's sins unto them (2Co 5:19).

ROMANS 5:14

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

Note 3 at Ro 5:14: If God was not bringing judgment upon people's sins until the time of the Law of Moses (see note 2 at Ro 5:13), then why were people still dying? Isn't death the wages of sin (Ro 6:23)? Why were people still dying if their sins weren't being counted against them?

Sin has a twofold effect. It is not only a transgression against God, worthy of His judgment, but it is also the inroad of Satan into our lives. Ro 6:16 says, "Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?" If we yield to sin, we also submit ourselves to Satan, the author of that sin.

This was why people were still dying even though God was not bringing His judgment on their sins. Satan was the one who had the power of death (Heb 2:14), and it was Satan, through sin, who was causing people to die. As sin multiplied on the earth, the life span of man decreased, not because of God's judgment, but because of the effects of sin on the human race.

Therefore, we can see that even when God doesn't judge sin, sin is still deadly. This is why the New Testament believer should resist sin. God doesn't bring judgment on His children for their sins (see note 11 at Ro 4:8), but Satan will. Christians don't live holy in order to avoid God's judgment but so that their enemy won't have any access to them.

Note 4 at Ro 5:14: The people from Adam to Moses had not sinned in the same way that Adam had because they didn't have a direct commandment to violate like Adam did. They were living under their own consciences, and that was enough to make them guilty (see note 2 at Ro 1:18). However, it was not until the time that God revealed the commandments through Moses that people

once again began to violate direct commands of God (Ro 4:15).

Note 5 at Ro 5:14: The Greek word translated "figure" here is "TUPOS," and it means "a type, figure, pattern" (Vine's Expository Dictionary). Paul was saying that Adam was a type of Jesus in the sense that in the same way sin entered the world through one man, righteousness entered the world through one man, Jesus.

ROMANS 5:15

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

Note 1 at Ro 5:15: Paul proceeded to make a series of comparisons about imputed righteousness through Christ being like imputed sin (see note 9 at Ro 5:21) through Adam. Paul made this comparison five times so that there should be no doubt that in the same way that all became sinners through Adam (see note 6 at Ro 5:19), all who put faith in Christ are made righteousness through Him.

The religious world has basically accepted this truth of inherited sin from Adam, but this truth of inherited righteousness

through the new birth is still a mystery to many. Yet Paul was saying that if one is true, then so is the other. These truths are like two sides of one coin. If you accept one truth, you have to accept the other.

Note 2 at Ro 5:15: These are five comparisons (Ro 5:15-19), but they are opposite comparisons. Adam's sin brought things from good to bad, but Jesus brought things from bad to good. The results are opposite extremes, but the principle involved in both is the same. In the same way that Adam was able to pass sin (see note 9 at Ro 5:21) and its consequences on to his descendants, so Jesus is able to pass righteousness and all its benefits on to those who put faith in Him.

Note 3 at Ro 5:15: The gift by grace spoken of here and in Ro 5:16 and 18 is clearly stated in Ro 5:17. It is the gift of righteousness.

ROMANS 5:16

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

Note 4 at Ro 5:16: Adam's one sin produced a sin nature in all people (see note 9 at Ro 5:21) that, in turn, caused each person

to commit individual acts of sin (see note 6 at Ro 5:19). However, Jesus not only dealt with the original sin that contaminated the human race, but He also dealt with each individual act of sin.

ROMANS 5:17

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

Note 5 at Ro 5:17: This comparison is repeated again in Ro 5:21 (see note 9 at that verse).

ROMANS 5:19

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

Note 6 at Ro 5:19: Some people think it is our individual acts of sin that make us sinners, but that is not what Paul was saying in these verses. These scriptures clearly state that Adam's one sin made all people sinners (see note 17 at Joh 8:44). It is

man's sin nature that produces sins, not their sins that produce a sin nature.

Therefore, those who are trying to obtain righteousness through their actions are totally missing the point. Even if they could stop all their individual sins, they could not change the sin nature that they were born with. That's the reason people must be born again (see note 2 at Joh 3:3).

Note 7 at Ro 5:19: These scriptures should provide the ultimate argument for righteousness by faith to everyone who believes the Scriptures to be inspired by God. Paul repeatedly said that believers are made righteous through faith in Christ, independently of their actions, in the same way that all were made sinners, not through their individual sins, but through Adam's one sin.

ROMANS 5:20

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

Note 8 at Ro 5:20: Paul was writing to Jewish Christians who had mistakenly thought that faith in Christ alone was not enough to produce justification. They thought one also had to fulfill a minimum standard of holiness by complying with certain

commands of the Old Testament Law. That's what occasioned Paul's whole teaching on justification by faith.

Paul had so conclusively proven justification by faith in Christ alone that he knew the legalistic Jews were wondering, "So, what was the purpose of the Law?" He stated that purpose in this verse. The Law was given to make sin increase, or super-abound ("abound" - "PLEONAZO" - "to do, make or be more, i.e. increase...to superabound" [Strong's Concordance]).

As explained in note 4 at Ro 3:19, the purpose of the Law was not to strengthen us in our battle against sin but to strengthen sin in its battle against us. Sin had already beaten us; we didn't know it. The Law brought that realization to us so that we would quit trusting in ourselves and call out to God for salvation.

So the Law made sin and all its devastating effects abound, but God's grace abounded even more. The Law gave sin so much dominion against us that the grace of God is the only way out.

ROMANS 5:21

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

Note 9 at Ro 5:21: The sin that is being spoken of here is not the individual acts of sin that we commit but rather the propensity for sin itself. The American Heritage Dictionary defines “propensity” as “an innate inclination; tendency.” It is this inherited inclination to sin that Paul was speaking of.

The word “sin” is used forty-five times in the book of Romans (Ro 3:9, 20; 4:8; 5:12-13, 20-21; 6:1-2, 6-7, 10-18, 20, 22-23; 7:7-9, 11, 13-14, 17, 20, 23, 25; 8:2-3, 10; and 14:23). The plural, “sins,” is used four times (Ro 3:25, 4:7, 7:5, and 11:27).

Of this total of forty-nine times that “sin” or “sins” is used in Romans, these two English words come from three Greek words. One of these Greek words, “HAMARTEMA,” is only used once, in Ro 3:25, and only three other times in all the New Testament (Mr 3:28, 4:12; and 1Co 6:18). Of the remaining forty-eight times, the Greek word “HAMARTIA” was used forty-seven times and “HAMARTANO” just once (Ro 6:15).

This is very significant because the Greek word HAMARTIA is a noun, while HAMARTANO is a verb. A noun denotes a person, place, or thing, while a verb describes the action of a noun. Therefore, in all but one instance in the book of Romans, the words “sin” and “sins” describe man’s tendency toward sin and not the individual acts of sins themselves. If you think of the word “sin” in these chapters as denoting the act of sin, you will miss what Paul was saying.

As believers, our fight is not against individual acts of sin

but against the inner tendency to sin. If the propensity to sin can be broken, then the actions of sin will cease. Our individual acts of sin are only an expression or indication of how well we are doing in our war against this condition of the heart that causes us to sin.

Ro 5:12 says that this propensity to sin (or what many call the “sin nature”) entered the world through Adam. It is this sin nature that caused us to sin, not our individual acts of sin that gave us a sin nature (see note 17 at Joh 8:44, note 6 at Ro 5:19, and note 3 at Ro 7:9).

At salvation, the “old man” (Ro 6:6), or sin nature, died, but the tendency to sin remained through the thoughts and emotions that the “old man” left behind. Christians no longer have a sin nature that compels them to sin; they are simply dealing with the renewing of their minds.

Note 10 at Ro 5:21: Sin (see note 9 at this verse) ruled like a king (the Greek word for "reigned" in Ro 5:17 was also translated "king") through condemnation (Ro 5:16) to bring death upon everyone. Condemnation is like the general of sin that enforced its power. Likewise, now God's grace rules like a king through righteousness to bring all who are in Christ into eternal life. Righteousness is the general of grace who defends us against all the wiles of the devil.

Sin would ultimately bring death to all people whether they were condemned or not (Ro 6:23). But to those who are guilty

ridden and condemned over their sins, sin has a particularly devastating effect. Likewise, those who put faith in Christ will ultimately experience God's eternal life. But those who understand righteousness as a gift to be received and not a wage to be earned are the ones who reign like kings, over sin and all its effects, in this life.

Remove guilt or condemnation, and sin loses its strength to rule (1Co 15:56). Remove the knowledge of righteousness by faith, and grace loses its power to release eternal life in our daily lives.

ROMANS CHAPTER 6

ROMANS 6:1

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

Note 1 at Ro 6:1: Paul had stated God's grace (see note 5 at Ac 20:24 and note 5 at Ro 1:5) in such a way that it was inevitable that someone would ask, "Can we just keep on sinning, since we are saved by grace?" Of course, that is not what Paul was saying at all. He had already answered this argument before (Ro 3:8), and he did it again in Ro 6:15, making a total of three times in this epistle he had to overcome misunderstandings about his grace teaching encouraging sin.

Paul spoke this revelation of God's grace under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost with perfect balance, yet he was still misunderstood. Therefore, those who are teaching grace but do not encounter the same arguments causing them to explain that they are not advocating a life of sin have not preached grace the way that Paul did. If, in their efforts to prevent misuse, they present grace in such a way that no one ever accuses them of giving people a license to sin, then they haven't presented grace correctly.

ROMANS 6:2

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

Note 2 at Ro 6:2: Paul had so convincingly proven salvation by grace that no theological argument against it was left. Yet the most common complaint against grace is not theological; it concerns the practical application. Most people who can't handle grace think, "If I'm saved by grace, then why resist sin?" Paul answered this question in two ways in this chapter. First, we as Christians don't live lives of sin because we are dead to sin (see note 3 at this verse). This was the point Paul was making in Ro 6:1-14. Second, although God is not imputing our sins unto us, Satan is. Beginning with Ro 6:15, Paul clearly stated that sin is an inroad of the enemy into our lives (see note 3 at Ro 5:14).

Therefore, Paul stated that sin is still deadly and something to be resisted, but he changed the motivation for living holy. No longer do we resist sin to try to be accepted by God, but we live holy lives because our nature has been changed and because actions of sin give place to the devil.

Note 3 at Ro 6:2: What does it mean that we are dead to sin? From the context and also from personal experience, we can

easily see what it doesn't mean. It clearly doesn't mean that we as Christians are incapable of committing sins.

Once again, the Greek word translated "sin" here is "HAMARTIA," a noun describing the propensity for sin, or what many call the sin nature (see note 9 at Ro 5:21). The New International Version translation calls this the old self. Our "old selves" were the driving force behind our acts of sin. Paul was saying that since our old selves that loved to sin are dead, it is not the nature of us Christians to commit acts of sin as it was before we were born again (see note 2 at Joh 3:3). That's the number one reason that we don't sin. We don't want to sin.

However, by Paul saying that the part of us that compelled us to sin is dead, new questions are raised. If we no longer have a sin nature that compels us to sin, then why do we do it? Some Christians believe they are still driven to sin and quote Paul's statements in Ro 7 to justify this. Paul went on to answer this question in Ro 6:6 (see note 7 at that verse).

ROMANS 6:3

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

Note 4 at Ro 6:3: Our spirits are the part of us that became born again (see note 2 at Joh 3:3), and this is the part of us that Paul was referring to as being baptized into Jesus and His death (see note 3 at Mt 26:41). Our physical bodies are not dead, and our souls are not dead. But our "old man" died with Christ (see note 8 at Ro 6:6).

Note 5 at Ro 6:3: The baptism that is being spoken of here in Ro 6:3-4 is not water baptism. Heb 6:2 speaks of the doctrine of baptisms (plural), clearly stating that there is more than one kind of baptism.

It is easy to see that there is a difference between the baptism of the Holy Spirit and the baptism into the body of Christ. When John the Baptist spoke of the baptism of the Holy Spirit in Mt 3:11, he said that Jesus is the baptizer and the Holy Spirit is the one that we are being baptized with. But in 1Co 12:13, Paul said that the Holy Spirit is the baptizer and the body of Christ is what we are being baptized into. So, there are two different baptizers and two different elements that we are being baptized into, leaving no doubt that these are two different baptisms.

The mistake of always associating the word "baptism" with water baptism has led many people to incorrectly interpret Ro 6:3-4 as speaking of water baptism. Some have even attempted to use these verses to prove that water baptism is the act that causes salvation. However, that is not what Paul was saying and, in fact, is the exact opposite of every point that he had made in the book

of Romans for salvation by grace through faith. This is not speaking of the sign of water baptism (see note 9 at Mr 16:16 and note 2 at Ac 2:38).

Paul was speaking of the act where all of us who put saving faith in Jesus as our Lord are automatically and instantaneously baptized into Jesus and all that He purchased for us (1Co 12:13 and Col 2:12). He was simply stating that as believers, we have become dead to sin (Ro 6:6) through the death of Jesus. Jesus didn't die for His sins; He had none. He died for our sins (1Pe 2:24). Therefore, His death was for us, and all the benefits to be obtained through His death and resurrection are our benefits.

ROMANS 6:4

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

Note 6 at Ro 6:4: This verse states our death with Christ (see note 7 at Ro 6:6) as an accomplished fact and our resurrection with Christ as what should be the result of that death. That might lead some to speculate that our death with Christ to sin has already been accomplished, while our resurrection with Him (in context, spiritual resurrection) has yet to be accomplished. Yet comparison with other scripture will reveal that is not so.

Eph 2:5-6 states our spiritual resurrection with Christ as an accomplished fact that happens at salvation. Col 2:12-13 makes the same claim. In Col 3:1, Paul used the reasoning that if we are risen with Christ, then we should seek those things that are above. Just as surely as all Christians are to seek heavenly things, likewise, all Christians have been raised with Christ.

Our spirits (see note 3 at Mt 26:41) died to sin and are already resurrected with Christ unto newness of life. These things are already realities in our new spirits. Yet to see these facts become realities in our physical lives, we have to first know what happened to us in our spirits at salvation and then believe this good news. To the degree that we think, believe, and act like who we are in our spirits, to that degree we will experience the life of Christ in our flesh.

ROMANS 6:6

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

Note 7 at Ro 6:6: As explained in note 6 at Ro 6:4, our spirits have already died with Christ unto sin and are already resurrected unto newness of life. Yet this newness of life, which

is a reality in our spirits, does not automatically manifest itself in our flesh. This verse makes it very clear that we have to know some things before this resurrection life flows from our spirits into our flesh.

Facts, whether spiritual or natural, don't govern your life. It's your knowledge or perception of truths that controls your physical emotions and experiences (Pr 23:7). If someone lied to you about a family member having just died, you would experience sorrow or other negative emotions even though there was no factual basis to feel that way. In the same way, if you were told that a family member had died and it was true but you didn't believe the report, you would be spared those emotions.

Likewise, we have had the power of sin broken in our lives by our death to sin (see note 8 at this verse), and we have the resurrection power of Christ's life in our spirits. But these facts won't change our experiences until we know them and begin to act accordingly. All Christians are already blessed with all spiritual blessings (Eph 1:3). However, few Christians know that, and even fewer understand it to a degree that it impacts their lives. "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge" (Ho 4:6).

Note 8 at Ro 6:6: Walking in resurrection power in our physical lives is dependent on knowing that our "old man" (New International Version - old self) is crucified. If we don't believe that, then there won't be newness of life (Ro 6:4) or victory for us (see note 7 at this verse).

As explained in note 6 at Ro 6:4, our old selves are already crucified. Yet some people have effectively voided the power of that truth (Mr 7:13) by teaching that we still have an old self, or sin nature, that is constantly being resurrected from the dead. There is no scripture that mentions a daily or even periodical resurrection of our "old man." Only Jesus has that power. Satan has no power to accomplish resurrection of any kind.

This common belief that people still have an "old man," or sin nature, does not come from Scripture but through observation. People observe a drive to sin, and they assume that it is their old sin nature that drives them to it.

The Scripture does teach that sin produced death (Ge 2:17; Ro 5:12, 15, 17, 6:23; and Eph 2:1), and therefore everyone was born with a spirit that was dead to (or separated from) God. This is the part of people that the Bible calls sin (see note 9 at Ro 5:21), or the "old man" (this verse). Therefore, the Scriptures do teach that everyone was born with a sin nature, or "old man" (see note 4 at Ro 7:9). But Paul was making a very clear presentation in these verses that for the Christian, the old self is dead. Christians do not have a nature that is driving them to sin (see note 2 at Ro 6:2).

If that is so, then why do we seem so bound to sin even after we experience the new birth? The reason is that the old self left behind what this verse calls a "body." Just as a person's spirit and soul leave behind a physical body at death, so the old self left behind habits and strongholds in our thoughts and emotions. The

reason we as Christians tend to sin is because of un-renewed minds, not because of a sin nature.

God made the mental part of us similar to a computer. We can program our minds so that certain actions and attitudes become automatic. For instance, when we were children, it was a major effort to tie our shoelaces or button our shirts, but as adults, we can now perform those tasks without even thinking about what we are doing. It's like it is just a part of us, but in actuality it was an acquired trait.

Likewise, our "old man" ruled our thinking before we were born again. Our "old man" taught us such things as selfishness, hatred, and fear, as well as placed within us the desire for sin. The old self is now gone, but these negative parts of the old self's body remain. Just as a computer will continue to perform according to its programming until reprogrammed, so our minds continue to lead us on the course that our "old man" charted until renewed (Ro 12:2).

Therefore, Christians do not have a part of them that is still of the devil and is driving them to sin. Instead, Christians have been liberated from the part of them that was dead in sin (i.e., the old self, Eph 2:1), and the rest of the Christian life is a renewing of the mind that results in the resurrection life of Jesus being manifest in their physical bodies (2Co 4:11).

Someone might say, "What's the difference? Whether it's my 'old man' or an un-renewed mind, I still struggle with the desire to

sin." The difference is enormous! If we still have a sin nature, then we are doomed to lives of schizophrenia (i.e., a split mind), but if it is just our un-renewed minds that cause the problem, then we can see the situation improve as we renew our minds.

If people retained a sin nature even after the new birth, then those who were bound by particular sins before salvation would still be bound by them after salvation. They would just have to refrain from the physical acts, but in their hearts, they would continue to be guilty of committing those sins in thought (see note 12 at Mt 5:22). Yet there are millions of examples of people who experience the new birth and are so changed that the very sins that used to enslave them before salvation are now so repulsive to them that they have no desire to commit those acts. They can't even relate to their old selves that did those things, because they are new people (2Co 5:17) with renewed minds.

It is truly liberating to learn that we don't have to commit sins; we choose to do so. Therefore, we can change through the renewing of our minds (Ro 12:2) because there is no longer a part of us that is a sinner by nature. This is the point that Paul was making in this verse. To experience the resurrection life of Jesus, we have to know that the old self is dead, and then through the renewing of our minds, we destroy the body that the old self left behind, with the end result being that we will not serve sin any longer.

ROMANS 6:7

For he that is dead is freed from sin.

Note 9 at Ro 6:7: There is a difference between being "freed" and being "free." In the 1860s, President Abraham Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation that "freed" the American slaves. Many slaves, however, continued to serve their masters in slavery because the truth was hidden from them or in some cases, the slaves were afraid that they couldn't make it on their own.

Likewise, Christians have been "freed" from sin, but that doesn't automatically mean all Christians experience that freedom. Through ignorance and deception, Satan continues to maintain mastery over those who have not yet realized their death and resurrection with Christ.

ROMANS 6:9

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

Note 10 at Ro 6:9: Our death to sin and resurrection to life with Christ is already a reality in our spirits (see note 7 at Ro

6:6), but it will only become a physical reality as we know and believe these truths (see note 8 at Ro 6:6). In this verse, Paul was stressing that this resurrection life is dependent on knowing that our death with Jesus unto sin is a one-time death that does not have to be repeated (see note 11 at this verse).

Note 11 at Ro 6:9: Much current theology believes that we died unto sin but that we resurrect unto sin every morning and therefore must continually repeat this process. That is not what happened to Jesus, and these verses are comparing our death to sin with Jesus' death to sin (see note 3 at Ro 6:11). It is true that we continually have to appropriate this death to sin, but there is a big difference between dying over and over and over and just renewing our minds with an accomplished fact.

Note 12 at Ro 6:9: In the same way that Jesus died unto sin once (Ro 6:10) and now death has no more dominion over Him, those who recognize their death with Christ unto sin will not have sin rule over them anymore either (Ro 6:14). Christians who are struggling with sin have not recognized that they are dead unto sin (see notes 7-8 at Ro 6:6).

ROMANS 6:11

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

Note 1 at Ro 6:11: As already discussed in note 3 at Ro 6:2 and note 6 at Ro 6:4, our "old man" is dead. However, because a lust to sin is still present even after the new birth, many teach that the "old man" is constantly being resurrected. That's not so.

This verse makes it very clear that we are to reckon ourselves dead to sin in the same manner as Christ is dead to sin. The Greek word that was translated "likewise" in this verse is "HOUTO," and it means "in this way (referring to what precedes or follows)" (Strong's Concordance). The American Heritage Dictionary defines "likewise" as "in the same way; similarly." Therefore, we are dead to sin in the same way that Christ is dead to sin.

Of course, Jesus only died to sin once, so therefore we only die to sin once (Ro 6:9-10). After that, we simply reckon (see note 2 at this verse) ourselves to be dead to sin and alive unto God.

Note 2 at Ro 6:11: In note 6 at Ro 4:3, the Greek word "LOGIZOMAI," which was translated "reckon" here, is explained in detail. The word conveys no causative meaning but rather only an inventory or assessment of a condition that already exists. Therefore, the state of being dead to sin already exists for us as Christians, but we have to seize this benefit by reckoning it to be so. The use of the word "indeed" in this verse further establishes that this is already an accomplished work of Christ that we are simply appropriating.

Note 3 at Ro 6:11: Many people focus on the death to sin that is mentioned in this verse and omit, or at least put secondarily, the part about being alive unto God. It is assumed that if people will just die to sin, then life with Christ comes automatically. That's no more so than physical death automatically producing physical resurrection. God doesn't need dead people; He needs people who have risen from the dead spiritually.

People who are preoccupied with dying to themselves will not experience their new lives with Christ. This verse emphatically states that they are to believe unquestionably, without a doubt, that they are, in reality, already dead to sin (see note 2 at this verse) in the same way that Christ is already dead to sin (see note 1 at this verse).

As explained in note 9 at Ro 5:21, being dead to sin is not a struggle against or victory over sin that we are accomplishing; it is deliverance from our "old man" (sin nature) that enslaved us to sin. Our "old man" no longer exists and, therefore, no longer can dominate us if we know the truth (see note 7 at Ro 6:6).

It is wrong to teach that dying to sin is something that we still have to accomplish by acknowledging all our sinfulness and forsaking it. This actually causes us to focus on self (sinful self) more than ever before and, therefore, actually strengthens the hold of what's left of the "old man" (see note 8 at Ro 6:6) in our lives. The way to get rid of the residual effect of the "old man" in

our lives is not to focus on our sins but to focus on our resurrected union with Christ.

Therefore, according to the instruction of this verse, we are to unquestionably count on the fact that our "old man" is gone and just as certainly reckon that our new man is alive with Christ, desiring only those things that please the Father. Doing this will transform us outwardly in our flesh into people who reflect who we already are inwardly in our spirits.

ROMANS 6:12

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

Note 4 at Ro 6:12: If this sentence were to be diagrammed the way we were taught in school for the purpose of identifying the subject and verb, then the understood subject of this sentence would be "you." Paul was saying, "[You] let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body" (brackets mine). You have the power to stop the reign of sin in your life, or the Lord would not have given you this command.

A mistaken belief that we can't help but sin is one of the biggest reasons that we do sin. The power of sin (see note 9 at Ro 5:21) has been broken in our lives, and the only reason we

Christians sin is because we haven't renewed our minds with the reality of our new lives with Christ (see notes 7 and 8 at Ro 6:6).

Note 5 at Ro 6:12: The word "therefore" makes our ability to end sin's reign in our lives that this verse speaks of, dependent on the truth that was just expressed in Ro 6:11 (see note 3 at that verse). We have to know beyond any doubt that our "old man" is dead and gone; then, and only then, will we be able to renew our minds and end the dictatorship of sin in our lives.

ROMANS 6:14

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

Note 6 at Ro 6:14: The "old man" (sin, see note 9 at Ro 5:21) is dead and gone. Yet there is a "residual old man", or the un-renewed mind and emotions that the "old man" left behind (see note 8 at Ro 6:6). It is these lingering effects of the "old man," or sin, to which Paul was referring.

Paul made a very clear statement that the reason this sin shall not have dominion over us is because we are not under Law (see note 3 at Ro 3:19) but under grace (see note 5 at Ro 1:5). However, most Christians today are still operating under the Law, so it's no surprise that sin still has dominion over them.

Understanding our freedom from the Old Testament Law is a prerequisite to breaking the dominion of sin in our lives.

The reason this is so is because the Law strengthened sin by producing guilt that condemned us and killed us (see note 4 at Ro 3:19). The Law also brought the wrath of God against our sins (see note 3 at Ro 4:15). However, once we accept the atonement of Christ for our sins, we no longer need to fear the wrath of God; that was placed on Jesus. We also don't need the Law to condemn us and kill us. We have already come to Christ for salvation, which is what the Law was designed to do (Ga 3:24-25).

Knowing this (see note 7 at Ro 6:6) frees us from sin; it doesn't free us to sin. As Christians, all of us continue to sin to some degree, not because we have to, but because we are still in the process of renewing our minds (see note 4 at Ro 6:12). However, when we aren't condemned and feeling separated from God because of our sins, we are free to run to God for help instead of away from God in fear. Therefore, understanding God's grace and our freedom from the Law is the key to breaking the dominance of sin in our lives.

ROMANS 6:15

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

Note 7 at Ro 6:15: Paul had started this sixth chapter with a similar question as to whether or not his teaching was encouraging people to sin (see note 1 at Ro 6:1). In Ro 6:1-13, he explained that as Christians, we don't sin, because we are dead to sin (see note 3 at Ro 6:2 and note 6 at Ro 6:4). Then in Ro 6:14, he brought up our deliverance from the Law again, which prompted this similar question. He then went on through the rest of this chapter to explain that the second reason we don't sin is because it gives Satan an inroad into our lives (see note 8 at Ro 6:16).

ROMANS 6:16

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

Note 8 at Ro 6:16: This is the second argument that Paul presented in this chapter as to why Christians don't live in sin (see note 2 at Ro 6:2). The legalistic Jews were pursuing sinless lives so that they could earn God's favor. Paul had conclusively proven that no one could keep the precepts of the Law and that the Law was never given for the purpose of justification (see note 4 at Ro 3:19 and note 14 at Ro 3:31). Therefore, he was explaining that Christians still seek to live holy but for different reasons.

This second reason Paul gave for holiness in our lives as believers is that when we obey sin, we yield ourselves to Satan, the author of that sin. Notice the use of the personal pronoun "whom" in this verse. Yielding to sin is yielding to a person-- Satan. God doesn't impute the sin to us (see note 2 at Ro 5:13), but the devil does (see note 3 at Ro 5:14). Our actions release in us either the power of Satan or the power of God.

Therefore, although God is not imputing our sins unto us, we cannot afford the luxury of sin because it allows Satan to have access to us. When we do sin and allow the devil opportunity to produce his death in our lives, then the way to stop that is to confess the sin, and God is faithful and just to take the forgiveness that is already present in our born-again spirits and release it in our flesh, thereby removing Satan and his strongholds (see note 11 at Ro 4:8).

Note 9 at Ro 6:16: The Greek word that was translated "servants" twice in this verse is "DOULOS," and it denotes "a slave" (Strong's Concordance) (see note 1 at Ro 1:1). Therefore, Paul was not speaking of an infrequent error on our part but rather a servile condition where one "gives himself up wholly to another's will" (Thayer's Lexicon). So Paul was stating that those who abandon themselves to sin are in actuality becoming slaves of the devil (see note 8 at this verse), while those who obey righteousness are actually yielding themselves to the Lord. This is the second reason in this chapter as to why a Christian should live holy.

ROMANS 6:18

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

Note 10 at Ro 6:18: Jesus said, "No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon" (Mt 6:24). We cannot become the servants of righteousness until we are made free from serving sin.

As discussed in note 9 at Ro 6:16, "servants" here denotes slavery. Christians still sin (1Jo 1:7 and 9), but they aren't the slaves of sin (see note 9 at Ro 5:21) anymore. Those who believe that the "old man" still lives and exerts mastery in their lives (see notes 1-3 at Ro 6:11) will not experience the joy of being servants to righteousness.

