

A Survey of Romans

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This survey offers an explanation of the argument of the Epistle to the Romans by the apostle Paul. It covers some passages in more detail than others. Also, there are more advanced endnotes (separate from the footnotes) and appendixes. The outline of Romans serves as Contents page; the appendixes are listed after it.

I am especially indebted to Alva J. McClain and, to a lesser extent, James M. Stifler and John MacArthur, Jr. Quotations from any of them refer to their books listed below. McClain's book title uses the word "Gospel" (for the Greek word meaning "good news"). There it refers to the Christian message for the unsaved. It can also refer to one of the four books (Matthew to John) that present that message. When it does, I will always capitalize it as in the following: "Learn the gospel from the four **Gospels**."

John MacArthur, Jr., *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary: Romans 9–16* (Moody Press: Chicago, 1994).

Alva J. McClain, *Romans: The Gospel of God's Grace* (BMH Books: Winona Lake, IN, 1973).

James M. Stifler, *The Epistle to the Romans* (Moody Press: Chicago, 1960).

Unless otherwise noted, my Bible quotations are from the 1973 New International Version (NIV). KJV designates the King James Version. NASB designates the New American Standard Bible.

All emphasis (bolding) in Bible quotations is added. Also, I will usually change Jesus' title *Christ* to its equivalent *Messiah*. This exchange is authorized by John 1:41: "We have found the **Messiah** (that is, the **Christ**)."
Both forms mean "the Anointed One," that is, the promised King, which Messiah still suggests in English.

Romans and the Gospel

Romans is a personal letter with a great doctrinal treatise* embedded (see the chart below). The letter, as is evident at the beginning and end of the book, is from the apostle Paul to the church at Rome. The treatise, which begins at 1:18,¹ is his explanation from God of **how and why the gospel works**. Paul summarizes the gospel in his introduction (1:3–4; also 10:9).² But in the treatise his design is not to teach unbelievers the gospel. Rather, it is to show **believers** the gospel’s power. When he appeals in Romans to unbelievers, it is a literary device. It does not indicate that they are his readers.³

Romans: A Letter Containing a Doctrinal Treatise		
Letter Intro- duction 1:1–17	Treatise Showing Believers How and Why the Gospel Works 1 : 1 8 t o 1 5 : 1 3	Letter Conclu- sion 15:14 to 16:27

Paul’s design should affect our study and use of Romans. For example, we should not consider it a primer to explain the gospel in evangelism. Of course, many people have been saved with help from Romans. But no one has to understand all, or even much, of Romans to be saved. He does have to respond to the gospel with “the obedience of faith” (1:5).

We will look through this entire epistle section by section, following my adaptation of Alva McClain’s outline.

* A treatise is “a formal, systematic article or book on some subject, esp. a discussion of facts, evidence, or principles and the conclusions based on these” (*New World Dictionary*).

Outline of the Epistle of Paul to the Romans

(Adapted from Alva McClain by John Hepp, Jr.)

Theme: "The gospel...the power of God"

Text: "The righteous will live by faith"

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Introduction, 1:1–17

Paul begins the book with two “bridges” to the believers in Rome—and another to his treatise.

1. Greeting, vv. 1–7

This salutation is one long sentence in Greek. As the first bridge, it shows Paul’s **official** relationship to the Romans and other such Gentiles as an apostle. The center and heart of this greeting is a summary of the gospel⁴ (vv. 3–4). You can compare it to other such summaries in Appendix C: Some Scriptural Summaries of the Gospel. Even before this summary, Paul gives three facts about the gospel: It is God’s gospel; it is Paul’s gospel; and it was promised in the Scriptures.⁵

The gospel concerns God’s Son. Many assume that “Son of God” in the Bible always refers to divinity. That is a mistake; it seldom, if ever, means divinity. (See Appendix B: The Title *Son of God*). Jesus indeed is divine, but His sonship (like that of some other “sons” of God in the Bible) refers to His being God’s royal heir. Hebrews 1:4–5 clearly shows that He acquired this title by inheritance as a man.⁶ The summary in Romans 1:3–4 makes two points about Him as Son:

- In the flesh He is David’s descendant.⁷
- By His resurrection He has been appointed Son-of-God-in-power (that is, glorified and ready to reign).⁸

In other words, (a) He has the royal credentials and (b) was raised with full authority. He has both the right and the power to bring the promised kingdom. At the end of verse 4⁹ Paul reiterates this gospel even more succinctly: “Jesus Messiah our Lord.”¹⁰

All four Gospels emphasize the same facts as Paul’s summary of the gospel here.¹¹ So do the evangelistic sermons in Acts. See Appendix C: Some Scriptural Summaries of the Gospel. Notice that Paul’s summary in Romans 1 means the same as another in Romans and another in his last epistle. “If you confess with your mouth, ‘Jesus is Lord,’ and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved” (Rom. 10:9). “Remember Jesus Messiah raised from the dead, descended from David. This is my gospel” (2 Tim. 2:8).

Those who hear the gospel should respond with “the obedience of faith” (1:5). Paul emphasizes this expression by using it both here and again at the end of his letter (16:26). Grammatically, it could have any of the following (or other) meanings:

1. obedience to faith (faith looked at as a command or set of commands)
2. obedience that consists of faith
3. obedience that comes from faith

Considering the apostle’s arguments elsewhere, especially in chapter 6, it probably means obedience “that **comes from** faith.” True faith obeys, as our Lord emphasized in His conclusion to the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 7:24, 26; cf. Gal. 5:6; James 2:14–26). See Appendix H: The Obedience of Faith.

2. Personal Communication, vv. 8–15

This is the second bridge, showing Paul’s personal relationship to those in Rome, his years of knowing about them, praying for them, and trying to see them. He will speak about this relationship in much more detail at the end of the letter.¹²

3. Transition to the Main Theme, vv. 16–17

Paul closes the introduction by bridging to his treatise (1:16–17). He announces its theme and its text:

- Theme—“the gospel...the power of God”
- Text—“The righteous will live by faith” (Habakkuk 2:4)

The basic reason for the gospel’s power is that it reveals God’s righteousness in a way that is accessible to all men “by faith from first to last.”¹³

BEGINNING OF THE TREATISE

I. Condemnation, 1:18 to 3:20*The Wrath of God Revealed*

This first section shows why the gospel is needed. It is needed because “the wrath of God is being revealed against all the godlessness and wickedness of men” (1:18). One after another, Paul describes every segment of the world as lost: the heathen (Gentile=non-Jew), the moralist of whatever race, and the Jew. This section answers the implied question “Is the world lost?” Its answer is “the whole world...accountable to God” (3:19).

A. The Heathen (Gentile) Condemned, 1:18–32

Gentiles “suppress the truth by their wickedness” (1:18). By the abundant evidence in God’s creation, they knew much about Him, “his eternal power and divine nature” (v. 20). But they did not like Him! “Although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him” but turned to idols (vv. 21–23).¹⁴ “Therefore God gave them over...to sexual impurity” (v. 24), “to shameful lusts” (v. 26), and “to a depraved mind” (v. 28). Verses 29–31 list many wicked things they practice in their supposed freedom, sins that permeate culture everywhere.¹⁵ They know that such sins “deserve death.” But not only do they do them; they also “approve of those who practice” the same things (v. 32). Instead of mourning over wickedness, they applaud it.

B. The Moralist Condemned, 2:1–16

You may be a moralist who agrees with Paul’s terrible indictment of the Gentile world. Whether Jew or Gentile (vv. 9, 10), you may step forward to “pass judgment on someone else” (vv. 1a, 1b, 3). There is nothing wrong with passing judgment in the sense of evaluating evil, as Paul did in chapter 1. In fact, that is necessary.¹⁶ But it is certainly wrong when “you who pass judgment **do the same things**” (v. 1). Such a judge condemns himself.

Merely knowing what is right will not help “when God will judge men’s secrets through Jesus Messiah” (2:16). In 2:1–16 Paul discusses the criteria for that coming judgment. Messiah will judge, above all, based on truth (v. 2), that is, on reality, the facts of each case. Concretely, this refers to one’s works (vv. 6–10): “God ‘will give to each person according to what he has done’” (v. 6). In a remarkable literary structure, Paul describes the two classes Messiah will distinguish (emphasis added):

- a. “To those who by **persistence in doing good** seek glory, honor and immortality, he will give eternal life....glory, honor and peace for everyone who **does good**” (vv. 7, 10).
- b. “But for those...who **reject the truth and follow evil**, there will be wrath and anger.... trouble and distress for every human being who **does evil**...” (vv. 8–9).¹⁷

The two classes are those who do good and those who do evil. Only those who show “persistence in doing good” will get eternal life.¹⁸ What will be the criterion of that goodness? God’s law, especially the covenant made at Sinai. Israel received the law as standard and will be judged by it (vv. 12–13). However, “it is not those who hear the law who are righteous...but it is those who obey the law who will be declared righteous” (v. 13). That is true even of “Gentiles, who do not have the law” (v. 14). They will be judged by “the requirements of the law...written on their hearts, their consciences also bearing witness” (v. 15).

As we are all aware, every person’s conscience accuses him of falling short. There is no exception. What, then, will happen to the second principle of judgment? Will God overlook our deeds? Or will Messiah despair of finding persons who persist in doing good? Of course not, because through the gospel God both accepts us and makes us able to do good and pass the test.¹⁹ That will be Paul’s argument starting at Romans 3:21.

C. The Jew Condemned, 2:17 to 3:8

The Jew is proud of two big God-given advantages: the law and circumcision. Chosen to receive “in the law the embodiment of knowledge and truth” (2:21), he can teach the rest of the world. But he does not obey the law himself; instead, he dishonors God. His physical circumcision was given to be a sign and seal of righteousness, a reminder to be holy. But he lacks the required spiritual circumcision that qualifies one as a real Jew (2:25–29).

Here Paul pauses to touch a subject he will later discuss in detail: what effect Jewish disbelief has on God’s promises (3:1–8). Jews do have spiritual advantages—great ones—whether they believe or not. Above all, God gave them His words. But some Jews did not believe Him. Will their lack of faith nullify His faithfulness? Certainly not; He will fulfill His words. In fact, their “unrighteousness brings out God’s righteousness more clearly” (3:5). That is true for us all: man’s wickedness makes God’s goodness sparkle in contrast.²⁰ But that fact can never justify our wickedness, which He will judge.

D. The Whole World Condemned, 3:9–20

Here Paul quotes many Scriptures, mostly from psalms, that show the final state of the world before God. He begins, “There is no one righteous, not even one; there is no one who under-

stands, no one who seeks God...no one who does good, not even one” (vv. 10–12, quoting from Psa. 14:1–3.).²¹ The next quotations picture people issuing the corruption of “open graves” through their throats, tongues, lips, and mouths (vv. 13–14). They are destructive and godless (vv. 15–18). Even God’s law—given to Israel as mankind’s representatives—does not make them good. Rather, it sharpens their guilt and instructs their consciences (vv. 19–20).

II. Salvation, 3:21 to 8:39

The Righteousness of God Revealed

In the previous section Paul has shown that the whole world is guilty before God. He has also shown that the law, though it embodies the essential elements of knowledge and truth (2:20), cannot save. Now, in 3:21 to 8:39 he begins to deal with a different means of revealing God’s righteousness. This means is the gospel, which operates not by works but by faith (3:22, 26, 27, 28, 30, 31; cf. 1:17). Paul will show that by the gospel God can save man in every aspect:

- make him acceptable (justify him)
- make him holy (sanctify him)
- give him eternal glory (preserve and glorify him)

This section answers the implied question “How does God save sinners?” The answer is “In Messiah Jesus” (8:1; cf. 6:3–4, 11, 23; 7:4, 25). In all three phases of salvation, that is the secret to the gospel’s power.

A. Justification by Faith, 3:21 to 5:21

Declared righteous in Messiah

1. This Divine Method Described, 3:21–31. In 3:21 to 5:21 Paul discusses the first phase of salvation: justification. He begins by contrasting the gospel’s approach and power to those of the law. In the gospel everyone who is guilty is invited to place his confidence in Messiah Jesus. It does not matter who he is, even if an ignorant Gentile or a boastful Jew. He will be declared righteous not by observing the law but by his faith in Messiah (see 3:22, 24, 26, 28, 30).²² A key word describing this transaction is *grace* (v. 24; 5:15, 20, 21). It refers to God’s favor for those who do not deserve it.

But how can God accept and save people who are godless and wicked? How indeed, when He—by His own nature—is angry against their sin (1:18)? Simply because Messiah, in obedience to the Father’s own plan, has offered Himself to settle sin’s account (3:24–26).²³ Messiah came and kept the law, yet paid its penalties. In this way He did not nullify the law but upheld it, that is, He fully affirmed its requirements (v. 31). In the gospel God is not careless, capricious, or arbitrary, but righteous (vv. 21, 25–26).²⁴

A WARNING: Sinners do not have to understand all of this—nor the next chapters—to be saved. As seen in the evangelistic messages in Acts, they must trust not primarily the sacrifice but the royal Person who made it.

2. This Divine Method Illustrated in Abraham, ch. 4. Justifying people by faith is not a new method; it has always been in operation. Abraham himself lived by faith:

- By faith Abraham was justified, as stated in Genesis 15:6 (and echoed by David in Psa. 32). This clearly took place before he was circumcised as a sign and seal of his righteousness (4:1–12).
- By faith Abraham “received the promise that he would be heir of the world,” a promise valid for his spiritual descendants as well (4:13–17). Notice that this promise involves the whole earth (“world”), not just the part of it promised to Abraham’s nation.²⁵ Notice also that it was a promise rather than a contract. Therefore, it could not be nullified by man breaking God’s law nor be limited by that law to Jews only.
- By faith Abraham “became the father of many nations...his body was as good as dead...and ...Sarah’s womb was also dead. Yet he did not waver through unbelief regarding the promise of God...” He believed in the God of resurrection, as do we, the God who brings life out of death (4:17–25).²⁶

3. This Divine Method Can Save Fully, 5:1–11. Justification by faith in Messiah does not stand alone. It starts a process that will never stop—bringing results that are powerful and assuring. It began by giving us “**peace with God**”²⁷—not a feeling but a fact, not an emotion of contentment but a state of harmony (cf. Eph. 2:14, 17). The King of the universe now accepts us. He also gives us “**access by faith into this grace** in which we now stand” (v. 2a; Eph. 2:18). In other words, we are not obliged to wait in His courts but can march boldly up to His “throne of grace” (Heb. 4:16; 10:19–22). With such peace and access, “we **rejoice in the hope of the glory of God**” (v. 2b).²⁸ This is the glory believers seek for (2:7) and will surely receive (2:10; 8:21, 30; 9:23; 2 Cor. 4:17; 1 John 3:1). “Not only so,” Paul continues, “but we also **rejoice in our sufferings**” (v. 3a). The verb translated “rejoice” in verses 2b and 3a is the same word as “brag” or “boast” in 2:23 (noun form in 3:27). It means to express great confidence.²⁹

How can we boast in sufferings? Paul shows the reason in a “much more” argument, summarized in the chart below. When God in love reconciled us to Himself through Messiah’s death, we were ungodly, powerless, sinners, and God’s enemies. Now that we are reconciled, He will **much more** surely save³⁰ us through Messiah’s life. “He always lives to intercede for [us]” (Heb. 7:25; Rom. 8:34). At the end of this road we will face no divine wrath (v. 9; see 8:1) but receive “the glory of God” for which we confidently hope. Along the road God will see to it that trials help us by producing perseverance, character,³¹ and greater hope in us (vv. 3–4). Nothing can really hurt us nor take away His love, which is “poured out...by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us” (v. 5).³² All this is certainly cause for godly boasting (vv. 2, 3), not in our own abilities but in God Himself (v. 11).

Romans 5:9–10: How Much More Shall We Be Saved from God’s Wrath!					
IF			HOW MUCH MORE		
when we were God’s enemies	we were reconciled to Him	through the death of His Son	having been reconciled	shall we be saved	through His life!
(This was our previous condition.)	(This is what Messiah did for us through His death.)		(This is our present condition.)	(This is what Messiah does and will do for us through His life.)	

4. This Divine Method Can Save Everyone, 5:12–21. In this passage Paul finishes considering justification. His general argument is clear, though some of its details are difficult.³³ He compares justification by faith in Messiah to the condemnation seen in the first main section. Just as condemnation is universal, so is the power of the gospel. Faith in one Man can save everyone. There are two heads of mankind: Adam and Messiah.³⁴ Adam in Eden committed one act of transgression; Messiah at the cross made a supreme act of obedience. Adam’s act brought sin and death to all in him; Messiah’s act brings justification and life to all in Him.³⁵ Where death reigned through Adam, grace now reigns through righteousness to eternal life.³⁶

As Paul has stated repeatedly, this grace comes only to those who have faith in Messiah (1:16–17; 3:22, 28; 4:5, 13; 5:1, 2). Only they “receive God’s abundant provision of grace and of the gift of righteousness.” Are you one of them? If so, you “will...reign in life through the one man, Jesus Messiah” (5:17). This means, as it always does in the New Testament, that you will rule with the Lord in His coming glorious kingdom.³⁷

B. Sanctification, chapters 6–7

Made holy in Messiah

Paul has just shown that the gospel can make us right with God: we can be justified (declared righteous) simply and only by faith in Messiah. But justification is merely the beginning of salvation. Can the gospel also overcome our sin and make us holy like God? To use a technical term with the same meaning, can it **sanctify** us? That is the question answered in Romans 6 and 7 (and even 8).³⁸ Romans 6 will answer yes by showing the right (gospel) way to be sanctified. Chapter 7 will show the wrong way.

1. How to be sanctified, ch. 6. We are made holy through due recognition of what God has already accomplished. Paul explains this by answering two questions (in vv. 1 and 15) arising from God’s method of justification by grace through faith alone:

- The first question is based on two facts about this grace: (a) It made no moral demands⁺ and yet (b) it triumphs over all sin (5:20–21). Does grace, then, encourage living in sin (v. 1)?³⁹
- The second question is based on the fact that believers are under grace rather than under law. Does grace, then, encourage sinning on any given occasion (v. 15)?

The first question, 6:1: “Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase?” This question may have been sarcastic, spoken by religious people who objected to the gospel as preached by Paul. They felt that God would not offer full pardon to those who come emptyhanded. If we bring no good works nor even promises to do good, won’t we be encouraged to keep sinning? Paul’s answer to this question (vv. 2–14) is based on the believer’s union with Messiah.⁴⁰ By faith (and as pictured in baptism) we were joined to Messiah in His death and resurrection.^{*41} When that happened, we died to sin and arose to God.⁴² The purpose of that death was to break sin’s power over us (v. 6).⁴³ The purpose of being raised with Him was that “we too may live a new life” (v. 4). So, how can we possibly live in the sin we died to? Sanctification involves our cooperation with the new reality as follows:

- **knowing** about this death and resurrection of ours (v. 6)⁴⁴
- **counting** on it in daily life (v. 11)⁴⁵
- **offering** ourselves to God as those alive from the dead (v. 13). This seems to summarize our new approach to God. The imperative “offer” means to “make available.” Though its Greek tense (aorist) sees this action as a whole, we should keep it before us constantly.⁴⁶

In conclusion, being under grace assures us of victory never possible under the law (v. 14).

The second question, 6:15: “Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace?” The answer to this question (vv. 15–23) is based on the fact that we chose a new Master. That is another aspect of our believing in Messiah. We did not just believe in One who died for sins but One who is Lord, that is, Master (10:9; 14:9; Luke 2:11; Acts 2:36).⁴⁷ Before that, we were slaves to sin, a slavery resulting in death. But now through Messiah we are slaves of righteousness and God⁴⁸—and will receive His gift of eternal life. For us to obey sin at all, then, is both unnecessary and contradictory.

Before continuing with chapter 7, try your own hand at summarizing and paraphrasing every part of chapter 6. Then read Appendix G: Romans 6 Restated.

2. How not to be sanctified, ch. 7. In chapter 6 Paul has affirmed that we are sanctified (made holy) by grace, that is, by responding to the gospel with faith. In chapter 8 he will show why the gospel method has this power to sanctify. First, however, he will show in chapter 7 why the law does not have such power. Law is the wrong way to be sanctified. That, in fact, is the reason God made us dead to the law (vv. 1–6). Though the law in itself is holy, it cannot make us holy

⁺ Grace requires no works whatsoever—not even signs of a new beginning—only faith. “Nothing in my hand I bring; simply to Thy cross I cling.” Reread passages like 3:24, 27–28; 4:4–8; and 5:10.

^{*}This shows that saving faith involves repentance. See the endnote.

but only condemn (“kill”) us (vv. 7–13). The trouble is not with the law but with our flesh. In the flesh is a “law of sin” that makes us incapable of keeping God’s law (vv. 14–25).

