



**A Self Guided Study of
Paul's Epistle to the Saints in Rome**

Material prepared by Seth Mauldin
for use in studying the Holy Bible.

Every effort has been made to accurately provide citations for works consulted;
either in the body of the text, or in the bibliography at the end.
If a portion of a work has escaped proper citation, please provide the author with written
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MAIN THEMES

These columns will have a few comments paired with each of the verses that deal with the main content and themes of the text.

SAMPLE PAGE

1 Paul, a bond-servant of Christ Jesus, called as
Here is where you are to make your observations on the text. The lessons will not have questions to answer, but by reading through the text of the book and making your notations, each one will be prepared to discuss and contribute in the class.

an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God,

2 which He promised before hand through his

prophets in the holy scriptures,

3 concerning His son, who was born of a

descendant of David according to the flesh,

SIDE POINTS

These columns will be used to make comments on other issues, false teachings, and popular notions that pertain to the text, but are not necessarily part of the passage's context.

Explanations and introductions to new sections of the letter will also be found in this column.

Sample Outline 1

Chapters 1- 3:18: All Sin, and are Justly Condemned

Chapters 3:19–5:21: The Remedy for Sin: The Gospel of Christ

Chapters 6-8: Development of the New Life in Christ

Chapters 9-11: The Gospel as it Relates to Israel

Chapters 12:1-15:7: Practical Application of the Law of Christ

Chapter 15:8-33: Christ: a Minister to Both Jew and Gentile

Chapter 16:1-27: Personal Greetings, Final Exhortation, Doxology

Adapted from Robert Turner's *Reading Romans*

Sample Outline 2

Chapters 1- 3:18: The Wrath of God Against all Humankind

Chapters 3:21-8:39: The Grace of God in the Gospel

Chapters 9-11: The Plan of God for Jews and Gentiles

Chapters 12:1-15:13: The Will of God for Changed Relationships

Chapters 15:14–16:27: The Providence of God in the Ministry of Paul

Adapted from John Stott's *The Message of Romans*

Sample Outline 3

Chapters 1-3:20: The Impotence of Law as a Way of Salvation

Chapter 3:21-5:21: The All-Sufficiency of Grace as a Way of Salvation

Chapters 6-8:39: The All-Sufficiency of Grace Gives Victory Over Sin

Chapters 9-11:36: God's Faithfulness in Dealing with the Jews

Chapters 12-15:13: Living the Sanctified Life

Chapters 15:14-16:27: Personal Messages from Paul

Adapted from Jack Cottrell's Work *The College Press NIV Commentary on Romans*

Create Your Outline Here

Introduction to Romans

Authorship:

There should be no doubt as to the letter being written by the Apostle Paul. Aside from identifying himself as such in the opening of the letter, there are at least two other references or titles that only fit the Apostle Paul. In 11:13 and 15:16 the writer refers to himself as the messenger, or apostle to the Gentiles. If one were interested, the unanimous opinion of first and second century disciples also testifies to Paul's authorship.

As with every book of the Bible, there will always be efforts to call into question the accepted author of a book. The reasons for this vary, but there is usually something to be gained in the advancement of a minority held view by the scholar in question. Any efforts to cast doubt on Paul's authorship have generally been met with scorn by almost every textual critic.

Dating the Book:

There almost always exists a wide variety of opinion on when Paul's letters were written, but most tend to agree that Romans falls somewhere during the time of AD 54-58. This would place the writing of the book to be somewhere during the third missionary journey (using the most commonly accepted dates for Paul's travels).

We also have evidence within the letter to help us with the dating of the book. It appears the book was written during Paul's stay in Corinth. He makes mention of Gaius as his host (16:23), a name mentioned as one of Paul's few baptisms in Corinth (1 Cor. 1:14). Other Corinthians are mentioned in the letter too: Erastus, the treasurer of the city from Acts 19:22, as well as Phoebe the servant of the church at Cenchrea (a port city of Corinth).

If Corinth is accepted as the place of writing, it assists with when the book was written. Paul mentions that he is on his way to Jerusalem to deliver the funds for the disciples there (15:24), which when compared to Acts 19:21 would seem to place the letter toward the end of that journey. Taking all of that into account, putting the letter closer to the end of that AD 54-58 window seems to be most appropriate.

Paul's Original Audience:

The question of who started the work(s) in Rome is something of a mystery. There is no mention in the letter, or in Luke's work of Acts as to who first brought the Gospel to the city. In spite of this lack of information, there are three options that seem sensible:

1. Those who were converted on the day of Pentecost likely included some of the "visitors from Rome" (Acts 2:10), and these may very well have taken the good news home with them.
2. Those who were scattered abroad in Acts 8:11 could have gone as far as Rome.
3. With Rome being the capitol and a major crossroads of the empire, the Gospel would have had many chances to spread naturally through the routine migration of people.

Regardless of the who and when, by the time Paul wrote to the brethren there these groups had been around for many years. Paul mentions that he'd wanted to make a visit to them for some time (15:23). The makeup of the congregation involved both Jews and Gentiles, perhaps with a large concentration of the latter.

Cultural Conditions for the Brethren in Rome:

Paul wrote to saints who lived in a time and place where corruption was equal to, if not greater than that of our own time. Of course, as Christians, they would have done their best to influence those around them. But we must remember that they lived in a world that had yet to be influenced and shaped by Christianity. As one secular scholar noted:

It would take another revolution, the advent of Christianity, to dethrone the old classical assumptions of Rome and replace them with a new set of values (Nagle, *The Ancient World 6th Ed. Pg. 286*).

Rome was a center of moral excess. The elite were depraved and oppressive of the poor. As you would expect, the worship of idols was ingrained into every part of society. Even the historians of the day were made to blush by what Rome had become. Speaking of Nero and the games that he brought to Rome, Tacitus writes: *Our traditional morals have been gradually weakened and finally ruined by imported licentiousness. We thus begin to be able to see in our city everything that can corrupt...our youth have been made degenerate by their eagerness for foreign ways, for the gymnasium, for idleness, for perverted sex.*

Religious tolerance was another important factor. From a positive perspective it had allowed the Jews of the day to live a separate life from the pagan Romans. This fostered an environment where congregations could quickly be established. However, that same tolerance also opened the way for those early Jews to be absorbed into Roman culture.

Reasons for Writing/Important Themes:

It has been oft stated that the theme of the book is most clearly found in Romans 1:16-17: *“For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, But the righteous man shall live by faith.”*

We will not venture to disagree with this assessment. There are, however, other themes that run alongside this and help it to become more fully developed.

- While the book of Acts is focused on the physical side of our justification, Romans gives us a behind the scenes look at the how and why of our justification (DeWalt, *Romans Realized*, 13).
- Romans discusses the universal nature of sin, and the ramifications that has for God to righteously condemn both Jew and Gentile.
- Paul brings to light the relationship that the Gentiles have as a part of God’s people.
- Perhaps most significant is that the book heavily emphasizes the sovereignty of God, specifically as it pertains to how and why He chooses to form His plans.

William Tyndale advised students setting out on a study of Romans to strive to gain a proper understanding of the following key words used by Paul:

Law, Sin, Grace, Faith, Righteousness, Flesh, Spirit, and Justification.

We will be giving each of them their proper due as we work to develop them along with the other themes mentioned above.

MAIN THEMES

By way of introduction, Paul, though he bears apostolic authority, chooses to begin by focusing on his position as a bond servant .

His life carried the purpose of being separated (aphorizo) literally meaning to be marked off with boundaries.

The timing of the promise in vs 2 (beforehand) fits into Paul's overall theme that God's plan of salvation and the inclusion of the Gentiles was not something that came out of nowhere.

The gospel involved fulfilling a promise through David's son but far more amazing was the involvement of God's Son.

The ancestry of Jesus to David could have been proven through physical records. His Sonship to God could only be proven through the testimony of God through the resurrection and the fulfillment of Ps. 16:10

Romans Chapter One

1 Paul, a bond-servant of Christ Jesus, called as

an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God,

2 which He promised beforehand through His

prophets in the holy Scriptures,

3 concerning His Son, who was born of a

descendant of David according to the flesh,

4 who was declared the Son of God with power

by the resurrection from the dead, according to

the Spirit of holiness, Jesus Christ our Lord,

SIDE POINTS

Whatever title we hold, we are first and foremost slaves of Christ our Lord.

As many distractions vie for our attention, have our lives been marked off with boundaries for Christ?

MAIN THEMES

Paul was always ready to speak of the grace that had been shown to himself and the other apostles. But this grace was given for an express purpose: To bring about the spread of the gospel.

Although they've not yet met, they are brethren who have been called in the same way.

VS 7 marks the end of the letter's opening.

While still strangers to the disciples, there was much for which to be thankful. Their faith was encouraging others around the world!

5 through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about *the* obedience of faith among all the Gentiles for His name's sake,

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

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

8 First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, because your faith is being proclaimed throughout the whole world.

SIDE POINTS

Paul felt that the gift of grace was more undeserved by him than any other: see 1 Tim. 1:12-16

Take special note of the phrase **obedience of faith**. It is impossible to separate one from the other. Paul begins and ends the book by using this phrase.

VS 6 further testifies that we are to be separated as well, though not in the same sense as the apostles.

Paul still rejoiced in their success even though he had not been a part of starting the work there. He did not have the attitude of Jesus' disciples who condemned those who cast out demons but weren't part of their number. All Christians should strive to rejoice in the success of God's people everywhere. Jealousy and envy have no place.

MAIN THEMES

Although they may not have known it before, they were the constant subject of Paul's prayers.

His prayer is to finally be able to visit them. He requests their prayers in this regard later in 15:30-33

The purpose of Paul's visit is two fold: He desired to edify and *to be edified*. He wanted to give them a spiritual gift to establish the brethren. Doing so we encourage them both.

Paul didn't simply want it; he longed to do it. Epipotheo carries the idea of yearning and intensely craving something.

9 For God, whom I serve in my spirit in the

preaching of the gospel of His Son, is my witness

as to how unceasingly I make mention of you,

10 always in my prayers making request, if per

haps now at last by the will of God I may succeed

in coming to you.

11 For I long to see you so that I may

impart some spiritual gift to you, that you

may be established;

12 that is, that I may be encouraged together with

you *while* among you, each of us by the other's

faith, both yours and mine.

SIDE POINTS

Consider the impact that we can have on the lives of others, even other congregations, by making it our practice to keep them in our prayers.

In all of Paul's plans, he remembers that man's way is subject to God's will.
James 4:13-15

Paul's view should be ours too: Look for ways to *mutually* edify each other.

Borrowing Paul's feeling of "epipotheo," do we crave the company of our brethren and the mutual edification we can bring to each other?

MAIN THEMES

We aren't told what hindered Paul from seeing these brethren. We are told about his desire. Paul probably means some combination of building up spiritual fruit within the congregation: He would delight to see them grow just as he had seen other Gentiles grow in the Lord.

There are perhaps two core points in Paul's desire to preach. First, he has a complete dedication in preaching to all; he is no respecter of persons. Second, there is a great debt he feels. Having been bought and purchased by the Lord, he is under obligation to share it with all.

From a fleshly perspective, there are innumerable reasons to be ashamed of the gospel. Nothing more than a foolish stumbling block. But to Paul, and everyone who is a right thinking person, it is life-giving, life-saving power.

The "Jew first" does not refer to preference but to the order in which the plan unfolded.

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

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

15 So, for my part, I am eager to preach the gospel to you also who are in Rome.

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

SIDE POINTS

Sometimes Paul was hindered by the work of Satan (1 Thess. 2:17-20), while at other times he was prevented by the Lord, Acts 16:6. But wherever he found himself, he still considered it an opportunity to work.

Continuing to mirror Paul's behavior, we would all do well to ask whether or not we feel a sense of debt that drives us to share the gospel.

The gospel is God's power to save, not destroy. People are lost because they failed to respond to what it is that could save them.

MAIN THEMES

How can God consider pardoning those who are sinful? Through Jewish or Gentile means? It was only through the Gospel, this New Covenant that God's righteousness to save men would be revealed.

God's wrath has always been provoked in a special way by those who go to great lengths to keep the truth from being made available to others.

The thought of 19-20 really develops the idea of being without excuse. God left the evidence, and it ought to have set them off on a series of steps that led them to God. Instead, the text outlines a series of steps which led them further away from their Creator and any knowledge of Him.

17 For in it *the* righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, "BUT THE RIGHTEOUS *man* SHALL LIVE BY FAITH."

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

19 because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them.

20 For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse.

SIDE POINTS

From faith to faith is a point of emphasis and progression. It is all about faith from first to last. God has always taken care of those who have faith in Him: under the Old Law and under the New.

Paul is getting ready to form the basis for his arguments for the whole book.

Remember, while there will be plenty of points in the periphery, the main theme is the necessity of Christ to bring justification to men. In the first section of 1:18-32, Paul will seemingly be looking at the Gentiles while laying the groundwork to condemn the Jews in chapter two. This section runs through 3:18 and strongly makes the point that none can justify themselves: *there is none righteous, no not one.*"

Be careful to discern that what is made known is God's existence via certain aspects of His nature. For the fully revealed picture, we can only

MAIN THEMES

In order to seek out that knowledge, there are two required attitudes, both of which should come from seeing God's power:

Praise and Thankfulness.

Instead of following their instincts, they began to speculate. This replaced their search for truth.

They were so proud of what they had become; but how does God see them? The word for fools is moraine, from which we derive the word moronic. It is purposefully strong.

This rejection involved replacing what was obviously greater with what was obviously weaker.

There are ways in which God will always reach out to His creation. He is longsuffering and patient. He desires all men to repent. Having said that, God is not going to force or "chase down" those who are determined to put Him out of their minds. God *will* give people over.

21 For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened.

22 Professing to be wise, they became fools,

23 and exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible man and of birds and four-footed animals and crawling creatures.

24 Therefore God gave them over in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, so that their bodies would be dishonored among them.

SIDE POINTS

Disciples today must ensure that we approach God's will with these same two attitudes. Similarly, we must never allow speculation to replace the meaningful search for truth.

We would do well to remember texts like Rev. 22:18-19. No matter how small, when we think our speculations can replace what God wants, remember how He sees us.

This is the attitude that is at the heart of all idol worship: Looking for ways to please and worship self.

Passages like these (and throughout Romans) emphasize the inconsistency of doctrines that teach we are only capable of acting as God wills us to act. God doesn't want people to reject Him, but He isn't going to forcibly change anyone. People He gives over are those who have made that choice.

MAIN THEMES

Continuing the theme of having no excuse, the emphasis here is the purposeful sacrifice of truth.

Continue to take note of the theme that the path which excludes God is one that grows progressively worse. See also the continued references to God's willingness to let people do what they want even if it is to their own harm.