ROMANS 6:20

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

Note 1 at Ro 6:20: Paul had just made a statement in Ro 6:19 that we should serve the Lord with the same fervor that we served the devil with before we were born again. He continued that comparison through Ro 6:22 and made an amazing point. He was saying that in the same way that our good acts could not change our sinful nature before we were born again, likewise, our sinful acts cannot change our righteous nature now that we have become new creatures in Christ Jesus.

In this verse, the phrase, "servants of sin," is describing people before they are born again. The phrase, "free from righteousness," is not saying that lost people cannot do anything that is right, but rather all of their good acts aren't enough to change their nature. They must be born again (see note 2 at Joh 3:3).

Most Christians have accepted this truth unquestionably. They were saved by believing that. Yet this exact terminology is used again in Ro 6:22 in a way that very few Christians accept. The same logic that was used in this verse is reversed in Ro 6:22.

If "servants of sin" in this verse signified people before salvation, then "servants to God" in Ro 6:22 denotes just the opposite--people who have been saved through faith in Christ. If "free from righteousness" in this verse described lost people who were incapable of changing their sinful nature by their own good works, then "free from sin" in Ro 6:22 describes Christians as being unable to change their righteous nature through their sins.

This is a powerful truth. In the same way that our sinful nature could not be changed by our own actions, now our new, born-again spirits cannot be changed by our actions either. If we are going to accept one of these truths, we have to accept the other. We cannot honestly accept this verse and reject Ro 6:22 when the exact same terminology is used in the same context.

Actions cannot produce the new birth, and actions cannot destroy the new birth. We had to believe to receive salvation, and we have to willfully reject that faith in Christ to become reprobate (see note 6 at Ro 1:28 and note 9 at Ro 1:32).

ROMANS 6:22

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

Note 2 at Ro 6:22: Notice that holiness is a fruit, and not a root, of salvation. That is to say that holiness is a byproduct of relationship with God; it does not produce relationship with God (see note 21 at Mt 23:26).

ROMANS 6:23

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

Note 3 at Ro 6:23: The American Heritage Dictionary defines "wages" as "a suitable return or reward." Sin has a wage that it pays, and no one can avoid "payday" without faith in Jesus.

As explained in note 9 at Ro 5:21, the sin spoken of here is not an individual act of sin but rather the sin nature, or "old man," itself. Those who do not receive the new birth (see note 2 at Joh 3:3) will be held liable for all the wrongs committed as a result of their sinful nature (see note 4 at Mr 3:29). However, those who receive the new birth through faith in Jesus don't have a sin nature (see note 8 at Ro 6:6) and will therefore not receive this payment of death.

The physical death of our bodies is not really what is being spoken of here. Physical death, as well as all results of the sin nature (i.e., sickness, depression, fear, etc.), is only a byproduct of the spiritual death that was already present on the inside of us. The Lord told Adam that in the day he ate of the forbidden tree, he would surely die (Ge 2:17). Adam didn't die physically that day, but he did die spiritually. Physical death came at age 930 for Adam (Ge 5:5) as a byproduct of spiritual death.

The wages (plural) of death that those who are not born

again will receive can be broken into two categories. The Bible speaks of a second death (Re 2:11; 20:6, 14; and 21:8)--banishment to the lake of fire (see note 4 at Mr 3:29) on the Day of Judgment. The first death is this separation from God (or spiritual death) that was inherited through Adam (see note 4 at Ro 5:16 and note 6 at Ro 5:19).

So this verse is specifically speaking of the spiritual death that was inherited through Adam and then the second death, which is eternal banishment from God and torment in the lake of fire. However, any negative results of sin, which were not part of God's original plan for man, can also be included in the term "death," since they are a direct result of this spiritual death.

Note 4 at Ro 6:23: Eternal life (see note 94 at Joh 17:3) is a gift. The American Heritage Dictionary defines "gift" as "something bestowed voluntarily and without compensation." We have nothing to do with earning this gift. Eternal life would cease to be a gift if we earned it (Ro 11:6). We simply receive it by faith.

ROMANS CHAPTER 7

ROMANS 7:1

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

Note 1 at Ro 7:1: Remember that Paul wrote this epistle to all the saints in Rome (Ro 1:7). Therefore, even though this term "brethren" can be used to designate fellow countrymen, as in Ro 9:3, here it is specifying fellow believers, especially the Jewish believers who were knowledgeable of the Law.

Note 2 at Ro 7:1: Paul was saying that the only way to get out from under the Old Testament Law is through death. He had just taught that the "old man" is once and for all dead (see note 6 at Ro 6:4 and note 8 at Ro 6:6). Here he used the natural illustration of marriage to further make this point.

In the same way that the marriage vow was intended by God to be binding until "death do us part" (see note 5 at Mt 19:7), so our bondage under the tyranny of the sin nature (see note 9 at Ro 5:21) was inescapable except through death. Therefore, this knowledge of our death to the old self is crucial to escaping the carnal life that the old self put in place in our lives.

ROMANS 7:2

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

Note 3 at Ro 7:2: Paul likened our death to sin, which he had explained in Ro 6, to the laws governing a marriage relationship. The husband is our "old man," the wife is the soul and body part of us, or our personality, and the binding civil and moral code that enforces a marriage is like the Old Testament Law.

We, the wife, were enslaved to a wicked husband, the old self. In Old Testament times, the Law gave the wife no option of divorce. The man could divorce his wife (De 24:1), but the wife could not divorce her husband. Therefore, the only hope a woman could ever have of being delivered from that situation was that her "old man" would die. Then she was delivered from that moral and civil code that kept her from having relationship with someone else.

Likewise, we were in bondage to the old self. We wanted out of the relationship, but we were by nature slaves to sin (Eph 2:3). The Old Testament Law only made the situation worse. It strengthened the control of the old self over us. The Law actually empowered sin, or our wicked husband, against us (see note 4 at

Ro 3:19).

Then Jesus entered the scene. He took the old self with Him to the cross, and when He died, the old self died too. But Jesus rose from the dead, and the old self didn't. Now we are free from the old self and the Law that bound us to it so that we can be married to Him who is risen from the dead.

ROMANS 7:3

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

Note 4 at Ro 7:3: In this comparison, it is clearly understood that a woman who has two husbands would be living in adultery. Likewise, Paul was saying that a Christian who has two natures would be living in adultery. Those of us who do not understand that the old self is dead will constantly feel the guilt of the Old Testament Law that bound us to our first husband, the "old man."

ROMANS 7:4

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

Note 5 at Ro 7:4: Through Jesus, not only is the old self dead, but we also are dead to the Law that enforced the tyranny of the old self over us. The Law was only made for the old self (1Ti 1:9-10). Once it is dead, we are no longer under the Law (see note 6 at Ro 6:14). Failure to understand this will produce the same end results as if our "old man" was not dead.

Note 6 at Ro 7:4: Christ didn't free us from the relationship to our first husband, the "old man," so we could just run around and do whatever we want; He freed us from that first marriage so we could marry Him. As Christians, our freedom is not the freedom to do "our own thing," but it is freedom from the old nature so that we can now serve Christ in newness of spirit (Ro 7:6).

Note 7 at Ro 7:4: Just as it is normal for a physical marriage to produce children, so our marriage to Christ is intended to bring forth fruit (see note 47 at Joh 15:2).

ROMANS 7:5

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

Note 8 at Ro 7:5: Christians are not in the flesh even though they walk after the flesh at times. There is a difference, and Paul made a major point in Ro 8 concerning the difference between being in the flesh and after the flesh (see note 20 at Ro 8:9).

Note 9 at Ro 7:5: Notice that the motions or influences of sin were by the Law. The Law actually made sin come alive in us (see notes 3 and 4 at Ro 7:9).

Note 10 at Ro 7:5: This is the same phrase that was used in the last part of Ro 7:4. In the same way that relationship with the old self produced death, now realizing our new relationship with Christ produces the fruit of holiness (see note 2 at Ro 6:22).

ROMANS 7:6

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

Note 11 at Ro 7:6: In these first six verses of Ro 7, Paul said we are "loosed from the law" (Ro 7:2), "free from that law" (Ro 7:3), "dead to the law" (Ro 7:4), and "delivered from the law" (this verse). Ro 6:14 says that we "are not under the law." How could it be made any clearer that the Law was not made for a born-again person (1Ti 1:9)?

Note 12 at Ro 7:6: The American Heritage Dictionary defines "spirit," when used as in this verse, as "the actual though unstated sense or significance of something." Just as Jesus taught against ritualistic observance of laws (see note 21 at Mt 23:26), so Paul was saying a Christian is someone who fulfills the real sense or significance of the Law, not every detail. God is more pleased with someone who has a pure heart and yet fails Him in actions (example: Lu 7:36-50) than someone who does the right things with an impure heart (1Sa 16:7). 2Co 3:6 says, "The letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life."

True Christianity is not the observance of a different set of rules than some other religion; it is a change of the heart (Eze 11:19, 36:26; and 2Co 5:17). Once people's hearts are changed, they will serve God, not because they have to, but because they want to.

ROMANS 7:7

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

Note 1 at Ro 7:7: Remember, in context, the sin being spoken of here is not an individual act of sin but rather the sin nature that compelled us to sin (see note 9 at Ro 5:21). Paul was saying, "Is it the Law that compelled us to sin?" The answer to this is no.

Paul had just spoken of being "loosed from," "free from," "dead to," and "delivered from" the Law (see note 11 at Ro 7:6). Here he was clarifying his statements so that someone wouldn't think he was saying that the Law is the thing that drove us to sin. The Law of God simply made clear to us that we already had a depraved nature. When the Law said, "Thou shalt not covet," that commandment didn't make covetousness come; it made the lust that was already present revive (Ro 7:9) and strengthened it (1Co 15:56) so that we could not be deceived any longer into thinking that we could produce salvation on our own (see note 4 at Ro 3:19).

God's commandments are holy, just, and good (Ro 7:12), but man apart from God is sinful. Therefore, it was impossible that a revelation of God's true standards could change our nature; only the new birth can do that. The Law simply stripped our sinful

nature of its disguise so that we could properly assess how bad the situation was.

Note 2 at Ro 7:7: As explained in note 2 at Ro 1:18, there is an intuitive knowledge of right and wrong inside every person. How does that harmonize with Paul's statement here? The answer is that the Law brought sin into focus.

Every person has an intuitive picture of what sin is, but hardness of the heart caused this image to become blurred. Once the Law comes to an individual, all blindness is removed, and it is very clear what God's standard of right and wrong is.

ROMANS 7:9

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

Note 3 at Ro 7:9: Paul stated that there was a time in his life when he (his soulish, emotional, or personality part) was not separated from God. This was before the Law came. But the Law of God was communicated thousands of years before Paul was born, so what does this mean?

When Paul spoke of the Law coming, he was speaking of the time in all people's lives when they recognize that they are

violating a command of God. Children may know they've been told not to do certain things and that if they do them, they will be punished. However, there comes a time when they realize that it is not just Mom or Dad or society that they are disobeying, but this is disobedience to God. That's when the Law comes and God imputes their sins from that time. Prior to that time, their sin nature is not being imputed to them (see note 2 at Ro 5:13), and they can fellowship with God.

Notice that Paul said, "When the commandment came, sin revived." He did not say, "Sin came." You cannot revive something that doesn't already exist. The sin nature already exists in every human at birth (see note 1 at Ro 5:15 and note 4 at Ro 5:16), but until the Law comes, that nature is dead (Ro 7:8). That does not mean that it is not functional. Observation tells us that very young children have a functional sin nature. But God is not imputing sin unto people until the time that they knowingly violate God's Law.

This is why children can receive from God even before they are born again, and it also explains why infants who die go to heaven. Until the time that Paul calls "when the commandment comes," or what many call "the age of accountability," the sin nature does exist, but God is not imputing that sin. Therefore, they are not bearing God's judgment against sin. But once the commandment comes, then the wrath of God against sin is released (see note 3 at Ro 4:15), and unless they receive Jesus as their Savior, they will bear the eternal punishment of God (see note 4 at Mr 3:29).

It is impossible to fix a certain age when this accountability occurs. That varies from person to person. For some, such as in cases of retardation, it is possible that this age of accountability is never reached. We can be sure that our all-knowing God will be righteous in His judgment of each individual.

Note 4 at Ro 7:9: All people are born with a nature that is dead in trespasses and sin (Eph 2:1-3), but until they reach an understanding where they are accountable to God, sin is not imputed unto them (see note 3 at this verse). Until that time, people are alive in the sense that they can communicate with God without the barrier of sin. However, once the Law comes and sin is imputed, there is a separation from (or death to) God that can only be remedied by the new birth (see note 2 at Joh 3:3) through faith in Jesus.

ROMANS 7:11

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

Note 5 at Ro 7:11: The ministry of the Law actually gave sin (the sin nature, see note 9 at Ro 5:21) an occasion against people. The corrupt rebellious nature of man will always lust for what it cannot have. Forbid people to do something that they were only

mildly interested in before, and they will develop an uncontrollable lust for that very thing.

This is how the Law worked. Sin was already at work in man, but when the Law came, condemning their actions, sin came alive (Ro 7:9) in comparison to what it was before. The reason God did this was because mankind had been blinded to what sin was and its consequences. Sin had already beaten and enslaved people, but they didn't realize it. They thought they were good enough, until the Law came. Once they were forbidden to do and think certain ways, sin began to abound (Ro 5:20), and they became aware that they were, by nature, children of the devil (Eph 2:3) and needed a savior. That was the purpose and ministry of the Old Testament Law (see note 4 at Ro 3:19).

Failure to understand this truth has led many well-meaning religious people to attempt to get others to stop sinning through the proclamation of God's laws against, and punishments for, sin. That wasn't the purpose of the Law. According to these verses, sin actually revives and gains an occasion against people when the Law is used. The right use of the Law is to give knowledge of sin (Ro 3:20) and convince people that they are doomed without a savior. The Law is powerless to overcome sin. Only the grace of God can cause people to overcome sin (Ro 6:14).

ROMANS 7:13

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

Note 6 at Ro 7:13: Even though the Law was called "the ministration of death" (2Co 3:7), the Law itself was not death. Death was already at work in us through the sin nature (see note 9 at Ro 5:21). The Law simply drew out what was already there so that we could see how sinful we were and realize that we needed a savior. The deceitfulness of sin evaporates in the presence of the Law, and sin becomes exceedingly sinful.

ROMANS 7:14

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

Note 7 at Ro 7:14: This is why the Law could not produce life for us. It is because the Law is spiritual, but we are carnal. Another way of saying this is, the Law is perfect, but we aren't. If we could have lived up to every detail of the Law, then we could

have obtained salvation through it. But all have sinned and come short of God's perfect standard (Ro 3:23), all except for one, and that is Jesus.

The Law did provide life for one man, the man Christ Jesus, because He was the only man who was ever perfect. Jesus was without any sin whatsoever, and therefore He deserved eternal life as a payment, not a gift. Those who put their faith in Jesus as their Savior benefit from His keeping of the Law (Ro 8:4).

ROMANS 7:15

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

Note 1 at Ro 7:15: Many debates have occurred over whether here Paul was describing himself before his conversion or whether he was describing the carnality that still existed in him after all those years of walking with the Lord. Was Paul describing a condition that has already been taken care of through the new birth, or was he saying that even mature Christians are doomed to lives of schizophrenia (i.e., a split mind) where part of us wants to serve God and part of us wants to serve the devil?

Actually, Paul was not stating either one of those positions. He was expounding the impossibility of serving God in our own

power, whether lost or saved. The flesh (see note 3 at Ro 7:18) is unwilling and unable to fulfill the Law of God, and if we as Christians try to fulfill the righteousness of the Law through our own will power, we will fail just the same as unregenerate people would. Paul was describing the futility of trying to obtain favor with God through our own goodness whether Christian or non-Christian. That has been the theme throughout the book of Romans.

Paul only used the term "spirit" once in Ro 7 (Ro 7:6), a chapter that described the hopelessness of people to ever keep the righteousness of the Law in their own strength. In contrast, the word "spirit" (or "Spirit") is used twenty-one times in Ro 8, a chapter that gives the answer to the hopelessness of Ro 7.

In these verses of Ro 7, Paul was not describing warfare that wages between the new man and the old man. He was contrasting the complete inability of people to save themselves because of their corrupted flesh (see note 3 at Ro 7:18) versus the life-transforming power of Christ described in Ro 8.

The Apostle Paul was not living a life of constant failure where the good that he wanted to do, he was unable to accomplish, but the evil that he didn't want to do, he did. He wasn't living that kind of life because it was no longer him living, but Christ living in him (Ga 2:20). Christ in Paul was manifesting holiness in Paul's life that was second to none.

However, if Paul had abandoned his dependency upon Christ

and had started trying to live the Christian life out of his own resources, then the condition described in Ro 7:15-24 would have been his experience.

Our flesh has been corrupted through sin, and though we can renew our minds through God's Word (Ro 12:2), we can never elevate our flesh to a place where it can fulfill the Law of God. Hence, the good news of Ro 8 that what the Law couldn't do, because of the weakness of our flesh (Ro 8:3), God did for us, and all we have to do is receive by faith.

ROMANS 7:17

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

Note 2 at Ro 7:17: As already stated in note 9 at Ro 5:21, this sin is not speaking of an individual act of sin but of the "old man," or "sin nature," itself. This looks like a direct contradiction to Paul's statements in Ro 6 about the old self being dead (see note 6 at Ro 6:4).

To harmonize these apparently opposite accounts, most people have said that the death spoken of in Ro 6 is not a one-time experience but an ongoing process. Experience and Paul's testimony here seem to bear that out.

However, Ro 6:9-11 makes a specific point of comparing our death to sin with Christ's death to sin. Ro 6:10 clearly states that Christ died unto sin once (see note 11 at Ro 6:9), and Ro 6:11 says we should likewise reckon ourselves to be dead unto sin (see note 1 at that verse). To further strengthen this point, Paul began Ro 7 with the illustration of marriage (see note 3 at Ro 7:2). In the same way that a woman cannot have two husbands, a Christian cannot have two natures (see note 4 at Ro 7:3).

So, in context, there is a very strong case for our "old man" being dead in the absolute sense. But what about Paul's statements here and in Ro 7:20 about sin dwelling in him? The key is in Ro 7:23 where Paul spoke of a law (influence) of sin that dwelt in his members, not sin itself (see note 5 at that verse).

Therefore, this passage is referring to the force or influence of the "old man," which does still exist, but not the "old man" itself. The argument for the complete abolishment of the sin nature is further strengthened in Ro 7:24 (see note 2 at that verse) where Paul referred to "the body of this death." This is referring to the same thing that Paul spoke of in Ro 6:6 where he used the terminology "the body of sin" (see note 8 at that verse).

ROMANS 7:18

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

Note 3 at Ro 7:18: The term "flesh" comes from the Greek word "SARX." SARX was translated "flesh" 147 times, "carnal" 2 times (Ro 8:7 and Heb 9:10), "carnally" 1 time (Ro 8:6), and "fleshly" 1 time (Col 2:18). There are many ways that the word "flesh" was used in the New Testament, but for simplification, we will group its usage into three main categories.

First, it can refer to the physical flesh of man (Lu 24:39) or beasts (1Co 15:39). When used in that context, the term is descriptive of only the physical makeup of man and is neither good nor bad, as can be seen by the fact that Jesus was made "flesh" (Joh 1:14).

Second, "flesh" can describe the weakness and frailty of people, or people apart from God. This was the way Paul used the term in Ro 8:3 when he said, "For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh." Paul was saying that people, without the quickening power of God in their lives, were unable to keep the Law. Paul described his own efforts at holiness without the power of Christ as works of the flesh (Php 3:3-9). "The flesh is weak" (Mt 26:41).

Third, "flesh" can refer to all that is sinful in man. In Ga

5:19-21, Paul described the works of the flesh as "Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like." In this sense, the term "flesh" can be used almost interchangeably with the "sin nature" when describing those who are not born again or the effects of the residual old self (see note 6 at Ro 6:14) on those who are born again.

In this instance, when Paul used this parenthetical phrase, "that is, in my flesh," he was specifying the natural part of his person, or the second category of "flesh" described above. He was stating that in himself, apart from his born-again spirit, there was no good thing. He had to include this explanation, or his statement would not have been accurate, for in his spirit there was a good thing (i.e., Christ).

ROMANS 7:21

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

Note 4 at Ro 7:21: This law (force or influence, see note 5 at Ro 7:23) was present, but Paul was not living under the dominance of it (Ro 6:14). He clearly stated in Ro 8:2 that the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus had made him free from

the law of sin and death (see note 1 at Ro 7:15).

ROMANS 7:23

But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.

Note 5 at Ro 7:23: The Greek word translated "law" three times in this verse is "NOMOS," and it means "a force or influence impelling to action" (Vine's Expository Dictionary). So these verses are not speaking of the "old self," or "sin nature," directly but rather of its influence.

In Ro 7:22, this same Greek word was used to refer to the Law of God. In that instance it is clear that this is speaking of the influence of God through His precepts and not the divine person Himself. Likewise, in Ro 7:23, the influence of the "old man" is what is being spoken of.

As explained in note 8 at Ro 6:6, the old self is dead and gone, but it left behind a body. Attitudes and emotions that still influence us until we renew our minds, are the body of the old self. We are not dealing directly with the "old sin nature" but with its influence that is still being exerted through our unregenerate

flesh. So the Christian life is a renewal of our minds to who we have become in Christ, not a hatred for who we are in our "old self."

ROMANS 7:24

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

Note 1 at Ro 7:24: Paul was not describing his spiritual condition when he said, "O wretched man that I am!" He was speaking of his flesh (see note 3 at Ro 7:18). He made this distinction clear in Ro 7:18 when he said, "I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing." So as explained in note 1 at Ro 7:15, Paul was describing the absolute wretchedness of his flesh.

Note 2 at Ro 7:24: In context, Paul was summarizing his statements from Ro 7:14-23. He didn't say, "Who shall deliver me from this death?" for the Christian has already been delivered from the death that is the wages of sin (see note 3 at Ro 6:23). He made special mention of the body of this death.

The terminology "the body of this death" corresponds to what Paul called "the body of sin" in Ro 6:6. He was not speaking of the sin nature itself, for a Christian no longer has a sin nature

(see note 8 at Ro 6:6), but he was rather speaking of the "old man" or the lingering influence of the sin nature that still exerts itself through the un-renewed mind.

So death, or the "old man," is gone, but the body that it left behind (i.e., the thoughts, attitudes, and emotions) still poses a problem to us as Christians. How do we overcome this flesh (see note 3 at Ro 7:18)? The answer is stated in Ro 7:25 and then explained in Ro 8.

ROMANS 7:25

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.

Note 3 at Ro 7:25: Paul was not just stating that he was thanking God through Jesus Christ; he was specifically thanking God for the deliverance from this body of death, and that deliverance only comes through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Note 4 at Ro 7:25: Here is the conclusion of Paul's arguments from Ro 7:14 to 7:24. He desired to serve the Law of God, but his flesh was incapable of doing so. How then can we overcome this frustration? The answer is given in Ro 8 as Paul explained how to escape the flesh and walk in the Spirit.

ROMANS CHAPTER 8

ROMANS 8:1

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

Note 1 at Ro 8:1: The American Heritage Dictionary defines the word "therefore" as "for that reason; consequently." This word ties Paul's statement here in this verse to the previous verses. Paul was giving us the answer to the hopeless situation he described in Ro 7:14-24.

Prior to Ro 8, the Holy Spirit was only mentioned once in this epistle (Ro 5:5 - Holy Ghost). In this chapter alone, the Holy Spirit is referred to nineteen times (compare with note 1 at Ro 7:15). Paul was making the point that the only way to overcome the effects of sin in our lives is through the indwelling presence and power of the Holy Spirit.

Note 2 at Ro 8:1: Nine Greek words are used in the New Testament that were translated "now." Some of these words simply provide a transition between thoughts. However, the Greek word translated "now" in this verse is "NUN," and it is "a

primary particle of present time; 'now'" (Strong's Concordance), "the immediate present" (Vine's Expository Dictionary). Thus, Paul's use of this word makes it very clear that living with no condemnation is a present-tense experience of the believer, not something reserved for the future.

Note 3 at Ro 8:1: The Greek word that was translated "no" in this verse is "OUDEIS." This is an emphatic term meaning "not even one...i.e. none" (Strong's Concordance). Wuest translated this as "There is not even one bit of condemnation" ("The New Testament: An Expanded Translation" by Kenneth S. Wuest).

Note 4 at Ro 8:1: The Greek word translated "condemnation" here is "KATAKRIMA," and it means "an adverse sentence (the verdict)" (Strong's Concordance). Paul was stating that God has no adverse sentence against us once we accept Him. All our punishment has been placed on Jesus, and we don't bear it. Those of us who still walk in condemnation are being condemned by the devil or are condemning ourselves. It's not God who condemns us (Ro 8:34).

2Co 3:9 called the Law a "ministration of condemnation." It was the Law that brought God's adverse sentence against us. Ro 3:19 says the Law was given to make us guilty before God. Guilt is the emotional response to condemnation.

This can be illustrated by the way a building is condemned. When the government condemns a building, it is declared unfit for use and must be destroyed. Likewise, when Satan condemns

us, he makes us feel unfit for use and ready to be destroyed. Since we as Christians are no longer under the Law (see note 3 at Ro 4:15), we should no longer be condemned or feel unfit for use. We have been accepted by the Father through Jesus (Eph 1:6).

Note 5 at Ro 8:1: God placed the judgment that the Law prescribed against us upon His Son. Therefore, those of us who accept Jesus as our Savior will not be condemned, because Jesus was condemned for us (Ro 8:3). This truth, and the fact that this phrase, "who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit," is not in some of the old Greek manuscripts, has led many scholars to believe that this phrase does not belong here. They say it was borrowed from Ro 8:4 by some scribe who was copying out the scriptures.

Condemnation still exists, as any Christian knows. This verse has rightly portrayed that only those who are living in the power of the Holy Spirit escape that condemnation. Compare this to the law of gravity. Gravity is a law that never quits exerting its power, but it can be overcome. Through the laws of aerodynamics, man can actually fly and send space ships beyond Earth's gravity. But it takes power to do this. If the power is shut off, the law of gravity is still at work and will cause the vehicle to fall.

Likewise, the law of sin and death still exists. If Christians shut off the power of the Spirit of life and begin to start walking in the power of their own flesh, Satan will use this law of sin and death to make sure they crash and are condemned.

God convicts of sin, but He doesn't condemn (Ro 8:34). Conviction is solely for our profit and is free of malice, while condemnation includes punishment (see note 4 at this verse). Satan is the one who condemns us, but the Holy Spirit has given us the power to escape that condemnation.

ROMANS 8:2

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

Note 6 at Ro 8:2: Ro 7:15-24 describes the hopelessness of those attempting to overcome the law (see note 5 at Ro 7:23) of sin and death in their own ability or holiness (see note 1 at Ro 7:15). But Ro 8, and specifically this verse, brings people the good news that what could not be done by human effort has been done through the power of the Holy Spirit. Christians are no longer slaves to the law of sin and death.

According to Ro 6:23, death is the wages of sin (see note 3 at Ro 6:23). Therefore, this phrase, "the law of sin and death," is referring to the influence of sin and the resulting wages of that sin. Another way of saying "the law of sin and death" is "the law that when we sin, we receive death instead of life" or "when we sin, we reap the curse instead of the blessing."

De 28:1-14 lists the blessings that come if we keep the whole Law. De 28:15-68 lists all the curses that come as the wages of not keeping the Law. Because the law of the Spirit of life has set us free from the law of sin and death, we no longer reap De 28:15-68, even though we haven't kept every precept of the Law. Christ redeemed us from these curses of the Law (Ga 3:13). Praise God that we don't have to receive the wages of sin, which is death.

Not only have we been redeemed from the curses of De 28:15-68, but also, through Jesus, we have the righteousness of the Law fulfilled in us (see note 9 at Ro 8:4) so that the blessings of De 28:1-14 are now ours. So, through Christ, we receive what we don't deserve (the blessings of De 28:1-14), and we don't receive what we do deserve (the curses of De 28:15-68).