This incapacity is true of us all, whether justified or not. The apostle shows this by describing his own experience in most of the chapter. After using plural pronouns (*you* and *we*) in verses 4–6, he changes to first person singular (*I* and *me*) in the rest of the chapter. However, our comments (aside from the chart) will use first person plural throughout. We will also sometimes quote from NASB rather than NIV. This is mostly because NASB translates the Greek word *sarks* as “flesh” rather than “sinful nature.” Though believers still have “flesh,” it is doubtful that they have two “natures.”

We are dead to the law, 7:1–6. Just as chapter 6 said that we believers are dead to sin (6:1–6), chapter 7 says we are also dead to the law (7:1–6). We used to be “married” to the law (7:1, 4–6), and our sinful passions bore fruit for death (v. 5). But now, having died with Messiah, we are joined to the risen Messiah and bear fruit for God (v. 4). Now “we serve in newness of the Spirit and not in oldness of the letter [that is, the law]” (v. 6, NASB). The old service under the law is described in this chapter 7; the new service of the Spirit will be described in chapter 8.

The law, though holy, kills (condemns) us, 7:7–13. Our failure under the law does not mean that the law is sinful. In fact, it is holy. But it reveals our sin (for example, our coveting, v. 7) and even provokes it (v. 8). Sin may seem dormant until the law comes; at that point sin wakes up and kills the one it inhabits (vv. 9–13).⁴⁹ Sin becomes “utterly sinful” (v. 13).⁵⁰ This happened to every honest Jew who grew up under the law.

The law cannot sanctify us, 7:14–25. The rest of the chapter shows how impossible it is to achieve victory over sin by means of the law. No one—whether justified or not—can be sanctified by his own strength in obedience to the law. In three similar cycles (vv. 14–17, 18–20, 21–25; see the chart) Paul shows this inability of the flesh to be righteous as the law requires. The reason for failure is that in one’s body there is a law (a principle and power) of sin that leads to death.⁵¹ Victory over sin comes only through Messiah (v. 25a), as Paul has already said in chapter 6. How Messiah does this will be told in the first part of chapter 8.

At the end of chapter 7 Paul pictures himself as a “wretched man” carrying a “body of death” (v. 24). He has no strength to free himself from “the law of sin” in his members (vv. 22, 23, 25). Thus, he is quite unable to do the good things he sees in the law; instead, he is prone to sin. However, there is victory “through Messiah Jesus our Master” (v. 25a, literal)—that is, through the gospel. The way to that victory was given in chapter 6; its power is explained in chapter 8.

This means that chapter 8 still considers the subject of sanctification, which it concludes. It does not really introduce a new subject but ties together many strands from previous chapters. However, chapter 8 does have an emphasis of its own. It merges into, then dwells in, the final stage of sanctification, which is **glorification**. We will indicate that new emphasis by designating chapter 8 by that title.

The Law Cannot Sanctify Me Romans 7:14–25 (NIV)				
	The Fact	Proof of the Fact	Conclusion	Note
Cycle I 7:14–17	14. We know that the law is spiritual; but I am unspiritual, sold as a slave to sin.	15–16. I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do. And if I do what I do not want to do, I agree that the law is good.	17. As it is, it is no longer I myself who do it, but it is sin living in me.	<i>There is an evil power within me that keeps me in bondage.</i>
Cycle II 7:18–20	18a. I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my [flesh], .	18b–19. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. For what I do is not the good I want to do; no, the evil I do not want to do—this I keep on doing.	20. Now if I do what I do not want to do, it is no longer I who do it, but it is sin living in me that does it.	<i>That evil power within me keeps me from doing the good I want to do.</i>
Cycle III 7:21–25	21. So I find this law at work: When I want to do good, evil is right there with me.	22–23. For in my inner being I delight in God’s law; but I see another law at work in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within my members.	25b. So then I myself in my mind am a slave to God’s law, but in the [flesh] a slave to the law of sin.	<i>That evil power within me keeps me enslaved to sin rather than to God’s law.</i>

C. Glorification, chapter 8

Made Like Messiah

How long will salvation by grace through faith hold good? Forever! As our Lord Jesus said, “I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish” (John 10:28). This is the same truth Romans 8 emphasizes as it brings to a conclusion the subject of salvation. Nothing can thwart God’s plans for a person who through faith is in Messiah. That person is eternally secure, and thus bound to share in God’s glory. Chapter 8 gives two reasons why that is so, namely, because the gospel gives (1) victory over sin (vv. 1–11) and (2) victory over suffering (vv. 12–30). The chapter then concludes with a victory hymn of praise to God (vv. 31–39). We will consider all of this in first person (“we,” “us,” “our”) to emphasize how it affects us.

1. Victory over Sin, 8:1–11. Paul proclaims the fact of our security, then gives the first reason for it. We are secure because God’s method of salvation—through the gospel—frees us from sin and death and gives us righteousness and life.

We are completely secure, 8:1. “Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Messiah Jesus.”⁵² The word “therefore” shows that our security is based on God’s way of justifying and sanctifying just presented (in 3:21 to 7:25). Paul’s statement itself combines two thoughts from those earlier chapters: (a) “no condemnation,” from 5:16, 18, and (b) “in Messiah” (also in 8:3, 5, 11, 23), from 6:3–5.⁵³

God has freed us to become holy, 8:2–4. With the word “because” in verse 2, Paul begins to give two reasons why the gospel makes us secure. The first reason he states in a positive form in verses 2–4: God has now truly freed us to become holy. This freedom is in contrast to the hopeless struggle just described in 7:14–25. That passage showed that nobody could keep the marvelous standard of holiness in God’s law. Why not? Because of the deadly “law of sin and death” (v. 2; 7:23) in our bodies/flesh, which maintained its mastery.⁵⁴ But now God has changed our hopeless condition; He has “condemned sin in the flesh” (v. 3, NASB). He did this by (a) sending His Son in our likeness and as a sacrifice for our sin (v. 3), then (b) uniting us with Him in His death and new life (v. 1; cf. 6:3–11; 7:4). In that union we have received His Spirit (v. 2; 5:5), who provides us a new and supernatural way to live (v. 2; 7:6).⁵⁵

Believers are no longer under God’s law of commandments; Paul asserts that fact repeatedly (6:14; 7:4; 10:4). Nevertheless, “the righteous requirements of the law” (8:4a; cf. 2:26) are being fulfilled in us “who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit” (v. 4b, NASB).⁵⁶ In other words, we who live “according to the Spirit” do what the law wants even though we are not under it. Does this describe only some believers or all believers? All of us! Just as Jesus promised, all believers no longer walk in darkness but in the light (John 8:12; 1 John 1:6–7).⁵⁷ For all of us the Spirit has brought the power for holiness. Our sin is conquered; there will be no condemnation.

Why we who have the Spirit can please God, 8:5–8. These verses explain why we can fulfill God’s desires as seen in His law of commandments. Others, who are “according to the flesh” (NASB), cannot do so. But we can because of the difference in mindset—which refers to our mind, affections, and will.⁵⁸ The mindset of the indwelling Spirit is toward “life and peace” (v. 6). The mindset of the flesh—in contrast—is death. That means (or, is due to the fact that) it produces enmity against God, that is, rebellion (v. 7, described in 7:14–25). Because of their mindset, fleshly people cannot possibly please God, even when they are “good” or “religious.”

This new life includes glory for the body, 8:9–11. These verses direct our attention to the end result of sanctification, which is, glorification. They affirm that the presence of Messiah’s Spirit in a believer also guarantees life for his body (see v. 23). Though the body is presently “dead” due to the sin principle still in it, the spirit is now life because of the righteousness principle in it (v. 10). And God will see to it that His Spirit of life in Messiah will resurrect our bodies just as He resurrected Messiah Himself (v. 11).⁵⁹ Thus, Messiah through His Spirit brings life to both spirit and body.

2. Victory over Suffering, 8:12–30. In this section Paul gives the second reason for a believer’s security: because God’s method of salvation gives us victory over suffering. The gospel will carry the believer through all troubles to a predestined glory. This section deals fully with

the theme of suffering and glory that was touched in 5:1–11. It shows that “our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us” (8:18).

Our new life is that of God’s children, 8:12–17. This subsection begins by reviewing—as two unavoidable obligations—the truth just presented in verses 1–11. “We have an obligation” that depends on whether we have chosen the gospel or not. (a) Verses 12b–13a, summarizing verses 5–8, show our obligation if we **have not** chosen the gospel. In that case we must live according to the flesh, resulting in death. (b) Verse 13b, summarizing verses 2–4, shows our obligation if we **have** chosen the gospel. In that case we must live by the Spirit, resulting in life. This second group is also described as “those who are according to the Spirit” (v. 5), who will attain “life and peace” (v. 6).

Opposite Obligations (Romans 8:12–13, quoting NASB)			
“So then, brethren, we are under obligation			
	Obligation	Result	Comments
<i>NOT THIS</i>	12b–13a NOT to the flesh, to live according to the flesh—for if you are living according to the flesh,	you must die.	<i>This sums up verses 5–8 (also 6:16, 21, 23). It describes “those who are according to the flesh” (v. 5a) and “cannot please God” (v. 8) because they have not chosen the gospel.</i>
<i>BUT THIS</i>	13b BUT if by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body,	you will live.”	<i>This sums up verses 2–4, (also 6:16–18, 22). It describes “those who are according to the Spirit” (v. 5b) because they have chosen the gospel.</i>

All Christians, of course, have made the second choice—and should never forget it (as we saw in 6:6, 11, 16). They are “according to the Spirit” and not “according to the flesh” (v. 5, NASB). They are “not in [controlled by] the flesh but in [controlled by] the Spirit” (v. 9, NASB). Therefore, they “by the Spirit...put to death the misdeeds of the body” (v. 13). The pace of their sanctification will vary; some are more obedient than others. But God will eventually accomplish in all of them what He intended when He “condemned sin in sinful man” (v. 3) and enabled them to “not walk [live] according to the flesh but according to the Spirit” (v. 4, NASB). To varying degrees they are all “led by the Spirit of God” (v. 14).

Why will those in the Spirit truly live? Because the life the Spirit gives is that of God’s sons and heirs (8:14–17). He witnesses within us—and our own spirit joyfully concurs—that God is now our Father. Fear is gone. Since God has accepted us for adoption—and actually made us to be born into His family, we are therefore His heirs—along with Messiah Himself.⁶⁰

*As God’s children, we will share Messiah’s glory, 8:17.*⁶¹ Knowing that we will inherit with Messiah helps us triumph in our sufferings. These are not the sufferings common to every

human being but sufferings endured “with Him” (NASB). Do all true believers suffer with Him—and thereby qualify for His glory? Certainly yes—to varying degrees. “Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven” (Matt. 5:10–11; cf. John 15:18–21; Phil. 1:29).⁶² Therefore, “if indeed we share in his sufferings” (8:17b) in effect means “assuming that in reality we are Christians.”

Present sufferings are not comparable to our future glory, 8:18–25. Future glory with Messiah will be so great that our present suffering is not worth comparing to it (v. 18; 2 Cor. 4:16–18). That glory will be “revealed in regard to us” (v. 18, probable meaning of Greek), implying that it will involve more than believers ourselves. Indeed, it will involve all creation (that is, all nature; vv. 19–22). We believers will be revealed for what we are (v. 19; Col. 3:4; 1 John 3:1–2). So will creation.

Glory for creation, vv. 19–22. Creation, like believers, now suffers from a condition that was not original (vv. 20, 22) and that will be relieved (v. 21). As a result of man’s fall (see Gen. 3), creation “was subjected to futility” (v. 20, NASB), that is, made “to attain to no good end permanently” (Stifler). Perhaps that is why cold winds moan and earthquakes shake. “All the voices of nature are in the minor key.” All things sigh before God:

Come and make all things new;
Build up this ruined earth;
Restore our faded paradise,
Creation’s second birth.
(Bonar, quoted by Stifler, pp. 144–145)

Creation’s moaning will be answered; glorious future relief will come. Jesus called that relief “the rebirth” (Matt. 19:28, Greek). Peter called it “the restoration of all things” (Acts 3:21, NASB). Isaiah (11:6–9; 35:1–10; et al.) and others had described it. Therefore, as Romans 8:22–23 reiterates, creation and believers are side by side, both groaning and waiting for their full redemption. Everything that was lost in the fall will be recovered.

This future glory is no less than the kingdom believers will inherit with the Lord. Notice some examples of this teaching. James 2:5, reflecting Matthew 5:3, speaks of “the poor [who are] rich in faith and...inherit the kingdom He promised those who love Him.” In Matthew 25:31 the Lord promises to come sit on “His throne in heavenly glory.” Then, as King, He will invite the blessed of His Father to “take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you...” (v. 34), which is the same as “eternal life” (v. 46). Hebrews 2:5–10 declares that Jesus’ suffering was designed to prepare many “sons” for the “glory” of “the world to come.”⁶³

Glory for our bodies, vv. 23–25. This future glory includes the completed adoption when believers’ bodies will be redeemed (v. 23; 1 Cor. 15:51–56; Phil. 3:20–21). We will have redeemed bodies to reign in a redeemed world. “In this hope we were saved” (vv. 24–25; see my comments on 5:2). “This hope” is **our present confidence regarding the future**, which (as Hebrews 11:1 also shows) is essential to our faith. In that sense “hope” is in us now. But the **future realization of our confidence** is also called “hope”: “we wait for the blessed hope—the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Messiah” (Titus 2:13). “He will appear a

second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him” (Heb. 9:28; cf. 1 Peter 1:5). That completed salvation will include His own kingdom and our participation in it in glorified bodies.

Sufferings accomplish God’s purpose for us, vv. 26–30. Each believer is highly favored, having the firm hope of unbelievable glory as God’s heir! Yet, we are presently deficient and do not even know what to ask for in prayer (v. 26). But the divine Spirit within us, who knows both us and God, makes intercession in perfect agreement with God’s purposes and plans (v. 27). His pleas cannot be put into human words; yet God understands Him.

Thus, the Spirit’s intercession is in harmony with God’s control. God makes all things work together to accomplish His eternal purpose for His elect ones (translated “those whom God has chosen” in v. 33). We reveal that we are the elect by our love for God, which we received when He called us (v. 28). According to God’s purpose for His elect, He did the following (vv. 29–30; also see the chart). Steps 1 and 2 took place before we existed; the rest at our conversion.

1. **He foreknew us** (decided on a special relationship with us).
2. **He predestined us** (designed for us to become like His Son).
3. **He called us** (invited us with the result that we responded).
4. **He justified us** (declared us righteous through faith in Messiah).
5. **He glorified us** (assured our final destiny).

McClain counts God’s purpose as a separate item, making the list total six. “These six words,” he says, “are the six golden links which bind the believer to the two eternities—the eternity that is past in the purpose of God, and the eternity that is future in glory with Him!” (p. 168). Consider each of the five I have listed:

1. Foreknew. This term is of great importance in understanding God’s sovereignty—and is often misunderstood. It does not mean seeing beforehand who would believe. Instead, it is based on a special meaning for the Hebrew word for *know* and its Greek equivalent—namely, to have intimate relations with someone. Here are some examples in both Testaments: “Now the man **had relations with** [lit., knew] his wife Eve” (Gen. 4:1. NASB). “The LORD **watches over** the way of the righteous” (Psa. 1:6). “You only **have I chosen** of all the families of the earth” (Amos 3:2). “I never **knew** you” (Matt. 7:23). See the note for other examples.⁶⁴ *Foreknow* or *foreknowledge* adds the idea of having this knowledge in advance, as it does here in Romans 8:29.

God did not wait to see which people would respond to the gospel. He ordained some to eternal life before they believed (Acts 13:48),⁶⁵ then enabled them to believe (Eph. 2:9; 1 Tim. 1:14; 2 Tim. 1:9). In themselves they were incapable of believing, did not seek God (Rom. 3:11), and could not be subject to His law (Rom. 8:7). In fact, they were dead in sins (Eph. 2:1, 5).

2. Predestined. Those God foreknew He predestined to become like Messiah. Though Messiah was the first to attain glory, He will not remain alone. He will be the “firstborn” (the greatest, 8:29) among many sons of God.⁶⁶

3. Called. Those God predestined He also called (8:28, 30). In the epistles this always means an “efficacious” call, one that results in obedience (see Rom. 1:6; 9:11; and the note).⁶⁷ This passage makes it obvious what people God called in this sense: only those He had predestined—and all of that group. He did not call everyone in general, then predestine those who believed. Notice that calling is the only step obvious to our experience. We are not aware of the others except through God’s Word.

4–5. Justified and Glorified. Those God called He justified (declared them to be righteous). He did this on the basis of Messiah’s sacrifice for them, as explained in Romans 3:21 to 5:21. Those same people He glorified, the end of the sanctification process dealt with in Romans 6–8.

In none of these steps does God lose anyone. Once God has selected someone for His grace, He will fulfill His purpose for him. In each case the divine Sculptor has chosen a rough slab of marble from which to make a beautiful figure. The marble must undergo much chipping before the image is complete—but the Sculptor will not allow it to be ruined. In His mind the process is as good as done; in the slab He already sees one like Messiah.

What God Has Done for “Those Whom God Has Chosen” (“those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose”) Romans 8:28–30				
<i>BEFORE THEY EXISTED</i>		<i>AT THEIR CONVERSION</i>		
Foreknew them	Predestined them	Called them (the step they “experience”)	Justified them	Glorified them
chose them →	planned to make them like Messiah →	invited them so that they responded →	declared them righteous →	assured their final destiny

3. Victory Hymn, 8:31–39.⁶⁸ Here Paul sums up the first eight chapters in a grand “Hymn of the Assurance of Salvation” (Godet). This hymn poses and answers four questions (quoted from the New KJV):

1. If God is for us, who can be against us? (v. 31)
2. Who shall bring a charge against [that is, successfully accuse] God’s elect? (v. 33)
3. Who is he who condemns? (v. 34)
4. Who shall separate us from the love of Messiah? (v. 35)

Notice that in each case the question is not “what” but “who.” “Who” refers to personal agents who might work against us, using various means. In each case the answer amounts to “No one!”

The first answer (v. 32) reminds us that God is indeed for us. He already gave us His greatest treasure, His own Son. If one gives a costly jewel, can he withhold the jewel case or chain that goes with it?

The second answer (v. 33) reminds us that God has already looked at all our offences and freed us from all guilt. Could someone discover an offence God overlooked?

The third answer (v. 34) reminds us who the appointed Judge is (see Acts 10:42), the only One who can condemn. The Judge Himself died for our sins, rose to give us His Spirit, and makes intercession for us at God's right hand.

The fourth answer (vv. 35–39) surveys all space and time to find someone with power to cut us off from the love of Messiah. Why does Paul say so much about this point? Because we need lots of encouragement—our troubles are numerous and sometimes loom large and black to our limited vision.

The apostle's eye looks through all time, through all space, and through all worlds. Then, in the most sweeping language, he asserts his persuasion that there is nothing "able" to break the golden chain that binds the heart of God to His people.
(Stifler, p. 152)

Have you accepted this everlasting love?

III. Vindication, Chapters 9–11

The Wisdom of God Revealed

Chapters 9 to 11 of Romans are extremely important for believers to understand God's ways in history. They show His wisdom and sovereignty as related to the story and gospel of salvation. But, like most of the book, they are obviously not designed to teach to unsaved people. In my comments I will make heavy use of McClain's outline and arguments.

Introduction

At first glance these three chapters seem to interrupt the flow of Paul's treatise. Chapter 8 would lead smoothly into chapter 12. The marvelous hymn of victory at the end of chapter 8 (vv. 31–39) has capped the study of God's mercy to us in salvation. Starting in 12:1, the believer is exhorted, on the basis of that mercy, to be transformed in all aspects of life. Before starting that exhortation, however, Paul addresses the problem of Israel's unbelief. It was known everywhere that most of Israel rejected Jesus as Messiah and violently opposed His witnesses (see 1 Thess. 2:14–15). How did that happen, seeing that God has highly favored Israel? They are God's chosen nation. From Paul's day until the present, Judaism considers it impossible that they could have rejected the true Messiah.⁶⁹

Paul's gospel was directly opposed to current Jewish thinking about themselves and about righteousness. Thus, Paul's opponents might claim that either (a) his gospel must be mistaken or

(b) God’s promises to Israel have failed. In answering these objections in chapters 9–11, Paul vindicates God and shows His wisdom. McClain says that this section answers the implied question “Why has Israel (the Jew) been set aside?” The answer is “so that he [God] may have mercy on them all” (11:32). Read McClain’s quick survey of the three chapters:

The ninth chapter admits to the fact that the Jewish nation has not received [that is, accepted] the gospel, but it also declares that the Word of God has not failed. Why? Because some Jews have believed, and these Jews, says Paul, are a part of that elect remnant that the Old Testament tells about. So the conclusion is that there is always a continuing line of believers, in whom the promises of God are being fulfilled.

The tenth chapter carries the argument further and lays the blame on Israel. The apostle says that if Israel, as a nation, has been set aside, it is through no fault of God. The reason that God has rejected Israel is because Israel rejected the gospel.

