

# ROMANS



Introduction  
and footnotes.

John West.

## ROMANS INTRODUCTION

*Drawn from Commentaries:-*

Dunn, WBC series

C.E.B. Cranfield, T&T Clark.

F.F. Bruce, Tyndale series.

Leon Morris, Eerdmans.

The letter is addressed by the apostle Paul (1:1) to the church at Rome (1:7, 15). He mentions in 15:24 that he hopes to visit them on the way to Spain. We don't know much about the start of the Roman church. There were Romans at Pentecost (Acts 2:10). There is also a tradition that Peter and Paul started a church there but this letter would at least rule out Paul since the church was active before he visited (1:10-13).

"in Rome" is missing in some mss. This has prompted some to think that the letter was written as a circular and Rome was just one destination. It is generally recognised now that it would be more likely that "in Rome" would be a later omission rather than a later inclusion.

Some believe that chapter sixteen was an addition intended for Ephesus.

The oldest copy of Romans, P<sup>46</sup> (late C2<sup>nd</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup>), has the doxology (16:25-27) after 15:33<sup>1</sup> implying that copies of Romans circulated without chapter 16 (in others of the 8 forms of Romans the doxology is placed after 14:23 or omitted altogether).

Some reject the doxology for having un-Pauline vocabulary

T.W. Manson, *Romans* in Peakes Commentary, argues that the letter, minus chapter 16 was sent to Rome and that chapter 16 is the letter to Ephesus (added to Romans when Paul realised its general usefulness as a circular). It is thought that there are too many personal references in chap 16, and that Paul would not have known so many people in Rome.

Leon Morris counters that the personal references in chapters 1 and 15 make any idea of a circular too difficult to sustain.

It would also be more likely that Romans 16 would be omitted in later copies rather than inserted (a long list of names and the details of the collection would have been irrelevant in later circulation).

It is thought that Marcion (c. 140AD) – no lover of OT quotes or of the thoughts in 15:8, might be responsible for cutting out chaps 15 & 16 from some copies.

Note also the closing greeting at 15:<sup>33</sup> *The God of peace be with all of you. Amen.* – not esp Pauline.

Similar occurs at 16:20b *The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.* followed by personal greetings 16:21-23. A few mss therefore include 16:20b again at 16:24.

Many then see 16:25-27 as an obvious later scribal addition.

### THE READERS

Paul mentions the Gentiles in connection with his hearers at a number of points suggesting a substantial number in the church at Rome<sup>2</sup>, but the prominence of his appeal to Abraham and references to law<sup>3</sup> suggests that there were Jews in the community too (and these may have been amongst the first converts). The suggestion is strengthened by the fact that the Roman historian, Suetonius, records that the Emperor Claudius expelled Jews from Rome because they constantly made disturbances at the instigation of Chrestus. That Paul speaks to two groups is supported by 15:7-9, "Welcome one another therefore..." .

### DATE AND PLACE OF WRITING.

Probably written at Corinth:-

16:1 Phoebe from Cenchrae, the port of Corinth.

16:23 Paul's host is Gaius, baptised at Corinth (1Co 1:14)

16:21,23 Timothy, Erastus & Sopater were with Paul when he wrote. They were with him in Greece (Act 19:22; 20:2-4)

15:24-28 Paul intended going to Jerusalem and then Rome (cf Act 19:21). He wished to take the "contribution" to the church at Jerusalem (cf Acts 24:17)

The date is assessed from the proconsulship of Gallio in Corinth. He was in office in AD52 and his term would have been 12 months (probably from AD51-52), but we don't know exactly when Paul came before him, though many think it was early in Gallio's term. If so the chronology could read (summarising Morris, p6):- Summer AD51, Paul before Gallio

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<sup>1</sup> P<sup>46</sup> is not conclusive evidence since 16:1-23 follows the doxology. ie It looks like a later addition.

<sup>2</sup> 1:5-6, 13; 11:13-32; 15:15-16 and where he refers to the Jews as "them" (9:3ff; 10:1-2).

<sup>3</sup> 4:1; 3:31; 6:1-7:6.

Autumn AD51, Paul leaves for Antioch (Act 18:18-22)  
Spring AD52, Returns to Galatia (Act 18:23)  
Autumn AD52, Visiting the churches & journey to Ephesus  
3 month stay (Act 19:8)  
two more years stay (Act 19:10; 20:31)

Early in AD55, three months in Greece prior to his journey to Jerusalem (Act 20:3; Rom 15:25). WRITES ROMANS.

AD55 Passover, Paul in Jerusalem.

Morris notes that there are some uncertainties and some date Romans as early as AD53.

Gorman says between 55 and 58

## **REASON FOR WRITING**

Keep in mind:-

Paul had not visited the Roman church before but had long wanted to (1:8-13; 15:23)

He had been hindered from visiting (1:13; 15:22)

He hoped at the time of writing to go on to Spain (15:22-29)

He wants to impart some spiritual gift to them, reap some harvest and to proclaim the gospel (1:11, 13, 15).

From Morris, pp8-18:-

### **1 A compendium of Christian Teaching**

Traditional view based on its grand themes. Doesn't explain the apparent personal references nor explain why he should particularly write it to Rome. As a compendium it has gaps (Christology, Resurrection, the Church, eschatology, Holy Communion).

### **2 Paul's mature thinking on Essential Christianity**

Topics dealt with in other epistles addressing particular church situations are now brought together in a more universal document. Like a last will and testament since Paul is not sure what will happen at Jerusalem. Doesn't entirely explain why he wrote it or sent it to Rome.

### **3 A discussion of the church**

With the wider church of Spain in mind Paul is showing that all believers benefit from the promises to Abraham. But why send this to Rome?

### **4 A circular letter**

Evidence of a 14-chapter edition. Also a fifteen chapter. Some mss lack "in Rome" at 1:7, 15. T.W. Manson (Studies in the Gospels and Epistles) thinks 15 chapters sent to Rome, 16 chapters to Ephesus. That the book is the summary of discussions during troublesome times - ie it is a manifesto. There is no solid evidence of a copy being sent to Ephesus. Probably the church there would already be aware of Paul's opinions.

### **5 Defence of the Gentile mission**

Paul is uncertain, as he travels to Rome with the collection, of how he will be received. He writes his defence of the Gentile mission and sends the letter to Rome so that they will support him in prayer (15:31-32) but also perhaps in word or letter. This does not account adequately for the epistle as a whole.

### **6 Personal claims**

It is part of the struggle for Paul to have his apostolicity recognised. It does not seem to read this way however. It sounds too confident for that.

### **7 Apostolic foundation**

The Roman church had not been founded by an apostle and Paul plans to give it the official stamp of approval. Paul does not plan to build on another's foundation (15:20) but does plan to preach the gospel (1:15).

### **8 The "weak" and "strong"**

Based on 14:1-15:13. Weak = Jews (bound to traditions, heritage etc). Strong = Gentiles (Free from such restraints). Jews driven out by Claudius in 49AD (Act 18:2) return to find a predominance of Gentiles. The letter does not seem to be strongly settling a quarrel between warring factions and if it were so Paul probably would have dealt with it first as in 1 Corinthians. (Though it can be convincingly argued that the first chapters do set out a measured presentation of the equality of the weak and strong - *if* weak does mean Jew, and strong means Gentile). However it is not at all clear that Weak = Jews or even a particular group of people.

### **9 Liberalizing a reactionary church**

The Roman church was large but immature. Paul writes to win it over to his way of thinking. Interesting but there is no evidence as to how large the Roman church was or what views it held.

### **10 Rhetorical genre**

An epideictic genre (displaying the art of the speaker) The argument is set out in terms of praise or blame judgements. Praise to encourage further adherence. Blame to change viewpoint. Morris finds this idea rather rigid and oversimplified.

## 11 Dialogue with Judaism

Response to questions Jews might ask. eg "What is Israel's role in salvation-history". But it is usually held that there was also a large Gentile component to the church there

## 12 Preparation for a visit

On the way to Spain he wants to meet with the church at Rome, carry out ministry there and enlist support for the further journey (15:24). To set out the essentials of the gospel and stave off any harmful criticisms of him which may have gone on ahead he writes to the Jewish/Gentile church also enlisting prayerful support for his trip to Jerusalem.

\*\*\*In short, it serves as a letter of introduction, and importantly (and often overlooked) **it addresses a universal of the relationships between Jew/Gentile, which could have been especially marked in the relatively new Roman church, with a Jewish community, some of whom were in Jerusalem to hear Peter preach on the Day of Pentecost.**

**It is not difficult to imagine that a dyed-in-the-wool Pharisee, like Saul of Tarsus, brought up short in meeting the risen Christ on the Damascus Road, and then commissioned to take the gospel to the Gentiles, would have thought and prayed, long and hard, about how the Jewish faith could extend to outsiders. And then he would need to determine where Israel then stood in relation to it all.**

The solution can be readily seen in the contents. All have sinned, Jew and Gentile. Right standing before God has always been by faith and Abraham is a prime example, obeying God well before the Law was given at Sinai and entering into a Covenant relationship before that Sinai Covenant with Moses. Chapters 3-5 state that justification is by faith both for Jew and Gentile, so there is no condemnation for either, through Jesus Christ. Jew and Gentile stand on a level playing field, even as Paul acknowledges that Israel (the Jews) had all the prior advantages of the revelation of God through the prophets and writers of the Hebrew Scriptures.

This understanding of the purpose of Romans then makes sense of chapters 9-11 (often regarded as a parenthesis). Paul is asking, "Where does Israel now stand then, especially as they appear to have, in large numbers, rejected Jesus as the Christ?" Chapters 9-11 answer the question. This understanding may also make sense of "the weak" and "strong" (see point 8 above).

Refer also to Ephesians 2:11 to 3:6 (esp 3:3-6). Colossians 1:26-27. "The Mystery" is the gospel message itself. It is Jesus Christ, his death and resurrection, but part of that revealed mystery is that the gospel incorporates the Gentiles with Israel.

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Theme: Rom 1:16-17.

*For I am not ashamed of the gospel;  
it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who has faith,  
to the Jew first and also to the Greek.  
For in it the righteousness of God is revealed  
through faith for faith; as it is written, "The one who is righteous will live by faith."*

Key Words: Righteous, faith, justify.



## ROMANS (NRSV) Footnotes by John West

<sup>1</sup>Paul,<sup>4</sup> a servant<sup>5</sup> of Jesus<sup>6</sup> Christ,<sup>7</sup> called<sup>8</sup> to be an apostle,<sup>9</sup> set apart<sup>10</sup> for<sup>11</sup> the gospel<sup>12</sup> of God, <sup>2</sup>which he promised beforehand<sup>13</sup> through his prophets in the holy scriptures,<sup>14</sup> <sup>3</sup>the gospel concerning his Son<sup>15</sup>, who was descended from David according to the flesh<sup>16</sup> <sup>4</sup>and was declared<sup>17</sup> to be Son of God with power<sup>18</sup> according to the spirit of holiness<sup>19</sup> by<sup>20</sup> resurrection from the dead<sup>21</sup>, Jesus Christ our Lord,<sup>22</sup> <sup>5</sup>through whom we have received grace and apostleship<sup>23</sup> to bring about the obedience of faith among all the Gentiles for the sake of his name,<sup>24</sup> <sup>6</sup>including yourselves who are called to belong to Jesus Christ,

<sup>7</sup>To all God's beloved in Rome, who are called to be saints:<sup>25</sup>

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.<sup>26</sup>

<sup>8</sup>First,<sup>27</sup> I thank my<sup>28</sup> God through Jesus Christ for all of you, because your faith<sup>29</sup> is proclaimed throughout the world.<sup>30</sup> <sup>9</sup>For God, whom I serve with my spirit<sup>31</sup> by

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<sup>4</sup> Roman citizens often had three names – personal, clan and family. Saul (Heb) Paulus (Roman)

The salutation (vs 1-7 is longer than usual as Paul presents his credentials to a church he has not met.

<sup>5</sup> **'servant'** Or slave. Denotes complete and utter devotion.

<sup>6</sup> **'Jesus'** - Saviour – Heb Yeshua.

<sup>7</sup> Gk Christos. Heb Messiah meaning anointed one.

<sup>8</sup> **'Called.'** 'Call' for Paul signifies something that is *effective*. Paul also uses the term where we might use 'conversion'.

<sup>9</sup> **'Apostle'** often associated with the 12, but included others (see Acts 14:14, Rom 16:7). Seems to denote an authorised agent or representative. Paul's claim is based on his having seen the risen Lord (1 Cor 9:1), his commission from Christ himself (Gal 1:1, Acts 26:15-18) and the confirmation of signs 2 Cor 12:12.

<sup>10</sup> Both 'called' and 'set apart' are passive – focussing on what God does, rather on how we respond.

<sup>11</sup> **'for'** – Gk. eis εις – into. Ie being called or set aside is for a purpose (in this case, the gospel)

<sup>12</sup> **'gospel'** Gk. euangelion from which we derive evangelism and evangelical.

<sup>13</sup> The gospel is not new but arises from OT promises.

<sup>14</sup> **'holy'** Scriptures because they are from God and reflect God's plan and promises. The content of the gospel promises follow in verses 3-4 which could be a confessional formula.

<sup>15</sup> **'concerning his Son'** A relationship which is personal, ethical and inherent.

<sup>16</sup> Important to Jewish expectations of the Messiah.

<sup>17</sup> **'declared'** - shown.

<sup>18</sup> In a powerful way. Ie through the power of the Holy Spirit in the Resurrection.

<sup>19</sup> **'Spirit of holiness'** is an unusual phrase but understandable if it is a confessional formula.

<sup>20</sup> **'by'** – Gk ex – can mean 'by reason of' or 'since' (Cranfield).

<sup>21</sup> **'dead'** – literally 'dead ones' which may hint at a the more general resurrection where Jesus is the forerunner. However, as in Acts 26:23 it can refer to one person.

<sup>22</sup> Jesus' lordship is established through these events.

<sup>23</sup> Paul appears to be making a statement of authority rather than implying that all his readers have received that particular grace.

This probably means 'grace (as in 'gift') of apostleship'

<sup>24</sup> vs To bring about...Gk εις – the *purpose* which is obedience.

**'Among'**...Gk.en εν – the *sphere* which is all the nations.

On behalf of...Gk. huper υπερ – *for the sake of* his name.

**'among the Gentiles'** would suggest first a church situated in a Gentile world and perhaps a predominance of Gentiles within the church.

<sup>25</sup> The addressees described as 'loved ones of God', 'called ones' and 'saints' OR 'called to be saints' ie set apart. All these descriptions suggest God's initiative.

<sup>26</sup> **'Grace and peace'** – a common greeting but with profound meaning encompassing the ideas of God's favour and of a relationship at peace with him.

announcing<sup>32</sup> the gospel of his Son, is my witness that without ceasing I remember<sup>33</sup> you always<sup>34</sup> in my prayers, <sup>10</sup>asking that by God's will I may somehow at last succeed in coming to you.<sup>35</sup> <sup>11</sup>For I am longing to see you so that I may share with you some spiritual gift to strengthen you<sup>36</sup>—<sup>12</sup>or rather so that we may be mutually encouraged by each other's faith, both yours and mine.<sup>37</sup> <sup>13</sup>I want you to know, brothers and sisters, that I have often intended to come to you (but thus far have been prevented), in order that I may reap some harvest<sup>38</sup> among you as I have among the rest of the Gentiles. <sup>14</sup>I am a debtor both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to the wise and to the foolish <sup>39</sup><sup>15</sup>—hence my eagerness to proclaim the gospel to you also who are in Rome.

<sup>16</sup>For I am not ashamed of the gospel; it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who has faith, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. <sup>17</sup>For in it the righteousness of God is revealed through faith for faith; as it is written, "The one who is righteous will live by faith."<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Paul doesn't get to a 'second' so perhaps 'first' is another of saying 'to start with'. We note that he is dictating to Tertius (see 16:22).

<sup>28</sup> **'my'** God – a personal note.

<sup>29</sup> **'faith'** could refer to their initial belief in Christ but perhaps should be read here as their ongoing faithfulness to Christ. That is – the outworking of their faith.

<sup>30</sup> Hyperbole (as with 'concerning *all* of you')

<sup>31</sup> **'with my spirit'** – with my whole heart. Paul's service is a passion

<sup>32</sup> Gk Literally 'in the gospel'. There is no word 'announcing'. Paul is governed by the gospel. It goes beyond preaching to the core of his means, motivation and way of life.

<sup>33</sup> **'Remember'** - Make mention.

<sup>34</sup> Constantly – more like a dotted line than an unbroken one. (see also 1 Thess 1:2, 2:13, 5:17.)

<sup>35</sup> Paul's eagerness to see them is tempered by God's will.

<sup>36</sup> **'Gift'** – Gk. charisma. Could be a specific gift of the Spirit or a more general blessing which will build them up in their spiritual life (see 5:15, 1 Peter 4:10, 1 Cor 7:7). 'Strengthen you' – That you may be established.

<sup>37</sup> Seems to be added so that he will not sound too patronising.

<sup>38</sup> **'Harvest'** may well refer to converts since that was the aim of Paul's preaching amongst the Gentiles, but it could also refer to the 'fruit' of the Spirit that grows from obedience and faithfulness to the gospel.

<sup>39</sup> The gospel places an obligation upon him to reach *all* people, 'Greeks / wise' – the cultured and educated and the 'barbarians / foolish' the uncultured and uneducated.

<sup>40</sup> vs 16-17 are usually seen as presenting the theme of Romans.

**'for'** – Paul wants to proclaim the gospel everywhere because he has no reason to be ashamed of doing so. It is not simply good advice, it is the 'power of God for salvation'. Any 'shame' might be in the reception of the gospel as 'foolishness'.

**'Salvation'** covers many facets. There is salvation from wrath, alienation and futility. Salvation has been achieved (Eph 2:5) it is an ongoing process, 'being saved' (1 Cor 1:18, 2 Cor 2:15) and it is a future event (Rom 13:11, 1 Cor 5:5, 2 Tim 4:18)

**'has faith'** – literally everyone 'believing' - may have a sense of 'continuing in faith'

**'Jew – Greek'** understood as Jew and Gentile, everyone.

**'Righteousness of God'**. There is no article 'the'. This phrase is used eight times in Romans (1:17, 3:5, 3:21-22, 25-26, 10:3) but elsewhere only twice in Pauline letters (2 Cor 5:21, Phil 3:9). The noun righteousness is used thirty three times in Romans. We tend to think of righteousness in an ethical sense but in Hebrew thought it can denote an innocent status (forensic). So, does the phrase mean *the righteousness, which is God's activity* (See 3:5 used of God's justice; vs 17a and 18a which are both activities of God, ie his righteousness and wrath. The Hebrew is 'sedaqah' in the OT referring to his saving activity; the phrase is a technical term in late Judaism speaking of God's saving justice and embracing his faithfulness in covenant and creation)? Or does the phrase mean a *righteousness which is imputed to people from God* (Cranfield's view) (see 5:17, 10:3, Phil 3:9, 1 Cor 1:30, 2 Cor 5:21.)? Cranfield argues that 'through faith for faith' makes more sense when applied to people and the quote in Hab 2:4b focuses on justified people rather

<sup>18</sup>For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and wickedness of those who by their wickedness suppress the truth.<sup>41</sup> <sup>19</sup>For what can be known about God<sup>42</sup> is plain to them, because God has shown it to them.<sup>43</sup> <sup>20</sup>Ever since the creation of the world his eternal power and divine nature, invisible though they are, have been understood and seen through the things he has made. So they are without excuse;<sup>44</sup> <sup>21</sup>for though they knew God, they did not honour him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile<sup>45</sup> in their thinking, and their senseless minds were darkened.<sup>46</sup> <sup>22</sup>Claiming to be wise, they became fools;<sup>47</sup> <sup>23</sup>and they exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling a mortal human being or birds or four-footed animals or reptiles.<sup>48</sup>

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than God's just act. Cranfield sees 1:18 to 4:25 expounding 'the righteous one by faith' and that imputed righteousness fits the structure and argument better.

However if this righteousness is 'revealed' then we may assume that it is related to the gospel (which is what Paul is talking about here). In other words a revealed 'righteousness of God' would appear to be the death and resurrection of Jesus, by which we are saved. (NB that we should not then limit every reading of *dikaioisune* (righteousness) to only apply to salvation. Even in this context it may carry shades of all the above understandings.

**'through faith for faith'** – from faith to faith, ie faith from beginning to end. OR 'out of (Christ's) faith into faith (of the Christian). OR 'from an OT faith into a NT faith'.

**'the one who is righteous will live by faith'** (a quote from Hab 2:4b) – or – 'the-one-who-is-righteous-through-faith shall live'. The context in Habakkuk would suggest a faith in God's vision or plan which was to come (faith in the faithfulness of God to carry out his promises).

A literal translation would read, 'for righteousness of God in it is revealed out of faith into faith, as it has been written, but the righteous out of faith will live.'

A paraphrase could be, "God's righteousness is revealed [in the gospel of salvation for all people] which starts from God's faithfulness to a faith response in people. As it has been written [in Habakkuk], the righteous person will live because of faith [in God's promises and plan of salvation].

<sup>41</sup> v18 introduces the contrast to a righteous state and behaviour which emanates from faith. The opposite of life and living is ungodliness and wickedness which attracts wrath which is righteous judgement - God's controlled anger and active opposition to sin. The theme of the problem of sin continues through to 3:20 and reveals why the gospel of salvation is necessary.

**'is revealed'** not just on the judgement day but also in the present, in the outworking in people's lives.

(In a world which often only thinks of sin as serious crime, it is interesting to note that a person who does just four wrong things a day (or fails to do what they ought to do) will amass a total of 29,200 sins in 20 years!)

<sup>42</sup> Refers not to the gospel but to the evidence of God's existence and nature, which can be seen in the creation around us.

<sup>43</sup> Not just visually. People also have the God-given ability to also understand.

<sup>44</sup> Because they have no response even to the clear revelation that comes through nature. Note Stephen Hawking, "What is the fire that has formed the universe that my equations can describe."

**'So'** Gk. 'eis to einai' – literally 'for them to be' without excuse. ie *for the purpose* that they will have no excuse.

<sup>45</sup> **'became futile'** – In the LXX often used in regards to people turning to idols (2 kings 17:15, Amos 2:4).

<sup>46</sup> Revelation does not lead to obedience.

**'minds'** – literally 'hearts' Gk. *kardia* – less to do with the emotions, more to do with the inner or whole being.

**'not honoured'** Literally 'they have not glorified him'. Not given God the glory and thanks which is due.

<sup>47</sup> Clear thinking and intelligence will not lead to the right conclusions if the reasoning is built on a wrong assumption.

**'became fools'** – Gk. *emoranthesan* from *moraine* – also used in 1 Cor 20, and of salt losing its flavour (Matt 5:13, Lk 13:34). It is a foolishness which is empty, flat and insipid, having no deep value.

<sup>48</sup> The end result of misplaced wisdom is idolatry (most commonly today in the form of self-idolatry – 'the answer is within', 'do your own thing'.)



<sup>24</sup>Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the degrading of their bodies among themselves,<sup>49</sup> <sup>25</sup>because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever! Amen.<sup>50</sup>

<sup>26</sup>For this reason God gave them up to degrading passions. Their women<sup>51</sup> exchanged natural intercourse for unnatural, <sup>27</sup>and in the same way also the men,<sup>52</sup> giving up natural intercourse with women, were consumed with passion for one another. Men committed shameless acts with men and received in their own persons the due penalty for their error.<sup>53</sup>

<sup>28</sup>And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a debased mind and to things that should not be done.<sup>54</sup> <sup>29</sup>They were filled with every kind of wickedness,<sup>55</sup> evil, covetousness, malice. Full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, craftiness, they are gossips,<sup>56</sup> <sup>30</sup>slanderers, God-haters, insolent, haughty, boastful,

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**'immortal'** – Gk. *aphtharion*, incorruptible, not subject to decay like idols.

**'images resembling'** – emphasises the unreality – they do not even worship people but images of them and of animals.

<sup>49</sup> Although the pagan world may have good aspects Paul concentrates on the result of idolatry and godlessness. Idolatry does not save from sin but leads to it.

**'God gave them up'** – God actively commits people to the results of sin, not vindictively but as an act of mercy (11:32).

**'impurity'** – not 'sexual' impurity as in the NIV

**'degrading of their bodies'** – ritual prostitution is probably referred to here. There were over 1000 sacred prostitutes in the temple at Corinth.

Paul lists sensual sins in vs 24-27 and antisocial sins in vs 29-31

<sup>50</sup> **'truth about God'** Gk. *aletheian*. NEB 'the true God' (God who is truth) OR NIV 'truth of God' OR 'the truth God has made known'. Truth in these cases seems to be foundational for relationship with God as a truth made known concerning salvation, bound up in God, revealed in the gospel and worked out in the Christian life (Morris, additional note B p103).

This truth has been exchanged for 'the lie'. Idolatry is the lie. It is the basis of sin (Exo 20:2-4) as it is the rejection of God.

Rom 2:2 God's judgement is according to truth. 2:8 Truth is contrasted with unrighteousness. 2:20 truth found in the law. 3:7 Human falsehood contrasted with God's truth which abounds (similar to grace and salvation). 8:39 to 9:1 Paul speaks of truth in Christ. 15:8 Jesus became a servant of the Jews on behalf of God's truth.

**'worshipped and served'** have similar meanings, being given up to or committed to

**'who is blessed forever'** OR 'forever praised'. The mention of the Creator leads Paul into a short doxology to which he makes his own response, 'amen'.

<sup>51</sup> Literally 'their females'. Some argue that Paul only speaks against promiscuous homosexual/lesbian relationships. This passage indicates that the practice is unnatural with 'changed the natural function into that contrary to nature'.

<sup>52</sup> Literally 'males'.

<sup>53</sup> Refers to the male counterpart of the female perversion and refers to active rebellion rather than being an innocent victim or victim of circumstances.

**'receiving...'** – the very sin itself is the penalty as they become enslaved and consumed by it. It is sin against a man's and woman's own nature one aspect being that they do not allow for natural reproduction.

<sup>54</sup> **'things that should not be done'** suggests an affront to normal human decency.

Literally, they didn't 'approve' to hold to God... God gave them over to an 'unapproved' mind (ie debased or depraved – a term used of substandard coins.) In short... a conscience and mind unable to make clear moral judgements.

