

Reaping

From

Romans

By Dr. Ron Wolfe

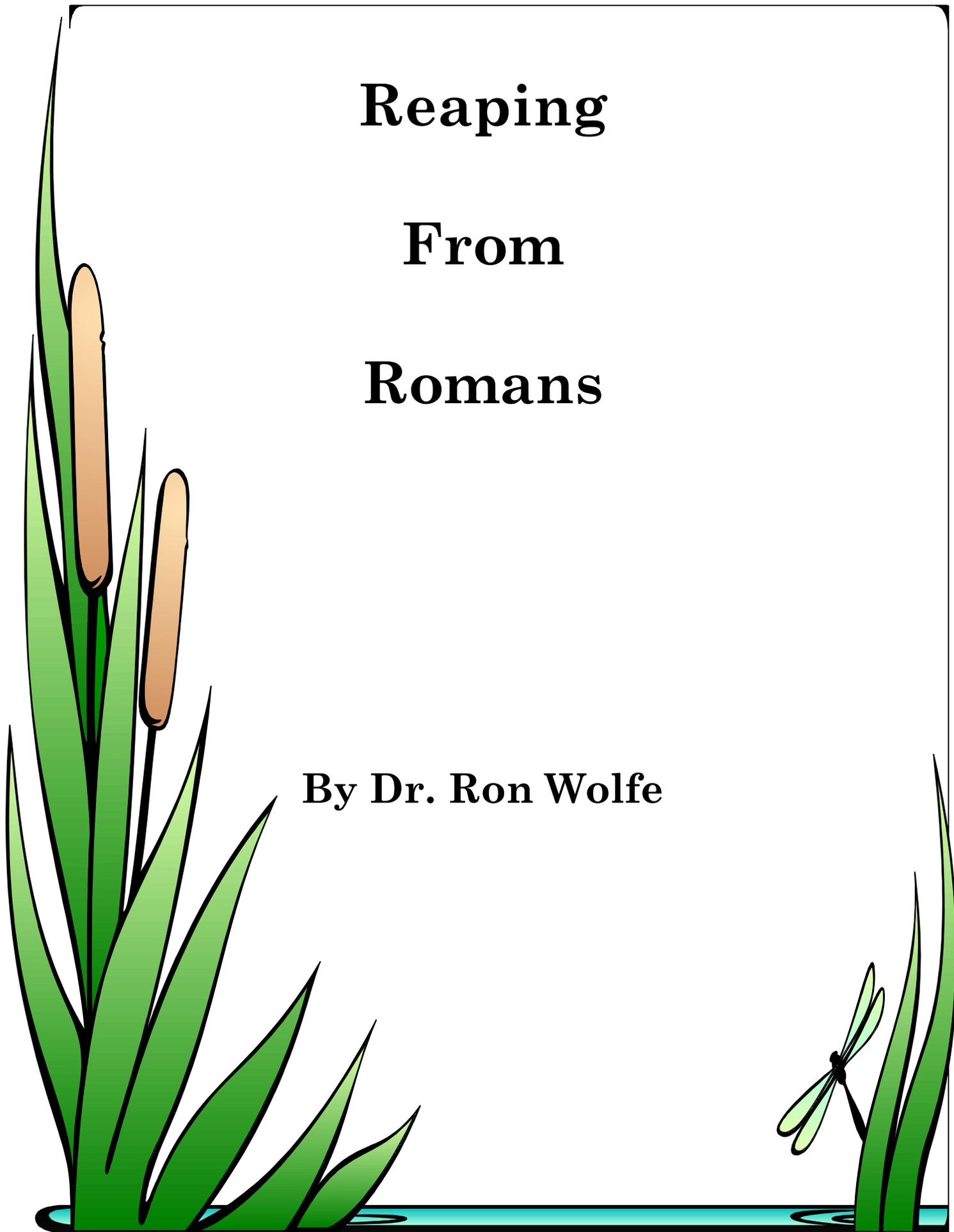


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Romans 1:1-6

Lesson #1 on Romans

By Dr. Ronnie Wolfe

Paul A Servant

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

Paul means “small.” This Paul, having his Hebrew name Saul, may have been a very small person, we just do not know.

Last and Least

Paul was both the last of the apostles and the least of the apostles.

He was the last of the apostles, because he was “born out of due time.”

1 Corinthians 15:8 *And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time.*

He was the least of the apostles, because he did not companion with them in the beginning when Christ was teaching them. He was taught of Christ three years before he went to Jerusalem to fellowship with the other apostles. (Gal. 1:18).

He was the least of the apostles in his own eyes, because he persecuted the church at Jerusalem.