Then in the eleventh chapter, the apostle tells that although the nation of Israel has been set aside, and although that rejection of them as a nation has been richly deserved (because they rejected the gospel), the rejection of Israel as a nation is not final. It is temporary only, and through all that (through the election and through the rejection) God is working out a mighty, loving, and gracious purpose. For by the rejection of Israel as a nation, salvation has been brought first of all to the Gentiles. And if Israel’s rejection has resulted in the enrichment of the world, how much more blessing will come someday when God receives Israel back in the place where it once was. (McClain, p. 174)

A. Divine Sovereignty, ch. 9—*Election*

1. The Problem Stated, 9:1–5

Paul expresses his deep sorrow for his people Israel, who have many honors from God.⁷⁰ Paul’s concern was not feigned (vv. 1–2). He showed it by preaching the gospel to the Jewish religious community wherever he went (see Acts 9:20; 13:5, 14; 14:1; 16:13; 17:1–2; 19:8). He continued doing so even though in most places the Jews tried—and often succeeded—to do him harm.

Romans 9:4–5 lists several of Israel’s honors, each of which would merit study using cross references. The first one, “the adoption as sons” (v. 4) refers to God’s choice of the nation as a whole. On the eve of bringing Israel out of Egypt, He told Pharaoh through Moses, “Israel is my firstborn son....Let my son go” (Exod. 4:22–23).⁷¹ Centuries later, after a long history of Israel’s rebellion, He still claimed them. “Hear this word the Lord has spoken against you, O people of Israel—against the whole family I brought up out of Egypt: ‘**You only have I chosen** [Heb. known] of all the families of the earth; therefore I will punish you for all your sins’” (Amos 3:1–2; see also Hosea 11).

Also in this list of Israel’s honors are “the promises” of a glorious future (v. 4). John the Baptist’s godly father Zechariah restated some of those promises in Luke 1. They included “salvation from our enemies...to enable us to serve him without fear in holiness and righteousness before him all our days” (Luke 1:71–75). But Jesus (in His first coming) did not bring Israel that aspect of salvation. Instead, He predicted the ruin that came a few years after Paul wrote: Israel would be scattered and their glorious temple destroyed. Should we conclude that Zechariah was

mistaken—simply a naive and misguided zealot? Certainly not; for he “was filled with the Holy Spirit and prophesied” (Luke 1:67). And what he prophesied was not novel but reflected God’s promises through earlier prophets (Isa. 11:10–16 and many others). Why then, were such prophecies not fulfilled? Paul will explain.

The last honor listed for Israel is the greatest: Messiah Himself is a Jew (v. 5)! In this verse Paul apparently proceeds to say something he rarely says: that Messiah is “God.”⁷²

2. The Explanation Offered, 9:6–13

What happened to Israel and their promises? Has God’s word failed? Paul explains why the answer is no. First, though God has chosen Abraham’s descendants, He never intended to include all of them. For example, He chose Isaac, the child of promise, but not Abraham’s other children. In the next generation He chose Jacob but not his older twin Esau. In doing this, He disregarded both custom and the boys’ future deeds. God’s reasons are in Himself; He elects and calls according to His own purpose (v. 11; 8:28). In other words, He is sovereign. Some interpreters assume that He chooses because He foresees some as having faith and/or good works. This passage specifically denies that human notion. God made His choice known “before the twins were born—in order that **God’s purpose in election might stand, not by works but by him who calls...**” (vv. 11b–12a).⁷³

3. The Objections Answered, 9:14–24

Paul has shown that God elects sovereignly, that is, He chooses to show mercy to only a few—and those undeserving. Men object to this. They believe that a God who would do this would be unjust (vv. 14–18).⁷⁴ Paul’s answer to this objection first implies that without God’s mercy all would be condemned. That was true for the whole nation of Israel at Sinai, when God spoke the words quoted in verse 15. Under Moses’ leadership God had brought Israel out of Egypt to His holy mountain. But even as He was making His covenant with them, they became idolatrous. They all deserved to die. Yet, those God chose would live (v. 15), not because of “man’s desire or effort” but because of “God’s mercy” (v. 16).

The case of Pharaoh was also one of mercy for Israel. On purpose God exalted a man to become Pharaoh, then hardened him. This afforded God the opportunity to do ten great plagues while giving Pharaoh what he deserved. The whole world, especially the elect, saw God’s power and His mercy (vv. 17–18).⁷⁵

This prompts a second objection to God’s sovereignty (vv. 19–24): If man cannot successfully resist God, how can he be blamed? This objection assumes that man somehow has a right to God’s mercy. Instead, God has full rights over His creation, like the potter over the clay. Remember that we are all corrupted clay. Yet, this Potter shows His glory in two ways: (a) He patiently puts up with vessels prepared for destruction;⁷⁶ (b) He makes some of the clay—both Jews and Gentiles—into noble pottery.

4. The Proof Given, 9:25–29

Unless our teachings agree with Scripture, they are useless if not dangerous. Paul now shows that earlier Scriptures had foretold Jewish unbelief and the salvation of Gentiles. He begins by

quoting (in vv. 25 and 26) two passages from Hosea originally about Israel. They say that those who were not God’s people would later become His people—words equally true about Gentiles (see 1 Peter 2:10). Next, Paul quotes (in vv. 27–29) other passages, basically from Isaiah, only about Israel. They state that the LORD’s judgments on Israel would leave only a small remnant to be saved. This contradicted a common Jewish belief in New Testament times that all the circumcised were safe.

5. The Conclusion Drawn, 9:30–33

These verses sum up the situation just discussed for unbelieving Israel and believing Gentiles. They also serve as basis for the discussion in chapter 10. They make two points: (a) that Gentiles have obtained righteousness by faith though they did not seek it, whereas (b) Jews did not obtain righteousness—although they pursued a law of righteousness—because they did not seek it by faith but by their own works. This fact again fulfills the old saying (Isa. 28:16) that Israel stumbles over God’s stone in Zion—which in this case was Messiah Himself.

B. Human Responsibility, ch. 10—*Rejection*

In chapter 9 Paul has shown that God’s choice is based on His sovereignty, not on personal characteristics or works. Nevertheless, as chapter 10 will show, God is not to blame when He must reject some. It is they who are to blame, who will not believe.

Accordingly, Israel is to blame for its current condition. They have heard the gospel and thus had opportunity to achieve righteousness. Yet, they have not believed the message. This chapter drips with earlier Scriptures that foresaw the gospel and the Jewish unbelief.

1. Israel has failed to attain salvation, 10:1–4.

Israel’s failure is due to ignorance of God. As already seen (in 9:1–3), Paul’s constant concern and prayer was for Jews to be saved.⁷⁷ Paul had been just like most other Jews. Therefore, he could testify that they worked for God but did not really know Him. If they had known Him, they would have submitted to His righteousness in Messiah (vv. 1–3). Verse 3 sums up the chapter:

Since they did not know the righteousness that comes from God
and sought to establish their own,
they did not submit to God’s righteousness.

They refused Messiah, who attained the goals of the law (v. 4).⁷⁸ Instead of the reality, they kept on pursuing the shadow!

2. The gospel is within the reach of all, 10:5–10.

Righteousness is unattainable by the law, because the law’s standard is absolute obedience (v. 5; see Gal. 3:10–12 and James 2:10–11). In contrast, righteousness by faith is easily available. It requires no search for Messiah, in heaven or in the grave (vv. 6–7). The message offering it is “near you... in your mouth and in your heart” (v. 8). Its two key elements are stated in verse 9:

(a) Jesus is Lord (that is, Master⁷⁹), and (b) God raised him from the dead (see Appendix C and comments on 1:3).

3. The gospel has been offered to all, 10:11–15.

Whether Jews or Gentiles, all can find salvation by believing the gospel. These verses emphasize the process through which the gospel has been offered. See the following chart. Notice that the way to get faith is to truly hear God’s message. “Everyone” of any race who thus hears and “calls on the name of the Lord will be saved” (vv. 12–13).⁸⁰

Did Israel have the opportunity to hear and believe this saving message? Certainly they did—as this passage implies and verse 18 strongly affirms. Paul later said to the Colossians, “the gospel that you have heard...was proclaimed in all creation under heaven” (Col. 1:23).

<p style="text-align: center;">The “Word of Faith”: Evangelism & Missions from Romans 10:8–15</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>“Faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Messiah” (10:17)</i></p>					
God	The Preacher	The Sinner			God
<p>sends the preacher (v. 15; see Isa. 6:8–9)</p>	<p>preaches the message (vv. 14–15)</p>	<p>hears the message (vv. 14, 18)</p>	<p>believes the message (vv. 14, 16)</p>	<p>calls on the Lord (vv. 12, 13, 14)</p>	<p>saves the one who calls on Him (vv. 9, 10, 13)</p>
<p>Verses 8b–9 summarize the message: (a) Jesus is Lord; (b) God raised him from the dead.</p>					

4. The gospel has not been obeyed by all, 10:16–21.

All four Gospels show that Israel rejected the good news that began with the ministries of John the Baptist and Jesus (Mark 1:1; Matt. 11:12–13).⁸¹ Here in Romans 10 Paul quotes Old Testament predictions that the message would be accepted by others but not by Israel. All these predictions were written centuries before Messiah came. The first one here (v. 16, from Isa. 53:1a) was from the last and greatest “song” about the Lord’s Suffering Servant (Isa. 52:13 to 53:12). Though the Servant’s first coming was far in the future, the song in Isaiah refers to it as past. In the song the future remnant reports on the Servant’s suffering and rejection as facts: “Who **has believed** our message?...He **grew up**....He **had** no beauty....He **was despised and rejected**.... He **was pierced** for our transgressions....” This song clearly predicts facts that Judaism still denies: (1) that the Messiah must suffer, (2) that by suffering He would bear their sins, (3) that His people would reject Him. It is obvious that the “message” was preached to those who rejected it.

How widely was the good news spread? Paul compares its extent to the worldwide witness of the heavens (v. 18 from Psa. 19:4). Then he continues his Scriptural evidence, going way back to Moses’ time (Deut. 32:21). Even then God predicted that He would incite Israel’s envy and

anger by blessing Gentiles over them (v. 19). Gentiles would respond and obtain God’s blessing although—in contrast to Israel—they were “not a nation” and had “no understanding.” God described these believing Gentiles again much later (Paul again quotes Isaiah): “I was found by those who did not seek me” and was revealed “to those who did not ask for me” (v. 20). Such predictions showed that Gentiles would understand and accept what they had not been prepared for, whereas God’s people Israel had. In contrast, “all day long” (during the whole law-period?; see Matt. 23:37) God would invite Israel in vain (v. 21). This was precisely the situation Jesus described in Luke 14:15–24 and Matthew 22:1–10.⁸²

C. Merciful Purpose, ch. 11—*Reception*

Many commentators have noted the three parts of chapter 11:

1. Israel’s rejection is not complete but partial (vv. 1–10).
There is still an elected remnant.
2. Israel’s rejection is not final but temporary (vv. 11–24).
That rejection has opened the door of salvation to Gentiles.
3. Israel’s final salvation is surely coming, as predicted (vv. 25–32).

Several more Old Testament Scriptures are quoted in this chapter. The way they are used illustrates two important rules of interpretation: (a) Scripture means what it says. Although it may use figures of speech and have various applications, its basic meaning is the normal one. (b) “Israel” means Israel and not the church.

1. There is a present election, 11:1–10.

The nation of Israel cannot cease to exist, because God has eternal plans for it.⁸³ “God did not “reject [that is, push away] his people, whom he foreknew” (v. 2). His foreknowledge of Israel was His decision to have a special relationship with them. (See my comments on 8:26–30.) On that basis, as you saw in Romans 9, God made Israel eternal promises. Those promises were not abrogated by that nation’s many rebellions, which were anticipated and punished. Even after such disasters, prophets often assured Israel of restoration. For example, when God was dissolving His kingdom over Israel, Jeremiah wrote: “This is what the LORD says: As I have brought all this great calamity on this people, so I will give them all the prosperity I have promised them” (Jer. 32:42).

In order to fulfill such plans and promises, God could not let Israel melt away. Though scattered all over the world, the Jews some day had to be constituted again into a nation. That happened in 1948.

Something else also assured Israel’s perpetuity in God’s grace: He has always preserved a godly remnant of them (vv. 2–7a). Paul himself was one example of that remnant (v. 1)—one of God’s “elect” ones “by grace,” not “by works” (vv. 5–7).⁸⁴ God had shown this grace for Israel even in deep dark days of apostasy. To Elijah He had said, “I **have reserved for myself** seven thousand who have not bowed the knee to Baal” (vv. 2–4). There was still an elect remnant in Paul’s day. Only they obtained “what Israel sought so earnestly” (v. 7), probably meaning righteousness (see 10:3). God hardened the rest of them in their unbelief, as He said He would (vv. 7b–10).⁸⁵

2. There will be a future reception, 11:11–24.

It is obvious that Israel stumbled as predicted. “Their transgression” (vv. 11, 12) probably includes their rejection both of Messiah and His witnesses. God’s purpose for that stumble, however, was not for Israel to fall. Rather, it was for “the reconciliation of the world” (v. 15). The Book of Acts repeatedly notes two direct results God designed and obtained from Israel’s transgression:

- By crucifying Messiah, Israel provided in His death the basis of reconciliation (see Acts 2:23; 3:13–18; 13:27–29).⁸⁶
- By rejecting Messiah’s witnesses, Israel affected the means of reconciliation. Preaching the message was rechanneled to the Gentiles (v. 11b; Acts 13:46–47; 28:28). Gentile conversion, however, will eventually lead back to Jewish conversion (vv. 11c–12). That ultimate Jewish “fullness” will be “much greater riches” for the world (vv. 12c, 15b).

As usual, God had anticipated this great turn in evangelism—and that Gentile conversion would result in Jewish conversion. It was implied by His prediction (recorded in Deut. 32:21 and quoted in Rom. 10:19) about Jewish envy. Their envy for God’s many blessings on believing Gentiles prepares Israel for conversion. Paul kept this in mind in his mission to Gentiles. He wanted to incite such envy to bring about more Jewish conversions (vv. 13–14). He knew that the greatest blessing is yet to come. At the present God, by partially rejecting Israel, has opened the door for Gentiles to be reconciled to Himself. But in the future when He again accepts Israel, He will produce “life from the dead” (v. 15).

How God’s Partial Rejection of Israel Shows His Wisdom Romans 11:11–15			
At the Present		In the Future	
Israel	The World	Israel	The World
Did they stumble so as to fall beyond recovery? Not at all! Rather, because of their transgression →	salvation has come to the Gentiles to make Israel envious.	Their fullness will bring →	much greater riches
If their transgression means→	riches for the world		
and their loss means →	riches for the Gentiles		
Their rejection is →	the reconciliation of the world	What will their acceptance be→	but life from the dead?

Israel must be restored because it is “holy” as connected to its holy past. “If **the part of the dough offered as firstfruits** is holy, then the whole batch is holy; if **the root** is holy, so are the

branches” (v. 16). The bolded words refer to Israel’s forefathers (Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob), as confirmed in verse 28 (“the patriarchs”). They are called “holy.” That term, as usual, does not specifically mean saved but separated to God, in the place of His blessing.⁸⁷ Since the patriarchs were separated to God, so was the nation as a whole.

This leads to the memorable illustration of the olive tree (vv. 17–24). As just seen, that tree does not picture saved people but people in the place of blessing.⁸⁸ At one time only Israel was in that place; they were the natural branches. But now, with some of those branches broken out, the tree includes Gentiles grafted there from a wild tree. (The illustration in Ephesians 2:11–22 is similar.) Only by faith can anyone stay there. Because of their unbelief, God in sternness broke out the natural branches. In kindness He grafted in the wild branches. But they can remain only by faith. When Israel is converted, “how much more readily” will He graft those natural branches back “into their own olive tree!”

3. There will be a final salvation of Israel, 11:25–32.

Here Paul sums up what his teaching in chapters 9–11 has implied:

Israel has experienced a hardening in part
until the full number of the Gentiles has come in.
And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written... (vv. 25–26a).

First, he says that this hardening of Israel is partial, not of the whole nation. Second, the hardening will cease when “the full number of the Gentiles has come in.” What might that mean?

- That no more Gentiles will be converted after that? No, as probably all literal interpreters agree. In fact, great numbers of Gentiles will be converted during the Great Tribulation (Rev. 7:9–17) and the millennium (Zech. 8:23).
- That the church will be complete before Israel gets saved? No, because (a) neither the olive tree nor the grafted branches represent the church; (b) there is no good reason to exclude converted Israel, baptized in the Spirit (Matt. 3:5, 11), from the church. See my writings on the meaning of the *ekklesia* (church), Messiah’s kingdom community.
- That the age of favoring Gentiles over Israel will be completed? The figure of the olive tree favors this meaning or something similar.

Third, what does Paul mean that “so all Israel will be saved”? (a) “All Israel” must refer to the nation as a whole, not to every individual. (b) “So” refers to the procedure or means of saving them. Does it look to the previous verses, the conversion of the Gentiles and Jewish envy? Or, to the conclusion of the time period? Or does it look to the quotation that follows—“the deliverer” and God’s “covenant...when I take away their sins”? It may be any or all of these. The precise occasion when Israel will be converted is made explicit in Zechariah 12:10 (cf. 13:1). It will be at Messiah’s Second Coming, when “they will look on me, the one they have pierced.”

Verses 28–32 show how we saved Gentiles should regard Jews. Jews have made themselves our enemies in their opposition to the gospel (v. 28a). But they are still unalterably God’s chosen people (vv. 28b–29). Neither we nor they were good. But we were saved out of our disobedi-

ence as a result of their own disobedience. When they realize their condition, they will find mercy because of the mercy shown to us (vv. 30–32).

Paul has been like an Alpine mountain climber. Now he has reached the peak, and he does just what anyone else would do—he turns around and looks back to see how far he has come, to know the path by which he has wound around to reach this height!

The person who has mastered the first eleven chapters of the book of Romans knows more about the philosophy of history than all the wisest historians that the world has ever seen. There is a philosophy of history here that is unmatched! It makes the historians of the earth appear like children playing with their toys. In these eleven chapters, Paul shows us the original human race. The race is split into two segments: Jew and Gentile. Then came the promises. But the Jew failed to receive the promises by crucifying the Messiah, resulting in the expansion of the promises to all. Then the two segments of the race come together again, God having mercy upon all. (McClain, pp. 203–204)

The doxology in verses 33–36 exults in God’s wisdom in this whole procedure! Absolutely no one could have imagined it (vv. 33–34). No particle of it came from us; it all came from Him (v. 35). In fact, everything is **from** Him as the origin. Everything is **through** Him as the sustainer. Everything is **to** Him as the goal (v. 36a). It will all be for His glory (v. 36b; see 1 Chron. 16:23–24, 28–29; Eph. 1:6, 12, 14; 3:21). This doxology “climaxes the doctrinal section of the epistle and focuses on the supreme purpose of everything God does—to glorify Himself.” (MacArthur, p. 124⁸⁹).

Is your life also dedicated to His glory?

IV. Exhortation, 12:1 to 15:13

The Will of God Revealed

In Paul’s treatise we have reached the last part, which consists of three sections of exhortation:

- A. In Relation to God, Self, and Others, chapter 12
- B. In Relation to the Government, chapter 13
- C. In Relations between Strong & Weak Brethren, 14:1 to 15:13

In this part Paul shows how we should respond to God’s mercies given through the gospel. He answers the question “How should a saved man (a believer) walk?” The answer can be summed up in a command from 12:2: “Be transformed.” The motive to everything in the process is love.

Because the commands in these three sections are given in the spirit of personal pleas, we call them exhortations. Like much of the doctrine in earlier chapters, they are not directed to unbelievers. Such people are quite incapable of responding with the proper motivation. Believers, however, will receive divine grace as they seek to trust and obey. As you study, do not treat these commands merely as theory to analyze. Instead, determine to obey them. As a practical

measure, choose at least three commands in each section and write down **how** you will obey each one.

A. In Relation to God, Self, and Others, ch. 12

1. The Basic Command: Consecration to God, 12:1–2

1 Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God’s mercy, to **offer your bodies** as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship.

2 **Do not conform** any longer to the pattern of this world, but **be transformed** by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

Basis of this command. The words “therefore...in view of God’s mercy [Gr. *mercies* or *compassions*]” base this command on God’s love shown to us through the gospel. In spite of our sin and rebellion, He has provided us a new life through His Son’s sacrifice. Solely because we believe in the Son, He makes us acceptable (justifies us) and holy (sanctifies us). Having transformed us into His children, He guarantees our complete victory over sin and over suffering. We can take no credit; He chose us and called us. For those of us who are Gentiles, the mercy is even greater: we have been grafted into the Jewish tree of blessing. Jewish failure led to our success. Yet, God will fulfill His promises to Israel. He will cleanse and save that nation when Messiah finally comes to rule.