<sup>55</sup> From a debased mind the influence spreads to all areas.

<sup>56</sup> Gk *poneria* – wickedness, evil. Gk *Kakia* – evil, malice. Both words denoting thoroughgoing evil (linked also in 1 Cor 5:8).

**'envy'** leads to strife and in its extreme to murder.

inventors of evil, rebellious toward parents,<sup>57</sup> <sup>31</sup>foolish, faithless, heartless, ruthless.<sup>58</sup> <sup>32</sup>They know God's decree, that those who practice such things deserve to die—yet they not only do them but even applaud others who practice them.<sup>59</sup>

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**'deceit'** Gk. dolour – decoy, trick, bait for fish. Sin is seductive and treacherous.

**'malice'** – intentional wickedness.

**'whisperers'** implies slander and back-stabbing, leading to 'slander' (v30)

<sup>57</sup> **'slanderers'** – 'backbiters' (KJV) – Gk katalalos – talk against

**'God-haters'** – Gk. theostugeis – not found elsewhere in the NT.

Three aspects of pride follow...

**'insolent'** – treating others as beneath one (when one is actually inferior)

**'arrogant'** – contemptuous

**'boasters'** – Gk. alazonas – from 'wanderings' connected with vagrancy and implies empty claims with the suggestion of evil intent.

**'rebellious towards parents'** strikes at fundamental order, gratitude and respect of authority in society (Exo 20:12).

<sup>58</sup> Four adjectives:

**'Senseless'** – acting stupidly in an unintelligent way

**'Faithless'** – untrustworthy

**'Heartless'** – unaffectionate, without natural affection esp within the family.

**'Ruthless'** – merciless, without pity (the Greek word is unique to the NT)

<sup>59</sup> v32 brings us back to the overall point, that these people know what is right, do not act in ignorance and deserve death, yet they actually encourage ('applaud' NRSV,) more active than 'approve' in the NIV and implies an enjoyment of the wrongdoing of others.

**'decree'** – a legal term denoting God's just ordinances – not just the law but the moral and natural order built into creation and inherent in the human conscience.

**'to die'** - 'death' – used 22 times in Romans and 18 times in relation to sin. It could refer to either physical or spiritual death.

## A SYNOPSIS OF ROMANS 2

It is important to recognise the context of Romans 2 in the development of Paul's argument.

Overall he is pointing out that the Gentile, who has abandoned God (resulting in a litany of sins) is under condemnation. But in chapter two he is saying that the Jew is also under condemnation even though he is outwardly a descendant of Abraham and a member of the covenant people. Why? Because the Jew is also demonstrating by his sinfulness that he is only a covenant member physically and not spiritually. He is not a child of Abraham from the heart. The sinful actions of the Jew betray his spiritual bankruptcy.

So both Jew and Gentile will come under God's condemnation on the Judgement Day...

The Gentile: because he knows of God through what God has made AND because he has an innate awareness of right and wrong. He has a conscience. But his wrong deeds will reveal that he has still not turned to God. (Though if he does what is right God will see where he stands in his heart and judge accordingly)

The Jew: because, (despite the Covenant and living under the law with all the outward appearances), his wrong deeds and failure to keep the law betray the fact that his heart is not in tune with God either.

Only those who keep the law (or the intention of the law), from the heart, (Gentile or Jew) will be justified by God through Jesus Christ, who judges the heart.

Paul follows a similar line when he writes about circumcision. Circumcision is the outward sign of the Covenant People but if the heart of the Jew is not right (demonstrated by the evil he does, breaking the Mosaic law) then he will be condemned by the very Mosaic law that he lives under, and the outward sign of circumcision will be meaningless. It will not save him. Circumcision needs to be a spiritual condition of one's relationship with God, demonstrated by a desire from the heart to do what is right. Only then is the outward sign meaningful. (However Paul will go on in chapter 3 to show that circumcision, in so far as it is a sign of God's Covenant with his people, has great advantages in pointing the Jew towards the faithfulness and justice of God).

Paul's argument will develop further in chapter three to show that in fact both Jew and Gentile are under condemnation because *no one* actually meets God's standard (3:23) and this is why God's free gift of grace in Christ Jesus is essential.

## ROMANS CHAPTER 2

<sup>1</sup>Therefore you have no excuse, whoever you are, when you judge others; for in passing judgment on another you condemn yourself, because you, the judge, are doing the very same things.<sup>60</sup> <sup>2</sup>You say, “We know that God’s judgment on those who do such things is in accordance with truth.”<sup>61</sup> <sup>3</sup>Do you imagine, whoever you are, that when you judge those who do such things and yet do them yourself, you<sup>62</sup> will escape the judgment of God? <sup>4</sup>Or do you despise the riches of his kindness and forbearance and patience? Do you not realize that God’s kindness is meant to lead you to repentance?<sup>63</sup> <sup>5</sup>But by your hard and impenitent heart you are storing up wrath for yourself on the day of wrath, when God’s righteous judgment will be revealed.<sup>64</sup> <sup>6</sup>For he will repay according to each one’s deeds:<sup>65</sup> <sup>7</sup>to those who by patiently doing good seek for glory and honour and immortality, he will give eternal life; <sup>8</sup>while for those who are self-seeking and who obey not the truth but wickedness, there will be wrath and fury.<sup>66</sup> <sup>9</sup>There will be anguish and distress for everyone who

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<sup>60</sup> Who is Paul addressing? The pagans who are the subject of vs 12-16, the Jews mentioned in v17 or people generally who hold moral ideals? Probably primarily Jews (since they would agree with Paul’s assessment of the Gentile world in chapter one, and v17 sounds like a continuance of the theme), but also anyone who took a superior stance.

The style of writing here is known as ‘diatribe’ and involves a lively, if imaginary, debate between writer and reader.

‘**you have no excuse**’ – in a legal sense, ‘you have no reasoned defence’ (as in 1:20 of the Gentiles), because they were acting in the same way as the Gentiles they condemned.

The point is that in behaviour there is no difference between Jew and Gentile so Jewish criticism becomes self-condemnatory.

‘**Whoever you are**’ in vs 1 and 3 is literally ‘O man’.

<sup>61</sup> ‘**You say**’ has been inserted in the NRSV and interprets what follows as an (imagined) quote from some of his readers. A more natural reading might be, “But we know that God’s judgement is true so do you think you will escape...” (‘But’, Gk. *de*, is missing from the NRSV).

The phrase, ‘**God’s judgement**’ is only used here and in v3 in the NT, nevertheless it is invariably assumed that where judgement is mentioned elsewhere it is God’s judgement and that it is just (according to the truth –that is, true to God’s nature and right justice).

<sup>62</sup> ‘**You**’, Gk *su*, is emphatic (implying, You of all people). Many Jews thought they could sin with impunity because they belonged to the covenant people.

‘**When**’ is absent in the Gk.

<sup>63</sup> It may be that those who were judging others yet acting the same way were doing so because they had not experienced God’s judgement. Paul ascribes this to the fact that God is merciful and demonstrating forbearance (or tolerance: a holding back until the judgement mentioned in v5).

‘**not realising**’, not knowing (when they should have known).

‘**repentance**’, a change of mind about sin, a change of direction from and to, not simply remorse.

<sup>64</sup> ‘**Storing up**’ usually associated with treasure, but here, wrath. (NIV adds ‘God’s’ to wrath)

‘**righteous-judgement**’ is a Greek compound word only used here in the NT.

<sup>65</sup> ‘**repay**’ Gk. *apodidomai*, ‘give’ in NIV, ‘render’ in KJV.

This verse is a quote from Psalms 62:12... ‘Surely you will reward each person according to what he has done’ (implying both good and bad). While salvation is according to grace, judgement is based on works.

Many Jews held that salvation was bound up in the law, by belonging to the covenant people by blood. Paul makes it clear that they cannot appeal to their membership of the chosen people since God will render to them according to their (evil) works, which are just as bad as the Gentile/pagan behaviour.

<sup>66</sup> This is not saying that glory and immortality are granted for good works, nor (as is suggested in some strands of ‘The New Perspective on Paul’) that ongoing good works are a necessary ingredient for salvation. It rather suggests an orientation towards God and to the hope of glory which leads to perseverance in the faith in Jesus Christ. In this context the good works are an expression and evidence of one’s faith and focus. In this respect Jew and Gentile are placed on the same level.

does evil, the Jew first and also the Greek,<sup>67</sup> <sup>10</sup>but glory and honour and peace for everyone who does good, the Jew first and also the Greek.<sup>68</sup> <sup>11</sup>For God shows no partiality.<sup>69</sup>

<sup>12</sup>All who have sinned apart from the law will also perish apart from the law, and all who have sinned under the law will be judged by the law.<sup>70</sup> <sup>13</sup>For it is not the hearers of the law who are righteous in God's sight, but the doers of the law who will be justified.<sup>71</sup> <sup>14</sup>When Gentiles, who do not possess the law, do instinctively what the law requires, these, though not having the law, are a law to themselves. <sup>15</sup>They show that what the law requires is written on their hearts, to which their own conscience also bears witness; and their conflicting thoughts will accuse or perhaps excuse them.<sup>72</sup> <sup>16</sup>on the day when, according to my gospel, God, through Jesus Christ, will judge the secret thoughts of all.<sup>73</sup>

<sup>17</sup>But if you call yourself a Jew<sup>74</sup> and rely on the law and boast of your relation to God<sup>75</sup> <sup>18</sup>and know his will and determine what is best because you are instructed in the law, <sup>19</sup>and if you are sure that you are a guide to the blind, a light to those who

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**'glory and honour'** could God's glory and honour they seek or the glory and honour conferred by God which v10 would seem to suggest.

**'self-seeking'** – the one who does not seek God seeks him or herself. The outcome of this orientation is selfishness, disobedience to the truth and obedience to unrighteousness.

**'wrath and anger'** both have much the same meaning.

<sup>67</sup> Both Jew and Gentile will be judged, but Jews first (presumably because they have received the revelation first).

<sup>68</sup> A similar thought to verse 7.

<sup>69</sup> This appears to be the key to the chapter. When courts in human systems may be biased or corrupt, God, in his righteousness, does not play favourites.

<sup>70</sup> Verse 12 expounds on v11. It does not matter whether people have formally received the law or not. The ultimate Judgement comes to both apart or by (Gk – *dia* – through) the law. It is the sin that counts.

<sup>71</sup> **'For'** expands on verse 12.

**'will be justified'** – (ie on the Judgement Day) A legal term associated with the courtroom carrying the idea of being *declared* righteous rather than *made* righteous.

<sup>72</sup> **'For'** at the beginning of v14 is dropped in the NRSV and translated 'indeed' in the NIV.

Paul argues for an inbuilt awareness in Gentiles of right and wrong (Probably *all* Gentiles rather than some). Conscience is their 'law' and is the reason they have no excuse and may be judged in the same way as the Jew, who has received the law. In that sense Gentiles may not have the law, they *are their own law and their own judge*. However the fact that they both accuse and excuse ('accusing' and 'defending' are both legal terms) themselves suggests that their own law draws on some external standard

**'instinctively'** – Gk. *phusei* – by nature.

**'requirement of the law'** (literally, 'work of the law') That is, the things they *do* in accordance with their conscience, coincides with the law given to Moses. This coincidence bears witness that God's law is written in their hearts. (Conscience in this case seems to evaluate past actions rather than determine future conduct. See 1 Cor 1:7ff and 10:25ff compared with Rom 9:1 and 2 Cor 4:2 & 5:11).

<sup>73</sup> Many commentaries (and the NIV) put verses 14-15 in brackets and link v16 to v13. Either way can make good sense and brackets are not necessary, since v16 talks of God judging the secret thoughts which links quite well to the inner conscience of the Gentiles mentioned in verse 15.

**'my gospel'** – the gospel as Paul has received it and preached it. This phrase would suggest that Paul is laying out his understandings and credentials in preparation for a visit to Rome.

**'through Jesus'** – God's judgement through Jesus reminds us that the judgement will be fair since Jesus has lived as one of us.

<sup>74</sup> Diatribe – a return to addressing the overconfidence of Jews. 'if' throws doubt on the proposition.

What follows to the end of verse 20 is a list embodying the superior attitude many Jews took towards Gentiles.

<sup>75</sup> **'your relation to'** is missing. Literally it reads 'and boast in God'.

are in darkness, <sup>20</sup>a corrector of the foolish,<sup>76</sup> a teacher of children,<sup>77</sup> having in the law the embodiment of knowledge and truth,<sup>78</sup> <sup>21</sup>you, then, that teach others, will you not teach yourself? While you preach against stealing, do you steal? <sup>22</sup>You that forbid adultery, do you commit adultery? You that abhor idols, do you rob temples? <sup>23</sup>You that boast in the law, do you dishonour God by breaking the law? <sup>24</sup>For, as it is written, “The name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you.”<sup>79</sup>

<sup>25</sup>Circumcision<sup>80</sup> indeed is of value if you obey the law; but if you break the law, your circumcision has become uncircumcision. <sup>26</sup>So, if those who are uncircumcised keep the requirements of the law, will not their uncircumcision be regarded as circumcision? <sup>27</sup>Then those who are physically uncircumcised but keep the law will condemn you that have the written code and circumcision but break the law. <sup>28</sup>For a person is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is true circumcision something external and physical. <sup>29</sup>Rather, a person is a Jew who is one inwardly, and real circumcision is a matter of the heart—it is spiritual and not literal. Such a person receives praise not from others but from God.

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<sup>76</sup> **‘foolish’**, not in the sense of ‘stupid’ but those without spiritual insight.

<sup>77</sup> **‘children’** – literally ‘babies’, meaning the uninstructed, rather than literal infants.

<sup>78</sup> **‘having in the law...’** Paul is not disputing this fact, but he is disputing whether it makes a difference to the Jews he is addressing. Whether they are applying it to themselves.

<sup>79</sup> In verses 21-24 Paul comes to the point of his questions in verses 17-20, which is to further ask whether those Jews think they are above all the things they propose to the Gentiles. He does this with a series of direct questions in the present tense – ‘are you doing now, continuing to do, the very things you apply to the Gentiles’.

**‘do you plunder temples’** – that is, do you profit from idolatry. This could refer to literal theft and sale of the idols (Josephus says that Moses forbade the robbing of temples or the theft of a treasure dedicated to another god, suggesting that it may have been a practice) or this could be a reference to withholding what truly belongs to God.

v24 A quote from Isaiah 52:5? In form but less in meaning. Resembles Ezekiel 36:20, 23 in thought.

Israel, who was supposed to be a blessing and good example to the nations, turns out to be the reverse.

<sup>80</sup> **‘Circumcision’** – The sign of entry into and membership of the Covenant (Gen 17:9-14). The outward sign is useless if the heart is not right (ie without the reality). Since the Covenant is circumscribed by law (even before the Mosaic Law was written), breaking the law nullified the human side of the Covenant and the sign of circumcision which accompanied it.

The reverse is also true from verse 26ff. The uncircumcised who keep the requirements of the law, also keep the essential Covenant requirements. They behave as though circumcised. (Paul may be thinking of Gentile Christians or in a wider context to people like the centurion, Cornelius, who prior to Peter’s visit was living up to the revelation as far as he had received and understood it – Acts 10:1-2 .)

### ROMANS CHAPTER 3

<sup>1</sup>Then what advantage has the Jew? Or what is the value of circumcision?<sup>81</sup> <sup>2</sup>Much, in every way. For in the first place the Jews were entrusted with the oracles of God.<sup>82</sup> <sup>3</sup>What if some were unfaithful?<sup>83</sup> Will their faithlessness nullify the faithfulness of God? <sup>4</sup>By no means!<sup>84</sup> Although everyone is a liar, let God be proved true,<sup>85</sup> as it is written,

“So that you may be justified in your words,  
and prevail in your judging.”<sup>86</sup>

<sup>5</sup>But if our injustice serves to confirm the justice of God, what should we say? That God is unjust to inflict wrath on us? (I speak in a human way.) <sup>6</sup>By no means! For then how could God judge the world? <sup>7</sup>But if through my falsehood God’s truthfulness abounds to his glory, why am I still being condemned as a sinner? <sup>8</sup>And why not say (as some people slander us by saying that we say), “Let us do evil so that good may come”? Their condemnation is deserved!<sup>87</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> Paul has just levelled the playing field by indicating that, i) both Jew and Gentile sin. ii) sin attracts God’s wrath and judgement. iii) physical circumcision makes no difference. So it is natural to ask if the Jew has any advantage at all. This is the first of a series of rhetorical questions.

<sup>82</sup> The answer to Paul’s rhetorical question is, “Yes” but the advantage does not lie in the *sign* of the covenant but rather in “the words of God” which were entrusted through the covenant. These “oracles” could be the covenant promises (or the covenant itself), messianic prophecies, the law, the ten commandments, or the whole of the Hebrew Scriptures.

<sup>83</sup> ‘**unfaithful**’, NIV and NASB have ‘did not believe’ but the context suggests that they were unfaithful to the charge entrusted to them (which included the promises fulfilled in Jesus Christ). Has this failure nullified God’s faithfulness to his covenant with Israel – and the Gk construction demands the answer, “No”. ‘**God’s faithfulness**’? It cannot be that all Israel are blessed (See chapter 2 and 1 Corinthians 10), nor that God’s plans of blessing are not thwarted by the few (since many in Israel rejected Christ). Rather that God’s promises for Jews are as just and as valid as ever but must be embraced by them. Israel may still respond.

<sup>84</sup> ‘**By no means**’ – Literally ‘May it never be!’

<sup>85</sup> ‘**Let God be proven true**’ – Gk ‘But let God be true’. Let God be seen to be what he is: thoroughly trustworthy and reliable. Any unfaithfulness lies with humans and that cannot influence God’s faithfulness. In fact human unfaithfulness throws God’s faithfulness into sharper relief.

<sup>86</sup> A quote from Psa 51:4 (exactly as in the LXX) where the psalmist confesses his sin and acknowledges that it is only against God and that God is proved right (justified) in what he says.

<sup>87</sup> Paul anticipates that some of his readers (perhaps the Jewish group) may ask, ‘If God’s righteousness is seen more clearly in contrast with our unrighteousness, how can God condemn this good outcome?’ It’s like the person who says, ‘My wife’s and my arguments are good because we enjoy making up’, or ‘If there was no evil in the world we wouldn’t experience patience and mercy and deep expressions of love,’ or ‘my sin keeps me humble’. If such a suggestion were true it would nullify all judgement by God.

‘**I speak in a human way**’ – Paul quickly distances himself from any suggestion that God might be unjust. In v7 the NIV rather unnecessarily inserts, ‘someone might argue’. It stands well enough as another rhetorical question.

v8 would indicate that people had distorted Paul’s doctrine of grace to make it sound as though he was encouraging the belief that it doesn’t matter how much people commit sin.

‘**Their** (Literally: ‘whose’) **judgement is deserved (just)**’ – What or who does ‘whose’ refer to? i) The slanderers? ii) those who advocate doing evil? iii) The argument itself? iv) God who does the judging?

<sup>9</sup>What then? Are we any better off?<sup>88</sup> No, not at all; for we have already charged that all, both Jews and Greeks, are under the power of sin, <sup>10</sup>as it is written:

- “There is no one who is righteous, not even one;  
<sup>11</sup> there is no one who has understanding,  
there is no one who seeks God.  
<sup>12</sup> All have turned aside, together they have become worthless;  
there is no one who shows kindness,  
there is not even one.” [Psa 14:1-3]<sup>89</sup>  
<sup>13</sup> “Their throats are opened graves;  
they use their tongues to deceive.” [Psa 5:9]<sup>90</sup>  
“The venom of vipers is under their lips.” [Psa 140:3]  
<sup>14</sup> “Their mouths are full of cursing and bitterness.” [Psa 10:7]  
<sup>15</sup> “Their feet are swift to shed blood;<sup>91</sup>  
<sup>16</sup> ruin and misery are in their paths,<sup>92</sup>  
<sup>17</sup> and the way of peace they have not known.” [Isa 59:7-8]  
<sup>18</sup> “There is no fear of God before their eyes.” [Psa 36:1]<sup>93</sup>

<sup>19</sup>Now we know that whatever the law says, it speaks to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be silenced, and the whole world may be held accountable to God.<sup>94</sup> <sup>20</sup>For “no human being will be justified in his sight” by deeds prescribed by the law, for through the law comes the knowledge of sin.<sup>95</sup>

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<sup>88</sup> **‘Are we any better off’** – ‘Do we excel?’ is the active meaning of the verb but this is middle or passive. The middle form of the verb means ‘do we have/put forward a defence?’ In the passive form the verb says, ‘are we in a worse position (than they)?’ Many scholars still take the active meaning.

Active: ‘Are we any better off’ – referring to Jews with respect to escaping judgement.

Middle: ‘Are we who are accused making excuses as though claiming to be blameless.’

<sup>89</sup> Verses 10-12 are from Psa 14:1-3 though v10 is more of a summary than a direct quote. They are comprehensively inclusive of all people, Jew and Gentile. This lays a foundation for what Paul will say about the justice of God’s election – No-one deserves anything. That God chooses anyone is because of his grace.

**‘No-one has understanding’** – If they realised the outcome they would not sin.

<sup>90</sup> v13-18 outlines the character of the wicked.

**‘throats’** is actually singular, ‘throat’. Corporate evil is on view and may refer to murderous impulses, or destructive teaching.

<sup>91</sup> **‘swift’** – an eagerness to do wrong.

<sup>92</sup> They leave a trail of misery which contrasts with the way of peace in v17 of which they know nothing. Sin separates from God and from other people.

<sup>93</sup> **‘fear’** here is more than simply respect. It is the terror which should be the consequences of their actions and which in turn should lead to wisdom (Proverbs 1:7).

<sup>94</sup> Paul counters a potential Jewish objection to the quotes, ‘But that refers to Gentiles, not us.’ Paul states in effect that the law (the whole OT in the wider sense of ‘law’), which he has just quoted, applies to those who are under (lit: in) the law – that is, the Jews. Therefore all are included as accountable and anticipating judgement.

**‘But we know’** appeals to common knowledge or self-evident truth.

<sup>95</sup> Following the argument of v19, consequently no-one will be accepted (declared righteous / acquitted) by God for observing the law, because law brings a full recognition of sin (as a plumb line reveals a leaning building), but law does not deal with the problem of sin. Sin, it must be remembered, is fundamentally the fracturing of humankind’s relationship with God by attempting to usurp God’s position by substituting oneself in his place.



<sup>21</sup>But now,<sup>96</sup> apart from law,<sup>97</sup> the righteousness of God<sup>98</sup> has been disclosed, and is attested by the law and the prophets, <sup>22</sup>the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ<sup>99</sup> for all who believe. <sup>100</sup>For there is no distinction, <sup>23</sup>since all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God;<sup>101</sup> <sup>24</sup>they are now justified<sup>102</sup> by his grace as a gift,<sup>103</sup> through the redemption<sup>104</sup> that is in Christ Jesus, <sup>25</sup>whom God put forward<sup>105</sup> as a sacrifice of atonement<sup>106</sup> by his blood, effective through faith.<sup>107</sup> He did this to

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<sup>96</sup> **'But now'** (can mean the next step in the argument or can be temporal or both) – introduces the remedy for sin (Justification) from 3:21 to 5:21.

Humankind is all sinful.

The verdict of guilt hangs over all

Because of what Christ has done we are acquitted in him and declared 'not guilty'.

**3:21-26 covers:** A righteousness of God. Faith in Jesus Christ. Sinfulness of humankind. Redemption through Christ bringing justification by God's grace. Sacrifice of atonement. God's justice and forbearance.

We see:-

The need – human sinfulness

The character of God – forbearance, justice and righteousness

The means – The sacrifice of atonement (hilasterion – propitiation – the turning aside of God's wrath) the blood of Christ and God's grace.

The requirement – faith in Jesus Christ and his blood.

The result – justification

<sup>97</sup> **'Apart from the law'** – Refers in the first instance to Jewish law but applies to all law since no law can make right relationships. It can only ever be a guide towards them. (It's worth noting that the more laws there are is usually an indication that people are failing to observe their intention.

<sup>98</sup> **'A righteousness from God'** (see 1:17) It's use in v22 would suggest that here it means a righteousness conferred on people – a right standing which comes from God.

<sup>99</sup> **'Through faith in Jesus Christ'** could be, 'through faith(fullness) of Christ' – if so, 'to all who believe' does not become redundant. It could also be understood as, 'God's faithfulness in Jesus Christ'

<sup>100</sup> **'disclosed'** – manifested – not discovered or deduced – and not just when Christ came. It was attested to by the law and the prophets (ie OT Scripture). It indicates that relationship with God and the way to it has always been God's initiative and (as Paul will argue using Abraham as an example) has always been through faith.

**'for all who believe'** may suggest that the attestation continues into the present.

<sup>101</sup> **'For all have sinned'** is the aorist tense in Greek (denoting a completed action) and therefore reads, 'for all sinned'. 'fall short' however is present tense, which in Greek denotes an ongoing action.

**'fall short of the glory of God'** – in heaven as a future state and in the present in the failure of people to meet God's standard for humankind, the failure to conform to his image and the failure to share true relationship with him.

<sup>102</sup> **'justified'** – declared right.

<sup>103</sup> **'grace'** – God's goodness, initiative and favour.

**'as a gift'** – Literally, 'freely'.

<sup>104</sup> **'redemption'** is illustrated by a POW, or a prisoner under sentence of death, being released on the payment of a price (Exodus 21:29-30). The price is not paid to the Devil rather the price paid satisfies the justice of God.

**'in Jesus Christ'** – He is the price.

<sup>105</sup> **'Put forward'** – NIV 'presented' – JB Philips 'appointed' – purposed (as in 1:13 & Eph 1:9)

<sup>106</sup> **'sacrifice of atonement'** Gk hilasterion... (note that 'sacrifice' is not necessarily present in this verb).

In the LXX hilasterion is the Gk translation for the Hebrew, 'mercy seat' (also Heb 9:5, NIV atonement cover). Atonement has to do with covering of iniquity. In relation to the Ark of the Covenant the mercy seat was the place of meeting with God (Exodus 25:22)

Also translated **Propitiation** (the turning aside of God's wrath) 1:18-3:20 shows sinners under God's wrath.