What is the specific consequence of this verse? It isn't stated, and it is impossible to say with any surety. The main point is that their lifestyle is one that leads to ruination.

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

26 For this reason God gave them over to degrading passions; for their women exchanged the natural function for that which is unnatural,

27 and in the same way also the men abandoned the natural function of the woman and burned in their desire toward one another, men with men committing indecent acts and receiving in their own persons the due penalty of their error.

SIDE POINTS

See Jeremiah 2:13

A Word of Caution:

It is tempting, especially in light of our current culture to treat this entire section as a treatise on homosexuality. While it is certainly included as a part of the list of actions that take place apart from God, it is only one item among many. Furthermore, it is not listed as being the apex of immorality, but rather as one of the steps on a lengthy path of increasing wickedness.

Sexual sin is targeted in 1 Cor. 6:18 as being especially heinous. Therefore we should also practice some degree of caution in saying that homosexuality is no worse than any other sin. But this should also be weighed with the care not to take this passage out of context and overstate our case.

Finally, I would also urge caution in trying to give a specific name to the consequence of vs 27, ie. Aids. There is no degree of specificity, other than this being a path to destruction.

MAIN THEMES

The third mention of God allowing them to reject Him, and He rejecting them in turn.

This is by no means an exclusive list of bad behaviors that come from abandoning God.

Many, if not all of these have to do with the unethical treatment of our fellow man. In that sense they are each eroding away at the basics of God's law: Loving Him and loving others.

28 And just as they did not see fit to acknowledge God any longer, God gave them over to a depraved mind, to do those things which are not proper,

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

30 slanderers, haters of God, insolent, arrogant, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents,

31 without understanding, untrustworthy, unloving, unmerciful;

SIDE POINTS

Sin cannot be in the presence of God. With God in our thoughts it is much more difficult for sin to take root. By pushing God out of our minds, we open the door for sin to take hold.

This list, and others like it, make for good opportunity to check ourselves for symptoms.

Do we find ourselves mirroring anything on this list? If so, should we not treat that as an alarm? Shouldn't it spur us to check for behavior that may be pushing God out and us away?

Many of the behaviors on this list are not "that bad" by the world's standards. Being disobedient to parents is almost expected or even laughed at. But each and every item that Paul mentions is part of depraved behavior. They are, according to Paul in vs 32, worthy of death.

MAIN THEMES

In something of a callback to vs 18, the final piece of evidence in their condemnation lies with their willful promotion of these behaviors.

They know full well that they are wrong, but they encourage and assist others in doing them. They even go so far as to hold them up as champions.

32 and although they know the ordinance of

God, that those who practice such things are

worthy of death, they not only do the same, but

also give hearty approval to those who

practice them.

SIDE POINTS

Chapter Summary

Chapter one sees Paul expressing his love for these brethren and his desire to encourage them in person. Wishing to expand their knowledge of God's great gospel, Paul begins to lay out God's righteousness revealed from faith to faith. The first step in this is showing the universal need for Christ, which involves showing that everyone is universally deserving of God's judgment.

Your Summary

MAIN THEMES

Harkening back to 1:20-21 and echoing James 4:17, Paul begins with this simple truth: If you have the knowledge and opportunity, then you have the obligation.

Those judging others of sin implicated themselves through their demonstration of knowing right from wrong.

Their knowledge of good gave them no special benefit if they failed to act on it. Rather it only testified to God's condemnation being just.

The only way to reach the conclusion that one would be immune to God's punishment while others are judged is to deny vs 2.

It would seem that there were those in the congregation who held the opinion that they held a different place in God's eyes; why else would they have the courage to condemn others for doing what they themselves did.

Romans Chapter Two

- 1 Therefore you have no excuse, everyone of you who passes judgment, for in that which you judge another, you condemn yourself; for you who judge practice the same things.
- 2 And we know that the judgment of God rightly falls upon those who practice such things.
- 3 But do you suppose this, O man, when you pass judgment on those who practice such things and do the same *yourself*, that you will escape the judgment of God?

SIDE POINTS

While virtually all of the material in 2:1-16 is applicable to any audience, it does appear that Paul has made a distinct shift from addressing the Gentile portion of his audience, and is now speaking to the Jews who were a part of the brethren in Rome.

V 1 also points to the inexcusable nature of one who condemns another while he himself practices the very same sin.

V 3 doesn't seem to fit any other group as well as it does the Jews. Whether before or after captivity, they lived in a state of denial about how God would judge them.

This is not hard to picture. We should make personal application. We can easily fall into the same trap and think that our standing as Christians will incur a softer judgment in spite of our sin.

MAIN THEMES

God's patience is not a sign of His approval over our actions. When we continue in sinful behavior instead of repenting, we demonstrate that we despise His goodness.

Jesus spoke about the necessity of laying up for ourselves treasures in heaven. The works that we do are accumulating wages toward something.

It isn't that God has a cosmic ledger keeping track of whether or not we are in the black or the red, but that we will be judged according to the nature of our deeds. This theme will be revisited in chapter six.

There are only two options; verse 7 gives us the first.

4 Or do you think lightly of the riches of His kindness and tolerance and patience, not knowing that the kindness of God leads you to repentance?

5 But because of your stubbornness and unrepentant heart you are storing up wrath for yourself in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God,

6 who WILL RENDER TO EACH PERSON ACCORDING TO HIS DEEDS:

7 to those who by perseverance in doing good seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life;

SIDE POINTS

It was no challenge to get Jew to agree that Gentiles were sinners. But how was he to help the Jews see themselves as being just as guilty? He really begins to address this attitude in vs 4.

The quotation seems to be from Psalm 62:12. In context, it is a righteous man rejoicing that God's faithfulness sees that the righteous are rewarded. But God's faithfulness also ensures that the wicked receive what is theirs. Which side of this payment do you want to be on?

MAIN THEMES

In contrast to vs 7, we now have the other alternative.

VS 9-11 provides a clear demonstration of God's impartial nature using an image that the Jews could only partially swallow. We are familiar with blessings to the Jew first and then to the Greek, but here Paul emphasizes that God would also meet out punishment in the same way.

Whether under the Mosaic Law, or what is sometimes called the "Law of Conscience", both Jew and Gentile had violated whatever law they were under. They would each be judged accordingly.

8 but to those who are selfishly ambitious and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, wrath and indignation.

9 *There will be* tribulation and distress for every soul of man who does evil, of the Jew first and also of the Greek,

10 but glory and honor and peace to everyone who does good, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.

11 For there is no partiality with God.

12 For all who have sinned without the Law will also perish without the Law, and all who have sinned under the Law will be judged by the Law;

SIDE POINTS

Paul's argument now refocuses on explaining the righteousness of God's condemnation toward men.

MAIN THEMES

Being under the Law as a Jew had no special advantage if you did not obey it! The principle of doers being justified is born out in the following verses.

While VS 14-15 do give evidence of Gentile condemnation, their purpose seems to be more geared toward a condemnation of the Jews.

Far from having a moral superiority over other sinners, sometimes the Gentiles proved themselves to be more righteous than some of God's own people. Although they did not have the Law given to them, they kept parts of the law "through instinct."

Nothing will be hidden from the Lord when it comes time for judgment.

Verse 17 begins to paint a picture of how the Jew saw themselves. Their delusion would serve as a strong contrast to reality.

13 for it is not the hearers of the Law who are just before God, but the doers of the Law will be justified.

14 For when Gentiles who do not have the Law do instinctively the things of the Law, these, not having the Law, are a law to themselves,

15 in that they show the work of the Law written in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness and their thoughts alternately accusing or else defending them,

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

17 But if you bear the name Jew and rely upon the Law and boast in God,

SIDE POINTS

This is not to say that God did not see His people as being righteous while seeing some nations as wicked. It is true that in many ways Jews would have tended to be more moral, at least in a general sense.

But by and large they failed to live up to the righteousness to which they had been called.

The fact that they failed to see this and saw themselves as being morally superior, regardless of their actions, was something that was in need of desperate correction.

Again, there are ample lessons for us as God's people today.

While we will be judged according to whether or not we respond to the gospel, Paul is not saying it is the measure by which God will judge.

Rather, it would be something like: *Just as I have been preaching to you, God is going to judge...*

MAIN THEMES

Verses 18-21a contain a list of attributes that should have *accurately described Israel*. God's chosen nation should have been instructed by the law and a guide to others.

They ought to have been teachers and a place to come and learn the Law,

The problem was they were guilty of not teaching themselves. They were hypocrites.

Read in that light these verses cannot help but sound arrogant. They pictured themselves as beacons of righteousness, but they were nothing more than white washed tombs.

Unfortunately for many of the Jews, the answer to these questions would have been yes.

Their lackadaisical attitude toward worship, their own morality, and their overall relationship with God was born out in their flagrant breaking of the Law. This point is continued in vs 23.

18 and know *His* will and approve the things

that are essential, being instructed out of the Law,

19 and are confident that you yourself are

a guide to the blind, a light to those who are

in darkness,

20 a corrector of the foolish, a teacher of the

immature, having in the Law the embodiment

of knowledge and of the truth,

21 you, therefore, who teach another, do you

not teach yourself? You who preach that one

shall not steal, do you steal?

22 You who say that one should not commit

adultery, do you commit adultery? You who

abhor idols, do you rob temples?

SIDE POINTS

As usual, disciples today should take stock of whether we are living up to the roles that God desires us to fill, or if we are guilty of the same terrible hypocrisy.

This is not to say that this is a descriptor of all Jewish saints in Rome. Rather this was a general description of an attitude prevalent among the Jews, and one that any brethren there must ensure that they did not share.

This has a great deal of bearing on conversations that will come later on regarding the "fairness" of God's plan for Gentile inclusion.

While there were specific reasons behind their thinking, it is all too easy for us to also fall into the trap of "*my sin isn't as bad as that of another.*"

MAIN THEMES

This was another inherent conflict that many Jews failed to feel.

The result, worse by far, was that God's name was held in derision among those they were supposed to be serving as lights. This was a *strong* condemnation against any self-righteous Jews.

Circumcision, being somewhat representative of the Law, is brought in because many Jews viewed it as an act which guaranteed their approval and standing.

While circumcision was required to be faithful as a Jew under the Law, it gained them nothing if they disregarded the rest of the commandments.

Whether the mention of the Gentiles is hypothetical or not, the point is once again a reiteration of v 13.

23 You who boast in the Law, through your breaking the Law, do you dishonor God?

24 For "THE NAME OF GOD IS BLASPHEMED AMONG THE GENTILES BECAUSE OF YOU," just as it is written.

25 For indeed circumcision is of value if you practice the Law; but if you are a transgressor of the Law, your circumcision has become uncircumcision.

26 So if the uncircumcised man keeps the requirements of the Law, will not his uncircumcision be regarded as circumcision?

SIDE POINTS

The quotation seems to come most clearly from Isa. 52:5, while calling to mind passages like Ezekiel 36:20.

The context in each of these is the derision that came on God's name when He had to punish His people, but the point is the same: When God's people who are supposed to be reflections of His nature engage in hypocrisy, we harm His name and keep others from coming to Him.

Many have tried to draw a parallel here between circumcision and baptism. The argument goes like this: In the same way that these gentiles may have kept the law but not have undergone circumcision, someone today may keep the moral tenets of Christianity and not be baptized.

The problem with this line of thought is that circumcision was something that was bound only to the Jews, while baptism has been bound on all who wish to be disciples, whether Jew or Gentile.

MAIN THEMES

The answer is a resounding yes. Numerous centurion examples come to mind.

Those who have not circumcised their hearts are merely playing at keeping the Law.

In addition to continuing the thought from vs 28, Paul adds another important distinction in regard to where a true follower of God looks to gain approval.

27 And he who is physically uncircumcised, if he keeps the Law, will he not judge you who though having the letter *of the Law* and circumcision are a transgressor of the Law?

28 For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh.

29 But he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that which is of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter; and his praise is not from men, but from God.

SIDE POINTS

Paul begins to develop a re-definition of Israel. This will really come to fruition in 9:7 and subsequent chapters. But here the thought that Gentiles could be more “Jew” than the Jews begins to take shape.

MAIN THEMES

Chapter Summary

Having turned his attention to the Jews, Paul proceeds to show that they are as guilty as the Gentiles. Beliefs and assurances held by some Jews based on their physical heritage are torn down as Paul points to their moral failures. These are made all the more poignant by the Gentiles who kept the Law by conscience, but were not physically of the nation of Israel.

SIDE POINTS

Your Summary

MAIN THEMES

If the Jew stood equally condemned, then what was the point of the Law?

Was there anything gained through being of physical Israel?

The advantage of having God's codified Law preserved in written form was enormous. From the Jewish people came the prophets, the spokesmen for God.

Their failure to keep the Law, and the consequences that follow, in no way reflect on God's faithfulness to them.

Paul's teaching in no way undermined their covenant with God.

The fierceness of Paul's rebuttal in vs 4 might sound something like "*Over my dead body!*", to borrow from one of our idioms. Every person on earth could be a liar and God would still be faithful.

Incidentally, this quotation comes from Psalm 51, and is the sort of heart they should have possessed.

Romans Chapter Three

1 Then what advantage has the Jew?

Or what is the benefit of circumcision?

2 Great in every respect. First of all, that they were entrusted with the oracles of God.

3 What then? If some did not believe, their unbelief will not nullify the faithfulness of God, will it?

4 May it never be! Rather, let God be found true, though every man *be found* a liar, as it is written,

"THAT YOU MAY BE JUSTIFIED IN YOUR WORDS, AND PREVAIL WHEN YOU ARE JUDGED."

SIDE POINTS

Paul frequently employed rhetorical devices. In the chapters ahead, Paul will frame points and further discussion through the use of strategically placed questions.

These questions take the form of objections that would have been offered by a Jewish audience. I would suggest that they were more than hypotheticals and were representative of the objections that had been raised by his many Jewish detractors as they'd heard him present the Gospel—especially the portions pertaining to Gentile inclusion.

Verse 1 contains the first of these objections. *Then what is the point, Paul?*

Without the objective truth of God, there exists no standard by which to judge anything as being wrong or right.

MAIN THEMES

Another objection: If what you say is true, then our wickedness only serves to show God's goodness. How can God then be just in condemning us?

Another categorical denial. This is not true, and God *is just* in judging the world.

If they applied their bad logic in a consistent way, then they should have no problem with his teaching.

"His lie" was the gospel he preached. The unwillingness of some Jews to believe what he's been saying in 2:1 up to now are why he calls it a lie.

Taking it a step further, using human terms, why not go ahead and do more evil to expose more of God's goodness?

5 But if our unrighteousness demonstrates the righteousness of God, what shall we say?

The God who inflicts wrath is not unrighteous, is He? (I am speaking in human terms.)