Parts of this command. In the first part of the command, we are exhorted to “**offer [our] bodies** as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God.” This is the same exhortation as in 6:13b (which see). “Offer” seems to refer to an action accomplished over our entire Christian life and often brought to mind. What we offer are our bodies, because they embrace everything we are. They are living sacrifices in contrast to animals slain in the temple. By means of the gospel they have already become holy (separated) and pleasing to God.

This “act of worship” is “spiritual.” This is the first of three possible translations of the Greek adjective. (a) “Spiritual” probably describes a level of worship in which the Spirit controls (see 1 Cor. 15:44, 46). (b) “Rational” would describe the activity of a reasoning human rather than an animal. (c) “Logical,” would describe a rational conclusion from what God has done.

The next part of the command uses two Greek “present tense” imperatives, which describe a process: “**Do not conform** any longer to the pattern of this world, but **be transformed** by the renewing of your mind.” “Conform” refers to a merely outward appearance; “be transformed,” to a revelation of one’s inner essence (Matt. 17:3; 2 Cor. 3:18). That transformation will proceed as our “mind” is renewed to agree with “the mind of the Lord” (11:34). The same process is described in Ephesians 4:21–24 and Colossians 3:9–16.⁹⁰ It involves our letting “the word of Messiah dwell in [us] richly” (Col. 3:16). The parallel in Ephesian (5:18b–20), shows how His Word has such an effect: “Be filled with the Spirit.” The Spirit uses the Word to transform us.

Result of obeying this command. By cooperating with divine grace, we will “test and approve what God’s will is.” As an assayer tests an ore, we will experience and approve God’s will. That will is not limited to vocational guidance but includes all He wants us to be and do. Far

from frightening, His will is good (pure and lasting), acceptable (pleasing to us and to Him), and perfect (lacking nothing).

Write down this command, with its parts, as the first one you will obey in this section (chapter 12). In fact, write out these two verses and keep reading them until they are memorized.

2. In Regard to Ourselves, Humility, 12:3–8

Considering yourself as better than other believers is wrong. But so is badmouthing yourself; it is false humility. Instead, you should “think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you” (v. 3). “Faith” here refers to your ability to exercise one of the spiritual gifts listed.⁹¹ None of us has all the gifts; we need the ministry of other gifted people. But none of us is useless either; we all have gifts. True humility will respect God’s judgment in giving you a gift, will seek to determine what it is, and will exercise it heartily in building up the body of Messiah.

3. In Regard to Others, Love, 12:9–21

This subsection deals with our relations in the church (vv. 9–16) but outside the church as well (vv. 17–21). As we play our part in both circles, we play in the key of “love...without hypocrisy” (v. 9). Several of the exhortations here—including the command to love—perfectly reflect our Lord’s teachings in the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5–7). Most of them are not hard to understand (except 12:20⁹²) but require divine grace to perform. Write down at least two commands from verses 3–21 that you will seek to obey—and how you will do so.

B. In Relation to the Government, ch. 13

In this second section the basic command is that every believer “must submit himself to the governing authorities” (v. 1). Submission involves (a) recognition that such authorities have rights over us and (b) corresponding conduct, such as, paying taxes and showing respect (v. 7).

In the early church both Jews and Gentiles could give reasons not to submit to government: (a) Authorities were often perverse; think of Caiaphas, Pilate, and—as Paul wrote—the Emperor Nero. (b) Jews, throughout their long history, had long resented non-Jewish authorities. (c) Both Jewish and Gentile disciples now rightly believed “that there is another king, Jesus” (Acts 17:7). Furthermore, (d) Jesus had promised that “you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free” (John 8:32). Some might interpret this to include freedom from government control.

Yet, in spite of growing opposition and persecution from rulers, early Christians learned to submit. They learned it from the Lord Jesus and from the apostles. (a) The Lord had given the main reason for submitting: “Give to Caesar what is Caesar’s” (Mark 12:17). Also, by paying the temple tax (Matt. 17:24–27), He had set an example of complying so as not to offend. He had even submitted to unjust arrest. (b) Two leading apostles wrote important passages on this subject, in Romans 13 and 1 Peter 2:13–17.

The Bible often teaches that God Himself has established government and appointed those who govern. This does not refer just to the institution itself but to the individuals in charge, the “rulers...the one in authority” (v. 3).⁹³

Romans 13 explains why God has appointed such rulers. He has done so in order to promote what is good and punish what is bad (vv. 3–4).⁹⁴ The negative purpose (punishing) parallels an exhortation just given: “Never take your own revenge, beloved, but leave room for the **wrath of God**” (12:19).⁹⁵ Revenge is not our job but God’s. Accordingly, His wrath will be poured out when the wicked are punished at Messiah’s coming to rule (see 2 Thess. 1:7–9).⁹⁶ But meanwhile, He has given human government that same purpose now. He has established it to “bear the sword” as “God’s servant, an agent of **wrath** to bring punishment on the wrongdoer” (13:4).⁹⁷

To repeat, it is God who ordains human government to promote good and punish evil. Thus, there are two reasons why we should “submit to the authorities.” The first reason is literally “because of **wrath**” (v. 5, NASB), which means “because of possible punishment” (NIV). The second reason is “because of conscience” (v. 5c). That means, because of our relation to God, whom the person in authority represents (vv. 2a, 4b, 6). To submit to the ruler is to submit to God.

Two other reasons for submission are given in the rest of this chapter 13. The first is love (vv. 8–10), and the second is Jesus’ soon coming (vv. 11–14). These reasons affect our relationship to all citizens of the state, not just rulers.

NIV translates verse 8 as “Let no debt remain outstanding.” This is probably the correct meaning for the literal Greek, “owe nothing to anyone” (NASB). If so, this command does not forbid all debts but debts we cannot pay.⁹⁸ The only debt we should always owe is love. Though we are not under the law, we “fulfill the law” by genuine love.⁹⁹ In the new covenant God writes His law on our hearts (Jer. 31:33) by pouring “out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us” (Rom. 5:5).

Everything we do should be in view of the Lord’s soon coming to rule. When He comes, He will bring our full salvation (v. 11) and the night will be replaced by the day (vv. 12–13).¹⁰⁰ The epistles often exhort us to live as children of that coming light rather than of the present darkness (for example, 1 Thess. 5:4–9). We do not belong to this “dominion of darkness” in which we live, but to the coming “kingdom of the Son he loves” (Col. 1:12–14). To live properly as children of the light, we should “clothe [our]selves with the Lord Jesus Messiah” (Rom. 13:14). This means to adopt His ways.¹⁰¹

But how should we act toward government if authorities do not fulfill their divine purposes? What if they subvert justice and reward evildoers? Must we still obey them? Scriptural precepts and examples would say yes—unless obeying authorities would make us disobey God (Acts 4:17–20). Should we strive to replace bad rulers? Surely we should if the government provides legitimate means to do so. But if there are no such means, it is doubtful that we may use violence. No scripture seems to authorize such rebellion.¹⁰²

If you have not already done so, pick out at least three commands in this section (chapter 13) that you will seek to obey. Write down **how** you will obey each of them. Do the same thing in the last section, which follows.

C. In Relations between Strong & Weak Brethren, 14:1 to 15:13

This section closes Paul's treatise on the power of the gospel. In it Paul gives some guidelines that will help maintain unity in the church. Apparently he knew of no major problems in the Roman church like those he had addressed in 1 Corinthians. Yet, there were bound to be different opinions about "disputable matters," matters not clearly settled by Scripture.¹⁰³ Arguments about holy days or unclean foods have caused quite as much division as have differences over doctrine.¹⁰⁴

The people Paul addresses as holding these opinions, he calls "weak" and "strong." Both groups are believers, accepted by the Lord and in agreement about basic teachings. They all agree, for example, to avoid the sins listed in Romans 13:13. But the weak also consider some things sins that the strong do not—such as, to eat certain foods or fail to observe certain days (14:2, 3, 5). For such opinions they can give no clear New Testament evidence. Yet, they lack faith to cast off these scruples; in this way they are weak. The strong do not have unscriptural scruples. They have better understanding of the freedom the gospel has brought us.

Paul classes himself among the strong (15:1). Yet, in this passage full of exhortations, he gives none about diet or days, only about love.¹⁰⁵ He begins with three basic rules, the first one general (14:1–3):

- Accept one another but do not quarrel about disputable matters (14:1; 15:7).
- The strong must not look down on (have contempt for) the weak (14:3a).
- The weak must not condemn the strong (14:3b).

After these basic rules Paul gives the reason for them (14:4–12): Both strong and weak are servants of Messiah and must answer (in judgment) to Him, not to one another.¹⁰⁶ No servant has the right to hurt the relationship of another servant to his master. It is important for each servant to have good reasons, then act accordingly (vv. 5b, 22). It is sinful for him to act against his conscience (vv. 14, 23).

Consider the matter of observing days. One servant "considers one day more sacred than another; another man considers every day [sacred]" (14:5, adding "sacred" rather than "alike," as NIV does). The first servant is weak. He probably thinks that we are still under the law of the Sabbath (Saturday) and maybe that Sunday has taken its place.¹⁰⁷ However, the strong believer disagrees that some days are more sacred than others. He can cite Galatians 4:9–10, that to "observe days and months" is "to turn back again to the weak and worthless elemental things." He knows that meeting on a particular day does not make it "more sacred than another."

Similarly, a strong believer like Paul knows that now no food "is unclean in itself. But if anyone regards something as unclean, then for him it is unclean" (v. 14). In other words, a believer is free to eat any food unless he considers it unclean. But the strong believer has a more important consideration than his own freedom—namely, his Christian brother's wellbeing. I must not

exercise my liberty if doing so will hurt my weak brother (vv. 15, 19–21). He is far more important than food. If by my actions I encourage him to violate his own conscience, I “destroy” him (v. 15) rather than build him up (v. 19).

What we eat and drink is quite unimportant in comparison to eternal things (2 Cor. 4:18). We should live as those who will participate forever in Messiah’s coming kingdom—“His servants will serve him....And they will reign for ever and ever” (Rev. 22:3, 5). And that “kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit” (v. 17).¹⁰⁸ Those are the things we should avidly pursue (v. 19), as Paul reiterates in 15:13 (cf. Matt. 6:33).

It may be helpful to read this section with the following divisions (MacArthur, pp. 271ff.):

- A. Receive one another with understanding (14:1–12).
- B. Build up one another without offending (14:13–23).
- C. Please one another as Christ did (15:1–6).
- D. Rejoice with one another in God’s plan of redemption (15:7–13).

The emphasis in 15:1–13 is on our ministry as following Messiah’s example. Our goal, like His, should be to please our neighbor rather than ourselves (vv. 1–3). We should “have a spirit of unity among [our]selves” (v. 5), not in regard to food and drink but in regard to love. Thus, “with one heart and mouth” we will glorify God and bring praise to Him (vv. 6–7). That praise to God will come from beyond our close friends; the circle of worshipers will keep growing. In other words, accepting one another as Messiah accepted us (v. 7a) will keep on extending the gospel. Messiah gave the example. He ministered to His own people; He was “a servant of the Jews...to confirm the promises made to the patriarchs” (v. 8). Yet, His objective was bigger than reaching Jews—namely, “that the Gentiles may glorify God for his mercy” (v. 9a).

On this missionary theme Paul brings his treatise to a climax. He reminds us that our ministry is the same as Messiah’s, whose motive was to fulfill God’s missionary plan. In verses 9–12 he illustrates that plan from every part of the Old Testament. Each quotation mentions the Gentiles, the non-Jewish nations.¹⁰⁹ By Messiah’s ministry (which we continue) there will be converts “from every tribe and language and people and nation” (Rev. 5:9). All these nations will praise and obey God along with redeemed Israel. This grand goal, as seen again in the final reference in the treatise (v. 12), will be attained in our Lord’s coming kingdom. That is when He “will arise to rule over the nations.” That is when He will bring the climax of salvation.¹¹⁰

Are you concerned to “make disciples of all nations” (Matt. 28:19)?

END OF THE TREATISE

Conclusion, 15:14 to 16:27

Paul's concluding remarks give a marvelous sample of the gospel being extended. As usual in the New Testament epistles, (a) this author is a missionary (b) writing to a church or churches or individuals won by missionaries, (c) in the interest of more missionary outreach. Read the entire conclusion, listing facts you consider important. Then read the following.

- Paul is writing to the church in the imperial capital, Rome. He has never visited that city or church but has longed to do so (15:22, 23b). Apparently the Roman church sprang up from believers who moved there (16:3–15).
- Paul has been hindered from going to Rome by the great amount of apostolic work to do in the East. Now he has finished planting the gospel “all the way around to Illyricum” (Dalmatia, 15:19–20, 23).
- He is in Corinth during his third missionary tour (16:23, 1—Cenchrea was a port for Corinth). He has established the Corinthian church on his second tour (Acts 18), communicated with it often (for example, 1 Cor. and 2 Cor.), and returned there to spend three winter months (Acts 20:3).
- He plans to end his third tour by going from Corinth to Jerusalem (15:25). He requests prayer for the success of that trip, since it will be dangerous but important (15:30–31). By taking a substantial gift from the Gentile believers to the poor saints in Jerusalem, he hopes to strengthen the unity of the worldwide church (15:26–28a; cf. 2 Cor. 9:12–14). But he knows that Jewish enemies want to kill him (15:31a).
- After ministering to the saints in Jerusalem, he plans to minister in Rome and Spain. He seems confident that he will visit the church in Rome, then—with their help—plant the gospel in Spain (15:24, 28–29, 32). Indeed, Paul eventually got to Rome as a prisoner, “in the full measure of the blessing of Messiah” (15:29; Acts 28:14–31).
- He sends the epistle by Phoebe, “a servant (Gr. *diakonon*) of the church in Cenchrea” (16:1–20).¹¹¹ He highly recommends her and asks the Roman believers to help her as needed.
- He sends greetings by name to a long list of believers in Rome (16:3–16).¹¹² Notice the many times Paul uses the expressions “in the Messiah [Jesus]” or “in the Lord.” That is certainly “the tie that binds” believers together all over the world.
- He warns them of troublemakers and false teachers sure to come (16:17–19).
- He sends greetings from several key people in Corinth (16:21–24). Tertius was the amanuensis who wrote the words of the epistle as Paul dictated them (v. 22).

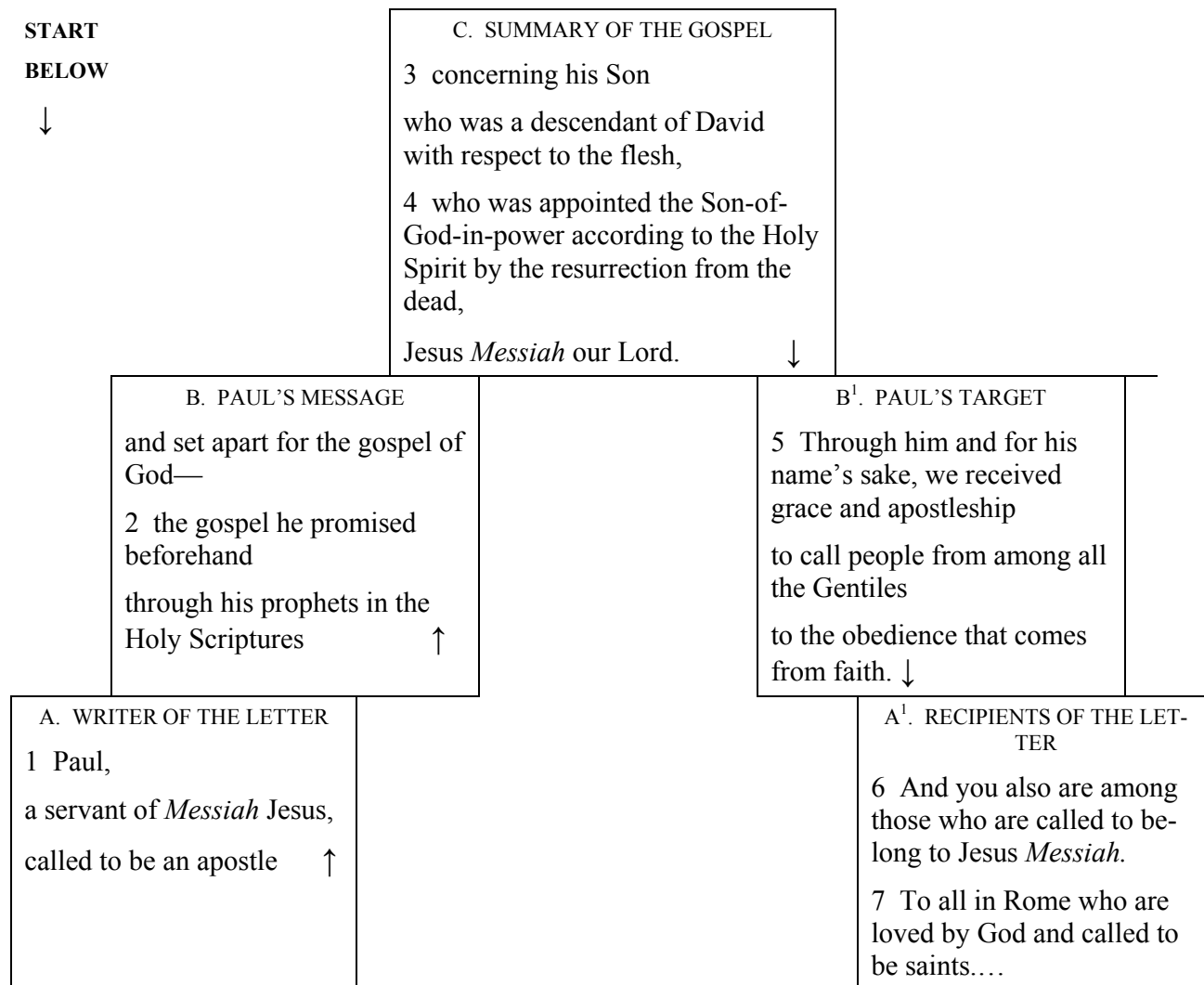
Paul closes the letter by reminding the Romans of the greatness of the gospel. In its fullness it is a great “mystery,” once hidden but now revealed (16:25–27). Its object is that “all nations [*ethnoi*, Gentiles] might believe and obey” its Architect (v. 26b).

All the glory should be, and will be, to Him!

Appendix A: The Gospel in Romans 1:1–7

Romans is not designed to preach the gospel to unbelievers but to explain its power to believers (1:16). The gospel is preached in the Gospels and throughout Acts and is often summarized (Acts 5:42; 9:22; 17:2–3; 18:5; 20:21; 24:24; 1 Cor. 1:17–18, 23; 2:2; 15:1–11; 2 Tim. 2:8; Titus 2:13–14; Heb. 2:3–5; 1 Peter 1:3, 19–21, et al.). Such summaries say that Jesus is the living (and therefore coming) Messiah, not that He is divine or was preexistent (though He is and was). Rarely do they mention the reason for His death. The summary in Romans 1:1–7 is like them (and like the one in 10:8–10). It is part of Paul’s salutation, which states his official relationship to the Roman Christians.

Verses 3–4 below are quoted from the NET Bible, the rest from the NIV. Changes are italicized. *Christ*, Jesus’ royal title (= *Son of God*), is consistently changed to its form *Messiah*. That change is authorized by John 1:41. Read segments clockwise, starting at the lower left. Notice that the first part, labeled A, corresponds to the last part, labeled A¹. The second part, labeled B, corresponds to the next-to-last part, labeled B¹. The central and most important part, (labeled C), which summarizes the gospel, stands alone.



Appendix B: The Title *Son of God*
Excerpts & Adaptations from My Essay

In the Bible the title “Son of God” was often used for beings who were not divine, such as, angels, the nation Israel, Adam, Solomon, and all believers. In most cases, including that of Jesus, the title designates royalty, God’s heir. As His “one and only Son” (John 3:16), Jesus is His supreme Heir and Ruler.

When applied to Jesus, this title usually, if not always, refers to Him as man. Hebrews 1:4 says that it is a “name he has inherited [Greek, obtained by inheritance].” This did not happen during His pre-existence as Creator, just referred to in verse 2, but during His time on earth. “He **became** as much superior to the angels as **the name he has inherited** is superior to theirs.” As Creator He was always superior to the angels, but as man He “became” so, when He “inherited” the name *Son*. As proof, verse 5 cites two Old Testament scriptures, each of which treats Jesus’ new “name” *Son* as a royal title.

Hebrews 1:5
The Royal Son

“For to which of the angels did God ever say,
‘YOU ARE MY SON; TODAY I HAVE BECOME YOUR FATHER’?
(Psa. 2:7)
Or again,
‘I WILL BE HIS FATHER, AND HE WILL BE MY SON’?”
(2 Sam. 7:14)

Consider these two Scriptures. The first one is from Psalm 2, which looks forward to the LORD God’s installing His new King over the nations. That psalm has four stanzas of three verses each. Stanza 1 identifies the Ruler as the LORD’s “**Anointed One**” (v. 2), which translates Hebrew *Mashiac* or Greek *Cristos* (“Christ”). In stanza 2 the LORD calls Him “My King on Zion” (v. 6). Hebrews quotes from stanza 3 (vv. 7–9), in which this King repeats “the decree of the LORD:... ‘You are my Son; **Today I have become** your Father. Ask of me, and I will make the **nations your inheritance**... You will rule them...’” (vv. 7–9). It is evident from this psalm that Jesus’ sonship referred to here (a) is not eternal but a new relationship to the LORD, and (b) has to do with inheritance and ruling the nations on earth.