ROMANS 8:3

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:

Note 7 at Ro 8:3: The Law itself was not weak. In Ro 7:12 Paul said, "The law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good." The Law wasn't weak, but our flesh (see note 3 at Ro

7:18) was. The Law and our flesh were linked together like a chain, and a chain is no stronger than its weakest link. Our flesh was the weak link in the chain. Although the Law was strong, it couldn't accomplish righteousness, because of the weakness of our flesh.

Note 8 at Ro 8:3: This last "flesh" in Ro 8:3 is speaking of the flesh of Jesus. God placed the condemnation that was directed toward us upon the flesh of His Son, Jesus.

As stated in note 7 at this verse, the Law was strong enough to produce life if we would have been able to keep it, but our human flesh rendered us impotent. This was a dilemma. The Law was ordained to life (Ro 7:10), but none of us could keep it (Isa 59:16). So God Himself became flesh (Joh 1:14 and 1Ti 3:16). He did what no sinful flesh had ever done: He kept the Law, thereby winning the life of God as the prize for keeping the Law.

This granted Him eternal life, but before He could give it to us, we still had a debt that had to be paid. This is similar to a man receiving the death penalty for some hideous crime, and then some billionaire leaves his whole estate to him. It would do the condemned man no good. But if that same billionaire could somehow take that man's place and die for him, then he could go free and enjoy his new wealth. That's what Jesus did for us. He took our sins and gave us His righteousness.

Jesus did much more than just obtain eternal life for us; He also paid all the wages of our sins (Ro 6:23). God literally placed

the condemnation, or judgment, that was against us upon His own Son. Jesus' perfect flesh was condemned so our defiled flesh could go free. What a trade!

Since Jesus bore our sentence (condemnation), we don't have to bear it. The debt has already been paid. It would be double jeopardy if we also had to bear any condemnation.

ROMANS 8:4

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

Note 9 at Ro 8:4: This verse is saying that through the sacrificial death of Jesus, we can now fulfill the righteousness of the Law. There are two ways that we need to understand this.

First, the righteousness of the Law is now fulfilled in our new, born-again spirits (see note 11 at Ro 4:8). Jesus fulfilled the Law (Mt 5:17) and has given us His righteousness (see note 10 at Ro 3:26). Every believer's spirit is righteous and truly holy.

Second, through the Holy Spirit, we are now empowered to live, outwardly in our actions, the holy lives that the Law demanded but we were unable to do in our own strength. That's what Paul was referring to when he said, "Who walk not after the

flesh, but after the Spirit." It needs to be pointed out that although as Spirit-filled believers, we will live holy lives, we will never keep every detail of the Law. That could not be done before salvation, and it cannot be done after salvation.

The same Greek word that was translated "righteousness" in Ro 8:4 was translated "ordinances" in Lu 1:6. Luke was speaking of Zacharias and Elizabeth, that "they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless." Notice that they were both righteous and blameless before the Lord but not sinless (see note 2 at Lu 1:6). So the righteousness of the Law can be fulfilled without keeping every commandment.

The purpose of the Law was to make us despair of saving ourselves and to point us to a Savior (see note 4 at Ro 3:19). When we come to put faith in Jesus as our Savior, then we are fulfilling the purpose of the Law. So this verse is speaking of us as believers being empowered to live holy lives, but fulfilling the righteousness of the Law is not the same as keeping every detail of the Law (see note 12 at Ro 7:6).

Therefore, all Christians have fulfilled the righteousness of the Law in their spiritual man through Jesus. But only those Christians who are under the control of the Spirit of God are fulfilling the spirit of the Law in their actions.

Note 10 at Ro 8:4: The word "walk" in this phrase is translated from the Greek word "PERIPATEO," and it means "to

tread all around, i.e. walk at large...figuratively, to live, deport oneself, follow" (Strong's Concordance). The American Heritage Dictionary defines it as "to conduct oneself in a particular manner." Therefore, this phrase, "who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit," is speaking of those who do not conduct their lives according to the flesh but follow the leading of the Spirit.

Ro 8:5 goes on to further explain this and uses the terminology "mind the things of the flesh" to describe those who "walk after the flesh" and "[mind] the things of the Spirit" (brackets mine) to describe those who "walk after the Spirit." So "walking after the flesh" is simply having your mind focused on carnal things, and "walking after the Spirit" is having your mind stayed on spiritual things (Joh 6:63).

ROMANS 8:5

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

Note 11 at Ro 8:5: Ro 8:5-8 explains why only those who walk after the Spirit (see note 10 at Ro 8:4) are seeing the righteousness of the Law fulfilled in their lives (see note 9 at Ro 8:4). It is because whatever people think on is what they are going to become or do (Pr 23:7). Those who are after the flesh think on carnal things and therefore do carnal things. Thinking

carnally can only produce death, while thinking spiritually (according to the Word, Joh 6:63) can only produce life (see note 15 at Ro 8:6).

Note 12 at Ro 8:5: This verse gives us a test so that we can determine if we are walking after the flesh or after the Spirit: We just have to judge what we are thinking about. If we are consistently thinking on the things of the Spirit (Joh 6:63), then we are walking after the Spirit. If we are dominated with carnal thoughts (see note 13 at Ro 8:6), then we are walking after (see note 20 at Ro 8:9) the flesh (see note 3 at Ro 7:18).

ROMANS 8:6

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

Note 13 at Ro 8:6: The same Greek word, "SARX," that was translated "flesh" in Ro 8:1, 3-5, and 8 was translated "carnally" in this verse and "carnal" in Ro 8:7. So these terms can be used interchangeably.

Note 14 at Ro 8:6: The death that is spoken of here is not just physical death, although that is included. It refers to all the effects, or wages, of sin (see note 3 at Ro 6:23). The Amplified Bible translates this as "[death that comprises all the miseries

arising from sin, both here and hereafter]." Sickness, depression, loneliness, hatred, poverty, fear, and everything else that came as a result of sin would be included in this term "death."

Note 15 at Ro 8:6: This is a powerful statement. Being carnally minded doesn't just tend toward death; it is death. Likewise, being spiritually minded doesn't just tend toward life; it is life and peace. Those who say they are spiritually minded yet are experiencing death (see note 14 at this verse) are deceived. If they would just dominate themselves with the spiritual truths of God's Word, they would receive only life and peace.

ROMANS 8:7

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

Note 16 at Ro 8:7: This word "carnal" is translated from the same Greek word as "flesh" (see note 13 at Ro 8:6). Just as with the word "flesh" (see note 3 at Ro 7:18), there is more than one way that the word "carnal" is used. All sin is carnal, but not all carnality is sin. The word "carnal" can also refer to human ability or natural things.

Trying to live the Christian life from our own ability is carnal. In context, Paul was contrasting the hopeless struggle of

the flesh to live holy, which he described in Ro 7:15-24, with the Spirit-filled life that he presented in Ro 8. Therefore, he was portraying that trying to obtain holiness through the flesh is being carnal. It is inaccurate to think that only sin is carnal. All our self-righteousness is carnal too.

Note 17 at Ro 8:7: The carnal mind is hostile or opposed to God. The carnal mind hates the things of God. Therefore, no one just naturally pleases God. It is impossible for the natural mind to think in the ways of God. As Paul said in 1Co 2:14, "But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." We have to deny our natural way of thinking and be led by the Spirit of God in order to walk pleasing to God.

ROMANS 8:8

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

Note 18 at Ro 8:8: Heb 11:6 says, "Without faith it is impossible to please him," so Ro 8:8 could also read, "So then they that are in the flesh cannot have faith" because faith is the only way to please God. Faith is a fruit of the Spirit (Ga 5:22-23) and cannot be produced by human effort.

Note 19 at Ro 8:8: This is the sum of what Paul was saying in Ro 7:15-24 and the reason we can never trust in our own holiness to be justified in the sight of God. The Christian life is not just hard to live; it is impossible to live in our own ability. Christianity only works when the Spirit of God indwells and controls us, thereby giving us supernatural ability. Without the quickening power of the Holy Spirit, we can't believe God and receive salvation.

Many religions of the world believe in one God--some of them even worship the God of Abraham--but they don't believe in Jesus as their Savior. Without Jesus, they are in the flesh and cannot please God. They may even live holier lives than those who have put faith in Jesus as their Savior, but their flesh will fail to be holy enough to earn salvation (see note 6 at Ro 3:23).

ROMANS 8:9

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

Note 20 at Ro 8:9: Paul made a clear distinction between being "in" the flesh and "after" the flesh, and "in" the Spirit and "after" the Spirit. Born-again people (see note 2 at Joh 3:3) cannot be "in" the flesh, but they can walk (see note 10 at Ro 8:4)

"after" the flesh. Lost people cannot be "in" the Spirit although they seek to walk "after" the ways of the Spirit.

The word that was translated "in" here is the Greek word "EN," and it denotes a "(fixed) position (in place, time or state)" (Strong's Concordance). In contrast, the word that was translated "after" in Ro 8:1, 4-5, and 12-13 denotes "according to anything as a standard, agreeably to" (Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon). Therefore, when Paul spoke of being "in" the flesh or Spirit, he was referring to a fixed position or state. When he spoke of being "after" the flesh or Spirit, he was referring to whatever we are using as a standard of conduct or whatever we are agreeing to at any given time.

Christians can agree to or conduct their actions according to some standard other than God's and still keep their position in Christ (see note 1 at Ro 6:20). So Christians can walk "after" the flesh, but they are never considered "in" the flesh.

Note 21 at Ro 8:9: According to Jesus' statement in Joh 14:17, people cannot receive the Holy Spirit unless they have first received Jesus as their Savior (see note 27 at Joh 14:17). Therefore, those who have the Spirit of God dwelling in them are born again (see note 2 at Joh 3:3) and are not in the flesh (see note 20 at this verse).

Note 22 at Ro 8:9: This passage makes an emphatic statement that every believer receives the Spirit of Christ at salvation. The supposition that the "Spirit of Christ" and the

"Spirit of God" are synonymous terms has led many to believe that every Christian receives the Holy Spirit at salvation. However, this seems to contradict the examples given in the book of Acts (see note 6 at Ac 2:4, note 3 at Ac 8:16, and note 1 at Ac 19:1).

It is very likely that the phrase "Spirit of Christ" refers to the born-again spirit that every believer receives at salvation. The phrase "Spirit of God" possibly refers to the Holy Spirit that only indwells the believers if they receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit (see note 6 at Ac 2:4).

ROMANS 8:10

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

Note 23 at Ro 8:10: Based on Ro 8:9, as well as Joh 14:20, 2Co 13:5, and Col 1:27, Christ is in every born-again believer. Therefore, Paul was saying that for all Christians, our bodies are dead because of sin (see note 24 at this verse).

Note 24 at Ro 8:10: The body is dead "because" of sin, but the Spirit is life "because" of righteousness. The Greek word translated "because" here is "DIA," and it denotes "the channel of an act; through" (Strong's Concordance). Therefore, our bodies

are dead through, or because of, the influence of sin in our lives.

In the same way that some people who have recovered from the polio virus still have crippled bodies, so Christians who have been delivered from the old sin nature (see note 9 at Ro 5:21) still have to deal with the corruption that the old sin nature released into our physical bodies and minds. That's why no one can please God in the flesh. The flesh has been corrupted and is therefore dead, or incapable of living up to God's standard.

To counter this, the Spirit of God is releasing life because of our new righteous spirits that we received through faith in Jesus. Sin has left its mark on our bodies, but the Spirit of life within us is more than enough to overcome these problems. That's why it is imperative that we Christians learn how to walk after the Spirit and not after the flesh.

ROMANS 8:11

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

Note 25 at Ro 8:11: This verse is speaking of more than just the quickening of our bodies at the second return of Christ, although that is included. In Ro 8:10, Paul spoke of the body

being dead because of sin, but the Spirit being life because of righteousness. This is speaking of the current situation we face in this life.

Our flesh (see note 3 at Ro 7:18) has been rendered incapable of serving God correctly because of the effect sin has had on us, but our situation isn't hopeless. God has given us His Spirit, and we can overcome this deficit by letting Him live through us (Ga 2:20). Here in Ro 8:11, Paul was commenting on this quickening power of the Holy Spirit for this life as well as the ultimate victory when our physical bodies will be resurrected.

ROMANS 8:12

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

Note 26 at Ro 8:12: Paul was saying that the flesh (see note 3 at Ro 7:18) never helped us. It has been rendered powerless through sin (see note 24 at Ro 8:10). It is only through the indwelling power of the Holy Spirit that we Christians have any hope of living in victory. Therefore, we are indebted to the Spirit and should yield to Him.

ROMANS 8:13

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

Note 27 at Ro 8:13: Paul was speaking of death in a figurative sense rather than a literal sense. He was addressing believers who had already received eternal life through the new birth (see note 2 at Joh 3:3), and he was not saying that they would lose their salvation if they walked "after" the flesh (see note 10 at Ro 8:4).

As explained in note 3 at Ro 6:23, "death" is a term that not only refers to physical death but also can denote all the effects of sin in our lives. Therefore, Paul was speaking about experiencing defeat as we Christians walk after the flesh compared to experiencing victory when we walk after the Spirit.

Note 28 at Ro 8:13: The word "mortify" was translated from the Greek word "THANATOO," and it means "to kill" (Strong's Concordance). The American Heritage Dictionary defines "mortify" as "to discipline (one's body and appetites) by self-denial." If we deaden ourselves to the flesh by self-denial and follow the leadership of the Holy Spirit, we will live.

ROMANS 8:14

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

Note 29 at Ro 8:14: Being led by the Spirit of God is the ultimate standard whereby we may know someone is a son of God. This raises the question, "If you aren't led by the Spirit of God, does that mean you are not born again?" It is true that everyone who is not born again is not led by the Spirit of God and that everyone who is born again is led by the Spirit of God, but that requires some explanation.

First, there are varying degrees of being led by the Holy Spirit. No believers are following the leading of the Lord as much as they could be, and if an absolute standard was applied to this verse, no believers would qualify to be sons of God. With this in mind, believers have been led by the Spirit to some degree in making Jesus their Lord, if nothing else.

Second, being led by the Spirit does not cause people to be sons of God, but being sons of God causes them to be led by the Spirit. All believers do have the Spirit of God to lead them, but that doesn't mean all believers heed His leading (see note 3 at Joh 10:3). In context, Paul had just spoken about denying the flesh through the power and leading of the Holy Spirit. Here he was simply pointing out that all Christians have the leading of the Holy Spirit available to them to accomplish this.

Note 30 at Ro 8:14: Some people have tried to make a distinction between being a "child of God" and a "son of God." They say a "child of God" is any born-again believer, while a "son of God" refers only to a mature Christian. This looks good on the surface, but further study will reveal there is no difference.

In Ga 4, these same terms are used, and "son" or "sons" is applied to all believers. Ga 4:6 says, "And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father," and Ro 8:9 says, "Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his." Since every believer must have the Spirit of Christ (Ro 8:9) and every son of God has the Spirit of God's Son in him, crying, "Abba, Father" (Ga 4:6), then we can clearly see that every born-again believer is a son of God. Therefore, these terms are used interchangeably, and no doctrine about different levels of maturity can be drawn.

ROMANS 8:15

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

Note 31 at Ro 8:15: This "spirit of bondage" is a reference to the old sin nature (see note 9 at Ro 5:21). The fact that Paul said, "Ye have not received the spirit of bondage again" (emphasis

mine), is a further testimony that our old sin nature is not just ceremonially dead but that it is totally gone from our lives (see note 3 at Ro 6:2).

Note 32 at Ro 8:15: We are sons of God by adoption. Jesus was the Son of God by nature. As Jesus said to the Jews, we were of our father, the devil (Joh 8:44 and Eph 2:3), but Jesus purchased us and made us adopted sons of God.

ROMANS 8:16

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

Note 33 at Ro 8:16: 1Jo 5:10 says, "He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself." John went on to say in 1Jo 5:13, "These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life." So the Spirit bearing witness with our spirits is to assure us that we are the children of God (1Jo 3:19).

ROMANS 8:17

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

Note 34 at Ro 8:17: We are not just heirs; we are joint-heirs with Christ. How wonderful it would be to inherit any amount of God's glory and power, but to think that we share equally with the One who has inherited everything God is and has is beyond comprehension. This is an awesome blessing, but it places a tremendous responsibility on us too.

In the same way that a check made out to two people cannot be cashed without the endorsement of both parties, so being joint-heirs with Jesus cannot be taken advantage of without people's cooperation. Unaware of this, many Christians are just trusting that the Lord will produce the benefits of salvation for them. They are acutely aware that they can do nothing without Him but don't realize that He will do nothing without them (Eph 3:20).

The way we place our endorsement on the check is to believe and act like what God promised in His Word is true. Jesus has already signed His name to every promise in the Word. We aren't waiting for Him; He is waiting for us.

ROMANS 8:18

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

Note 1 at Ro 8:18: This is a very important statement. Paul did not say that this glory would be revealed "to us" but rather "in us." The complete glory of God that most dream of receiving in eternity is already in us here on this earth!

Paul said in 2Th 2:14, "He called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ." And in 1Pe 5:1, Peter said he was a partaker of this "glory that shall be revealed." Paul also prayed for the Ephesians that the Lord would grant them the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him so that they would see the glory of His inheritance that was already in the saints (Eph 1:17-18).

This leaves no doubt that, as Christians, our spirits are already complete. We don't need more faith, more power, or more anointing. We simply need to use more of what we have already received. Many Christians will be shocked when they stand before God and realize that all the things they prayed for were inside them from the time they believed (see note 3 at Mt 26:41).

ROMANS 8:19

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

Note 2 at Ro 8:19: The two English words "earnest expectation" were translated from the Greek word "APOKARADOKIA." This Greek word was only used twice in the New Testament (here and Php 1:20). This is a compound word meaning "intense anticipation" (Strong's Concordance). Other scholars have translated it as "to strain forward," "a watching with outstretched head" (Vine's Expository Dictionary), and "to expect on and on, to the end" (Cremer). Fritz Rienecker says this word "denotes diversion from all other things and concentration on a single object."

Therefore, this verse makes it very clear that all of creation is eagerly and intensely anticipating the day when the glory of God that is already deposited within God's saints (see note 1 at Ro 8:18) will be revealed. That day won't completely arrive until the Second Coming of the Lord, but it is logical to think that creation rejoices to some degree every time a saint manifests His glory here on this earth.

Note 3 at Ro 8:19: The Greek word "KTISIS" was translated "creature" in Ro 8:19-21. This same word was translated "creation" in Ro 8:22. It literally means "original formation

(properly, the act; by implication, the thing, literally or figuratively)" (Strong's Concordance).

Note 4 at Ro 8:19: The American Heritage Dictionary defines "manifestation" as "an indication of the existence or presence of something." Something that does not already exist cannot be manifested. As the Apostle John said, "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be" (1Jo 3:2). We are already the sons of God. This is not something that has yet to transpire. All of creation is waiting for us to manifest what is already in us (see note 1 at Ro 8:18).

ROMANS 8:20

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

Note 5 at Ro 8:20: Many people have thought that the "creature" spoken of here is human beings. However, the contrast made in Ro 8:22-23 clearly exempts the saints from this group. Ro 8:21 speaks of the creature being "delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God." If "creature" were referring to unsaved people, then this would mean ultimate reconciliation of the human race to God, and that is not the teaching of Scripture. Therefore, it is most probable that the creature being spoken of here is all of creation, living and

non-living, excluding humans. Paul was speaking of how all of creation did not choose to rebel against God. It was just mankind that sinned. Yet the Lord brought all the rest of creation, against their choice, into our cursed state with us so that He could also redeem them with mankind.

Take for example the animal creation. Ge 1:30 says that all the animals were given "every green herb" for their food. There were no carnivorous beasts. Yet after man's rebellion, parts of the animal creation began to devour one another, as we see today. This was not God's original plan, and it was not because of a specific sin on the animals' part that this happened. God subjected the animal creation to the same vanity (see note 6 at this verse) that man had come into, in the hope of redeeming them also.

The animal creation, as well as the inanimate creation, will be delivered from the corruption that we now see, to walk in the glorious liberty of the children of God. It is not clear that every animal that has ever lived will be resurrected, but it is clear that the animal creation will be represented.

The Scriptures declare this freedom for the creation when it speaks of the child playing with the snake; the wolf and the leopard dwelling peacefully with sheep; and the lion and lamb, and cow and bear dwelling together and eating straw like the ox (Isa 11:6-8 and 65:25). We know that in heaven, there are animals because the saints ride white horses at the Second Coming of Jesus (Re 19:14).

In summary, the animal creation was plunged into the same degenerate state as mankind so that they could also be redeemed with us into liberty. Therefore, it can be expected that on the new earth where the saints will live for eternity (Re 21:1-7), animals will be living in harmony with each other and mankind as God originally designed in His first creation.

Note 6 at Ro 8:20: The Greek word that was translated "vanity" here is the word "MATAIOTES," and it means "emptiness as to results" (Vine's Expository Dictionary). In this verse it specifically means "failing of the results designed, owing to sin" (Vine's Expository Dictionary). This is speaking of the non-human creation (see note 5 at this verse) being subjected to a corruption (Ro 8:21) that was not God's original design.

ROMANS 8:21

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

Note 7 at Ro 8:21: God made creation involuntarily subject to the same corruption that mankind voluntarily entered into so that He could reunite us through redemption back into the glorious creation He originally intended for us to be.

ROMANS 8:22

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

Note 8 at Ro 8:22: Many times we are awestruck at the perfect balance that we see in nature. As glorious as it may seem, it is not God's best. Creation as we see it today has been corrupted and is far less than what God originally intended for it to be. All of creation is groaning and travailing together in pain and will not be relieved until the manifestation of the children of God (see note 4 at Ro 8:19).

ROMANS 8:23

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

Note 9 at Ro 8:23: The Holy Spirit is called the "firstfruits" of our salvation. Where there are first fruits, there has to be further fruit. Paul spoke of the Holy Spirit as being the earnest, or

down payment, of our salvation with more to come (2Co 5:5 and Eph 1:14).

As wonderful as our salvation is right here in this life, it is not complete. The flesh (see note 3 at Ro 7:18) is a constant source of trouble, and even victorious Christians groan for the time when we will be delivered from this flesh at the redemption of our bodies (2Co 5:1-4).

Note 10 at Ro 8:23: The word "adoption" is used five times in the New Testament (Ro 8:15, 23, 9:4; Ga 4:5; and Eph 1:5). People draw many analogies from this term that have merit, but this verse makes it very clear that the term "adoption" is referring to the time when we will receive our glorified bodies.

Note 11 at Ro 8:23: Jesus purchased redemption for us--spirit, soul, and body--but our redemption is not completed yet. Our spirits are the only part of us that have experienced total redemption (see note 3 at Mt 26:41).

The English word "redemption" was translated from the Greek word "APOLUTROSIS," and this Greek word means "(the act) ransom in full" (Strong's Concordance). However, it is specifying more than just the payment of a ransom; it includes the deliverance that comes as a result (Vine's Expository Dictionary). So Paul was speaking of the time when we will experience in our bodies what Jesus has already purchased for us.

This can be illustrated by the way trading stamps are used.

First, the stamps have to be purchased, and then they are redeemed for the desired product. The purchase is essential, but so is the redemption. No one really wants the stamps. They want what the stamps can be redeemed for.

The purchase for our total salvation has already been made with the blood of Jesus, but our bodies are not redeemed yet. That is to say, we have not yet received all the benefits of that transaction in our physical bodies. That will take place at the Second Coming of the Lord, when we receive our new glorified bodies (see note 3 at Lu 24:39).

ROMANS 8:24

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

Note 12 at Ro 8:24: Eph 2:8 says, "For by grace are ye saved through faith." Is there a contradiction between these two scriptures? Not at all. Putting faith in God's provision is what saves us, but hope is an important part of faith (see note 12 at Ro 5:4).

This verse makes it very clear that hope is not based on what is seen. Someone who says, "I have no reason to hope," doesn't understand what hope is. Hope comes directly from God (Ro

15:13) through His Word (Ro 15:4).

ROMANS 8:25

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

Note 13 at Ro 8:25: This verse definitely links patience and hope together. Hope produces patience. When we are in need of patience, we are in need of hope (see note 10 at Ro 5:3).

ROMANS 8:26

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

Note 1 at Ro 8:26: The word "likewise" is stressing that in the same way that hope helps us endure until the redemption of our bodies (Ro 8:23), so the Holy Spirit helps us through the frailties of our flesh by interceding for us.

Note 2 at Ro 8:26: The word "helpeth" was translated from the Greek word "SUNANTILAMBANOMAI," and it means "to take hold of opposite together, i.e. co-operate (assist)" (Strong's Concordance). It describes a union, not the Holy Spirit doing all the interceding for us. The Holy Spirit helps us as we are interceding, but He doesn't automatically do it for us.

Note 3 at Ro 8:26: The Greek word that was translated "infirmities" in this verse is "ASTHENEIA," and it means "feebleness (of mind or body); by implication, malady; morally, frailty" (Strong's Concordance). This same word was translated "weakness" five times (1Co 2:3, 15:43; 2Co 12:9, 13:4; and Heb 11:34), so it is easy to see that this word is describing mental and moral weakness, not sickness.

Paul went on to describe what these infirmities are when he said, "For we know not what we should pray for as we ought." The infirmities this scripture is speaking of are the weaknesses that come from not knowing how we should pray.

Note 4 at Ro 8:26: This has been an encouraging scripture for countless believers. It is certain that none of us knows exactly how to pray in every situation. Therefore, it is very comforting to know that the Holy Spirit is there to help us. However, as mentioned in note 2 at this verse, He helps us; He doesn't do the interceding for us but through us.

Even Jesus drew on this ministry of the Holy Spirit. It is written in Joh 11:33 and 38 that Jesus groaned in the Spirit twice

when He raised Lazarus from the dead. What infirmity did Jesus have that He needed this ministry of the Holy Spirit? Jesus had no sin, but He did have an infirmity--His physical mind. Even a sinless human mind could not comprehend raising a man from the grave after four days.

If Jesus needed the Holy Spirit to help Him when He didn't know how to pray, then certainly this should be an important ministry of the Holy Spirit in our lives.

Note 5 at Ro 8:26: This intercession of the Holy Spirit is with "groanings which cannot be uttered." Some Spirit-filled Christians have said that this means groaning that cannot be uttered in our normal speech and therefore have said this is referring to speaking in tongues (see note 13 at Mr 16:17 and note 9 at Ac 2:4). Yet this is referring to an intercession that is different from speaking in tongues.

In Joh 11:33 and 38, Jesus groaned in the Spirit twice. This is the exact terminology that is used here in Ro 8:26, and in Joh 11, it is easy to see that no words were uttered. It was exactly as the Scripture states, a groaning in the Spirit.

All those who have the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit have or will have this happen to them. Paul was referring to this in Ga 4:19 when he spoke of travailing in birth for the Galatians. As explained in note 16 at Joh 11:33, this groaning of the Holy Spirit is not just of grief but a groan of anger and resistance against Satan's devices in people's lives. Many times

Christians don't discern this, because they think they are the only ones grieved with their situations. But this is the Holy Spirit desiring to get into intercession with people against their problems.

Although the groaning is unutterable, it can be discerned, and many times people react to this with audible groans or other outward acts. This has led to religious doctrines and traditions that are offensive to many people and are unscriptural. There is nothing wrong with people reacting to the inner working of the Holy Spirit as long as they don't confuse their reactions with the Holy Spirit's actions. This intercession cannot be uttered.

Any counterfeits that religion may have produced only serve to illustrate that there has to be a genuine. The genuine groaning in the Spirit is priceless.

ROMANS 8:27

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

Note 6 at Ro 8:27: "He that searcheth the hearts" is a reference to God. God knows our hearts, and He knows that the Holy Spirit will only intercede for the will of God to be done. The

Holy Spirit is never at a loss as to how to convey our needs to the Father, as we sometimes are. That's the reason this ministry of the Holy Spirit is so important. There is such oneness between the Father and the Holy Spirit that even His groanings are perfectly understood.

ROMANS 8:28

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

Note 7 at Ro 8:28: This is a very powerful verse with a wonderful promise, but it has been greatly abused and misapplied. This verse is not saying that everything that happens to us is from God and is used by Him to accomplish His purposes in our lives. The Bible doesn't teach that.

2Pe 3:9 makes a clear statement that the Lord is "not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." However, many men and women are perishing, because they have a choice. So, regarding salvation, God's will is not being done in the lives of many people.

Concerning physical healing, the Bible states that Jesus has already provided healing for us (Isa 53:5, see note 2 at Mt 8:17

and my note at 1Pe 2:24) and that it is God's will for us to be healed (3Jo 2). Yet not all of us are healed, and our sicknesses are not automatically working some redemptive purpose in our lives (see note 2 at Joh 9:2 and note 4 at Joh 11:4).