6 May it never be! For otherwise, how will God judge the world?

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

8 And why not *say* (as we are slanderously reported and as some claim that we say),

"Let us do evil that good may come"?

Their condemnation is just.

SIDE POINTS

The disclaimer of "human terms" serves to underscore that one would only reach this conclusions by using a fleshly way of thinking.

It is important to draw a distinction between beliefs that were actually held by some of the Jews, and sayings that were either hypothetical or slanderous misrepresentations of what Paul had taught elsewhere.

MAIN THEMES

Paul's point is not to establish that God has never been pleased with anyone, or imparted righteousness to anyone.

Neither is this a general description of man apart from God. But using a scathing series of OT quotations, Paul lays out a picture that every man and woman every living has in some way failed to keep the Law of the Lord.

No one has fully appreciated it; no one has fully kept it; all have broken it, sometimes willfully, and on occasion hindering others.

The Jew may have been justified in their own eyes by circumcision of the Law, but they had not justified themselves in the eyes of God.

9 What then? Are we better than they?
Not at all; for we have already charged that both
Jews and Greeks are all under sin;
10 as it is written,
“THERE IS NONE RIGHTEOUS, NOT EVEN ONE;
11 THERE IS NONE WHO UNDERSTANDS,
THERE IS NONE WHO SEEKS FOR GOD;
12 ALL HAVE TURNED ASIDE, TOGETHER
THEY HAVE BECOME USELESS;
THERE IS NONE WHO DOES GOOD,
THERE IS NOT EVEN ONE.”
13 “THEIR THROAT IS AN OPEN GRAVE,
WITH THEIR TONGUES THEY KEEP DECEIVING,”
“THE POISON OF ASPS IS UNDER THEIR LIPS”;
14 “WHOSE MOUTH IS FULL OF
CURSING AND BITTERNESS”;
15 “THEIR FEET ARE SWIFT TO SHED BLOOD,
16 DESTRUCTION AND MISERY
ARE IN THEIR PATHS,
17 AND THE PATH OF PEACE THEY
HAVE NOT KNOWN.”
18 “THERE IS NO FEAR OF GOD BEFORE
THEIR EYES.”

SIDE POINTS

There is some discussion about whether this is intended for the Jewish portion of Paul's audience. Vs 9 would seem to clearly state that these verses speak to the condemnation of both Jew and Gentile.

The quotations listed are a mix of verses from the book of Psalms and the prophecy of Isaiah.

MAIN THEMES

What is the end result of these OT quotations? Every mouth is shut. No one can boast of having achieved righteousness through their own efforts.

Everyone is pointed toward their absolute dependence on the grace of God to provide another way.

The Law and the Gospel are not separate as though they came from two separate sources; but the point needed to be made clear that it was through the Gospel and not the Law that God had brought His righteousness to all.

Neither Jew nor Gentile are excluded from the need for Christ.

19 Now we know that whatever the Law says, it speaks to those who are under the Law, so that every mouth may be closed and all the world may become accountable to God;

20 because by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified in His sight; for through the Law *comes* the knowledge of sin.

21 But now apart from the Law *the* righteousness of God has been manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets,

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

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

SIDE POINTS

Here begins a discussion that will be more fully explored in chapter 7: What was the purpose of the Law? We sometimes discuss the hypothetical of “perfect Law keeping” as being a way to salvation, but for one who has *already sinned*, even this would gain them nothing. The point of the Law was not to provide a means of salvation, but to point out man’s need for salvation by condemning his sin.

There is no distinction, but there is a stipulation; *for all those who believe*.

It is often pointed out, but always worth commenting on, that the *falling short* in vs 23 is a continuous action. We will continue to make mistakes and stand in need of God’s grace.

MAIN THEMES

Gift: dorean—something given freely, without cause...

Propitiation: the idea of a calming or soothing. The word is used in the context of atonement. Christ was an atoning victim. Someone else made reparations on your behalf.

God had not turned a blind eye to sin, but he accepted insufficient sacrifices with an eye to when Jesus would come.

It is that death that allows God to be both just, and justifier.

If we are all fully condemned, and our justification has been bought through the blood of another, how could we possibly see room for boasting? Where did this deliverance come from?

24 being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus;

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

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

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

SIDE POINTS

See Hebrews 9:15; 10:5-14

In order for God to be just, sin must be punished. In order for God to justify us, He must declare that we are without sin.

This seems to put Him at an impasse; how can God accomplish both of these without contradiction? Only through the atoning sacrifice of Jesus.

It is strange that those who appeal to Paul in the “grace over law” argument always seem to miss that we are still under a law of some sort.

MAIN THEMES

Paul repeats the point from earlier. The Law was unable to bring justification to men. This can only be found in Christ.

Contrary to what some Jews may have believed, they did not have a monopoly on God's attention or His good graces.

There is one God, and He is the justifier of all who believe, 3:22

While some Jews may have seen Paul's teaching as a scandal, he was merely doing what Jesus said He came for in Matthew 5:17

28 For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from works of the Law.

29 Or is God *the God* of Jews only? Is

He not *the God* of Gentiles also? Yes, of

Gentiles also,

30 since indeed God who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through faith is one.

31 Do we then nullify the Law through faith?

May it never be! On the contrary, we establish the Law.

SIDE POINTS

The phrase faith alone is not found in this verse. It is only found in James 2:24 stating that man is not justified by faith alone.

Of course, Paul and James are not in disagreement. Rather they are dealing with two different extremes to a similar problem.

Paul is laying the groundwork for the argumentation that comes in chapter 4.

MAIN THEMES

Chapter Summary

Dealing with potential objections to the condemnation mentioned in Chapter 2, Paul unleashes a barrage of OT quotations that demonstrate the universal need for the atoning sacrifice of Christ.

SIDE POINTS

Your Summary

MAIN THEMES

Paul's first example is important because of his level of prestige among the Jews. Aside from David, there was no more revered figure than Abraham.

But Paul demonstrates that even Abraham was not one who earned his salvation.

The very term credited, or reckoned, indicates that Abraham was not being paid according to his works.

Is this to say that Abraham literally did no works? It would be hard to read the Genesis account and reach that conclusion. Rather, Abraham, sinner though he was, obeyed and believed God.

Romans Chapter Four

- 1 What then shall we say that Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh, has found?
- 2 For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God.
- 3 For what does the Scripture say?
“ABRAHAM BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS CREDITED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS.”
- 4 Now to the one who works, his wage is not credited as a favor, but as what is due.
- 5 But to the one who does not work, but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is credited as righteousness,

SIDE POINTS

One of the key takeaways from chapter four is the issue of **when**. Paul is making the point that Gentile inclusion and justification did not suddenly appear out of the blue.

The examples in this chapter demonstrate that men have *always* been justified by faith, and those who lived lives pleasing to God knew this.

This quotation of Gen. 15 is often used to identify the point of Abraham's salvation. Even a cursory glance of chapter 12 would indicate that Abraham had a relationship with God long before chapter 15 took place.

This and other misapplications lose sight of the chapter's purpose. It is not here to say that God doesn't expect us to work, but that these men who *did work* were justified by their faith both before and after the Law.

MAIN THEMES

Abraham is not alone. Even David speaks as one who was justified, not because he had earned his salvation, but because he relied on God to graciously forgive him when he repented, ie faith.

When did these things take place? Was it before or after the Law? The answer is both. Abraham was justified by faith as an uncircumcised Gentile living long before the Law was delivered.

David was justified by faith as a circumcised Jew living under the Law of Moses.

Both were men who had sinned and thus could not be justified through their own efforts.

6 just as David also speaks of the blessing on the man to whom God credits righteousness apart from works:

7 “BLESSED ARE THOSE WHOSE
LAWLESS DEEDS HAVE BEEN FORGIVEN,
AND WHOSE SINS HAVE BEEN COVERED.

8 “BLESSED IS THE MAN WHOSE SIN
THE LORD WILL NOT TAKE INTO ACCOUNT.”

9 Is this blessing then on the circumcised,
or on the uncircumcised also? For we say,
“FAITH WAS CREDITED TO ABRAHAM
AS RIGHTEOUSNESS.”

SIDE POINTS

As with Abraham, is anyone really willing to say that David did not work? Or a step further, would anyone say that David's works were not required of him?

When he repented of his sin with Bathsheba, is there some reason to assume that he didn't offer the appropriate sacrifices? Of course not.

MAIN THEMES

Continuing the point of when these things took place...

The emphasis is not so much on the specific physical act as it is on to whom the promise was given.

The covenant was made with an uncircumcised man so that he would be the father of both.

The promise of blessing was also given before the Law was enacted.

10 How then was it credited? While he was circumcised, or uncircumcised? Not while circumcised, but while uncircumcised;

11 and he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had while uncircumcised, so that he might be the father of all who believe without being circumcised, that righteousness might be credited to them,

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

13 For the promise to Abraham or to his descendants that he would be heir of the world was not through the Law, but through the righteousness of faith.

SIDE POINTS

These thoughts are further developed in vs 17

More steps on the road to chapter 9; continuing to give a clear definition of what it really means to be of Israel.

MAIN THEMES

See vs 16 below...

If the promise was to those under the Law only, then God's promise to bless all nations could not be fulfilled.

The promise of a great nation was fulfilled in physical Israel. The totality of being a father of *many* nations was only fulfilled in his spiritual descendants who come to a faith in Christ.

14 For if those who are of the Law are heirs,
faith is made void and the promise is nullified;

15 for the Law brings about wrath, but where
there is no law, there also is no violation.

16 For this reason *it is* by faith, in order that *it may be* in accordance with grace, so that the promise will be guaranteed to all the descendants, not only to those who are of the Law, but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all,

17 (as it is written, "A FATHER OF MANY NATIONS HAVE I MADE YOU") in the presence of Him whom he believed, *even* God, who gives life to the dead and calls into being that which does not exist.

SIDE POINTS

As confusing as this statement has been to some, it does not mean that there is a situation where people are without sin. 1 John 3:4 defines sin as breaking the law; and if all have sinned as 3:23 says, then all are under a law of some sort.

MAIN THEMES

The main thrust of this section is an elaboration on the great faith that Abraham possessed.

The enormity of his faith did not earn his salvation anymore than works would have earned it; but it was his continuous unwavering faith that was rewarded by God.

The prospects for a physical nation were looking bleak. It would not be brought about by his own power and might.

The difficulties of the promise being fulfilled did not cause Abraham to doubt God, but bolstered his belief as God proved Himself true.

18 In hope against hope he believed, so that he might become a father of many nations

according to that which had been spoken,

“SO SHALL YOUR DESCENDANTS BE.”

19 Without becoming weak in faith he contemplated his own body, now as good as dead since he was about a hundred years old, and the deadness of Sarah’s womb;

20 yet, with respect to the promise of God, he did not waver in unbelief but grew strong in faith, giving glory to God,

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

SIDE POINTS

This section is not Paul’s attempt to re-write history in a more favorable way.

The very context in which Abraham is introduced should make it clear that Paul doesn’t picture him as being without sin.

Abraham made his fair share of mistakes, but he never seems to have disbelieved that God would carry out this great promise.

Sarah was chastised because she laughed in disbelief; Abraham, like Mary when visited by the angel, did not question out of doubt, but out of a desire to know how.

Although he stumbled, he never doubted God’s promise; this is why Paul can say that his faith *with respect to the promise* did not waver.

MAIN THEMES

Vs 22 implies that if Abraham *had not* had the sort of faith just described, then he would not have had righteousness credited to his account.

This is preserved for all today who are true children of Abraham, so that we may learn to be justified in the same way.

22 Therefore IT WAS ALSO CREDITED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS.

23 Now not for his sake only was it written that it was credited to him,

24 but for our sake also, to whom it will be credited, as those who believe in Him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead,

25 *He* who was delivered over because of our transgressions, and was raised because of our justification.

SIDE POINTS

The concept of an obedient faith is illustrated with incredible clarity in the life of Abraham. His belief in God affected his actions. Every time he demonstrated faith/belief in God, that was born out in what he did. Whether that was going to Canaan, or sacrificing Isaac. Abraham was justified by his faith, but his faith was far more than any simple mental assent.

Chapter Summary

Using Abraham (and David) as an example, Paul demonstrates that faith has always been the way in which the faithful are justified. God carried out His covenant with Abraham in such a way that it clearly demonstrated that Gentiles would come to Him in the same way.

Your Summary

MAIN THEMES

The justification that comes through faith in Christ, (and was unable to be obtained through works of the Law), is a confident salvation. It brings us to a place where we can **stand**.

The surety of God's grace and the blessings in Christ enable us to face trials with an attitude that goes beyond simple endurance.

Not only do we exult (boast, take pride in) in the hope of God's glory, it is the same attitude applied to difficulties.

God in His goodness has enabled us to face trials in such a way that they spur growth and the ability to withstand more.

This not only enables us to stand, but serves as an assurance that God will not let us down.

Romans Chapter Five

- 1 Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,
- 2 through whom also we have obtained our introduction by faith into this grace in which we stand; and we exult in hope of the glory of God.
- 3 And not only this, but we also exult in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance;
- 4 and perseverance, proven character; and proven character, hope;
- 5 and hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us.

SIDE POINTS

There are many misunderstandings that plague the book of Romans. The most notable come from Chapters 5, 7, and 9.

These are the go-to chapters for those who wish to teach the doctrine of inherited sin, or radical depravity.

Chapter 5 especially is often taken as a continued commentary on the sinfulness of man. While this is obviously a part of the discussion at hand, what Paul is doing is moving into an explanation of what justification through faith in Jesus as the Christ accomplishes for us.

While there are other observations to make throughout the chapter, the main theme comes down to a contrast of two eras: The time of Adam, and the time of Christ.

MAIN THEMES

These are stirring verses that serve as a strong reminder of how great a sacrifice was made for us, as well as how undeserving we were of such action.

The way that Paul uses these points is to elaborate on the points made in vs 1-5.

God has already given us the most valuable treasure He possessed, and He did so when we were least deserving of it.

Therefore, everything else God has to give is a lesser gift. If God gave the greatest gift while we were enemies, will He hold back anything else now that we are part of His children?

VS 10-11 Seem to be referencing the work that Jesus now does on our behalf as High Priest and mediator.

6 For while we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly.

7 For one will hardly die for a righteous man; though perhaps for the good man someone would dare even to die.

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

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

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

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

SIDE POINTS

These are strong assurances that need to be taken to heart by believers today.

We suffer, we have difficulties, and we see suffering in the world around us.

How are we to know that all of this is truly working together for our good?

The proof is in what God has already done for us!

MAIN THEMES

The conditions of Chapter 1:18 and following began in the Garden. With the actions of Adam (here being used for the purposes of contrasting with the work of Christ) creation began to be in rebellion against God.