The second of the Scriptures quoted in Hebrews 1:5 and applied to Jesus is 2 Samuel 7:14. This verse was from the LORD’s covenant with David. It originally referred to Solomon, David’s royal offspring. As the LORD promised on that occasion, Solomon did “build a house” for Him (the temple). As also foreseen, he did wrong and was punished—but did not lose the kingdom. So it is obvious that in the Davidic covenant even Solomon (and every succeeding Davidic king, including Jesus) was God’s “son” as Ruler and Heir. Read some of the LORD’s words:

Appendix B: The Title Son of God

I will raise up your offspring to succeed you, who will come from your own body, and I will establish his kingdom. He is the one who will build a house for my Name....**I will be his father, and he will be my son.** When he does wrong, I will punish him....But my love will never be taken away from him as I took it away from Saul. (2 Sam. 7:12–15)

Appendix C: Some Scriptural Summaries of the Gospel

This list includes some of the shorter summaries of the gospel and clear references to it. It does not include the lengthy sermon summaries in Acts, such as at Pentecost (Acts 2; see v. 36) and at the “Gentile Pentecost” (Acts 10; see vv. 42–43).

Acts 5:42 “Day after day, in the temple courts and from house to house, they never stopped preaching and proclaiming the good news that **Jesus is the Messiah.**”

9:22 “Yet Saul grew more and more powerful and baffled the Jews living in Damascus by proving that **Jesus is the Messiah.**” (This means the same as the summary in James 2:1—and similar summaries—“believers in our **glorious Lord Jesus Messiah.**”)

17:2–3 “As his custom was, Paul went into the synagogue, and...reasoned with them from the Scriptures, explaining and proving that the **Messiah had to suffer and rise from the dead. ‘This Jesus I am proclaiming to you is the Messiah,’** he said.”

18:5 “Paul devoted himself exclusively to preaching, testifying to the Jews that **Jesus was the Messiah.**”

20:21 Paul reminded “the elders of the church” in Ephesus that “I have declared to both Jews and Greeks that they must **turn to God in repentance and have faith in our Lord Jesus.**”

24:24 “Felix came with his wife Drusilla...He sent for Paul and listened to him as he spoke about **faith in Messiah Jesus.**” (See also 8:12; 18:5, 28; 28:23, 31.)

Romans 1:1–4 God’s “Son, who as to his human nature was **a descendant of David** and who... was declared with power to be the Son of God by his **resurrection from the dead.**”

NOTE: Romans 1:16–17 does not summarize the gospel but introduces the main theme, why the gospel is God’s power for salvation. Likewise, 3:21–26 does not give the gospel’s content but emphasizes that, unlike law, it works by faith. That subject is developed in the next chapters. Romans 2:16 says that the gospel includes judgment by Messiah.

6:3–4 Implies what was preached: “All of us who were baptized into **Messiah Jesus** were baptized into **his death**...in order that, just as **Messiah was raised from the dead**...we too may live a new life.”

10:8–10 “the word of faith we are proclaiming: That if you confess with your mouth, ‘**Jesus is Lord,**’ and believe in your heart that **God raised him from the dead,** you will be saved.”

16:25–26 “Now to him who is able to establish you by my gospel and the proclamation of **Jesus Messiah**....”

1 Corinthians 1:17–18, 23 “The **cross of Messiah**...the message of **the cross**....we preach **Messiah crucified.**”

2:2 “I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except **Jesus Messiah and him crucified.**” (Cf. 8:11, “weak brother, for whom Messiah died.” 10:16 and 11:26, the Lord’s Sup-

Appendix C: Some Scriptural Summaries of the Gospel

per is participation in Messiah's blood and body. 6:2–3 reminds believers that they will judge the world, including angels. 6:9–10 reminds them that they will inherit the coming kingdom.)

3:11 “For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is **Jesus Messiah.**”

8:6 “There is but **one God, the Father**...and there is but **one Lord, Jesus Messiah**....”

12:3 “No one can say, ‘**Jesus is Lord,**’ except by the Holy Spirit.”

15:1–11 “I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you...By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you...What I received I passed on to you...that **Messiah died for our sins** according to the Scriptures, that he **was buried**, that he **was raised** on the third day...and that he **appeared** to Peter...to me also....This is what we preach, and this is what you believed.”

NOTE: According to Acts 18:5, the message (gospel) first preached at Corinth was simpler and shorter: “**Jesus is Messiah.**” The two versions can be harmonized by simply emphasizing the fact from the longer version that **it was “Messiah”** who died and rose. The reason for His death was probably not essential to the original message but was a corollary important to 1 Corinthians 15 (see v. 17). Even more important for that chapter was the fact of His resurrection, as proof of our own resurrection. See verses 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 20, 22, and 23.

Galatians 3:6ff “The Scripture...announced the gospel in advance to Abraham: ‘**All nations will be blessed through you.**’”

2 Timothy 2:8 “Remember **Jesus Messiah, raised from the dead, descended from David.** This is my gospel.”

Titus 2:13–14 “We wait for the blessed hope—the **glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Messiah, who gave himself for us** to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good.”

Hebrews 2:3–5 “This salvation, which was **first announced by the Lord...the world to come,** about which we are speaking.”

1 Peter 1:3 “Father of our Lord Jesus Messiah...has given us new birth into a living hope through the **resurrection of Jesus Messiah** from the dead.”

1:19–21 “redeemed...with the precious **blood of Messiah...chosen...revealed...raised... from the dead and glorified**” (also 2:21, 24, 25; 3:15, 18, 21–22; etc.)

1 John 1:1–3 “We proclaim to you **what we have seen and heard** [as recorded in the Gospels], so that you also may have fellowship with us.”

Appendix D: Eternal Life for Those Who “Do Good”?

Romans 2:6–11

Romans 2:2–16 gives four principles by which God will judge the world:

- a. by truth (the abstract principle), vv. 2–5
- b. by deeds (the concrete principle), vv. 6–10
- c. without respect of persons, vv. 11–15
- d. by means of Messiah, v. 16

The most attention is given to the second principle, in verses 6–10. This is stated in a remarkable structure, shown in the chart at the end of this appendix. Stifler (pp. 39–40), adapting from John Forbes, describes it. There are “four triplets, balanced against one another” and including repetitions and reversals of order. These triplets speak about people who do good deeds and people who do evil deeds—and what they will get in judgment. In each and every triplet, the three lines deal with the character, the pursuits, and the appropriate awards of the good or the bad. Sometimes the order of those lines is reversed.

Such statement and restatement emphasize what is taught: that in the judgment God will give eternal life to those who do good and condemn those who do evil. Look at what is said about the former group:

God “will give to each person according to what he has done.” To those who by **persistence in doing good** seek glory, honor and immortality, he will give eternal life....glory, honor and peace for everyone who **does good**. (2:6–7, 10)

Later verses specify in what way some people do good:

For it is not those who hear the law who are righteous in God’s sight, but it is those who **obey the law** who will be declared righteous. (Indeed, when Gentiles, who do not have the law, **do by nature things required by the law**....) (2:13–14)

If those who are not circumcised **keep the law’s requirements**....The one who is not circumcised physically and yet **obeys the law**.... (2:26–27)

It seems clear, then, that some people—even some “Gentiles who do not have the law”—do good by doing what the law requires. Those who persist in doing good, says Romans 2:6–10 with much emphasis, will be given eternal life. How are we to understand such statements, especially in view of the purpose and conclusions of this section (1:18 to 3:20)?

- This section is designed to prove not that some are all right but that all are condemned.
- The conclusion claims that “there is no one who does good, not even one” (3:12). And the law’s function was to show that. It was not given to help some get saved but so that “every mouth may be silenced and the whole world be held accountable to God” (3:19).
- It is mankind’s incapacity to do good which calls for the doctrine of salvation by faith in the next section.

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In other words, we have a dilemma; the apostle seem to contradict himself. (a) Since he denies that anyone does good (3:12), it would seem that good people do not exist. Yet, (b) he repeatedly refers to good people in chapter 2. Furthermore, the principle of judgment according to deeds could never result in eternal life if there will be no good people.

Some avoid this dilemma by denying that the “good” people of Romans 2 actually exist: they are hypothetical people, not real ones. This view implies that even the picture Romans 2 draws of the judgment is hypothetical, not real. But the view is weak since there is no hint in Romans 2 that such people do not exist or that the judgment will only condemn. In fact, many other Scriptures (e. g., Job 1:1, 8. 22; 2:3; Acts 10:35) speak of good people. And many other passages say about the judgment in summary (see the introduction to the chart) what Romans 2 says in detail.

Another solution to the dilemma admits that there will be “good” people in the judgment—but **not good enough** to get eternal life. This view assumes that the standard must be perfection (cf. Gal. 3:10). But Romans 2 calls for “persistence,” not “perfection.” And by criticizing the moralist for not repenting (vv. 4–5), it implies that the “good” people had sinned but then repented.

Here are two other solutions from well-known commentators (with emphasis added). Each of them believes that Romans 2:6–10 describes real good people who really receive eternal life in the real judgment. Each of these commentators solves the dilemma by the way he defines “doing good” (“well doing” in KJV). The first one defines it only as faith. The second one includes also deeds that result from faith.

- What is welldoing in this age? **Welldoing in this age is believing** on the name of the Son of God. “What must we do, that we may work the works of God? Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent” (Jn 6:28–29, ASV). (McClain, p. 76)
- [The apostle] is not speaking here of faith’s beginning, but of its completion; not of justification, but of judgment. **The deeds that gain a reward clearly imply faith** in him who does them. For in the opposite side of the parallel indignation and wrath are said to come to those who do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness; that is, this sad award comes to them as a result of their unbelief. (Stifler, pp. 40–41)

Will every person justified by faith also practice good deeds? Of course. “Saints...obey God’s commandments and remain faithful to Jesus” (Rev. 14:12). That is the glory of the gospel and the covenant of the Spirit—to make us good. By these God not only declares us righteous; He also transforms us (“We shall be like him,” 1 John 3:2; cf. 2 Cor. 3:18). In theological terms, *imputation* inevitably leads to *sanctification*. This is an essential teaching of Romans 1–8.

Jesus pictured the same judgment event as Romans 2, and the same two groups. The event: “the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God and those who hear will live” (John 5:25). The two groups: those “in their graves [who] will hear his voice and come out—**those who have done good** will rise to live, and **those who have done evil** will rise to be condemned” (5:28–29). In his excellent commentary on John, Leon Morris comments on these verses (emphasis added):

Appendix D: Eternal Life for Those Who “Do Good”?

This does not mean that salvation is on the basis of good works, for this very Gospel makes it plain over and over again that men enter eternal life when they believe on Jesus Christ. But **the lives they live form the test of the faith they profess**. This is the uniform testimony of Scripture. Salvation is by grace and it is received through faith. Judgment is based on men’s works.

Morris also quotes John Calvin regarding the same verses:

He **marks out believers by their good works**, just as elsewhere He says that a tree is known by its fruit...The Papists’ inference from these passages, that eternal life repays the merits of works, may be refuted without any difficulty. For Christ is not here treating of the cause of salvation, but only distinguishing the elect from the reprobate by their own mark. (Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to John*, p. 322)

Romans 2:6–11: God’s Judgment

In the following chart the main caption (“God’s Righteous...”) uses words from Romans 2:2, 3, 5. The four column captions in row 2 use words from Jesus’ promise that “a time is coming when all who are in their graves will hear his voice and come out—**those who have done good will rise to live**, and **those who have done evil will rise to be condemned**.” (John 5:28–29). Everything else is quoted from Romans 2:6–11. In row 1 verse 6 quotes from Psalm 62:12 and Proverbs 24:12 and is similar to many other Scriptures. After reading verse 7 in the first cell of row 3, keep reading cell by cell to the right, then down, then cell by cell to the left.

God’s Righteous Judgment, Based on Truth, Romans 2:6–11			
6. God “will give to each person according to what he has done.”			
THOSE WHO HAVE DONE GOOD	TO LIVE	THOSE WHO HAVE DONE EVIL	TO BE CONDEMNED
7. To those who by persistence in doing good seek glory, honor and immortality, →	he will give eternal life . →	8. But for those who are self-seeking and who reject the truth and follow evil , →	there will be wrath and anger . ↓
for everyone who does good : first for the Jew, then for the Gentile. ↓	10. but [<i>there will be</i>] glory, honor and peace ←	for every human being who does evil : first for the Jew, then for the Gentile; ←	9. There will be trouble and distress ←
11. For God does not show favoritism.			

Appendix E: Interpretive Issues in Romans 5:12

Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned— (Romans 5:12, NIV)

Where is the thought of this verse completed? The word “therefore” indicates that verse 12 begins a conclusion to this whole section on justification. The conclusion itself begins with a “just as” (Greek *hōsper*) statement occupying the rest of the verse: “**just as** sin entered...and death...and...death...because...” Although this statement is complex, it gives only one side of a comparison. Normally, it would be completed by a “so also” (Greek *houtōs*) statement, as in 5:19, 21; 6:4, 19. However, the apostle does not immediately give the other side of the comparison. Instead, he pauses in verses 13–14 to prove the first statement. After that, he presents both sides of the comparison in negative terms (vv. 15–17) and finally in positive terms (vv. 18–21). In other words, he uses the whole passage to complete the comparison. It is not unusual for Paul to introduce a thought then wait to complete it. For example, he starts to mention his prayer in Ephesians 3:1 but does not give it until 3:14–19.

What kind of death “entered the world” and “came to all men”? Physical death? Spiritual death? Or both physical and spiritual? Death rules human beings in both aspects: We all die physically and, before salvation, are all “dead in...transgressions and sins” (Eph. 2:1–2). To determine what death is meant in Romans 5:12, we should look at the original account in Genesis to which it refers. Genesis 2–3 tells about that first sin and its result. And it is clear that the death there is physical but not clear that it is spiritual. Notice three indications.

- The first indication seems ambiguous. The LORD warned Adam before he sinned, “you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die” (2:17). That could either mean instant spiritual death or the beginning of a physical process.
- The next indication is not ambiguous but decisively physical. The LORD’s curse after Adam sinned definitely focused on man’s body: “By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground...to dust you will return” (Gen. 3:19).
- The LORD’s further action after the curse also clearly pointed to physical death. “The LORD God banished him from the Garden” because “the man...must not be allowed to...take also from the tree of life and eat, and live forever” (Gen. 3:22–24).

Clearly, then, man was sentenced to die physically, from the time when Adam ate of the forbidden fruit. Possibly spiritual death began at the same time. Yet, the evidence in Genesis, and consequently in Romans 5:12, does not justify separating it from physical death.

Does “death came to all men” refer to extinction? Or will they all nevertheless live forever? Twice we read that “death reigned” over all in Adam (vv. 13, 17). At the least this means that we humans cannot live forever as we are; we are mortal. But will we all live in some other condition? Only if God grants it. He “alone is immortal” (1 Tim. 6:16); only He by nature will continue forever. But He will grant immortality; “our Savior, Messiah Jesus...has destroyed death and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel” (2 Tim. 1:10). Believers in

Messiah know that they will become immortal when Messiah comes to reign (1 Cor. 15:22–25). At that time “the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed” (1 Cor. 15:52). It is then that “the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with **immortality**” (said twice in vv. 53–54). That will be the ultimate victory over death (vv. 54–57). It is then that “to those who by persistence in doing good **seek** glory, honor and **immortality**, he will give **eternal life**” (Rom. 2:7).

So God will grant immortality/eternal life to believers. But what about unbelievers, who do not seek immortality from God and will not get eternal life? Will they nevertheless live forever? Many teachers think so. Based on certain New Testament texts (especially Matt. 25:46; Luke 16:23–24; and Rev. 14:9–11), they teach that God will keep all unbelievers alive forever in hell. Obviously, this issue is too big and complicated to study here. It bears on the character of God, the constitution of men, and the meaning of punishment and salvation. It should be studied beginning in Genesis, when God made man. For example:

- “The LORD God formed the man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a **living being**” (Gen. 2:7). Certainly God’s method of creating man is intended to show how special he is. But does it in some way imply that he is immortal? His becoming a “living being” does not; the same term in Hebrew is used for water creatures (1:20) and land creatures (1:24).
- According to Genesis 2–3, Adam had to eat from the tree of life to live forever. Doesn’t that imply what is often called “conditional immortality,” that he would perish if he did not eat from that tree?

Whose sin brings death to every person? “Death came to all men, **because all sinned**” (v. 12). Does this refer to each man’s personal sin? Does God wait to sentence each one to death only after he sins personally? That interpretation would invalidate the argument of the whole passage, which compares the consequences of the single acts of Adam and Messiah. In regard to Adam, the passage repeatedly says this or its equivalent: “the many died **by the trespass of the one man**” (v. 15; see vv. 16, 17, 18, 19). Therefore, it seems that “all sinned” in verse 12 must refer to what they did **in Adam** (corporate sin).

The next two verses (vv. 13–14) verify this interpretation. Beginning with the word “for,” they introduce evidence for the statement in verse 12. Notice what they say about death as a penalty in the period of time between Adam and Moses.

For before the law was given, sin was in the world. But sin is not taken into account when there is no law. Nevertheless, death reigned from the time of Adam to the time of Moses, even over those who did not sin by breaking a command, as did Adam, who was a pattern of the one to come. (5:13–14)

* Several times the New Testament lists personal sins, then says that “those who practice such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God” (Gal. 5:21; 1 Cor. 6:10; Eph. 5:5). In fact, Ephesians adds that “because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience” (Eph. 5:6). Without denying that fact, Romans 6 traces God’s wrath further back, to its original cause.

Appendix E: Interpretive Issues in Romans 5:12

Under a system of justice there is no penalty for sin unless it breaks a law. Thus, there would be no death unless sinners broke divine laws/commands. Why, then, was that penalty enforced on everybody before the law was given, since most of them had received no commands from God? Not for their personal sins but for Adam's—who did break a divine command. God did not have to wait for each of them—nor for us—to sin personally. We all participated in Adam's sin and in its penalty.* Reread the same thoughts as expressed by Stifler:

But now the fact is that death reigned, had sovereign, undisputed sway, during all the no-law period from Adam to Moses. In all this long period death came to those who had “not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression”; that is, they had not broken any formal command. Many more irresponsible babies died in the Flood than men. If, then, death is the penalty of some law broken, and these had none, it follows they broke that first law: they sinned in Adam. And the statement “for that all have sinned” means this. The unwritten law noticed in 2:14 cannot be the cause of death, for babes have not even that. All sinned when Adam violated the Word of God. (Stifler, p. 97)

If this principle seems at all unfair, just remember that it also allows us all to be saved through the sacrifice of one Man!

* This principle also explains why even infants and idiots die though they cannot be held accountable for personal sins.

Appendix F: Influence of Adam & Messiah
Romans 5:15–21

Most of the text in the tables below directly quotes Roman 5:15–19, 21 from the NIV. “Christ” has been changed to “Messiah,” as authorized by John 1:41. A few words have been emphasized to show contrasts and similarities. See also 1 Corinthians 15.

Three Contrasts in the Influence of Adam & Messiah Romans 5:15–17		
Kind of Contrast <i>(titles adapted from McClain)</i>	Adam <i>“the first man Adam...the earthly man” (1 Cor. 15:45–49)</i>	Messiah <i>“the last Adam...the man from heaven” (1 Cor. 15:45–49)</i>
1. Quality of Influence v. 15 The gift is not like the trespass.	For if the <u>many died</u> by the trespass of the one man,	how much more did <u>God’s grace and the gift</u> that came by the grace of the one man, Jesus Messiah, <u>overflow to the many!</u>
2. Quantity of Influence v. 16 Again, the gift of God is not like the result of the one man’s sin.	The judgment <u>followed one sin</u> and brought condemnation,	but the gift <u>followed many trespasses</u> and brought justification.
3. Certainty of Influence v. 17	For if, by the trespass of the one man, <u>death reigned</u> through that one man,	how much more <u>will</u> those who receive God’s abundant provision of grace and of the gift of righteousness <u>reign in life</u> through the one man, Jesus Messiah.