That wrath remains unless Christ's sacrifice averts it. God turning aside his own anger is only a problem if we think of wrath as an out of control, vengeful condition rather than an expression of punishment demanded by justice. Propitiation retains more of the idea removing a barrier to a right relationship than...

show his righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over the sins previously committed; <sup>26</sup>it was to prove at the present time that he himself is righteous and that he justifies the one who has faith in Jesus.<sup>108</sup>

<sup>27</sup>Then what becomes of boasting?<sup>109</sup> It is excluded. By what law? By that of works? No, but by the law of faith. <sup>28</sup>For we hold that a person is justified by faith apart from works prescribed by the law. <sup>110</sup> <sup>29</sup>Or is God the God of Jews only? Is he not the God of Gentiles also? Yes, of Gentiles also, <sup>30</sup>since God is one; and he will justify the circumcised on the ground of faith and the uncircumcised through that same faith.<sup>111</sup> <sup>31</sup>Do we then overthrow the law by this faith? By no means! On the contrary, we uphold the law.<sup>112</sup>

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**Expiation**, which is sometimes substituted here. This carries the idea of ‘taking away sin’ – the removal of guilt, as though sin were a thing. Like making amends. (If a person fails to do something and falls out with another, he may do what needed to be done without necessarily restoring the relationship).

<sup>107</sup> Morris notes the two ways in which propitiation is effected, by faith and in Jesus’ blood (rather than by faith in his blood).

<sup>108</sup> In God’s righteousness he does not overlook sins committed in the past. They are also dealt with in Jesus. God’s mercy is seen in his forbearance, alongside his justice. ‘who has faith in Jesus’ Literally ‘one of faith of Jesus’.

<sup>109</sup> Another rhetorical question.

<sup>110</sup> **‘works’** here is shown to be works of the law in the next verse. This may denote more than simply obeying the law, but the fact that obeying the OT law signifies membership of the Covenant. Either way neither membership of the Covenant nor obedience to the law brings justification in God’s sight, rather the ‘law’ of faith. Since the latter is God’s initiative there is no room for human boasting.

**‘we maintain’** – Paul sees his argument as generally upheld by authentic Christians

<sup>111</sup> **‘or’** is omitted in the NIV. If there is one God (as Jews would claim) then he must be God of both Jew and Gentile. He cannot justify Gentiles on the grounds of law (or even Covenant membership) because they don’t have it, so justification must be by faith, for both Jew and Gentile.

<sup>112</sup> Has faith made law redundant? In Matthew 5:17 Jesus said that he came to fulfil the law and the prophets. Here in Rom 3:21 Paul affirms that the law and prophets attest to salvation. ‘Law’ as both an expression for the Ten Commandments and associated laws, and for the Old Testament as a whole, is about relationship with God and with other people. Faith in Jesus Christ deals with sin (the barrier to relationship), and brings people into relationship- thus enabling and fulfilling the intent of the law. Keeping of the law is then the outcome of faith.

## ROMANS 4

### Summary of Paul's argument so far...

1:16-17 "I am not ashamed of the gospel..."

All are sinners – pagans are without excuse, they know God's decree.

- Jews do the same wrongs as pagans

Judgement is coming on all and outward circumcision is only of value if you obey the law.

No-one is justified by law.

A righteousness is revealed from God which is through faith and apart from works of the law.

This faith upholds the law.

4:1-25

Paul is in the process of answering the question, "What is a true Jew?"- that is, "What makes a true Jew different from a Christian Gentile?"

He does not discard the Old Testament because it finds its fulfilment in Jesus, but the true Jew is not one who conforms to the outward rituals but one who:-

Sees where the OT is pointing

Is a true Jew, inwardly (2:28-29)

Recognises Jesus as Messiah

Responds to him through faith

Fulfils the intent of the law through faith

Paul will now go on to show that even Abraham was considered right in God's eyes (justified) by faith, rather than the works / ritual of the law (which actually derive from faith. In other words he now takes up the argument of 3:27-28 with specific examples.

4:1ff Example 1: Abraham believed and was reckoned righteous.

work, deserves pay

Trust/faith, reckoned righteous

4:6ff Example 2: David

forgiveness is apart from works

4:9ff Circumcision: A sign of righteousness, but Abraham reckoned righteous before circumcision

Abraham is therefore the ancestor of...

those who believe apart from circumcision AND those who are circumcised

4:13ff LAW – The promise of inheritance came to (was reckoned to) Abraham and his descendants through righteousness – not law.

If the promise is through law, it annuls faith and the promise because law cannot save nor bring forgiveness.

Therefore the promise is through faith and is a gift.

4:17ff HOPE – Abraham could only hope in God who gives life.

<sup>1</sup>What then are we to say was gained by<sup>113</sup> Abraham, our ancestor according to the flesh?<sup>114</sup> <sup>2</sup>For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God.<sup>115</sup> <sup>3</sup>For what does the scripture say? “Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness” [Gen 15:6].<sup>116</sup> <sup>4</sup>Now to one who works, wages are not reckoned as a gift but as something due. <sup>5</sup>But to one who without works trusts him who justifies the ungodly, such faith is reckoned as righteousness.<sup>117</sup> <sup>6</sup>So also David speaks of the blessedness of those to whom God reckons righteousness apart from works:

- <sup>7</sup> “Blessed are those whose iniquities are forgiven,  
and whose sins are covered;  
<sup>8</sup> blessed is the one against whom the Lord will not reckon sin.”<sup>118</sup>

<sup>9</sup>Is this blessedness, then, pronounced only on the circumcised, or also on the uncircumcised? We say, “Faith was reckoned to Abraham as righteousness.” <sup>10</sup>How then was it reckoned to him? Was it before or after he had been circumcised? It was not after, but before he was circumcised. <sup>11</sup>He received the sign of circumcision as a seal of the righteousness that he had by faith while he was still uncircumcised. The purpose was to make him the ancestor of all who believe without being circumcised and who thus have righteousness reckoned to them, <sup>12</sup>and likewise the ancestor of the circumcised who are not only circumcised but who also follow the example of the faith that our ancestor Abraham had before he was circumcised. <sup>119</sup>

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<sup>113</sup> ‘gained by’ – literally ‘to have discovered’ – is omitted in some mss which read ‘say about’.

<sup>114</sup> Could be paraphrased, ‘what shall we say that Abraham discovered (or that we discover about Abraham) by human effort (from a human point of view)?’ OR it could be a reference to Abraham as a ‘physical’ ancestor (according to the flesh) – making the point that although Abraham may be the physical ancestor of the Jews he is not necessarily their spiritual ancestor. He is spiritual ancestor of all believers according to the Spirit.

<sup>115</sup> If he had been justified by his works, Abraham could boast to others, but his works would not impress God. OR “but not before God” could qualify ‘justified by works’. ie. Paul is saying that Abraham was not justified by works before God (even if others may have thought so). And if Abraham wasn’t justified by works, who else could?

<sup>116</sup> ‘For’ – following on from the fact that Abraham was not justified by works – we see that it was his belief that was accounted to him as righteousness. (‘reckoned’ clearly defines righteousness as a *status*.)

<sup>117</sup> Paul here contrasts works, which incur debt and payment (which God is obliged to pay) to grace, which is a gift (‘as a gift’ is literally ‘according to grace’). Paul does not say ‘according to *faith*’, which could then be construed as a work, but ‘according to *grace*’, which is God’s initiative. The one who has no works of law to bring *has* to trust in God’s grace for justification. Paul is not saying that Christians should not do good works but continues to point out the difference as it relates to justification. It is the one who trusts God (who justifies the ungodly) who is accounted righteous.

<sup>118</sup> David is notable as an adulterer and murderer, but blessed by God. There is no question of his justification by works. Verses 7-8, a quote from Psa 32:1-2, seems to put the case that people do not get what they deserve. ‘covered’ is not so much ‘to cover up’ as to covering (paying) a debt. ‘not reckon sin’ – ‘not’ is Gk οὐ μὲν and is strongly stated.

<sup>119</sup> Circumcision was central to one’s identification with the covenant and of being one of God’s covenant people. It set one apart from the Gentiles. To prove that justification is by faith for all people Paul must establish when the sign was received by Abraham. He concludes that the sign was received after he had been reckoned as righteous through faith (when Abraham was 99 – Gen 17:24). He replies to his own rhetorical question in v10 with a negative and positive statement – ‘not in circumcision but in uncircumcision’. Circumcision was then a sign or seal of the righteousness already pronounced, with the purpose of God that Abraham should be the forebear of all who exercise the same sort faith. Note that there were no conditions attached to the promises given to Abraham.

<sup>13</sup>For the promise that he would inherit the world did not come to Abraham or to his descendants through the law but through the righteousness of faith. <sup>14</sup>If it is the adherents of the law who are to be the heirs, faith is null and the promise is void. <sup>15</sup>For the law brings wrath; but where there is no law, neither is there violation.<sup>120</sup>

<sup>16</sup>For this reason it depends on faith,<sup>121</sup> in order that the promise may rest on grace and be guaranteed to all his descendants,<sup>122</sup> not only to the adherents of the law but also to those who share the faith of Abraham (for he is the father of all of us, <sup>17</sup>as it is written,<sup>123</sup> “I have made you the father of many nations”)—in the presence of the God in whom he believed, who gives life to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist.<sup>124</sup> <sup>18</sup>Hoping against hope, he believed that he would become “the father of many nations,” according to what was said, “So numerous shall your descendants be.”<sup>125</sup> <sup>19</sup>He did not weaken in faith when he considered<sup>126</sup> his own body, which was already as good as dead (for he was about a hundred years old), or when he considered the barrenness of Sarah’s womb. <sup>20</sup>No distrust made him waver concerning the promise of God, but he grew strong in his faith<sup>127</sup> as he gave glory to God,<sup>128</sup> <sup>21</sup>being fully convinced<sup>129</sup> that God was able to do what he had promised. <sup>22</sup>Therefore his faith “was reckoned to him as righteousness.” <sup>23</sup>Now the words, “it was reckoned to him,” were written not for his sake alone, <sup>24</sup>but for ours also. It will be reckoned<sup>130</sup> to us who believe in him who

<sup>120</sup> Paul does not argue that law was given after Abraham, but does argue that grace and law are incompatible **‘the descendants’** is singular ‘the seed’ and could refer to Jesus.

**‘inherit the world’** refers to a worldwide family, spiritually not just physically.

**‘the law brings wrath’** – literally ‘works wrath’. That is, it reveals the imperfections and failures and brings down condemnation and judgement.

If there is no law it cannot be broken, but then we would not realise the need of salvation.

<sup>121</sup> **‘it’** could be ‘promise’ as supplied in the NIV, but it could be righteousness, the inheritance, the plan of salvation or all the benefits of faith.

<sup>122</sup> There can be no guarantees if justification depends on keeping the law since the Jews don’t keep the law and the Gentiles don’t have the law. For God to embrace all people justification must be his gift.

<sup>123</sup> An appeal to the LXX. Gen 17:5.

<sup>124</sup> **‘I have made’** – The perfect tense gives weight to the permanence of the promise to be father of many nations.

**‘in the presence of the God’** who in particular gave life to Abraham and Sarah in the form of Isaac. But to all who come with the same faith they approach God as those dead, bringing nothing. It is Creator God who brings life and resurrection from nothing.

<sup>125</sup> **‘Hope’** is grounded in what God has done or promises to do. It is an expectation rather than vague optimism. It is confidence in the promise of ongoing relationship with God (and it is why it abides alongside love and faith in 1 Cor 13). Here in v18 though Paul seems to be saying that Abraham believed against all human hope and hoped in God’s promise to him.

Literally: ‘who beyond hope on hope believed, that he should become father of many nations’.

<sup>126</sup> **‘when he considered’** – Some mss have ‘he did not consider’ others ‘he considered’. Both make sense if the first is applied to hope in God and the second to human hope (which is the more probable since the same is applied to Sarah’s barrenness.)

<sup>127</sup> **‘grew strong in his faith’** fails to put the emphasis on God’s work – Literally it reads, ‘was empowered by faith’. It is not the faith itself that empowers but the object of faith which is God

<sup>128</sup> **‘gave glory’** is to recognise God’s glory (it cannot be added to), ascribing to God what is due to him even before the promise was fulfilled.

<sup>129</sup> **‘being fully convinced’** that God would achieve his promise somehow (even though he had found the suggestion laughable (Gen 17:17-18).

<sup>130</sup> **‘it will be reckoned’** takes an eschatological viewpoint of justification at the final judgement day.

raised Jesus our Lord from the dead,<sup>131</sup> <sup>25</sup>who was handed over to death for our trespasses and was raised for our justification.<sup>132</sup>

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<sup>131</sup> A repetition of the idea of v17 with explicit reference to Jesus' resurrection

<sup>132</sup> Since Jesus has been raised we can be justified.

**'handed over' – 'to death'** is not in the Greek but may be assumed.

## ROMANS 5

### 5:1-11 Search for a title...

A transition from justification to spiritual life (Black)

Fruits of Justification (Boylan)

Final salvation of all believers (Godet)

Key to the rest of the letter (Lloyd-Jones) (ie assurance that our salvation is complete)

A summary of the argument up to 8:39 (Dodd)

Free from the wrath of God (Nygren)

Peace with God (Cranfield)

<sup>1</sup>Therefore, since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,<sup>133</sup> <sup>2</sup>through whom we have obtained access [by faith] to this grace in which we stand; and we boast in our hope of sharing the glory of God.<sup>134</sup> <sup>3</sup>And not only that, but we also boast in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance,<sup>135</sup> <sup>4</sup>and endurance produces character, and character produces hope,<sup>136</sup> <sup>5</sup>and hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us.<sup>137</sup> <sup>6</sup>For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly.<sup>138</sup> <sup>7</sup>Indeed, rarely will

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<sup>133</sup> **'Peace with God'** not peace *of* God. An objective fact rather than a subjective feeling. 'We have peace' is better than the variation 'let us have peace' (Which would suggest a choice for those justified).

<sup>134</sup> **'access'** Morris thinks 'introduction is better since 'access' suggests that entry into grace could be in our own strength.

**'we have obtained'** – perfect tense suggests the access has not only started but continues.

**'this grace'** – a shorthand for the free gift of relationship with God.

**'by faith'** is added in some mss.

**'we stand'** – perfect tense denotes ongoing standing.

**'boast'** – present tense (ongoing sense) – NIV translates 'rejoice' – NEB translates 'exult'.

**'the hope of the glory of God'** – 3:23 states that we fall short of this glory naturally. The 'hope' is assurance for Paul, but it is still in the future.

<sup>135</sup> A natural outcome of assurance for the future is that it enables people to not simply put up with, but to glory in present tribulations (a strong Greek word, *thlipseis* θλίψεις) knowing that they bring the ability to continue in perseverance.

<sup>136</sup> **'character'** (Gk *dokimen*, δοκιμή) approvedness or testedness. The one who has stood the test has proved God's faithfulness and his or her faith and hope are strengthened. Therefore testedness leads to hope/assurance. The testing establishes the authenticity of faith and strengthens the yearning for that future hope.

<sup>137</sup> **THE ASSURANCE THAT HOPE WILL NOT DISAPPOINT**

**v5 Because of the Holy Spirit assuring us of God's love**

**v6-8 The proof of God's love demonstrated in the Cross**

**v9-11 That people are reconciled when they are *enemies*, so now they are *friends* he will surely save them.**

**'disappoint us'** Literally 'put us to shame'. Hope is not a pious wish because it is linked to the love of God which never fails (ref 1 Cor 13).

**'poured into'** suggests the abundance of God's love.

**'through the Holy Spirit given to us'** – aorist passive tense denotes a completed action in the past, as in a conversion or divine initiation.

<sup>138</sup> **'For'** at the beginning of the verse links verse 6 to verse 5 in that Christ's death for ungodly people is both the expression and the means of the outpouring of God's love.

**'weak'** – frail in regard to sinfulness and ungodliness.

anyone die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person someone might actually dare to die.<sup>139</sup> <sup>8</sup>But God proves his love for us in that while we still were sinners Christ died for us.<sup>140</sup> <sup>9</sup>Much more surely then, now that we have been justified by his blood, will we be saved through him from the wrath of God.<sup>141</sup> <sup>10</sup>For if while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son, much more surely, having been reconciled, will we be saved by his life.<sup>142</sup> <sup>11</sup>But more than that, we even boast in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.<sup>143</sup>

### **A Summary of 5:12-21 (A summary statement drawing threads together**

#### **One man**

#### **Adam (head of race of sinners)**

**>Sin >Death (reigns w/o law)**

**Many died**

**judgement/condemnation**

**Made sinners**

**Law made sin increase**

**Sin reigned in death**

#### **Christ (head of new race)**

**God's grace overflows to many**

**Justification/life**

**Made righteous**

**Grace increased all the more**

**Grace reigns through righteousness**

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**'the ungodly'** – 'the' is missing. It is not *the* ungodly as a particular section of society it is *all* people, and all people *are* ungodly.

**'at the right time'** – in God's plans and timing (as opposed to ours?).

<sup>139</sup> v7f The magnitude of God's outpoured love is demonstrated in that Christ's death was unexpected and unusual.

**'for scarcely on behalf of...'** The emphasis is not on the rarity of the occurrence but on the rarity of finding a willing person.

**'righteous'** in this context means 'right living (fulfilling the law?)' rather than justified.

**'good person** (literally 'man')' could then refer to a person who goes beyond the minimum of the law, who is generous and endears him/herself more to people. Even such a person it is only a possibility.

<sup>140</sup> The Cross then is not just Jesus' love demonstrated but more importantly, God's love. And his love is demonstrably greater than human love in that Christ died for God's enemies (NB the oneness of purpose in Christ and God. In all this it was God who took the initiative, not us.

<sup>141</sup> **'then'** or 'therefore' links into the series of results which come from justification.

Now that we have been justified by Christ's blood (which is the more difficult thing to achieve) it will be comparatively easy for him to keep us as God's friends and save us from wrath to come (salvation here is in the future).

<sup>142</sup> **'enemies'** We were hostile to God and he was hostile to the evil at work in us.

**'reconciled'** – such as making up after a quarrel, barriers broken down, relationship established. The means of this reconciliation is the death of Christ

**'how much more shall we be saved'** – salvation follows reconciliation. In other words, 'Because Jesus lives he will surely secure our final salvation' (Hodge). Or 'Because we are in Jesus and he in us then we shall be saved because we share his life' (Other commentators). Or 'Because Jesus has conquered death, our life is so much more secure in him.'

<sup>143</sup> Jesus' work of reconciliation is complete. We have received it so its effect is ongoing – we exult in God (cf v2), and we shall be saved from wrath (judgement) as we share in Christ's life (the idea of the vine and branches in John 15).



**v12 begins the comparison between Adam and Christ but breaks off at v13 to discuss the place of sin and death.**

**v15-17 Covers the contrast between Adam and Christ**

**v18 Completes the thought of v12**

**v19 Adds explanation to v18**

**v20-21 The law**

<sup>12</sup>Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death came through sin, and so death spread to all because all have sinned—<sup>144</sup> <sup>13</sup>sin was indeed in the world before the law, but sin is not reckoned when there is no law.<sup>145</sup> <sup>14</sup>Yet death exercised dominion from Adam to Moses, even over those whose sins were not like the transgression of Adam, who is a type of the one who was to come.<sup>146</sup> <sup>15</sup>But the free gift is not like the trespass. For if the many died through the one man's trespass, much more surely have the grace of God and the free gift in the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, abounded for the many.<sup>147</sup> <sup>16</sup>And the free gift is

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<sup>144</sup> **'Therefore'** - The reconciliation of v11 overcomes the effects of Adam's sin.

**'came into the world'** (ie the human race) suggests the existence of sin before Adam

**'death'** (Gen 2:17 In the day you eat of it you shall die - physical or spiritual death?) is personified and uses sin to enter the world too.

**'came'** – διελθεν διηλθεν, δια + ερχομαι δια + ερχομαι. implies death 'coming through' as though forcing its way into the life of all people. (cf the 'fill' command in a photo computer program which bleeds colour through any gap in the fill area).

**'because all have sinned'** OR 'in as much as all sinned' OR 'in whom all sinned'

1. We are all punished for Adam's sin (as a race with Adam).
2. Adam so corrupted our nature which is sinful (Calvin). ie It is an inherited tendency to sin (though actually Paul does not speak of sinful tendencies.)
3. Our sin is our own (all sinned).
4. 2 and 3 combined. Because of the tendency, we commit our own sins.
5. We all actively sin on our own.

**'sin entered'** (aorist tense) points to one event. Adam sinned. He thus provided the damaged template which humankind has subsequently followed.

**'death spread to all'** – 'to all men death came through' - is also aorist linking death for all to the sin of Adam (suggesting that 1 or 2 above would be closest in meaning).

Cf v15 many died (aorist) through one man's trespass.

v16 the judgement followed one sin

v17 by one trespass death reigned

v18 the result of one trespass was condemnation for all

v19 through the disobedience of one, all were *made* sinners.

<sup>145</sup> v13 breaks off to talk of sin and death though the subject is still linked by 'for'

ie. Sin was spread to all before the Law of Moses was given although technically one could not be a law breaker. However law is written on people's hearts (2:15) so they were still accountable before Moses (as the Flood demonstrates). After the law is given sin becomes more evident.

<sup>146</sup> **'yet'** ἀλλὰ ἀλλὰ, a strong 'but'. Far from not being reckoned (imputed), death reigned.

**'those whose sins were not like the transgression of Adam'** – It is not necessary to sin in exactly the way Adam did to be under the reign of death. They die because of Adam's sin and because there was a universal law before the 10 Commandments. They sinned in their own way as Adam's stock.

Adam is a type/pattern of Jesus in the sense that each heads up a race: Adam- those dead in sin. Jesus- those alive in him.

<sup>147</sup> **'But'** ἀλλὰ ἀλλὰ. Since Paul has just likened Adam to Christ he is hasty to point out the strong contrasts 'the trespass' (lapse, as in a broken relationship) is unlike the gift (charisma).

not like the effect of the one man's sin. For the judgment following one trespass brought condemnation, but the free gift following many trespasses brings justification.<sup>148</sup> <sup>17</sup>If, because of the one man's trespass, death exercised dominion through that one, much more surely will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness exercise dominion in life through the one man, Jesus Christ.<sup>149</sup> <sup>18</sup>Therefore just as one man's trespass led to condemnation for all, so one man's act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all.<sup>150</sup> <sup>19</sup>For just as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous.<sup>151</sup> <sup>20</sup>But law came in, with the result that the trespass multiplied; but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more,<sup>152</sup> <sup>21</sup>so that, just as sin exercised dominion in death, so grace might also

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'the many' ie all humankind, contrasting with the one man, Christ Jesus, through whom salvation comes.

The work of Christ is introduced by '**how much more**'.

The work is summed up in grace, [Gk. charis χάρις], and is connected to both God and Christ.

The gist of the verse is that the positive effects of Christ's work abundantly surpass the negative effects of Adam's failure.

<sup>148</sup> Again the contrasts...

The one having sinned v the gift

Judgement v the gift

One sin v many trespasses

Condemnation v justification

'**one man's sin**' Sin is a noun in the English but in Gk it is literally 'one man having sinned' emphasizing the continuing sinfulness.

The first word for 'gift' here is not charisma but dorema δōρημα, perhaps suggesting bounty.

'**the many trespasses**' calls attention for the need of the blessing of a free gift.

Jesus' act brings justification which deals not only with the sin the believer shares with Adam but also the many trespasses that he or she commits as well.

<sup>149</sup> '**If**' implies a condition which has already been met.

Paul continues with the contrast

'**Death reigned**' (aorist tense) – began to rule.

Through the trespass of one man in the sense that being human he passed on the consequences to all humans.

The result of sin is miserly death. The result of grace is the free gift overflowing with abundance, generosity and mercy.

A '**gift of righteousness**' suggests a status, a right standing before God - a forensic term.

Instead of death reigning, recipients of the gift 'reign in life' (Paul doesn't explain this expression but it seems to do with being victors in having eternal life, or having joined a royal family in which there is eternal life..

<sup>150</sup> v18 seems to take up where v12 left off but does also give a summary statement to verses 13-17.

'**act of righteousness**' – the same word used in v16 and translated 'justification'

'**for all**' – ie all those in Christ.

<sup>151</sup> Disobedience – '**the many**' are the whole human race

Obedience – '**the many**' are those whose faith is in Jesus and they 'will be' made righteous (an eschatological view or simply saying that there are people continually coming to Christ, now and in the future).

'**made righteous**' as opposed to being made sinners – considered, constituted as righteous. Forensic rather than ethical. Both Bultmann and Morris take this as a righteous status (ie *pronounced* righteous)

<sup>152</sup> Adam drops from the picture as the focus comes on Christ. Law is mentioned because it falls between Adam and Christ (There is no article 'the' which may denote law generally)

'**with the result that**' [Gk. hina ἵνα], should be 'in order that'. The purpose was that sin should be revealed more clearly for what it is.

exercise dominion through justification leading to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.<sup>153</sup>

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**‘the trespass’** (singular), ie the magnitude of Adam’s sin of disobedience increased (rather than the number of sins).

<sup>153</sup> *The Sin ‘exercised dominion’* (aorist) in *the* death. Grace now reigns dethroning sin and death, by imputing righteousness (justification) which in turn leads to eternal life, all accomplished through Jesus Christ, our Lord (which implies that he reigns over those who are freed from the reign of sin a change of allegiance.)

## ROMANS 6

Paul now addresses the way those justified should live.

His argument to date also raises the question... If everything depends on God, does it matter how we live?

<sup>1</sup>What then are we to say? Should we continue in sin in order that grace may abound?<sup>154</sup> <sup>2</sup>By no means! How can we who died to sin go on living in it?<sup>155</sup> <sup>3</sup>Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?<sup>156</sup> <sup>4</sup>Therefore we have been buried with him by baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.<sup>157</sup> <sup>5</sup>For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his.<sup>158</sup> <sup>6</sup>We know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be destroyed, and we might no longer be enslaved to sin.<sup>159</sup> <sup>7</sup>For whoever has died is freed from sin.<sup>160</sup> <sup>8</sup>But if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him.<sup>161</sup> <sup>9</sup>We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death

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<sup>154</sup> **'then'** links the question to what precedes.