Even if we have not committed the *exact* same offense as Adam, all have still committed *some sort* of sin, and are therefore in the same condition.

The transgression brought death, but the gift brings life.

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

13 for until the Law sin was in the world, but sin is not imputed when there is no law.

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

15 But the free gift is not like the transgression. For if by the transgression of the one the many died, much more did the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abound to the many.

SIDE POINTS

Death has spread to all men, not because all have inherited Adam's sin, but *because all sinned*.

The work of Christ is being held as a parallel to the sin of Adam. If, as many will say, Adam's sin imparted death to all, then the parallel would be that Jesus's sacrifice *automatically* brought life to all. This is not a concession many are willing to make from this chapter. The false parallel begins to break down.

MAIN THEMES

The era of Adam was an era of wrath, separation, and death. The era of Christ is one of peace, reconciliation, and life.

This section of verses is repeating and elaborating on the verses prior.

Adam's sin introduced death, and all have followed. Christ's work introduced life for all who follow in faith.

16 The gift is not like *that which came* through the one who sinned; for on the one hand the judgment *arose* from one *transgression* resulting in condemnation, but on the other hand the free gift *arose* from many transgressions resulting in justification.

17 For if by the transgression of the one, death reigned through the one, much more those who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.

18 So then as through one transgression there resulted condemnation to all men, even so through one act of righteousness there resulted justification of life to all men.

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

SIDE POINTS

See side-note on previous page

MAIN THEMES

Why is the Law considered to be a part of the era of death? Although Adam's sin was before the Law, it started the problem.

The Law did not prevent anyone from sinning, but as Paul will explain in ch. 7 exposed and named their sin.

The Law in doing so could not provide a solution, and is therefore considered in this conversation as belonging to the era of Adam and in contrast with the work of Christ.

20 The Law came in so that the transgression would increase; but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more,

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

Chapter Summary

What is the result of justification through faith in Christ Jesus? The complete reversal of the devastating consequence of following in Adam's sin, and the bestowment of life not possible under the Law.

Your Summary

SIDE POINTS

One more strong point delivered to any Jews who may have been still looking to the Law for justification.

MAIN THEMES

If Paul's gospel is true, and justification has "nothing to do with works", then we might as well just sin all we want, and let grace cover it!

Despite this slanderous interpretation of what Paul's teaching truly was, Paul firmly declares this to be a lie, and against the truth of the Gospel.

We escaped the era of wrath and death when we died with Christ in baptism; why would we want to go back?

Christ did not die to die again; He died, was raised, and stayed alive. This is supposed to be the pattern we follow.

Romans Chapter Six

1 What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin so that grace may increase?

2 May it never be! How shall we who died to sin still live in it?

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

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

5 For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection,

SIDE POINTS

How is it that we leave the era of Adam, and enter into the era of Christ? The answer is in vs 3-5.

Chapter Five served as an explanation of the benefits of justification through faith; Chapter Six takes time to deal with objections and hypothetical abuses.

These objections are handled in the same way as in chapter 3. As we mentioned then, these were likely objections that he had heard multiple times from Jews as he taught in different cities. There are two question/objections in ch 6, and two in ch 7.

Although Paul's main point is to address the question of continuing in sin, this text is without a doubt one of the most powerful passages to show the necessity of baptism in the salvation of a believer.

MAIN THEMES

What must be put to death? The old man of sin.

When we bury that old man, what rises up is a servant of Christ over which sin has no claim..

Pointing back to vs 5, we not only live a life *with* Christ, we strive to live a life *as* he did.

We can't have it both ways!
We are either dead to sin or we aren't.

6 knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin;

7 for he who has died is freed from sin.

8 Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him,

9 knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, is never to die again; death no longer is master over Him.

10 For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God.

11 Even so consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus.

SIDE POINTS

MAIN THEMES

Using another image to make the point of the previous verses Paul gives us food for thought: Do we want our bodies to be used by the evil one for his purposes, or do we want to be used by God in His plans?

Should we continue to sin since we are being shown mercy and not condemnation? (The second of Paul's questions.)

Once again, the resounding answer is *absolutely not!*

One of Paul's points is that we can't choose our wages. If we work for sin, we are going to get paid by sin.

12 Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its lusts,

13 and do not go on presenting the members of your body to sin as instruments of unrighteousness; but present yourselves to God as those alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God.

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

15 What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? May it never be!

16 Do you not know that when you present yourselves to someone as slaves for obedience, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either sin resulting in death, or of obedience resulting in righteousness?

SIDE POINTS

When we sin, or do right, our bodies are outwardly expressing what our souls want.

There is no excuse to continue on serving sin. If we make that choice, it is **our choice**. We are not bound under a Law that cannot justify, we have the Law of Grace.

The next seven verses contain the word slave 8 times.

MAIN THEMES

More elaboration on previous verses. Paul continues to emphasize the pitiful state of when we were trapped serving sin. Now that we've been delivered to something immeasurably greater, why would we ever want to go back? No, we should press on and continue in greater growth of service.

Not just in the sense that we didn't serve righteousness, but that we were "righteousness-free", i.e., a sick person hopes to hear that they are free of any trace of their disease. There was no righteousness found in us.

17 But thanks be to God that though you were slaves of sin, you became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching to which you were committed,

18 and having been freed from sin, you became slaves of righteousness.

19 I am speaking in human terms because of the weakness of your flesh. For just as you presented your members as slaves to impurity and to lawlessness, resulting in further lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves to righteousness, resulting in sanctification.

20 For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness.

SIDE POINTS

Remember, we are speaking in the context of justification by faith. Notice how often we keep seeing the concept of being **obedient** pop up.

We are going to be slaves of something...But we do have a choice in the matter.

How often do we see in the NT writings, an inability to perceive spiritual truth because of fleshliness?

MAIN THEMES

Nothing!

There is simply no comparison to the corrupting, false promise of sin, and the life giving wonder found in Jesus. We must again beg the question, why would we ever go back?

21 Therefore what benefit were you then deriving from the things of which you are now ashamed? For the outcome of those things is death.

22 But now having been freed from sin and enslaved to God, you derive your benefit, resulting in sanctification, and the outcome, eternal life.

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

Chapter Summary

Paul answers two similar objections to living a life of justification through faith in Christ: Grace is not a license to continue in sin. If we pursue that old life style, we will get our old wages.

Your Summary

SIDE POINTS

Do you feel ashamed for our previous life/service?

We have no guilt, but we should take no pride in our former lives.

MAIN THEMES

The point is one of dominion/jurisdiction.

As long as the Jew was alive, he was bound to the Old Law.

In the same way that death puts an end to a marriage union, dying frees you from the Law.

When they died with Christ, they were severed from the Law. The new person who was born into Christ was now joined to Christ. This also relates back to Ch. 6. The purpose from being loosed from the Law is to bear fruit for God, not engage in sinful behavior.

Romans Chapter Seven

- 1 Or do you not know, brethren (for I am speaking to those who know the law), that the law has jurisdiction over a person as long as he lives?
- 2 For the married woman is bound by law to her husband while he is living; but if her husband dies, she is released from the law concerning the husband.
- 3 So then, if while her husband is living she is joined to another man, she shall be called an adulteress; but if her husband dies, she is free from the law, so that she is not an adulteress though she is joined to another man.
- 4 Therefore, my brethren, you also were made to die to the Law through the body of Christ, so that you might be joined to another, to Him who was raised from the dead, in order that we might bear fruit for God.

SIDE POINTS

Chapter 7 is continuing to answer the question that was introduced in 6:15

Paul is not giving any new teaching on marriage. In context he is not teaching on marriage to any degree.

The purpose of the marriage discussion is to illustrate the nature of being bound to the Law, and how one could be unbound from it.

MAIN THEMES

Flesh is not only referring to the physical body.

The sinful nature of these passions was revealed by the Law. This does not mean that they were stirred up by the Law.

Spirit is in reference to the New Covenant, Letter is in reference to the Old.

The Law is not sinful because it exposes our sinfulness. It is fulfilling its function just as God designed it to do.

Paul uses the basic example of coveting; something that everyone has experienced.

But now that he knew it was wrong (through the instruction of the Law) sin tempted him to engage in all sorts of coveting.

5 For while we were in the flesh, the sinful passions, which were aroused by the Law, were at work in the members of our body to bear fruit for death.

6 But now we have been released from the Law, having died to that by which we were bound, so that we serve in newness of the Spirit and not in oldness of the letter.

7 What shall we say then? Is the Law sin? May it never be! On the contrary, I would not have come to know sin except through the Law; for I would not have known about coveting if the Law had not said, "You shall not covet."

8 But sin, taking opportunity through the commandment, produced in me coveting of every kind; for apart from the Law sin is dead.

SIDE POINTS

Sinful passions are those that lead us to behave contrary to God's will.

Spirit vs Letter is not a reference to strict vs lax obedience. It is not living by the Spirit to "violate the letter."

Verse 7 begins the third of the four questions in Chapters six and seven.

Beginning in vs 8, Sin is spoken of in a personified way. It is an entity that represents the selfish struggles we have to overcome to please God.

Take note that it is Sin, not the Law, that produced the wicked desires.

MAIN THEMES

There was a time when Paul's innocence kept him from being in violation of the Law. But when Paul was able to comprehend right from wrong, Sin took hold and he died in spirit.

Again, the Law was not defunct. It performed exactly as God created it.

(Fourth Question)

If the Law's identification of sin enabled sin to tempt us, does that mean that the Law was sinful?

No; the goal was that we would come to see the detestable nature of sin.

Utterly = exceedingly, excessive. We are to see the sinfulness of sin.

9 I was once alive apart from the Law; but when the commandment came, sin became alive and I died;

10 and this commandment, which was to result in life, proved to result in death for me;

11 for sin, taking an opportunity through the commandment, deceived me and through it killed me.

12 So then, the Law is holy, and the commandment is holy and righteous and good.

13 Therefore did that which is good become a cause of death for me? May it never be! Rather it was sin, in order that it might be shown to be sin by effecting my death through that which is good, so that through the commandment sin would become utterly sinful.

SIDE POINTS

The Law was not given because God wanted man to be lost: The law was given to show men how to please God. The commandments were "for our good always."

But when that Law is violated, there is no remedy. It only had the ability to convict.

This is not an attempt by Paul to shirk responsibility for his actions.

MAIN THEMES

More emphasis on the goodness of the law. Chapter six reminds us that we are the ones who sold ourselves into sin.

The knowledge of sin that came through the Law taught him to hate sin.

He, like all of us, acted in ways that he knew were wrong, thus agreeing with the Law that labeled them.

Paul continues to describe the struggle between the part of him that knew the Law was good, and the part that gave into sin.

Notice that Paul restricts the statement of nothing good in vs 18 to the realm of his flesh.

14 For we know that the Law is spiritual, but I am of flesh, sold into bondage to sin.

15 For what I am doing, I do not understand; for I am not practicing what I would like to do, but I am doing the very thing I hate.

16 But if I do the very thing I do not want to do, I agree with the Law, confessing that the Law is good.

17 So now, no longer am I the one doing it, but sin which dwells in me.

18 For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh; for the willing is present in me, but the doing of the good is not.

SIDE POINTS

This is a section of Paul's letter that has been widely abused. On the one hand there are those who have followed the path of Calvin. Their reading of this chapter concludes that Paul's discussion of the flesh vs spirit is evidence of man's sinful nature before a miraculous transformation of our hearts through the Spirit's intervention. This is in spite of passages like Ezek. 18 that teach we are all responsible for our own sin, committed through the exercise of our own freewill. On the other hand, there have been Christians who have looked at this text in a light that isn't too far removed from Calvin's ideas. The struggle between wanting and doing is not a description of an "every day struggle with sin." While Paul writes elsewhere about our need to work to overcome temptation, he never speaks of it in a way where we simply cannot keep ourselves from sin no matter how hard we try. (His comments in 1 Cor. 10:13 would say the opposite.) This section is not a commentary on his present life. How would that conclusion match up with description of having died to sin in Ch. 6? What Paul is describing here is the hopelessness of living under the Old Law with no path of deliverance following sin. *Continued...*

MAIN THEMES

To further illustrate this section, imagine a struggle taking place inside you between two “selves”.

There is the self that knows what is right and desires to do it, and then a self that desires to do wrong. Whichever one acts, it is still one of your “selves.”

Paul is not is not advocating a “devil made me do it” attitude, or a loss of his will.

Think back to the goal of the Law; to demonstrate the sinfulness of sin. That is the conclusion that Paul came to, and what leads to his exclamation in the following verses.

19 For the good that I want, I do not do, but I practice the very evil that I do not want.

20 But if I am doing the very thing I do not want, I am no longer the one doing it, but sin which dwells in me.

21 I find then the principle that evil is present in me, the one who wants to do good.

22 For I joyfully concur with the law of God in the inner man,

23 but I see a different law in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin which is in my members.

SIDE POINTS

The chapter ends with the deliverance that can only be found in Christ and was not accessible under the Law.

This serves as a transition into chapter 8 where Paul will discuss the blessings that come by the Spirit in Christ.

If someone finds themselves feeling as though they can relate to the struggle of ch. 7 in their lives, it is an indication that they are not living by the Spirit as outlined in chapter 8, and are not living out their death with Christ as described in ch. 6.

Paul’s use of the present tense in this section serves as a literary device to emphasize that there is a danger in us going back to this sort of life if we live outside of Christ.

MAIN THEMES

This is the desperation that comes from being without Christ.

Paul answers his own question. The only solution was to find deliverance from the Law through Christ.

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

25 Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, on the one hand I myself with my mind am serving the law of God, but on the other, with my flesh the law of sin.

Chapter Summary

Paul answers two more objections to his teaching. We have died to the Law, not because it was sinful, but so that we could be bound to Christ. The Law's purpose was to show the exceeding sinfulness of sin. Paul demonstrates this by describing the hopelessness of living under the Law without the deliverance that can only come in Christ.

Your Summary

SIDE POINTS

Again, compare this with Paul's description of himself in chapter 6.

To take this to mean that Paul advocates a position where we can be faithful to God by serving Him with our hearts, even though our bodies are given over to sin, would be another contradiction of ch. 6:1-3.

None of this is to undermine that fact that there are some very difficult sayings in ch. 7 that take a great deal of thought to parse through. We must start with what we know to be true and take passages that are simple and straightforward. With this approach we can work through a text, discarding views that contradict the simple passages, and work our way to a better understanding. This should be kept in mind for chapters 8 and 9 as well.

MAIN THEMES

If Christ has declared us to be free from sin, no one else can say one word.

This is the freedom Paul desperately wanted while he was still under the Law.

Notice Gal. 5:1

The Law only had the power to expose and condemn. Complete forgiveness was not possible without the sacrifice of Jesus.