1 Corinthians 15:9 *For I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God.*

Galatians 1:13 *For ye have heard of my conversation in time past in the Jews' religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and wasted it:*

Paul was a servant. The Greek word here indicates a bonds slave, a higher calling than being monarch of the entire world. Paul thought this servanthood to be the most holy calling in his life; so he committed the rest of his life to the service of his King, Jesus Christ the righteous.

Paul The Called

Paul was “called” an apostle. Certainly he was called to be an apostle, but most importantly, he was called an apostle by the Lord himself.

Some men would not accept him as an apostle, but God called him an apostle; so he was an apostle by all proper means.

Paul The Separated

The word “separated” here means “to mark off from others by boundaries.” He was marked off from others by God, since God made him an apostle.

But he was separated to a very special purpose: the gospel of God.

The Gospel is:

1. The gospel of the kingdom (Matt. 4:23)
2. The gospel of Jesus Christ (Mark 1:1)
3. The gospel of the grace of God (Acts 20:24)
4. The gospel of peace (Rom. 10:15).

This separation brought Paul away from his old life of destroying the work of God through the church of the Lord Jesus Christ and placed him into the King of God and Christ to serve his Master by preaching the gospel instead of the old message of legalism.

Acts 9:21 *But all that heard [him] were amazed, and said; Is not this he that destroyed them which called on this name in Jerusalem, and came hither for that intent,*

that he might bring them bound unto the chief priests?

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

The Gospel Promised Before

This Gospel, which Paul is now to preach, had been promised or foreshadowed in the Hebrew scriptures.

Paul should have been aware of this, as he had studied the scriptures long and hard; but this knowledge of the Gospel of given by God and is not learned by man on his own intellect.

1 Corinthians 2:14 *But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know [them], because they are spiritually discerned.*

Hebrews 1:1 ¶ *God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hebrews 1:2 Hath in these last days spoken unto us by [his] Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds;*

Promised By The Prophets

This Gospel was predicted and prophesied by the prophets of the scriptures which Paul had in his hands most every day of his life.

Isaiah was one of those prophets who prophesied of Jesus Christ.

Isaiah 9:6 *For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.*

Isaiah 53:5 *But he [was] wounded for our transgressions, [he was] bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace [was] upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.*

Genesis 15:6 *And he (Abraham) believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness.*

Galatians 3:8 *And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, [saying], In thee shall all nations be blessed.*

3 Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh;

Gospel Concerns Jesus Christ

This Gospel was concerning or about Jesus Christ our Lord. The Gospel is the subject of the New Testament. If you are to begin reading your Bible, the Gospel of John along with Romans is the best place to begin. This will give you the basics of the Gospel and then add detail in the book of Romans that will challenge you for the rest of your life.

The Gospel does not include any other person except Jesus Christ. He is the only one who could accomplish the necessary procurement to bring us to salvation. All other Christs are foreign to the word of God and the Gospel.

Paul preaches only one Gospel.

Galatians 1:6 ¶ *I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: 7 Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. 8 But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that*

which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. 9 As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed.

This Gospel is “according to the flesh.” The Gospel was not something that happened in a far-away world. It took place right here in this world. This was important so that Jesus Christ could be our kinsman Redeemer.

See Ruth 4:17-22 for a list of fathers from Pharez to David.

Matthew 1:17 So all the generations from Abraham to David [are] fourteen generations; and from David until the carrying away into Babylon [are] fourteen generations; and from the carrying away into Babylon unto Christ [are] fourteen generations.

It is an amazing thing to study the lineage of the Lord Jesus as it goes back through the generations past in which God sovereignly guided this lineage and brought about the birth of Jesus Christ according to the pleasure of his good will.

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

Declared or Appointed Son

The Greek word for “declare” is *horizo*, and it means to appoint. So, Jesus was appointed to be the Son of God. The word also means, of course, “declare” and is shown in:

Matthew 3:17 And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

Jesus was the Son in his pre-incarnate state.

Philippians 2:6 Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God:

The phrase “with power” is a modifying phrase and, according to A. T. Robertson in his *Word Pictures in the New Testament*, it modifies “declared.”

This declaration was made, and Jesus was marked off by his Father to be the true Son of God by the resurrection.

Men did not understand him to be the Messiah as much before his resurrection as they did after his resurrection.

This powerful miracle of raising Jesus from the dead was such an influence in the first century after Christ, that no one dare say in that century that Jesus did not rise from the dead. He was declared with power to be the Son of God.

The Spirit of Holiness

This was not his nature of divinity as he dwelt with his Father, although he was holy then, also. But this is the embodiment of holiness as witnessed in his life according to the flesh.

That a human being could die and then with his own power come back to life is in itself a declaration that Jesus is the Son of God and in fact God incarnate.