Ro 8:28 begins with the word "and." This means that the statement about everything working together for our good was made after Paul had spoken of the Holy Spirit making intercession for us. If we are not cooperating with the Holy Spirit so that He can make intercession for us (see note 4 at Ro 8:26), then everything will not work together for our good.

This verse also says this happens for those "that love God, to them who are the called." That means this doesn't apply to everyone. However, this verse has been used to try to convince even unbelievers that God is controlling the circumstances of their lives. That is not the message of this verse.

Also this verse does not say that everything that comes our way is from God but rather that the Lord can work it together for our good through the intercession of the Holy Spirit. Ro 6:16 clearly states that if we yield to the devil, we become his slaves. The false teaching that nothing happens to us but what God wills or allows has caused many of us to yield to Satan's bondage instead of resisting him (Jas 4:7).

People may cite experiences where they learned great lessons through tragedy and argue that these negative experiences are the only way the Lord could have accomplished His will in

their lives. Again, that is not what the Bible teaches (see note 7 at Ro 3:4).

2Ti 3:16-17 says, "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." 2Ti 3:17 says that God's Word will make us perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works. That means we don't have to learn through hardships. God's Word is for correction and reproof.

Although not ordained by God for their good, people will experience tribulation. Therefore, they can and should learn from trials, but God's Word could have taught them the same thing with less grief. Those who submit to their problems because they believe God has brought them to teach them something are making a great mistake. That mistake is allowing the devil to inflict much pain in their lives.

Ro 8:28 is really promising that when we let the Holy Spirit intercede through us with these groanings that cannot be uttered, then we can rest assured that regardless of what the devil brings across our path, God can turn that situation around and work it together for our good.

ROMANS 8:29

For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate [to be] conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.

Note 1 at Ro 8:29: The word "foreknowledge" refers to God knowing who would accept His offer of salvation in advance of them actually doing it. The Scriptures teach that we (believers) were chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world (Eph 1:4). That's how infinite God's ability is to know our choices in advance.

The Scriptures also reveal that there are some things God does not know. Twice in the book of Jeremiah, God said the fact that people would offer their children as sacrifices to demon gods never even came into His mind (Jer 19:5 and 32:35). There are some things that God Himself said He had never foreseen.

It is most probable that the Lord has the ability to know everything in advance, but He simply doesn't choose to exercise that ability in every situation. He told us to be wise concerning that which is good, and simple (or innocent) concerning that which is evil (Ro 16:19). He also told us to think on things that are true, honest, just, pure, lovely, of good report, and things that have virtue and praise (Php 4:8). That's the way He desires us to be because that's the way He is.

Therefore, when God acted surprised that Adam and Eve had

eaten of the forbidden tree, He probably was. As we have already pointed out from Eph 1:4, God chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world. He knew there would be a transgression and a need for redemption before man was even created. But apparently, He did not utilize His foreknowledge to the extent that He knew every move that man was making. No reason is given for this, but certainly one reason is that an absolute use of God's foreknowledge would hinder His relationship with man.

God sent two angels to Sodom and Gomorrah to see if their actions were really as bad as had been reported to Him (Ge 18:20-19:29). The Lord tested Abraham (Ge 22:1-10). After the test, He said, "For now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me" (Ge 22:12). The Lord repented for choosing Saul to be king when He saw the way he turned out (1Sa 15:11). The Scripture contains many other examples besides these.

God's ability to know all things in advance is limitless, but by His choice, God does not know every detail. Understanding foreknowledge provides the foundation for understanding predestination (see note 2 at this verse), calling (Ro 8:30), and election (1Pe 1:2).

Note 2 at Ro 8:29: This verse provides the key for unlocking the answer to the doctrine of predestination. Predestination is dependent on foreknowledge (see note 1 at this verse).

The word "predestinate" means to predetermine.

"Predestinate" and its variant "predestinated" are only used four times in the New Testament (Ro 8:29-30; Eph 1:5, and 11).

People have interpreted this doctrine as saying that God predetermines everything in people's lives, including whether they will be saved or lost. This interpretation is not consistent with other doctrines or examples in Scripture. This belief will destroy people's motivation to fight evil and do good. If God predetermines everything that happens in people's lives, then everything that happens to them is God's will--even sin. That is not true.

This verse limits God's predestination to only those whom He foreknew. This means that only those people who God knew would accept His offer of salvation have been predestined. He does not predestine people to be saved or lost. Those whom He foreknew in Christ have been predestined to be conformed to the image of Christ. As we can tell by observation, God doesn't even force that to happen. With some Christians, this will not occur until they receive their glorified bodies, but it will occur.

God gave all people free will, and God will not violate that free will except in judgment. Even in judgment, God is only enforcing the choices that people have already made of their own free will. All people have a God-given right to go to hell if they want to.

Just as in Ro 8:28, God works everything together for good for those who already love Him. And even then He does not take away their free will. Everything that happens to them is not good,

and it is not from God. However, God, in His infinite wisdom, can work it together for good (see note 7 at Ro 8:28). Ro 8:29 is simply continuing to develop the truth that God is for man and has predetermined that those who have come to Him for salvation will be saved to the uttermost.

Understood correctly, this verse provides great reassurance to believers that God is for them and working with them to bring them to the complete stature of the Lord Jesus Christ (Eph 4:13).

Note 3 at Ro 8:29: This English word "firstborn" was translated from the Greek word "PROTOKOS." According to Strong's Concordance, this is a compound Greek word comprised of "PROTOS," which means "foremost (in time, place, order or importance)," and "TIKTO," which means "to produce (from seed...)." Therefore, this word "firstborn" could refer to either first in order or importance. Both of these applications are true of Jesus.

Although others were raised from the dead before Jesus (see note 3 at Mr 16:6), Jesus was the first one to be raised from the dead never to die again. Jesus was also the firstborn in the sense of importance, since His resurrection made all other resurrections possible.

In context, Paul was stressing that we believers are predestined to be just like Jesus, then he drew from scripture that prophesied Jesus being the firstborn (Ps 89:27). Therefore, the point being made is the extent that we will be conformed to the

image of Jesus. There are other children who will become just like Jesus, and it is in this sense that "firstborn" is used here.

ROMANS 8:31

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

Note 4 at Ro 8:31: Ro 8 came as the answer to the hopelessness of the flesh ever pleasing God that Paul declared in Ro 7. Ro 8 is full of victory through the indwelling presence and power of the Holy Spirit.

Paul had just spoken of the Holy Spirit making intercession for us (Ro 8:26-27), God working all things together for our good (Ro 8:28), and us being predestined to be conformed to the image of Jesus (Ro 8:29). Here he was drawing a conclusion from all these things. If God be for us (which is exactly what he had been saying), then no one can successfully be against us. This is an exclamation of victory for the Spirit-controlled life that Paul continued teaching through the end of this chapter.

ROMANS 8:32

He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?

Note 5 at Ro 8:32: Paul had already used this same reasoning in Ro 5:6-10.

ROMANS 8:33

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

Note 6 at Ro 8:33: If Almighty God has dropped all charges against us because of our faith in Christ, then why should we let the accusations of others bother us?

ROMANS 8:34

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

Note 7 at Ro 8:34: Jesus is making intercession for us. Therefore, Jesus couldn't be the one ministering condemnation to us. Intercession and condemnation are opposites.

ROMANS 8:35

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

Note 8 at Ro 8:35: Neither people nor external things can separate us from the love of Christ. The only way for believers to be exempted from the love of Christ is to deny their faith in Christ (see note 5 at Ac 5:5 and note 4 at Ac 12:23).

ROMANS 8:37

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

Note 9 at Ro 8:37: How can we be more than conquerors? Conquerors have the victory and the spoils of war, but they have to fight to get them. We are more than conquerors because we

have victory and all the spoils of war, but we didn't do the fighting. Jesus fought and won this battle for us, and all we have to do is receive the benefits. That's being more than conquerors.

ROMANS CHAPTER 9

ROMANS 9:1

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

Note 1 at Ro 9:1: Paul was going to great lengths to verify that what he was saying was the truth. This needed to be stated because Paul's statement in Ro 9:3 would certainly have been interpreted as a hyperbole (exaggeration) if there had not been some clarification.

ROMANS 9:2

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

Note 2 at Ro 9:2: This is not a contradiction to other statements by Paul (2Co 7:13; Ga 5:22-23; Php 1:4, 18, 2:2, 18, 4:4; Col 1:24; 1Th 3:9, 5:16; and Phm 7). Paul did operate in the joy of the Holy Ghost, just as he told others to do. However, there

was this continual heaviness and sorrow in his heart when it came to the unbelieving Jews.

This is comparable to those who have lost loved ones who were very dear to them. In the process of time, they "get over it" to the point that they may be considered very joyful people, but there is always that vacancy in their hearts. Similarly, Paul was rejoicing in the Lord, but he always had this great longing in his heart for the salvation of the Jews.

ROMANS 9:3

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

Note 3 at Ro 9:3: What a statement! Paul was saying that he would go to hell in the place of the Jews if that would accomplish their salvation. This is nothing less than the perfect "AGAPE" love (see note 4 at Joh 13:35) that Jesus demonstrated when He died for our sins.

Although this desire on Paul's part is commendable, there is nothing that he could have accomplished that Jesus hadn't already accomplished completely. Paul was specifically commissioned by the Lord to go to the Gentiles, yet we see him repeatedly going to the Jews, even after he said he wouldn't do that anymore (see note

2 at Ac 13:14). Paul even went to Jerusalem, apparently against the instruction of the Holy Ghost (see note 4 at Ac 21:4), and was more than willing to lay down his life for the sake of the Jews (Ac 21:13). This illustrated his great love for the Jewish people as he was describing here.

ROMANS 9:6

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

Note 1 at Ro 9:6: Paul had just expressed a compassion for the Jewish race that was so strong that he was willing to be damned in their place if that would have produced their salvation (see note 3 at Ro 9:3). As he said in Ro 9:2, this produced "great heaviness and continual sorrow."

According to Ro 9:4-5, one of the reasons he longed for the salvation of the Jews so intensely was because he himself was a Jew and he was acutely aware that Christ was the Jewish Messiah. How ironic it was that Jesus came unto His own and His own received Him not (Joh 1:11). Here Paul began to relate the reasoning that had enabled him to cope with the Jews' tragic rejection of Jesus.

The promises made to Abraham and his descendants were

not made to his physical descendants but to his spiritual seed (Ro 9:6-8). Therefore, the true people of God have not rejected their Messiah. There is a body of believers comprised of believing Jews and Gentiles, and they are the true Israel of God. To back this up, Paul cited the two Old Testament examples of Isaac (Ro 9:9) and Jacob (Ro 9:10-13) to illustrate how the blessing of God was not passed on through the normal method of inheritance but through election.

Paul had expressed some of these same thoughts twice before in this epistle, and he used the same reasoning in his letter to the Galatians (Ro 2:28-29, 4:12-16; Ga 3:16, and 6:16).

ROMANS 9:8

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

Note 2 at Ro 9:8: Paul cited six Old Testament references to make his point that God's promises to Abraham and his "seed" were made to the spiritual offspring of Abraham, not the physical.

First, Isaac was not the firstborn son of Abraham, entitled to the birthright and blessing, yet he obtained both because he was chosen by God. Next, Jacob was not the firstborn either, yet he

was chosen by God. These two examples confirm that God's promise was not inherited by birth.

Paul also pointed out that before Jacob and his twin brother, Esau, were born, God told Rebekah that the elder would serve the younger. They weren't even born yet, so they had not done any good or evil that caused God to make this choice. This means that the blessing of Abraham was not obtained by individual performance either but was based solely on God's choosing by grace.

ROMANS 9:11

(For [the children] being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth;)

Note 3 at Ro 9:11: Paul was citing these Old Testament examples to show that those who were considered the children of Abraham were not his physical descendants, but they were chosen by God, in this case, before they were born. This proves God's election is not based on birth or performance (see note 2 at Ro 9:8).

However, some people have interpreted this verse and the quotation from Mal 1:2-3 in Ro 9:13 as an example of extreme

predestination. They reason that Esau was hated by God before he was born (see note 5 at Ro 9:12). Therefore, some people are predestined by God for damnation, while some are elected to salvation before they are ever born. This means people have no choice in the matter. That is not what these verses are saying.

As explained in note 2 at Ro 8:29, God's predestination is based on His foreknowledge (see note 1 at Ro 8:29). Only those whom God foreknew would accept Him have been elected and predestinated. God did not force Jacob and Esau to make the choices they made. But through His foreknowledge, He was able to foresee who would respond to Him, and that is the one He chose.

Note 4 at Ro 9:11: The doctrine of election is based on God's foreknowledge (see note 1 at Ro 8:29) the same way that predestination is based on His foreknowledge (see note 2 at Ro 8:29). This can be clearly seen in 1Pe 1:2, which says we are "elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father." God does not choose people independent of their free will. Instead, through His foreknowledge, He knows who will choose Him, and those are the individuals He elects to be His own.

ROMANS 9:12

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

Note 5 at Ro 9:12: There is no record in Scripture that the individual Esau ever served the individual Jacob. However, Esau's posterity (Edomites, Ge 32:3) did serve Jacob's posterity (1Ch 18:13). Although Paul was making reference to the actual birth of these two individuals, the prophecy given to Rebekah and its fulfillment were referring to the nations that came from these men.

ROMANS 9:13

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

Note 6 at Ro 9:13: God did not hate Esau and love Jacob while they were still in their mother's womb. He did choose Jacob over Esau as the inheritor of Abraham's blessing before they were born, but Esau could have walked with God and have been blessed by God if he had chosen to do so.

Mal 1:2-3 says, "I loved Jacob, and I hated Esau." This was written in approximately 557-525 B.C., thousands of years after the birth of Esau and Jacob, so this is not speaking of God hating Esau at birth. There is no mention in Scripture that God hated the individual Esau. This reference to Esau was referring to the nation of Edom (Esau's descendants) in the same way that the term Israel often referred to the entire nation of Israel, not the

individual (Ge 32:28). God was saying that He had rejected the nation of Edom and had chosen the nation of Israel.

Paul quoted from Malachi, not to show that God hated Esau and loved Jacob while they were still in their mother's womb, but rather to confirm that the choice God made before they were born, based on His foreknowledge (see note 1 at Ro 8:29), was the right choice. Jacob went on to become a mighty man of God, and Esau despised the things of God. God's choice of Jacob didn't cause this to happen. This quotation from Malachi simply confirms that God's foreknowledge was accurate.

Jacob was called to a higher position than his brother, Esau, before they were born, but that does not display any rejection of Esau on God's part. That is comparable to God choosing certain people to be pastors while others are called to be deacons. The deacons are not inferior to the pastors. They are simply called to different positions. Jacob and Esau were called to different positions before they had done any good or evil, to illustrate that election was not based on performance but choice.

ROMANS 9:14

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

Note 7 at Ro 9:14: Paul was seeking to stop anyone from interpreting his statements in a way that would make it look like God was unfair in His dealings with man. God can extend mercy to an individual without treating others unjustly. Just as in the parable that Jesus gave in Mt 20:1-16, God treats everyone fairly, but to some He chooses to give extra mercy. Does that mean He is unjust? Not at all.

If God chooses to call individuals to account for their actions and choices they have made of their own free will, He is completely justified to do that at any time. In Lu 13:1-9, Jesus mentioned the people whom Pilate had killed and mingled their blood with the sacrifices, and the people on whom the tower in Siloam fell and were killed. He raised the question (Lu 13:2 and 4), "Were these people worse sinners than others to suffer this judgment?" He answered His own question by saying that all of them deserved such judgment, but God in His mercy had spared them (see note 2 at Lu 13:2).

He then immediately followed that with the parable about the man with an unproductive tree in his vineyard. He was going to cut down this dead tree and replace it, but the vine dresser interceded for the tree. The owner then gave him some extra time to see if he could revive it (see note 1 at Lu 13:6). Likewise, people all deserve judgment, but through things such as the intercession of others, God will sometimes show extra mercy to certain individuals.

However, if He chose not to extend mercy to anyone and He

called everyone's accounts due, He would be completely justified in doing so. It's His choice. God has never brought judgment on anyone without being righteous in doing so. Likewise, He has never extended mercy to any individual that made His treatment of someone else unfair.

ROMANS 9:16

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

Note 8 at Ro 9:16: There is a very subtle trap that many people who have been used of God fall into. They see what God has accomplished through them, and they begin reasoning, "God must use me because of my great faithfulness." But that is not the case. God has never had anyone qualified working for Him yet. God is a lot more merciful than we are faithful.

ROMANS 9:17

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

earth.

Note 9 at Ro 9:17: Some people have taken this word from God about Pharaoh and made a paragraph out of it. They have drawn conclusions that God predetermines everything in people's lives to the degree that free will doesn't exist. That is not what the Lord was speaking of here.

We can be assured that Pharaoh had already had ample opportunity to respond to God prior to the time that God began to harden his heart. Since Pharaoh had already made his choice, even to the point that he proclaimed himself to be a deity and commanded the Egyptians to worship him, God was not unrighteous in bringing him into judgment for this.

God did not make Pharaoh the way he was, but God used, for His glory, the way Pharaoh had chosen to be. God exalted Pharaoh and gave him leadership of the nation, knowing full well how he would respond to His demands to let His people go. Since Pharaoh had already hardened his heart toward God, God was not unjust in continuing to harden his heart further until His glory was manifest completely.

This verse is depicting God as using Pharaoh's hardened heart for His glory, but Pharaoh had already had his chance. God simply upheld his choice and received glory through His triumph over Pharaoh and all his host.

ROMANS 9:19

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

Note 10 at Ro 9:19: The argument that Paul was refuting here is not a correct interpretation of what he had said. This is comparable to his statement in Ro 6:1 where he said, "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?" Paul knew someone would interpret his teaching on grace to be advocating sin; therefore, he spoke their wrong conclusion and then refuted it. Likewise here, he stated an abusive interpretation of his statements and then proceeded to counter it.

ROMANS 9:20

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

Note 11 at Ro 9:20: The truth that Paul was expressing here is the overall point that was made in the book of Job. God never did explain Himself to Job as Job had insisted that He do. Instead, God rebuked Job for his "know-it-all" attitude (Job 38:18). God basically asked Job what right he had to maintain his own

integrity at the expense of God's (Job 40:8). Job got the message when God spoke to him from a whirlwind, and he humbled himself (Job 42:2-6). Paul's message should draw the same response from us.

ROMANS 9:21

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

Note 12 at Ro 9:21: Paul was drawing an illustration from an Old Testament passage of Scripture, Jer 18:3-6. In that passage, God sent Jeremiah to the potter's house to learn a lesson. The potter was making a vessel; it was marred, so he remade it. The Lord spoke to Jeremiah and said, "O house of Israel, cannot I do with you as this potter?...Behold, as the clay is in the potter's hand, so are ye in mine hand, O house of Israel" (Jer 18:6).

From this illustration, some people have drawn a wrong conclusion that the Lord creates some people evil and predestined to a life of damnation, not by their choice, but by God's. However, a closer look at the passage in Jeremiah and its context will show that is not the case.

First of all, the potter started to create a good vessel, but the clay was marred. Whose fault was that? It wasn't the potter's

fault. The clay was faulty. The potter took this imperfect clay, and instead of discarding it, he refashioned it into another vessel that may not have been worth nearly as much as his original design but was still useful.

Likewise, the Lord does not create certain individuals for destruction. However, some do become marred by their own choices, not due to any fault of the Creator. Instead of just removing them from the earth, the Lord will endure (Ro 9:22) their atrocities. He may even put them in great positions of authority, such as He did with Pharaoh, so that He may manifest His great power through His victory over them and their devices. God can still use someone who has rejected Him, in the same way that a potter can take a marred piece of clay and find some use for it.

By continuing to read the context of Jeremiah's experience with the potter, it can be clearly seen that the Lord does not do these things against the will of the individual. In Jer 18:7-10, the Lord said that when He purposes evil or good against a nation, if that nation repents, then God will change His plans for them. That undeniably states that man's choice influences God's choice.

ROMANS 9:24

Even us, whom he hath called, not of the Jews only, but

also of the Gentiles?

Note 13 at Ro 9:24: Paul had started explaining in Ro 9:6 that there was a true people of God, not based on nationality, but on faith in God. Here he gave four quotes (Ro 9:25-29) from two Old Testament prophets to show that this was not a new concept but had been prophesied hundreds of years before.

ROMANS 9:27

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

Note 14 at Ro 9:27: This verse could read, "only a remnant shall be saved." That is the point Paul was making. His next reference from Isaiah (Ro 9:29) complements this one, and it is clearly stressing that there will be very few Jews who are truly God's people.

ROMANS 9:30

What shall we say then? That the Gentiles, which followed

not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith.

Note 1 at Ro 9:30: Paul was saying that this was the conclusion or the summary of his point in this chapter.

Note 2 at Ro 9:30: This is another one of Paul's radical statements. How can it be that people who are not seeking to be righteous can become righteous? The answer to this question lies in God's grace.

By grace, God has provided righteousness for all people, regardless of their actions. If people will believe and receive this gift, God will reckon them righteous. This is what happened to the Gentiles. They had a reputation for not seeking God (Eph 4:17-19 and 1Pe 4:3), yet the Gentiles as a whole accepted God's gift of salvation, while the Jews as a whole, who were seeking after God, rejected His gift. The reason for this was given by Paul in Ro 9:32-33 (see note 5 at Ro 9:32).

People who don't understand God's grace will always be confused and unbelieving that a person who hasn't lived a morally good life can be righteous in the sight of God, while a morally good person can be unrighteous in His sight. Righteousness is based on faith, not actions.

ROMANS 9:32

Wherefore? Because [they sought it] not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumblingstone;

Note 3 at Ro 9:32: Why is it that a person who is seeking so hard to please God can be rejected, while a person who has not sought God at all can come into a righteous relationship with Him? This is an important question, and its answer is one of the most profound doctrines in Scripture.

Paul gave the answer to his own question. The answer is faith and its object. The Jews were zealous (Ro 10:2) for the things of God, but their faith was in themselves. They were trusting that they could earn God's favor by their acts of righteousness. On the other hand, the Gentiles had no holiness to trust in. So when they heard the Gospel that Jesus paid man's debt, they readily accepted His "gift" of salvation, while the religious Jews could not abandon their trust in themselves for salvation.

This same problem exists today. Millions of church people are trying to live holy lives, but they do not have a true faith in Jesus as their Savior. If they were to stand before God and He was to ask them what they had done to deserve salvation, they would immediately start recounting all their acts of holiness: church attendance, financial giving, etc. Regardless of how good their actions are compared to others, they always come short of

the perfect standard of God (see notes 5-6 at Ro 3:23). The only response to this kind of question that would grant them entrance to heaven is for them to say that their only claim to salvation is faith in Jesus as their Savior. Anything more or less is damned.

Note 4 at Ro 9:32: There is a difference between works of faith (1Th 1:3 and 2Th 1:11) and works of the Law (Ga 2:16; 3:2, 5, and 10). The difference is not in the action but in the attitude. A work of the Law is some act of righteousness or holiness that is being done to earn the favor of God. A work of faith may be the same act of righteousness or holiness, but it is done as a labor of love (1Th 1:3). It is done not to obtain favor but in gratitude for the favor that has already been extended to us in Christ. Works of the Law and faith in Jesus are opposites (Ro 11:6).

Note 5 at Ro 9:32: Jesus is the "stumblingstone" that Paul was speaking of. God has placed Jesus directly in the path of every person. Those who fail to put their complete trust in Jesus because they are trusting in themselves will stumble and fall into hell, while those who believe in Him will never be ashamed (Ro 9:33).

ROMANS 9:33

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

ashamed.

Note 6 at Ro 9:33: Those who are offended at Jesus are the ones who are trusting in themselves. They feel they will be accepted with God because they think they are holy enough on their own. It is humbling to admit that all of our righteousness is as filthy rags (Isa 64:6). This is why the religious people have always been the persecutors of true Christians (see note 6 at Mr 15:10).

Note 7 at Ro 9:33: This quotation does not appear in the Old Testament in these exact words. It is most probable that Paul was quoting the last part of Isa 28:16. If so, Paul substituted the words "be ashamed" for Isaiah's words, "make haste." In the context of war, making haste is descriptive of a person who has been shamed in battle.

ROMANS CHAPTER 10

ROMANS 10:2

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

Note 1 at Ro 10:2: This scripture goes contrary to many religious teachings. Many people believe that it's not necessary to believe the right thing--just as long as people believe something, they'll be all right. However, Paul disproved this kind of thinking by saying in this passage that their zeal was without knowledge and therefore they were not saved.

The Jews were very zealous about their religion, but that wasn't enough. It's not enough just to believe; people have to believe the truth. Even those who are sincere can be sincerely wrong. Jesus said, "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (Joh 8:32).

ROMANS 10:3

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

Note 2 at Ro 10:3: This verse describes the condition of much of the church today. Most people are unaware that there are two kinds of righteousness. Only one type of righteousness is acceptable to God.

One form of righteousness that Paul described here is one's own righteousness (Php 3:9). These are the acts of holiness that we do in an attempt to fulfill the commands of the Old Testament Law. This is an imperfect righteousness because human nature is imperfect and incapable of fulfilling the Law (see note 7 at Ro 8:3). Therefore, our own righteousness, which is according to the Law, is inadequate. Isaiah said it this way in Isa 64:6, "All our righteousnesses are as filthy rags."

In contrast, God's righteousness is perfect. Also, God's righteousness is not something that we do but something that we receive as a gift through faith in Christ (see note 5 at Ro 10:5).

Paul made it very clear in this verse that it's not possible to trust in our own righteousness and in God's righteousness also. If we believe that we must earn God's acceptance by our holy actions, we cannot be believing in God's righteousness, which is a

gift. It has to be one or the other; we cannot mix the two. Righteousness is not what Jesus has done for us plus some minimum standard of holiness that we have to accomplish (Ro 11:6).

ROMANS 10:4

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

Note 3 at Ro 10:4: The Greek word that was translated "end" here is "TELOS," and it means "the point aimed at as a limit, i.e. (by implication) the conclusion of an act or state (termination...)" (Strong's Concordance).

This verse does not say that Christ is the end of the Law but rather that Christ is the end of the Law for the purpose of righteousness. This means that people no longer become righteous, or justified in the sight of God, by how well they perform the deeds of the Law (see note 2 at Lu 1:6). However, the Law still has useful purposes for New Testament believers.

The Old Testament Law still reveals to us God's holiness, which we should seek to emulate. It must be understood, however, that our failure to comply does not bring the punishments pronounced in the Law since Jesus bore those for us

(Ga 3:13). Our compliance does not earn the blessings of God either; those only come by faith in Christ (Ro 4:8-13). We also need to be acquainted with the Old Testament Law so that we will better understand our New Covenant and God's historical dealings with mankind.

Also, Paul said to Timothy, "But we know that the law is good, if a man use it lawfully" (1Ti 1:8). He then said that the Law was not made for a righteous person (i.e., a Christian, 2Co 5:21) but rather for an unbeliever (1Ti 1:9-10). So, a Christian can still use the Law when ministering to unbelievers to show them their sin and their need for a savior (see note 4 at Ro 3:19).

As Christians, we should not discard the Old Testament Law. When understood in the light of the New Covenant, the Old Covenant provides us with invaluable revelation of God. Paul was simply stressing that the time when people sought to be justified through the keeping of the Old Testament Law is over. Now, people must put their faith in Christ, and Christ alone, for salvation.

Someone might ask, "Was anyone ever justified by the keeping of the Law?" The answer is yes. One person did become righteous through His keeping of the Old Testament Law. That person was Jesus. One of the reasons the Old Testament Law was given was so that Jesus could legally earn man's redemption. Now that the purchase has been completed, that function of the Law is over.

Note 4 at Ro 10:4: The phrase "to every one that believeth" limits this benefit only to believers (Christians). To those who do not receive God's gift of salvation, the Law is still in effect (see note 4 at Joh 3:36). Those who fail to believe on Jesus will have to answer to God for each and every one of their transgressions of the Law.

ROMANS 10:5

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

Note 5 at Ro 10:5: In Ro 10:5-9, Paul contrasted those who seek righteousness by the Law with those who seek the righteousness of God as a gift (see note 2 at Ro 10:3). Those who seek to earn righteousness through keeping the Law are consumed with "doing" (this verse), while those who receive righteousness by faith are simply confessing what has already been done (Ro 10:9).