We will pour ourselves into the pursuit of whatever our hearts desire.

Romans Chapter Eight

1 Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

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

3 For what the Law could not do, weak as it was through the flesh, God did: sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and as an offering for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh,

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

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

SIDE POINTS

This chapter also deals with some more complicated concepts that require us to drill down a little deeper.

But this is one of the most encouraging chapters in scripture as it describes the blessings and confidence that we can now have in Christ.

There is no distinction between the Law of the Spirit and the Law of Christ.

Remember, Paul is not speaking ill of the Law. But for this discussion the Law has been placed along with the era of Adam and death. It could not provide what is found in Christ.

The declaration in vs 1 is not a statement of immunity to ever being condemned of wrong doing. We cannot be charged by the Law of being guilty of what Christ has now forgiven us. However, vs 4 pairs this whole concept with **those who do not walk according to the flesh**. What happens if you decide to stop walking according to the Spirit, and go back to the flesh? You are no longer free from condemnation.

MAIN THEMES

The consequences and outcomes of verse five.

It is unable *because* it is set on the flesh, and has no interest in God.

We cannot be pleasing when we are in a state of open hostility.

We are in the flesh physically, but not in the flesh as a sinful mindset. Having the Spirit dwell in us allows us to live in the flesh while not being dead through the pursuit of fleshly desires.

Although Ch. 5 teaches that our bodies are under the same sentence of death. If Christ is in us we still live.

6 For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace,

7 because the mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God; for it does not subject itself to the law of God, for it is not even able to do so,

8 and those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

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

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

SIDE POINTS

The mind on the flesh doesn't just lead to death, but *produces* it.

Someone who has become so engrained in a habit cannot imagine breaking it.

See Matt. 6:24 and Romans 6:16

You cannot please God when you are intent on pleasing yourself.

It is easy to get lost in the pursuit of *how does the Spirit dwell in us?* The Bible simply doesn't reveal this in great detail. We should be careful not to make claims that aren't found in scripture and should be content with the knowledge that God's Spirit dwells in believers. How do we know? Because the Bible says so.

MAIN THEMES

There will be a great contrast between what the wicked and the righteous experience in resurrection.

We are under a debt, but not one to the flesh. If we serve the flesh we will die. If we serve the Spirit we can put to death the deeds of the flesh.

The Spirit is a large part of our Sonship, being mentioned in this context and others.

The Spirit enables us to have courage. We can approach God as our Father!

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

12 So then, brethren, we are under obligation, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh—

13 for if you are living according to the flesh, you must die; but if by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live.

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

15 For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, “Abba! Father!”

SIDE POINTS

Another difficult question: How does the Spirit lead us? When we say that someone is being led by certain principles, we do not mean that they are being whispered to or jerked about by some invisible impulse. Rather, when we live by the truth revealed by the Spirit, have our minds on the Spirit, are bearing the fruit of the Spirit, and following Spiritual truths, we are being guided by the Spirit.

This begins a section in the chapter that deals with a difficult truth. We’ve been freed from the flesh, we’ve been given the ability to walk by the Spirit. We’ve been made sons of God. But in spite of all this there is still suffering. Some see suffering as a part of condemnation, but Paul says that suffering is a part of our sonship. These verses weave together with the blessings that come through the Spirit.

MAIN THEMES

The idea is a co-witness;
The Spirit is giving this
testimony alongside
our own.

As fellow heirs we should
not desire that we receive
only blessings. We should
willingly and gladly accept
suffering as well. Christ was
glorified, but it was after
He had subjected Himself
to God's will and suffered
on our behalf.

We are not the only ones
living in a cursed and fallen
world. The Earth didn't
sin, but it suffers under the
punishment for sin.

16 The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit
that we are children of God,

17 and if children, heirs also, heirs of God
and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer
with Him so that we may also be glorified
with Him.

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

19 For the anxious longing of the creation
waits eagerly for the revealing of the sons of God.

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

SIDE POINTS

Although it may be in a
slightly different context than
we usually think, this is
another verse that places a
condition on our salvation.

This is really saying
something. It calls to mind
Ephesians 3:20-21. As much
as Paul suffered, there was
simply no comparison to
what was in store for him.

We need to make sure that
we don't shy away from
allowing God to take credit
for the difficulties we often
face. It isn't all just chance
and bad people being bad.
God made the choice to put
the whole world under a
curse, but He did so *in hope*.
There is something He
hopes to accomplish. This
futile world is supposed to
cause us to see our need
for Christ and a way back
to Him.

MAIN THEMES

Christ brings freedom from corruption and bondage. Both for ourselves and the rest of creation. We may not know in what sense this will take shape, but the point is to highlight the glory of God and the glory that we are anxiously awaiting.

Just as the creation waits for the suffering of its form to cease, we look forward to a timewhen we will have new bodies as well.

There are blessings we now experience, but there are still blessings not seen. Our hope has not yet been fully realized.

Rather than being a disappointment this is something to which we look.

21 that the creation itself also will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God.

22 For we know that the whole creation groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now.

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

24 For in hope we have been saved, but hope that is seen is not hope; for who hopes for what he already sees?

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

SIDE POINTS

These are difficult verses, and there have been many different attempts to spin them in different directions. These become especially difficult when read alongside passages like 2 Peter 3:10-13. Those passages talk about new heavens and earth, but are not necessarily much clearer. Again, it is safe to stick with the basics. While we see a portion of God's glory now, there is more glory coming!

MAIN THEMES

Our prayers are often hindered by our physical and mental weaknesses. We don't know what to pray for; we don't know how to express our thoughts, and may even pray for the wrong things. But one of the blessings of being God's child is that His Spirit who dwells within us intercedes and conveys those thoughts which we are unable to express. *Thank God.*

In context, this probably reaches forward to the general idea of nothing being able to thwart God's purposes for us.

God laid out a plan in the beginning that those who chose to love Him could become like His Son. These would be able to find justification and ultimately be glorified.

26 In the same way the Spirit also helps our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words;

27 and He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.

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

29 For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren;

SIDE POINTS

How does this work? What does it look like on a chart? I have no earthly idea. Again, we have to be satisfied with simply saying what the verse says and taking comfort in wonderful truth that the Spirit does what the text says He will.

There is still application to be made that God can bring good out of terrible circumstances. That is after all the point of God placing the world under a curse.

Foreknow is used 5 times in the NT. Once in Acts, twice by Peter, and another in Romans 11:2. In these places foreknow is not used in the sense of foreordain or pre-election.

It means to anticipate the course of events, whereas foreordain would mean to decide the course of events.

See also Hos. 13:5, Amos 3:2

MAIN THEMES

See vs 29

Nothing and no one!

Paul once again argues from the greater to the lesser. God has given His Son, what would He hold back? Nothing!

Satan may try, but if God has declared us to be justified, then the devil's words are meaningless. He can try, and he will continue to try, but we have Christ interceding on our behalf: "*This is one of my brethren! They are a part of Your elect!*"

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

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

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

33 Who will bring a charge against God's elect? God is the one who justifies;

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

SIDE POINTS

We should be so very careful not to use this text, (and passages like Phil. 4:13) in a trite or flippant way. We are speaking about matters of eternal salvation! If we are justified before God, then nothing can keep us from being with Him!

See Zechariah 3

MAIN THEMES

No physical (or spiritual for that matter) force can separate us from Christ. But as this chapter has made clear, that doesn't stop us from feeling fear. It doesn't always feel that way in the midst of suffering. Hence the quotation from Ps. 44:22. But God does not abandon His faithful when they are afflicted.

When the smoke clears, the suffering is over, and every battle has been fought, we will find that it wasn't even close. Satan never stood a chance. Nothing he could throw at us or God hope to thwart the Lord's plans. We are not just conquerors, we have *overwhelmingly* conquered in Christ.

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

36 Just as it is written, "For Your sake we are being put to death all day long; We were considered as sheep to be slaughtered."

37 But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us.

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

39 nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

SIDE POINTS

Paul certainly speaks from experience on these.

The only force that can take us away from the love of Christ (in the saving and relational sense) is what this chapter has already emphasized. If we are not willing to suffer for Him, if we are not walking by the Spirit, we have no part with Him. These passages are not teaching the inability of a believer to fall away, but there exists no force that can take a faithful saint out of God's hand. We are safe in the sheepfold.

Amen.

AMEN.

AMEN!

MAIN THEMES

Chapter Summary

SIDE POINTS

Having been freed from the Law of death, we are now to live by the Spirit. Those who live by the Spirit are equipped to live as sons of God, even as we face the great difficulties that come while waiting for the rest of God's glory to be revealed.

Your Summary

MAIN THEMES

Paul took joy in the addition of the Gentiles to the people of God. He did not take joy in the Jews who had, through their own stubbornness, found themselves excluded.

God had not discarded the Jews; They were still His beloved people, and God desired their return. Paul too felt this strong desire to see them restored. How truly awful for those who had been entrusted with so much to be left standing on the outside.

Romans Chapter Nine

1 I am telling the truth in Christ, I am not lying, my conscience testifies with me in the Holy Spirit,

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

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

4 who are Israelites, to whom belongs the adoption as sons, and the glory and the covenants and the giving of the Law and the temple service and the promises,

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

SIDE POINTS

The last three chapters have dealt with the reality of being in Christ: The requirements of moral living, freedom from the Law and condemnation, and the blessings of the Spirit. This was all well and good, but there were many of the Jewish Christians who still had some misunderstandings about God's plan. As we've already seen, there were feelings of frustration and even resentment that the Gentiles had not been born under the same burden they had. Some had gone from asking, *what is the point in being a Jew*, to more pointed accusations that God had treated the Jews unfairly. Maybe He is the one who failed them! Or maybe He has unfairly given up on them. To those who were very bold, they may have even questioned God's right to do as He had. Paul's thoughts in chapter nine are the most spirited defense yet of God's right to choose and execute His plans as He will. Although God has no obligation to reveal His reasons, when Paul finishes explaining what God had done with the Jews, it is clear that God's plans are just and perfect.

MAIN THEMES

Paul's point in this section is to emphasize that the Jews were not treated unfairly, and the Gentiles were not getting off easy.

What makes someone "of Israel"? It is more than physical heritage. It is a heritage of faith.

To emphasize the point, Paul goes back and shows that not all of Abraham's descendants were part of God's chosen, but only those who came through the promise.

Someone might dismiss Hagar, but no one would dismiss Rebekah. Not even all of Isaac's children were children of promise. It was only the one whom God chose. The next verses deal with how God made the choice.

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

7 nor are they all children because they are Abraham's descendants, but: "through Isaac your descendants will be named."

8 That is, it is not the children of the flesh who are children of God, but the children of the promise are regarded as descendants.

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

10 And not only this, but there was Rebekah also, when she had conceived twins by one man, our father Isaac;

SIDE POINTS

MAIN THEMES

The twins were in every way on equal footing. Neither had done good nor evil. God made a choice of who it would be, and merit had nothing to do with it. This effectively destroys the idea that there was something *special* about the Jews that caused God to choose them. God made them special *by choosing them*.

VS 15-16 are not stating that God is random or whimsical in His choice. He chooses the type of person and the type of action. **Required reading for this section:**
Exodus 4-11
Jeremiah 18

11 for though the twins were not yet born and had not done anything good or bad, so that God's purpose according to His choice would stand, not because of works but because of Him who calls,

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

13 Just as it is written, "Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated."

14 What shall we say then? There is no injustice with God, is there? May it never be!

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

SIDE POINTS

Paul is not building a case for salvation that excludes individual consent. Nor is he teaching a double predestination. He is arguing that the exclusion of so many Jews from the family of God did not constitute a failure on God's part to maintain his covenant with Israel. He had not broken His promise to the descendants of Abraham.

Malachi 1:2-3 is spoken of in the context of nations, not individuals.

The entirety of this following section is to illustrate the point that Paul has just made.

MAIN THEMES

Pharaoh was raised up for the purpose of glorifying God. As you saw in the Exodus account, God did not harden Pharaoh's heart before it was already hardened. The choice was his.

God never hardens the heart of one who is pursuing His will. This principle is born out in the potter and the clay.

We do not have the right to make demands of God.

16 So then it does not depend on the man who wills or the man who runs, but on God who has mercy.

17 For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, "For this very purpose I raised you up, to demonstrate My power in you, and that My name might be proclaimed throughout the whole earth."

18 So then He has mercy on whom He desires, and He hardens whom He desires.

19 You will say to me then, "Why does He still find fault? For who resists His will?"

20 On the contrary, who are you, O man, who answers back to God? The thing molded will not say to the molder, "Why did you make me like this," will it?

SIDE POINTS

Remember the rules for this section: Start with what you know, start with passages that are clear and easily understood. Whatever this chapter says, it isn't going to contradict what you read elsewhere.

MAIN THEMES

This section elaborates on the theme of Jeremiah 18. The clay is in the hands of the potter. It isn't that the potter always sets out to make something that is destined for a dishonorable use.

Often times the clay refuses to cooperate, and so that potter cannot make what it wishes, but God will still use the clay.

And so, if God uses some for glory and other He uses to make known His wrath, what right do we have to question?

It was God's choice to have planned from the start to include the Gentiles.

21 Or does not the potter have a right over the clay, to make from the same lump one vessel for honorable use and another for common use?

22 What if God, although willing to demonstrate His wrath and to make His power known, endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction?

23 And He did so to make known the riches of His glory upon vessels of mercy, which He prepared beforehand for glory,

24 even us, whom He also called, not from among Jews only, but also from among Gentiles.

25 As He says also in Hosea, "I will call those who were not My people, 'My people,' And her who was not beloved, 'beloved.' "

SIDE POINTS

God could have used Pharaoh in the same way He used Cyrus. But Pharaoh refused. He could have become a vessel of honor but placed himself as one of dishonor. Either way, they will be used to give glory to God.

Overall, this section emphasizes that God's plans are His to make. He does not choose according to our knowledge or our design. We would choose according to the flesh, or our rights, or accomplishments. God chooses according to His purposes and we have no right to criticize.

MAIN THEMES

God did not call Israel for the purpose of excluding all other people. He called Israel so that He could bring a Savior to redeem all His creation.

The prophecies that had immediate application to physical Israel would find their ultimate application in the Spiritual nation.

The Jew has no right to complain or cry foul. It is only by God's mercy that any of us can be saved; Jew or Gentile.

26 “And it shall be that in the place where it was said to them, ‘you are not My people,’ There they shall be called sons of the Living God.”

27 Isaiah cries out concerning Israel, “Though the number of the sons of Israel be like the sand of the sea, it is the remnant that will be saved;

28 for the Lord will execute His word on the earth, thoroughly and quickly.”

29 And just as Isaiah foretold, “Unless the Lord of Sabaoth had left to us a posterity, We would have become like Sodom, and would have resembled Gomorrah.”