5 By whom we have received grace and apostleship, for obedience to the faith among all nations, for his name:

Grace and Apostleship by Jesus Christ Our Lord

“By whom” refers to Jesus Christ our Lord. The phrase “Jesus Christ our Lord”

includes both his divinity and his humanity.

This is the reason he has the power to give gifts to men:

Ephesians 4:8 *Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men.*

Paul mentions here that he received grace and apostleship from Jesus Christ our Lord.

Paul needed both grace and apostleship, which is an outgrowth of that grace, to be able to do the things that Jesus Christ called him to do.

Paul's Obedience

First, we must notice that it took the power of God to bring Paul to obedience of the faith.

But this is not faith in salvation, although it takes the same power for that. This is "the faith." The faith is the doctrine that Jesus Christ laid down as he inspired men to write the scriptures.

The word "for" here does not mean "because of." It means "in order to." Paul received grace and apostleship in order that he might be obedient to the faith, in order that he might preach the Gospel and the counsel of God among all nations.

This obedience would be "for his name." He would preach, teach, love, rebuke, help, weep, and encourage for the name of Jesus Christ.

1 Corinthians 1:14 ¶ *I thank God that I baptized none of you, but Crispus and Gaius; 1 Corinthians 15 Lest any should say that I had baptized in mine own name.*

Paul lost his identity as a man of the world and lost himself in the service of Jesus Christ. He did everything to for sake and in the name of Jesus Christ.

6 *Among whom are ye also the called of Jesus Christ:*

Hebrews 3:1 ¶ *Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus;*

Romans 1:7
Lesson #2 on Romans
By Ronnie Wolfe

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

To All at Rome

In this verse Paul directs his attention to the specific people at Rome, not that this message is not to be spoken or directed to others, but that he in this current situation is speaking directly and specifically to the Romans in their capital city of Rome.

He is not speaking to all the people in Rome, although I am sure he would have no problem with all men of Rome reading his words.

He was speaking to believers at Rome. We know this, because he refers to them as the “beloved of God,” “called,” and “saints.”

Since God has preserved this word written down by Paul, we know that this word is written to all believers everywhere, not exclusively to those at Rome.

Beloved of God

The Romans, as we who are saved, are beloved. This is expressed in God’s word in many places.

Daniel 9:23 *At the beginning of thy supplications the commandment came forth, and I am come to shew [thee]; for thou [art] greatly beloved: therefore understand the matter, and consider the vision.* (See Dan. 10:11, 19).

In the Gospels, the word “beloved” is used to refer only to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Later, it was used to designate the love that God has for his children, as in our verse here, and the love for God’s children one to

another, as in Romans 12:19.

In the books to the Corinthians, Paul uses the phrase “dearly beloved” several times. (1 Cor. 10:14; 2 Cor. 7:1; 12:19).

John the Apostle uses this word in addressing his letter to believers in I John and 3 John, which notice.

But these to whom Paul is writing are “beloved of God.” That means that God has expressed an initial love toward them that designates them under a very special and personal love from the Father.

1 John 4:19 *We love him, because he first loved us.*

Jeremiah 31:3 *The LORD hath appeared of old unto me, [saying], Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee.*

John 3:16 *For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.*

Malachi 1:2 *I have loved you, saith the LORD. Yet ye say, Wherein hast thou loved us? Was not Esau Jacob’s brother? saith the LORD: yet I loved Jacob,*

Romans 8:37 *Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.*

Ephesians 2:4 *But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us,*

Ephesians 5:2 *And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour.*

2 Thessalonians 2:16 *Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father, which hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace,*

1 John 4:10 *Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.*

1 John 4:11 *Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.*

1 John 4:19 *We love him, because he first loved us.*

Revelation 1:5 *And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood,*

Called To Be Saints

First, we will take up the thought of being called, because it is a very significant subject concerning our relationship with God.

Acts 16:10 *And after he had seen the vision, immediately we endeavoured to go into Macedonia, assuredly gathering that the Lord had called us for to preach the gospel unto them.*

1 Corinthians 7:15 *But if the unbelieving depart, let him depart. A brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases: but God hath called us to peace.*

1 Thessalonians 4:7 *For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness.*

2 Timothy 1:9 *Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began,*

1 Peter 5:10 *But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ*

Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you.

2 Peter 1:3 *According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue:*

Secondly, he has called us to be saints. Now we must do a little thinking on the definition of a saint here.

The dictionary has one definition as “a person of great holiness, virtue, or benevolence.” I would leave out the word “great” in this definition.

Who are the saints of God? The word comes from the Greek word HAGIOS and is the root word for “holy.”

Some are teaching today that the ones who are called saints in the New Testament are members of local churches of the Lord Jesus Christ. That seems sometimes to be a valid designation until we consider some things.