This is a simple yet profound difference. If we are still "doing" acts of holiness to get God to move in our lives, then we are still operating under a "Law" mentality that is not faith (Ga 3:12). When we simply believe and confess what has already been provided through Christ, that's grace.

Those who are living under the Law and those who are living under grace should have very similar actions of holiness, but their motivations are completely opposite. Legalists have their attention on what they must do, while those living by faith have their attention on what Christ has already done for them.

For instance, the Scriptures teach us to confess with our mouths and believe with our hearts and we will receive from God (Ro 10:9-10 and Mr 11:23-24). Legalists think that means they can get God to heal them by confessing that by His stripes, they are healed. However, those who understand God's grace will not confess the Word to get healed. They will confess that by His stripes, they are healed, because they really believe it has already been done.

Analyzing our mindsets is the simplest way of discerning whether we are operating in true Bible faith or a legalistic counterfeit. If the motive for our actions is to be accepted by God, then that's legalism. If we live holy out of faith and gratefulness for what God has already done, then that's grace.

Note 6 at Ro 10:5: The Greek word that was translated "live" here is "ZAO," and it means "to live" (Strong's Concordance). However, that definition by itself doesn't fully convey Paul's intent in quoting this Old Testament passage from Le 18:5. It is clear from the context that Paul was contrasting the effort to keep the Old Testament Law with the New Testament faith in Christ. He was concluding that the observance of the Old Testament Law for producing righteousness (see note 3 at Ro 10:4) is inferior to

the New Testament method of obtaining righteousness by putting faith in Jesus as our Savior.

This quote from Moses is intended to illustrate the harshness of living by the Old Testament Law. Paul quoted this same Old Testament passage in Ga 3:12, and so did Nehemiah in Ne 9:29. In each case, the context clearly reveals that the writer was quoting this verse to speak of the negative effects of living by the Law.

The word "live" in the English language can mean many different things, as can be seen by the multiple definitions of this word in any dictionary. In the American Heritage Dictionary, there is one definition that communicates Paul's meaning here. The word "live" can mean "to continue to be alive."

Using this definition, this quote from Le 18:5 is saying that once people start trying to fulfill the Law to earn righteousness, they will have to subsist, or continue to be alive, by their ongoing adherence to the precepts of that Law. In other words, once they decide to "earn" right standing with God, then God is going to give them what they deserve. The thing that is dreadfully wrong with this thought is that people don't really deserve righteousness. They don't need justice. They need mercy!

This is what Paul was communicating when he quoted this scripture from Leviticus. Trying to achieve righteousness by keeping the Law doesn't bring peace, because it puts the burden of salvation on our shoulders (see note 2 at Ro 5:1). In contrast,

salvation by grace through faith places the burden on Jesus and allows us to walk free.

ROMANS 10:6

But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise, Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down [from above]:)

Note 7 at Ro 10:6: Paul was saying that failure to understand justification by grace produces an attitude that, in effect, denies Christ's substitutionary work for us. Those who still believe that their performance is essential for salvation are denying that Christ is in heaven, making intercession for man (Ro 8:34). That dethrones Christ from His present position. It is like denying that Christ has ascended into heaven for us.

Likewise, a belief that we have to bear the punishment for our sins is like denying that Christ's death was sufficient by itself. If we are to be punished for our sins, then Christ might as well not have died for us.

All of this is continuing what Paul began in Ro 10:5, contrasting the doing of the Old Testament Law and the believing of the New Testament grace (see note 5 at Ro 10:5). The Law mentality puts us under an unbearable load of performance to

obtain righteousness; faith just receives the righteousness that has already been provided through Christ.

ROMANS 10:8

But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, [even] in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach;

Note 8 at Ro 10:8: In Ro 10:6-8, Paul was again quoting Moses, this time from De 30:11-14. However, in this verse, Paul added, "that is, the word of faith, which we preach," and that provides us with a commentary on Moses' statements.

A reading of De 30:11-14 by itself might lead some to suggest that Moses was saying that the Law was not hard to keep. Yet that is against everything that Paul taught and the context of this verse in particular. Paul was saying that Moses' statements in this quotation were actually prophesying the day of justification by faith that Paul was preaching.

Paul revealed in Ga 3:22-25 that the purpose of the Old Testament Law was to shut us up "unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed" (Ga 3:23). The Law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ. From Paul's use of Moses' statements to make his point, it can be supposed that Moses had a

revelation of the day when faith in Christ would supersede the Law (De 18:15-18).

ROMANS 10:9

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

Note 9 at Ro 10:9: Remember that, in context, Paul had been contrasting two types of righteousness (see note 2 at Ro 10:3). The righteousness of the Law binds a person up in "doing," while the righteousness of faith just receives what Christ has already done (see note 5 at Ro 10:5).

This verse is stressing the simplicity of receiving righteousness by faith, as opposed to the bondage of trying to produce our own righteousness that is by the Law (Php 3:9). An attempt to amplify too much on the conditions of this verse would counter the point that Paul was making. However, in light of other scriptures, some explanation needs to be given.

This verse is not saying that anyone who just says the words, "Jesus is Lord," and believes that He rose from the dead is born again (see note 2 at Joh 3:3). As explained in note 1 at Mr 1:24, the Greek word "HOMOLOGEO," translated "confess" here,

means more than just saying words. It literally means "to assent, i.e. covenant, acknowledge" (Strong's Concordance). By looking at Jesus' statement in Lu 6:46, a true confession of Jesus as Lord has to be heartfelt enough to involve a person's actions.

There are some groups that interpret the word "Lord" in a way that denies the deity of Jesus (see note 3 at Lu 1:43 and note 8 at Joh 5:23). This confession of Jesus as Lord has to be a declaration of faith in Jesus as God manifest in the flesh (1Ti 3:16). A Jesus who is less than God could not provide salvation for the whole human race.

Therefore, this verse is a promise to those who believe on Jesus to the extent that they are willing to change their actions accordingly and confess Him as Lord (God) with their mouths so that they might be saved.

ROMANS 10:10

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

Note 10 at Ro 10:10: For true salvation to take place, there must be confession with the mouth and belief from the heart. People tend to major on one or the other of these requirements, but that fails to obtain the desired results.

Confession is scriptural, but it is a result of faith in the heart. Only when people have already believed with their hearts will confession release the power of God. Confession without sincere belief in the heart is dead works (Heb 9:14).

Likewise, faith without works is dead (Jas 2:17). When people really believe in their hearts, they will speak what they believe (Mt 12:34 and Lu 6:45). A faith that won't confess what is believed is not God's kind of faith (see note 6 at Ro 4:17).

Failure to properly combine these two truths has caused some people to fail in their attempts to receive from God, and reject "faith teaching" or "confession teaching." However, if one of these truths was presented without the proper emphasis on the other, then it wasn't scriptural teaching. The truths of faith and confession will work when used according to the instructions in this verse.

ROMANS 10:11

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

Note 11 at Ro 10:11: The emphasis here, as well as in Ro 10:13, is on the word "whosoever." In the first chapter of

Romans, Paul started making the point that Gentiles did not have to become Jews to be saved (Ro 1:16). He had developed that truth all the way through this epistle and was declaring it once again.

ROMANS 10:12

*For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek:
for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him.*

Note 12 at Ro 10:12: The differences between Jew and Gentile do not mean much to the Christian church today. Therefore, many church people may feel that they agree with this verse. However, Paul was speaking of more than just racial differences.

Paul was saying that there is no difference between moral and immoral people. There is no difference in the sight of God between the religious and the nonreligious. All people are sinners and in need of the same salvation. This point still aggravates the religious people today as much as it did in the days of Paul.

ROMANS 10:13

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

Note 13 at Ro 10:13: Paul was quoting from Joe 2:32. Paul interchanged the word "saved" for the word "delivered" that Joel used. There is no contradiction. Salvation includes deliverance (see note 7 at Ac 2:21).

ROMANS 10:14

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

Note 1 at Ro 10:14: Paul had just conclusively proven that salvation was not according to people's performance but according to their acceptance of God's grace by faith in Christ Jesus. This was great news! Yet this great news will not do people any good if they don't know it. The Gospel has to be heard to release its power (Ro 1:16).

Note 2 at Ro 10:14: Ro 10:14-15 shows a number of things that must happen in order for people to be born again. Individuals must believe, but they need to have something or someone to

believe in. Therefore, ministers have to share the Gospel with them. But in order for that to happen, others have to send the ministers to the uttermost parts of the earth.

So there are three areas of responsibility for salvation: individuals have to believe, ministers have to preach, and others have to send. Satan works on all three of these areas to stop people from receiving God's gift of salvation.

Satan tries to harden people's hearts through the deceitfulness of sin (Heb 3:13) to the point that the Gospel will not penetrate. If people are faithful to the two other responsibilities, salvation still will not occur if the individuals reject the good news.

Yet many times, people are hungry and ripe for salvation, and still there is no one to share the good news with them. If Satan can stop people from preaching the Gospel through a lack of preachers or a lack of people who will send them, then he can stop people from being saved.

As Christians, we cannot take responsibility for people's reactions to the Gospel, but we must take the responsibility of preaching the Gospel and giving so that others can preach the Gospel.

ROMANS 10:15

And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!

Note 3 at Ro 10:15: When people understand that sharing the Gospel is just as important a part of salvation as others accepting the message, then they will rejoice with Isaiah about the beauty of those who share this good news.

ROMANS 10:16

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

Note 4 at Ro 10:16: Contrary to popular belief, an anointed messenger with an anointed message is not always well received. This quotation from Isaiah shows that not everyone received his message about the coming Messiah. The same thing was true of many other prophets that the Lord sent to Israel, including Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and even Jesus.

An incorrect belief that if we really minister in the power of the Holy Spirit, we will always succeed in converting the hearers has brought undeserved condemnation on many of us Christians.

We cannot take responsibility for other people's actions.

ROMANS 10:17

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

Note 5 at Ro 10:17: Faith comes by hearing God's Word because God's Word is His faith (see note 4 at Ro 3:3). People cannot be born again (see note 2 at Joh 3:3) through human faith. They have to use God's supernatural faith (see note 2 at Mt 8:10, note 4 at Joh 20:29, and note 6 at Ro 4:17) to receive God's supernatural gift of salvation.

The only place to obtain God's kind of faith is from God's Word. Therefore, we cannot compromise God's Word. It must be proclaimed boldly to make God's faith available to those who choose to believe.

Note 6 at Ro 10:17: Notice that this verse says faith comes by "hearing," not by "having heard." People cannot rest on revelation they received from God years ago, unless they are still hearing the Lord speak those same truths to them now.

The Lord doesn't fail to speak; we fail to hear. Therefore, we

can keep our faith in the present tense if we will open our spiritual ears to hear what God's Word is saying (Pr 4:20-22, see note 10 at Mr 6:52 and note 3 at Mr 8:17).

ROMANS 10:19

But I say, Did not Israel know? First Moses saith, I will provoke you to jealousy by [them that are] no people, [and] by a foolish nation I will anger you.

Note 7 at Ro 10:19: What was it that Israel knew? Paul was saying that Israel knew the Gospel of salvation by faith, which he had expounded on in this epistle. One way this truth was revealed in the Old Testament was through the prophecies concerning the Gentiles becoming the people of God. If God was going to embrace nationalities that didn't adhere to the rites and ceremonies that were delivered to the Jews, then it should have been evident that these things were not prerequisites to salvation.

Paul quoted a prophecy from Moses and two additional passages from Isaiah to verify that this truth was revealed in the Old Testament. The truth was there, but the Jewish hearts had become so hardened through legalism that they couldn't perceive this truth (see note 3 at Mr 8:17).

ROMANS CHAPTER 11

ROMANS 11:1

I say then, Hath God cast away his people? God forbid. For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, [of] the tribe of Benjamin.

Note 1 at Ro 11:1: Paul's message of grace and his announcement that Gentiles could become a part of the true Israel of God through the new birth without becoming Jews was a startling revelation. Paul had systematically dealt with objections that a legalistic Jew would have to such a message. Here he answered the criticism that this would mean God has forsaken the Jewish nation.

Basically, Paul was saying that Jews are not excluded, but that they just aren't favored over the Gentiles. He cited himself as an example of a believing Jew and compared the status of Israel to that of the Jewish nation in the days of Elijah. In the same way that there were 7,000 true worshipers of God left in Israel in Elijah's day (1Ki 19:18), so there was a remnant of believing Jews in Paul's day.

The rest of this chapter is Paul's explanation of Israel's current relationship to God during the church era.

ROMANS 11:6

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

Note 2 at Ro 11:6: Paul stated the doctrine of justification by grace through faith so clearly in his writings that any person who claims to believe the Bible has to acknowledge this truth. However, one of Satan's cleverest deceptions is to take a truth and add to it until it is no longer the truth. Lest that happen with this doctrine of grace, Paul stated emphatically that we cannot combine anything with God's grace as a requirement for salvation.

In the same way that gasoline and water don't mix, so grace and works will not mix. Justification has to be all works or all grace, but not a combination of the two.

In this epistle, Paul repeatedly made his point of justification by grace through faith. He repeatedly stressed that faith is the only requirement on our part. Here he was repeating that point once again in perhaps his clearest words yet. Still, an abundance of religious people today cannot accept the fact that all we have to do is to believe to receive God's grace (Ro 5:2). This verse

leaves no alternatives.

ROMANS 11:8

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

Note 1 at Ro 11:8: This appears to be a paraphrase of a Bible truth that is expressed in many scriptures. See De 29:4; Isa 6:9, 29:10; Jer 5:21; Eze 12:2; Mr 4:11-12; Lu 8:10; and Ac 28:26.

ROMANS 11:9

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

Note 2 at Ro 11:9: This quotation from David comes from Ps 69:22-23. In that psalm, David was prophesying about the suffering of Christ in the first person, as if David himself was actually describing his own suffering. However, there are seven very clear references to Christ in this psalm that were quoted in the New Testament as having a direct fulfillment through Jesus:

(1) Ps 69:4, fulfilled in Joh 15:25; (2) Ps 69:9a, fulfilled in Joh 2:17; (3) Ps 69:9b, fulfilled in Ro 15:3; (4) Ps 69:21a, fulfilled in Mt 27:34, Mr 15:23, and Lu 23:36; (5) Ps 69:21b, fulfilled in Mt 27:48, Mr 15:36, and Joh 19:28-30; (6) Ps 69:22, fulfilled in Ro 11:9; and (7) Ps 69:25, fulfilled in Ac 1:20. Also, Ps 69:8 was certainly fulfilled in Jesus (Joh 7:5), although this passage was not quoted in the New Testament.

Therefore, Ps 69 is a prophetic psalm where Christ, through David, was describing His earthly ministry and crucifixion. The denunciation of Ps 69:22-23 was given by Christ against those who crucified Him. When understood in this context, it is easy to see that this blindness and deafness didn't cause the Jews' rejection, but it was the Jews' rejection that caused this pronouncement.

All of this is to say that God is not unjust and has never taken away people's freedom of choice unless they had already exercised that choice against Him (see note 9 at Ro 9:17).

ROMANS 11:11

I say then, Have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid: but [rather] through their fall salvation [is come] unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy.

Note 3 at Ro 11:11: The Greek word translated "fall" here is "PIPTO," signifying "a complete irrevocable fall" (Rienecker). Paul was saying, "Is this rejection of Jesus by the Jews irrevocable?" The answer is no.

The Amplified Bible reads, "So I ask, have they stumbled so as to fall [to their utter spiritual ruin, irretrievably]? By no means!" The New International Version reads, "Again I ask: Did they stumble so as to fall beyond recovery? Not at all!"

Paul then began to relate how the Jews can still be saved during this "church age," and he cited Old Testament scriptures to declare a future time when the whole nation of Israel will once again come back into God's fold (Ro 11:26-27).

ROMANS 11:15

For if the casting away of them [be] the reconciling of the world, what [shall] the receiving [of them be], but life from the dead?

Note 1 at Ro 11:15: Paul had conclusively proven that the Jews did not have a monopoly on God. The Gentiles could now come directly to God without becoming Jews. He had also stated that the Jewish nation as a whole had rejected God because they denied the concept of a savior. They had become their own savior

(see note 3 at Ro 9:32).

This could leave some Jews wondering if the Jews had been forsaken by God. Paul answered this question in this chapter (see note 1 at Ro 11:1). There was still a remnant of Jews who were heirs through faith (Ro 11:5).

In this passage of Scripture, Paul drew a conclusion: "If the Jews' rejection of Christ opened up salvation to the rest of the world, then what will happen when the Jews turn back to God? It will be resurrection from the dead!" Paul's statement that the return of the Jews to their God will be life from the dead could be an analogy. That is, Paul could be comparing the Jews' return to God to the joy and blessing that would come from seeing a friend raised from the dead. Or Paul could be speaking literally that the time the Jews return to God will be at the end of the world and the return of Christ when the dead shall be raised.

In either case, Paul was stressing that there will be a future spiritual restoration of Israel (see note 3 at Ro 11:26) and great blessing on the world as a result.

ROMANS 11:18

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

Note 2 at Ro 11:18: Paul was warning the Gentiles against gloating in the fact that salvation had been opened unto them as though it happened because of some goodness on their part. It wasn't earned. It was God's grace. Paul explained that the Jews' unbelief (Ro 11:20) caused them to be broken off and that the same thing could happen to the Gentiles (Ro 11:21) if they didn't stand strong through faith.

ROMANS 11:22

Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in [his] goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off.

Note 3 at Ro 11:22: Even in the midst of God's judgment, there is mercy. The people who suffered destruction during the Flood and the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah experienced the severity of God, but these judgments were actually acts of mercy upon the world as a whole. During those times, sin was so rampant in the earth that it was like a cancer. God did radical surgery on mankind by removing these vile sinners and therefore allowed the human race as a whole to survive.

Likewise, God's turning from the Jewish nation to the Gentiles had both severity and goodness in it. It had severe

consequences for the Jews, but it blessed the rest of the world.

ROMANS 11:23

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

Note 1 at Ro 11:23: God is not only "able" to restore the Jewish nation, but Paul went on to say in Ro 11:26 that all Israel "shall" be saved (see note 3 at Ro 11:26).

ROMANS 11:25

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

Note 2 at Ro 11:25: This phrase, "fulness of the Gentiles," is only used here. A similar expression, "times of the Gentiles," is used in Lu 21:24. There are two obvious ways this phrase could be interpreted.

First, the fullness of the Gentiles could be referring to all the Gentiles who are foreordained (see note 2 at Ro 8:29) to come to Christ, experiencing salvation. Then there would be a wonderful move of God among the Jews in which the Jewish nation as a whole would come to the Lord (Ro 11:26). The Amplified Bible's translation would lend itself to this interpretation: "a hardening (insensibility) has [temporarily] befallen a part of Israel [to last] until the full number of the ingathering of the Gentiles has come in."

This phrase could also be referring to the time when the Gentiles would no longer be dominating the Jewish nation, and specifically referring to the occupation of Jerusalem by the Gentiles. This is apparently what Lu 21:24 is referring to. If so, then there will have to be a future fulfillment of the scriptures that prophesied the end of Gentile control of Jerusalem, since Israel has physically possessed Jerusalem since the Israel-Arab War of 1948, yet the nation as a whole has not come to God.

ROMANS 11:26

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

Note 3 at Ro 11:26: An abundance of Old Testament prophecies speak of the Jewish nation being restored to its former status, both physically and spiritually. It must be understood that when Paul said "all" Israel will be saved, he was using a figure of speech (see note 6 at Mr 1:5). The Jewish nation as a whole will return to God, but there will be individual Jews who do not.

ROMANS 11:29

For the gifts and calling of God [are] without repentance.

Note 4 at Ro 11:29: In context, this is speaking about the future restoration of the Jewish nation. Paul was saying that even though the Jews had rejected God, the Lord was still going to bring His promises to the Jews to pass. This is an act of total grace on the Lord's part (see note 5 at Ro 1:5).

This scripture has a broader application too. Any calling, or gift to accomplish that calling, that the Lord gives an individual is without repentance. It means that regardless of what an individual does, God doesn't withdraw His gifts and callings. This is why some ministers who fall into sin can still see the supernatural gifts of God flow in their ministries.

That is not to say that living a life separated unto God is not important. It is very important. People who are living in sin are

going to have their faith made shipwreck through their consciences (1Ti 1:19). They will begin to lose effectiveness. However, as much as they can operate in faith, the gifts and callings of God that they have received are still there and they will function.

Anything that you've ever received from God is still there; it just needs to be activated by faith.

ROMANS CHAPTER 12

ROMANS 12:1

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, [which is] your reasonable service.

Note 1 at Ro 12:1: Paul was speaking to us Christians. It is possible to commit our lives to the Lord for the purpose of salvation and yet not be yielded to the Lord in our daily lives. It is only when we make the total sacrifice of every area of our lives that we begin to see God's perfect will manifest through our lives.

Note 2 at Ro 12:1: Paul used the mercies of God to encourage these Romans to give themselves totally to God. Today, most preachers use the wrath of God to try to drive people to God. Some people need the condemnation of the Law to make them aware of their need for a Savior, but as a whole, we could "draw more flies with honey than with vinegar." It's the goodness of God that leads people to repentance (Ro 2:4).

Note 3 at Ro 12:1: Notice that we are the ones who have to make this presentation of our bodies to the Lord. He will not do it for us. Some of us might pray, "Lord, You do what You have to do to make us serve You." That is not a proper prayer. We cannot

have someone lay hands on us to impart this commitment to us. We cannot just rebuke the flesh and expect it to disappear. We have to give our bodies to God as living sacrifices daily (see note 4 at this verse).

Note 4 at Ro 12:1: This sounds like a contradiction in terms. How can we be living sacrifices when sacrifices are always dead? This is speaking of the fact that offering ourselves to God is not just a one-time deal. We have to die to our own desires daily. This has to be a living, ongoing commitment to the Lord.

The Apollo spacecraft traveled to the moon, but it was not just as simple as blasting off and landing on the moon. Course corrections were made every ten minutes or so for the entire trip. And then, they only landed a few feet inside the targeted landing area of 500 miles. Yet the mission was a success.

Likewise, there has to be a starting place for this decision to be a living sacrifice. We have to "blast off," or start our journey, sometime, but we don't ever "arrive" in this life. We just leave and start toward the goal (Php 3:12-13). We may be making course corrections every ten minutes for the rest of our lives.

You see, living sacrifices have a tendency to keep crawling off the altar. Every minute of every day, we have to reaffirm this decision to be totally separated unto God. This is what Paul was referring to by the term "living sacrifice."

Note 5 at Ro 12:1: Many Christians think that living lives

totally consecrated to God is something that only preachers or a few lay people do. They see it as "extra" and not "normal" Christianity. However, Paul said this level of commitment is our reasonable service. Jesus died for each one of us. Each one of us ought to live for Him.

ROMANS 12:2

And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what [is] that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

Note 6 at Ro 12:2: Many of us would think that if we fulfill the conditions of Ro 12:1, then everything else would automatically work out. Yet Paul went on to state that we also have to renew our minds. Many of us who have had made genuine commitments to the Lord but haven't renewed our minds through God's Word, have needlessly suffered many problems.

Note 7 at Ro 12:2: The Greek word that was translated "conformed" here is the word "SUSCHEMATIZO," and it means "to fashion alike, i.e. conform to the same pattern" (Strong's Concordance). This scripture is telling us that we should be different than the unbelievers. Most of us as Christians recognize this, but we seem at a loss as to how to accomplish it. This verse goes on to give us the answer. The key is our minds. "For as he

thinketh in his heart, so is he" (Pr 23:7).

If we think on the same things that the world thinks on, we are going to get the same results. If we keep our minds stayed upon God through the study of His Word and fellowship with Him, then we'll have perfect peace (Isa 26:3). It's that simple.

Note 8 at Ro 12:2: The Greek word that was translated "transformed" here is the word "METAMORPHOO" and is the same word that we get our word "metamorphosis" from. It is describing a complete change, like that of a caterpillar changing into a butterfly. This word is also the same word that was used to describe Jesus' transformation when His face shone and His garments became white as the light (Mt 17:2).

Making our thinking line up with God's Word will affect this complete transformation in our lives.

Note 9 at Ro 12:2: When people are born again (see note 2 at Joh 3:3), they become totally new creations in their spirits. Their spiritual salvation is complete. They don't need any more faith, joy, or power. They are complete in Him (Col 2:9-10, see note 3 at Mt 26:41).

However, it is not God's will that we only be changed on the inside. He wants to manifest this salvation in our physical lives also. That takes place through the renewing of our minds.

We each have a spirit, soul, and body (1Th 5:23). As born-

again believers, our spirits are as perfect as they will ever be in heaven (see note 1 at Ro 8:18). If we will change our thinking so that we believe what God says in His Word about who we are and what we have, then this agreement between our spirits and souls forms a majority, and our flesh will experience the life of God that has been deposited in our spirits.

If we fail to renew our minds, we can live our entire time on this earth without experiencing the abundant life that Jesus provided for us (Joh 10:10).

Note 10 at Ro 12:2: The American Heritage Dictionary defines "prove" as "to establish the truth or validity of by argument or evidence...to be shown to be such; turn out." Therefore, this is speaking of how to physically display God's will in our lives. This is a promise that if we fulfill the requirements of these two verses, we will prove (not might prove, but will prove) the good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

Finding God's will for our lives is not hard when we do what these verses instruct us to do. As a matter of fact, it would be impossible to miss God's will once we commit ourselves to God as living sacrifices and begin to renew our minds. Finding God's will for our lives only becomes hard if we are not totally committed to God.

Note 11 at Ro 12:2: There is a difference of opinion among scholars as to whether Paul was using "good, and acceptable, and perfect" to describe the will of God or if he was saying that there

are stages in walking in the will of God (i.e., good, then acceptable, then perfect). Either of these cases would be doctrinally correct.

God's will certainly is good and acceptable and perfect. It is also true that people don't move immediately into everything that God has for them, but there is always growth into the things of God.

Note 12 at Ro 12:2: This is a wonderful promise that we can prove God's will in our lives (see note 10 at this verse). The first step is to make a total commitment of our lives to the Lord ("living sacrifice," Ro 12:1). Actually this is the will of God for us all. Our vocation is secondary. God's will for all of us is to be living sacrifices to Him. Once that is accomplished, more specific direction will come as we renew our minds.

If we try to find God's vocation for us but don't present ourselves to God as living sacrifices, then we are frustrating God's plan. God doesn't just want our service; He wants us. Once He gets us, He'll get our service.

ROMANS 12:3

For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think [of himself] more highly than he

ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.

Note 13 at Ro 12:3: Paul began this sentence with the conjunction “for.” That means the point he was making in Ro 12:3 was a continuation or result of what was said in Ro 12:2. Many times the word “because” can be used interchangeably with “for.”

Paul had just admonished them about humility and submission (living sacrifices) being the way to true success. He here continued that thought by giving these people another reason for humility: the fact that every person has been dealt “the measure of faith” (see note 16 at this verse).

In other words, we all, as believers, have perfect plans for our lives that we can “prove” (see note 10 at Ro 12:2) if we will totally yield ourselves to God. We may have different gifts, but they are not better than someone else’s. Paul then continued in Ro 12:4 with the word “for” again, and drew a comparison from the way our bodies have different parts but they all work together to make one body.

Note 14 at Ro 12:3: Religion has interpreted this verse to say that we should think of ourselves in a lowly manner, but that is not what Paul was saying. It would be proper to say that we shouldn't think of ourselves more highly or more lowly than we ought to. We need to remember that any good thing we have is a gift from God (1Co 4:7). Paul was admonishing us to have the

correct viewpoint, not a lowly viewpoint.

Note 15 at Ro 12:3: The dictionary defines “according as” as “in proportion to.” Paul was saying we need to remember that God has given every believer “the” measure of faith (see note 16 at this verse). This sobers us up because we recognize that what we have is a gift from God that every child of God possesses. Some of us live up to more of our potential than others, but it’s only God’s mercy that makes it possible for any of us to accomplish anything.

Note 16 at Ro 12:3: God has dealt to every person "the" measure of faith, not "a" measure of faith. There are not different measures with God. The Lord doesn't give one person great faith while another person is given small faith. We were all given an equal amount of faith at salvation. The problem is not that we don't have faith, but rather we don't know how to use our faith, because of a lack of renewing our minds.