SIDE POINTS

Again, it is only a small portion of Abraham's/Isaac/Jacob's descendants that were ever going to be a part of what Israel was truly intended to be.

MAIN THEMES

The Israelites who had failed to come to Jesus were not being failed by God's neglect of His covenant. They were excluded outside of Spiritual Israel because they had not pursued the Covenant as God had intended.

Instead of pursuing it in faith, many had pursued it with the idea they could either earn it, deserve it, or merit it through works of the flesh.

The Gentiles did not stumble over the message of the cross; they pursued it by faith and they found it.

30 What shall we say then? That Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, attained righteousness, even the righteousness which is by faith;

31 but Israel, pursuing a law of righteousness, did not arrive at that law.

32 Why? Because they did not pursue it by faith, but as though it were by works. They stumbled over the stumbling stone,

33 just as it is written, "Behold, I lay in Zion a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense, And he who believes in Him will not be disappointed."

SIDE POINTS

All of the warnings to physical Israel in this section pertain to God's people today. We must be just as cautious that we remember why and how we stand as a part of Spiritual Israel. This will be explored in greater depth in Ch. 11.

MAIN THEMES**Chapter Summary****SIDE POINTS**

Paul's heart ached that the Israelites had squandered their advantage. He emphasizes that the failure was not with God's plans. God's choice of His people was never based on merit. However they may have felt, God's actions are never unjust and were not theirs to question. Whether God is using the righteous or the wicked, His choice is always for the benefit of His creation and creating a way for all to return to Him.

Your Summary

MAIN THEMES

A second confirmation that Paul took no joy in their not coming to Christ.

Paul wrote from a place of experience. See **Gal. 1:14**; **Acts 22:3**. One might commend their zeal, but it burned out of control and in the wrong direction.

No matter their level of zeal, it would not get them to God. They were determined to stay on a road that had come to an end. (*Not to mention their improper observance of that road in the first place.*)

I.e., the one who is practicing the Law is putting his faith in his keeping of that Law.

See contrast in vs 6

Romans Chapter Ten

- 1 Brethren, my heart's desire and my prayer to God for them is for their salvation.

- 2 For I testify about them that they have a zeal for God, but not in accordance with knowledge.

- 3 For not knowing about God's righteousness and seeking to establish their own, they did not subject themselves to the righteousness of God.

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

- 5 For Moses writes that the man who practices the righteousness which is based on law shall live by that righteousness.

SIDE POINTS

It is easy to speak about the lost as the large unembodied mass of people. It is easy to become emotionally detached and never develop the emotional connection that comes from learning to love people like Paul, (who of course followed the example of Jesus). Most of us might find our activity in the Kingdom looking quite different if we had the same attitude.

We have in this chapter a second testimony that the excluded Jews were in a situation of their own making. This was not a failure on the part of God.

While no one *has* kept the Law perfectly (aside from Christ) what these verses lay out is that this wasn't because the Law was impossible.

MAIN THEMES

Faith does not require us to go up and bring Christ down to earth...

Nor does it require us to raise Him from the dead.

Instead, God had done the work. What's more, His message of salvation is not hidden or only for the privileged. It is near.

We cannot experience God's saving grace without submitting to the rule of His Son.

Belief begins in the heart and must come from the heart. Belief will result in action—confession...

Explanation continued in following verses.

6 But the righteousness based on faith speaks as follows: “Do not say in your heart, ‘Who will ascend into heaven?’ (that is, to bring Christ down),

7 or ‘Who will descend into the abyss?’ (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead).”

8 But what does it say? “The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart”—that is, the word of faith which we are preaching,

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

10 for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation

SIDE POINTS

In verse 5-13, Paul is laying out two paths/two kinds of righteousness. The first is the one that begins with the Law:

See Lev. 18:5; Gal. 3:12

The second is the path based on faith. Paul illustrates this with a series of hyperbolic feats that the man of faith knows he does not have to accomplish.

See Deut. 30:11-14

The other point in quoting Deuteronomy is to apply the point in a new way. When Moses spoke, his argument was that they had no excuse for not keeping the Law. In the same way, we have no excuse for not following through on the path of faith.

A confession that is often left unsaid as a part of what has been commonly called “the good confession.”

Incidentally, the confession of Jesus's Lordship is more in keeping with what Paul references in 1 Tim. 6:13 as being the good confession.

For all practical purposes, righteousness and salvation are used interchangeably in this verse. Paul is giving a summary of an entire series of events.

MAIN THEMES

Verses 11-13 pause to connect the explanation of how we are saved to the issue of Gentile inclusion.

God spoke in Isa. 28:16 and in Joel 2:32 that His salvation would be for **whoever** believed/was called.

“Christ sends heralds; heralds preach; People hear; hearers believe; believers call; those who call are saved.”

The above quotation from Robert Mounce aptly sums up the plan for the spread and response of the Gospel. Paul’s quotation of Isa. 52 applies the freedom language of that passage to those who were in need of spiritual deliverance.

11 For the Scripture says, “Whoever believes in Him will not be disappointed.”

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

13 for “Whoever will call on the name of the Lord will be saved.”

14 How then will they call on Him in whom they have not believed? How will they believe in Him whom they have not heard? And how will they hear without a preacher?

15 How will they preach unless they are sent?

Just as it is written, “How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news of good things!”

SIDE POINTS

These passages cannot be isolated from the rest of scripture and certainly not from the passages they are drawn from. Joel 2 and its subsequent explanation in Acts 2 make it clear that calling on His name is far more than saying a few words. It involves submitting to His Lordship. This involves submitting to each of His commands. When the crowds in Acts 2 asked Peter what they had to do (*after he’d already spoken of their need to call on His name*), he answered to repent and be baptized. This same equivocation between baptism and calling on His name is made by Paul in Acts 22:16.

Verses 14-17 comprise a parenthetical statement from Paul.

If we want people to respond to the Gospel, this text outlines the only way.

MAIN THEMES

This verse is especially applicable for the discussion at hand. Just as many Israelites failed to respond to Isaiah's message, many Jews had failed to respond to the Gospel when preached.

None could claim that they hadn't been given the opportunity to respond. God sent the message out. *(Again, this is especially aimed at any objections among the Jews.)*

None could claim that God had pulled a bait and switch. While the matter of Gentile inclusion had taken time to understand, it wasn't because God had not repeatedly spoken about it.

16 However, they did not all heed the good news; for Isaiah says, "Lord, who has believed our report?"

17 So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.

18 But I say, surely they have never heard, have they? Indeed they have; "Their voice has gone out into all the earth, And their words to the ends of the world."

19 But I say, surely Israel did not know, did they? First Moses says, "I will make you jealous by that which is not a nation, By a nation without understanding will I anger you."

SIDE POINTS

Both of these verses would seem to again thwart some basic building blocks of Calvinist doctrine. All are given the opportunity to hear and believe, but not everyone will respond.

Paul again uses the device of hypothetical rebuttals.

Ps. 19:4

Deut. 32:21

MAIN THEMES

None could say that these matters were whispered in secret corners. Isaiah pulled no punches and shouted out the message.

Meanwhile, God has been loyal. He has waited for them to respond. If they refuse, it is because of their own stubbornness.

20 And Isaiah is very bold and says,

“I was found by those who did not seek Me,

I became manifest to those who did not ask

for Me.”

21 But as for Israel He says, “All the day long

I have stretched out My hands to a disobedient

and obstinate people.”

Chapter Summary

Paul continues to grieve for his countrymen. He demonstrates that they made the choice to continue down a path that could not lead them to salvation. They had no excuse in doing so, because God has clearly outlined the proper path, as demonstrated by the Gentiles’ ability to find it.

God continues to wait for them to respond; He is willing and desirous of everyone to come to Him.

Your Summary

SIDE POINTS

Isa. 65:1

Isa 65:2

As chapter 11 will make clear, while these verses may have been mostly for the Jews, the lessons learned should be applied to all.

MAIN THEMES

If God had completely discounted the Jews, then not even Paul would have been saved. His role as an apostle is proof that God had not done this.

God had foreknown Israel; they were just as much a part of His plan as anyone else, if not more so in some senses.

These two verses emphasize the point that Paul made earlier: It has always been the case that there were very few “of Israel” among Israel.

It has *always* been a remnant who are faithful to God.

Romans Chapter Eleven

1 I say then, God has not rejected His people, has He? May it never be! For I too am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin.

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

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

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

SIDE POINTS

This section continues the theme of “who rejected whom.” Paul continues to emphasize the choice of the wayward Jews to reject God’s plan; God had not been unfaithful to His people.

Paul expected his audience to have a wide working knowledge of various OT passages. In addition to the frequency of his quotations, notice phrases like this: *Or do you not know...*

Even the most faithful are subject to moments of doubt.

MAIN THEMES

Grace includes all people, but excludes certain actions. It cannot be on the basis of works because these two systems are not compatible.

(Those who were chosen; i.e., those who had come to God on His terms)

(Those who were hardened; i.e., those who refused to respond to the message when given the opportunity mentioned in ch. 10)

Just as God's warnings and punishment caused those of Isaiah's day to harden their hearts even more, the gospel had worked the same effect on many.

Just as David was rejected by his own house, Jesus would be rejected by His own people.

6 But if it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works, otherwise grace is no longer grace.

7 What then? What Israel is seeking, it has not obtained, but those who were chosen obtained it, and the rest were hardened;

8 just as it is written, "God gave them a spirit of stupor, Eyes to see not and ears to hear not, Down to this very day."

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

10 Let their eyes be darkened to see not, and bend their backs forever.

SIDE POINTS

We need to remind ourselves that when Paul speaks of works, the context dictates that he is using the word in such a way as to indicate those who sought their justification through a system of meritorious works.

Paul began by speaking of the obedience of the faith, and he has continued to speak about actions that are required on our part.

There is a large difference between engaging in the works that God has commanded because we are responding to His grace, and thinking that our doing of works earns us justification.

The problem with the Jew was one of attitude.

VS 8

See Isa. 29:10-17; 6:8-10

VS 9

See Ps. 69:21-23

MAIN THEMES

It was not too late for the Jews. They still had the opportunity to return.

Those who rejected were the catalyst for a wide-spread preaching to the Gentiles: See Acts 13:51

Paul transitions to addressing the Gentiles who may have begun to think in fleshly terms. Their were those among the Gentiles who needed to learn love of their brethren just like the Jews.

Paul's ministry among the Gentiles would be made even greater if it could be used to help restore some part of Israel.

How could the return of more sheep to the fold be considered anything other than wonderful?

11 I say then, they did not stumble so as to fall, did they? May it never be! But by their transgression salvation has come to the Gentiles, to make them jealous.

12 Now if their transgression is riches for the world and their failure is riches for the Gentiles, how much more will their fulfillment be!

13 But I am speaking to you who are Gentiles. Inasmuch then as I am an apostle of Gentiles, I magnify my ministry,

14 if somehow I might move to jealousy my fellow countrymen and save some of them.

15 For if their rejection is the reconciliation of the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead?

SIDE POINTS

This section transitions into demonstrating God's desire and willingness for Israel to come back.

Vs 11 and following are not introducing the idea of sin without consequence. Their initial choice to reject Jesus did not mean they had to stay on that path. The crowds in Acts 2 are proof.

This is a good reminder that bad attitudes are a danger for all.

There are opportunities throughout this section to make application in churches today. Are we loving as we ought? Are we putting to death jealousy and pettiness? Do we rejoice when the church grows?

MAIN THEMES

The lump gets its characteristics, or is affected by, the first piece. Same for the tree. The Gentiles are holy because of the first piece, because of the root.

The Gentiles should remember that they were able to be placed on the tree because the Vinedresser placed them there. If they forget how they were placed there, they can just as easily be taken right back off.

The Gentiles say: *But God cleared them out to make room for us; that must mean that we are better!*

16 If the first piece of dough is holy, the lump is also; and if the root is holy, the branches are too.

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

18 do not be arrogant toward the branches; but if you are arrogant, remember that it is not you who supports the root, but the root supports you.

19 You will say then, “Branches were broken off so that I might be grafted in.”

SIDE POINTS

How easy it is to think of ourselves in such a pride-filled way! There seem to have been Gentiles who thought that they were quite special for having been brought in. (*Of course they were special, but not for the reasons they imagined.*)

They (*and we*) needed to be reminded of what it was that made them holy in the first place.

VS 17 is further testimony to the advantage of the Jews.

The first hypothetical question from the Gentiles.

MAIN THEMES

The unfaithful Jews had not been taken off the tree because God had stopped loving them. They had been removed because they were unfaithful.

The same would be true for them. If they stopped living by faith then they would be stripped off.

Continuing in God's kindness is defined by the surrounding verses: e.g., continuing to believe, continuing to be faithful, continuing to pursue a righteousness that comes by faith.

Paul speaks of Israel in the opposite sense to gain a positive result.

20 Quite right, they were broken off for their unbelief, but you stand by your faith. Do not be conceited, but fear;

21 for if God did not spare the natural branches, He will not spare you, either.

22 Behold then the kindness and severity of God; to those who fell, severity, but to you, God's kindness, if you continue in His kindness; otherwise you also will be cut off.

23 And they also, if they do not continue in their unbelief, will be grafted in, for God is able to graft them in again.

SIDE POINTS

This section is a difficult text for those coming from a Calvinist perspective. Paul clearly speaks about people being removed from God's good graces because they chose not to believe.

But they are not doomed forever, even those who are described as having their hearts hardened.

Instead, Paul speaks about the ability to be placed back on for the unfaithful, and possibility of being removed for the faithful.

There are many attempts to postulate that those who are taken off were never believers in the first place. The text has no such indication.

Interpreting this text in any other light requires that the reader approach the text with a bias born of many other misinterpreted verses.

MAIN THEMES

There was no reason to take an ill view of these Jews. For them to come back would only be natural.

God did not fail or recalculate. Knowing what their reaction would be, He chose to use it to further His purposes.

Just as God promised to send a deliverer after wicked Judah was punished, He would extend salvation to those who currently rejected Him. This was all in keeping with His plan.

24 For if you were cut off from what is by nature a wild olive tree, and were grafted contrary to nature into a cultivated olive tree, how much more will these who are the natural branches be grafted into their own olive tree?

25 For I do not want you, brethren, to be uninformed of this mystery—so that you will not be wise in your own estimation—that a partial hardening has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in;

26 and so all Israel will be saved; just as it is written, “The Deliverer will come from Zion, He will remove ungodliness from Jacob.”

27 “This is My covenant with them, When I take away their sins.”

SIDE POINTS

VS 25: Some have seen this to mean that there will be a *full hardening* after the fullness of the Gentiles sets in. Still others have seen this phrase as indicating not a certain portion of the Jews having been hardened, but that their hearts had not become fully hardened against God.