Notice, for example, in Romans 8:27 *And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what [is] the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to [the will of] God.* Here the Lord makes intercession for the saints. Now we know that the Lord makes intercession for more than just church members. He makes intercession for all believers. Therefore, the saints of God include all believers in Jesus Christ, not just church members.

In 1 Cor. 14:33 Paul speaks of “*all churches of the saints.*” But this does not limit the term saints to only church members. This is used, because every church member is required to be a saint, or a believer.

Not only so, but Ephesians 1:18 speaks of “*his inheritance in the saints.*” We see here that all saints have an inheritance. If that be

true, then we cannot say that the term “saints” is restricted to church members. We know that the inheritance of the Lord is not restricted to church members. We must be very careful that we do not make salvation through the local church, and making the saints only church members points in that direction. See also Colossians 1:12.

In Revelation 13:7 the beast makes war with the saints. Is this war declared against just the church? No, it is declared against all of God’s people. In Revelation 15:3, Jesus is King of saints. Is he King of just the church? No. In Revelation 19:8 we read of the “*righteousness of saints.*” Does this mean that only church members have righteousness? No.

So, let’s dispose of the idea that the saints are only church members. The Lord has made us holy by his grace. This makes us “saints.”

Grace and Peace

First, we must speak of grace. This word is used 20 times in the English in the King James Version of the Bible in this book of Romans..

The Greek word is CHARIS, and is the basic word for “gifts.” It implies a giving. It also has the meaning of “favor” and “thanks.”

We find from studying the context of verses which include the word GRACE that it is an act of God whereby he does something for us that we cannot do for ourselves and that the law cannot do and that no other human being can do for us.

We are saved by grace: Ephesians 2:8 *For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: [it is] the gift of God:*

We have access into grace: Romans 5:2 *By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.*

We have been justified by grace: Romans 3:24 *Being justified freely by his grace*

through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:

Grace reigns through righteousness: Romans 5:21 *That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.*

Grace is to be used and is given from God as we live for him: Romans 12:6 *Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, [let us prophesy] according to the proportion of faith;*

Secondly, we will consider a little upon the subject of peace. This word “peace” is found eleven times in the book of Romans and 104 times in the New Testament.

Being justified through faith brings peace: Romans 5:1 ¶ *Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:*

Only the spiritually minded have peace: Romans 8:6 *For to be carnally minded [is] death; but to be spiritually minded [is] life and peace.*

Peace must come from God: Romans 15:13 ¶ *Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost.*

Grace comes first, then peace. Peace is manifested through faith. Grace without faith would be unfelt and unappreciated, for it would be unknown. God gives us faith to unite our hearts with him and his hope and peace.

Romans 1:8-15

Lesson #3 on Romans
By Pastor Ronnie Wolfe

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

My God

Paul is now beginning the proper body of his letter with thanksgiving to his God. His God is different from any of the gods of this world or of anyone to whom Paul may be directing this letter.

Paul uses this phrase “my God” several times in his epistles.

Romans 1:8 *First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world.*

1 Corinthians 1:4 *I thank my God always on your behalf, for the grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ;*

1 Corinthians 14:18 *I thank my God, I speak with tongues more than ye all:*

2 Corinthians 12:21 *And lest, when I come again, my God will humble me among you, and that I shall bewail many which have sinned already, and have not repented of the uncleanness and fornication and lasciviousness which they have committed.*

Philippians 1:3 *I thank my God upon every remembrance of you,*

Philippians 4:19 *But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.*

Philemon 1:4 *I thank my God, making mention of thee always in my prayers,*

Paul considered his God a personal God. He was not just the God of creation or the God of Heaven or the God of the universe or the Great God beyond all description and

comprehension. He was Paul’s personal God.

Thankfulness

Paul is thankful to his God for the saints in Rome. We, too, should thank God for our Christian brothers and sisters. They mean more to us than we may think. What would we do if we were in this world alone as a believer?

He intimates that their comradery is through Jesus Christ. This is our common bond with every Christian around the world.

But Paul is thankful, not just for the saints alone, but for the fact that their “faith is spoken of throughout the whole world.”

Faith

Paul is thankful for the faith of the Romans. Faith is a wonderful gift of God through which we are all saved. *Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.* Hebrews 11:1

Faith is a very precious commodity. The righteousness of God is revealed from heaven from faith to faith (Rom. 1:17).

The Romans did not shield or hide their faith, but they let it be known around the world. This means that the Romans had learned the lesson that the Gospel was not just for Jews but for the Gentiles also. Some of the Jews had not yet learned this lesson.

9 **For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son, that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers;**

My Witness

To have a witness implies that an oath has been made. Remember, it is better not to vow than to vow and not pay (Eccl. 5:5).