**'continue in sin'** rather than **'to sin'** ie decline to move from an habitual state of sin.

**'that grace may abound'** – that god's goodness and mercy may be seen in sharper relief.

<sup>155</sup> **'By no means!'** *me genoito μη γένοιτο*, 'May it never be!!' After all Paul has just explained that in Adam, death reigns through sin, so how can we remain in sin if Christ brings justification, reconciliation and peace and Christians have died to sin (aorist tense)?

<sup>156</sup> **'Baptised'**. Here immersion rather than dipping captures the more radical picture, associated with violence, of people drowned and ships sunk. Jesus refers to his death as a baptism (Mk 10:38, Lk 12:50). This goes beyond a liturgical rite. It is death to an old way of life and a genuine turning point. It is an incorporation into Christ Jesus (one body in Christ) through his death.

<sup>157</sup> It therefore follows that if we are united in death we are also buried, which is the seal of death, the completion of severance with life. Burial is also part of the evidence for resurrection. Christians are to be raised to new life by the *glory* of the Father. Glory is the splendour of God and is associated with his power and majesty.

**'we too might walk in newness of life'** We too - As well as Jesus. Walk – steady if unspectacular progress. Newness – (rather than just 'new') gives emphasis to the quality of life, which is *eternal* (implied).

<sup>158</sup> **'For'** *gar γαρ* – To put it another way.

**'if'** – the condition has been fulfilled.

**'united,'** grown together speaks of the close union of a branch grafted into a vine. The spiritual life of the believer is derived from Christ.

**'a death like his'** denotes similarities. We do not of course die the same death as Jesus did.

<sup>159</sup> The point is re-emphasised, this time in terms of **'crucified'** (aorist passive tense).

**'old self'** Literally 'old man' suggesting worn out, ready to be discarded. But since Paul is addressing Christians then obviously the 'old man' is still there. Nevertheless Christians are to *consider themselves* dead to sin. When the Christian does slip up or sin it is then *uncharacteristic* of the newness of his or her life. Christians are no longer enslaved to that way.

**'body of sin'** – the body dominated by sin and enslaved to it, OR body, as in 'the whole person'.

<sup>160</sup> **'Whoever has died'** – ie in the ways just described.

**'freed'** – Literally *justified* from sin. Just as we can no longer be a slave to anyone when we have died, so we are freed from sin by this sort of death in Christ.

To die with Christ is then to partake of Christ's atoning work by which one is justified.

<sup>161</sup> There is a sense in which the living with Christ also occurs before the Parousia.

no longer has dominion over him.<sup>162</sup> <sup>10</sup>The death he died, he died to sin, once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God.<sup>163</sup> <sup>11</sup>So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.<sup>164</sup> <sup>12</sup>Therefore, do not let sin exercise dominion in your mortal bodies, to make you obey their passions.<sup>165</sup> <sup>13</sup>No longer present your members to sin as instruments of wickedness, but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and present your members to God as instruments of righteousness.<sup>166</sup> <sup>14</sup>For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace.<sup>167</sup>

<sup>15</sup>What then? Should we sin because we are not under law but under grace? By no means!<sup>168</sup> <sup>16</sup>Do you not know that if you present yourselves to anyone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin, which leads to death, or of obedience, which leads to righteousness?<sup>169</sup> <sup>17</sup>But thanks be to God that you, having once been slaves of sin, have become obedient from the heart to the form of teaching to which you were entrusted,<sup>170</sup> <sup>18</sup>and that you, having been set free from sin, have become slaves of righteousness.<sup>171</sup> <sup>19</sup>I am speaking in human terms

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<sup>162</sup> So decisive was Christ's death, and so complete the victory that death cannot touch him again. Like burned earth that cannot be burned again.

<sup>163</sup> Christ dealt with all aspects of sin through his death, but his death also marked the end of his living in the realm of sin (the world). He has been raised to life with God. The point is that if we live in union with Christ then we share in these benefits too.

<sup>164</sup> **'consider yourselves'** – see yourselves – let the implications sink in – that you, not just Christ (as in v10) are dead to sin and alive to God in Jesus. I.e. See what you really are and, that sin is no longer in character for you.

<sup>165</sup> The result of a people *realising* where they stand is to *live* as though they were there. If sin is no longer the master then it is no longer their natural realm or place of allegiance and they should not allow it to have dominion (the assumption being that sin is actually still there)

**'body'** sin manifests itself in the body.

mss read, 'obey the lusts/passions of it (NRSV NIV are probably correct). 'obey it in its lusts' (which looks like a conflation of two texts) or 'obey it'

<sup>166</sup> **'No longer present'** do not offer, (present tense denoting 'Do not cease the present activity') Offering carries the notion of sacrifice, in this case of one's members to sin (which is personified).

**'but present yourselves'** - *do* offer (aorist tense – a decisive act) – similar in idea to Romans 12:1.

<sup>167</sup> This is a repetition of the idea. Believers are not under law (by which sin is magnified) but under grace (by which sin is defeated)

<sup>168</sup> Paul has established that we cannot continue in sin so that grace *may* abound, now he asks a related question, 'Can we sin because we are no longer under law but under grace, which *does* abound?' (ie because God will forgive us anyway) and again the retort is strong 'by no means!!'

<sup>169</sup> **'Do you not know'** – Paul replies with another rhetorical question appealing as he often does to the knowledge of his readers.

The one you obey is the one who is your master. Your actions will give away whom you serve. (You know a person's interests by looking around their house. You can tell a person's priorities from the amount of time they spend on various activities.)

Obedying sin leads to death. Obedience (to God implied) leads to righteousness (right standing with God, but more particularly here, right behaviour and living.

<sup>170</sup> Paul now thanks God (not them) that the Roman Christians are no longer slaves to sin but slaves to righteousness.

**'have become obedient'** (aorist tense – a decisive act of turning)

**'from the heart'** – in sincerity and voluntarily.

**'to the form of teaching'** – Christians are subject to the teaching rather than masters of it.

<sup>171</sup> **'set free from sin'** – from its guilt, its consequences and its enslaving power.

because of your natural limitations. For just as you once presented your members as slaves to impurity and to greater and greater iniquity, so now present your members as slaves to righteousness for sanctification.<sup>172</sup> <sup>20</sup>When you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness.<sup>173</sup> <sup>21</sup>So what advantage did you then get from the things of which you now are ashamed? The end of those things is death.<sup>174</sup> <sup>22</sup>But now that you have been freed from sin and enslaved to God, the advantage you get is sanctification. The end is eternal life.<sup>175</sup> <sup>23</sup>For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.<sup>176</sup>

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**‘become slaves of righteousness’** which is now the natural realm of the person set free, doing what is right and worthwhile, to the extent that when such a person does the wrong thing it goes against the grain (the conscience does not leave that person in peace).

<sup>172</sup> **‘human terms’** ie using an illustration from slavery which was familiar to their daily living

**‘your natural limitations’** we often need concrete illustrations to explain and anchor spiritual truths.

**‘you presented’** (aorist tense)

**‘greater and greater iniquity’** Literally ‘lawlessness resulting in lawlessness (one leads to more)

The opposite is to present oneself for setting aside (holiness or sanctification)

<sup>173</sup> Paul now takes the Romans back to their pre Christian days when they were slaves to sin, to ask what advantage they were. That sort of freedom was hollow, with no advantage.

<sup>174</sup> **‘what advantage’** Literally ‘what fruit had you then?’ The answer is far less than nothing only shame and ultimately, death.

<sup>175</sup> **‘the advantage you get’** Literally the fruit of you – is expressed in sanctification to (the assurance of) eternal life. Literally, ‘the end is eternal life.’

<sup>176</sup> Sin is now personified as the employer paying the wage – death (the inevitable consequence). However eternal life is not referred to as a wage but as the free gift of God (charisma) in Jesus Christ and his work.

## ROMANS 7

### Outline:

6:2 The believer died to sin	7:4 and law
6:18 Freed from sin	7:3 and law
6:7 Justified from sin	7:6 discharged from law and released
6:4 Walks in newness of life	7:6 serves in newness of Spirit

The question then arises does law = sin? (v7)

No – Law reveals sin and accentuates it.

Law is therefore holy, just and good (v12)

Sin on the other hand works death

### The battle:

I do not do what I want v I do what I hate v14

*This shows that the law is good because I know what is right and want to do it*

I want to do right v the sin within me that does wrong v20

Inmost self/law of my mind v my members (captive to the law of sin) v23

The question: Who will deliver me from this body of death?

The answer: Through Jesus Christ our Lord.

<sup>1</sup>[Gk: Or] Do you not know, brothers and sisters—for I am speaking to those who know the law—that the law is binding on a person only during that person's lifetime?<sup>177</sup> <sup>2</sup>Thus a married woman is bound by the law to her husband as long as he lives; but if her husband dies, she is discharged from the law concerning the husband.<sup>178</sup> <sup>3</sup>Accordingly, she will be called an adulteress if she lives with another man while her husband is alive. But if her husband dies, she is free from that law, and if she marries another man, she is not an adulteress.<sup>179</sup> <sup>4</sup>In the same way, my friends, you have died to the law through the body of Christ, so that you may belong to another, to him who has been raised from the dead in order that we may bear fruit

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<sup>177</sup> 'Or' is in the Gk linking this verse with as far back as 6:14

'Do you not know' implies that they ought to know what follows since he is speaking to those who know the law.

'that the law is binding' Could be any law here. 'Binding' is literally 'lords it over'.

<sup>178</sup> v2-3 present as an example from v1.

'married woman' hupandros, ὑπανδρος (Literally, 'under/subject to the man')

'is bound' (has been bound, perfect tense) an ongoing state.

The death of the husband changes both his obligation to the law, and hers, though for the purpose of the illustration Paul is more concerned with her freedom.

'discharged' in the sense of null and void.

'from the law concerning the husband' in all obligations to him (though should not be pressed too far in terms of respect of wills and the like)

<sup>179</sup> 'discharged from the law' ie She is free to remarry.

for God.<sup>180</sup> <sup>5</sup> [Gk For] While we were living in the flesh, our sinful passions, aroused by the law, were at work in our members to bear fruit for death.<sup>181</sup> <sup>6</sup> But now we are discharged from the law, dead to that which held us captive, so that we are slaves not under the old written code but in the new life of the Spirit.<sup>182</sup>

## DOES THE LAW=SIN? WHAT IS LAW'S INFLUENCE?

<sup>7</sup> What then should we say? That the law is sin? By no means! Yet, if it had not been for the law, I would not have known sin. I would not have known what it is to covet if the law had not said, "You shall not covet."<sup>183</sup> <sup>8</sup> But sin, seizing an opportunity in the commandment, produced in me all kinds of covetousness. Apart from the law sin lies dead.<sup>184</sup> <sup>9</sup> I was once alive apart from the law, but when the commandment came, sin revived<sup>185</sup> <sup>10</sup> and I died, and the very commandment that promised life proved to be

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<sup>180</sup> The analogy is not perfect in that in the illustration the husband dies and the wife is set free, whereas here the law does not die. It is the Christian who dies *and* is set free. However the point is that death itself frees Christians from the curse of the law and its rigid control over their lives.

**'through the body of Christ'** not the church/body of believers but identification with the death of Christ as in 6:4-5.

The Purpose?

1 'So that you may belong (literally, be joined) to another' – Christ described in terms of his resurrection – ie we participate in his new life.

2 'to bear fruit for God' – in the context the fruit of the Spirit is in view rather than 'offspring'

<sup>181</sup> The converse of v4 now follows.

**'living in the flesh'** unregenerate – characterised by fleshly desires and outlook which was the unbeliever's natural realm.

**'sinful passions through the law were working in our members'** verses 7-13 will explain how the law does this.

**'fruit for death'** Similar in idea to 6:23 (the wages of sin) and contrasts with the fruit for God in v4.

<sup>182</sup> **'But now'** moves from the unregenerate state.

**'died to the law'** – no longer under the sort of influence and captivity which Paul will expound in v7-13, and additionally it can no longer be seen as a way of salvation.

**'new life of the Spirit'** (Gk, 'Newness of Spirit' as opposed to 'oldness of letter' ('Old written Code')).

<sup>183</sup> Paul has described the law in various ways:- The Jews have broken it (2:27), It justifies no-one (6:14), The Believer is not under it (6:14), The Believer has died to law (7:4), It arouses sinful passions (7:5). It is therefore natural to ask, 'Is the law sin?' Reply: 'May it Never be!'

At the same time though, the law reveals sin for what it is.

**'I'**, Paul seems to be talking about his own past experiences (though it can be said that it applied to everyone).

**'I would not have known sin'** He would still have sinned (2:14-15, 5:12-14) but not have seen it as sin against God (ie in its fundamental relationship-breaking character)

**'I would not have known... except that the law said, "you shall not covet"'**. By choosing the 10<sup>th</sup> Commandment Paul identifies an inward problem at the root of those outward prohibitions – it points to the self and the satisfaction of personal desires/lusts. Paul is saying that the unregenerate person does not recognise that he or she is the centre of his or her own universe. The law however *shows* this root cause of sin, which is a form of idolatry.

<sup>184</sup> The suggestion is that the law adds the spice of "forbidden fruit", which in turn indicates the perverseness and rebellion in human nature.

**'apart from the law sin is dead'**, If there was no command legally there could be no disobedience. But since the law focuses and emphasises sin and establishes guilt, it can hardly be a means of salvation.

<sup>185</sup> **'I was once alive'** - 'I' is emphatic perhaps to emphasise Paul's own involvement (in the past – 'once') while at the same time referring to the situation of all.

**'alive apart from the law'**, Paul had grown up with the law so when he refers to the sin reviving he could be indicating that he came to realise its power to convict. Formerly he was blissfully unaware, ignorant.



death to me.<sup>186</sup> <sup>11</sup>For sin, seizing an opportunity in the commandment, deceived me and through it killed me.<sup>187</sup> <sup>12</sup>So the law is holy, and the commandment is holy and just and good.<sup>188</sup> <sup>13</sup>Did what is good, then, bring death to me? By no means! It was sin, working death in me through what is good, in order that sin might be shown to be sin, and<sup>189</sup> through the commandment might become sinful beyond measure.<sup>190</sup>

<sup>14</sup>For we know that the law is spiritual; but I am of the flesh, sold into slavery<sup>191</sup> under sin.<sup>192</sup> <sup>15</sup>[For] I do not understand my own actions.<sup>193</sup> For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate. <sup>16</sup>Now if I do what I do not want, I agree that the law is good.<sup>194</sup> <sup>17</sup>But in fact it is no longer I that do it, but sin that dwells within me.<sup>195</sup> <sup>18</sup>For I know that nothing good dwells within me, that is, in my flesh. I can will what is right, but I cannot do it.<sup>196</sup> <sup>19</sup>For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I do. <sup>20</sup>Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I that do it, but sin that dwells within me.<sup>197</sup>

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**‘the commandment came’** – could refer to law generally or the law against covetousness, which he has just mentioned, in particular. Moffat gives the sense - ‘the commandment came home to me’.

**‘sin revived’** – ‘sin sprang to life’ (NIV)

<sup>186</sup> **‘I died’** The commandment killed his carefree life by showing the seriousness of sin. It is the death of self-reliance and self-satisfaction.

**‘that promised life’** Literally ‘into life’ – ‘was intended to bring life’ (NIV). Ie The law which was intended to point people towards right relationships also revealed the inadequacy of people to live up to its standard.

**‘I found’** Literally, ‘it was discovered to me’ – ‘proved to be’ (NIV).

<sup>187</sup> **‘sin... deceived me’** (This is the same verb as in 2 Cor 11:3 where the serpent deceived Eve). The deception was Paul being caught out, expecting the law to provide salvation and life, but instead finding that it brought him death.

<sup>188</sup> **‘So’** [then] introduces the consequence. Note that it is the law/commandment that is holy, not sin.

**‘holy’** because it is God’s law and takes it’s character from him.

**‘commandment’** same as law? OR the 10 Commandments? OR the command concerning covetousness

**‘just’** equitable, fair.

**‘good’** in the sense of having our best interest in mind.

<sup>189</sup> **‘and’** Gk ἵνα, ‘so that’.

<sup>190</sup> In v7 Paul has asked the question, ‘Is the law sin?’ Now he asks ‘Did the law (which is good) bring death to me?’ Again there is a strong denial (even though he came close to affirming it in v10). The law was never the problem, but sin using the law. The law, like a magnifying glass, shows sin to be sin.

**‘so that through the commandment sin might become sinful beyond measure’** The law then is good as it shows right and wrong and the way to life, but it has no power to give life. Therefore the real villain, Sin, jumps in and takes the opportunity to bring death.

<sup>191</sup> **‘into slavery’** is assumed (not present in the Greek) This is a recognition that while we live in the flesh we struggle with sin, even while set free from its consequences and ultimate dominion and with all the potential for sanctification.

<sup>192</sup> **‘the law is spiritual’** is a recognition of its divine origins (Cranfield) and cannot be understood properly without the help of the Spirit.

<sup>193</sup> ‘I don’t know what I am doing’. Confusion reigns.

<sup>194</sup> The struggle within is itself an acknowledgment that the law is good and should be obeyed.

<sup>195</sup> For the regenerate person wrong actions no longer come from the desire to do wrong but from the nature of sin within. This is not an excuse but a description of the way things are.

<sup>196</sup> **‘nothing good’** is a bit strong. It rather reads, ‘For I know that good does not dwell in me’ and even then he qualifies the statement with, ‘that is in my flesh’ (ie the whole fallen human nature).

Paul is saying that he can never attain the standard of good he desires while he lives in this fallen flesh. Such perfection is beyond his reach.

<sup>197</sup> v22 is similar to v15, and v23 is similar to v17.

<sup>21</sup>So I find it to be a law that when I want to do what is good, evil lies close at hand.<sup>198</sup> <sup>22</sup>For I delight in the law of God in my inmost self, <sup>23</sup>but I see in my members another law at war with the law of my mind, making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members.<sup>199</sup> <sup>24</sup>Wretched man that I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death?<sup>200</sup> <sup>25</sup>Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, with my mind I am a slave to the law of God, but with my flesh I am a slave to the law of sin.<sup>201</sup>

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<sup>198</sup> **'find it to be a law'** Have learned this to be a principle from experience.

Evil lying close at hand seems to refer to the old nature.

<sup>199</sup> The inner man delights in God's law (This parallels with 'in my mind' in verses 23 & 25, and the 'I' who wants to do good in verse 21.) It is the 'I' that has become regenerate to delight in God's law.

At the same time there is another 'law' (force, influence, controlling principle) at work conflicting with that 'inner man'/'the law of my mind'. That other law is the law (or influence) of sin, a 'law' which is a travesty compared with God's law.

**'in my members'** the body that sin uses. (See 6:13, 19 and 7:5)

<sup>200</sup> The intensity here would strongly suggest Paul's own experience.

**'this body of death'** (The whole conflicting condition of the regenerate life in the physical body. The longing is for release from the conflict as a future event.

or **'the body of this death'**

<sup>201</sup> Thanks is due to God for deliverance through Jesus Christ our Lord (note the full title). Whilst there is an element of present deliverance in chapter 8, the final resurrection will make it complete.

## NOTE on Romans 7:14-25

### Is it about a regenerate or unregenerate person?

#### REGENERATE

v14 Changes to pres tense (I am unspiritual) whereas he has been talking in past tense about being under the scrutiny of the law.

V15 I am at odds with the wrong things I do. I don't understand why I do them

V16 I recognise right and wrong which affirms the goodness of the law

V17 Even though I can't live up to it, what I am now really desires to do right.

V18...[qualified by] in my sinful nature, for I have the desire to do what is good (but cannot carry it out) — then developed in vv19-22 with the conflict of law of mind and law of sin in v23

UNREGENERATE from the point of view of one who is now regenerate

Chap 6 vv2, 6, 11-12, 17-18 suggest death to sin  
But notice the exhortations...

6:11 reckon yourselves

6:12 let not sin

6:13 no longer present

6:19 present your members

V18 I know nothing good lives in me...

V23 I see another law at work in the member sof my body... making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within my members

V24 Who will rescue me from this body of death?

v25 Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord

V25 So then [summarises the present state] I myself in my mind am a slave to God's law, but in the sinful nature a slave to the law of sin

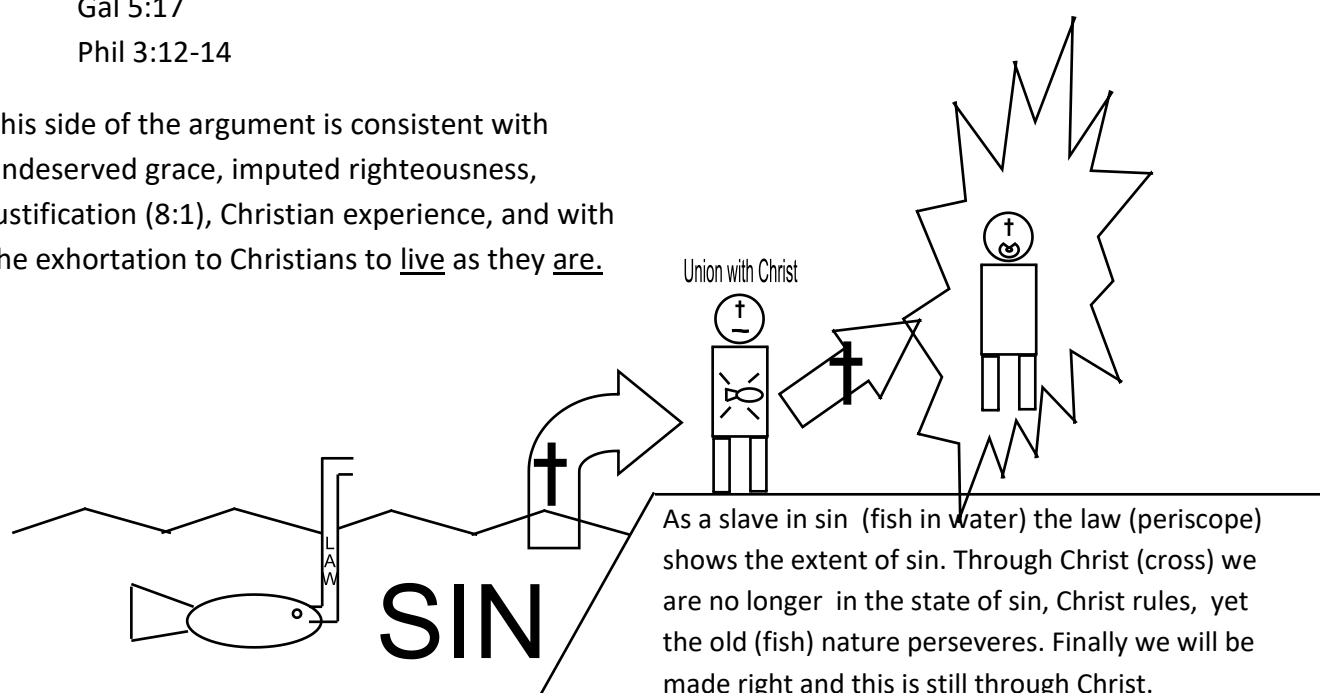
Paul's references to buffeting the body...

1 Cor 9:27

Gal 5:17

Phil 3:12-14

This side of the argument is consistent with undeserved grace, imputed righteousness, justification (8:1), Christian experience, and with the exhortation to Christians to live as they are.



## **ROMANS 8**

### **OUTLINE**

**For those in Christ. 8:1-4 The Work of Jesus...**

**There is no condemnation**

**The Spirit sets you free from the law of sin and death**

**The law was weakened by the flesh**

**Jesus came in the likeness of sinful flesh**

**He condemned sin in the flesh and dealt with sin**

**The law's requirement is therefore fulfilled in the Christian  
who walks not according to the law, but Spirit.**

**8:5-11 Two ways to live...**

**Those who live according to the flesh**

**set their minds on things of the flesh**

**leads to death.**

**mind hostile to God.**

**unsubmissive to God's law.**

**cannot submit to or please God**

**Those who live according to the Spirit**

**set their minds on things of the Spirit**

**leads to life and peace.**

**Spirit of God dwells in you.**

**Without the Spirit – you don't belong to Christ**

**but (v10) if Christ is in you...**

**The body is dead because of sin but the spirit is alive because of righteousness**

**The resurrection of Jesus will give life to your mortal bodies through the Spirit within you**

**8:12 Therefore you have an obligation...**

**Not to the sinful nature**

**(If you live according to it you will die)**

**If by the Spirit you put to death**

**the misdeeds of the body**

**you will live, because those led by**

**the Spirit of God are children of God**

**8:14-27 The benefits to the children (sons) of God through the Spirit**

**God as Father. Heirs and co-heirs. Redemption of the body. Help in weakness.**

**8:28-39 Nothing can separate those who are called from God's love.**

**They are more than conquerors.**

<sup>1</sup>There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.<sup>202</sup> <sup>2</sup>For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death.<sup>203</sup> <sup>3</sup>For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do: by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and to deal with sin, he condemned sin in the flesh,<sup>204</sup> <sup>4</sup>so that the just requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.<sup>205</sup> <sup>5</sup>For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit.<sup>206</sup> <sup>6</sup>To set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace.<sup>207</sup> <sup>7</sup>For this reason the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God's law—indeed it cannot, <sup>8</sup>and those who are in the flesh

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<sup>202</sup> **'therefore'** links to the preceding argument as a whole. That is, that God saves us in Christ.

**'now'** in time, as opposed to before we were in Christ, but also 'now', even before Christ comes again.

**'condemnation'** is both the sentence and the execution. (For the Christian there is neither).

<sup>203</sup> **'for'** Gk gar γάρ, The reason there is no condemnation

**'the law [principle] of the Spirit of life'** (or 'life-giving Spirit') 'Law' may include the idea of the influence which encourages the action.

**'set you free from the law [controlling force] of sin and death'** How does this square with 7:14b 'I am carnal, sold under sin'?... The Christian knows that he/she is not perfect and never will be in this life, but the power of the Spirit means that he/she is no longer a powerless slave to sin. There is now an even more powerful force at work. The Christian now revolts against sin and with a measure of effectiveness (and the One at work within the Christian will not let him/her go).

**'set you free'** or **'me free'**, mss differ with slightly stronger case for 'you'.

**'in Christ Jesus'** can come before or after 'freed'. Either way the believer is set free.

<sup>204</sup> **'For'** introduces the reason for the setting free statement of v2. God had to act in sending his Son because of the weakness of the law. The failure being within people rather than the law itself.