What seems in keeping with the surrounding text is that Paul speaks of a time when a certain number of Gentiles had responded to the Gospel that it would serve as a sort of wake up call

See Isaiah 59:20-21

In reference to “all Israel”, keep in mind Paul’s (God’s) definition of Israel in 6:9 and following.

MAIN THEMES

Their actions had made them enemies, but they were still beloved because of their heritage.

God still desires and will grant their salvation: The invitation had not been removed, although they could still reject it.

30-32 are summary verses.

Jews and Gentiles are on equal footing. Both have been enemies of God, and both have an invitation to salvation in Christ through the obedience of the faith. No brother is above another. This sets up the change in focus of ch. 12. How do we apply all of these principles of God's saving grace to life and to each other?

28 From the standpoint of the gospel they are enemies for your sake, but from the standpoint of God's choice they are beloved for the sake of the fathers;

29 for the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable.

30 For just as you once were disobedient to God, but now have been shown mercy because of their disobedience,

31 so these also now have been disobedient, that because of the mercy shown to you they also may now be shown mercy.

32 For God has shut up all in disobedience so that He may show mercy to all.

SIDE POINTS

These verses are also used to try and push the idea that a believer cannot be lost.

This does not fit with what has been said in the previous verses. In context it is a discussion of God's faithfulness to His promise.

Anyone who responded would be accepted, but they still had to respond.

MAIN THEMES

We can thank God that His plans are not our plans. These chapters have demonstrated that if it were up to us, we would make plans according to fleshly standards that would benefit only ourselves.

We must come to make God's ways and thoughts our own: *See Isaiah 55*

33 Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways!

34 For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who became His counselor?

35 Or who has first given to Him that it might be paid back to him again?

36 For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever. Amen.

SIDE POINTS

See Isa. 40:13— in the context of none greater.

See Job 35:7; 41:11

Chapter Summary

Chapter 11 brings to a close the first section of the book. Paul has demonstrated that everyone, both Jew and Gentile are equally deserving of condemnation and equally in need of Christ. For those among the Jews who objected to this system of justification by faith and Gentile inclusion, Paul demonstrates that both have always been a part of God's plans. For those who objected that this was not fair, God condescends through Paul to give an explanation. God makes His plans according to His purposes and not the way that man might think: His are always just and fair. The Jews have not been left out or betrayed; God still desires their return. Both Jew and Gentile are admonished to make sure they continue to walk the path of justification by faith. Now Paul will turn His attention to how believers should behave and treat each other as a response to the great plans of God.

Your Summary

MAIN THEMES

Under the New Covenant we offer sacrifices of ourselves, not animals. Our sacrifice continues to live on in His service.

If we allow ourselves to be contaminated by the world instead of being molded by God, then our sacrifices become tainted.

If the world is shaping our minds then we are unable to properly discern between right and wrong.

Making an appeal to his position as an apostle, Paul commands each of them to keep the proper view and estimation of themselves.

Romans Chapter Twelve

1 Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship.

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

3 For through the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think; but to think so as to have sound judgment, as God has allotted to each a measure of faith.

SIDE POINTS

Spiritual: also translated as reasonable. Word is *logikos* and has to do we reason and ration. In other words, reasonable does not mean that God isn't asking too much, but is used in the sense that this is our rational service. In context of the contrast between Old and New, it seems to also refer to the difference in the state of mind of the sacrifices. We are making a conscious choice to offer ourselves, unlike the mindless animals.

Sound judgment is the idea of having sobriety of thought.

Measure of faith means whatever measure of talent or ability God has given.

For other examples of this type of use see:

Eph. 4:7; 1 Cor. 12:11

MAIN THEMES

The body of Christ does not consist of only one kind of person with only one kind of ability.

Whatever ability we have, we have the obligation to use it for the good of the body.

Prophecy seems to be in the context of handling the responsibility with accuracy; You would not prophecy something that would conflict with what the apostles had already revealed.

Service: practical abilities like Dorcas or Lydia.

Teaching: moral instruction and doctrine.

People must be exhorted to do what they've been taught.

Giving must come from the heart.

Leading cannot be lax

Hurting people have no need of helpers who act as though they are burdens.

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

5 so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.

6 Since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, each of us is to exercise them accordingly: if prophecy, according to the proportion of his faith;

7 if service, in his serving; or he who teaches, in his teaching;

8 or he who exhorts, in his exhortation he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness.

SIDE POINTS

These verses do speak about unity through diversity, but they are not speaking about doctrinal diversity.

The diversity in the body of Christ is in terms of the people it up, and the differing levels of skills and abilities.

See comments on vs 3

On the importance of teaching: See 1 Cor. 12:28

On giving: See Lk 22:25
Our giving is not to place us in the position of becoming benefactors over others.

MAIN THEMES

Love must be genuine.

Evil must repulse us, and good should be unable to shake us off.

Devotion is the idea of the close affection that exists between parent/child. Here it is applied to us as brethren; it will not fail to show in how we treat each other.

We must not run out of the fire that makes us go. We have to work to maintain zeal.

We are to give thanks when all is well and we should pray for guidance when it is not. We are to be prayerful at all times.

In addition to the helping of those mentioned earlier, this is perhaps a reference to the kind of giving mentioned in 2 Cor. 8.

Hospitality is the love of strangers.

Speak well of them: hope for the genuine good of your enemies.

9 Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil; cling to what is good.

10 Be devoted to one another in brotherly love; give preference to one another in honor;

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

12 rejoicing in hope, persevering in tribulation, devoted to prayer,

13 contributing to the needs of the saints, practicing hospitality.

14 Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse.

SIDE POINTS

If we allow our love to be compromised, we have tainted one of the core building blocks of our faith.

Giving preference is really the idea of outdoing each other. Not that it is a competition, but when every member puts the other first, nobody is last.

Having each other in our homes for a meal is a great activity, and one we should enjoy. However, hospitality is more than this. It is providing for the needs of others; a place to stay if needed, or perhaps supplies for the road. Think about this in the first century context.

Brethren fleeing persecution, men travelling to preach the gospel, orphans and widows who had lost a parent or spouse to persecution—all of these would find an open door in the home of a disciple of Jesus.

On vs 14, see LK 6

MAIN THEMES

Haughtiness reaches back to vs 10. We have to learn how to put others before ourselves; this requires sober thinking.

Connect 17a to vs 19

We seek to obey God first; as it is allowed we should practice what even the world sees as good.

It may not always be possible; but peace is our goal.

See Deut. 32:35

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

16 Be of the same mind toward one another; do not be haughty in mind, but associate with the lowly. Do not be wise in your own estimation.

17 Never pay back evil for evil to anyone. Respect what is right in the sight of all men.

18 If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men.

19 Never take your own revenge, beloved, but leave room for the wrath of God, for it is written, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord.

SIDE POINTS

Envy and jealousy can make it difficult to rejoice with others; a lack of sympathy and understanding can make it hard to weep.

Verses like these are just as much apart of doctrine as any other teaching:

See Phil. 1:9; 1 Tim. 1:3-5

This verse is a challenge to disciples to ask if they really have their trust in God, or if they feel that they must take matters into their own hands.

MAIN THEMES

The idea in these verses is not that you are doing good out of ill motives.

Rather, “heaping burning coals” is an idiom for pricking their conscience.

The goal of these actions is to cause the enemy to no longer be your enemy.

20 “But if your enemy is hungry, feed him, and if he is thirsty, give him a drink; for in so doing you will heap burning coals on his head.”

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

Chapter Summary

After giving a thorough explanation of God’s plans, Paul turns his attention to how those who have been united in Christ should behave toward each other and the outside world. Each one is to use their abilities to further edify the body, and to live in such a way that pricks the conscience of the world.

Your Summary

SIDE POINTS

See Proverbs: 25:21-22

II Kings 6:22

MAIN THEMES

Being a part of a heavenly kingdom does not mean that we no longer live among earthly nations.

We are still subject to them and being a disciple is not an excuse to try and throw off all bonds.

Whoever is in power, they are there because God has allowed it (*and in some cases He may have even willed it to be*). Resisting our rulers means resisting the Lord.

When governments function as they ought to, those who pursue good have nothing to fear.

Romans Chapter Thirteen

1 Every person is to be in subjection to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those which exist are established by God.

2 Therefore whoever resists authority has opposed the ordinance of God; and they who have opposed will receive condemnation upon themselves.

3 For rulers are not a cause of fear for good behavior, but for evil. Do you want to have no fear of authority? Do what is good and you will have praise from the same;

SIDE POINTS

These first seven verses are a challenge for all disciples in all eras, whether they live under a king, a communist regime, or some sort of democracy. The brethren in Paul's day would have struggled terribly as they lived under a man who claimed to be God and would eventually seek their brutal deaths.

For us today, we face the challenge of staying away from identity politics. Christians can lose their way when they are drawn into following people and parties.

Our challenge is to remember our real leader and where our true home is. When we keep this in mind we have a much easier time of submitting to the rulers of the land, even when they are not the ones we would have chosen; even when they make laws and policies that we do not like.

Even in countries with corrupt rulers and systems, it is not uncommon for the local authorities to learn to appreciate the influence that Christians have on others.

MAIN THEMES

Verses 4-7 continue to emphasize that when we submit to the government we are in fact submitting to God. While service to Christ must supersede the laws of the land, we are under obligation to obey without protest the government which we are under.

- 4 for it is a minister of God to you for good.
- But if you do what is evil, be afraid; for it does not bear the sword for nothing; for it is a minister of God, an avenger who brings wrath on the one who practices evil.
- 5 Therefore it is necessary to be in subjection, not only because of wrath, but also for conscience' sake.
- 6 For because of this you also pay taxes, for rulers are servants of God, devoting themselves to this very thing.
- 7 Render to all what is due them: tax to whom tax is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honor to whom honor.

SIDE POINTS

It is worth repeating: the statements about government in this section have to be seen in to lights. First, this is their intended function as put in place by God; that doesn't mean that they will always do as they ought to. Second, these statements are general rules. Generally speaking, those who obey they law, keep their noses down, and mind their own business don't have very much to worry about.

There are some similarities here between the idea of the worker being worthy of his wages. We support men who preach because they are devoted to serving God. In a similar way, those who rule are servants of God and our taxes are supporting them.

Regardless of who sits on "the throne" or what letter they have beside their name.

MAIN THEMES

The only “debt” that we can never fully repay is to love each other. We will never get to a point where we no longer owe it to our brethren to love them.

Quoting the final of the four commandments, which all pertain to the way we treat our neighbor, Paul demonstrates how love is the guiding principle in the way we treat others.

Each day that passes, the Lord’s return grows closer.

8 Owe nothing to anyone except to love one another; for he who loves his neighbor has fulfilled the law.

9 For this, “You shall not commit adultery, You shall not murder, You shall not steal, You shall not covet,” and if there is any other commandment, it is summed up in this saying, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.”

10 Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.

11 Do this, knowing the time, that it is already the hour for you to awaken from sleep; for now salvation is nearer to us than when we believed.

SIDE POINTS

This is not a prohibition against taking on debt or a loan. Rather it is instructing us not to leave our debts unpaid. Whether this is in society at large, where the reputation of Christ could be damaged by our actions, or in the Church itself, the only tab that should be kept running is love.

Jesus often spoke to His disciples about working while the time was theirs to use. We only have a limited amount of days to use, and should pursue them to the fullest extent.

MAIN THEMES

We've been called to be children of light. This includes walking in the light and equipping ourselves with it as well.

While this is what we'd expect to see in speaking of Christian behavior, it would seem that in context there is a special emphasis in being good citizens.

12 The night is almost gone, and the day is near. Therefore let us lay aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light.

13 Let us behave properly as in the day, not in carousing and drunkenness, not in sexual promiscuity and sensuality, not in strife and jealousy.

14 But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh in regard to its lusts.

SIDE POINTS

Making the most of our days is going to exclude an awful lot of behavior, and it is going to include living in a way that anticipates the Lord's return

Making no provision for the flesh sets up the thoughts that are coming in Chapter 14.

MAIN THEMES

Chapter Summary

Paul continues his instruction on the proper behavior of those who live under the Law of Christ. He turns his attention to the civil life of disciples. It is to be defined by obedience and behavior that shows honor to our rulers and respect for our neighbors.

Your Summary

SIDE POINTS

MAIN THEMES

Weak in faith is not fully defined in this verse. It would *seem* to be referring to a lack of knowledge in certain areas *or* that one lacked enough conviction that something was approved for them to engage in that activity.

Weak being defined by vs 1.

This is not a matter of sin. God has accepted both, and therefore neither should pass judgment on the other brother.

Furthermore, we have no right to judge our brethren (in this context where God is assessing their actions) because we are not their master. If their master has approved them, then what could we possibly say?

Romans Chapter Fourteen

- 1 Now accept the one who is weak in faith, but not for the purpose of passing judgment on his opinions.

- 2 One person has faith that he may eat all things, but he who is weak eats vegetables only.

- 3 The one who eats is not to regard with contempt the one who does not eat, and the one who does not eat is not to judge the one who eats, for God has accepted him.

- 4 Who are you to judge the servant of another? To his own master he stands or falls; and he will stand, for the Lord is able to make him stand.

SIDE POINTS

The first 11 chapters contained a great deal of tensions between Jew and Gentile. Paul had to deal with the Jewish notions that the Gentiles should have had to follow the same path as the rest of Israel. In chapters 9-11 there were ample warnings to the Gentiles as well that they not develop an improper view of themselves or of their Jewish brethren. If chapter 12 dealt with more general relationships in the Church, chapter 14 begins a section that zeroes in on specific issues between Jew and Gentile.

While the section has often been used as a template for all sorts of situations, the two specific problems at hand are strife over eating certain meats and keeping certain holy days.

This section is Paul's treatise on dealing with each other in a way that is characterized by love and patience, especially in matters of judgment. It runs through 15:13

Special note: While this text has many similarities to the discussion in 1 Corinthians 8, they are dealing with different issues. While similar, they should not be used as interchangeable texts.

MAIN THEMES

The same holds true for those who felt especially strong that they should continue to observe a certain day, while others saw no reason to hold any day as being special.

Again, these brethren who have differences can and must live alongside each other, knowing that if that brother is pleasing to God, then there is no right to judge them for their action.

Whatever the action in question, it must be done with a clear conscience and for the glory of God.

5 One person regards one day above another, another regards every day alike. Each person must be fully convinced in his own mind.

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

7 For not one of us lives for himself, and not one dies for himself;

8 for if we live, we live for the Lord, or if we die, we die for the Lord; therefore whether we live or die, we are the Lord's.