Paul, then, had vowed to God that he would pray for the Romans without ceasing, and this he did, knowing that God was his witness. If he had not kept his vow, then he would need to answer to God, not to the Romans.

10 Making request, if by any means now at length I might have a prosperous journey by the will of God to come unto you.

God was also Paul's witness that he indeed wanted to come to Rome to be with the saints there and to impart something to them in person.

Paul made request to God that he might have a prosperous journey to Rome and that the journey would be in God's will and not in his own.

James 4:13 Go to now, ye that say, To day or to morrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain:

The phrase "at length" in this verse simply means "sometime." It is the Greek word *POTE* and means "sometime" or "any time."

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

Paul's Longing

This word "long" has the meaning of strong desire or even lust. The idea here is that Paul had an intense desire to see the saints at Rome.

Paul's desire was not to see the great city of Rome or its grand government buildings or its art or culture. His desire was to see and

be with the lowly saints of God.

Paul's Duty

Paul had a duty in mind. He has a desire to impart (give) some spiritual gift, not a special gift as was given to the apostles and the prophets of old, but a spiritual gift, perhaps the gift of his own teaching that the church there may be stabilized (established).

New children of God have everything needed to secure them unto heaven, but they do need to be instructed (Matt. 28:18-20) in the things of Jesus Christ so that they may grow thereby (1 Pet. 2:2).

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

Comforted In Mutual Faith

Paul's desire is that he come to them, give them a spiritual gift that they may be established and that they and he may be bonded together in "mutual faith."

Paul would be comforted in this, both he and they. This spiritual gift of his teaching would bring mutual faith, stability and comfort for both Paul and the Romans.

In this mutual faith, both Paul and the Romans are responsible for dispensing the message of this faith to the whole world. In establishing them in deeper truths of the word of God, they would be able to carry on the work of evangelism for a long time; and Paul would certainly be comforted in knowing that.

13 Now I would not have you ignorant, brethren, that oftentimes I purposed to come unto you, (but was let hitherto,) that I might have some fruit among you

also, even as among other Gentiles.

Ignorance

Paul did not want the Romans ignorant of the fact that he had for a long time had this strong desire to come to them. He did not want them to think that he had just recently developed this desire. He had been praying for the Romans for a long time, and he would have come much earlier if he could have done so.

Hindrance

The word “let” means to hinder. Either God hindered Paul from going to Rome because he had somewhere else for Paul to travel and preach the Gospel, or Satan had hindered him from coming.

1 Thessalonians 2:18 *Wherefore we would have come unto you, even I Paul, once and again; but Satan hindered us.*

Paul wants to see fruit among the believers in Rome. I am sure he wants to receive the fruit of the conversion of many as he comes to preach to them.

Then, he wants the fruit of the edification of the saints of God as he teaches them the word.

He also wants the fruit of the works of the saints as they work out their own salvation with fear and trembling. He wants to see them acting upon their faith.

Paul implies that he has had fruit among other Gentiles, and he wants to see some fruit among the Romans. It is not arrogance or selfishness to desire to see fruit from our evangelism or preaching or witnessing the grace of God in the Gospel.

Paul said:

1 Corinthians 3:6 *I have planted, Apollos*

watered; but God gave the increase.

Sometimes we receive the fruit of another’s planting or watering. Therefore, we should not be proud when people are saved when we witness to them or preach to them.

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

Being A Debtor

The Bible discourages debt of any kind, but in a spiritual sense, we become debtors to every person.

Romans 13:8 *Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law.*

We are debtors to two things: (1) To the Greek, the Barbarians, the wise and the unwise to love them and give them the Gospel. (2) We are debtors to do the whole law.

Galatians 5:3 *For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law.*

We are debtors to the Jews, also; because Paul said many times: “to the Jew first, and also to the Greek,” etc.

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

As Much As In Me Is

This is a strange-sounding phrase to me. “As much as in me is.”

The one Greek word that is translated “as much as” is KATA and means “according to.”

The one Greek word that is translated “In me is” is the word EME and means “me.”

Literally it would be translated “according to me.”

This means that Paul was persuaded in himself that God wanted him to go to Rome to preach to the Romans. He had been called by God as a servant and led by the Spirit of God to go to Rome and preach the gospel to them.

where he calls us.

I Am Ready

So, he said “I am ready.” The Greek word here is PROTHUMOS and means “ready” or “willing.”

Paul was willing to submit to God’s call to go to Rome also. I think he emphasizes Rome here with the term “Rome also,” since it was the capital city for crime, commerce, and the seat of Satan where the Roman government was ruling the world with an iron hand.