**'his own Son'** Not just a messenger but one in unique relationship with God.

**'likeness'** preserves Jesus' sinlessness

**'sinful flesh'** preserves the idea that Jesus was real flesh and blood, a real human not just like a real person which is Docetism.

**'and to deal with sin'** ('to be a sin offering' NIV) Gk peri hamartias περὶ ἁμαρτίας, is the regular LXX rendering of the Hebrew for 'sin offering'. Cranfield however does not think the context supports the sacrificial interpretation.

**'he condemned sin in the flesh'** Sin is sentenced and executed by Christ in the flesh (ie by Christ in *his* flesh – it cannot mean that the only sin condemned was the sin committed in *our* flesh)

<sup>205</sup> God condemned sin so that the righteous requirements of the law could be fully met in people.

Some say that this is a reference to justification (the *righteousness of God*), others that believers are enabled to *live righteously* on the strength of the truths expressed in v3. Note that it does not say that we fulfil the requirements of the law but that the requirements of the law are fulfilled in us. In other words through Christ the Holy Spirit works in the believer. This suggests an element of justification (which is foundational) but also on view is sanctification, especially following a reference to the 'walk' of the Christian. The fulfilment is therefore connected with 'walk... according to the Spirit'

**'not according to the flesh'** not conforming to the flesh as the person's major aim and focus.

<sup>206</sup> **'For'** again links the argument of v4 to verses 5-11.

Cranfield translates this, 'those whose lives are determined by the flesh (ie their focus is on the flesh) are on the side of the flesh (mentally disposed towards it). The converse is true when a person lives according to the Spirit.

<sup>207</sup> **'For'** is omitted by the NRSV. The verse explains the opposition between flesh and Spirit.

**'is death'** 'is' is missing in the Greek but may be assumed.

**'life and peace'** peace is with God but also pervades the whole life and characterises a mind set on the Spirit.

cannot please God.<sup>208</sup> <sup>9</sup>But you are not in the flesh; you are in the Spirit, since the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him.<sup>209</sup> <sup>10</sup>But if Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness.<sup>210</sup> <sup>11</sup>If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also through his Spirit that dwells in you.<sup>211</sup> <sup>12</sup>So then, brothers and sisters, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh<sup>212</sup>—<sup>13</sup>for if you live according to the flesh, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.<sup>213</sup> <sup>14</sup>For all who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God.<sup>214</sup> <sup>15</sup>For you did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received a spirit of adoption. When we cry, “Abba! Father!”<sup>215</sup> <sup>16</sup>it is that very Spirit

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<sup>208</sup> **‘For this reason’** The mind set on and dominated by its fallen state can only identify with rebellion against God (which is the characteristic of fallen-ness and carnality). The mind set on the flesh is naturally inward looking and makes self into god. Therefore such a person cannot please God.

<sup>209</sup> Here we see the Trinity at work in the believer, whose life is no longer characterised by the flesh.

<sup>210</sup> **‘Christ is in you’** expresses a similar idea to the ‘Spirit in you’. It is not saying that Christ and the Spirit are identical but that union with Christ ensures the Spirit’s indwelling.

**‘the body is dead because of sin’** 6:6 The body of sin. 6:12 In which sin reigns. 7:24 from which Paul longs for deliverance. 8:13 Whose deeds are to be mortified by the Spirit.

Christ’s presence subdues the body but here the ‘body is dead because of sin’. That is, dead to God and the things of the Spirit. On the other hand the Spirit (could be spirit of people but more likely Holy Spirit) is life because of righteousness (justification, Cranfield). (imputed *and* to do with the walk in righteousness)

<sup>211</sup> **‘If’** once again assumes the case.

The Spirit of Jesus (v9) is here termed ‘the Spirit of God’. The Spirit of the resurrecting God takes up house (‘dwells’ Gk oikei οἰκεῖ) in the Roman Christians and will raise them too, in the sense of giving them life. People need not only to be raised but also given life.

**‘mortal bodies’** speaks of the final resurrection (though Calvin saw it as ethical renewal)

**‘through his Spirit’**, through the agency of the Spirit (‘through’, Gk δια διὰ, followed by the genitive).

<sup>212</sup> **‘so then’** introduces the implications of the fact that Christ gives life to believers – which is to *live* as those who are Christ’s.

**‘we’** links Paul with his Roman readers in this obligation

**‘debtors not to the flesh’** the flesh has not rights and is owed nothing. Christian are not obliged to live that way. On the other hand Christians are debtors to the Spirit, to live according to the Spirit.

<sup>213</sup> This is a restatement of 6:11-14.

**‘If you’** changes from ‘we’, since Paul has no intention of living according to the flesh himself.

**‘put to death’** present tense, an ongoing action. It is done by the person but also by the Spirit. Ie not without help.

**‘deeds’** ‘misdeeds’ NIV, Gk, praxeis πράξεις, sometimes used of evil deeds as in Luke 23:51.

**‘of the body’** as in the ‘body of death’ 7:24

<sup>214</sup> **‘For’** is introduces the basis of the assertion, ‘you will live’.

**‘led’** rather than compelled suggests a freedom.

**‘are children (sons)’** rather than *made* children. Being led by the Spirit is the distinguishing sign.

<sup>215</sup> **‘back into fear’** sin involves fear (but there is no fear in love, perfect love casts out fear 1John 4:18)

**‘adoption’** rare in Judaism but common in Roman/Greek law. In Roman law it denoted being granted full rights and privileges of a son.

**‘by whom we cry’** ‘by whom’ is missing from the NRSV. ‘cry’ denotes a fervent prayer.

**‘Abba’** Aramaic word for father denoting the form of address used by a child, but bearing in mind that in that culture the father was held in awe, ‘daddy’ doesn’t quite capture that respect. Nevertheless Jews would not normally have referred to God as intimately as Abba.

Paul’s emphasis is on calling God, ‘Father’ rather than referring to oneself as ‘son’

bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God,<sup>216</sup> <sup>17</sup>and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ—if, in fact, we suffer with him so that we may also be glorified with him.<sup>217</sup>

<sup>18</sup>I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory about to be revealed to us.<sup>218</sup> <sup>19</sup>For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God;<sup>219</sup> <sup>20</sup>for the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope <sup>21</sup>that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and will obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God.<sup>220</sup> <sup>22</sup>We know that the whole creation has been groaning

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<sup>216</sup> **‘that very Spirit’** Literally ‘itself the spirit’ (Gk. auto to pneuma, αὐτὸ τὸ πνεῦμα). ‘itself’ is neuter because the Greek word for spirit is always neuter. However through Scripture God’s Spirit is given personal attributes and in John 16:13-14 the writer specifically refers to the Spirit as ‘he’ (Gk ekeinos, ἐκεῖνος). Our spirit cannot testify unaided to our relationship with God. The presence of God’s Spirit is required.

<sup>217</sup> The result of being children (sons): Christians are also heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ.

The concept of inheritance goes back to the promises to Abraham in Genesis 12, with the possession of the Land. In Isaiah 60:21 and 61:7 we see the secure possession won by the Messiah and in Matthew 5:5, 19:29 and 25:34 there are the symbols of Messianic blessings.

Here the concept has more to do with the blessings of relationship (since God of course is not going to die!).

**‘joint heirs with Christ’** means all the blessings that are in him and to be called his brothers and sisters.

**‘glorified with him’** All of this inheritance is an assurance of a heavenly home.

**‘if, in fact, we suffer with him’** A condition is added which suggests that suffering is a natural experience in discipleship and that Christians must be prepared to endure and remain in the faith. (Christ himself was persecuted, Christians suffer because of their faith in him and because they are identified with him in his death (6:8).

<sup>218</sup> Paul goes on to reflect on present sufferings.

**‘I consider’** expresses a strong belief rather than an opinion.

**‘present sufferings’** what the Christian goes through in this life *for Christ*.

**‘not worth comparing’** (Gk. axia ἄξια, worthy) as in bring up the beam on a set of scales to even them out

**‘the glory’** is the sharing in God’s glory – the light of his presence.

**‘to be revealed’** (aorist passive infinitive) The glory is already in existence but will be seen.

<sup>219</sup> **‘the creation’** nature itself is personified. Presumably this does not include the unbeliever, who does not long for the revealing.

**‘waits with eager expectation’** suggests hushed anticipation

**‘revealing of the children [sons] of God’** Just as the glory exists but is to be revealed, so the children of God are already children, and that too will be made clear on that day.

<sup>220</sup> **‘For the creation was subjected to futility’** ie we know that the creation eagerly awaits because it is subjected to futility (or frustration). Sin has affected the whole natural world (and beyond?) in which human beings exist. Creation is unable to fulfil its purpose because the chief players, humankind, fail to fulfil theirs.

**‘by the will of the one who subjected it in hope’** Literally ‘the one having subjected it’. ‘The one’ being God (Genesis 3:17) which would fit with the idea that God subjects ‘in hope’ – a characteristic of God. Some argue that ‘the one’ is either Satan or Adam, but Scripture never assigns such power to them.

Verse 20 could end, ‘subjected it in hope *because* (Gk *hoti* ὅτι) the creation...’ OR ‘subjected it in *hope so that* the creation...’ Both renderings are possible here.

If verse 20 ends ‘subjected it in hope’ then verse 21 gives the reason that God has subjected it in hope.

If verse 21 should begin, ‘In hope that the creation...’ then it could take up from verse 19 and verse 20 could be placed in parentheses.

**‘the freedom of the glory of the children of God’** would indicate the future ‘new heaven and new earth’.

Just as nature has been affected by the sin of humankind, so the restoration of humankind will include a restoration of the rest of the creation.

in labour pains until now;<sup>221</sup> <sup>23</sup>and not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly while we wait for adoption, the redemption of our bodies.<sup>222</sup> <sup>24</sup>For in hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what is seen? <sup>25</sup>But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.<sup>223</sup> <sup>26</sup>Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words.<sup>224</sup> <sup>27</sup>And God, who searches the heart, knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.<sup>225</sup> <sup>28</sup>We know that all things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose.<sup>226</sup> <sup>29</sup>For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn within a large family.<sup>227</sup> <sup>30</sup>And those whom he predestined he also called; and those whom he called he also justified; and those whom he justified he also glorified.<sup>228</sup>

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<sup>221</sup> **'For we know'** appeals to common knowledge (at least amongst believers).

**'groaning in labour pains'** is positive in that it is an anticipation of new birth and life, not death.

**'until now'** the pangs are a present phenomenon.

<sup>222</sup> Christians groan with creation because they already have the first fruits of the Spirit, which implants a desire for all that God has prepared for them (exemplified in Paul's cry in 7:24 – "Who will deliver me...").

**'First fruits'** as in Leviticus 23:1-10 we see the Jewish custom of bringing the first of the harvest to the Temple, which thus consecrated the whole harvest. I.e. 'First fruits' denotes that there is more to come. In this case Paul refers to what God gives to believers rather than what they give to him. NB 1 Corinthians 15:20, 'Christ is the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep'.

**'adoption'** (Literally, 'sonship') though Christians are adopted now, in the future they will enter their heavenly home. That adoption comes about through the 'redemption of our bodies' (Literally 'body', singular). This new body will be a spiritual one with some sort of link to the earthly body (1 Corinthians 15:35ff).

<sup>223</sup> **'For in hope we were saved'** The aorist tense denotes a completed action, which shows that salvation has a future completion to it, so at present it is unseen, anticipated.

**'we wait for it with patience'** This hope is worth persevering for.

<sup>224</sup> **'Likewise'** links with the idea of patient endurance in hope. It is the Spirit who helps the believer to endure.

**'we do not know how we are to pray'** in view of the next verse seems to have to do with knowing the will of God.

**'sighs too deep for words'** Literally 'groanings unexpressed'. These groaning s are of a more general kind rather than for resurrection as in v23.

<sup>225</sup> **'And God'** literally 'and the one'. God not only knows the human heart but also the Spirit who is at work there and is therefore able to take full account of the Spirit's intercessions (and by implication, responds to them)

**'because'** (Gk *hoti* ὅτι) if *hoti* is translated 'because' then it means that God knows the mind of the Spirit because the Spirit always asks according to God's will. If *hoti* is translated 'that' then what follows is the content of the Spirit's mind, i.e. that he intercedes according to God's will.

**'for the saints'** because he dwells within the saints.

<sup>226</sup> **'(And) we know'** 'And' or 'But' (Gk, *de* δὲ) is missing from the NRSV. If it is 'but' then it contrasts the suffering with God's working for good. If it is 'and' it links the 'all things working together for good' with the idea of patient endurance and groanings.

**'all things work together for good'** Is not a very good translation in that it is not the 'things' that work, but more literally, 'he works for good' (Some mss actually include 'God works'). 'He' here in v28 is unlikely to be the Spirit since 'he' in v29 is obviously God.

**'who are called according to his purpose'** This is an effectual call, i.e. those who have responded.

<sup>227</sup> **'For those whom he foreknew'** Knew beforehand but could have the sense of choosing beforehand. God knows people through and through. Knowing is the basis of relationship.

**'he also predestined to be conformed'** (Gk, *proorisen* προώρισεν) 'set the boundary beforehand'



### **8:31-39**

The Believer's Song of Triumph, which is a reference, particularly to verses 29-30 and based on God's call and predestination. But it is also a summary of the whole letter to this point...

Chapter 1 The guilt of the Gentiles.

Chapter 2 The guilt of the Jews.

Chapter 3 The guilt of all – justification by faith alone.

Chapter 4 Abraham justified by faith.

Chapter 5 The results of justification by faith...

freed from wrath.

Chapter 6

freed from sin.

Chapter 7

freed from law.

Chapter 8

freed from condemnation, to walk in the Spirit, and in security.

**8:31-34** The impossibility of any charge being sustained against a believer before God.

**8:35-39** The impossibility of anything separating the believer from God's love.

<sup>31</sup>What then are we to say about these things? If God is for us, who is against us?<sup>229</sup> <sup>32</sup>He who did not withhold his own Son, but gave him up for all of us, will he not with him also give us everything else?<sup>230</sup> <sup>33</sup>Who will bring any charge against

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**'to the image of his Son'** To take on the family likeness through sanctification.

**'that he might be the firstborn within a large family'** (among many brothers)' The firstborn was honoured as the most important, the heir. But also implies that others would follow. God predestines that he may have many children.

<sup>228</sup> **'predestined', 'called', 'justified' and 'glorified'** are all aorist tense (a completed action), When applied to 'glorified' it may just be following the other aorists or it may denote the certainty of the future glory. 'called' is once again an effectual call.

Predestination assumes the absolute sovereignty of God. God is always the first cause in the salvation of the believer. The fact that God has called and the believer has responded gives the immense security expressed from v31 onwards.

<sup>229</sup> **'What shall we say...?'** begins a series of rhetorical questions

**'if God is for us'** Given God's predestining, calling, justifying and later glorifying, then the 'if' is a certainty.

**'who is against us?'** ie who can prevail against us.

<sup>230</sup> **'who did not withhold his own Son'** 'own' emphasises the special relationship. This is reminiscent of Abraham and Isaac (Genesis 22:16).

**'but gave him up'** a deliberate act of love.

**'will he not with him also give us everything else'** The giving of the Son is the greatest gift and other benefits naturally flow from that. God is hardly going to withhold the lesser blessings having given the greater one. 'everything else' is probably all things connected with salvation, perhaps particularly being co-heirs with Christ (v17).

God's elect? It is God who justifies.<sup>231</sup> <sup>34</sup>Who is to condemn? It is Christ Jesus, who died, yes, who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who indeed intercedes for us.<sup>232</sup> <sup>35</sup>Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will hardship, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?<sup>233</sup> <sup>36</sup>As it is written, "For your sake we are being killed all day long; we are accounted as sheep to be slaughtered."<sup>234</sup> <sup>37</sup>No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.<sup>235</sup> <sup>38</sup>For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, <sup>39</sup>nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.<sup>236</sup>

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<sup>231</sup> In verses 33-34 we have a question, answer and another question. Some translators have three questions (lack of punctuation makes it uncertain, but we might expect an answer somewhere)

**'Who will bring any charge...?'** (Gk *tis egkalesei tis egkalései*) A courtroom term.

**'against God's elect'** 'God's chosen ones' (Gk *eklekton eklektōn*) a term used with some pride for Israel (1 Chronicles 16:13, Psalms 105:6, 43) but particularly in the intertestamental period in connection with *the remnant*.

The implicit answer to the question is that no-one will bring any charge, because God (emphatic 'of God; God... Gk, *theou*; *theos* θεοῦ; θεός) himself justifies Christians and no-one would dare to attempt to overthrow that!

<sup>232</sup> **'Who is to condemn?'** The answer: 'Christ Jesus, the one having died'. Christ will be the judge, but since he is also the one who has died for the elect he can hardly then condemn them.

**'yes'** (Gk, *mallon de mallon* δέ, 'and more' or 'rather')

**'who was raised'** 'having been raised'. The resurrection of Jesus is the guarantee to the believer of new life.

**'who is at (the) right (hand) of God'** the position of honour and influence.

**'who indeed intercedes for us'** Jesus' death, resurrection and exaltation to God's right hand means that his intercession will be effective. It is the guarantee of the believer's justification.

<sup>233</sup> **'Who shall separate us'** The Greek order of words gives slight emphasis to the word 'us'. 'Who' instead of 'what' because the nouns which follow are all either masculine or feminine (none neuter).

**'love of Christ'** rather than God, because Paul has just been writing about Christ's work and intercession.

**'hardship'** or 'tribulation', **'distress'** affliction and inward distress, **'nakedness'** not indecency but poverty, **'sword'** execution.

<sup>234</sup> Quote from Psalm 44:22 (cf. 2 Corinthians 4:11) where it expresses the confusion of God's people in the face of suffering they can't explain, while calling on God for help.

<sup>235</sup> **'No'** (Gk 'But' *alla* ἀλλά)

**'in all these things'** in the midst of all this adversity.

**'more than conquerors'** emphasises the totality of the victory.

**'through him who loved us'** Aorist active participle ('the one having loved us') points to the event of love expressed in Christ's death ('the one' could be either Christ or God).

<sup>236</sup> **'I am convinced'** Paul's personal conviction.

Ten items are listed. Four pairs and two single...

**'death nor life'**,

**'angels nor rulers'** Earthly or heavenly rulers. The mention of 'angels' is unexpected unless it means fallen angels or a reference to angel worship, or simply a hypothetical reference.

**'present nor things to come'** could be a reference to present and future troubles or anxieties or to present and future ages.

**'powers'** In the context could include earthly and heavenly powers, as well as magicians and miracle workers.

**'height nor depth'** 'height' may refer to the universe. The world above and the world below?

**'nor anything else'** A wide generalisation covering anything Paul may have missed.

**'in Christ Jesus our Lord'** Only in Christ can the love of God be fully known with the security that comes from that knowledge.

## ROMANS 9

Paul has argued that Law and Circumcision do not save. Another factor which rules out a works-salvation is God's election.

### SUMMARY

v1-5 Paul's love for the Israelites. Theirs are the promises. (Not by works but by call)

v6-13 It is the children of the promise who are Abraham's true descendants.

eg Isaac – promised beforehand.

eg Esau and Jacob – foreordained that the elder serve the younger.

v14-18 Is this unjust? No! It is not to do with human exertion but God's mercy (key word)

Moses/Pharaoh

v19-29 Can God therefore find fault?

We are not in a position to question God.

He can choose or destroy whom he wants. (Quotes Hosea and Isaiah)

v30 Conclusion: Righteousness is attained through faith – not law or works

(something Jews stumbled over).

### THE PLACE OF CHAPTER 9 IN ROMANS

Chapters 9-11 form the climax of chapters 1-8?

It could be if the book is primarily addressing Jew/Gentile relationships in Rome.

Although 1:16-17 comments on 'to the Jew first' that hasn't been explained up the end of chapter 8.

Chapters 9-11 are a postscript to chapters 1-8?

Paul has completed the argument about individual salvation, but this still leaves unanswered questions about the promises given to Israel, especially now that Gentiles are flocking in and many Jews appear to be anti-Christianity. So what does that say about the elect of God and his promises, particularly when Christian security appears to be founded on election (according to chapter 8).

### 9:1-5 The Tragedy of Israel

<sup>1</sup>I am speaking the truth in Christ—I am not lying; my conscience confirms it by the Holy Spirit—<sup>237</sup> <sup>2</sup>I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart.<sup>238</sup> <sup>3</sup>For I could wish that I myself were accursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my own people, my kindred according to the flesh.<sup>239</sup> <sup>4</sup>They are Israelites, and to them

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<sup>237</sup> **'I am speaking the truth'** Literally, 'Truth I speak'. Placing the word 'Truth' first gives it emphasis.

Paul's conscience is illuminated by the Holy Spirit.

<sup>238</sup> Paul has almost invariably taken the gospel to the Jew first only to find opposition from that quarter.

Nevertheless, as a Jew his personal grief for their plight shows.

**'in my heart'** here, the emotions.

<sup>239</sup> **'For'** Introduces the result and depth of Paul's grief

**'I could wish'** Literally, 'I was praying'. The imperfect tense conveys the idea of a desire or wish.

**'I myself'** emphasizes Paul's involvement

belong the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship, and the promises; <sup>5</sup>to them belong the patriarchs, and from them, according to the flesh, comes the Messiah, who is over all, God blessed forever. Amen.<sup>240</sup>

**9:6-29 is an affirmation of the sovereignty of God.**

**His purposes have not failed just because many Jews are not the true Israel.**

**God's election ensures his control.**

**God's election is balanced with mercy (He is not a tyrant).**

<sup>6</sup>It is not as though the word of God had failed. For not all Israelites truly belong to Israel,<sup>241</sup> <sup>7</sup>and not all of Abraham's children are his true descendants; but "It is through Isaac that descendants shall be named for you."<sup>242</sup> <sup>8</sup>This means that it is not the children of the flesh who are the children of God, but the children of the promise

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**'accursed'** The idea of being offered up to the wrath of God. The result of such a curse is separation from Christ.

**'for the sake of my own people'** ('on behalf of my brothers'). There is a parallel here with Moses' wishing to die for the people rather than surviving alone and then suggesting that he might make atonement for their sin. (Exodus 32:32).

**'my kindred according to the flesh'** Paul is aware that he is not kindred according to the Spirit.

<sup>240</sup> **'They are Israelites'** in the sense of being the People of God.

**'the adoption'** ('adoption as sons') admitted to the family of God. A term usually used of Christians.

**'the glory'** The glory of God in his presence and deeds amongst his people?

**'the covenants'** (some mss have 'covenant – singular, but the plural is thought to be more likely because it is the harder reading). Covenants of the Exodus – Horeb, Plains of Moab, Gerizim, Ebal? OR Noah (Gen 9:9), Abraham (Gen 17:2), Moses (Exo 24:8), Joshua (Josh 8:30ff), David (2 Sam 23:5).

**'the worship'** Probably to do with instructions for worship (approach to God) in the Tabernacle and Temple

**'the promises'** could have to do with the blessings and curses of Deuteronomy, but more especially the promises concerning the Messiah

**'the patriarchs'** especially Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

**'the Messiah'** Literally 'the Christ'

**'according to the flesh'** the human ancestry of Christ is traced from the Patriarchs, but the phrase also suggests that there is a divine ancestry, with a more universal ownership and application.

**'who is over all, God blessed forever. Amen'** Confusing because of the lack of punctuation in the Greek. Literally it reads, 'The one is over all God blessed to the ages. Amen.' The sense hinges on whether there is a comma after 'flesh'. The NIV reads, 'Christ... who is God over all forever praised.' Another possibility is, 'God, who is over all be blessed for ever.' Grammatically the NIV is to be favoured because it follows the word order. If it were to read as a doxology tagged on the end then it would be more likely to start, 'Blessed be God...'

<sup>241</sup> **'God's word'** His promises have not failed simply because they did not only apply to the physical Israel, and they were not even applied to some of the physical Israel. Paul will go on to show that it never was God's intention to elect all of the physical Israel, implied by the separation process between Isaac and Ishmael (both children of Abraham) and stated explicitly in the case of Jacob over Esau. True Israelites then are not a race but children of the promise by God's election.

<sup>242</sup> **'not all of Abraham's children are his true descendants'** Literally, 'not all the seed (singular) of Abraham are his children'. The true line is through Isaac (implicitly rather than Ishmael) but far from being bound to Isaac's descendants (as many Jews would have thought) God is free to choose between them. This doesn't mean that Ishmael and Esau were excluded from the covenant (since they received the sign of circumcision at God's command – Gen 17:9-13, 23, 26) but they did not receive the revelations.

**'shall be named'** (Gk, 'called') So literally – 'In Isaac will your seed be called' carrying the weight of divine call and/or a naming which denotes what they actually are.

are counted as descendants.<sup>243</sup> <sup>9</sup>For this is what the promise said, "About this time I will return and Sarah shall have a son."<sup>244</sup> <sup>10</sup>Nor is that all; something similar happened to Rebecca when she had conceived children by one husband, our ancestor Isaac.<sup>245</sup>

**9:11-13 God's election of Jacob and Esau took place before they were born.**

so that            i) There could be no question of merit or works.

ii) God emerges as sovereign, calling according to his plan.

**The case of Ishmael showed that birth does not ensure calling.**

**The case of Isaac showed that works do not ensure calling.**

**THE RESULT IS that no-one can claim their rights before God because no-one has any rights! God's purposes will be fulfilled no matter what.**

<sup>11</sup>Even before they had been born or had done anything good or bad (so that God's purpose of election might continue, <sup>12</sup>not by works but by his call) she was told, "The elder shall serve the younger."<sup>246</sup> <sup>13</sup>As it is written, "I have loved Jacob, but I have hated Esau."<sup>247</sup> <sup>14</sup>What then are we to say? Is there injustice on God's part? By no means!<sup>248</sup> <sup>15</sup>For he says to Moses, "I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion."<sup>249</sup> <sup>16</sup>So it depends not on

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<sup>243</sup> **'children of the flesh'** could be a partial reference to Ishmael, where Abraham tried to take the initiative to expedite God's promises. Isaac was born by divine intervention according to God's promises.

<sup>244</sup> **'For'** introduces the context of the promise... that Sarah would have a son which was foretold, under God's control and at his fixed time (Genesis 18:10).