Three Similarities in the Influence of Adam & Messiah Romans 5:18–21		
Kind of Similarity <i>(titles by McClain)</i>	Adam <i>“the first man Adam...the earthly man” (1 Cor. 15:45–49)</i>	Messiah <i>“the last Adam...the man from heaven” (1 Cor. 15:45–49)</i>
1. One Act v. 18	Consequently, just as the <u>result of one trespass</u> was condemnation <u>for all</u> men,	so also the <u>result of one act of righteousness</u> was justification that brings life <u>for all</u> men.
2. One Man v. 19	For just as through the disobedience of <u>the one man the many</u> were made sinners,	so also through the obedience of <u>the one man the many</u> will be made righteous.
3. The Reign of Grace v. 21	just as <u>sin reigned</u> in death,	so also <u>grace might reign</u> through righteousness to bring eternal life through Jesus Messiah our Lord

Appendix G: Romans 6 Restated

Introduction. Romans 3:21 to 5:21 has showed how the gospel justifies, the first aspect of its power to save. Salvation is by God's grace simply through our faith in the crucified and risen Messiah. Nothing is required from us—no works nor guarantee of works—because God Himself dealt with sin in Messiah's death. Peace with God is a free gift for all who accept it by believing in Messiah. This good news is not for an elite few, who consider themselves godly, but can save everyone (5:12–21). In fact, the more sin there is, the more grace there is, through this one Man, to cover it (5:20–21). Only the gospel can make everyone right with God. But can it also make us holy like God (sanctify us)? Yes, it can, as seen in Romans 6–7, with a climax in chapter 8. To show how God sanctifies, Paul answers two questions in chapter 6.

6:1–4. First question and answer

Question: Do the facts just presented allow us to keep on living in sin? (v. 1).

Answer: No! because of our new relationship to God. When we accepted God's grace, we were baptized into Messiah, united to Him. In Him we died to sin (vv. 2–4a) in order to live a new life in Him (v. 4b).

6:5–11. Explains and enlarges the answer

Dying with Messiah leads to rising with Him (v. 5). That death terminated our old life and broke sin's power over us (vv. 6–7). The new life in Him is bound to follow (v. 8). He died to sin, which can no longer affect Him, but now lives to God (vv. 9–10). We should keep in mind that we also died to sin and rose to serve God (v. 11).

6:12–14. Appeal to recognize the triumph of grace

Now sin is not to (will not) enslave us (vv. 12, 14; and 5:21). Therefore, we must not offer our bodies to sin (v. 13a) but to God—as alive from death and as agents of righteousness (v. 13b). This victory over sin results from our being under grace, not under law (v. 14).

6:15–18. Second question and answer

Question: Does being under grace and not under law encourage our sinning on any particular occasion? (v. 15a)

Answer: No! (v. 15b), because we are now slaves of righteousness (vv. 16–18). Offering ourselves as slaves makes us live as slaves, whether to sin—resulting in death—or to obedience—resulting in righteousness (v. 16). By receiving the gospel, we switched from one master to the other (vv. 17–18).

6:19–23. Results of the two kinds of slavery

Speaking of slavery under the gospel is not quite accurate (it really is freedom)—but helps understand (v. 19a). Slavery to impurity led to more sin; slavery to righteousness leads to sanctification (v. 19b). Slaves of sin are not subject to righteousness (v. 20) but produce only death (v. 21). In contrast, freedom from sin and slavery to God leads to holiness and eternal life (v. 22). Sin's payoff is death; God's gift is eternal life (v. 23)..

Appendix H: The Obedience of Faith

1:5. The whole phrase in Romans 1:5 and 16:26 is *eis hupakoēn pisteos, to [the] obedience of faith* (*faith* in the genitive case). In 1:5 the NIV translates, “to bring about the obedience of faith.” Consider three possible meanings:

1. Obedience **to** faith. Arguments for this meaning can include the use of similar phrases with equivalent Greek syntax elsewhere. For example, 1 Peter 1:22 speaks of “obedience to the truth” and 2 Corinthians 10:5, of “obedience to Christ.” Other passages use the verb *obey* (rather than the noun *obedience*), followed by the dative (rather than the genitive). For example, Romans 10:16 and 2 Thessalonians 1:8 speak of obeying the gospel. Acts 6:7 says that “a large number of priests became obedient to the faith.”

However, opposed to this meaning in Romans is the fact that Paul does not elsewhere speak of *faith* as though it were a command to be obeyed.

2. Obedience **that consists of** faith. Romans 4:4–5 seems to favor this meaning. It emphasizes justification by faith rather than by works: “to the man who **does not work but trusts** God who justifies the wicked, his **faith** is credited as righteousness.” This might be the meaning of obedience in Acts 5:32b: “the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who **obey** him.” Since the Holy Spirit comes to every believer from the first moment of faith (Romans 8:9), not after he has good works, “obey” here may equal “believe.”

However, Romans 1:5 looks at the whole of salvation; 4:4–5 only its beginning. The man justified by faith alone will inevitably begin giving evidence of his new life. In that sense “a person is justified by what he does and not by faith alone” (James 2:24). Saving faith produces works; a new creature is transformed. For this reason Jesus warned that the wise man both “hears these words of mine and **puts them into practice**” (Matt. 7:24). This point is assumed in several passages in Romans, such as 6:15–23 (see later). The obedience true of every believer involves more than passive faith. This may be the meaning of Romans 15:18: “the obedience of the Gentiles **by word and deed**” (NASB, taking “word and deed” to refer to the hearers rather than the messenger).

3. Obedience that comes from faith. This is probably the correct meaning. It reflects the same truth as Galatians 5:6: “The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love.” This response is described in Romans 6: “Don’t you know that when you offer yourselves to someone to obey him as slaves, you are slaves to the one whom you obey—whether you are slaves to sin, which leads to death, or to obedience, which leads to righteousness? But thanks be to God, that though you used to be slaves to sin, you wholeheartedly obeyed the form of teaching to which you were entrusted. You have been set free from sin and have become slaves to righteousness” (Rom. 6:16–18; see 15–23). This is not optional; every believer’s obedience has made him a slave to righteousness and to God (v. 22). The results are described in 8:3–4.

Appendix I: The Kingdom in Romans 14:17

*For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking,
but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.*

Among the many references in the New Testament to God’s kingdom, this verse is unusual. It is often wrongly assumed to mean that the kingdom has begun and is wholly spiritual.

What Romans 14:17 Means & Doesn’t Mean		
Text	Meaning	Common Misunderstanding
<i>“For the kingdom of God is</i>	This introduces the essence of the worldwide kingdom that God has promised in the Scriptures and in which Jesus the Messiah will rule.	that the kingdom has already started
<i>not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit”</i>	The promised kingdom’s essence is not material but spiritual.	that the kingdom is only spiritual in nature

A. The character of the coming kingdom. Since the promised kingdom will be God’s kingdom and eternal, its essence has to be spiritual. By no means, however, will it lack the material and political elements that were often predicted for it. As for politics, many prophecies agree with the following:

- “The LORD will be king over the whole earth” and “survivors from all the nations...will go up year after year to worship the King...and to celebrate...” (Zech. 14:9, 16)
- “The Root of Jesse will spring up, one who will arise to rule over the nations...” (Rom. 15:12, quoting Isaiah 11:10)

As for eating and drinking, here are two samples:

- “The LORD Almighty will prepare a feast of rich food for all peoples, a banquet of aged wine—the best of meats and the finest of wines.” (Isa. 25:6)
- The Lord Jesus promised that “many will come from the east and the west, and will take their places at the feast with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom...” (Matt. 8:11; see also Luke 22:29–30)

Romans 14:17 is not meant to deny such prophecies but to emphasize the kingdom’s spiritual essence. Although the verse makes an absolute statement (“is not”), it should be interpreted with a relative meaning (“is not primarily”). This is a common figure of speech known as “absolute for relative.”

B. The futurity of the kingdom. Believers belong to the kingdom simply because we belong to the King and His coming triumph (Matt. 25:31, 34). Speaking of that kingdom in the present tense, however, (“the kingdom **is**”) does not prove that it has begun. It is not unusual and not

confusing to speak in the present tense of something important yet future. For example, in Luke 20:35–36 the future resurrection is described with six present-tense verbs: “**marry...are given in marriage...can no longer die...are...are....**” The verbs are all present in Greek but refer to the future. Likewise, Romans 2:2 speaks of the future judgment in the present tense: “God’s judgment...**is** based on truth.”

However, most references to the kingdom either use future tense or logically refer to the future. Following, for example, are all the references to the kingdom by name in Luke 19–24 (all from NASB):

- “Because He was near Jerusalem, and they supposed that the kingdom of God was going to appear immediately, He said therefore, ‘A certain nobleman went to a distant country to receive a kingdom for himself, and then return.’” (Luke 19:11–12)
- “When he returned, after receiving the kingdom.” (Luke 19:15)
- “When you see these things happening, recognize that the kingdom of God is near.” (Luke 21:31)
- “I shall never again eat it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God.” (Luke 22:16)
- “I will not drink of the fruit of the vine from now on until the kingdom of God comes.” (Luke 22:18)
- “Joseph...was waiting for the kingdom of God.” (Luke 23:51)

There is no way that this kingdom Jesus promised has actually begun. The Corinthians acted as though it had. “You have become kings—and that without us!” Paul ironically told them. “How I wish that you really had become kings so that we might be kings with you!” (Cor. 4:8).

Instead, Paul taught new disciples that they “must go through many hardships to enter the kingdom of God” (Acts 14:22). In that kingdom we will receive our inheritance.

- “Come...take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world.” (Matt. 25:34)
- “The wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God.” (1 Cor. 6:9–10; see also Gal. 5:21; Eph. 5:5.)
- “Has not God chosen those who are poor...to be rich in faith and to inherit the kingdom he promised...?” (James 2:5)
- “You have made them to be a kingdom and priests...and they will reign on the earth.” (Rev. 5:10)
- At the seventh trumpet in his vision, John heard loud voices anticipating the conclusion: “You have...begun to reign....The time has come...for rewarding your servants the prophets and your saints.” (Rev. 11:15–18)

The goal for us believers (as you saw in Acts 14:22) is to enter that kingdom and share that glory.

- “Live lives worthy of God, who calls you into his kingdom and glory.” (1 Thess. 2:12)

Appendix I: The Kingdom in Romans 14:17

- “Our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us....The creation itself will be liberated....We wait eagerly for...the redemption of our bodies.” (Rom. 8:18–25; a liberated creation clearly implies an earthly kingdom.)
- “The Lord will rescue me...and will bring me safely to his heavenly kingdom.” (2 Tim. 4:18; “heavenly” referring to its character, not its location.)

Therefore, the coming of the kingdom is the object of our prayers: “This, then, is how you should pray:...your kingdom come....” (Matt. 6:9–10)

In view of the coming kingdom, no sacrifice or suffering is too great:

- “The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field. When a man found it, he...in his joy went and sold all he had and bought that field.” (Matt. 13:44)
- “We boast about your perseverance and faith in all the persecutions and trials you are enduring....You will be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you are suffering.” (2 Thess. 1:4–5)

In conclusion, Romans 14:17 looks at the Romans as heirs of the coming kingdom and obligated to live by its standards. As Paul said previously, believers should live “as in the day” (13:13) although the day has not yet arrived (13:12).

For further consideration of this subject, see my writings at www.kingdominbible.com.

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¹ Romans 1:16–17 is transitional from Paul’s introduction to the treatise and could be included in either. In these verses Paul announces the theme for the treatise and quotes its text.

² What is the gospel? Above all, it is the story presented in each of the four Gospels. Consider some of the evidence that Mark gives the gospel.

Mark 1:1 is “the beginning of the gospel about Jesus Messiah, the Son of God.” In His ministry Jesus was “proclaiming the good news [gospel] of God” (1:14), that is, beginning to reveal it. Soon after His disciples confessed through Peter, “You are the Messiah” (8:29), He promised that “whoever loses his life for me and for the gospel will save it” (8:35). That refers to the full salvation when the Lord comes again “with great power and glory” to reign (13:26; cf. 8:38; 9:1). Before He comes to reign, however, “the gospel must first be preached to all nations” (13:10). He alluded to the same process after Mary anointed Him for death: “Wherever the gospel is preached throughout the world, what she has done will also be told in memory of her” (14:9). After His resurrection Messiah gave this Great Commission: “Go into all the world and preach the good news [gospel] to all creation” (16:15).

So it is evident that Mark’s Gospel claims to present the gospel we should preach. There is strong ancient tradition, in fact, that Mark was a record of Peter’s evangelistic preaching. You can confirm that tradition by comparing Mark to the summary of Peter’s sermon in Acts 10:34–43. (See also the many other summaries in Acts of the message preached at that time.) Nevertheless, some nowadays believe that Mark left out doctrines that they consider essential in evangelizing; Mark has no clear statements of Jesus’ pre-existence, divinity, virgin birth, or the substitutionary nature of His death. Therefore, they never preach the gospel as Mark gives it—an attitude which seems arrogant, to say the least.

³ Paul’s appeals in Romans to unbelievers do not mark them as his readers. For example, in 2:17–29 he appeals to unconverted Jews in the second person (“you” and “your”). Being a Jew himself, he sometimes refers to Jews in the first person (“our,” “my,” and “we,” as in 3:5, 7, 9). Most often, however, he speaks of Jews in the third person (“they,” “their,” and “them” in 3:1–3 and often in chapters 9–11). This is from the standpoint of the Gentiles to whom he writes (as clearly seen in 11:13, 17–24, 30; 15:16).

⁴ 1:1–7. Appendix A gives this greeting in chart form, showing its emphasis, which is the gospel (vv. 3–4), and its parts that are parallel.

⁵ 1:1–2. Before summarizing the gospel in verses 3–4, Paul gives these three facts about it:

- It is God’s gospel (1:1; 15:16). Only He could have designed it or made it a reality. “To Jews it is a stumbling-block, and to Gentiles, foolishness, but to those who are the called, both Jews and Greeks, Messiah the power of God and the wisdom of God” (1 Cor. 1:23–24).
- It is Paul’s gospel, to which he has been consecrated (1:1) and which he constantly preaches. For this reason he also calls it “my gospel” (2:16; 16:25). Paul gives great emphasis to this fact in Galatians; see 1:8, 11, 12.
- It is no novelty but was “promised beforehand...in the Holy Scriptures” (1:2). Therefore, no “gospel” that disagrees with the Old Testament can be valid.

⁶ 1:1–7. The title *Son of God*. This is discussed in Appendix B. It is key to understanding Paul’s summary of the gospel in 1:3–4. Though fairly common in the Bible, this title rarely if ever means divinity. Many are called “son[s] of God” who are not divine, such as, angels, the nation Israel, Adam, Solomon, and all believers. In most cases, as in Jesus’ case, the title implies royalty; it designates God’s heir. As God’s “one and only Son” (John 3:16), Jesus is the supreme Heir and Ruler.

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Several Scriptures show that Jesus acquired this title as a human being. For example, Hebrews 1:4–5 gives proof that He “acquired [it] by inheritance” (Heb. 1:4, Greek). As proof it cites two texts that refer to His sonship as a new relationship: (1) “You are my Son; **Today I have become** your Father” (Psa. 2:7), (2) “**I will be his father, and he will be my son**” (2 Sam. 7:14). In both texts sonship has the same royal sense as in Romans 1:3 and 4.

⁷ 1:3. Instead of “with respect to the **flesh**” (literal), NIV says, “as to his **human nature**.” But that can wrongly imply a contrast between Messiah’s human and divine natures, which is not the point either in Romans or in the gospel. NIV also employs a similar meaning for *sarks* in other passages (such as, 1 Cor. 5:5, “sinful nature”) where it does not fit.

⁸ 1:4. NIV translates the Greek verb as “declared” here but, more accurately, as “appointed” in Acts 10:42. The NET Bible says the following about this verb:

The Greek term *horidzo* is used eight times in the NT, and it always has the meaning “to determine, appoint.” Paul is not saying that Jesus was appointed the “Son of God by the resurrection” but “**Son-of-God-in-power** by the resurrection,” hence the hyphenation. He was born in weakness in human flesh (*with respect to the flesh*, v. 3) and he was raised with power. (p. 519, emphasis added)

⁹ 1:3–4. All Greek manuscripts conclude verse 4 with the words “Jesus Messiah our Lord.” The KJV transfers those words to right after “his Son” in verse 3. The result is not clarification but loss of emphasis.

¹⁰ 1:3–4. “Christ Himself *is* the good news. Apart from Jesus Christ there is no good news. If somebody should ask, ‘What is the gospel?’, we ought to answer, ‘The gospel is not *what*, it is *who!*’ The gospel is the Lord Jesus Christ, in His blessed person and in His mighty work. To lose Jesus is to lose the gospel.” (McClain, *Romans*, p. 54)

¹¹ 1:3–4. See the note near the beginning showing that the Gospel of Mark is a full-length sermon giving the gospel this way. Romans does not preach that sermon but explains the gospel’s power.

¹² 1:8–15. By comparing Paul’s statements at the beginning and end of this letter to the history in Acts, we can come to certain conclusions. (1) He wrote from Corinth, during the winter of A.D. 56–57, before finishing his third missionary tour by going to Jerusalem. (2) He and some colleagues were taking an offering from the Gentile churches of Macedonia and Achaia, to help the poor Jewish saints in Jerusalem. (3) Having completed his apostolic work east of Italy, he intended to visit Rome and make it his headquarters for work in the West (Spain). (4) Acts tells us how he did reach Jerusalem, was spared from death by becoming a prisoner in Jerusalem and Caesarea, and was taken as a prisoner to Rome.

¹³ 1:17. NIV says that the righteousness revealed in the gospel is “by faith from first to last.” The Greek phrase describing this operation is *ek pisteos eis pistin* (the same noun twice, after two different prepositions). There is no doubt that *ek pisteos* means “by faith” (see v. 17b). But *eis pistin* (literally “to faith”) has had many explanations. NIV sees it as adding more faith to the previous faith. Another common explanation of the whole phrase is “based on faith and to those with faith.”

¹⁴ 1:18–32. In perversity man does not like God nor His ways revealed in creation. He shows this attitude by the things he “exchanges”:

- “the glory of the immortal God for images...” (v. 23)
- “the truth of God for a lie” (v. 25)
- “natural relations for unnatural ones” (vv. 26–27)

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¹⁵ 1:29–32. It is obvious that instead of evolving upward, man degenerates downward. Notice the emphasis on homosexuality, which shows the breakdown of the home. Of course, we believers no longer live that way (1 Cor. 6:11). In contrast, we reprove such sin—and manage to save some sinners. But we cannot turn the awful tide, because God Himself decided its course.

¹⁶ 2:1. Messiah’s disciples are not to judge under certain conditions (Matt. 7:1–5). But they are definitely expected to judge under other conditions (Matt. 7:6, 16, 20; John 7:24; 1 Cor. 6:2–5).

¹⁷ 2:6–11. There is a chart of these verses at the end of Appendix D.

¹⁸ 2:7. “He will give eternal life.” It is evident that here “eternal life” is not a present possession but future, to be received at the judgment. It is likewise future in 6:22, 23—and often in the New Testament (see Matt. 25:46; Titus 1:2; 3:7; Jude 21). For example, a man asked Jesus what he must “do to **inherit eternal life**” (Mark 10:17). In His comments Jesus equated eternal life to salvation in the promised “kingdom of God” (vv. 23, 24, 25). Then He promised it to everyone “who has left home or brothers [etc.] for me and the gospel.” Every such person will “receive a hundred times as much in this present age...and **in the age to come, eternal life**” (Mark 10:30).

The writings of the Apostle John, however, sometimes speak of eternal life from a different perspective (John 3:36; 5:24; 6:47, 54; 1 John 5:13). Take John 5:24 as an example; it says that the believer already “has eternal life.” Should eternal life be defined by this present aspect **instead of** the future aspect? Of course not, because it is mostly future, as even John 5 recognizes: “those who have done good **will rise to live**” (v. 29; see also 12:25). In what sense, then, is it present? In the sense that by faith in Messiah we already make the future certain and receive the “seal” of it (Eph. 1:13–14).

¹⁹ 2:1–16. This passage seems to describe God’s judgment as it will take place. But because Paul is showing that all are condemned, some interpreters deny that the judgment will be as described. See Appendix D: Eternal Life for Those Who Do Good?

²⁰ 3:1–8. “**My falsehood enhances God’s truthfulness** and so increases his glory” (v. 7). This is not a misrepresentation of Paul’s teaching but sober fact. It restates the words of verse 4: “Let **God be true and every man a liar**. As it is written...[in Psa. 51:4].” The imaginary speaker in verse 7 did not twist that fact but came to the wrong conclusions at the end of verse 7 and verse 8.

²¹ 3:10–12. Since the Bible speaks of exceptions, such as, Noah, Abraham, Job, and others, those must be due to God’s grace.