When God calls us to do a job, travel overseas, or be in harm’s way to preach the gospel; will we be willing to follow his leadership? Will we have a lust, love or strong desire to follow the Lord’s leading even though dangers lie ahead?

Many of our missionaries are in harm’s way today, yet they have followed God’s leading. Many are old and feeble, but they continue to go on for the Lord and do the work away from the comfort of a home in America. They love the people in their countries, and they are persuaded to do the work of God.

Even here in the United States, missionaries and pastors many times are put against the wall of persecution and continue to do the work of God. May we all have that zeal to love the Lord, surrender to his service and be willing and ready to go when and

Romans 1:16-18

Lesson #4 on Romans
By Pastor Ronnie Wolfe

The Power

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

Paul tells us in verse 15 that he is ready to preach the Gospel at Rome, also. Even at the end of this life, when he believes that his life may be taken at Rome, he is yet ready to preach the Gospel to those people at Rome, too.

The reason is that Paul knows the power is not in himself. He has often said that he is nothing and that his message is nothing.

1 Corinthians 2:5 *That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.*

1 Corinthians 1:17 ¶ *For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect.*

The Gospel is the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 15:1-4). That is the message he preached.

1 Corinthians 2:2 *For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.*

This power is not “authority” (Greek EXOUSIA), but it is “power” (Greek DUNAMIS). When we preach the Gospel, the message is powerful through the Holy Spirit and explodes in the heart to bring about regeneration.

This power is to everyone who believes. Any time this power is made effective in a person, he believes. That is what this power does: it brings faith as a gift of God to the sinner, and the sinner is saved by grace.

This Gospel is to be presented to the Jew first; that is, the Jew has first need of the Gospel, because he was the first guardians of its law and mysteries.

Romans 3:1 ¶ *What advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit [is there] of circumcision? 2 Much every way: chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God.*

If any man is in a position to hear the Gospel of Jesus Christ, it is the Jew, because he has the oracles of God (The Bible) in his hand and reads it consistently and believes it wholly. The Jewish Scriptures are the Jew’s basis for truth. If he will listen and hear and hearken to the truths in the scriptures, he will be saved.

John 5:39 *Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me.*

The tendency to hear the words of the scriptures are strong among the Jews, for the Bible says in ...

Romans 11:24 *For if thou wert cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature, and wert grafted contrary to nature into a good olive tree: how much more shall these, which be the natural [branches], be grafted into their own olive tree?*

But this Gospel is power also to the Greek, or the Gentile. The gospel is for the whole world, for every kind of man no matter what his lot in life or his ancestry.

Mark 16:15 *And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to*

every creature.

How marvelous is that wonderful grace that brought us as Gentiles from the wildernesses of the world and gathered us into his Kingdom, which he promised to the Jew first.

Romans 11:8 (*According as it is written, God hath given them the spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear;*) unto this day. See Isaiah 29:20; Isaiah 6:10.

Romans 11:12 *Now if the fall of them [be] the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles; how much more their fulness?*

God blinded the eyes of the Jews so that he might open the eyes of the Gentiles through the Gospel. This is truly the power of God.

The Righteousness

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

The purpose of the preaching of the Gospel is to reveal the righteousness of God. Notice this quote is from Habakkuk 2:4.

Write a paper on The Righteousness of God using Bible references and some comments from commentators or other writers.

Most references to the righteousness of God are in the book of Romans (See Rom. 1:17; 3:5, 21, 22; 10:3; 2 Cor. 5:21; James 1:20; 2 Peter 1:1).

This righteousness is revealed. Notice, first, that it is the righteousness of God, not

the righteousness of man. It comes from God and not man, as Israel went about to establish their own righteousness (Rom. 10:3).

Then it is revealed. If God were not gracious enough to reveal this righteousness to us, we would never know about it or have it to own or use to his glory.

Matthew 10:26 *Fear them not therefore: for there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; and hid, that shall not be known.*

This righteousness must be revealed, because it is this righteousness, the inherent and active righteousness of Jesus Christ in his holy life, which was lived in our stead.

This righteousness was revealed as Jesus came to the earth and lived among men as the sinless One.

2 Corinthians 5:21 *For he hath made him [to be] sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.*

But we are told here that this righteousness is revealed “from faith to faith.”

1. Some say from the faith of God to the faith of man. It does not seem to me that God needs faith.
2. Others say from the faith of preachers to the faith of the hearers of the Gospel. This could be, since God has chosen the foolishness of God to save them that believe (1 Cor. 1:21).
3. Some speak of the change of faith of the Old Testament into the faith of the New Testament. This would indicate the mysteries of God being revealed in the New Testament.
4. Some say this refers to the measure of faith on one level to a higher level such as “grace upon grace” in John 1:16 *And of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace,*

indicating the growing of grace and here the growing of faith in Jesus Christ.