<sup>245</sup> **'Nor is that all'** introduces reinforcement to the argument in the case of Jacob being chosen over Esau. In this case they had the same parents (unlike Ishmael and Isaac with different mothers). This is probably the force behind the 'one husband' reference.

**'our ancestor'** Literally 'our father'. Paul links himself with all Jews in the word 'our'.

<sup>246</sup> **'not by works'** goes beyond just the law. The evidence is in the quote from Genesis 25:23 (from the LXX) 'the elder shall serve the younger. Although Esau himself did not serve Jacob, the Edomites later served Israel.

<sup>247</sup> A quote from Malachi 1:2-3. Here again the context speaks of two nations rather than two individuals.

**'hated'** can mean 'loved less' (Genesis 29:31, 33. Deuteronomy 21:15. Matthew 6:24. Luke 14:26. John 12:25). Here though 'hated' seems to carry the idea of 'rejected' (in the context of fulfilling God's masterplan) as against Israel who is accepted (NB that Esau and the Edomites still enjoyed the blessings of God). In other words this passage is stressing calling/election for *service* rather than salvation.

<sup>248</sup> If God has already chosen people before they do anything, is he therefore unjust? Paul's argument here in chapter 9 is presented to reinforce that a) Justification is not based on works. b) Jews and Gentiles have equal access to God, because justification is not by natural birth. c) The Old Testament supports Paul's proposition.

Paul does not discuss human freedom of choice (as we might want him to do). He is rather arguing for God's complete freedom, where people do not have rights, because they do not deserve anything. Any goodness that God does show towards people is wholly dependent on his mercy (neither Esau nor Jacob deserved God's mercy.

Paul strongly denies and suggestion that God is unjust ('By no means!') because it would be a contradiction in terms.

<sup>249</sup> A quote from Exodus 33:19.

**'For'** introduces the reason why God cannot be termed unjust, because God is free to act in mercy and compassion without restraints or obligations. He is never in debt to good people and in the context of the quote he would have been completely justified in destroying Israel. Instead he showed mercy.

human will or exertion, but on God who shows mercy.<sup>250</sup> <sup>17</sup>For the scripture says to Pharaoh, “I have raised you up for the very purpose of showing my power in you, so that my name may be proclaimed in all the earth.”<sup>251</sup> <sup>18</sup>So then he has mercy on whomever he chooses, and he hardens the heart of whomever he chooses.<sup>252</sup>

<sup>19</sup>You will say to me then, “Why then does he still find fault? For who can resist his will?”<sup>253</sup> <sup>20</sup>But who indeed are you, a human being, to argue with God? Will what is moulded say to the one who moulds it, “Why have you made me like this?”<sup>254</sup> <sup>21</sup>Has the potter no right over the clay, to make out of the same lump one object for special use and another for ordinary use?<sup>255</sup> <sup>22</sup>What if God, desiring to show his wrath and to make known his power, has endured with much patience the objects of wrath that are made for destruction;<sup>256</sup> <sup>23</sup>and what if he has done so in order to make known the riches of his glory for the objects of mercy, which he has prepared beforehand for

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<sup>250</sup> **‘it’** could be salvation or mercy. Neither depend on human wishes or desires.

**‘or exertion’** literally ‘nor on the one running’ – the idea of striving, as in a foot race.

If salvation, or God’s plans were to rest on human will and effort then the world would be in a sorry state. In the case of Abraham, Ishmael and Isaac, and Jacob and Esau God’s mercy was at work.

<sup>251</sup> Pharaoh’s primary purpose in history was to serve God’s purposes. The quote is from Exodus 9:16 and is a demonstration of God’s power and the glory (proclamation) of his name. (The plagues and deliverance of Israel were widely spoken of at the time, Exodus 15:14-15, Joshua 2:9-10 & 9:9).

<sup>252</sup> Bearing in mind the context that Paul is establishing that God’s purposes have not failed simply because many in Israel had not accepted and that true descendants of Abraham are those of the promise, Paul now asserts the positive and negative aspects in the worship (proclamation) of God’s name – ie that he ‘has mercy’ and he ‘hardens the heart’. (NB that God is never said to have hardened the heart of anyone who did not harden their own heart (Exodus 7:13, 14, 22 etc).

<sup>253</sup> **‘You will say’** You (singular) the reader are sure to say.

**‘who can resist his will’** (‘will’ Gk. boulemati βουλήματι is an unusual word for ‘will’ and perhaps implies ‘intention’ or deliberate purpose.) Keep in mind that Paul is not talking about the individual’s eternal destiny but the service of Israel in the world, or more especially the failure of Israel as a whole to respond to Jesus, as he writes to a largely Gentile church, explaining that the hardening of Israel has seen the gospel spread to the Gentiles.

<sup>254</sup> Paul anticipates further argument from his readers.

**‘who indeed are you, a human being, to argue with God’** We don’t have a right to argue with God particularly as he has shown mercy to us as undeserving people. Perhaps even if God were to explain, would we have the capacity to understand? Human inability to fathom God is like the inanimate clay reasoning with the artist.

<sup>255</sup> It is the potter that has the responsibility for the outcome of the clay, not the clay itself. Clay has no rights while the potter has every right. Clay has no ability to form itself. Pharaoh, Isaac, Ishmael, Jacob and Esau were all made of the same clay but put to different uses. (NB that Paul is not saying that God forms people into sinners but that he takes sinners and reforms them.)

<sup>256</sup> **‘What if’** There is no ‘what’ in the Greek. The ‘if...’ is not matched with ‘then...’ unless it is implied, ‘then what will you say’.

The gist of verses 22-23 seems to be that God is working out his plan of mercy and this is seen in his wrath as well as his longsuffering.

**‘his power’** the first inclination might be for God to show his power in wrath towards the rebellious (especially Israel)

**‘objects of wrath that are made for destruction’** or ‘having been prepared for destruction’. It doesn’t say clearly that God prepares them. They have prepared themselves (in the sense of being ripe and ready) for destruction through rebellion, and God affirms the hardening process.

**‘endured with much patience’** Despite the rebellion God shows patience for the sake of making known his glory (as in v23).

glory—<sup>257</sup> <sup>24</sup>including us whom he has called, not from the Jews only but also from the Gentiles?<sup>258</sup> <sup>25</sup>As indeed he says in Hosea, “Those who were not my people I will call ‘my people,’ and her who was not beloved I will call ‘beloved.’”<sup>259</sup> <sup>26</sup>“And in the very place where it was said to them, ‘You are not my people,’ there they shall be called children of the living God.”<sup>260</sup> <sup>27</sup>And Isaiah cries out concerning Israel, “Though the number of the children of Israel were like the sand of the sea, only a remnant of them will be saved;<sup>261</sup> <sup>28</sup>for the Lord will execute his sentence on the earth quickly and decisively.”<sup>262</sup> <sup>29</sup>And as Isaiah predicted, “If the Lord of hosts had not left survivors to us, we would have fared like Sodom and been made like Gomorrah.”<sup>263</sup>

**9:30-31 is a conclusion of sorts, but also leads to further questions and clarification of Israel’s position. Paul has asserted God’s mercy and initiative in election from amongst the families, peoples and nations. Here, human response and responsibility (especially Israel’s) is also on view and Paul again asserts that the appropriate response is faith.**

<sup>30</sup>What then are we to say? Gentiles, who did not strive for righteousness, have attained it, that is, righteousness through faith;<sup>264</sup> <sup>31</sup>but Israel, who did strive for the

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<sup>257</sup> Notice that while God is not said to prepare people for wrath, ‘he’, God, has prepared vessels for mercy and glory. In other words, out of a world that is already completely under condemnation, God chooses objects of mercy and his patience with the rest serves his purpose further.

<sup>258</sup> ‘including us’ Paul, and Jews and Gentiles of the Roman church. This must mean that Jews were also under condemnation.

<sup>259</sup> Quotes support the point that God has prepared vessels for mercy from Gentiles as well as Jews. Hosea 2:23 (2:25 in the LXX) where the prophet speaks to Israel (the Northern Kingdom). In the context of Hosea the sins of the ten tribes had placed them under God’s judgement – no longer his people. Nevertheless, he would call them his people again. Paul applies this to the Gentiles who had *never been* God’s people in that sense.

<sup>260</sup> Quote from Hosea 1:10. It is the effectual call of God which reverses the condition of being ‘not my people’ and there’s more! – They are to be called ‘children’ (Gk. ‘sons’).

<sup>261</sup> As the Gentiles are included so also only a remnant of Israel will be saved. The fact that a *majority* of ‘God’s people’ rejected Jesus did not mean Jesus was a fraud. Historically the majority were the rebellious ones. The faithful remnant is a theme throughout the Old Testament. There has always only been one people of God – *The Remnant* – not the leftovers, but *The Chosen*. The quote is Isaiah 10:22 which talks of the remnant returning (rather than being saved). However since the return is to God in Isaiah 10:21 then the idea is similar.

<sup>262</sup> Isaiah 10:22 continued. Paul abbreviates the LXX which differs slightly from the Hebrew, though the sense is much the same. Isaiah had the Assyrians in mind.

Those of Israel who are not of the Remnant are not immune from judgement.

‘**quickly and decisively**’ Literally, ‘concluding and cutting short in righteousness’, which could refer to the time or the people.

<sup>263</sup> A further quote from Isaiah 1:9. Had it not been for God’s mercy not even The Remnant would have survived.

‘**survivors**’ Literally, ‘a seed’ – which normally would have the potential for regrowth. In these circumstances, without God’s mercy, there would not have been even a grain of hope.

‘**Lord of hosts**’ “Lord Almighty” NIV. Probably equivalent to ‘Lord of the Universe’.

These OT quotes have shown that Israel never was secure and immune from judgement.

<sup>264</sup> ‘**Gentiles who did not strive**’ The Gentiles generally did not have a great desire for a right standing before God (as Israel did) but then ‘attained’ it (NIV has ‘obtained’ which would suggest the initiative of God). ‘attained’ (NRSV) suggests a striving for it. Perhaps the best sense is that the Gentiles laid hold of it eagerly when it was presented to them.

righteousness that is based on the law, did not succeed in fulfilling that law.<sup>265</sup> <sup>32</sup>Why not? Because they did not strive for it on the basis of faith, but as if it were based on works.<sup>266</sup> They have stumbled over the stumbling stone, <sup>33</sup>as it is written, “See, I am laying in Zion a stone that will make people stumble, a rock that will make them fall, and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame.”<sup>267</sup>

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<sup>265</sup> **‘the righteousness that is based on the law’** Literally reads, ‘But Israel following after a law of righteousness to a law of righteousness did not attain’. The NRSV rendering suggests a righteousness attained by keeping the law, that is, a right standing before God. The Greek order of words, ‘a law of righteousness’ may rather mean, ‘a law that is righteous’. The meaning of the latter would then be that, ‘Israel failed to live up to the righteous law (the righteous living that the law pointed to.) This latter interpretation is supported by, ‘did not succeed in fulfilling the law’. Whichever Paul had in mind, elements of both are surely true.

<sup>266</sup> They failed to keep the righteous law (to live righteously and attain a righteous status before God) not because the law was wrong but because they strove for it in the wrong way (by works without the basis of faith). This would suggest a mechanical and even ritualistic approach to God rather than a relational one.

<sup>267</sup> Quotes from Isaiah 8:14, where the Lord Almighty is the stumbling stone (here Paul applies it to Christ), and Isaiah 28:16 where the Lord lays the stone in Zion. NT writers refer to Christ as the stone (Matthew 21:42, Luke 20:17-18, Acts 4:1, 1 Corinthians 3:11, Ephesians 2:20, and especially 1 Peter 2:4-81, where Peter also takes Isaiah 8:14 and 28:16 together.

**‘a rock that will make them fall’** (Gk. petran skandalou πέτραν σκανδάλου) ‘a rock of offence’, but rather carries overtones of a bait or trap.

**‘put to shame’** Shame is often to do with judgement.



## ROMANS 10

<sup>1</sup>Brothers and sisters, my heart's desire and prayer to God for them is that they may be saved.<sup>268</sup> <sup>2</sup>I can testify that they have a zeal for God, but it is not enlightened.<sup>269</sup> <sup>3</sup>For, being ignorant of the righteousness that comes from God, and seeking to establish their own, they have not submitted to God's righteousness.<sup>270</sup> <sup>4</sup>For Christ is the end of the law so that there may be righteousness for everyone who believes.<sup>271</sup>

<sup>5</sup>Moses writes concerning the righteousness that comes from the law, that "the person who does these things will live by them."<sup>272</sup> <sup>6</sup>But the righteousness that comes from faith says, "Do not say in your heart, 'Who will ascend into heaven?'" (that is, to bring Christ down)<sup>273</sup> <sup>7</sup>"or 'Who will descend into the abyss?'" (that is, to

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<sup>268</sup> **'Brothers'** is emphatic being placed first in the sentence and refers to brothers in Christ rather than brothers in Israel.

**'them'** is translated 'Israelites' in the NIV, but Gk is 'them'.

Although what follows may have been unpalatable to Jewish readers, this verse reflects the warmth Paul feels towards them, which finds action in his prayer to God for them, with the purpose of their salvation.

<sup>269</sup> **'I can testify'** Rather, 'I testify' – Paul is already testifying here.

Israel's enthusiasm for God is commendable (no other nation had as much) but the means by which they attempt to please him is not, because it is not according to knowledge, uninformed, even though the information was available (as Paul has shown in his OT quotes).

<sup>270</sup> **'For'** seems to expand on what it means to be unenlightened:- a) They did not understand or acknowledge the righteousness which comes from God (a major theme of the letter). b) The act of attempting to establish their own righteousness was actually *contrary* to God's Righteousness.

Submission to another is difficult for human beings to do. It challenges pride and independence but is the main feature of true worship (See Rom 12:1-2).

<sup>271</sup> **'For'** introduces the reason why pursuing their own righteousness equalled non-submission to God's and why it was and is inadequate... namely because 'Christ is the end of the law', that is in law, 'bringing (or as a way to) righteousness for everyone believing'.

**'end'** Gk. telos τέλος, termination? fulfilment? goal? One commentator takes all three. Whichever way telos is understood, law ceases to be a means of righteousness in the light of the righteousness which is in Jesus (who has always been the object of the law, ie. If law was given to show right relationships then Jesus alone achieves those right relationships, primarily with God. Legalism is irrelevant to salvation.

**'law'** Primarily the law of Moses though law generally is 'ended' too.

**'everyone'** For Jew and Gentile the way is faith ('everyone who believes').

<sup>272</sup> Now Paul contrasts righteousness and law, and righteousness and faith. He shows that his view on righteousness is scriptural with a group of quotes and he therefore introduces the verse with 'For' (omitted by the NRSV).

The quote is Leviticus 18:5. Both the following meanings have merit and are consistent with Paul...

i) If you use the law for righteousness your life must be lived in accordance with *all* of it.

ii) That the person who *does* the law should realise that it points to Christ and live accordingly.

<sup>273</sup> **'But'** introduces the contrast.

This is the righteousness that comes from faith (Gk. ek pisteos ἐκ πίστεως).

Paul's quote from Deuteronomy 30:12-14 doesn't quite match the LXX or Hebrew. He may be just paraphrasing the thought. The original context of the 'quote' is talking about the accessibility of the law, ie it is nearby. Similarly faith says, 'we do not attain Christ (God's Word) by going and getting him (through our own will and effort), rather the message concerning him is *here*, close by. He has come to us.

bring Christ up from the dead).<sup>274</sup> <sup>8</sup>But what does it say? “The word is near you, on your lips and in your heart” (that is, the word of faith that we proclaim);<sup>275</sup> <sup>9</sup>because if you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. <sup>10</sup>For one believes with the heart and so is justified, and one confesses with the mouth and so is saved. <sup>11</sup>The scripture says, “No one who believes in him will be put to shame.” <sup>12</sup>For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; the same Lord is Lord of all and is generous to all who call on him. <sup>13</sup>For, “Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.” <sup>14</sup>But how are they to call on one in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in one of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone to proclaim him? <sup>15</sup>And how are they to proclaim him unless they are sent? As it is written, “How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!” <sup>16</sup>But not all have obeyed the good news; for Isaiah says, “Lord, who has believed our message?” <sup>17</sup>So faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes through the word of Christ. <sup>18</sup>But I ask, have they not heard? Indeed they have; for “Their voice has gone out to all the earth, and their words to the ends of the world.” <sup>19</sup>Again I ask, did Israel not understand? First Moses says, “I will make you jealous of those who are not a nation; with a foolish nation I will make you angry.” <sup>20</sup>Then Isaiah is so bold as to say, “I have been found by those who did not seek me; I have shown myself to those who did not ask for me.” <sup>21</sup>But of Israel he says, “All day long I have held out my hands to a disobedient and contrary people.”

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<sup>274</sup> **‘abyss’** is sometimes a reference to the sea. In Deuteronomy 30:13 the reference to ‘beyond the sea’ in its context may be the opposite of ‘from heaven’. People cannot descend to the abode of the dead to bring about Christ’s resurrection.

The idea is of ascent and descent both express the impossible. Faith recognises that impossibility and that God has done what is necessary.

<sup>275</sup> Deuteronomy 30:14. and again giving the sense but not an exact quote. God does not make it too difficult for us to know his word and do what he wants. Paul applies this to the message of faith (ie the message which calls for faith – is about faith from beginning to end).

**‘we proclaim’** Present tense – an ongoing action.

## ROMANS 11

I ask, then, has God rejected his people? By no means! I myself am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham, a member of the tribe of Benjamin. 2 God has not rejected his people whom he foreknew.<sup>276</sup> Do you not know what the scripture says of Elijah, how he pleads with God against Israel? 3 “Lord, they have killed your prophets, they have demolished your altars; I alone am left, and they are seeking my life.” 4 But what is the divine reply to him? “I have kept for myself<sup>277</sup> seven thousand who have not bowed the knee to Baal.” 5 So too at the present time there is<sup>278</sup> a remnant, chosen by grace. 6 But if it<sup>279</sup> is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works, otherwise grace would no longer be grace.<sup>280</sup>

7 What then? Israel failed to obtain what it was seeking. The elect obtained it, but the rest were hardened,<sup>281</sup> 8 as it is written,

“God gave them a sluggish spirit,  
eyes that would not see,  
and ears that would not hear,  
down to this very day.” [Deut 29:4]

9 And David says,

“Let their table become a snare and a trap,<sup>282</sup>  
a stumbling block<sup>283</sup> and a retribution for them;  
10 let their eyes be darkened so that they cannot see,  
and keep their backs forever bent.” [Psa 69:22, 23]

11 So I ask, have they stumbled so as to fall?<sup>284</sup> By no means! But through their stumbling salvation has come to the Gentiles, so as to make Israel jealous. 12 Now if their stumbling means riches for the world, and if their defeat means riches for Gentiles, how much more will their full inclusion mean!

13 Now I am speaking to you Gentiles.<sup>285</sup> Inasmuch then as I am an apostle to the Gentiles, I glorify my ministry 14 in order to make my own people jealous, and thus

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<sup>276</sup> The people whom he foreknew are not a people out of Israel but national Israel itself. The nation is on view here. However that does not imply that the whole nation will be saved. God has not rejected Israel and they still have access to salvation but the following reference to Elijah and the 7000 shows that salvation is for a remnant, chosen by grace (vs 5-8).

<sup>277</sup> It is God's action alone that ensures preservation.

<sup>278</sup> **'is'** - literally “having become” γέγονεν. The perfect tense suggests ongoing permanence.

<sup>279</sup> **'it'** - ie Being chosen as God's people.

<sup>280</sup> Paul is continuing the argument about grace and works. True in Elijah's time and true for Christians today.

<sup>281</sup> They were not hardened so that they would fail. They were hardened because they failed.

<sup>282</sup> **'Snare and a trap'** - εἰς παγίδα καὶ εἰς θήραν, into a trap and into a net.

<sup>283</sup> **'Stumbling block'** - εἰς σκάνδαλον – into offence. Lit. The bait stick of a trap.

<sup>284</sup> **'Fall'** – that is, beyond recovery (as in NIV)

<sup>285</sup> Suggests a significant proportion of Gentiles in the Roman church and that they should not think that the situation of the Jews is unimportant.

save some of them. 15 For<sup>286</sup> if their rejection is the reconciliation of the world,<sup>287</sup> what will their acceptance<sup>288</sup> be but life from the dead!<sup>289</sup> 16 If the part of the dough offered as first fruits is holy, then the whole batch is holy; and if the root is holy, then the branches also are holy.<sup>290</sup>

#### 11:17-24

**Lest Gentiles should feel superior ('Israel's history was simply for our benefit') Paul includes these verses. It may be that a general contempt for Jews in Rome could have influenced Gentile thinking in the church there. So Paul makes the points:-**

**v17 Gentiles were not the originals but a wild shoot.**

**v18 The Jewish traditions, covenants, revelations and promises benefit the Gentiles (rather than the other way around).**

**v19-20 Gentiles were accepted, not because of their works but because of Jewish failure.**

**v 20 Gentile salvation is therefore still by faith not by worth or works.**

**v21 Gentiles should not be overconfident. If Israel, with all their advantages could fall, so could they ('even more so' is implied).**

**v22 The Gentile position is on account of: i) God's severity to Israel. ii) His kindness towards the Gentiles (conditional upon their remaining faithful).**

**v23 Believers within Israel still have access just as Gentiles do, and indeed some do believe.**

**v24 Gentile inclusion might not be the expected or natural outcome. It would have been more natural for Israel to be included and when they are they bring with them all the knowledge and understanding of the history and cultural background of the Hebrew Scriptures with a heightened awareness of being 'in Abraham' with all that was entailed in the covenant promises.**

**A lesson may be drawn from the older son in Jesus' parable of the Prodigal Son (Luke 15). The Jewish leaders could originally be associated with the older son as they looked down on the Gentile 'sinners' but now the Gentile Christians are in danger of having the same superior attitude towards Jews who have rejected Christ.**

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<sup>286</sup> **'For'** seems to link back to v12

<sup>287</sup> **'Reconciliation of the world'** Not that every person will be reconciled but that they are given the opportunity. In the end, of course, the Creation will be reconciled/restored.

<sup>288</sup> **'Acceptance'** by God. The re-inclusion of Israel through faith.

<sup>289</sup> **'Life from the dead'** Israel, spiritually dead is given new life and/or resurrection life.

<sup>290</sup> **'Batch'** is 'lump' NRSV and NIV assume **'firstfruits'** to be dough. Firstfruits see Num 15.

Two metaphors are used: Firstfruits leading to the whole batch and Roots and branches of a tree.

Meanings?: Just as the patriarchs had holy status, so their descendants will not be rejected. They too are set aside. OR, Just as there are Jewish Christians (a Jewish faithful remnant) so others will follow.

OR, The words 'firstfruit' and 'root' could even refer to Christ himself.

17 But if some of the branches were broken off, and you, a wild olive shoot, were grafted in their place to share the rich root of the olive tree, 18 do not boast over the branches. If you do boast, remember that it is not you that support the root, but the root that supports you. 19 You will say, “Branches were broken off so that I might be grafted in.” 20 That is true. They were broken off because of their unbelief, but you stand only through faith. So do not become proud, but stand in awe. 21 For if God did not spare the natural branches, perhaps he will not spare you. 22 Note then the kindness and the severity of God: severity toward those who have fallen, but God’s kindness toward you, provided you continue in his kindness; otherwise you also will be cut off. 23 And even those of Israel, if they do not persist in unbelief, will be grafted in, for God has the power to graft them in again. 24 For if you have been cut from what is by nature a wild olive tree and grafted, contrary to nature, into a cultivated olive tree, how much more will these natural branches be grafted back into their own olive tree.

25 So that you may not claim to be wiser than you are, brothers and sisters, I want you to understand this mystery: a hardening has come upon part of Israel, until the full number of the Gentiles has come in. 26 And so all Israel will be saved;<sup>291</sup> as it is written,

“Out of Zion will come the Deliverer;  
he will banish ungodliness from Jacob.”

27 “And this is my covenant with them,  
when I take away their sins.”<sup>292</sup>

28 As regards the gospel they are enemies of God for your sake; but as regards election they are beloved, for the sake of their ancestors;<sup>293</sup> 29 for the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable. 30 Just as you were once disobedient to God but have now received mercy because of their disobedience, 31 so they have now been disobedient in order that, by the mercy shown to you, they too may now receive

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<sup>291</sup> **‘All Israel will be saved’** a) Every Jew, past ,present and future? b) Every Jew in the future? (few exegetes would hold out for a) and b)). c) A substantial number of Jews, past , present and future? d) A substantial number at some point in the future? e) Spiritual, rather than national, Israel? f) A remnant of Israel through the ages? Of these d) appears to be quite attractive in the context of Israel as a nation and because **‘mystery’** in v25 would seem to rule out e) and f).

**‘full number of the Gentiles’** (lit. ‘until the fullness of the Gentiles comes in’) could mean a specific number of Gentiles that God is waiting for OR the fulfilment of God’s plans in bringing the Gentiles in.

<sup>292</sup> Isa 59:20-21.

**‘Deliverer’** Christ through his incarnation, the Parousia or both.

**‘Out of Zion’** – ‘to Zion’ in the NIV OT. ‘for Zion’ (ie ‘on account of Zion’ in the LXX). Paul’s adjustment of the text to **‘out of Zion’** perhaps suggests that the Messiah and the conversion of Israel begins with the crucifixion at Jerusalem. (Harrison in the Expositors Commentary believes it refers to The Parousia.

<sup>293</sup> The Jews have been hardened and become **‘enemies of God’** for the purposes of God – the inclusion of the Gentiles in the scope of the gospel. But in terms of election, and the promises to their ancestors the Jews are **‘beloved’**. God’s plans, then, have not changed. Gentiles were disobedient to God but received mercy because of the Jews’ disobedience. And because the Gentiles received mercy the Jews may also receive mercy because they observe the benefits that the Gentiles received through faith.

mercy. 32 For God has imprisoned all in disobedience<sup>294</sup> so that he may be merciful to all.<sup>295</sup>

33 O the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways!

34 “For who has known the mind of the Lord?  
Or who has been his counsellor?” <sup>296</sup>

35 “Or who has given a gift to him,  
to receive a gift in return?”

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

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<sup>294</sup> **‘imprisoned all in disobedience’** – ‘gave over to disobedience’ may give a better sense. ‘all’ refers to Jew and Gentile mentioned in verses 30-31.