Peter said we had "like precious faith" with him (2Pe 1:1). The same faith that he used to raise Dorcas from the dead (Ac 9:36-42) is in us too. The same faith that Peter used is the same faith that we have.

Paul said he was living his Christian life by the faith of the Son of God (Ga 2:20). Since we all have been given "the" measure of faith, then that means we all have the faith of the Son of God in us. Our faith is sufficient. The problem we're experiencing is a result of our minds not knowing what we have.

In the same way that a car battery transfers its power to the starter through battery cables, so our minds are what allows this faith of God that is in our spirits to flow into our bodies. If our minds are not renewed, then it's like having corroded cables. The power is there, but it won't flow. Likewise, we believers have the same faith that Jesus has, but it won't flow through us until we renew our minds through the Word of God.

ROMANS 12:4

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

Note 1 at Ro 12:4: This verse starts with the word "for"; i.e., a conjunction, just as in Ro 12:3 (see note 13 at that verse). This is linking Paul's following statements with his previous ones.

Paul had encouraged these people to experience the perfect will of God (Ro 12:2) by humbling themselves (being living sacrifices). This was vastly different than the world's formula for success and needed some further explanation. Therefore, in Ro 12:3, Paul explained that every believer has been given the same opportunity for success through "the" measure of faith.

Here in Ro 12:4, Paul continued to explain that although

every believer has been given "the" measure of faith, not every believer has been given the same job in the body of Christ. He used the physical body to illustrate this.

We have many different parts of our bodies, and they all have different purposes or functions. Yet it takes all the parts operating in unity to make one body. Likewise, it takes all the different people in the church performing their different functions to make up Christ's body.

So, in Ro 12:1-2, Paul gave a "foolproof" formula for success. However, to keep anyone from gloating at the tremendous potential of these promises, he made it clear in Ro 12:3 that everyone has been given the same potential. And in Ro 12:4-8, he revealed that people all have different functions, and all need each other.

ROMANS 12:6

Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, [let us prophesy] according to the proportion of faith;

Note 2 at Ro 12:6: It must be remembered that Paul was not teaching on the function and administration of these seven gifts that he mentioned here like he taught on the nine gifts of the

Spirit in 1Co 12-14. He was simply mentioning these gifts to illustrate his point that different people in the body of Christ have different positions or functions. However, there are some truths concerning these gifts that can be gleaned from these scriptures.

First, it needs to be pointed out that all believers can operate in the gifts listed here, but that doesn't mean that is their ministry. For instance, they can and should be able to teach others, but that doesn't make them teachers. Paul said "ye may all prophesy one by one" (1Co 14:31), but he also made it clear that not all are called to be prophets (1Co 12:29). It is definite that believers should all show mercy and be givers, but some people are given supernatural gifts in these areas. Paul was describing that here.

Concerning the gift of giving, Paul said that giving should be done with simplicity (see note 7 at Ro 12:8). Those that rule should be diligent about it (see note 8 at Ro 12:8), and those who have the gift of mercy should administer it with cheerfulness.

Note 3 at Ro 12:6: The Greek word that was translated "prophecy" here is "PROPHETEIA," and it "signifies the speaking forth of the mind and counsel of God" (Vine's Expository Dictionary). This originally applied to Old Testament prophets who predicted future events, but it came to be applied to any messengers who were inspired by God as they spoke. This would apply to preachers today if they are speaking under the anointing of the Holy Spirit.

This verse is saying essentially the same thing that Peter said

in 1Pe 4:11. If we are going to prophesy, let's do it according to the ability that God gave us--the measure of faith (see note 16 at Ro 12:3).

ROMANS 12:7

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

Note 4 at Ro 12:7: The Greek word that was translated "ministry" here is "DIAKONIA," and it means "attendance (as a servant, etc.)" (Strong's Concordance). It is a variation of the Greek word "DIAKONOS" from which we get our English word "deacon."

This same Greek word was translated "serving" in Lu 10:40, "service" (referring to charitable giving) in Ro 15:31, "relief" in Ac 11:29, and "office" in Ro 11:13. The Amplified Bible translates this verse as "[He whose gift is] practical service, let him give himself to serving."

Therefore, we can surmise from these things that this is referring to those who have been given a ministry of serving others, as Paul described the house of Stephanas (1Co 16:15). This gift is not often recognized and even more often not appreciated, but it is listed in good company. Paul mentioned this

between prophecy and teaching, two gifts that are recognized and accepted.

Note 5 at Ro 12:7: The ministry gift of a teacher was placed third in authority in the church, behind the ministry of the apostle and the prophet (1Co 12:28). The basic difference between a teacher and a preacher is that a preacher proclaims and a teacher explains.

ROMANS 12:8

Or he that exhorteth, on exhortation: he that giveth, [let him do it] with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness.

Note 6 at Ro 12:8: The Greek word for "exhorteth" is "PARAKALEO." It was translated "beseech" in Ro 12:1, 15:30, and 16:17. It was also translated as "comfort," and it is probably used that way here.

Our English word "exhort" comes from the Latin "EXHORTARI." This is a compound word comprised of "EX," meaning "completely" (www.wordinfo.info) and "HORTARI," meaning "encourage" (Merriam-Webster Dictionary). Therefore, the word "exhort" literally means to "completely encourage." One of the purposes of prophecy is exhortation (1Co 14:3).

Exhortation is also a part of preaching the Word (2Ti 4:2). However, this verse shows that there are individuals who have a special ministry of encouraging people. This is a supernatural gift.

Note 7 at Ro 12:8: The Greek word used here for "simplicity" is "HAPLOTES." According to Vine's Expository Dictionary, this word denotes "simplicity, sincerity, unaffectedness," but it can also mean "simplicity as manifested in generous giving." Most scholars agree that in this case, it is expressing generosity. Therefore, Paul was saying that those who have a ministry of giving should be generous in their giving.

Note 8 at Ro 12:8: The Greek word translated "ruleth" here is "PROISTEMI," and it means "to stand before, i.e. (in rank) to preside" (Strong's Concordance). The Amplified Bible translates this phrase as "he who gives aid and superintends, with zeal and singleness of mind." This could be speaking of any one of many positions of authority in the church. This does reveal that although everyone has some degree of authority, there are individuals who are given a ministry gift of ruling, or what might be commonly called "administration" today.

Note 9 at Ro 12:8: The Greek word that was translated "cheerfulness" here is "HILAROTES," and it means "alacrity" (Strong's Concordance). "Alacrity," according to the American Heritage Dictionary, means "cheerful willingness; eagerness." HILAROTES comes from the Greek word "HILAROS," which is where we get our word "hilarious." Therefore, Paul was

admonishing those who show mercy to be hilarious in their administration of this gift.

ROMANS 12:9

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

Note 1 at Ro 12:9: The American Heritage Dictionary defines "dissimulate" as "to disguise under a feigned appearance." The Greek word that was used for "without dissimulation" was "ANUPOKRITOS," and it means "unfeigned, undisguised" (Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon). This Greek word was only used six times in all the New Testament. In Jas 3:17 it was translated "without hypocrisy," and four times it was translated "unfeigned" (2Co 6:6, 1Ti 1:5, 2Ti 1:5, and 1Pe 1:22).

Paul was still talking about love when he said, "Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good." Part of true love is hatred (see note 2 at this verse). If we don't hate the things that oppose the one we love, then it is not God's kind of love. If we don't hate evil, then our love for God is with dissimulation. It is hypocritical.

It has become customary in our society to conceal our real feelings behind a hypocritical mask. Although we should be

tactful and not purposely say things to offend people, there is a time and a place for speaking the truth, even if it isn't popular.

In Le 19:17, the Lord said, "Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thine heart: thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbour, and not suffer sin upon him." That verse is saying that if we fail to rebuke our brethren when we see sin approaching, then we hate them. Many people have concealed their true feelings about evil under the pretense of "I just love them too much to hurt their feelings." The truth is, they just love themselves too much to run the risk of being rejected. That's hypocrisy.

This scripture commands us to abhor (see note 2 at this verse) that which is evil. We need to love the sinner, but hate the sin. We need to be outspoken on what is right and wrong. Jesus illustrated this scripture when He drove the moneychangers out of the temple (Joh 2:14-17).

Note 2 at Ro 12:9: The Greek word that was translated "abhor" here is "APOSTUGEO," and it means "to detest utterly" (Strong's Concordance).

Sometimes people have misunderstood and misapplied God's kind of love so that they no longer hate evil. However, Pr 8:13 says, "The fear of the LORD is to hate evil." Those who love the Lord hate evil (Ps 97:10). Only the wicked don't abhor evil (Ps 36:4).

Jesus got angry (see notes 5-6 at Mr 3:5), and the Scriptures

say His hatred for sin was the reason God anointed Him with gladness above His fellows (Ps 45:7 and Heb 1:9). It is impossible to truly love someone with God's kind of love without hating anything that comes against that person. There is a righteous type of anger that is not sin (Eph 4:26).

ROMANS 12:10

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

Note 3 at Ro 12:10: The word that was translated "brotherly love" here is "PHILADELPHIA." It means "fraternal affection" (Strong's Concordance) and comes from the Greek word "PHILOS" ["dear, i.e. a friend" (Strong's Concordance)]. The Greek word that was translated "kindly affectioned" here is "PHILOSTORGOS," a compound of PHILOS and "STORGE" ("cherishing one's kindred") (Strong's Concordance).

There is much confusion on the subject of love today because we have only one English word ("love") to describe a broad range of meanings. For example, if I said, "I love my wife, I love apple pie, and I love my dog," obviously I am not talking about love in the same degree or definition.

In the New Testament, three major Greek words described

the various kinds of love. One of these words, "EROS," was not actually used in the New Testament, but it was alluded to. The following is a brief definition of these three major words.

EROS - sexual passion; arousal, its gratification and fulfillment. This Greek word is not used in the New Testament, probably because its origin came from the mythical god Eros, the god of love. It is inferred in many scriptures and is the only kind of love that God restricts to a one-man, one-woman relationship within the bounds of marriage (Song 1:13, 4:5-6, 7:7-9, 8:10; 1Co 7:25; Eph 5:31; and Heb 13:4).

PHILEO - friendly love based on feelings or emotions. We could describe "PHILEO" love as tender affection, delighting to be in the presence of someone, or a warm or good feeling toward someone that may come and go with intensity.

This verb and its other related Greek words are found over seventy times in the New Testament. Although PHILEO-love is encouraged in Scripture, it is never a direct command. God never commands us to PHILEO (love) anyone, since this type of love is based on feelings. Even God did not PHILEO the world. He operated in "AGAPE" love toward us.

The following are some scriptures in which PHILEO or a form of it is used: Joh 5:20, 11:3, 36, 12:25, 16:27, 20:2; Ac 28:2; Ro 12:10; 1Ti 6:10; 2Ti 3:4; Tit 2:4, 3:4; Heb 13:1; 3Jo 9; and Re 3:19.

AGAPE - God's type of love; the highest kind of love. AGAPE is seeking the welfare or betterment of others even if there is not affection felt (paraphrase based on "Happiness Explained" by Bob Rigdon). AGAPE does not have the primary meaning of affection nor of coming from one's feelings.

Jesus displayed this AGAPE kind of love by going to the cross and dying even though He didn't feel like dying. He prayed, "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt" (Mt 26:39, Mr 14:36, Lu 22:41-42, and Joh 18:11). Jesus sought the betterment of mankind, regardless of His feelings.

We, too, can AGAPE (love) our enemies, even though we don't have any warm feelings of affection for them (Lu 6:35). If they are hungry, we can feed them; if they thirst, we can give them a drink (Ro 12:20-21). We can choose to seek the betterment and welfare of others regardless of how we feel.

The Apostle John said, "Let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth" (1Jo 3:18). Jesus referred to His love for others (Joh 13:34; 15:9, and 12), but He never directly told anyone, "I love you."

Note 4 at Ro 12:10: The American Heritage Dictionary defines "prefer" as "to choose as more desirable." That means this verse is admonishing us to desire the welfare of others more than our own. That is an awesome command that is only obtainable through God's supernatural love.

If this very simple yet very profound truth could be understood and applied, then strife would cease (Pr 13:10), the world would see Christianity as never before (see note 3 at Joh 13:35), and we would discover the true joy that comes from serving someone besides ourselves (Mt 10:39 and 16:25).

ROMANS 12:11

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

Note 5 at Ro 12:11: There are many scriptures against slothfulness, or laziness. Paul even went so far as to say, "This we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat" (2Th 3:10).

It is interesting that Paul spoke about not being slothful right after he mentioned brotherly love and preferring one another. This adds a very important balance to brotherly love, a balance that many today are missing. While it is true that we have a responsibility to help others, it is also true that a handout doesn't help a lazy person.

When we support those who are living in direct disobedience to God's instructions regarding slothfulness, we are hurting those people. Charity should be reserved for those who need it, not

those who abuse it.

Note 6 at Ro 12:11: The Amplified Bible's translation of this verse indicates that the "spirit" being spoken of here is the Holy Spirit ("Never lag in zeal and in earnest endeavor; be aglow and burning with the Spirit, serving the Lord"). The New American Standard Bible ("not lagging behind in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord") and the New International Version ("Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord") refer to "spirit" as our attitude.

The Greek word that was translated "spirit" is "PNEUMA." This word was used to distinguish the Holy Spirit many times (Mt 3:16, 10:20, 12:28; Lu 4:18, 11:13; Joh 7:39; and Ac 2:4), but it was also translated "spirit" when the context clearly indicates it is speaking of attitude (Mt 5:3; 1Co 4:21; 2Co 4:13; Eph 1:17, 4:23; Php 1:27; 1Ti 4:12; and Re 19:10).

PNEUMA can mean "mental disposition" (Strong's Concordance). In this application, "spirit" is speaking of our attitude. The American Heritage Dictionary defines "spirit" as "a predominant mood or attitude."

Note 7 at Ro 12:11: This same point was made in Eph 6:6-7 where Paul said, "Not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart; With good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men." Paul was emphasizing that even in our business endeavors, we are serving the Lord and not man. He repeated this same thought in Col 3:23

when he said, "And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men."

ROMANS 12:14

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

Note 8 at Ro 12:14: Many people think of a curse only in relation to witchcraft. It should go without saying that Christians should not practice witchcraft against those who have done them harm. However, that is not the type of curse that is being spoken of here.

The Greek word used for "curse" here is "KATARAOMAI," and it means "to execrate; by analogy, to doom" (Strong's Concordance). The word "execrate" means "to protest vehemently against; denounce" (American Heritage Dictionary). Vine's Expository Dictionary says KATARAOMAI means "to pray against, to wish evil against a person or thing."

Therefore, vicious talk about others is actually a curse. Without realizing it, many Christians curse others and thereby allow the devil access to the lives of those they are denouncing.

Pr 18:21 says, "Death and life are in the power of the tongue: and they that love it shall eat the fruit thereof." Every

word we speak releases either life or death. Our negative talk releases death. When we speak against others, we are actually releasing Satan against them.

Once we understand this, it should make us pray this prayer with David, "Set a watch, O LORD, before my mouth; keep the door of my lips" (Ps 141:3).

ROMANS 12:15

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

Note 9 at Ro 12:15: Self-centered people will not rejoice at someone else's prosperity. They will be jealous instead. Likewise, selfish people will not weep with those that weep, because they really don't care about anyone but themselves. Paul was continuing the thought about preferring one another (see note 4 at Ro 12:10).

ROMANS 12:16

[Be] of the same mind one toward another. Mind not high

things, but condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceits.

Note 10 at Ro 12:16: This is not saying that Christians should never occupy prominent positions. If that were true, then Paul would not have needed to admonish these people to be willing to associate with those of low estate. They wouldn't have any other choice.

Many Bible people were people of renown, even among the unbelievers [examples: Abraham, Isaac, Joseph, David, Solomon, Paul (Ac 28:7), and John (Joh 18:15)]. Paul was just saying that we shouldn't seek out prestigious people and snub those whom the world doesn't consider important. God doesn't evaluate people the way that the world does. Those who are greatest in His kingdom are the greatest servants.

We will miss some of the most beautiful people who could bless our lives if we judge people by the world's standards. We also run the risk of destroying our faith when we seek the honor that comes from man (see note 22 at Joh 5:44).

ROMANS 12:17

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

Note 11 at Ro 12:17: There is an unwritten but widely understood code in human relations that says we should treat people the way they treat us. Jesus taught just the opposite (see note 1 at Lu 23:34), and Paul was reaffirming that same teaching here. If we are to be Christ-like, then we cannot give people what they deserve.

Note 12 at Ro 12:17: It is not enough just to be honest in the sight of God. This scripture commands us to also have integrity in the sight of man. This corresponds to "abstain from all appearance of evil" (1Th 5:22). We not only need to be right, but we also need to appear right as much as possible.

ROMANS 12:18

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

Note 13 at Ro 12:18: This verse is advocating living peaceably with all people, yet the very wording reveals that this is not always possible. We are not responsible for other people's actions. We must pursue peace, even when we are not at fault, but the other people do have a choice. We should be sure that we are at peace with all people. Whether or not they are at peace with us is their decision.

ROMANS 12:19

Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but [rather] give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance [is] mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.

Note 14 at Ro 12:19: Ro 12:19-21 is humanly impossible. It takes the supernatural power of God's faith at work in our hearts to fulfill these scriptures. Letting God be the one who defends us is a matter of faith. If there is no God who will bring people into account for their actions, then turning the other cheek would be the worst thing we could do (see note 22 at Mt 5:44). But if there is a God who promised that vengeance is His and He will repay, then taking matters into our own hands shows a lack of faith in God and His integrity.

ROMANS 12:20

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

Note 15 at Ro 12:20: These coals of fire are not coals of

punishment or torment, but rather conviction. If this was urging us to be kind to our enemies because that would hurt them more than anything else, then that would be violating the context of this verse. Paul was telling us to live peaceably with all people (Ro 12:18) and to render to no one evil for evil (Ro 12:17). God's kind of love is being promoted, not some scriptural way to hurt those who hurt us.

When we walk in love toward those who hurt us, it heaps conviction on them. They know what their reaction would be if they were in our place, and to see us walk in love under adverse circumstances shows them that we have something special that they don't have.

Paul should know. He saw Stephen forgive and pray for the very people who stoned him to death. When Jesus appeared to Paul on the road to Damascus, He told him that it was hard "to kick against the pricks." The Lord was saying it was hard for Paul to resist the conviction that had come to him through Stephen's witness (see note 6 at Ac 9:5).

ROMANS 12:21

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

Note 16 at Ro 12:21: We cannot fight evil with evil. Evil has

to be overcome with good. It is frustrating to see the schemes of Satan and his kingdom; however, we must never let our frustration drive us to using their tactics. The wrath of man does not accomplish the righteousness of God (Jas 1:20). Instead of cursing the darkness, turn on a light.

ROMANS CHAPTER 13

ROMANS 13:1

Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God.

Note 1 at Ro 13:1: The subject of submission to authority is a very basic Bible doctrine. Some of the major areas of submission commanded in the Scriptures are (1) submission to God (Eph 5:24 and Jas 4:7), (2) submission to civil or governmental authority (Ro 13:1-7), (3) submission to the church or religious authority (Heb 13:17), (4) wives submitting to their husbands (Eph 5:22-24 and Col 3:18), (5) children submitting to their parents (Eph 6:1 and Col 3:20), (6) slaves submitting to their masters (today's equivalent would be employees submitting to employers, 1Pe 2:18), (7) the younger submitting to the older (1Pe 5:5), and (8) all of us submitting to each other in love (Eph 5:21 and 1Pe 5:5).

The Greek word translated "subject" here, as well as thirteen other times in the New Testament, is "HUPOTASSO." This was a military term meaning "to rank under" (Vine's Expository Dictionary). Although, in most cases, obedience is a part of submission, these terms are not synonymous. Just as those

enlisted in the army have limits to their obedience to an officer, so we only obey others as long as their commands do not oppose God.

A failure to understand the difference between submission and obedience has given birth to many false teachings that have caused some people to obey others in matters of sin. That is never commanded in the Word of God.

One of the easiest ways to see that a person can submit without obeying an ungodly command is to look at the life of Peter. Peter made some striking statements in 1Pe 2:13-14 when he said, "Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme; Or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well."

This was the same Peter who refused to obey the chief priests when they commanded him not to speak or teach anymore in the name of Jesus (Ac 4:18-19). When Peter and the other apostles continued their teaching and preaching about Jesus, the high priest and the Jewish elders imprisoned them. However, they were supernaturally freed from prison by an angel of the Lord who told them to go back to the temple and preach again (Ac 5:17-20). This command was a direct contradiction to the commands of the Jews.

The Jews again arrested Peter and the other apostles and said (Ac 5:28), "Did not we straitly command you that ye should not

teach in this name?" Peter responded by saying, "We ought to obey God rather than men" (Ac 5:29). This is always the bottom line. We never obey any person if that would cause us to disobey God. And yet, we are to submit to every ordinance of man (1Pe 2:13). Submission is an attitude, not an action. It will express itself through actions, but we can have a submissive attitude and yet disobey an ungodly command.

If government officials commanded us not to preach Jesus, we should follow the example of Peter, and not obey them. But we should also not rebel at their authority, in the same way that Peter and the other apostles did not rebel at the authority of the Jews.

When the apostles were beaten for their obedience to God, they didn't criticize or form a revolt. They praised God and kept right on preaching the Gospel (Ac 5:41-42). They didn't obey ungodly commands, but they didn't become ungodly, either, by cursing those who had hurt them (see note 8 at Ro 12:14). They submitted to the authority over them to the point that they took a beating without one complaint, but they never did do what the Jews commanded them.

If a man commanded his wife not to go to church anymore, she should not obey that command. The Bible clearly says not to forsake the assembling of ourselves together (Heb 10:25). However, there is a submissive way and a rebellious way of doing that.

If she said, "You old reprobate. You never have liked me going to church. Well, I'm going to show you that you can't tell me what to do. I'm going anyway, and I don't care what you say," that would be a rebellious attitude.

Yet, a woman in the same circumstance could affirm her love to her husband and state that she really wants to comply as much as possible, but in this instance, she has to obey God over her husband. If that was her attitude, she would be in submission to her husband even though she wouldn't do what he said.

Submission is also a voluntary thing. You cannot make another person submit. You can make people obey you, but that doesn't mean they've submitted. Their attitude is totally a matter of choice on their part. This is the reason that a man cannot hear a teaching on submission and go home and make his wife submit. She has to choose to submit.

The book of Daniel has two examples of civil disobedience done through a commitment to God's higher laws (Da 3:8-18 and 6:10-17), yet this disobedience was accomplished with respect and submission to the civil authority. When Pharaoh commanded that the male Hebrew babies were to be killed at birth (Ex 1:16), Moses' parents did not obey, and God blessed them for their actions.

Submission is an essential part of true Christianity. However, it is a missing ingredient in most of our lives. The root of all lack of submission in our lives lies in pride (1Pe 5:4-6).

Note 2 at Ro 13:1: This sentence--"For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God"--has perplexed many people. Was Paul saying that God wills that there be oppressive governments like the Nazis or even the Roman government that Paul was under? Definitely not. Even though He has used corrupt rulers and governments to punish offenses, their governmental authority was not created by God to be oppressive. They were ordained to be ministers of God to us for good (Ro 13:4).

In the same way that God ordains people to the ministry yet they fail to fulfill that call as God intended, likewise, God ordains governments but doesn't ordain everything that they do. There are countless scriptural examples of rebukes and punishments by God upon civil leaders because they did not submit to His will.

God's original government over mankind was directly administered by God Himself. People answered only to their Creator. Even after the Fall, God worked in cooperation with people's consciences to restrain them from evil. In the beginning, this was effective, as can be seen through Cain's statement, "My punishment is greater than I can bear" (Ge 4:13).

However, people seared their consciences (1Ti 4:2) through repeated sin. Therefore, since people were no longer responsive to their Creator, God ordained people to begin to police themselves. He told Noah, "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man"

(Ge 9:6). This responsibility of a corporate body to avenge the wrongs of an individual continued to develop until, through the giving of the Old Testament Law, God gave detailed instructions on how mankind was to treat each other and prescribed punishments for failure to do so.

So, in that context, God did ordain all government. But in more cases than not, governments are not any more responsive to Him than are individuals. However, we are to submit to them and obey them as long as we don't have to violate a clear command of God. Even bad government is superior to anarchy.

The governors themselves may not be of God, but civil government is definitely of God.

ROMANS 13:2

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

Note 3 at Ro 13:2: Notice specifically Paul's choice of words here. "Whosoever therefore resisteth the power" (emphasis mine). The word "resist" implies actively fighting against. As discussed in note 1 at Ro 13:1, we can refuse to comply with ungodly edicts without resisting the government that issued them. And the word

"power" is referring directly to the authority of the government itself, not just its directives.

Therefore, Paul was instructing us not to fight against the authority of the government we live under. That doesn't mean we have to comply with any law that is in direct opposition to God's laws, but when we oppose the order of government, we are opposing God's order.

The early Christians were great examples of this. They lived under one of the most corrupt and ruthless governments of all time. The Roman emperors even proclaimed themselves as gods. Yet nowhere in Scripture was there any instruction given to the believers to subvert that government and replace it. On the contrary, Paul commanded the believers to pray for their governmental leaders (1Ti 2:1-4). Peter commanded the believers to submit to every ordinance of the king and governors (1Pe 2:13-14).

The early Christians never brought any political pressure to bear on the Roman government or encouraged revolt. Yet in a relatively short period of time, Christianity overwhelmed the pagan Roman government and was adopted as the official state religion. Although this was one of the worst things that ever happened to Christianity, it does illustrate how we can overcome evil with good (Ro 12:21).

Note 4 at Ro 13:2: The word that was translated "damnation" here is the Greek word "KRIMA." This word was translated

"judgment" twelve times, "damnation" seven times, "condemnation" five times, "be condemned" once, "judgments" once, "go to law" once, and "avenged" once. It means "'judgment'; i.e. condemnation of wrong, the decision (whether severe or mild) which one passes on the faults of others...in a forensic sense, the sentence of a judge" (Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon).

In this case, this is not speaking of the eternal damnation or judgment of God. This is saying that if people resist the power of government, they will come under the judgment of that government.

ROMANS 13:3

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

Note 5 at Ro 13:3: There are certainly scriptural exceptions to this statement. The Egyptian government turned on the Israelites (Ex 1:8-22) not because of any sin on their part but because of the insecurities and fears of the Pharaoh. James the apostle was killed by Herod just because it pleased the Jews (Ac 12:2-3). John the Baptist was imprisoned and beheaded by Herod, and Jesus Himself commented on the innocence of John (Mt

11:9-11).

However, there is a truth that, as a whole, even corrupt governments do not bother those who are doing good. Paul was an example of this. Many times the Roman government actually came to his defense (Ac 18:12-16, 19:35-41, 21:31-36, 23:23-24, 25:1-5, and 27:42-44). In the book of Daniel, Daniel and his three friends were repeatedly honored even though the governmental system was corrupt and unjust. Joseph prospered in Egypt despite the injustices done to him.

With few exceptions, governments are established to protect the good and punish the evil. If we do good, we have nothing to fear.

ROMANS 13:4

For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to [execute] wrath upon him that doeth evil.

Note 6 at Ro 13:4: The Greek word that was translated "minister" here was also translated "deacon" and "servant." Government officials, including the police and army, were ordained by God to minister to us. The Lord uses this civil authority to protect us and execute His wrath on the ungodly.

Knowing this gives us added assurance when we pray for justice to be done through the judicial system (1Jo 5:14-15).

When people fail to respond to the conviction of the Holy Spirit, we can pray that the Lord will use the legal system to stop their evil ways. Those in the legal system are ministers of God. Many thousands of prisoners have praised God for the prison term that finally stopped them and made them come to grips with the real problems of their lives.

Note 7 at Ro 13:4: The sword that is being spoken of here is symbolic of power to restrain or kill. That is what swords were used for. God has delegated some of His power to rule to governments, even to the extent of taking life.

The Lord told Noah that any person who murdered another had to die at the hand of mankind (Ge 9:5-6, see note 2 at Ro 13:1). Likewise, this verse shows that God has given government the right to use force and execute His wrath, which would include capital punishment. Even some wars can be justified on the basis of this scripture (see note 6 at Joh 18:36).

Therefore, Christians can serve as police officers or soldiers as long as they are enforcing what is right.

ROMANS 13:5

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

Note 8 at Ro 13:5: In Ro 13:1-4, Paul gave two reasons for being subject to civil government, which he summarized here. First, we need to be subject to it because the government has the power to punish us if we aren't. Second, since God has ordained government, we have to submit or our consciences will condemn us for violating the instruction of God.