²² 3:25 seems to say that faith is in Messiah’s blood: “God presented him as a sacrifice of atonement, **through faith in his blood.**” (According to 5:8–9, “his blood” means His death.) However, many summaries of the gospel show that saving faith is in Messiah Himself, not in His blood. For example, “If you confess with your mouth, ‘Jesus is Lord,’ and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved” (Rom. 10:9). We can harmonize Romans 3:25 with the other statements by simply adding a comma after the word “faith”: “**sacrifice of atonement, through faith, in his blood.**” Then Paul is not saying “faith in his blood” but “sacrifice of atonement in his blood.” The English Standard Version clarifies it as follows: “whom God put forward as a **propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith.**”

²³ 3:24–26. Vindicating God. Notice how Messiah’s sacrifice vindicates God both for His present and His past actions. (a) As to the present, that sacrifice shows how God can be both “just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus” (v. 26). In other words, He is right in justifying people who come with no good works but only faith. Why is He right? Because He did not overlook their sins but dealt with them in the sacrifice. (b) As to the past, it shows how He could leave “the sins committed beforehand unpunished” (v. 25). In other words, He was right in not punishing sinners as the standards in

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the law require. Why? Because they would be punished in the same sacrifice. In both cases, past and present, Messiah's sacrifice vindicates God because it truly deals with sin. It has power, wherever applied, to atone for all sins—past, present, or future. Thus, as Stifler points out (quoting Godet), that sacrifice not only justifies men but justifies God also.

“For four thousand years the spectacle presented by mankind to the whole moral universe... was, so to speak, a continual scandal... Divine righteousness seemed to sleep; one might even have asked if it existed. Men sinned here below and yet they lived. They sinned on and yet reached in safety a hoary old age. Where were the ‘wages of sin’? It was this relative impunity which rendered a solemn manifestation of righteousness necessary.” Jesus died for men, but in a much more striking way He died for God. (Stifler, pp. 64–65)

²⁴ 3:25–26 shows a key way in which “a **righteousness** from God... has been made known” in the gospel (3:21; cf. v. 22). It is by God's providing the “sacrifice of atonement” Himself. “He did this to demonstrate his **justice**” (vv. 25 and 26, NIV). “Justice” represents the same Greek word as “righteousness” in verses 21 and 22. (See the previous note.)

²⁵ 4:13–17. “Abraham and his offspring received the promise that he would be **heir of the world...**” This means the same as Jesus' promise, quoting from Psalm 37:11: “Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth” (Matt. 5:5).

²⁶ 4:25. “He was delivered over to death **for our sins** and was raised to life **for our justification.**” The two prepositional phrases with “for” represent Greek *dia* plus the accusative case. In that usage *dia* nearly always means “because of, on account of,” as in 4:23 (also twice in 8:10 and twice in 13:5, all translated “because of”). It is easy to understand that the Father delivered Him to die on account of our sins; see the same thought and verb in 8:32. But what does it mean that He was raised on account of our justification? Probably that the Father accepted the sacrifice that accomplished justification.

...if faith stopped at the tomb it would be only an agony. It also sees that, while Jesus died for sins, that death was accepted as the ransom price (3:24), and so Jesus was raised again. He who became surety for the sinner's debt could not have been released from the prison-house of the tomb unless the debt was paid. His reappearance from the tomb is an everlasting proof of the sufficiency of His atonement for our sins, and he who really believes in the resurrection believes that the guilt of his sins is canceled. Faith is no longer an agony but a joy, and the believer's heart is set not merely on the historic...but on the raised Christ. That He was delivered for our offenses is pain; that He was raised again for our justification is pure spiritual delight. (Stifler, p. 85)

²⁷ 5:1. “**We have** peace with God.” The bolded words represent the Greek indicative form *echomen*. Most of the earliest Greek manuscripts have a different, subjunctive, form: *echōmen* with a long *ō*. That form is a kind of command, meaning “let us have.” Both forms “were pronounced alike in ancient Greek” (NET Bible, p. 527). NET Bible goes on to explain why the indicative form is likely the original here. It better fits the argument of Romans, since the readers already have peace with God (v. 10). Romans is giving facts in the first chapters, with practically no imperatives until chapter 6.

²⁸ 5:2. “the hope of the glory of God.” This “hope” refers to our confident expectation. The “glory” we will have includes becoming like Messiah, God's Son (2 Cor. 3:18; 1 John 3:3).

²⁹ 5:2, 3. The word here translated “rejoice” is *kauchaomai*. Some other passages where it clearly means “boast” are 2 Corinthians 10:8, 13, 16; Galatians 6:13, 14. It is not the usual word for “rejoice” (*chairo*), which is used in Romans 12:12, 15; 16:19; Philippians 1:18; 4:10, et al. Notice that we can boast not just in the midst of suffering but in the sufferings themselves.

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³⁰ 5:9, 10. “How much more **shall we be saved.**” This clearly refers to the future aspect of salvation, which is by far the greatest (see also 13:11 and the note on 5:21). As we are seeing in Romans, salvation is past, present, and future. Though oversimplified, the following often-repeated statement is helpful:

- In the past, we were saved from the penalty of sin.
- In the present, we are being saved from the power of sin.
- In the future, we will be saved from the presence of sin.

³¹ 5:3–4. “Character” translates the Greek word *dokimon*, which is either (a) evidence or proof of genuineness, or (b) proven or evident worth, value. We hardly give proof of the value God produces in us without going through testing. See how the same word is used about Timothy in Philippians 2:22.

³² 5:5. This verse has the first mention in Romans of the Holy Spirit and of love. These anticipate the next section on sanctification.

³³ 5:12–21. See Appendix F: Interpretive Issues in Romans 5:12. Some of the difficult details discussed there are (a) What kind of death “entered the world”? (b) Will all men live forever? (c) Whose sin brings death to every person?

³⁴ 5:12–21. These verses in Romans should be read in connection with 1 Corinthians 15. That chapter calls both heads of mankind “Adam.” In the original creation “the first man Adam became a living being” (v. 45). He received a mortal life, as did all of us in him. But the same verse calls Messiah “the last Adam, a life-giving spirit.” He will give life to all in Him. “For as in Adam all die, so in Messiah all will be made alive” (v. 22). When He gives us that life, we will be like Him: “Just as we have borne the likeness of the earthly man, so shall we bear the likeness of the man from heaven” (v. 49). When will we get that life and become like “the last Adam”? When He comes again and raises our bodies imperishable (vv. 22–23 and especially 50–55). The whole chapter (1 Cor. 15) was written to expound this hope at the center of Christianity. Without it the gospel would be vain (v. 2).

The Gospel of John gives another side to the Christian hope. In a sense the judgment of the world has already taken place (John 12:31; 3:18–19) and a believer already “has eternal life” (5:24). We should rejoice in the past aspect, which guarantees the future, but never lose sight of the future aspect itself.

³⁵ 5:14. “Adam, who was a pattern [figure or type] of the one to come.”

Adam is a figure of Christ in just this respect: that as his one sin brought death to all, even when there was no personal sin, so Christ’s one act of obedience brings unfailing righteousness to those who are in Him, even when they have no personal righteousness. Hence the argument of verses 13 and 14 to show that death must be traced to Adam’s sole act and not to the sin of his posterity—one side of the parallel. (Stifler, p. 97)

³⁶ 5:21. Notice in this verse three contrasts to verse 12:

Romans 5:12	one man	sin	death
Romans 5:21	Jesus Messiah our Lord	righteousness	eternal life

³⁷ 5:21. “**will...reign** in life.” The same verb is used for the future rule of believers in 1 Corinthians 4:8; 2 Timothy 2:12; Revelation 5:10; 20:4, 6; 22:5. This promise is also stated in other ways: “They will inherit the earth” (Matt. 5:5), be “heir[s] of the world” (Rom. 4:13), as participants with Messiah (Heb. 1:9; 3:14) in His kingdom when He comes (Matt. 25:34; 1 Cor. 6:9–10; Gal. 5:21). In fact, God created us to have that dominion (Gen. 1:26–28), which Psalm 8 sketches and Hebrews 1–2 calls “salvation” (1:14; 2:3) and “glory” in “the world to come” (2:5–10).

³⁸ Chapters 6–7. This second phase of salvation is called “sanctification” for a Greek word first used in 6:19 and 22 and often translated “holiness.” Sanctification and holiness are exactly the same thing.

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This subject actually continues through chapter 8, for glorification is simply the final stage of sanctification. However, we will separate the two to show the emphasis Paul makes.

³⁹ 6:1. McClain quotes Romans 5:20, then comments:

No matter how great the sin was, grace was greater than the sin. The worst sinner in the world can find grace sufficient. That is Paul's conclusion to the section on justification, that wherever sin appeared, grace came to the rescue in an even greater measure and covered it. "Grace did much more abound." It superabounded! Someone will say, "then if that is the case, it does not matter how much we sin. If our sin, no matter how great it is, only causes us to see that the grace of God is greater than our sin, let us go on and sin in order that we may see more of the grace of God." (McClain, p. 141)

⁴⁰ 6:2–14. Answer to the first question.

Paul met this first charge that was brought against the doctrine of gratuitous justification. "They will rejoice in sin because it only magnifies the grace of God." Paul does not hedge the slightest bit. He does not say, "Well, I know that I said a man is justified apart from works and character, and after all, that is not quite it. He has to be good, or he will go to hell." Paul will not retreat one inch from what he said in chapters 4 and 5. He has insisted that believers are "justified freely," that "by grace ye are saved." But now he shows that once justification has been received, sanctification follows logically and naturally. (McClain, p. 141)

⁴¹ 6:2–5. "baptized into his death." This shows that saving faith involves repentance. Those who come to Messiah must come "poor in spirit," mourning, hungering and thirsting for righteousness, as in Matthew 5:3–6. Since Messiah Himself had to die (Mark 8:29–32), those who follow Him are also condemned to death in this world (Mark 8:34–37; cf. 9:43–47; 10:23–27). Ritual baptism pictures—but does not itself effect—their joining Messiah in death to sin and resurrection to new life.

But must it not be said now that Paul has abandoned his theme, salvation by faith, in substituting the word "baptism"? Why did he not say, "All we who believed into Christ," a common phrase in the New Testament (10:14; Gal. 2:16), "believed into his death"? The difficulty arises from the modern wrong conception of the New Testament meaning of the word "baptism," that it is a mere rite, an act to be done, at the best, because one believes in Christ. The New Testament writers never separate it from the faith which it embodies and expresses. It is the fixed sign for faith, just as any appropriate order of letters in a word is the sign of an idea. The sign stands for the thing and is constantly used for the thing. Hence Paul can say that Christ was "put on" in baptism (Gal. 3:27), and Peter does not hesitate to declare that "baptism doth also now save us" (I Pet. 3:21)... To refuse to be baptized is to reject God, and the opposite is to accept Him (Luke 7:29, 30). Every one of these passages—and there are more like them—would teach salvation by a rite, salvation by water, but that the word for baptism is used as a symbol of faith. Faith so far is not one thing and baptism another; they are the same thing. The faith that accepted Christ in Paul's day was the faith that showed its acceptance in baptism. The water without the preceding faith was nothing. The faith without the water could not be allowed. Believers were baptized into Christ or they were not considered to be in Him. (Stifler, p. 107)

⁴² 6:2. "we died to sin." McClain points out

two views that fall short of the truth in dealing with sanctification. One view is that there is nothing at all in the cross of Christ that sanctifies, so...an attempt is made to place the

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Christian back under the law... The other view admits that believers come short and do not live the high type of Christian life they should. So mysticism is advocated... They say, "We must die to sin." But the Bible does not teach this. What does the Bible teach? *The Bible teaches that we have died to sin.* (pp. 142–143, emphasis his)

It is also important to note that we died; sin did not die. Sin is still in us, but we are freed from its power (v. 7).

⁴³ 6:6. "in order that the body of sin might be **brought to nothing**, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin" (ESV). For the bolded words, NIV has "done away with." But the verb does not picture something disappearing but losing its power, as in 3:3, 31; where NIV translates as "nullify"; and 4:14 ("is worthless"). The second clause here ("so that we would...") indicates a definite result, not just a purpose. For the meaning of "body of sin," see the next note.

⁴⁴ 6:6. "Our old man was crucified with him." Galatians 5:24 has a similar meaning: "Those who belong to Messiah Jesus have crucified the sinful nature [Greek *flesh*] with its passions and desires." Colossians 3:9–10 (and Ephesian 4:20–24, when interpreted correctly) refer to the same **past action**.

It stirs up our pride for us to try to *do something* by "crucifying the flesh of the old man." *But Christ has already gotten the victory!* The "old man" means the old self, what we were in Adam. That "old man" was crucified with Christ at the cross, and the task is finished in the mind of God. (See also Gal 2:20). (McClain, p. 144, emphasis his)

"The body of sin"—what is that? It is the body we have, in which sin finds an instrument: the tongue, the hands, the mind. Sin does not find its source in the body. Sin finds its source in the will, but uses the body as an instrument. Because we were crucified with Christ the body of sin is actually powerless in our lives. (McClain, p. 144)

⁴⁵ 6:9–11. "**Count** yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Messiah Jesus." The Greek imperative for "count" is "present" tense, here indicating an ongoing activity. But it does not mean that we kill ourselves daily; this death is **past**, just as His is (v. 9).

If he does not die anymore, do we? Certainly not. Some people say we can, but we died with Him, were buried with Him, raised with Him. "He dieth no more!" So we die no more. That is security! "Death hath no more dominion over Him." When He went to the cross, He paid the debt of sin in full. And when the debt is paid in full, the creditor has no more power over the debtor. We are in Him, therefore death hath no more dominion over us. (McClain, p. 145)

Though the death is past, however, the **life** in Him has only begun. Therefore, the new life is both present (vv. 4, 10) and future (vv. 5, 8).

⁴⁶ 6:13. "**Offer** yourselves to God." Unlike "count" in verse 11, "offer" is aorist tense in Greek, indicating an action looked at as a whole. It is the same verb and "tense," with the same meaning, as "**offer** your bodies...to God" in 12:1. Daniel B. Wallace (in *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics*) classifies the aorist imperative in 6:13 as "pure ingressive," in which "the stress is on the beginning of an action that the context...makes clear is *not* a momentary action" (p. 720, emphasis his). Wallace cites similar uses of the aorist imperative in James 1:2 ("*Consider* it all joy, my brothers, when you encounter various trials") and Philippians 4:5 ("*let* all men [*come to*] know your forbearance"). On the other hand, it is possible that the command in Romans 6:13 is "constative," referring to an act that is solemn and urgent. A constative aorist often refers to an act that has already started and should continue. That would be true in John 15:4 ("*remain* in me"), 1 Corinthians 6:20 ("*glorify* God with your body"), and 2 Timothy 4:2 ("*preach* the

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word”). Similarly, Romans 6:13 may mean that the Romans had already offered themselves and should continue to do so.

⁴⁷ 6:16. Slaves to the Lord (Master). “When you offer yourselves to someone to obey him as slaves, you are slaves to the one whom you obey.” Saving faith truly recognizes Jesus’ authority. That is the meaning of “confess with your mouth, ‘Jesus is Lord’” (10:9). In fact, “for this very reason, Messiah died and returned to life so that **he might be the Lord** both of the dead and the living” (14:9). This was the announcement at His birth: “A Savior has been born to you; he is **Messiah the Lord**” (Luke 2:11). It was also the main point at Pentecost: “God **has made this Jesus**, whom you crucified, both **Lord and Messiah**” (Acts 2:36). Thus, it is not optional for a believer to choose his master; he chose when he believed! See the next note.

⁴⁸ 6:16–23. “You are slaves” is stated repeatedly. Paul points out that slavery is an inadequate human figure of speech (v. 19). In fact, our “slavery” to God is the greatest liberty possible (John 8:32).

⁴⁹ 7:9–10. “When the commandment came, sin sprang to life and I died.” Paul gives his own testimony of how the good law killed him. “The pool of his heart had looked like a spring of sweet water. The law was the staff that stirred it up and showed it to be nothing but mud at the bottom and full of all hideous reptiles” (Stifler, p. 125). Some insist that such a result must be due to a corrupted law, twisted by legalism. Instead, Paul repeats that it was God’s “holy, righteous, and good” law that did it (v. 12).

⁵⁰ 7:13. “So that through the commandment sin might become utterly sinful.” Sin often remains hidden until it is provoked. Stifler illustrates this process: “The coward is not known until he hears the command to march against the foe” (p. 126).

⁵¹ 7:14–25. This section in chapter 7 reflects the impotency of mankind that we saw in the section on condemnation. Even the godliest of men—those who care the most and try the hardest—realize that they fall far short. We cannot reach God’s standard on our own.

⁵² 8:1. “**Therefore**, there is **now** no condemnation” (emphasis added). McClain points out that the word translated “now” does not imply that there may be condemnation later; instead, it strengthens the idea in “therefore.” The New English Bible says it well: “The conclusion of the matter is this: there is no condemnation.”

In regard to the second part of this verse in KJV, see the note on 8:4.

⁵³ 8:1. “**no condemnation** for those who are **in Messiah**.” The bolded thoughts are from earlier chapters:

“No condemnation” means no doom—including punishment and loss. In 5:16, 18 Paul contrasted two conditions and their causes: (a) our former condemnation and its cause in Adam and his sin, (b) our justification and its cause in Messiah’s act of righteousness.

“In Messiah” reflects 6:3–5, which traced our victory over sin (that is, our sanctification) to union with Messiah.

⁵⁴ 8:3. “what the law could not do, weak as it was through the flesh” (NASB). This pictures from the law’s side the same condition as in 5:6, 8, and 10. There we were described as “powerless,” “ungodly,” “sinners,” and “God’s enemies.”

⁵⁵ 8:2. “the law of the Spirit of life in Messiah Jesus” (Greek). Does “of life” modify “Spirit” or “law”? In other words, does it (a) tell something about the Spirit? Or does it (b) tell what the law of the Spirit accomplishes (gives life in Messiah)? By moving the words “through Messiah Jesus” to the beginning of the sentence, NIV chooses the former meaning. But the latter meaning makes good sense.

⁵⁶ 8:4. “who do not live according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.” The King James Version, following many late manuscripts, has this same clause in Romans 8:1. Most textual critics believe it was

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not there originally. But if it was, it probably meant the same as in 8:4, that there is no condemnation for those in Messiah because the Spirit has truly given them a new life.

⁵⁷ 8:4. “who...live...according to the Spirit.” Some believe that this is optional for believers, who, they say, may choose to live “according to the flesh” instead. But that is not correct. Jesus promised that “whoever follows me **will never walk in darkness**, but will have the light of life” (John 8:12). Therefore, no true believers walk in darkness; they all “walk in the light, as he is in the light” (1 John 1:7). This is true because they “have fellowship with him” (1 John 1:3, 6, 7), which means that they participate in His life. It does not mean that they are perfect; they confess the sins revealed by the light (1:9). But there is also a process in which “the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin” (1:7).

⁵⁸ 8:5–8. “the mind.” This represents a Greek noun (*phronema*) and verb (*phroneo*) translated “mind” in Romans 8:5–7. It is from the noun *phren*, which includes mind, affections, and will.

⁵⁹ 8:11. “will also give life to your mortal bodies.” Resurrection in a glorified body is the most basic element in the believer’s “hope of the glory of God” (5:2). His body “is sown [at death] in dishonor, it is raised [at Jesus’ coming] in glory” (1 Cor. 15:43).

⁶⁰ 8:17. “If we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Messiah.” The next verses in this passage briefly sketch the believer’s inheritance, calling it “glory” (v. 18), “freedom of glory” (Greek, v. 21), “our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies” (v. 23), and our “hope” (vv. 24–25). The same future inheritance is in view in the conclusion to Paul’s great doxology in Ephesians 1:3–14 (and in Acts 20:32). Most of that inheritance is still future; in the Spirit we have only the beginnings of it (“the firstfruits,” Rom. 8:23).

⁶¹ 8:17. This verse serves a dual purpose in Paul’s argument. It (a) concludes the paragraph affirming that our new life is that of God’s sons and (b) introduces the subject of suffering.

⁶² 8:17. “if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.” From the “faithful” hymn of 2 Timothy 2:11–12, Paul cites a similar statement: that all true believers will endure through trials and will reign with Messiah. Most Christians in the world understand what it is to suffer for righteousness’ sake. Such suffering comes partly from external causes and partly from internal concerns. The degree of suffering depends a lot on the degree of difference between Christians and their culture. When the salt loses its savor, there is little reaction and little influence.

⁶³ 8:18, 21. Our future “glory.” There are many more references identifying this as the future kingdom. For example, Hebrews 12:25–28 shows that the believer’s confidence is in receiving, after God shakes all other things, “a kingdom that cannot be shaken.” The Lamb is worthy, says Revelation 5:9–10, because He died to redeem people from all nations to be “a kingdom and priests” who “will reign on the earth” (cf. 22:5).

⁶⁴ 8:29. “those God **foreknew**.” This is based on a special meaning for the word for “know” in the Hebrew Scriptures as well as its equivalent in Greek (in the *Septuagint*). That meaning is to have intimate relations with someone or take special note of someone. “Now the man **had relations with** [lit., knew] his wife Eve” (Gen. 4:1, NASB); “watches over” (Psa. 1:6); “care for” (Psa. 144:3); “cared for” (Hosea 13:5). In fact, this knowledge is akin to choice, as in Amos 3:2 (“You only have I **chosen** of all the families of the earth”) and Genesis 18:19 (“I have **chosen** him, so that he will direct his children....”).