<sup>295</sup> Even though both Gentile and Jew were enemies of God, his purposes were to include all through his mercy towards them (by faith in Jesus Christ). God’s purposes are ultimately to show mercy.

<sup>296</sup> Verses 33-34 comprise a doxology which may draw on several Scriptural passages. Eg. Isa 40:13, Job 15:8, Jer 23:18. This doxology is a response to the way that God has brought Jew and Gentile together in Jesus Christ. The questions posed in this hymn of praise are in effect answered in 12:1-2, our response to the wonderful outworking of God’s plan. (See the structure of 11:30 to 12:2 which follows)



## STRUCTURE OF ROMANS 11:30—12:2 *John Wesrt 2022*

11:30 ὥσπερ γὰρ ὑμεῖς ποτε ἠπειθήσατε  
τῷ θεῷ, νῦν δὲ ἠλειήθητε τῇ τούτων  
ἀπειθείᾳ,

31 οὕτως καὶ οὗτοι νῦν ἠπειθήσαν τῷ  
ὑμετέρῳ ἐλέει, ἵνα καὶ αὐτοὶ [νῦν]  
ἐλεηθῶσιν.

32 συνέκλεισεν γὰρ ὁ θεὸς τοὺς πάντας εἰς  
ἀπειθειαν, ἵνα τοὺς πάντας ἐλεήσῃ.

33 Ὡ βάρους πλούτου  
καὶ σοφίας καὶ γνώσεως θεοῦ·  
ὡς ἀνεξεραύνητα τὰ κρίματα αὐτοῦ  
καὶ ἀνεξιχνίαστοι αἱ ὁδοὶ  
αὐτοῦ.

34 Τίς γὰρ ἔγνω νοῦν κυρίου;  
ἢ τίς σύμβουλος αὐτοῦ  
ἐγένετο;

35 ἢ τίς προέδωκεν αὐτῷ,  
καὶ ἀνταποδοθήσεται αὐτῷ;

36 ὅτι ἐξ αὐτοῦ καὶ δι' αὐτοῦ καὶ εἰς  
αὐτὸν τὰ πάντα·

αὐτῷ ἡ δόξα εἰς τοὺς  
αἰῶνας, ἀμήν.

12 Παρακαλῶ οὖν ὑμᾶς, ἀδελφοί, διὰ τῶν  
οἰκτιρμῶν τοῦ θεοῦ

παραστήσαι τὰ σώματα ὑμῶν θυσίαν  
ζῶσαν ἁγίαν εὐάρεστον τῷ θεῷ, τὴν  
λογικὴν λατρείαν ὑμῶν·

2 καὶ μὴ συσχηματίζεσθε τῷ αἰῶνι τούτῳ,  
ἀλλὰ μεταμορφοῦσθε τῇ ἀνακαινώσει τοῦ  
νοῦς

εἰς τὸ δοκιμάζειν ὑμᾶς τί τὸ θέλημα τοῦ  
θεοῦ,

τὸ ἀγαθὸν καὶ εὐάρεστον καὶ τέλειον.

30 Just as you were once disobedient to God  
but **have now received mercy** because of  
their disobedience,

31 so they have now been disobedient in  
order that, by the **mercy** shown to you, they  
too may now **receive mercy**.

32 For God has imprisoned all in disobedience  
so that he may be **merciful to all**.

33 O the depth of the riches and **wisdom and  
knowledge of God!**

**How unsearchable are his judgments and  
how inscrutable his ways!**

34 “For who has known the mind of the  
Lord?

Or who has been his counsellor?”

35 “Or who has given a gift to him,  
to receive a gift in return?”

36 For from him and through him and to him  
are all things.

To him be the glory forever. Amen.

12 I appeal to you therefore, brothers and  
sisters, by the **mercies of God**,

to **present your bodies** as a living sacrifice,  
holy and acceptable to God, which is your  
spiritual worship.

2 Do not be conformed to this world,  
but be transformed by the **renewing of your  
minds**,

so that you may **discern what is the will of  
God**

—what is good and acceptable and perfect.

Received  
MERCY

The  
MIND  
God

GIFT  
to God

GLORY  
TO GOD

Received  
MERCY

GIFT  
to God

Your  
MIND  
God's  
MIND



## ROMANS 12

I appeal to you therefore,<sup>297</sup> brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God,<sup>298</sup> to present your bodies<sup>299</sup> as a living sacrifice,<sup>300</sup> holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.<sup>301</sup> 2 Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds,<sup>302</sup> so that you may discern what is the will of God—what is good and acceptable and perfect.<sup>303</sup>

3 For by the grace given to me<sup>304</sup> I say to everyone among you not to think of yourself more highly than you ought to think,<sup>305</sup> but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned.<sup>306</sup> 4 For as in one body we have many members, and not all the members have the same function,

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<sup>297</sup> **‘Therefore’** indicates a summary of chapters 1-11, which are mainly doctrine with a few exhortations at 6:12, 7:6, 8:9 etc. So Paul is now exhorting his readers to respond in the light of that doctrine

<sup>298</sup> **‘by’** – (Gk. *dia* δια, ‘in view of’ NIV. In light of **‘the mercies of God’** (justification through faith in Jesus Christ and his sacrifice for our sins, summarised in chapters 1-11) this is the appropriate response – ‘present your bodies’ – a sacrifice that can only be made *because of* God’s mercies first shown to us and it is on the grounds of those mercies that Paul makes this appeal.

<sup>299</sup> **‘bodies’** rather than ‘whole selves’. It could be that Paul saw most of the shortcomings of Christians as associated with the body (eg 7:24), while the spirit already wants to obey God. Therefore place the weakest aspect of yourselves under God’s control. In that sense ‘body’ can indeed be understood as representative of the whole self.

<sup>300</sup> **‘living sacrifice’** Sacrifices could be brought as an atonement for sin or for various acts of praise and thanksgiving. Here the offering of oneself is an act of worship. Animal Sacrifices offered the death of the creature but here it is the whole *life* that is offered.

<sup>301</sup> **‘spiritual service’** – ‘your true and proper worship’ NIV. ‘Service’ and ‘worship’ should be understood in their wider sense of *‘everything we do for God in his service’*. ‘Worship’ in the sense of a church service is only a representative part of our wider submission to God and his will.

**‘spiritual’** (Gk. *logiken*, λογικην) sometimes translated ‘reasonable’ with the idea of ‘reasoned,’ ‘logical’ or ‘intelligent’. A service worthy of thinking people.

<sup>302</sup> **‘conformed’** may suggest a more superficial accommodation to the world, where **‘transformed’** (Gk. *metamorphousthe*, μεταμορφουσθε) suggests a profound inner change or metamorphosis. The present tense of ‘transformed’ tends to indicate that it is an ongoing process – ‘continue to be transformed’. **‘mind’** The believer is to think differently, mindfully and not just emotionally, in line with the perfect will of God. However it is not just an intellectual response, but also a moral and ethical one. And even more, It involves one’s whole being

**‘to this world’** is in Gk. ‘to this age’ (*aioni*, αἰωνι) suggesting something temporal, transitory, fleeting.

<sup>303</sup> **‘so that you may discern’** (Gk. *dokimazein*, δοκιμαζειν) sometimes translated ‘prove’ or ‘test’. It goes beyond saying that you will be *able* to discern (the word ‘may’ is not really there). Rather ‘you **will** discern’ or ‘approve of’ the will of God, because your mind is transformed to be in tune with God’s mind. And by implication you will, in submission, also carry out God’s will.

<sup>304</sup> **‘by the grace given me’** Paul is appealing to the charge entrusted to him as an apostle of Jesus Christ.

<sup>305</sup> **‘not to think more highly’** The more our minds are attuned to God the more we will see ourselves through his eyes, remembering that all we are and all we have is through the grace of God

<sup>306</sup> **‘each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned’**. It is by our faith in Jesus Christ that we measure and think about ourselves and are able to make something approaching an accurate assessment. **‘measure’** is a standard (Gk. *metron*, μετρον), rather than an amount of faith. The Faith in which we stand *is* the measure, like a plumbline against each of our lives. We have the same faith but Paul goes on to say that it is manifested in various ways in each believer.

5 so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually we are members one of another.<sup>307</sup> 6 We have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us:<sup>308</sup>

There follows a list of Greek participles: ministering, teaching, the one exhorting, the one contributing, the one governing, the one showing mercy, abhorring evil, clinging to the good, loving dearly, preferring one another, in spirit burning, the Lord serving, in hope rejoicing, in tribulation enduring, in prayer persevering, to needs contributing, hospitality seeking (extending).

See also the structure of these verses at the end of this chapter.

- prophecy, in proportion to faith;<sup>309</sup>
- 7 ministry, in ministering;<sup>310</sup>
- the teacher, in teaching;<sup>311</sup>
- 8 the exhorter, in exhortation;<sup>312</sup>
- the giver, in generosity;
- the leader, in diligence;
- the compassionate, in cheerfulness.<sup>313</sup>
- 9 Let love be genuine;<sup>314</sup>
- hate what is evil, hold fast to what is good;<sup>315</sup>
- 10 love one another with mutual affection; outdo one another in showing honour.<sup>316</sup>
- 11 Do not lag in zeal, be ardent in spirit,

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<sup>307</sup> See also 1 Cor 10:17, 12:12-30. Those who are one body in Christ do not constitute dull uniformity but vibrant, active variety, though interdependent. Believers do not generally exist alone.

<sup>308</sup> The imperatives (in the form of participles) are to use one's gifts to the best of one's ability. These gifts (with the possible exception of prophecy) appear to refer to one's natural aptitudes and abilities (though we must always acknowledge that these too are God-given).

<sup>309</sup> '**prophecy in proportion to faith**' could perhaps be better translated, 'prophecy according to a right relationship with the faith'. ('**proportion**', Gk analogian, αναλογιαν, corresponding to logos, the word). In other words, when exercising prophecy it must concur with *The Faith* and not go beyond what God has revealed to the one who is prophesying. (The definite article '*the*' is present in the Greek.)

<sup>310</sup> '**Ministry**' - serving is a general word from which we derive 'deacon'

<sup>311</sup> '**Teaching**' was especially important where Christian writings were rare and many could not read, for Gentiles who were less conversant with the Old Testament Scriptures and Jews who may not have fully understood or appreciated them as they referred to the Messiah.

<sup>312</sup> '**Exhorter**', or encourager (Gk. parakalon, παρακαλων)

<sup>313</sup> '**Compassionate**,' sometimes translated, *showing mercy*, (*used nine times in Romans*) presumably shown towards the sick and suffering and not as a chore but with joy. ('**cheerfulness**,' Gk. hilaroteti, ιλαροτητι, from which we derive 'hilarity')

<sup>314</sup> As between 1 Corinthians 12 and 13 Paul moves from gifts to love. While the gifts may not apply equally across all believers, love is a command for everybody (see the outline for this section, verses 9-21)

<sup>315</sup> '**Love**' (Gk agape, αγαπη) is not superficial nor sentimental. It involves an abhorrence of evil while clinging passionately to what is good.

<sup>316</sup> '**Love**' (Gk philadelphia, φιλαδελφια) brotherly (and sisterly) love towards one another with '**mutual affection**' (Gk. philostorgoi, φιλοστοργοι) or **kindly** affection, the idea of loving one's kin or the family of the believing community.

'**Outdo one another in showing honour**,' not engaging in false humility but showing preference for others.

- serve the Lord. <sup>317</sup>
- 12 Rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering,  
persevere in prayer<sup>318</sup>.
- 13 Contribute to the needs of the saints; extend hospitality to strangers.<sup>319</sup>
- 14 Bless<sup>320</sup> those who persecute you; bless and do not curse<sup>321</sup> them.
- 15 Rejoice with those who rejoice,<sup>322</sup> weep with those who weep.
- 16 Live in harmony with one another; <sup>323</sup>  
do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly;<sup>324</sup>  
do not claim to be wiser than you are.

## Verses 17-21

continue the imperatives associated with letting love be genuine (v9). Here, where revenge is on view, it may be good to remember that Paul is first writing to the Jew and Gentile Believers in the church at Rome. Their enemies may sometimes be those within the fellowship, but more often those who persecute will be unbelievers. While Paul is addressing individual responses to those who persecute, there may be applications for the leaders of nations when faced with aggression. When applying these verses, we have to also bear in

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<sup>317</sup> **‘Do not lag’** – Don’t be lazy.

**‘zeal’** – combines the idea of haste and diligence.

**‘be ardent in spirit’** – more literally, ‘in spirit burning’. It is possible that ‘spirit’ could be capitalised. The overall sense of the verse may be found in the now seldom-heard exhortation, ‘be on fire for the Lord!’

**‘serve’** (Gk. douleuontes, δουλευοντες) Related to doulos, a slave.

**‘Lord’** (Gk. kurio.) Some texts read, ‘time’ (Gk. kairo) in which case the sense would be, ‘make the most of the time.’ Both make good sense.

<sup>318</sup> **‘hope’** refers to the hope of glory. Not a wish or uncertain desire but an assurance and expectation. The word ‘hope’ is used because participating fully in the glory of God is still in the future. Having such an assurance to look forward to gives the Believer reason for a deep seated joy which goes beyond the transitory emotional experience of happiness, which can be here one moment and gone the next. Such hope enables **‘patience in suffering’** (tribulation) we tend to think of ‘patience’ as something passive but Morris suggests that the Greek word hupomenontes (υπομενοντες) implies a steadfast endurance (probably more akin to gritting one’s teeth and pressing on). This patience is bolstered by **‘persevering in prayer’** where ‘persevering’ also suggests that effort is involved.

<sup>319</sup> **‘contribute to the needs of the saints’** Paul’s first priority is the needs of the Believers, though in a day of comparative prosperity in the Western church, we may apply this to unbelievers, and particularly in the light of verses 14-21.

**‘to strangers’** is not in the Greek, but may be implied.

**‘extend hospitality’** – seeking hospitality suggests actively sharing everything one has, rather than only inviting people to one’s home for a meal.

<sup>320</sup> **‘Bless’** Ask God to bless or could extend to actively seeking good things for those who persecute you. Probably both.

<sup>321</sup> **‘curse’** Is not just about pronouncing a curse or swearing at one’s persecutors. We can curse people by our conversation, our gossip, our withholding of forgiveness or friendship or actively seeking their harm.

<sup>322</sup> **‘Rejoice’** with the rejoicing. We can often be jealous of those doing well. Love means we will rejoice instead.

<sup>323</sup> **‘Live in harmony...’** Literally – ‘The same thing toward one another thinking’. This is not necessarily monochrome agreement on everything, but being of one mind on the essentials of the Christian faith. (What follows also seems to imply some flexibility as well. A working together for agreement)

<sup>324</sup> **‘associate with the lowly’** could mean being prepared to take on menial tasks or to associate with lowly people, or both.

**mind factors such as the responsibilities of governments to defend their citizens, the principles of a ‘just war’ and in this context the aim behind actively blessing instead of cursing, which is change of heart within the persecutor.**

- 17 Do not repay anyone evil for evil, but take thought for what is noble in the sight of all. <sup>325</sup>
- 18 If it is possible, so far as it depends on you, <sup>326</sup> live peaceably with all.
- 19 Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave room for the wrath of God; <sup>327</sup> for it is written, “Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord.” <sup>328</sup>
- 20 No, “if your enemies are hungry, feed them; if they are thirsty, give them something to drink; <sup>329</sup> for by doing this you will heap burning coals on their heads.” <sup>330</sup>
- 21 Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good. <sup>331</sup>

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<sup>325</sup> The command includes all people, not just fellow believers.

**‘in the sight of all’** does not mean doing what everyone else thinks is noble, but rather doing what is noble in the sight of God in front of everyone else. In other words, living out one’s faith in difficult circumstances. Behaviour that contrasts with repaying evil for evil.

<sup>326</sup> This implies that it won’t always be possible to live peaceably but that the Believer should not be the aggressor and should be heartily ready to make peace.

<sup>327</sup> **‘leave room for the wrath’** (Gk. Literally - ‘give place to wrath’.) **‘of God’** is not in the Greek.

This has been variously understood as:-

- 1 Allow your anger to dissipate.
- 2 Give in to the anger of others. Let it wash over you?
- 3 Leave it to God’s justice.

The third option seems most likely in view of ‘vengeance is mine... says the Lord.’

<sup>328</sup> Deuteronomy 32:35, Genesis 50:19, 1 Samuel 26:10, Psalm 94:1, Jeremiah 51:36.

<sup>329</sup> Verse 20. Examples of practical, positive actions are entreated towards one’s enemy. Proverbs 25:21-22 (substantially from the LXX).

<sup>330</sup> **‘heap burning coals on their heads’** Often thought to mean ‘giving the offender a burning sense of shame.’ It has been noted that Egyptian literature and Proverbs use the expression to imply a change of mind rather than shame. The intention then is change of heart and restoration of the offender.

<sup>331</sup> Verse 21 is a summary statement. **‘overcome by evil’** in this context indicates responding to evil with more evil. When that happens evil wins.

## STRUCTURE IN THE IMPERATIVES of Romans 12:9-21

We may detect some structure in 12:9-21 where 'Let love be genuine' is an overarching title.

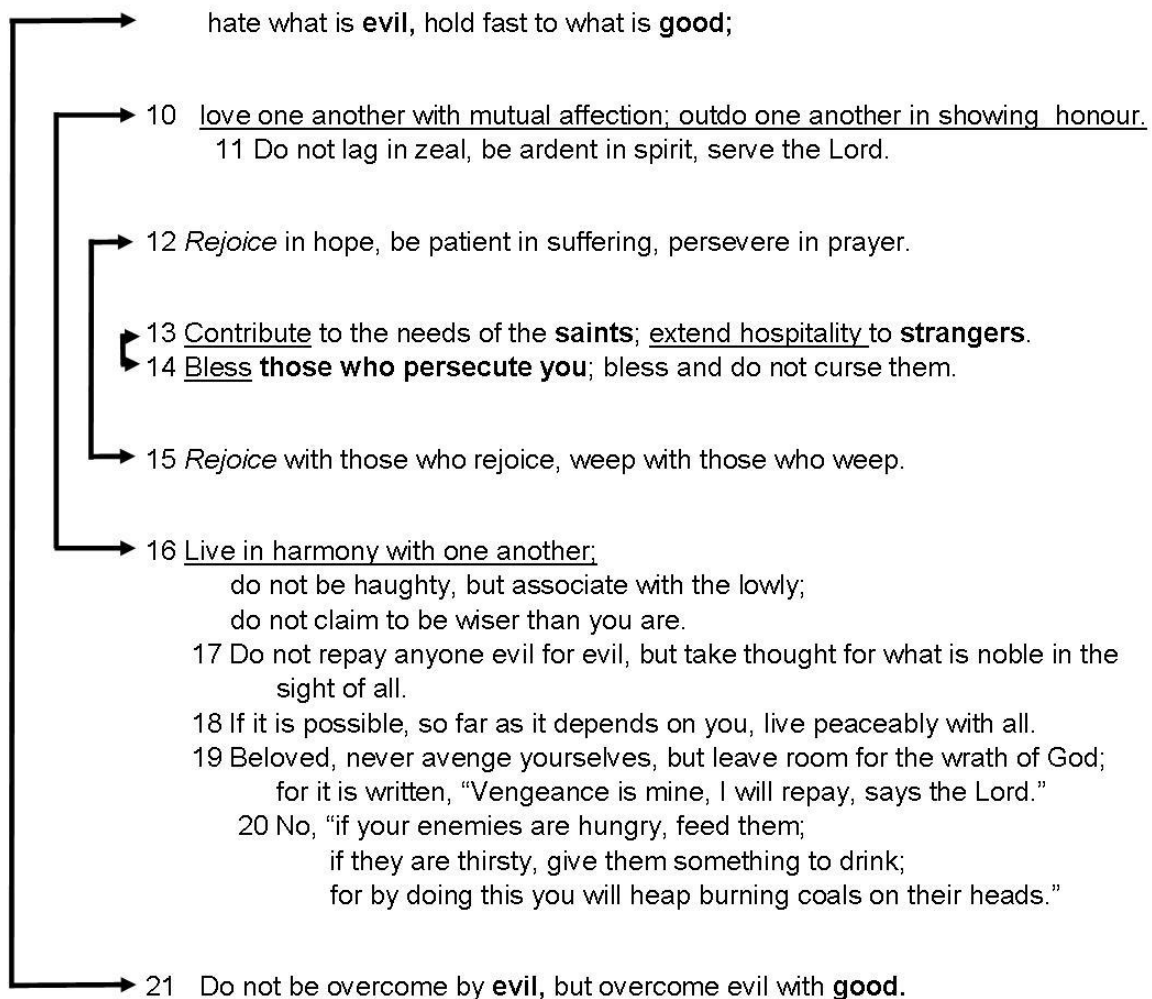
The list of imperatives is then enclosed by 'hate what is evil, hold fast to what is good' in v9 and 'Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good' in v21.

V10 ('love one another') then corresponds to vv16-20 ('Live in harmony with one another')

'Rejoice' occurs in vv12 and 15

'Contribute' and 'bless' express similar ideas in vv13 and 14. Here Paul covers saints, then strangers, then those who would oppose as enemies.

### 9 LET LOVE BE GENUINE:



## ROMANS 13

### Romans 13:1-7

These verses move from the individual's responses to another individual to the Individual's response to the ruling authorities.

As we try to apply these verses context is of the utmost importance and the following should be noted:-

The ruling authority on view is Rome, which generally brought peace.

Roman rulership was generally beneficial even though Jewish Christians, in particular would have probably resented paying taxes to a heathen power.

Paul was well aware of what it was like to misuse authority and also to be on the receiving end of unjust authorities.

Paul is therefore not covering every eventuality and circumstance when it comes to government. For example in the context of a wider reading of Scripture were learn that...

If there is a choice, Christians are to obey God first.<sup>332</sup>

There may be a case for a 'Just War'<sup>333</sup>

In short, Paul exhorts the Roman Christians to support, as far as they are able without contravening God's laws, a government which is providing peace and order to its citizens. (Compare with Jeremiah 29:7).

Let every person be subject to the governing authorities; for there is no authority except from God, and those authorities that exist have been instituted by God.<sup>334</sup> 2 Therefore whoever resists authority resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment.<sup>335</sup> 3 For rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad. Do you wish to have no fear of the authority? Then do what is good, and you will receive its approval; 4 for it is God's servant for your good.<sup>336</sup> But if you do what is wrong, you should be afraid, for the authority does not bear the sword in vain! It is the servant of God to execute wrath<sup>337</sup> on the wrongdoer. 5 Therefore one must be subject, not only because of wrath but also because of conscience.<sup>338</sup> 6 For the same reason you also pay taxes, for the authorities are God's servants, busy with

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<sup>332</sup> Acts 5:29, Mark 12:17, and the stories of Daniel and his friends for example.

<sup>333</sup> For an clear explanation of 'Just War' see Stott, McCloughry and Wyatt's book, *"Issues Facing Christians Today"*.

<sup>334</sup> **'instituted by God'** better translated *'an institution of God'* (ie That government itself is an institution of God rather than the individual rulers - the Greek has a noun rather than a verb) Both renderings imply that the rulers are subject to God (their rule is not absolute – see verse 4). The NRSV rendering suggests that God allows (if not engineers) people to take authority, which is still consistent with Scripture and the sovereignty of God. Why would he allow heathen leadership? Often we can only speculate. The reasons can be various and complicated, where, for example, both judgement and/or good order could be on view. (See Isaiah 44:28, 45:1, 45:13 concerning Cyrus, the Persian king).

<sup>335</sup> **'incur judgement'** from the authorities or from God, or both? Verse 3 would suggest the former.

<sup>336</sup> **'God's servant for your good'** could be translated, 'God's servant for you, for good' (ie The State is God's servant for your good/ or the general good/ or that *you may do* what is good – OR translated more literally 'of God a servant he is for you' (ie God makes the State a servant *for you*.) See also the comment on verse 1.

<sup>337</sup> **'wrath'** ie God's wrath rather than the State's.

<sup>338</sup> **'because of conscience'** because it is right to do so, not just out of fear of punishment.

this very thing. 7 Pay to all what is due them—taxes to whom taxes are due, revenue to whom revenue is due,<sup>339</sup> respect to whom respect is due, honour to whom honour is due.<sup>340</sup>

**Verses 8-10 again take up the theme of the love of the individual, from the end of chapter 12. These verses also expand on what it really means to obey the law (ie not just because the government says so but out of love for others). Verse 10 summarises these verses.**

8 Owe no one anything,<sup>341</sup> except to love one another; for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law. 9 The commandments, “You shall not commit adultery; You shall not murder; You shall not steal; You shall not covet”; and any other commandment, are summed up in this word, “Love your neighbour as yourself.” 10 Love does no wrong to a neighbour; therefore, love is the fulfilling of the law.

11 Besides this, you know what time it is,<sup>342</sup> how it is now the moment for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we became believers;<sup>343</sup> 12 the night is far gone, the day is near. Let us then lay aside the works of darkness and put on the armour of light; 13 let us live honourably as in the day, not in revelling and drunkenness, not in debauchery and licentiousness, not in quarrelling and jealousy. <sup>344</sup> 14 Instead, put on the Lord Jesus Christ,<sup>345</sup> and make no provision for the flesh,<sup>346</sup> to gratify its desires.

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<sup>339</sup> **‘taxes’** possibly taxes on land. **‘revenue’** possibly custom duties etc. Cranfield translates, “direct and indirect taxes”.

<sup>340</sup> We are not independent from our social structure.

<sup>341</sup> **‘Owe no one anything’** (‘owe’ is a present imperative with ongoing force) Don’t abuse the generosity of others so that you always appear in their debt OR Don’t leave debts outstanding, *don’t continue in indebtedness*.

<sup>342</sup> **‘time’** (Gk. Kairon, καιρον) Knowing the *present time* (NIV) in which you are living. Implies knowing the character of the present age in which they lived.

<sup>343</sup> **‘is now’** (Gk. ‘Already’) gives an extra sense of urgency, which may suggest that the Second Coming is on view, especially in the light of salvation being nearer. Though the reference could simply be to the limited time that people have on earth.

<sup>344</sup> **‘honourably’** or decently, contrasting with **‘revelling’** (orgies), **‘drunkenness’**, **‘debauchery’** and **‘licentiousness’** (sexual immorality), **‘quarrelling’** (strife) and jealousy.