Therefore, even if we could break the laws of government and get away with it, we shouldn't, because we are also violating God's Word. So laws that are not in direct opposition to God's Word should be kept, whether or not we will get caught and whether or not we think they are important.

In the next verse (Ro 13:6), Paul specifically mentioned taxes as one of those laws that we should comply with (see note 9 at Ro 13:6). This could be updated to include speed limits, local ordinances, and a host of other things that many of us may disagree with but cannot say are directly against God's Word. The government has a God-given right and responsibility to regulate and establish order, and we should comply for consciences' sake. Our submission to government and our submission to God are intertwined.

ROMANS 13:6

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

Note 9 at Ro 13:6: Paul had commanded being subject to the laws of the government we live under as long as they don't cause us to sin against God (see note 1 at Ro 13:1). In Ro 13:5, Paul said we need to do this not just because of the power of government to punish us, but even if we never got caught, we need to submit because of our submission to God (see note 8 at Ro 13:5). Then he mentioned taxes.

Many Christians feel that taxes and serving God are two different things. But the Lord commanded us to pay our taxes. We cannot be true servants of God and refuse to obey Him in this area. Jesus, as the Creator, was not obligated to pay taxes to His creation, but He did (see note 1 at Mt 17:25). He paid taxes to a corrupt system where much of the tax money went straight into the pockets of the tax collectors.

In the United States of America, we are given certain tax deductions for charitable gifts and other exemptions. There is nothing wrong with taking advantage of these or even using the political process to try to change taxation laws that we feel are wrong. Our government guarantees us those rights. But no

Christian has any scriptural ground for refusing to pay taxes. Whether or not we can get away with it is immaterial. God commands us to submit, even in the area of taxes. Failure to do so is rebellion against God.

ROMANS 13:8

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

Note 1 at Ro 13:8: In context, Paul was speaking about paying our taxes, respect, and honor (Ro 13:7). However, this principle holds true in every area of our lives. We are to pay our bills.

Some people have interpreted this verse as forbidding Christians to go in debt. It can be shown in Scripture that purchasing on credit is not a blessing but a curse (De 28:12 and 44); therefore, it is not God's best. However, it is not a sin to borrow money. Many scriptures speak of lending money and place restrictions on whom we should lend to. The Lord would not have us help someone sin.

Therefore, being in debt is not a sin. Failure to pay our bills or make payments on loans that we have given our word on, however, is wrong.

Note 2 at Ro 13:8: Notice that Paul spoke of love for others as a debt. This is not optional. We are commanded to love one another. Indeed, this is the royal law of God (Jas 2:8).

Note 3 at Ro 13:8: Mankind as a whole had misunderstood the purpose of the Law. They thought that God was giving a list of what people must do to be accepted by Him. But the Law was given to convince people that they didn't have a chance of saving themselves; they needed a savior (see note 4 at Ro 3:19).

However, the Law was accurate and a perfect description of what God created man to be. The Law portrayed what those who were walking in God's kind of love would do. Man still can't keep the Law perfectly in the flesh (see note 9 at Ro 8:4), but the New Testament believers can now fulfill the spirit of the Old Testament Law as those in the Old Testament never could.

ROMANS 13:10

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

Note 4 at Ro 13:10: Instead of focusing on all the dos and don'ts, all we have to do is let God's kind of love rule in our hearts and we will automatically meet the requirements of the Law.

ROMANS 13:11

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

Note 1 at Ro 13:11: Paul had commanded submission to government, and he used two reasons for compliance (see note 8 at Ro 13:5). The most important reason was not just to avoid being caught and punished by the government but to have a good conscience toward God. He was continuing that thought in this verse.

He was saying that the time left before the Lord's return is growing short and that we must therefore be even more sensitive to God. This is the same reasoning that the Lord Jesus used in the parable of the ten virgins and the parable of the stewards and their talents (Mt 25).

The message of these four verses (Ro 13:11-14) can be summed up in the words of Jesus from Lu 21:34. The issue of the Lord's imminent return adds even more importance to us walking in love.

ROMANS 13:13

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

Note 2 at Ro 13:13: The American Heritage Dictionary defines "wanton" as "1. Immoral or unchaste; lewd. 2. Gratuitously cruel; merciless. 3. Unrestrainedly excessive. 4. Luxuriant; overabundant. 5. Frolicsome; playful. 6. Undisciplined."

ROMANS 13:14

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

Note 3 at Ro 13:14: Paul was using the term "flesh" here as referring to the part of us that has not been changed by Christ; i.e., our sinful appetites and desires (see note 3 at Ro 7:18). These sinful lusts cannot dominate us if we don't make provision for them. Paul was saying to cut off the flesh's rations and starve it to death.

Many of us Christians have mistakenly believed that during

our lives here on the earth, we are doomed to have ungodly lusts and desires. However, it doesn't have to be that way. The sin nature that enslaved our flesh is gone, and to the degree that we renew our minds through God's Word, we can experience victory over the flesh (see note 9 at Ro 5:21). The reason that the flesh seems so strong in many of our lives is because we are continually feeding it.

Temptation is linked to what we think on. If we don't think on things that engender temptation, we won't be tempted and won't sin (see note 9 at Ro 4:19).

ROMANS CHAPTER 14

ROMANS 14:1

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

Note 1 at Ro 14:1: Paul wrote this epistle to the saints in Rome. There was a big argument between the Jewish Christians and the Gentile Christians over the issue of grace versus works. Paul spent the majority of this letter dealing with the mistaken teaching that Gentiles who became Christians had to keep the Old Testament laws in order to be saved.

The main Old Testament requirement Paul dealt with up to this point was circumcision (Ro 4). He conclusively proved that circumcision, or any other part of the Law, was unnecessary for salvation (see note 1 at Ro 4:9, notes 2-3 at Ro 4:10, note 4 at Ro 4:11, and note 5 at Ro 4:12). The only thing that God requires for the born-again experience is faith in what Jesus Christ did for us (see note 2 at Ro 4:14).

In this chapter, Paul brought up two more points of the Law that were real stumbling blocks to Jewish Christians. The first was the issue of eating meats that the Law declared unclean, and the second was the issue of observing special days such as the

Sabbath and the feast days. The Jewish Christians were saying that the Gentile Christians had to keep these laws. The Gentile Christians felt no obligation to old Jewish rituals.

Paul stated that the Gentile Christians were correct doctrinally (Ro 14:20), but he warned them against despising their weak Jewish brethren who could not, in good conscience, eat meat or skip the observance of special days. Therefore, Paul established a principle that those who have the greater revelation of their freedom in Christ have an obligation to try not to display that freedom in a way that offends their weak brethren.

Note 2 at Ro 14:1: Who was the weak brother referred to here? It was the religious Jew who was converted to Christianity. Ro 14:2 refers to the weak one as the one who was eating herbs. This was a reference to the Jewish Christians who had not totally realized their freedom from the Old Testament dietary laws.

The Old Testament Law forbade Jews from eating certain meats (Le 11) and blood (Ge 9:4; Le 3:17, 7:26-27, 17:10-14; De 12:16, 23-25, and 15:23). Because the Jews who were in Rome could not always be certain of what type of meat they were buying or if it had been killed properly to drain the blood, many of them had become vegetarians to avoid any possible contamination.

It is very interesting that Paul cited the religious person as the weak brother. Most religious people think that all their religious convictions make them superior to those who come to

Christ without any religious background, but that wasn't Paul's assessment.

There is no bondage like religious bondage. A simple pagan background is easy to overcome in comparison to a heritage of legalistic religion. Paul ought to know; he was the Pharisee of the Pharisees.

Note 3 at Ro 14:1: Paul was saying that we shouldn't be critical of or discriminate against those who are weak in their convictions. This has been interpreted by some as inconsistent with some of Paul's actions.

Right here, in this epistle, Paul had called the legalistic Jewish Christians impenitent and hardhearted (Ro 2:5). In dealing with the same subject in the letter to the Galatians, Paul was very uncompromising, saying that they had been bewitched (Ga 3:1) and that they were fallen from grace if they trusted in circumcision (Ga 5:2-4). He also said, in Ga 2:5, that he didn't give any place to the legalistic Jews who were advocating circumcision for salvation.

How do Paul's actions harmonize with what he was teaching here?

There are some doctrinal points that are nonnegotiable and others that are not. When it comes to the doctrine of grace for salvation, Paul didn't compromise. He even said, "But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than

that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed" (Ga 1:8).

If these Jewish believers had taught that abstinence from meats and observance of special days are essential for salvation, Paul would not have tolerated it. However, if these Jewish Christians were professing righteousness with God solely based on the work of Christ yet had a personal conviction about these other things, that was okay.

The thought or the motive behind the action is what must be judged.

Paul didn't object to circumcision; Paul objected to faith in circumcision instead of faith in Christ. He even circumcised Timothy to keep from offending the Jews (Ac 16:3). Yet when the legalistic Jews tried to pressure Paul about the circumcision of Titus (Ga 2:3-5), Paul would not bend.

Likewise, we cannot compromise on the matter of salvation by grace through faith (Eph 2:8). But there should be room for Christians to dwell together yet have different ways of conduct.

ROMANS 14:2

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

Note 4 at Ro 14:2: This verse is speaking of the Gentile Christian who didn't have any convictions about eating certain meats and the Jewish Christian who would only eat herbs for fear of breaking an Old Testament dietary law (see note 2 at Ro 14:1).

ROMANS 14:3

Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not; and let not him which eateth not judge him that eateth: for God hath received him.

Note 5 at Ro 14:3: Paul was preaching about having a tolerance for other believers who had differing views that may have appeared contradictory to his own actions. However, as explained in note 3 at Ro 14:1, these were not believers who were putting faith in these actions for salvation; they wouldn't have been true Christians if they had. These people were justified by faith, but they had a personal conviction about keeping the ceremonial law of their Jewish heritage.

These people were different from the ones that Paul spoke of in his letter to Timothy. In 1Ti 4:1-3, Paul said those who commanded others to abstain from meats were speaking a doctrine of devils. The key difference is the word "commanding" (1Ti 4:3). Those in 1Ti 4 were demanding compliance for

salvation. The people that Paul was saying to receive in this verse were people who were not judging others for their own personal convictions.

Note 6 at Ro 14:3: Notice that Paul instructed those who have the revelation of their freedom in Christ not to despise those who don't. He also instructed those who are still emphasizing works not to judge those who aren't.

Paul was revealing that the danger for those who have a revelation of God's grace is to become insensitive to and impatient with their brethren who haven't yet come to that knowledge. Those believers have to temper their freedom in Christ with love for their fellow Christians. "Knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth" (1Co 8:1).

Those who have not yet renewed their minds to their freedom from the Old Testament Law tend to be judgmental of others who don't have their same standard of holiness. Passing judgment on others is a sure sign of a legalistic mentality (see note 46 at Mt 7:1).

ROMANS 14:4

Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be holden up:

for God is able to make him stand.

Note 7 at Ro 14:4: We are all servants, not judges. We should let the Lord be the judge. All that we are supposed to judge is ourselves, to make sure that we aren't stumbling blocks to anyone (Ro 14:13).

ROMANS 14:5

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

Note 8 at Ro 14:5: On other occasions, Paul called it bondage to observe special days (Ga 4:9-10). Once again, this must be denoting people who were observing certain days as a mere conviction and not a command (see note 3 at Ro 14:1). Personal conviction and doctrinal truth are two different things.

ROMANS 14:6

He that regardeth the day, regardeth [it] unto the Lord; and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not

regard [it]. He that eateth, eateth to the Lord, for he giveth God thanks; and he that eateth not, to the Lord he eateth not, and giveth God thanks.

Note 9 at Ro 14:6: This verse verifies that these observances of certain days and abstinence from meats were not done in a legalistic manner that caused people to think they were earning salvation. They were doing these things as unto the Lord.

ROMANS 14:11

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

Note 10 at Ro 14:11: Paul was citing this Old Testament verse to show that each one of us is accountable to God (Ro 14:12). Therefore, we don't have to judge our brethren; God will do it.

ROMANS 14:13

Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumblingblock or an

occasion to fall in [his] brother's way.

Note 11 at Ro 14:13: We are not supposed to judge others (see note 46 at Mt 7:1). Instead, we are supposed to judge ourselves to make sure that we are not causing them to stumble in their faith through our actions.

ROMANS 14:14

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

Note 12 at Ro 14:14: This is quite a statement! Nothing is unclean. It is how we use a thing that makes it unclean.

The Old Testament Law declared many animals unclean (Le 11), not because there was anything wrong with the animals, but because the Lord was making a point. In the New Testament, Paul revealed that every creature of God is good and that nothing is to be refused if it is received with thanksgiving (1Ti 4:4). Every creature of God has always been good, even during Old Testament times. However, the Lord wanted His people to be a holy people, separated unto Him even in the things they ate.

Therefore, He gave them dietary laws that pronounced

certain animals as unclean so that they would be reminded, even as they ate, that they were not free to do whatever they wanted to do. They were bought with a price (1Co 6:20), and they were to glorify God in every area of their lives (1Co 10:31).

Col 2:16-17 makes it very clear that these dietary laws were shadows of things that are now realities in Christ. Yet, just as with so many other Old Testament truths, the Jews had become engrossed in the observance of the ritual with no understanding as to what it symbolized. Likewise today, some Christians still hold to Old Testament ritual without any idea that the ritual has become reality in Christ (see note 1 at Joh 5:16).

In Col 2:16-17, Paul said that these things were shadows of things to come. If I were walking toward you but the corner of a building blocked your view, then my shadow could be very significant. It could show you that I was coming and how close I was, but once I came around the corner and was in view, it would be unthinkable that you would fall down and embrace my shadow. My shadow is meaningful only because it represents me. Once you could talk to me, my shadow would be meaningless.

Likewise, Old Testament rituals were significant before Christ came. They illustrated truths that were not yet in full view. But now that Christ has come, the rituals are meaningless and can be oppressive if they are wrongfully thought to be requirements for acceptance by God.

ROMANS 14:15

But if thy brother be grieved with [thy] meat, now walkest thou not charitably. Destroy not him with thy meat, for whom Christ died.

Note 13 at Ro 14:15: This verse ties all of this teaching back in with Ro 13:8-10. Paul had summarized all our duty to mankind as loving our neighbors as ourselves (see note 4 at Ro 13:10). If we ignore the influence our actions have on others, we are not walking in this law of love.

ROMANS 14:17

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

Note 14 at Ro 14:17: People usually focus their attention on external things, such as meat and drink, but God is always concerned with the heart (1Sa 16:7). God deals with people's actions because they indicate the condition of their hearts. However, it is always the spiritual condition of the inner being that God is seeking to change.

Paul was saying that we need to be like God and focus on the inner condition of our brothers and sisters in Christ. Then we will be able to tolerate minor differences in their actions.

ROMANS 14:20

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

Note 15 at Ro 14:20: Prior to this verse, Paul had encouraged the believers to consider their weaker brothers based on their obligation to love one another (see note 2 at Ro 13:8). Here Paul strengthened that argument by revealing how damaging it could be if the weaker brethren follow our actions with defiled consciences. It is evil for them (this verse); it will offend them and make them weak (Ro 14:21); it will damn them, and it is sin for them (Ro 14:23).

ROMANS 14:21

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

Note 16 at Ro 14:21: A casual reading of Paul's instructions here might leave people with the impression that Paul was only suggesting that we not offend the weak brethren in this area. However, this is not the case.

The Jerusalem church had already issued a command to the Gentile Christians that they abstain from meat that had been offered to idols (Ac 15:20 and 28-29). Paul agreed with this mandate and became one of the messengers who delivered this decree to the churches (Ac 15:25 and 30).

Paul also commented on this same subject in 1Co 8 and 10: "But when ye sin so against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, ye sin against Christ" (1Co 8:12). That doesn't sound optional. He also gave a direct command in 1Co 10:28 not to eat meat sacrificed to idols, for the sake of the weak brethren.

However, the greatest proofs that this abstinence from meat offered to idols was not optional are the comments of Jesus Himself. In Re 2:14 and 20, the Lord rebuked two churches for allowing individuals to teach in those churches that the people could eat meats sacrificed to idols.

Therefore, even though these scriptures do explain that the actual eating of meats sacrificed to idols is not wrong in itself, it does not give believers the right to indulge. They are to abstain strictly because of the effect their actions would have upon the weaker Christians' consciences.

ROMANS 14:22

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

Note 17 at Ro 14:22: This is specifically speaking of having faith that they could eat meat sacrificed to idols. "The Life and Epistles of Paul" by W. J. Conybeare and J. S. Howson renders this verse, "Hast thou faith [that nothing is unclean]? keep it for thine own comfort before God." Therefore, Paul was stating that those who have clear consciences about eating meat that has been sacrificed to idols, they should keep that faith to themselves and not practice it openly lest they offend the weaker brethren.

ROMANS 14:23

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

Note 18 at Ro 14:23: The Greek word that was translated "damned" here is "KATAKRINO," and it means "to judge against, i.e. sentence" (Strong's Concordance). This differs from

the Greek word "KRINO" that is used in 2Th 2:12 to designate eternal damnation. KATAKRINO, as used in this verse, actually means, "to condemn" (Vine's Expository Dictionary), and it was translated as "condemn" and "condemned" fifteen times in the New Testament. In contrast, KRINO was only translated as "condemn" once (Joh 3:17), "condemned" twice (Joh 3:18), and "condemning" once (Ac 13:27).

Therefore, this verse is not saying that Christians who do something with defiled consciences are eternally damned. Paul was stating that Christians who violate their consciences are going to come under condemnation.

Note 19 at Ro 14:23: This verse provides us with a definition of sin that is applicable to all people of all cultures and different religious backgrounds. Any action is sin for us if we don't have faith in its correctness. Thus, until we can settle our doubts, we aren't to do it. This provides an infallible system for determining right and wrong for any individual.

ROMANS CHAPTER 15

ROMANS 15:1

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

Note 1 at Ro 15:1: This verse is the summary of Paul's teaching in Ro 14. He explained that the Christian who is strong in grace and realizes that it is all right to eat meat sacrificed to idols is technically correct. However, just because it's lawful doesn't mean it is the correct thing to do (1Co 6:12 and 10:23). He clearly stated that the strong believer is supposed to bear the infirmities of the weak Christian brother.

Note 2 at Ro 15:1: This word "bear" was translated from the Greek word "BASTAZO," and it means "to lift" (Strong's Concordance). This gives us a picture of Christians with weak consciences being burdened down with guilt or condemnation. We that are strong are supposed to help them lift that load. We do that by not offending their weak consciences.

Note 3 at Ro 15:1: The word that was translated "infirmities" here is the Greek word "ASTHENEMA," and it means "a scruple of conscience" (Strong's Concordance). This is saying that the

stronger believer needs to help lift the burden (see note 2 at this verse) of the one who has a weak conscience.

Note 4 at Ro 15:1: Here Paul was summing up his instructions given in Ro 14 on how to get along with those who have differing convictions (see note 1 at this verse). It all comes back to love. Love thinks of the other person first. Love is not selfish (1Co 13). If people would seek the pleasure of others more than their own, strife would be killed. "Only by pride cometh contention" (Pr 13:10).

ROMANS 15:3

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

Note 5 at Ro 15:3: As always, Jesus is the supreme example of God's kind of love. Jesus submitted to things that He, as God, didn't have to. However, He became a man and submitted Himself (Mt 17:27), lest He should offend people. If Jesus did this for us, how can any of us justify not bearing the infirmities of our weak brethren?

ROMANS 15:4

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

Note 6 at Ro 15:4: All the Old Testament scriptures were written for our instruction so that we would not make the same mistakes. If we do not heed the lessons of the Old Testament, we are trying to reinvent the wheel. People have already made mistakes, and the Old Testament scriptures were faithful to report the consequences of those sins. We don't have to learn the same lessons by "hard knocks." We can learn at their expense instead of our own.

Note 7 at Ro 15:4: Patience, comfort, and hope do not come to us by begging and pleading with God. We cannot have a lasting measure of these things just by having others lay hands on us. These things come through the Scriptures (see note 12 at Ro 8:24 and note 13 at Ro 8:25)

Some people have also mistakenly thought that problems produced patience because of a misunderstanding of scriptures like Ro 5:3 and Jas 1:3. However, this verse makes it clear that patience is a product of the Scriptures. If tribulations produced patience, every Christian would be patient. Everyone has experienced tribulation.

Patience comes through God's Word, but problems cause us

to exercise or use our patience and thereby become stronger (see note 8 at Ro 5:3).

ROMANS 15:5

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

Note 8 at Ro 15:5: Paul was referring back to Ro 15:3 where he used Christ as an example of bearing the infirmities of those who are weak. He was praying that the Lord would work in us the same grace that was displayed in Christ Jesus.

ROMANS 15:7

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

Note 9 at Ro 15:7: How do we determine what doctrines are negotiable and which ones are not? If individuals have truly been born again by Christ receiving them, then we should receive them also, regardless of our differences. If Jesus is able to overlook the doctrinal errors of those people, who are we to refuse them?

ROMANS 15:8

Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises [made] unto the fathers:

Note 1 at Ro 15:8: In Ro 15:7, Paul concluded his remarks about walking in love toward brethren who had different convictions. He judged that on certain issues that were not critical to salvation (see note 3 at Ro 14:1), the stronger should bear with the weak (see note 1 at Ro 15:1).

Here in case someone should try to cite Jesus' exclusion of the Gentiles during His earthly ministry as proof that we can reject those who don't conform to Jewish traditions, Paul explained why Jesus ministered nearly exclusively to the Jews. He was fulfilling God's promises to the Jews. Jesus could not become the Savior of the Gentiles until He had been the Messiah to the Jews.

Paul then went on to cite a number of Old Testament scriptures that make it very clear that Jesus' present ministry embraces the Gentiles without converting them to Judaism.

ROMANS 15:9

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

Note 2 at Ro 15:9: Paul was briefly verifying a point that he had already made in this letter to the Romans. In Ro 15:9-12, he quoted four Old Testament scriptures in order to verify that Christ opened up the door of salvation to the Gentiles (Ps 18:49, De 32:43, Ps 117:1, and Isa 11:10; see also 2Sa 22:50 and Mt 12:21).

This was done to make it clear that Gentiles do not have to become Jews in order to be saved. The salvation of Gentiles as Gentiles does not fall into the category of one of those nonessential doctrines (see note 3 at Ro 14:1) discussed in Ro 14, on which we compromise for the sake of our weak brethren.

ROMANS 15:16

That I should be the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God, that the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Ghost.

Note 1 at Ro 15:16: We cannot just worship God any way we want to. Our worship has to be sanctified by the Holy Ghost. Until we make Jesus our Lord, the Holy Spirit does not intercede for us. Paul was saying that through his preaching of the Gospel and the Gentiles' reception of salvation, the Holy Spirit was then free to work on their behalf.

ROMANS 15:17

I have therefore whereof I may glory through Jesus Christ in those things which pertain to God.

Note 2 at Ro 15:17: Paul took the Gospel to the Gentiles, and it granted salvation to those who received it. Therefore, he had quite a bit to boast ("glory") about. However, he said his boasting was through Christ Jesus, and that clarifies that this was not done in arrogance or pride.

ROMANS 15:19

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

Note 3 at Ro 15:19: Paul was known primarily for his preaching of the Gospel of God's grace (see note 5 at Ac 20:24), but Paul had the miraculous power of God working in him too. Indeed, this should be true of all true ministers of the Gospel (see note 4 at Ac 4:30).

Paul struck Elymas, the sorcerer, with blindness, causing the conversion of Sergius Paulus (Ac 13:6-12). In Lystra, Paul healed a man who had been crippled from birth (Ac 14:8-10). In Philippi, Paul cast a spirit of divination out of a girl (Ac 16:16-18), and he was also delivered from prison in that city by a miraculous earthquake (Ac 16:25-26).

In Ephesus, the Lord accomplished "special miracles" through Paul by healing and delivering people as they came in contact with handkerchiefs or aprons that Paul had touched (Ac 19:11-12). In Troas, Paul raised Eutychus from the dead (Ac 20:9-12), and while shipwrecked on the island of Melita, Paul miraculously survived a bite from a poisonous snake (Ac 28:3-6).

Paul was also delivered from death at the hands of the Romans and Jews many times, including one time when he may actually have been raised from the dead (see note 3 at Ac 14:20). Paul's life, as well as the lives of everyone on his ship, was spared from death at sea through God's intervention (Ac 27:21-26 and 43-44).

Paul also wrote to the Corinthians that the signs of an apostle

were wrought among them by him (2Co 12:12), yet there is no record in Acts of a single miracle performed by Paul during his visits to Corinth (Ac 18:1-17 and 20:2-3). Therefore, it can be concluded that there were many miraculous things accomplished by Paul that were not recorded, just as in the case of our Lord Jesus (Joh 20:30 and 21:25).

Note 4 at Ro 15:19: Ancient Illyricum occupied the territory that is modern-day Albania and Bosnia-Herzegovina, just north of Macedonia where Thessalonica and Berea were located. There is no record of Paul preaching in this area, so it can be supposed that he is referring to ministering up to the border of this province.

Note 5 at Ro 15:19: Some people have interpreted Paul's statement here to mean that he had covered all the area of Asia (see note 3 at Ac 16:6 and note 4 at Ac 19:10), Macedonia (see note 1 at Ac 16:9), and Achaia (see note 11 at Ac 18:12) with the Gospel. The following few verses would lend themselves to that interpretation.

However, the immediate context of this verse specifically mentions "mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God." This would lead us to believe that Paul "fully" preaching the Gospel referred to the confirmation of the Word through the demonstration of God's miraculous power (see note 2 at Mr 16:20).

Therefore, Paul could be making a distinction between just

preaching the Gospel and fully preaching the Gospel. A minister hasn't fully preached the Gospel unless there are accompanying signs and wonders (see note 4 at Ac 4:30). This must be where the phrase "full Gospel" came from.

ROMANS 15:20

Yea, so have I strived to preach the gospel, not where Christ was named, lest I should build upon another man's foundation:

Note 6 at Ro 15:20: Paul had a burning desire to reach the un-reached, yet the greatest legacy that he left us is the collection of his epistles written to those he led to the Lord. This reflected the lifestyle that Paul had that we should have also. Paul didn't just evangelize; he disciplined people (see note 5 at Mt 28:19).

ROMANS 15:22

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

Note 1 at Ro 15:22: The cause that Paul was referring to was

his desire to preach the Gospel to everyone who had not heard. He had wanted to go to Rome, but he felt it was necessary first to preach the Gospel to everyone in the areas he had already been. This is what he referred to in the next verse when he said, "Now having no more place in these parts" (Ro 15:23). He was saying there was no place left in those parts that hasn't heard the Gospel. Therefore, he was ready to depart for new, un-reached areas.

ROMANS 15:23

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

Note 2 at Ro 15:23: In Ac 19:21, Paul purposed in his spirit to visit Rome after he had gone back through Macedonia (see note 1 at Ac 16:9) and Achaia (see note 11 at Ac 18:12). This happened while he was in Ephesus from A.D. 54 to 57 (see note 2 at Ac 18:23).

Paul was writing this epistle around A.D. 57 to 58 from Corinth (see Life for Today Study Bible Notes, Introduction to Romans, Date and Place of Writing). Therefore, Paul's "many years" is referring to a two- to three-year period of time.

ROMANS 15:24

Whensoever I take my journey into Spain, I will come to you: for I trust to see you in my journey, and to be brought on my way thitherward by you, if first I be somewhat filled with your [company].

Note 3 at Ro 15:24: Paul mentioned his intention to travel to Spain twice in this chapter (this verse and Ro 15:28). These verses are the only two times in Scripture that this is mentioned. There is no scriptural account that Paul ever made it to Spain. Some have speculated that he went to Spain after his imprisonment in Rome. There are traditions that support that but no facts.

Note 4 at Ro 15:24: Paul was referring to the Romans helping him with his expenses for his planned trip to Spain ("to be brought on my way thitherward by you"). See also Ac 15:3, 1Co 16:6, 2Co 1:16, and 3Jo 6.

ROMANS 15:26

For it hath pleased them of Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor saints which are at Jerusalem.

Note 5 at Ro 15:26: Acts' account of Paul's travels does not give us any details about this collection for the poor saints at Jerusalem. However, Paul did mention it as being the reason he made his last trip to Jerusalem (Ac 24:17), and he wrote about it in his letters to the Corinthians.