5. This grace, I believe, is revealed from the faith of one individual to another individual. It is a common spiritual process for a believer to tell someone who is lost the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Then the other person believes, and that carries the faith of the one through his message to the faith of another who believes the message. This is all in the power of God.

So comes the imperative that we as God's children *shall live by faith*. The reason is that, in our lives of faith, we will tell others of God's righteousness, and faith will be given through this message. This is the way God saves his people from their sins.

The Wrath

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

The wrath of God is also revealed from heaven. It is revealed in two ways:

1. God's wrath is revealed in the law of nature, which we will undertake shortly beginning with verse 19. In this law the Gentile, even without the law of the Jews, can see the wrath of God displayed and taught.
2. God's wrath is revealed in the law of Moses to the Jew. He lives under that law and is subject to it. He can understand by its teachings that God is angry with sin and the ungodliness of man. Under the Mosaic law God gives many condemnations of the wickedness of man and his responding judgment and wrath to

that great nation of his.

Neither of these laws is sufficient to deliver a person from God's wrath. The wrath of God abides or dwells with the unbeliever (John 3:36).

The judgment of God's wrath is not against his own decrees of nature, but it is against the ungodliness and unrighteousness of men. All men are in unrighteousness and ungodliness before the grace of God delivers him from it.

The truth of God is manifested in both the law of nature of the law of Moses, but men hold this truth in unrighteousness, for their own advantage and pride. We shall see in the following verses to what extent man will go to suppress the truth and to interpret and teach it in a deceitful way to impress himself with his own righteousness instead of seeking for God's righteousness, which no man does on his own.

Man may hold the truth in unrighteousness in knowing the truth of the Gospel by hearing it so frequently and yet will not surrender to it or believe it with the heart, not having been enlightened by the Holy Spirit.

The Greek word translated "hold" is KATECHO and has at least two meanings. The first meaning is to "hinder," such as it is used in 2 Thessalonians 2:7 *For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth [will let], until he be taken out of the way*, translated here as "let" or to hinder.

So wicked men hinder the truth of God through their unrighteousness.

Also, man may hold (or literally "hold fast") the truth in unrighteousness by knowing the truth of the Gospel and believing it and yet not living the Gospel or dispensing the Gospel to others, thus holding it in unrighteousness.

Romans 1:19-23

Lesson #5 of Romans
By Pastor Ronnie Wolfe

The Reason

19 ¶ **Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them.**

This verse tells us why God's wrath is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men.

The reason is that God has manifested and shown unto man that which may be known of God; that is, through nature and empirical wisdom. Notice what John says in

John 1:9 *[That] was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.*

God has given natural light to every man (person) who comes into the world. He has the light of reason whereby man may comprehend certain things about God. He can ascertain his wonderful attribute of perfect power to create. Man might know of God's glory, his majesty, his transcendence, his power and wisdom, etc.

However, man may not know his true nature, his trinity, his Gospel, etc., without a special revelation from God. Neither can man know his need of a Savior or his desperate condition before God without God's special revelation through the word of God.

God has shown man his sun, his stars, his clouds, his lightning, his mountains, his wildernesses, his beauty of the blooming deserts, his majestic waterfalls, his open fields which seem to reach out to eternity, his animal kingdom, his tiny insects and microscopic creatures, his design and his orderliness in the world.

God has not spared the revelation of himself to man through nature. Man can see

these truths, but they hold the truth in unrighteousness and deny the power of God in them.

The Invisible Things of God

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

These invisible things of God are not his Gospel or his righteousness or his attributes, but they are his wonderful creating qualities, his majesty, even his "eternal power and Godhead." In other words, man has clearly shown God's eternal power and Godhead (or deity) by the things which he has created and put into the course of nature.

Neither are these things new. Our evolutionists are always looking for some new revelation of science to give them more information that will help them discover the origin or life; but God is not giving any new revelations of science. These things have been clearly shown from the time of creation by the things that are made.

The scientist, the farmer, the lawyer, the poet, the philosopher, the teacher, the preacher, the typist, the Indian chief all have at their disposal the creation of God to show them God's eternal existence and power, and so much so that they are "without excuse." They will have no excuse in the judgment for their ignorance of a just God who will judge them of their unrighteousness, nor can they give a just reason that they should not be condemned for their sins.

This knowledge of God is sufficient for their guilt before God, but it is not sufficient for a saving knowledge of God. This must be given by God as a gift.

The Foolish Heart Darkened

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

We have already said that there is no excuse, because they knew God. They knew him in his existence and his power from the time of creation.