<sup>345</sup> **‘put on’** Implies more than imitating Christ’s character but the idea of wearing him like armour (Morris)

<sup>346</sup> **‘flesh’** Romans 7:5, 8:3-13.

## ROMANS 14

**Note that Paul is writing from Corinth (1 Corinthians 8:4, 8:7) where he may have had in mind their problem of meat offered to idols. This doesn't mean that it was necessarily a problem in Rome and Paul may here have just been referring to 'eating' as an example of peripheral issues of conduct.**

Welcome those who are weak in faith,<sup>347</sup> but not for the purpose of quarrelling over opinions. 2 Some believe in eating anything, while the weak eat only vegetables. 3 Those who eat must not despise those who abstain, and those who abstain must not pass judgment on those who eat; for God has welcomed them. 4 Who are you to pass judgment on servants of another? It is before their own lord that they stand or fall. And they will be upheld, for the Lord is able to make them stand.

5 Some judge one day to be better than another, while others judge all days to be alike.<sup>348</sup> Let all be fully convinced in their own minds. 6 Those who observe the day, observe it in honour of the Lord. Also those who eat, eat in honour of the Lord, since they give thanks to God; while those who abstain, abstain in honour of the Lord and give thanks to God.<sup>349</sup>

7 We do not live to ourselves, and we do not die to ourselves. 8 If we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord; so then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's. 9 For to this end Christ died and lived again, so that he might be Lord of both the dead and the living.<sup>350</sup>

10 Why do you pass judgment on your brother or sister? Or you, why do you despise your brother or sister? For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God. 11 For it is written,

“As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to me,  
and every tongue shall give praise to God.”<sup>351</sup>

12 So then, each of us will be accountable to God.<sup>352</sup>

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<sup>347</sup> 'weak in the faith' Not that they didn't have faith in Christ but that they were weak in their understanding of how their justification by faith played out in everyday practice, where they were unable to distinguish what was centrally important. Their good conscience before God, and the maintenance of their faith therefore found encouragement from these physical observances.

<sup>348</sup> Paul doesn't directly refer to the Jewish Sabbath and may rather have had in mind the various Jewish feast days (rather than pagan festivals, which Paul would probably have condemned). See also Galatians 4:10-11 (Were the Galatians also insisting on these observances?) and Colossians 2:16ff where the observances are only a shadow of the things to come. (See also 15:1 and footnote)

<sup>349</sup> Motive is important. Our conduct should arise from our faith in God/Jesus Christ (Hebrews 11). The Lordship of Christ is the determining factor in what we do or don't do – as indicated in verses 7-9.

<sup>350</sup> Christ's atoning work in death and resurrection established his Lordship over all people and therefore in all situations. 'Lord' is emphasised three times in verses 7-9.

<sup>351</sup> Isaiah 44:23 (LXX).

<sup>352</sup> God, who sees our heart and understands the motives for our actions even better than we know ourselves.



13 Let us therefore no longer pass judgment on one another, but resolve instead never to put a stumbling block or hindrance in the way of another.<sup>353</sup> 14 I know and am persuaded in the Lord Jesus that nothing is unclean in itself; but it is unclean for anyone who thinks it unclean.<sup>354</sup> 15 If your brother or sister is being injured by what you eat, you are no longer walking in love. Do not let what you eat cause the ruin of one for whom Christ died. 16 So do not let your good be spoken of as evil.<sup>355</sup> 17 For the kingdom of God is not food and drink but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. 18 The one who thus<sup>356</sup> serves Christ is acceptable to God and has human approval.<sup>357</sup> 19 Let us then pursue what makes for peace and for mutual upbuilding. 20 Do not, for the sake of food, destroy the work of God. Everything is indeed clean,<sup>358</sup> but it is wrong for you to make others fall by what you eat; 21 it is good not to eat meat or drink wine or do anything that makes your brother or sister stumble. 22 The faith that you have, have as your own conviction before God.<sup>359</sup> Blessed are those who have no reason to condemn themselves because of what they approve. 23 But those who have doubts are condemned if they eat, because they do not act from faith; for whatever does not proceed from faith is sin.<sup>360</sup>

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<sup>353</sup> Paul is addressing 'the strong' in the faith - those who are able to readily distinguish which observances are centrally and universally important and those that are peripheral to the Faith, only having significance for some people. He does this because 'the strong' ought to be able to more readily accommodate those who are 'weak' and his warning is that 'the strong' should not feel superior to 'the weak' but love them as brothers and sisters.

<sup>354</sup> It is not a question of whether something is wrong in itself but of its effect on others, whom we are supposed to love. 'nothing' refers to these peripheral issues and not to everything. Some things are 'unclean' whether we think so or not. When it comes to the matters of food and drink and ceremony however, it is a matter of conscience (which is still important for the individual, but not necessarily to be imposed on others).

<sup>355</sup> **'your good'** could be addressed to 'the strong' meaning your rights or what is good for you. More likely, however to be addressed to both 'the strong' and 'the weak' and 'your good' could be taken as the good you do, the outworking of your faith or even the gospel itself. That is, "Don't let your attitude and disagreement with each other over these minor issues bring your good works and the gospel into disrepute." This fits well with, **'and has human approval'** in v18.

<sup>356</sup> **'thus'** - in this way - that is, serves Christ 'through righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit' (v17).

<sup>357</sup> **'human approval'**. See the footnote for v16

<sup>358</sup> **'everything is indeed clean'** - within the scope of Paul's writing here. See the footnote for v14.

<sup>359</sup> **'the faith that you have'** is not here a reference to saving faith but the Believer's ongoing relationship with God - faith that allows a clear conscience in the things the Believer observes. But the Believer should not allow those things which are all right for him or her to cause others to stumble in their relationship with God.

<sup>360</sup> It is faith that leads to action (Hebrews 11). Our relationship to God through Jesus Christ is therefore of paramount importance and is evidenced in what we do, and what we do should emanate from a clear conscience before God, and for the building up (rather than criticizing) our sisters and brothers in Christ..

## ROMANS 15

Paul moves from addressing attitudes towards the particular matters of food and the observance of special days to the Believers' attitudes to each in general. Here he is writing to those who are strong/mature in the Faith to exhort patience and encouragement for those who are in the early stages of learning. It echoes a major theme of Scripture that the People of God are on this earth to be a blessing to others rather than to themselves. A true understanding of this will revolutionise the Believer's relationships and choices.

We who are strong ought to put up with the failings of the weak, and not to please ourselves.<sup>361</sup> 2 Each of us must please our neighbour for the good purpose of building up the neighbour.<sup>362</sup> 3 For Christ did not please himself; but, as it is written, "The insults of those who insult you have fallen on me."<sup>363</sup> 4 For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, so that by steadfastness and by the encouragement of the scriptures we might have hope. 5 May the God of steadfastness and encouragement grant you to live in harmony with one another, in accordance with Christ Jesus, 6 so that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.<sup>364</sup>

**Harmony with one another (v5) is the natural result of each one being in accord with Christ. The harmony between Jew and Gentile, demonstrated in behaviour towards each other (welcoming each other v7), brings glory to God, whose purpose it has always been to include both Jew and Gentile (vv7-12.), so fulfilling the covenant promise to Abraham (v8. See Genesis 12:1-3)**

7 Welcome one another, therefore, just as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God. 8 For I tell you that Christ has become a servant of the circumcised on behalf of the truth of God in order that he might confirm the promises given to the patriarchs, 9 and in order that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy. As it is written,

"Therefore I will confess you among the Gentiles,  
and sing praises to your name";<sup>365</sup>

10 and again he says,

"Rejoice, O Gentiles, with his people";<sup>366</sup>

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<sup>361</sup> Verse 1 summarises the exhortations of chapter 14.

In the light of the context of 15:1-12 **'the weak'** could be Gentiles, who have had a previous background in temple sacrifices of meat offered to idols, or it could refer to Jews, with a background in the ceremonies and feast days of Judaism. Quite possibly both.

<sup>362</sup> **'Building up the neighbour'**. Verse 4 speaks of the encouragement of scripture and verse 5 of God's encouragement and the steadfastness and harmony that are found in him. (3-fold encouragement)

<sup>363</sup> Psalm 69:9

<sup>364</sup> **'with one voice'**. To be in accordance with Jesus Christ (v5) is to be in harmony with one another and to glorify God with one voice, which implies action (the welcoming of Jew and Gentile v7), as well as praise.

<sup>365</sup> Psalm 18:49, 2 Samuel 22:50. David's song of praise.

11 and again,

“Praise the Lord, all you Gentiles,  
and let all the peoples praise him”;<sup>367</sup>

12 and again Isaiah says,

“The root of Jesse shall come,  
the one who rises to rule the Gentiles;<sup>368</sup>  
in him the Gentiles shall hope.”<sup>369</sup>

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

14 I myself feel confident about you, my brothers and sisters, that you yourselves are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, and able to instruct one another.

15 Nevertheless on some points I have written to you rather boldly by way of reminder, because of the grace given me by God<sup>370</sup> 16 to be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles in the priestly service of the gospel of God,<sup>371</sup> so that the offering of the Gentiles<sup>372</sup> may be acceptable, sanctified by the Holy Spirit. 17 In Christ Jesus, then, I have reason to boast of my work for God. 18 For I will not venture to speak of anything except what Christ has accomplished through me to win obedience from the Gentiles, by word and deed, 19 by the power of signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God,<sup>373</sup> so that from Jerusalem and as far around as Illyricum<sup>374</sup> I have fully proclaimed the good news of Christ. 20 Thus I make it my ambition to proclaim the good news, not where Christ has already been named, so that I do not build on someone else’s foundation, 21 but as it is written,

“Those who have never been told of him shall see,  
and those who have never heard of him shall understand.”<sup>375</sup>

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<sup>366</sup> Deuteronomy 32:43. Moses song

<sup>367</sup> Psalm 117:1

<sup>368</sup> Isaiah 11:10 This reference has an eschatological context

<sup>369</sup> Isaiah 42:4 Part of a Servant Song

<sup>370</sup> **‘the grace given me by God’** carries the responsibility to minister to the Gentiles, which, in these chapters also entails direct words to mould those Gentiles into people who are presentable to God (v16) .

<sup>371</sup> **‘priestly service’** Gk. hierourgounta, ιερουργουντα – ‘administering in sacred service’. The role of the priest was as a mediator between God and people. Here Paul mediates (in the sense of proclaims) God’s Good News to the Gentiles. Of course all Believers also have this sort of priestly role (1 Peter 2:5, 9).

<sup>372</sup> **‘offering of the Gentiles’** That is, the Gentiles offering of themselves (following 12:1).

<sup>373</sup> **‘signs and wonders’** are only mentioned by Paul here and in 2 Corinthians 12:12. There are various references in Acts to miracles (eg. Acts 13:6-12, 14:3, 8-10, 19:11-12, 20:8-10)  
**‘by the power of the Holy Spirit’** may not be confined to the signs and wonders but also apply to the proclamation and effectiveness of the gospel message.

<sup>374</sup> Ancient **Illyricum** is now the Albania, Montenegro, Croatia area. We don’t have any record of significant ministry to Gentiles in **Jerusalem** or Illyricum so the two references may indicate the areas bounding those in which Paul did minister to Gentiles.

<sup>375</sup> Isaiah 52:15 (LXX).

22 This is the reason<sup>376</sup> that I have so often been hindered from coming to you.  
 23 But now, with no further place for me in these regions, I desire, as I have for many years, to come to you<sup>377</sup> 24 when I go to Spain. For I do hope to see you on my journey and to be sent on by you, once I have enjoyed your company for a little while.  
 25 At present, however, I am going to Jerusalem in a ministry to the saints;  
 26 for Macedonia and Achaia have been pleased to share their resources<sup>378</sup> with the poor among the saints at Jerusalem.  
 27 They were pleased to do this, and indeed they owe it to them; for if the Gentiles have come to share in their spiritual blessings, they ought also to be of service to them in material things.<sup>379</sup>  
 28 So, when I have completed this, and have delivered to them what has been collected, I will set out by way of you to Spain;  
 29 and I know that when I come to you, I will come in the fullness of the blessing of Christ.

30 I appeal to you, brothers and sisters, by our Lord Jesus Christ and by the love of the Spirit, to join me in earnest prayer to God on my behalf,<sup>380</sup> 31 that I may be rescued from the unbelievers in Judea, and that my ministry to Jerusalem may be acceptable to the saints,<sup>381</sup> 32 so that by God's will I may come to you with joy and be refreshed in your company.  
 33 The God of peace be with all of you. Amen.

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<sup>376</sup> **'This is the reason'** ie Because Paul has been evangelising in previously unevangelised areas.

<sup>377</sup> **'no further place...in these regions'** – Paul is writing from Corinth but is probably referring to the regions from 'Jerusalem to Illyricum' (v19). He has already evangelised and established fellowships there. Now he wants to move on to Spain, using Rome as a base for further evangelism.

<sup>378</sup> **'share their resources'** – is more than 'made a contribution'. The word for **'resources'** is the Greek, koinonian, κοινωνίαν, from koinonia, κοινωνία, the word for 'fellowship'.

<sup>379</sup> The offering to the Jerusalem Church is indicative to Paul of unity between Jew and Gentile, which he has been addressing.

<sup>380</sup> The appeal for prayer is given some urgency by the mention of Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit.

<sup>381</sup> **'rescued from unbelievers'** Paul had experienced opposition from Jewish people on his journeys so he could expect even more at Jerusalem – and seems to have had insight to that effect (Acts 20:22-23, 21:11-13)

**'acceptable to the saints'** may indicate misgivings about the conservatism of the Jerusalem church when it came to Gentiles and the observance of Jewish rituals. He was in fact welcomed (Acts 21:17).

## ROMANS 16

**Leon Morris argues that this chapter (thought by some to be a later appendage) was part of the original letter to the Romans and that Paul's expectation was that it would be helpful, not to theologians but to some ordinary people listed here. Apart from Prisca and Aquilla and what we can glean here about Phoebe, we know nothing about the others in the list. In a male-dominated society nine of the twenty-four people are women.**

I commend to you our sister Phoebe, a deacon of the church at Cenchreae, 2 so that you may welcome her in the Lord as is fitting for the saints, and help her in whatever she may require from you, for she has been a benefactor of many and of myself as well.<sup>382</sup>

3 Greet Prisca and Aquila, who work with me in Christ Jesus, 4 and who risked their necks for my life, to whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles. 5 Greet also the church in their house.<sup>383</sup>

Greet my beloved Epaenetus, who was the first convert in Asia for Christ.

6 Greet Mary, who has worked very hard among you.

7 Greet Andronicus and Junia, my relatives who were in prison with me; they are prominent among the apostles, and they were in Christ before I was.<sup>384</sup>

8 Greet Ampliatus, my beloved in the Lord.

9 Greet Urbanus, our co-worker in Christ, and my beloved Stachys.

10 Greet Apelles, who is approved in Christ.

Greet those who belong to the family of Aristobulus.<sup>385</sup>

11 Greet my relative Herodion.<sup>386</sup>

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<sup>382</sup> **'Cenchreae'** On the southern side of Corinth. We can only speculate on why Phoebe, a prominent and wealthy person in her community, might be going to Rome.

<sup>383</sup> **'Prisca'** – name used by Paul. 'Pricilla' is a diminutive form adopted by Luke. In the six references (Acts 18:2, 18:18, 18:26, Romans 16:2, 1 Corinthians 16:19, 2 Timothy 4:19, Acts) her name is mentioned before Aquilla's four times.

**'Aquila'** was a tentmaker from Pontus, who settled in Rome but was later expelled by Claudius (Acts 18:2) **'risked their necks'** possibly when Paul was in danger in Ephesus (1 Corinthians 15:32/ Acts 19:23, 30-31)? The couple were obviously well known amongst the Gentiles.

<sup>384</sup> **'Junia'**. (Gk Iouñia, Iouñiav) The Patristic commentators recognised the feminine Junia rather than Junias (as in the earlier NIV). Also sometimes translated, Julia. Usually Andronicus and Junia are understood to be husband and wife. Paul refers to them both as prominent apostles. This makes it clear that the term 'apostle' applied well beyond the twelve.

**'relatives'** could mean kinsfolk, but has a wider application to include fellow Jews.

<sup>385</sup> **'Aristobulus'** There was a grandson of Herod the Great with that name who moved to Rome as a private citizen on friendly terms with Emperor Claudius. It was likely that his slaves would be passed on to the Emperor and keep the name 'household of Aristobulus'. If this is so there could have been a significant Christian influence from these Jews in the Emperor's household.

Greet those in the Lord who belong to the family of Narcissus.<sup>387</sup>

12 Greet those workers in the Lord, Tryphaena and Tryphosa.<sup>388</sup>

Greet the beloved Persis, who has worked hard in the Lord.<sup>389</sup>

13 Greet Rufus, chosen in the Lord; and greet his mother—a mother to me also.<sup>390</sup>

14 Greet Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermes, Patrobas, Hermas, and the brothers and sisters who are with them.<sup>391</sup>

15 Greet Philologus, Julia, Nereus and his sister, and Olympas, and all the saints who are with them.<sup>392</sup>

16 Greet one another with a holy kiss. All the churches of Christ greet you.<sup>393</sup>

**Verses 17-19 at first seem like such an abrupt and stern insertion into the greetings that some have thought it a later insertion. It may be that Paul received some information from Rome or that something happened in Corinth before he finished the letter, or that the thought of a ‘holy kiss’ set him back on the train of thought about harmony? Perhaps the Holy Spirit just brought to mind the necessity for an extra word on the subject?**

17 I urge you, brothers and sisters, to keep an eye on<sup>394</sup> those who cause dissensions and offenses, in opposition to the teaching that you have learned;<sup>395</sup> avoid them. 18 For such people do not serve our Lord Christ, but their own appetites,<sup>396</sup> and by smooth talk and flattery they deceive the hearts of the simple-minded. 19 For while your obedience is known to all, so that I rejoice over you, I want you to be wise in what is good and guileless<sup>397</sup> in what is evil. 20 The God of peace will shortly crush Satan under your feet.<sup>398</sup>

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<sup>386</sup> ‘Herodion’ Liked to Herod and probably the household (family) of Aristobulus.

<sup>387</sup> ‘Narcissus’ There was a wealthy and powerful freedman of this name executed under Nero. His slaves would (like Aristobulus’) have become the Emperor’s and likewise taken the name ‘household of Narcissus’.

<sup>388</sup> ‘Trypaena and Tryphosa’ Possibly sisters? Their names mean ‘delicate’ and ‘dainty’ but they continuing to be hard workers.

<sup>389</sup> ‘has worked hard’ Persis (female) may have been getting on in years and no longer able to work as hard?

<sup>390</sup> ‘Rufus’ – Red. A common slave name.

‘chosen in the Lord’ All Christians are ‘chosen’ so this must indicate something like, ‘an outstanding Christian’.

<sup>391</sup> This could have been a fellowship group or even a group of slaves belonging to one person.

<sup>392</sup> Quite possibly the members of another house church.

<sup>393</sup> ‘All the churches in Christ’ Probably those that Paul has been recently associated with in relation to the collection for Jerusalem.

<sup>394</sup> ‘keep an eye on’ (Gk skopein, σκοπεῖν) Watch out for. It is a warning to be active rather than complacent.

<sup>395</sup> ‘the teaching you have learned’ refers to Christian teaching in accord with the apostles’ teaching rather than Paul’s own teaching, since he had not visited Rome.

<sup>396</sup> ‘appetites’ probably refers to people generally following their own desires over against God’s will.

<sup>397</sup> ‘guileless’ unmixed, innocent, pure

<sup>398</sup> ‘peace’ not just the absence of conflict but the idea of wholeness, which is achieved by the defeat of evil.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.<sup>399</sup>

21 Timothy, my co-worker, greets you;<sup>400</sup>

so do Lucius and Jason and Sosipater, my relatives.<sup>401</sup>

22 I Tertius, the writer of this letter, greet you in the Lord.<sup>402</sup>

23 Gaius, who is host to me and to the whole church, greets you.<sup>403</sup>

Erastus, the city treasurer, and our brother Quartus, greet you.

**The doxology of verses 25-27 is found in some manuscripts at the end of chapter 14, in one at the end of chapter 15, some have both, and some omit it all together. However it does reflect Paul's style and language and is unlikely to be by someone else.**

25 Now to God who is able to strengthen you according to my gospel<sup>404</sup> and the proclamation of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery that was kept secret for long ages<sup>405</sup> but is now disclosed,<sup>405</sup> and through the prophetic writings is made known to all the Gentiles, according to the command of the eternal God, to bring about the obedience of faith— 27 to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory forever! Amen.<sup>406</sup>

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**'under your feet'** Christians share in victory over Satan as they also resist evil.

<sup>399</sup> Morris surmises that Paul, who usually used an amanuensis, may have penned this line himself and then left it to the Tertius to write the final greetings.

<sup>400</sup> **'Timothy'** A trusted fellow worker and often companion. He is mentioned by Paul in all his letters except Galatians, Ephesians and Titus. See also Acts 16:1-3 and Paul's letters to him.

<sup>401</sup> **'Lucius'** we know nothing else about.

**'Jason'** may be the one who hosted Paul at Thessalonica (Acts 17:5-9).

**'Sosipater'** is unlikely be the Sopator of Acts 20:4 since the latter seems to have been a Gentile and the former, Paul's relative, would have been a Jew.

<sup>402</sup> **'Tertius'** A Roman name. He may have had connections in Rome and therefore adds his own note.

In Greek the word order reads, **'Greet you, I Tertius, the one having written the letter in the Lord'** If 'in the Lord' is to be taken with 'written the letter' rather than 'greet' it may indicate that Tertius saw this secretarial work as a service to the Lord.

<sup>403</sup> **'Gaius'** may be the Corinthian Paul baptised in 1 Corinthians 1:14 and could be the first name of Titius Justus, who received Paul in Corinth (Acts 18:7). He may have hosted the church at his house, been a frequent provider of hospitality or both. Obviously a man of means.

<sup>404</sup> **'my gospel'** which is not to infer that Paul's gospel message was unique, perhaps rather that the truth had been revealed to him personally so that he could proclaim it to the Gentiles.

<sup>405</sup> **'according to the revelation'** This is a proclamation which has not been devised by human wisdom or philosophy. **'mystery...kept secret'** affirms that it can only be revealed not worked out.

**'for long ages'** Gk. *kronois aioniois, χρονοis αιωνιοis*, 'in times eternal'. The word **'eternal'** is used again of God in v26 and is translated **'forever'** in v27. Apparently then the mystery is kept secret eternally, confirmed by the use of the perfect tense (*sesigemenou, σεσιγημενου*) translated here as **'was kept secret'**. Aspects of God will never ever be plumbed by human beings, but part of the mystery of God has been revealed (v26) through the prophets and especially in Jesus Christ (**'disclosed'** is in the aorist tense suggesting the one-off event of Christ's coming into the world).

<sup>406</sup> **'the only wise God'** i) The only God, who is also wise ii) The only wise one, God OR iii) The only God who is also the only truly wise one. Paul would certainly have believed all three.

## “THE NEW PERSPECTIVE ON PAUL”

This term was coined by James Dunn but could more accurately be conveyed by the plural, “perspectives” since there are a large range of understandings on the subject.

Simply put, some scholars have felt that the interpretations of Paul’s writings have been too influenced by Reformation thinking, which was itself heavily influenced by its response to the Roman Catholic theology of the day. They argue that we need to understand how Paul, as a Jewish Christian, understood issues of justification and grace back in the first century AD.

They would argue that much of what Paul was addressing when he talked about ‘works of the law’ was not about the way you enter God’s Kingdom but the ways in which you identify as a Jew. In other words, Paul was arguing that Gentiles (and Jews for that matter) don’t have to practise Jewish customs (works of the law) to be a Christian.

Included in this thinking is that devout Jews were not trying to become God’s People by keeping the law. They already believed that they were God’s People through grace – expressed in the covenant promises to Abraham and which they inherited because they were ‘in Abraham’. The keeping of the law by Jewish people, who were already the Covenant People, had more to do with sustaining their place in the Covenant Community and bringing God’s Kingdom on earth. (It must be noted that Romans 10 indicates that descendants of Abraham could fall away from grace. Also Hebrews quoting of Psalm 95:7-11 and further, 1 Corinthians 10).

Now, there is some truth in those thoughts, but some proponents of the New Perspective take it much further and write that Paul saw that one’s good works are in fact necessary for salvation. In some ways this appears to be a reaction to the sort of ‘intellectual assent’ approach to salvation, where one only has to ‘say the words’ and nothing more is required. Works for salvation, they would say, makes good sense then of James’ assertion that “faith without works is dead” and makes faith and salvation a whole-of-life experience.

I believe a reasonable interpretation of Paul can be found in a balance of these ideas. Paul may well have been addressing misunderstandings about who is in and who is out of the Christian faith based on works (observances) of Judaism, but we can’t escape the wider sense of ‘works’, which Paul writes about in Ephesians 2:8-10...

*For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast. For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.*

These verses make it clear that salvation is a gift received by faith and that the good works (obviously more than Jewish observance) follow on from one’s salvation (See also Titus 3:4-6). The ongoing nature of faith can be better understood if it is broken down into its components: Knowledge, Assent and Trust. Knowledge is essentially an understanding of the gospel message, Assent is the belief that these things are true and Trust is the commitment to Jesus as Lord and the continuation of relationship with him. Works of any sort do not provide



salvation (Otherwise there would be no assurance - one would never know whether one had done enough!) but the New Testament letters are consistent in urging Christians to persevere – that is, to not fall, give up on that saving faith and turn one's back on Christ (for example the previously mentioned, 1 Corinthians 10, Hebrews, which seems to revolve around Psalm 95:7-11 as its text, and Revelation in general, but especially in the address to the seven churches in chapters 2-3.)

So even if Paul was primarily talking about Jewish law and observances when he refers to works in Romans, there can be little doubt that he believed that good works generally cannot procure salvation. There is too much about God's sovereign choice in Romans to leave that as an option. However, it is also clear throughout the New Testament that: i) saving faith involves a response of receiving God's gift by a genuine commitment of oneself to Jesus Christ as Lord, ii) that good works will result from that commitment and that, iii) one must remain in relationship with Jesus Christ.