SIDE POINTS

It should be noted, and Paul will mention this further on, that these issues were not inherently sinful. It was okay to eat meat because God had declared everything clean. It was okay to observe a feast day, and it was okay to treat it as any other day. Both choices were acceptable to God. We have to practice extreme caution when we start trying to label practices that may not have a God-pleasing choice as areas of judgment. There seem to be very few areas of judgment where we simply cannot know for sure what a good answer may be. While they do exist, they are not the rule.

MAIN THEMES

Contempt: to hold them in disdain; to despise; to consider them as having no value.

Since we all belong to the Lord, we will all be judged by Him. Our brother is now our servant. We are all His servants.

We should be less concerned about trying to force others into holding our position, and more worried about making sure our actions don't cause others to sin.

10 But you, why do you judge your brother?

Or you again, why do you regard your brother with contempt? For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God.

11 For it is written, "As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to Me, And every tongue shall give praise to God."

12 So then each one of us will give an account of himself to God.

13 Therefore let us not judge one another anymore, but rather determine this—not to put an obstacle or a stumbling block in a brother's way.

SIDE POINTS

See: Isaiah 45:23

It bears repeating that this is not a prohibition against the sorts of judgment that we are called to make; Rather this is unrighteous condemnation of someone who God holds sees as a faithful servant.

MAIN THEMES

For the one who has knowledge, it isn't a matter of whether or not they have a right to eat something: Rather, they are concerned with making sure that they don't run over their brother's conscience by exercising their knowledge.

Do not let physical matters derail what has eternal importance.

14 I know and am convinced in the Lord

Jesus that nothing is unclean in itself; but to him who thinks anything to be unclean, to him it is unclean.

15 For if because of food your brother is hurt, you are no longer walking according to love. Do not destroy with your food him for whom Christ died.

16 Therefore do not let what is for you a good thing be spoken of as evil;

17 for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.

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

SIDE POINTS

This section should properly bring the situation into perspective. This is a part of the body that Christ died to redeem. Are you really going to trample them down just so you can eat your favorite food? That isn't stating it with more force than Paul; this is the basic idea of this section.

MAIN THEMES

The one who eats or drinks must be able to do so with a clear conscience.

The one who doesn't eat or drink must be able to do the same.

In all cases, we have to give consideration to what might make ourselves stumble, as well as what might do others harm.

Your conscience cannot be someone else's guide.

This is the summary and guiding principle for this section.

19 So then we pursue the things which make for peace and the building up of one another.

20 Do not tear down the work of God for the sake of food. All things indeed are clean, but they are evil for the man who eats and gives offense.

21 It is good not to eat meat or to drink wine, or to do anything by which your brother stumbles.

22 The faith which you have, have as your own conviction before God. Happy is he who does not condemn himself in what he approves.

23 But he who doubts is condemned if he eats, because his eating is not from faith; and whatever is not from faith is sin.

SIDE POINTS

It is often argued from this and other sections that drinking strong alcoholic beverages should be considered a Christian liberty (a judgment call). The notion is that wine is listed along with meat as something that would be fine to do, but Paul chose not to.

Even if we set aside the considerable discussion about the difference between potency of beverages then vs what we have now, that still misses the point of this text.

Paul does not mention wine in the context of something that should be dearly fought for and nobody was going to judge him for drinking!

His purpose in mentioning it was to say that if it caused others to stumble, then *he would be glad to never drink wine again.*

How does that line up with those who try to force today's drinking culture into Paul's instruction on consideration?

MAIN THEMES

Chapter Summary

Paul encourages both Jew and Gentile to show patience with each other in areas where they differed. Some had the faith that they could eat anything while others felt that they must refrain. Both of them were accepted in God's sight, therefore neither had the right to judge or hold the other in contempt.

Your Summary

SIDE POINTS

MAIN THEMES

If we are truly strong, we will use that advantage for the benefit of others.

Using our strength for the good of others serve to build them up.

When we do this, we are following the example of Christ's selfless service.

Just as Jesus's actions were informed by the OT, so should ours.

Romans Chapter Fifteen

1 Now we who are strong ought to bear the weaknesses of those without strength and not just please ourselves.

2 Each of us is to please his neighbor for his good, to his edification.

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

4 For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction, so that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.

SIDE POINTS

Chapter 15, going through about verse 13, continues the themes of the previous chapter. Paul will continue to urge Jews and Gentiles to pursue harmony.

While we must be careful to avoid pride and judgment that lacks sobriety, we should note that we have been given Biblical language to discuss Biblical issues. In other words, it is not unbiblical to speak in terms of weak or strong.

See Psalm 69:9

Instruction is also translated as doctrine or teaching in other passages. The OT writing are just as much a part of our faith as the NT.

MAIN THEMES

The God who commands us to live in unity will give us the strength to see it through.

When we are unified, we can offer praise that is acceptable to God.

Paul continues to draw on Jesus's actions as the basis of how we should treat each other.

Jesus came to save the Jews in order to fulfill the promises made to their fathers: Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. But He did not come for them alone...

5 Now may the God who gives perseverance and encouragement grant you to be of the same mind with one another according to Christ Jesus,

6 so that with one accord you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

7 Therefore, accept one another, just as Christ also accepted us to the glory of God.

8 For I say that Christ has become a servant to the circumcision on behalf of the truth of God to confirm the promises given to the fathers,

SIDE POINTS

Of course, the flip side of these verses is that when we don't have unity, we cannot offer worship that will be pleasing to God.

MAIN THEMES

He also came to save the Gentiles so that even more Glory could be brought to the Father.

What these verses prove, in addition to what Paul demonstrated earlier in His letter, is that the intent to save the Gentiles was always a part of God's plan.

9 and for the Gentiles to glorify God for His mercy; as it is written, "Therefore I will give praise to You among the Gentiles, And I will sing to Your name."

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

11 And again, "Praise the Lord all you Gentiles, And let all the peoples praise Him."

12 Again Isaiah says, "There shall come the root of Jesse, And He who arises to rule over the Gentiles, In Him shall the Gentiles hope."

SIDE POINTS

MAIN THEMES

See Chapter 8

While they needed to grow, there was still much good going on.

Paul was required to speak boldly when it came to the truth.

Take note of where his confidence to speak this way came: It was not from his own accomplishments but because of what God had done.

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

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

15 But I have written very boldly to you on some points so as to remind you again, because of the grace that was given me from God,

16 to be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles, ministering as a priest the gospel of God, so that my offering of the Gentiles may become acceptable, sanctified by the Holy Spirit.

SIDE POINTS

It is hard to read this verse and not think about the wonderful blessings that we have in Spirit, and how they enable us to hope.

It is worthwhile to point out the way that Paul rebukes his brethren.

First, he expresses his confidence that they will follow up on what he says.

Second, it is based on and coupled with a recognition of the many strengths and accomplishments to their credit. Instead of getting discouraged when the situation seems to be going poorly, why not give a confident exhortation that the things will improve?

We should have faith based on the past behavior of good brethren.

MAIN THEMES

The only reason...

Paul was not the one who had done the work, but Christ working *through him*..

By the power of Christ, he had spread the good news from one corner of the Empire to the other.

His desire to start with a clean slate was not out of pride, but he was drawn to go where people had not yet heard the gospel.

17 Therefore in Christ Jesus I have found reason for boasting in things pertaining to God.

18 For I will not presume to speak of anything except what Christ has accomplished through me, resulting in the obedience of the Gentiles by word and deed,

19 in the power of signs and wonders, in the power of the Spirit; so that from Jerusalem and round about as far as Illyricum I have fully preached the gospel of Christ.

20 And thus I aspired to preach the gospel, not where Christ was already named, so that I would not build on another man's foundation;

SIDE POINTS

It is a humbling experience to compare what we tend to boast about with where Paul found his contentment.

There may have been other practical issues at work in the sentiments of this verse as well.

MAIN THEMES

Because he had a great desire to pursue lost souls, it had often carried him in other directions than Rome.

Paul desired to go to Spain; we have no real way of knowing whether or not this dream was realized.

Taking the offering.

21 but as it is written, “They who had no news of Him shall see, And they who have not heard shall understand.”

22 For this reason I have often been prevented from coming to you;

23 but now, with no further place for me in these regions, and since I have had for many years a longing to come to you

24 whenever I go to Spain—for I hope to see you in passing, and to be helped on my way there by you, when I have first enjoyed your company for a while—

25 but now, I am going to Jerusalem serving the saints.

SIDE POINTS

In all of his plans, Paul knew that they were subject to God’s will.

MAIN THEMES

The way that these brethren had come together to cross the Jew/Gentile boundaries should serve as an example for the brethren in Rome.

Again, hoping to see the brethren soon, he hoped to encourage and build them up.

But the journey would not be without danger. He needed their prayers.

26 For Macedonia and Achaia have been pleased to make a contribution for the poor among the saints in Jerusalem.

27 Yes, they were pleased to do so, and they are indebted to them. For if the Gentiles have shared in their spiritual things, they are indebted to minister to them also in material things.

28 Therefore, when I have finished this, and have put my seal on this fruit of theirs, I will go on by way of you to Spain.

29 I know that when I come to you, I will come in the fullness of the blessing of Christ.

30 Now I urge you, brethren, by our Lord Jesus Christ and by the love of the Spirit, to strive together with me in your prayers to God for me,

SIDE POINTS

The offering that was being given to the saints in Jerusalem would be a testimony to Jew and Gentile unity. The Gentiles showed love in their giving, and the Jews showed humility in their receiving.

MAIN THEMES

Waiting for him in Judea were those who sought to continue to sow discord among the church and persecute God's people.

31 that I may be rescued from those who are disobedient in Judea, and that my service for Jerusalem may prove acceptable to the saints;

32 so that I may come to you in joy by the will of God and find refreshing rest in your company.

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

Chapter Summary

Paul continues to urge harmony among the brethren. He expects the best of them and knows that they will follow through. He directs them to learn from the contribution being given to the saints, and to pray for his travel.

Your Summary

SIDE POINTS

MAIN THEMES

The first sixteen verses do not lend themselves to extensive comment but you will do well to look up the names of those who Paul greeted.

Many of the brethren in this section gave of themselves; not only in their goods, but even up to their own lives.

1 I commend to you our sister Phoebe, who is a servant of the church which is at Cenchrea;

2 that you receive her in the Lord in a manner worthy of the saints, and that you help her in whatever matter she may have need of you; for she herself has also been a helper of many, and of myself as well.

3 Greet Prisca and Aquila, my fellow workers in Christ Jesus,

4 who for my life risked their own necks, to whom not only do I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles;

SIDE POINTS

In any section where Paul calls out so many beloved brethren, I'm always struck by how emotional of a tone it carries. These were his fellow workers whom he loved dearly. He would refer to them as his brothers, sisters, mothers, and fathers. It is a stirring example of the type of unity that Paul urged the churches to practice, and the sort that existed in his life.

MAIN THEMES

5 also greet the church that is in their house.

Greet Epaphroditus, my beloved, who is the first convert to Christ from Asia.

6 Greet Mary, who has worked hard for you.

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

8 Greet Ampliatus, my beloved in the Lord.

9 Greet Urbanus, our fellow worker in Christ, and Stachys my beloved.

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

SIDE POINTS

MAIN THEMES

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

12 Greet Tryphaena and Tryphosa, workers in the Lord. Greet Persis the beloved, who has worked hard in the Lord.

13 Greet Rufus, a choice man in the Lord, also his mother and mine.

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

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

SIDE POINTS

MAIN THEMES

They are to be marked.
The church must be warned. This is a danger that must not be ignored.

There is nothing good that can come from them.
Their intentions are fowl.
They are out to get the stragglers of the flock.

The good brethren in Rome were potential targets. They needed to practice discernment.

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

17 Now I urge you, brethren, keep your eye on those who cause dissensions and hindrances contrary to the teaching which you learned, and turn away from them.

18 For such men are slaves, not of our Lord Christ but of their own appetites; and by their smooth and flattering speech they deceive the hearts of the unsuspecting.

19 For the report of your obedience has reached to all; therefore I am rejoicing over you, but I want you to be wise in what is good and innocent in what is evil.

SIDE POINTS

It is a strong contrast that after Paul would spend so much time calling to mind brethren who love the truth, that he would now turn his attention to warning against those who held it in no regard.

Hopefully, nobody enjoys calling out a member of the body as someone who is self-serving and destructive. But while it brings no joy, it is a task that must be done.

We do ourselves no favors when we pretend as though it is gracious and kind to extend unlimited patience to those who are clearly out to cause harm in the church.

This is not practicing the wisdom of which Paul speaks; people's lives are at stake.

MAIN THEMES

What a powerful verse! Their efforts were not in vain. God's power would ensure the outcome in the battle between good and evil.

20 The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet. The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you.

21 Timothy my fellow worker greets you, and so do Lucius and Jason and Sosipater, my kinsmen.

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

23 Gaius, host to me and to the whole church, greets you. Erastus, the city treasurer greets you, and Quartus, the brother.

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

SIDE POINTS

This verse should not fail to have a heavy impact on our lives. We have nothing to fear. It is the natural end to what was described in ch. 8.

It was not uncommon for Paul to use someone to write down the majority of the letter as he spoke. I enjoy picturing Tertius trying to keep up with Paul's winding tangents and sentences.

MAIN THEMES

The letter concludes with what is often called a doxology. This is a great burst of praise offered to God. What other way could his letter end?

God, in His sovereignty has created a great plan to rescue all men from sin. He gave them the means to do what they could not do of their own power.

Now that God has brought all people together through the death of His son, what else could we do but offer praise to Him?

25 Now to Him who is able to establish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery which has been kept secret for long

ages past,

26 but now is manifested, and by the

Scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the eternal God, has been made known to all the nations, leading to obedience of faith;

27 to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, be the glory forever. Amen.

SIDE POINTS

MAIN THEMES

Chapter Summary

SIDE POINTS

Paul closes the book with a list of those who had helped him, and he hoped would encourage the brethren there. He turns his attention to warn them about those who are the opposite of these brethren, encourages wisdom in dealing with them, and assures them that God will grant the victory. Having concluded all his arguments, Paul ends with a burst of praise to God.

Your Summary

Helpful Resources

Reading Romans: Robert F. Turner

The College Press NIV Commentary on Romans: Jack Cottrell

Paul's Letter to the Saints at Rome: Bryan Vinson

The Message of Romans: John Stott

The Pillar New Testament Commentary on Romans: Leon Morris

TNTC Commentary on Romans: F.F. Bruce

NAC Commentary on Romans: Robert Mounce

Word Studies in the New Testament Vol. 3: Marvin Vincent

***As always, read with discretion. Writers are teachers, and teachers try to teach you what they believe. God's Word is your first and foremost guide. Outside sources are helpful for stimulating thought and helping to get an idea of the text. ***

**Material Prepared by Seth Mauldin:
For the use of the disciples at the
Northwood church of Christ**