Foreknow or *foreknowledge* adds the idea of having this knowledge in advance, as it does in Romans 8:29. See also Romans 11:2; 1 Peter 1:2, 20; and Acts 2:23, some of which have to mean choice.

⁶⁵ 8:29. “those God foreknew.” These are the same people referred to in Acts 13:48: “All who were appointed for eternal life believed.”

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⁶⁶ 8:29. “firstborn.” See Psalm 89:27, where God makes David “firstborn” (the greatest) though he was youngest in his family.

⁶⁷ 8:30. “Those he called, he also justified.” Here, as elsewhere in the epistles, God’s “call” is efficacious. See, for example, Romans 1:6; 9:11; 1 Corinthians 1:2, 24; 2 Thessalonians 2:13b–14; 2 Timothy 1:9; Jude 1. First Corinthians 1:24 says, “to those whom God **has called**, both Jews and Greeks, Messiah the power of God and the wisdom of God.” 2 Thessalonians 2:13b–14 says, “From the beginning God chose you to be saved through the sanctifying work of the Spirit and through belief in the truth. He **called** you to this through our gospel, that you might share in the glory of our Lord Jesus Messiah.”

There is also a general call sometimes referred to in the Gospels. For example, Matthew 22:14: “For many are **invited** [called], but few are chosen.”

⁶⁸ 8:31–39. The Victory Hymn. In this section I lean heavily on McClain’s commentaries.

⁶⁹ chs. 9–11. Introduction. McClain (p. 173) comments:

The whole Old Testament was simply packed with promises that God had made to this Jewish nation. They were Messianic promises, promises which went with the Christ, the Messiah. Now notice the paradoxical situation. If the Jewish nation will not accept Jesus as Messiah, then the unbelieving Jew would say that there are two possible conclusions to be drawn. Either the gospel that Paul is preaching is not true, or else, if it is true, then the promises of God to Israel have failed, because the Messiah and blessing to Israel were connected inseparably. The Jew would say in essence that, either Jesus Christ is not the true Messiah or the Word of God has proven false.

Paul’s treatment of this problem is daring! He admits the fact that the Jew as a nation has rejected the gospel, and yet he takes his stand firmly and declares that the nation still has a place in the economy of God. There is nothing in all the Word of God, in logic itself, that can exceed the movement of thought constituting the ninth, tenth, and eleventh chapters of Romans.

⁷⁰ 9:1–5. “the people of Israel. Theirs is the adoption....” These verses resume and conclude the consideration of Israel’s advantages begun in the first part of chapter 3. The terms *Israel* and *Israelite* are used over sixty times in the New Testament, always of people who are physical descendants of Abraham. Although it is popular nowadays to say that the church is the new Israel, there is no substantial evidence for that notion. Even the “Israel of God” in Galatians 6:16 refers to converted Jews.

⁷¹ 9:4. “the adoption as sons.” God’s choice of Israel is the foundation for many Old Testament passages. Before his death Moses repeatedly reminded Israel of this great privilege. For example:

The LORD your God has chosen you out of all the peoples on the face of the earth to be his people, his treasured possession. The LORD did not... choose you because you were more numerous than other peoples, for you were the fewest of all peoples. But it was because the LORD loved you and kept the oath he swore to your forefathers... (Deut. 7:6–8).

⁷² 9:5. “Messiah, **who is** God over all, **forever praised! Amen.**” The Greek for the bolded words is identical to the benediction of God the Father in 1:25. With a change in punctuation of the Greek, the benediction in 9:5 would probably refer to the Father also. In that sense NIV gives two alternate readings in the margin: “Messiah, who is over all. God be forever praised!” or “Messiah. God who is over all be forever praised!” These readings would agree with the fact that Paul rarely calls Messiah “God” (but see Titus 2:13 and compare Phil. 2:6). However, he may intend to state the full glory of Messiah here in order to emphasize the favor shown to Israel and the serious nature of their rebellion.

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⁷³ 9:11–12. “before the twins were born or had done anything good or bad—in order that God’s purpose in election might stand.” They had not “done anything good,” not even believed in God. Thus, not even man’s faith is the basis of God’s choice (election). Of course, an elected person will get faith—which will show that he was elected (see Heb. 11:17–18; cf. 20–21). Faith confirms election. But faith is not its cause. When God chooses to save some, He makes no conditions (requirements) at all. Attempting to avoid this teaching, some deny that God elects individuals. They cite God’s words to Rebekah:

Two nations are in your womb,
and **two peoples** from within you will be separated;
one people will be stronger than **the other**,
and the older will serve the younger. (Gen. 25:23)

It is clear that God’s election affected more than the twin brothers. It determined the course of history for the whole nations descended from each of them. In fact, their names often represent those nations, as in the passage Paul quotes (in Rom. 9:13) from Malachi. Yet, it was *also* true that they were individuals—and elected or not elected as such (vv. 11–12).

John Piper points out that Paul in Romans 9–11 answers a problem presented in 9:1–5. The problem is not only national but individual, why so many of Paul’s race are not being saved. God’s choice of Jacob rather than his twin brother Esau (9:10–13) is part of that answer. (Piper, “What We Believe About the Five Points of Calvinism.”)

Piper also considers another passage teaching God’s unconditional election of individuals: Ephesians 1:3–6. It says that God “**chose** us in him [Messiah] before the creation of the world.” The Greek word for “chose” is the verb form for the noun translated “election” in Romans 9:11 and 11:7. It always means to pick out of a group, as in Luke 6:13; 14:7; John 13:18; 15:16, 19. And though Ephesians 1:4 says that God chose us in Messiah, it doesn’t say or mean that He chose Messiah instead of us, as some interpret it.

⁷⁴ 9:14. “Is God unjust?” It seems that critics who object to sovereign choice want a God who conforms to their standards rather than the real God. MacArthur (p. 27) comments:

The power of salvation is entirely from God’s grace, and the primary purpose of salvation is to give Him glory. Self-centered man rebels at such a notion, and even many Christians vainly try to explain away the clear truth that God is God and that, by definition, whatever He does can be nothing but just and righteousness. He needs no justification for anything He does—including calling some men to salvation and not calling others. He has always acted thus.

⁷⁵ 9:17. “I raised you up for this very purpose, that I might display my power in you and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth.” This is quoted from Exodus 9:16. “Raised up” does not mean created but exalted to prominence, as in Numbers 24:19; Habakkuk 1:6; and Zechariah 11:16. The resulting worldwide glory to God is mentioned in Joshua 2:9–11; 9:9; et al., and is still obvious today.

⁷⁶ 9:22. “objects of his wrath—prepared for destruction.” MacArthur says that this

is surely one of the most tragic identifications of unbelievers in all of Scripture...speaking of ungodly and unrepentant *human vessels*, all of whom will feel the ultimate **wrath** of God, for which they have been **prepared for destruction** by their own rejection of Him. As already noted, it is not that God *makes men sinful* but that He leaves them *in their sin* unless they repent of it and turn to His Son for deliverance. (MacArthur, p. 40, emphasis his)

McClain (p. 182) agrees that it is wrong to say “that God has the right to take the clay and make one man a sinner and another a righteous man...God makes no man a sinner. Remember that God takes the clay as He finds it, and the ‘clay’ here is man who is already a sinner.”

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⁷⁷ 10:1. “prayer to God...that they may be saved.” It is often questioned what good it does to pray for people’s salvation if God has already elected them or not. The same question can be asked about preaching. Though we can never explain such mysteries, it is clear that our prayers and preaching are means He uses. He does not save people without our cooperation.

⁷⁸ 10:4. “For Messiah is the **end** of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.” The word translated “end” (*telos*) could here mean either goal or conclusion. If it means goal, then Messiah—and those in Him—achieves all that the law seeks. If it means conclusion, the law is superseded. Both are true, though goal may be the emphasis, as McClain explains:

You may never hear another sermon, but in that verse [4] you will have learned all you need to know to be saved—that Christ is the end when it comes to righteousness. To illustrate it: there is an old road that is called the Santa Fe Trail, that runs out to Los Angeles. If you want to get to Los Angeles you take that road. But suppose you want to go there, and you could just be lifted up, transported, and set right down in Los Angeles. Would you, after you got there, say, “I must go back and come over this Santa Fe Trail”? You are already there; Los Angeles is the end. (McClain, p. 188)

⁷⁹ 10:9. “Jesus is Lord.” This emphasizes His authority as David’s descendant (the Messiah; see 1:3). Literally, the word for “Lord” usually means “master.” It is often used for earthly masters over slaves, as in Ephesians 6:9 (twice). It refers to Jesus about 700 times in the New Testament, 92 of them in Acts (compared to only ten there for “Savior”). “The Lord” is also used in both Testaments as a substitute for God’s name *Yahweh*. Only rarely, however, could it be used in that sense for Jesus. Take, for example, the conclusion to the sermon at Pentecost: “God **has made** this Jesus...both **Lord** and Messiah” (Acts 2:36). It is evident that Jesus could be **made** Master but not *Yahweh*. Similarly, Romans 14:9 says, “For this very reason, Messiah died and returned to life **so that he might be the Lord** [Master] of both the dead and the living.” Philippians 2:9–11 has the same thought.

⁸⁰ 10:11. “will never be put to shame.” This promise quotes the same words as 9:33b (from the Greek version of Isa. 28:16; cf. 49:23; 45:17). In effect, it means the same as “will be saved” (10:13).

⁸¹ 10:16. “Not all the Israelites accepted the good news.” The Gospel that goes deepest into the reasons for this is John. John gives practically no information about Jesus’ Jewish trial just before His crucifixion (see chapters 18–19). Instead, chapters 1–12 constitute His trial before His nation, with the issues summarized in chapter 12 (see especially vv. 37–43). Israel saw lots of evidence that Jesus is Messiah, but rejected Him. “He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him” (1:11). See my writing on that Gospel.

⁸² 10:16–21. Scriptures predicting Gentile belief and Jewish unbelief. “Where Israel was groping and failing to find the Messiah, those who sought Him not clearly discerned Him. How can Israel be excused for ignorance of a worldwide Gospel, when even the heathen discovered it?” (Stifler, p. 182)

⁸³ chapter 11. Israel is eternal. Prophets often describe it under the most durable analogies. For example: “He who appoints the sun to shine by day, who decrees the moon and stars to shine by night... ‘Only if these decrees vanish from my sight,’ declares the Lord, ‘will the descendants of Israel ever cease to be a nation before me.’” (Jer. 31:35–36)

⁸⁴ 11:5–7. “remnant **chosen** by grace...**the elect**.” The bolded words represent the same Greek word in two grammatical cases: *eklogen* and *ekloge*. NASB is more successful in showing that they are the same: “remnant according to God’s gracious **choice**...**those who were chosen**.”

⁸⁵ 11:9. “May their table become a snare and a trap, a stumbling block and a retribution.” God’s greatest provision for their life and sustenance (“their table”) was Messiah Himself. Yet, Messiah became their downfall. “When the Lord Jesus Christ came as their Messiah, He really was bringing all the bene-

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fits of a banquet. He was their table, and their table became a stumbling block to them... They lost everything back there—their Messiah, their kingdom, their land, all the millennial blessing that God had promised them—lost them all, and their loss was the benefit of the Gentile world.” (McClain, p. 199)

⁸⁶ 11:15. “their rejection is the reconciliation of the world.” McClain (p. 200) comments, “Where did the reconciliation of the world take place? At the cross... They rejected their Messiah; they took Him to the cross and there He reconciled the world.”

⁸⁷ 11:16. “holy...holy...holy.” This Greek adjective is *hagios*. It and other words built on the same Greek root usually refer to God or to saved people. It is the word translated “saints” in the greetings of epistles (e.g., 1:7; Eph. 1:1). In the section of Romans regarding *sanctification*, the key word is *hagiasmos* (6:19, 22). The basic meaning of this root, however, is “separated [to God],” which need not mean saved. For example, children with one believing parent are not “unclean” but “holy [*hagia*],” that is, dedicated to God (1 Cor. 7:14). Similarly, Hebrews 10:29 uses the verb *hagiadzo* to describe people near to God but unsaved. (Hebrews 10:10 and 14 use the same verb for the saved.) In Romans 11:16 both “root” and “branches” are holy in this sense of separated or dedicated.

⁸⁸ 11:17–24. The olive tree. “What is this olive tree? It represents the place of favor or privilege. Abraham is the root... It does not save anyone to be in this olive tree... Of course, the whole church is here too—all the professing members of the church—because all the Gentiles are here. Some are really believers and some are not. Those that are not will be broken off.” (McClain, pp. 201–202)

⁸⁹ 11:33–36. “To him be the glory forever!” On pages 124–126 MacArthur has a beautiful study of God’s glory as revealed in Scripture.

⁹⁰ 12:2. “Be transformed.” Since we are exhorted to let this happen, is it optional? From one perspective, no; under the New Covenant it is certain to happen. 2 Corinthians 3 emphasizes the fact that in this covenant God writes His laws in our hearts. Colossians 3:9–10 says that this change has already begun: “You have taken off your old self... and have put on the new self.” (The parallel passage, Eph. 4:22–24, should be translated accordingly.) Yet, it is a process, often lengthy, with which we must cooperate.

⁹¹ 12:6–8. “We have different gifts.” The seven gifts listed here may be comprehensive (include all gifts). That of “prophesying” (v. 6) seems to have served a special purpose when the New Testament was not yet complete. There are other lists of gifts, with related exhortations, in 1 Corinthians 12 and 1 Peter 4.

⁹² 12:20. “heap burning coals upon his head.” This exhortation, quoted from Proverbs 25:21–22a, has been interpreted in many ways. One way is that goodness to an enemy will get revenge by making him feel awful. Instead, this verse shows how not to take revenge, as is emphasized in verse 19. Giving him food and drink shows love. Burning coals were essential to keep home fires burning. If an enemy was forced to ask for coals, it would show love to heap up a lot of coals in the container he would carry on his head. The object would not be to get revenge but to “overcome evil with good” (v. 21).

⁹³ 13:3. “rulers...the one in authority.” God does not merely establish the institution of government but the individuals who are in charge. See also “king” and “governors” in 1 Pet. 2:13, 14 (cf. 1 Tim. 2:2; Dan. 2:21, 37–38; 4:25, 32; 5:18–19). Not every government is based on a constitution or has free elections; but all have “authorities...established by God” (13:1). Therefore, Bible history rightly says that even godless rulers like Pharaoh and Nebuchadnezzar were elevated to their positions by God. For the same reason King David refused to harm “the Lord’s anointed one,” Saul, who kept trying to kill him.

⁹⁴ 13:4. “God’s servant to do you good.” Psalm 146:7–9 spells out what is good.

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⁹⁵ 13:4. “wrath.” This is only one of the words repeated in 13:1–7 from 12:17–21. Others are “evil,” “good,” and forms of “revenge.” “Love” precedes that section (12:9) and follows this one (13:8).

⁹⁶ 13:4. “an agent of wrath.” The word “wrath” strikes the same chord as 12:19: “the wrath of God.” God cannot allow wickedness to remain unpunished. He will purge it from His coming kingdom. “When the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven in blazing fire...He will punish those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel....They will be punished with everlasting destruction” (2 Thess. 1:7–9). Only by doing away with wicked rebels can He “bring justice to the nations” (Isa. 42:1, also vv. 3, 4).

⁹⁷ 13:4. “bear the sword.” It should be obvious that the sword implies capital punishment as well as all levels of minor punishment. God ordained human government with such power when Noah’s family began the new world after the flood (Gen. 9). The divine covenant made then—and never rescinded—emphasized the requirement to take the murderer’s life.

⁹⁸ 13:8. “owe nothing to anyone” (NASB). Does this mean no debts at all? Some think so. They reason from the facts that a borrower easily becomes the lender’s slave (Prov. 22:7) but we are not to enslave ourselves (1 Cor. 7:23). However, God did not forbid debts in the law. He legislated about them but allowed them. See also the Lord’s approval of banking in Luke 19:22–23. Therefore, other interpreters limit this restriction in Romans to depreciating items. Others limit it to items too big for one’s budget. Certainly a life without debts is much easier and more efficient.

⁹⁹ 13:9. “The commandments...are summed up in this one rule: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’” In contrast, Muslim commentators are said to sum up Allah’s commandments in 75,000 rules—though with exceptions. There is truth in saying, “Love God totally, then do as you please.”

¹⁰⁰ 13:12. “the day is almost here.” “The day” is a common title for the coming kingdom of our Lord (e.g., 1 Cor. 1:8; Heb. 10:25). He warned us that He would not come immediately to rule but after certain things took place (Matt. 24:32–34). Therefore, His coming and His kingdom were not near when the church first began (Acts 2). However, those preliminary things began taking place. By the time Paul and others wrote their epistles, they considered the Lord’s coming near (see also James 5:8; 1 Peter 1:5; 5:7, 17).

¹⁰¹ 13:11–14. Live godly in view of the Lord’s soon coming. The three exhortations in this paragraph might be called: Wake up (vv. 11–12), Shape up (v. 13), and Dress up (v. 14).

¹⁰² ch. 13. Overthrow bad government? This question has many aspects. Dietrich Bonhoeffer decided that a Christian should help destroy Hitler because Hitler destroyed millions. At least one mission agency considered the Soviet Union to be no government at all because of its cruelty and opposition to the gospel. Liberation Theology considers sin to be inherent in structures (particularly capitalism) and revolution to be essential. Each view must be judged in the light of Scripture.

¹⁰³ 14:1 to 15:13. Compare the closely parallel passage, 1 Corinthians chapter 8.

¹⁰⁴ 14:1. “passing judgment on disputable matters.” “Passing judgment” (*diakriseis*) should probably be “getting into quarrels” (Louw & Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament Based on Semantic Domains*, I:439). “Disputable matters” probably refers to “opinions” (NASB) about debatable areas of conduct not clearly addressed in the Bible. In this passage Paul deals only with matters of food and observance of days. Examples of other such matters in modern churches are dress for worship services, music, and Bible translations.

¹⁰⁵ 14:1 to 15:13. There are no rules here about diet or days. In other contexts these matters involve other problems. Note two examples: (a) In the Corinthian church some still considered that eating food sacrificed to idols was itself idolatry (1 Cor. 8:7; cf. Acts 15:19–20, 28–29). In the Roman church there was no such dispute. (b) In Antioch food affected the gospel. God had revealed to Peter that all foods are clean, thus freeing him to preach to Gentiles (Acts 10). But in Antioch he violated that truth, withdrawing

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from Gentiles because of what they ate. In this way he compromised the doctrine of justification by faith (Gal. 2:12–21). Colossians 2:16 addresses the same issue with Judaizers in Colosse.

¹⁰⁶ 14:10–12 “God’s judgment seat.” Many Greek manuscripts say “judgment seat of Messiah,” as in 2 Corinthians 5:10. In either case the Judge will be the Lord Jesus (John 5:22; Acts 10:42). Many commentators believe that there will be several judgments. If so, they are not distinguished here or in the Scriptural passage Paul uses as proof (Isa. 45:23)—nor in Romans 2 (see Appendix D). Here Paul builds on the thought that “none of us lives to himself alone and none of us dies to himself alone” (14:7). This does not mean that our actions affect other people (though they do) but that our Lord will call us to account.

¹⁰⁷ 14:5. “considers one day more sacred than another.” Entire denominations believe that Christians are still under the law, at least the Ten Commandments. If so, what Sabbath are they obligated to keep? Most often they say Sunday, because Messiah rose on that day, and the church at Troas met on that day (Acts 20:6–7).

¹⁰⁸ 14:17. “the kingdom of God is...” Some wrongly assume that this verse defines the kingdom as a present spiritual reality. Instead, it states the essence of the coming kingdom already well-known from the prophecies. See Appendix I, page 48.

¹⁰⁹ 15:9–12. “The Gentiles.” Both in Hebrew and Greek, the words translated “Gentiles” mean “nations.” Nearly always their existence as separate political units is part of the concept. (This affects the interpretation of Matthew 28:19.) Though a nation itself, Israel is generally considered separate from the nations.

Paul’s quotations in these verses come from every part of the Hebrew Old Testament. Verse 9 quotes from “The Prophets” (2 Sam. 22:50, same as Psa. 18:49). Verse 10 quotes from “The Law” (Deut. 32:43). Verses 11 and 12 quote from “The Writings” (Psa. 117:1 and Isa. 11:10).

¹¹⁰ 15:12. “will arise to rule over the nations.” This climax of salvation was also the final theme in chapters 8 and 11.

¹¹¹ 16:1. “Phoebe... a *diakonon* of the church.” Was she a deaconess? The Greek word is often used in a general sense (for all believers) as well as the title of an office (Phil. 1:1b). It is quite possible that it is the latter here. But we must remember that deacons were not set apart to oversee the church (as elders were). Rather, they were to serve in whatever function the church wished.

¹¹² 16:3–16. Greetings. It was unusual for Paul to name those to whom he sent greetings in his epistles. Possibly in the case of Rome it was to show them the strong foundation he already had for approval and ministry there.