In 1Co 16:1-4, Paul gave instructions for the collection for the saints in Jerusalem. In 1Co 16:1, he said that he gave the same instructions to the churches of Galatia. It is unclear whether he was saying he had also instructed the churches of Galatia to receive an offering for the Jerusalem saints or whether he was simply instructing the Corinthians to receive the collection in the same manner as the Galatians did. At any rate, Paul was only delivering the offerings from the churches of Macedonia and Achaia (this verse) during this trip to Jerusalem.

In 2Co 8:1-5, Paul spoke favorably about the attitude the churches of Macedonia (the churches of Thessalonica and Berea) had toward this offering. He acknowledged that the churches of Achaia (the Corinthian church) had purposed to send an offering a year before the Macedonian churches had (2Co 8:10 and 9:2). Paul gave the impression that the offering from the Macedonian churches was unsolicited (2Co 8:4).

Paul encouraged the Corinthians to participate generously in this offering, reminding them that they would reap proportionally to how they sowed (2Co 9:6). He stated clearly that they should not give under compulsion (2Co 9:7) or try to give what they

didn't have (2Co 8:11-15). He gave them a tremendous promise of God's physical blessing on them if they participated (2Co 9:8-11).

This must have been a relatively large sum of money for Paul to be carrying to Jerusalem. Even though Paul could have demanded these people's trust, since he was the apostle that brought them the Gospel, he made provision for whomever they chose to accompany him to Jerusalem to make sure the money went for what it was intended (2Co 8:20-21 with 1Co 16:3).

This was a benevolence offering for the poor saints in Jerusalem.

ROMANS 15:27

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

Note 6 at Ro 15:27: Specifically, the carnal things that Paul was referring to here was finances.

ROMANS 15:29

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

Note 7 at Ro 15:29: What a statement! Paul had no doubt that he would be walking in the fullness of God. This reveals that walking in the power of the Holy Spirit is a choice.

Some people disagree with this and say that you can't make the blessings of God occur. Their argument is that sometimes blessings happen and other times they don't, based on God's choosing; otherwise, it would be like being able to turn God on and off.

The answer to this is that God is always on. We are the ones who are on and off. Anytime we choose life (De 30:19), we can be assured that the life of God that has been given to us through Christ Jesus will flow. The responsibility to stir up the gift that is in us (2Ti 1:6) rests on us.

ROMANS 15:30

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

Note 8 at Ro 15:30: This shows how important Paul thought prayer was. Paul begged these believers to intercede on his behalf.

ROMANS 15:31

That I may be delivered from them that do not believe in Judaea; and that my service which [I have] for Jerusalem may be accepted of the saints;

Note 9 at Ro 15:31: Paul's prayer request was that he would be delivered from the religious unbelievers in Jerusalem. The answer to this prayer came in a way that many of us would not have liked. Instead of not having any problems, he was assaulted and wound up spending many years in prison. Yet he was delivered from the unbelieving Jews. They tried to kill him three times (Ac 21:31, 23:20-21, and 25:2-3), but the Lord delivered him through the Roman government.

Note 10 at Ro 15:31: Paul knew that trouble was waiting for him in Jerusalem. In Ac 20:22-23, he said he didn't know exactly what would happen to him in Jerusalem but knew it would be bonds and afflictions (see note 4 at Ac 21:4).

ROMANS CHAPTER 16

ROMANS 16:1

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

Note 1 at Ro 16:1: The only mention of Phebe in Scripture is here and in the subscript at Ro 16:27 (found in some Bibles). From these passages, we can see that Phebe was the one who delivered this epistle to the Romans. She had ministered to many, including Paul, and therefore Paul instructed the Romans to assist her in her business in whatever way they could.

Because the word "servant" in this verse has also been translated "deacon" in other scriptures (see note 2 at this verse), many believe that Phebe was actually a deaconess of the church in Cenchrea.

Note 2 at Ro 16:1: The Greek word that was translated "servant" here is the word "DIAKONOS." DIAKONOS comes from the root word "DIAKO," meaning "to run on errands," and specified "an attendant, i.e. (genitive case) a waiter (at table or in other menial duties); specially, a Christian teacher and pastor (technically, a deacon or deaconess)" (Strong's Concordance).

This word was used a total of thirty times in the New Testament. It was translated “deacons” three times (Php 1:1; 1Ti 3:8, and 12), “ministers” six times (1Co 3:5; 2Co 3:6, 6:4, 11:15, and 23), “minister” fourteen times (Mt 20:26; Mr 10:43; Ro 13:4, 15:8; Ga 2:17; Eph 3:7, 6:21; Col 1:7, 23, 25, 4:7; 1Th 3:2; and 1Ti 4:6), “servant” four times (Mt 23:11, Mr 9:35, Joh 12:26, and here), and “servants” three times (Mt 22:13; Joh 2:5, and 9).

So, it can be said that the dominant use of this word in the New Testament was to specify a minister or deacon. However, out of the six other times this word was translated “servant” or “servants,” it was definitely designating a person who performs menial tasks as a slave. Therefore, it cannot be stated emphatically from this verse that Phebe was or was not a deaconess or female minister.

History supplies us with information that there were female ministers “in the churches of Bithynia (see note 5 at Ac 16:7) as early as A.D. 100, for Pliny, in his celebrated letter to the emperor Trajan regarding the Christians, reports having examined ‘two old women’ of the Christian community ‘who were called ministers’” (“A Dictionary of the Bible” by John D. Davis, brackets mine).

ROMANS 16:2

That ye receive her in the Lord, as becometh saints, and

that ye assist her in whatsoever business she hath need of you: for she hath been a succourer of many, and of myself also.

Note 3 at Ro 16:2: One definition of the word "for" is "because; since" (American Heritage Dictionary). Paul was saying that the reason they should assist Phebe is because she had assisted others, including Paul. This illustrates the law of reaping what you sow (Ga 6:7 and Lu 6:38).

Some people become offended when they do not receive assistance from others, yet they have never helped anyone. That is not what Paul was advocating here. Phebe had earned their help. Salvation is by grace, but respect and help from others has to be earned.

ROMANS 16:4

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

Note 4 at Ro 16:4: Paul did not elaborate on, nor do the Scriptures reveal, a specific instance where Priscilla and Aquila "laid down their own necks" for Paul's sake. It is possible they were some of the disciples who restrained Paul from entering into the theater in Ephesus during the uproar caused by Demetrius (Ac

19:28-31).

ROMANS 16:5

Likewise [greet] the church that is in their house. Salute my wellbeloved Epaenetus, who is the firstfruits of Achaia unto Christ.

Note 5 at Ro 16:5: This is the only mention of Epaenetus in Scripture. From this reference, we can see that Epaenetus was loved very much by Paul. He was Paul's first convert in Achaia.

ROMANS 16:6

Greet Mary, who bestowed much labour on us.

Note 6 at Ro 16:6: There are a number of Marys mentioned in Scripture, implying that it was a common name. There is no reason to believe that this Mary in Rome is the same as some other Mary mentioned in Scripture.

This woman had bestowed much labor on Paul and his companions.

ROMANS 16:7

Salute Andronicus and Junia, my kinsmen, and my fellowprisoners, who are of note among the apostles, who also were in Christ before me.

Note 7 at Ro 16:7: The name Andronicus means "man of victory" (Strong's Concordance). This is the only mention of Andronicus in Scripture. He and Junia were two of six relatives (see note 9 at this verse) Paul mentioned in this chapter. Andronicus had been imprisoned, presumably for his faith in Christ. Paul said that he was "of note" among the apostles. That probably means Andronicus and Junia were well known, even to the apostles.

Andronicus and Junia were Christians before Paul's conversion. It is very possible that they witnessed to Paul and this may have been part of the "pricks" Paul was fighting against at his conversion (see note 6 at Ac 9:5). Since Junia (see note 8 at this verse) was a feminine name, it is possible that Andronicus and Junia were married.

Note 8 at Ro 16:7: This is the only mention of Junia in Scripture. The fact that Andronicus and Junia were both imprisoned, both in Christ before Paul, and both Paul's relatives suggests that they were close, possibly man and wife.

They were both "of note" among the apostles, probably meaning that they were well known, even to the apostles. Junia and Andronicus were apparently living in Rome.

Note 9 at Ro 16:7: The Greek word used for "kinsmen" here is "SUGGENES" and means "a relative (by blood); by extension, a fellow countryman" (Strong's Concordance). In Ro 9:3, Paul used this word to refer to all of the Jews as his kinsmen. Therefore, it is not certain whether Paul was using this word to denote blood relatives or fellow Jews. The fact that more of these people were Jews than what Paul designated by the term "kinsmen" would suggest that he was speaking of blood relatives.

There are six (depending on how Ro 16:21 is interpreted) kinsmen of Paul's referred to in this chapter: Andronicus and Junia (this verse); Herodion (Ro 16:11); and Lucius, Jason, and Sosipater (Ro 16:21).

It is possible that Tertius (Ro 16:22) was the one speaking in Ro 16:21, and therefore Lucius, Jason, and Sosipater would be his kinsmen (see note 4 at Ro 16:21).

ROMANS 16:8

Greet Amplias my beloved in the Lord.

Note 10 at Ro 16:8: This is the only time Amplias is mentioned in Scripture. He was a Christian in Rome to whom Paul sent greetings. His name came from the Latin word meaning "enlarged" (Strong's Concordance).

Note 11 at Ro 16:8: The Greek word that was translated "beloved" here is "AGAPETOS," the adjective form of "AGAPE" (see note 3 at Ro 12:10). It is signifying the type of love that God has. Paul said that Amplias was "beloved in the Lord," meaning this was God's love being expressed through Paul.

ROMANS 16:9

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

Note 12 at Ro 16:9: The name Urbane means "of the city" (Strong's Concordance). This was the only mention of Urbane in Scripture. He had been a companion in work ("helper" - Greek "SUNERGOS" - "a co-laborer, i.e. coadjutor" [Strong's Concordance]) with Paul.

Note 13 at Ro 16:9: The name Stachys means "a head of grain" (Strong's Concordance). This is the only mention of Stachys in Scripture.

ROMANS 16:10

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

Note 14 at Ro 16:10: This is the only mention of Apelles in Scripture.

Note 15 at Ro 16:10: According to Strong's Concordance, the name Aristobulus means "best counselling." This is the only mention of Aristobulus in Scripture.

ROMANS 16:11

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

Note 16 at Ro 16:11: The name Herodion came from the Greek word "HERODES" meaning "heroic" (Strong's Concordance). This was the name of a number of kings of Palestine (see note 3 at Lu 3:1), and it is possible that Herodion was named after one of the kings named Herod. If so, that would most likely make Herodion a Gentile, since it would be very unusual for a Jew to name a child in honor of Herod.

Herodion was the third person Paul mentioned in this chapter as being his kinsman (see note 9 at Ro 16:7). If Herodion was a Gentile, as his name could imply, then Paul would have been referring to him as a brother in the Lord and not a natural blood relative.

Note 17 at Ro 16:11: The name Narcissus came from the flower narcissus, or the daffodil. This is the only mention of Narcissus in Scripture.

Note 18 at Ro 16:11: The phrase, "in the Lord," refers to the members of Narcissus' household who had been born again through faith in Christ. This is a very appropriate and descriptive phrase since all believers are in Christ Jesus (2Co 5:17 and Col 2:10).

ROMANS 16:12

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

Note 19 at Ro 16:12: Tryphena ("luxurious") and Tryphosa ("luxuriating") (Strong's Concordance) were women at Rome that Paul saluted and commended for their labor in the Lord.

Note 20 at Ro 16:12: The name Persis means "a Persian woman" (Strong's Concordance). She was a Christian in Rome whom Paul greeted. Paul mentioned that she labored much in the Lord. This is the only mention of Persis in Scripture.

ROMANS 16:13

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

Note 21 at Ro 16:13: According to Strong's Concordance, the name Rufus means "red." The name Rufus is mentioned twice in Scripture (Mr 15:21 and here). It is unclear whether both of these instances refer to the same Rufus. If so, then this Rufus to whom Paul sent greetings in Rome would have been the son of Simon of Cyrene, the man who was compelled to bear the cross of Jesus. Paul also sent greetings to the mother of Rufus (see note 22 at this verse).

Note 22 at Ro 16:13: Paul greeted the mother of Rufus and called her his own mother. It is unclear whether this is figurative or literal. Most commentators suspect this was a figurative statement, as is the case elsewhere in Scripture (Mt 12:49-50, Mr 3:35, Joh 19:27, and 1Ti 5:2).

ROMANS 16:14

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

Note 23 at Ro 16:14: Asyncritus ("incomparable"), Phlegon ("blazing"), Hermas (probably from "Hermes, the name of the messenger of the Greek deities"), Patrobas ("father's life"), and Hermes ("the name of the messenger of the Greek deities") (Strong's Concordance) were Christians in Rome to whom Paul sent greetings. This is the only mention of these individuals in Scripture.

ROMANS 16:15

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

Note 24 at Ro 16:15: The name Philologus means "fond of words, i.e. talkative" (Strong's Concordance). The wording of this verse suggests that Philologus was the husband of Julia (see note 25 at this verse). This is the only mention of Philologus in Scripture.

Note 25 at Ro 16:15: The name Julia was the feminine form of the Latin "Julius," as in Julius Caesar. Because of the wording of this verse, many people believe that Julia was the wife of Philologus (see note 24 at this verse). This is the only mention of Julia in Scripture.

Note 26 at Ro 16:15: The name Nereus came from Greek mythology. Nereus was a sea god who lived in the Aegean Sea. This was the name of a Christian in Rome to whom Paul sent greetings. Paul also greeted Nereus' sister, who is not named in this verse. This is the only mention of Nereus in Scripture.

Note 27 at Ro 16:15: The name Olympas came from the word meaning "heaven-descended" (Strong's Concordance). This was the name of a Christian in Rome whom Paul greeted. This is the only mention of Olympas in Scripture.

Note 28 at Ro 16:15: This is the second consecutive scripture in which Paul greeted a group of people and the brethren or saints that were with them. This was probably referring to a local group of believers who regularly met in the households of these people, and that would make those who were mentioned in these verses leaders of those local bodies of believers.

ROMANS 16:16

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

Note 29 at Ro 16:16: This is one of five times in Scripture where we are exhorted to greet other believers with a holy kiss, or a kiss of charity (see also 1Co 16:20, 2Co 13:12, 1Th 5:26, and 1Pe 5:14).

The culture of Paul's day used a kiss as a greeting, just as we still see in various other cultures today. However, Paul's repeated use of this custom in his instructions to the believers would suggest that he advocated it as a Christian custom. It is certain that Christians have more reason to greet one another with a kiss than anyone else.

It needs to be noted that in each reference to this, there is a specific mention of this being a holy kiss, or kiss of charity. That qualifies the manner in which this is to be done. This certainly is not an opportunity for people to exercise their lusts. This should be motivated only by the holiest Christian love for fellow believers.

If this kiss of charity is misunderstood or not wanted by the person receiving it, then it would certainly be inappropriate to give it.

ROMANS 16:17

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

Note 1 at Ro 16:17: This is one of many times that Paul made a very clear statement about withdrawing from individuals who are causing problems in the church (1Co 5:9-11; Php 3:17; 2Th 3:6, 14-15; 1Ti 6:3-5; 2Ti 2:16-17, 3:5; 1Jo 2:19; and Tit 3:9-10). We also have an example of Paul separating the true believers from the false and meeting in a separate place in Ac 19:9. These are scriptural precedents for separation based on doctrine.

However, Paul did not say to avoid contact with people who simply had different doctrine. He said to avoid those who caused division and offenses over doctrine. Some people have doctrines that disagree with the Word, but they aren't disagreeable. These people can be loved and restored, but those who are causing dissension over doctrine are to be treated as contaminated and infectious.

One example of this that Paul used in this epistle was the matter of observing dietary laws. Paul made it clear that there was nothing wrong with any food (see note 12 at Ro 14:14), but it would be sin for people to eat certain foods if they weren't eating them in faith (Ro 14:23). Therefore, there can be differences of

doctrines, but Paul told those that were strong in grace to bear with those who were not. However, if the weak brethren became contentious over their doctrine of abstinence from certain meats and began to condemn others (see note 3 at Ro 14:1), Paul would say to mark those people and avoid them.

The first thing Paul said to do was to mark these people. The Greek word that was translated "mark" here is the word "SKOPEO," and it means "to take aim at (spy), i.e. (figuratively) regard" (Strong's Concordance). In modern-day terms, we'd say we should "keep an eye" on these people. They are not to be trusted and should not be given the freedom to move about freely among the believers and spread infection.

The way we choose who is to be marked is based on the doctrine of God's Word. There are those who are indifferent to or don't believe the Word of God, but they aren't out to oppose it. Those, we simply love and continue to share the Word with, praying for their eyes to be opened. However, those who actively seek to subvert others from following the doctrine of God's Word are the ones to mark. Paul gave some characteristics of these people in Ro 16:18.

Marking these individuals falls into the category of church discipline and should be done consistently with all those instructions (see note 5 at Mt 18:17).

ROMANS 16:18

For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple.

Note 2 at Ro 16:18: In this verse, Paul gave us some characteristics of the people he said to mark (Ro 16:17). These people are not truly serving the Lord Jesus Christ; they are serving themselves. That's what the terminology "their own belly" means.

This same description was used in the parallel account Paul gave on this same subject (Php 3:17-19). There, Paul said that their god is their belly. This is saying that their motive is not the selfless motive of love for God and others, but rather, they are motivated by a love for themselves. This is always at the root of all division (see note 6 at Mr 15:10 and note 4 at Lu 10:20). Php 3:19 gives the further explanation that these people glory in their shame and mind earthly things.

Paul said in this verse that these individuals use good words and fair speeches and deceive the hearts of the simple. This means that they flatter people (2Ti 4:3) and appeal to the same selfish desires that they themselves have, to draw people after themselves (Ac 20:30).

Note 3 at Ro 16:18: Paul said that the simple are those of us who are deceived by these sowers of strife. If we will quit being

simple, we won't be deceived.

What did Paul mean by "simple"? The Greek word that was translated "simple" in this verse is "AKAKOS." It was only used twice in the New Testament, here and in Heb 7:26. In Heb 7:26, it was translated "harmless," meaning "without guile" or "fraud, harmless; free from guilt" (Thayer's Lexicon).

In this verse, the meaning of this word is "fearing no evil from others, distrusting no one" (Thayer's Lexicon). This is describing those whom today we would call gullible (Pr 14:15). Only those who lack discernment between good and evil will fall prey to this deceit.

How do we quit being simple or gullible? It's through God's Word. Many scriptures promise that God's Word will cause the simple to start being wise (Ps 19:7, 119:130; and Pr 1:4). A good understanding of God's Word is the greatest defense against deception (Joh 8:32 and 17:17).

The English word "simple" is only used twice in the New Testament (here and Ro 16:19, see note 4 at Ro 16:19).

ROMANS 16:19

For your obedience is come abroad unto all [men]. I am glad therefore on your behalf: but yet I would have you wise

unto that which is good, and simple concerning evil.

Note 4 at Ro 16:19: This is the second and final time that the English word "simple" was used in the New Testament. The first time was in the previous verse (Ro 16:18). However, this one English word came from two different Greek words. The Greek word that was used in Ro 16:18 was "AKAKOS" (see note 3 at that verse), while the Greek word that was used in this verse is "AKERAIOS," meaning "(a) 'unmixed, pure,' as wines or metals, (b) of the mind, 'without admixture of evil, free from guile, innocent, simple'" (Thayer's Lexicon).

Therefore, when Paul presented being simple in Ro 16:18 as something that is not good, and simple in Ro 16:19 as something that is good, he was speaking of two different things. Ro 16:18 is speaking against being gullible, while Ro 16:19 is speaking in favor of being pure, focused only on things that are good (see note 5 at this verse).

Note 5 at Ro 16:19: This is a wonderful key that the Lord is giving us for living the Christian life, yet very few people use it. It goes contrary to the modern thought that all knowledge is good, even the knowledge of evil.

Satan used Eve's desire to know about evil to entice her to sin (Ge 3:5-6). All that she knew about was good, but Satan convinced her that she would be better off if she knew about evil. That definitely was not the case.

God never intended for us to know about evil. That's the reason He forbade Adam and Eve to eat of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. We cannot be tempted with things that we don't think about (see notes 7 and 9 at Ro 12:2, note 10 at Ro 8:4, and notes 11-12 at Ro 8:5). Therefore, if we don't think about evil things, we will not be tempted with them.

Of course, since the Fall, evil is in the world, and there needs to be knowledge about evil so we can avoid its pitfalls. Paul said, "We are not ignorant of his devices" (2Co 2:11). Notice that Paul said we should be simple, not ignorant. However, most of us are indulging in a knowledge of evil that is far beyond what Paul was advocating.

Paul also said, "For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret" (Eph 5:12). Yet many Christians feel it is necessary and beneficial to plumb the depths of the moral debauchery in our world today. That is not so.

We don't have to know all about Satanism and what its followers are doing in order to avoid that pitfall and help those who have already fallen in it. If we are seeking God with our whole heart and thinking on all the good He has to offer, we will never fall prey to Satanism. We will also have the wisdom of God to deliver anyone who has become possessed by that spirit. The best defense is a good offense.

Bank tellers don't become astute at recognizing counterfeit money by studying counterfeit bills. It would be impossible to

school them on all the possible variations they could encounter. Instead, they become so familiar with the genuine article that they are able to recognize a fake.

Likewise, Christians should be wise concerning that which is good, and simple (unmixed, separated from--see note 4 at this verse) concerning evil. Undue attention to what Satan is doing will actually give the Enemy inroads into our lives.

ROMANS 16:20

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

Note 6 at Ro 16:20: The word "amen" does not mean "the end," as so many people use it in prayer. It means "properly, firm, i.e. (figuratively) trustworthy; adverbially, surely (often as interjection, so be it)" (Strong's Concordance). It was used seventy-eight times in the Bible; fifty-one of those times were in the New Testament.

ROMANS 16:21

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

Note 1 at Ro 16:21: The name Lucius means "illuminative" (Strong's Concordance). This name is used twice in Scripture (here and Ac 13:1). He was referred to as a kinsman of the Apostle Paul (see note 9 at Ro 16:7), or possibly Tertius (see note 4 at this verse).

It is unclear whether this is the same Lucius that was mentioned in Ac 13:1. If so, Lucius would have been a long-time associate of Paul, and he would either have been a prophet or a teacher.

Some people suspect that this Lucius is the Luke who traveled with the Apostle Paul (see note 2 at Ac 16:10) and wrote the books of Luke and Acts (see Life for Today Study Bible Notes, Introduction to Acts, Authorship).

Note 2 at Ro 16:21: The name Jason means "about to cure" (Strong's Concordance). Jason was a kinsman (see note 9 at Ro 16:7) of the Apostle Paul or possibly Tertius (see note 4 at this verse).

The name Jason is used five times in Scripture. Four of these times are from an account in Ac 17 (Ac 17:5-7 and 9). It is not certain that the Jason mentioned here was the same as the Jason

mentioned in Ac 17, but he probably was.

If this was the same Jason as the Jason of Ac 17, then this Jason had been an acquaintance of Paul since Paul first went to Thessalonica (Ac 17:1). This would make it hard to understand Jason as being a kinsman of Paul in the sense of a blood relative. This must be referring to these men as being brothers in the Lord, or possibly, as Tertius' relatives (see note 4 at this verse).

Jason apparently took Paul and his companions into his household. Because of this, the unbelieving Jews assaulted the house of Jason, and when they didn't find Paul, they took Jason into custody.

Note 3 at Ro 16:21: The name Sosipater means "of a safe father" (Strong's Concordance). He was called a kinsman of Paul, or possibly it was Tertius who referred to him as a kinsman (see note 4 at this verse).

Most scholars believe that Sosipater is the same man as Sopater of Ac 20:4. If so, this would mean that he was from Berea and more than likely a convert of Paul's missionary work there (see note 3 at Ac 20:4).

Note 4 at Ro 16:21: In note 9 at Ro 16:7, the word "kinsman" was defined and its normal usage discussed. However, this verse seems to present a problem with the word "kinsman" denoting either a blood relative or a fellow countryman.

There are quite a few scriptures where Paul wrote of Timotheus, and nowhere else is it implied that Timothy was related to Paul (see note 1 at Ac 16:1). Therefore, most scholars exclude Timothy and believe that Lucius, Jason, and Sosipater are the ones being referred to as kinsmen.

However, if these men were the same men as mentioned in Acts (see notes 1-3 at this verse), then it would appear that they were converts of the Apostle Paul during his second missionary journey. This would make it doubtful that they were blood relatives as the primary usage of the word "kinsman" would imply.

This could mean that these men were kinsmen in the sense that they were fellow countrymen. So that would mean they were of Jewish descent, living in these Gentile cities. There is also the possibility that Paul was referring to them as kinsmen in the sense that they were brothers in Christ.

There is also the possibility that Paul had ceased his comments in the previous verse and that Tertius, the writer of Romans (Ro 16:22), was speaking of these men as his kinsmen.

Note 5 at Ro 16:21: Whether these men were Paul's kinsmen or Tertius' kinsmen, they were definitely Paul's converts and companions in the ministry. This gives us some insight into Paul's methods.

If these men were the same men as listed in the book of

Acts, then they were born again during Paul's second missionary journey (see note 1 at Ac 18:22). This means that these men were converted around A.D. 52, and Paul was writing this letter to the Romans around A.D. 57 to 58 (see Life for Today Study Bible Notes, Introduction to Romans, Date and Place of Writing).

That means Paul had disciplined these men for approximately five years. Therefore, we have an example of how long it took for Timothy to progress into a position of leadership. Paul was the one who wrote that a novice should not be given a position of authority (1Ti 3:6). Timothy was to be left in charge of the church at Ephesus (1Ti 1:3) a very short time after Paul's writing of this letter as he traveled toward Jerusalem. Some scholars speculate that the church at Ephesus could have had as many as 100,000 members.

ROMANS 16:22

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

Note 6 at Ro 16:22: The name Tertius is of Latin origin and means "third" (Strong's Concordance). This is the only mention of Tertius in Scripture. He actually wrote the book of Romans from the Apostle Paul's dictation.

ROMANS 16:23

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

Note 7 at Ro 16:23: The name Gaius was a common Roman name. This name is used five times in Scripture (Ac 19:29, 20:4; here; 1Co 1:14; and 3Jo 1) and refers to at least three different men.

Ac 19:29 refers to Gaius as being a man of Macedonia (see note 1 at Ac 16:9), while Ac 20:4 refers to a Gaius who was of Derbe (see note 5 at Ac 14:6), a city of Asia (see note 3 at Ac 16:6).

It is probable that the Gaius referred to here was the same man that Paul mentioned in 1Co 1:14, since the book of Romans was written from Corinth (see Life for Today Study Bible Notes, Introduction to Romans, Date and Place of Writing). This would make Gaius one of the few people in Corinth that Paul actually baptized. This verse says that Gaius was not only Paul's host, but also host of the whole church, implying that he had a house church meeting in his residence.

The Apostle John addressed the epistle of 3 John to Gaius. Some speculate that this man was the same Gaius that Paul was

referring to here.

Note 8 at Ro 16:23: The name Erastus is mentioned three times in Scripture (Ac 19:22, this verse, and 2Ti 4:20). Erastus means "beloved" (Strong's Concordance).

Most scholars agree that this was the same Erastus that Paul sent with Timothy into Macedonia (see note 1 at Ac 16:9) while Paul remained in Ephesus (see note 3 at Ac 18:19). Paul later wrote to Timothy that Erastus abode in Corinth (2Ti 4:20), while this verse reveals that he was the chamberlain of that city (see note 9 at this verse).

Note 9 at Ro 16:23: The word "chamberlain" is only used six times in the Bible (2Ki 23:11; Es 2:3, 14-15; Ac 12:20; and here). Of the two times this word is used in the New Testament, Ac 12:20 uses "chamberlain" in the sense of an eunuch who keeps the king's bedchamber, and in this verse, it was referring to Erastus being the treasurer of the city of Corinth.

Note 10 at Ro 16:23: The name Quartus means "fourth" (Strong's Concordance). This is the only mention of Quartus in Scripture. He was a Christian brother in Corinth who sent greetings to the saints in Rome.

ROMANS 16:27

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

Note 11 at Ro 16:27: This subscript was probably not a part of Paul's original letter to the Romans. A scribe added it at a later date. However, it does seem to be accurate and is therefore retained.