But when they knew God as God, they did not glorify him as God. They know he is the Creator, yet they do not give him credit for being the Creator. They know he is the Designer, but they do not glorify him as such.. They know he has perfect control over the affairs of nature, yet they do not credit him with this grand orderliness. They say either that they do not know why a thing is or that a thing happens, or they imagine or pretend that they know why and yet never will admit that God is behind every event in nature.

So, since they do not glorify God as God, they neither are thankful to him for the very nature that they enjoy. Evolution is based upon the cause and effects of second causes; the First Cause is never admonished nor referenced. Some give more thanks to the creation than to the Creator.

As a result, their imaginations are vain: they think they know or pretend they know, but they do not have the knowledge they pronounce, because they will not glorify the real Actor in nature. They become proud and arrogant and ferocious against God.

They have a foolish heart, and “the fool hath said in his heart, there is no God” (Psalm 14:1). And this foolish heart becomes darkened by man’s own intellectualism, for he thinks he knows something that he does not know.

The Profession

22 **Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools,**

Many of the fools sit at the feet of college professors whose breath is spiritual cyanide; and when they are finished at the educational pig-sty, they go on to the classrooms as teachings of our children pretending to be wise. They teach our children that there is no God; they poke fun at faith in a living God and work to eradicate any mention of him in their classrooms.

But in their so-called wisdom, they have become fools. They may seem to be wise to the world, but they are fools to God.

1 Corinthians 3:19 *For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, He taketh the wise in their own craftiness.*

The Image

23 **And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things.**

So, since man is at his root a religious creature, and not knowing the real nature of the true God of Heaven, he goes about to glorify the corruptible rather than the incorruptible.

Instead of God, we find that man worships many things.

Vincent remarks “Deities of human form prevailed in Greece; those of bestial form in Egypt; and both methods of worship were practiced in Rome. See on Acts 7:41 ...

Acts 7:41 *And they made a calf in those days, and offered sacrifice unto the idol, and rejoiced in the works of their own hands.*

death, burial and resurrection. Remember, the Gospel is the power of God unto salvation.

... Serpent-worship was common in Chaldea, and also in Egypt, where the asp was sacred." Israel evidently learned calf-worship from Egypt's sacred bull.

Birds were worshiped by the Samaritans and the Egyptians.

Can you image people worshiping Cicadas? Well, many peoples worship the creeping things such as insects.

Conclusion of This Lesson

Some may object to spending so much time by the Apostle Paul in speaking of the crimes and sins of the people mentioned here. Why, if God is such a wonderful and gracious and forgiving God should we spend this time depicting the horrors of man's objection to an Almighty God?

The fact of the matter is, why would a person want to be forgiven by an all-gracious God if he does not know that he has sinned so horribly against him?

A man will be not receive forgiveness unless he needs forgiveness. He will not ask for mercy unless he needs mercy. He will not plead for grace unless he needs grace. He will not want to be changed from his present self into something better unless he knows that his present self is at odds against a holy God and that a new self will be much better for himself and to the glory of an eternal and loving God.

Today, you must know you sin. You must know your need of a Savior. You must surrender to him and trust him, being forgiven of your sins. Romans 3:23 tells us that "all have sinned and come short of the glory of God." That means every person on the face of the earth. Therein is the need. If you know that need today, then repent of your sins and trust Jesus Christ and his

Romans 1:24-32

Lesson #6 of Romans
By Pastor Ronnie Wolfe

God Gave Them Up To Uncleaness

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

Since these wicked ones changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into images of man and beast, God gave them over. They were already committed in their denial of God, and they were determined to do all they could to deny him and to live wickedly in his presence.

They were already living in uncleaness, so God turned them over to this uncleaness in which they were wallowing. He delivered them up, or delivered into their own power to do what they so desired to do.

Lusts of the flesh are natural and must be kept in check if they are to be used properly. But the lusts of the heart are very much deeper. These lusts are deep in the soul and reject the very restraints that God puts upon us to protect us from irreversible harm.

Their sin had gone further than physical activity. It was so ingrained in their lives that their complete nature had changed to live in uncleaness by instinct.

This uncleaness had an effect upon the physical practice of these wicked ones. They did not understand or desire to know the restrictions that God has put upon the practice of certain human habits, so they did whatever was right in their own eyes.

They dishonored their own bodies. They abused the very bodies that God had created

for them and would have blessed them with if they had only heeded his instruction.

They did things between themselves that were unheard of on a social level until men get to the point where God is eliminated from their minds.

In our own society, there is no wonder that so many perverted things are going on, since in our society there are those who teach that we do not need God and that his mention should be censured on every level.

One day God will give them over to their uncleaness, and they will be able to abound in their sin.

Proverbs 14:34 *Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin [is] a reproach to any people.*

Let us pray that God will intervene in our country and cause us as believers to stand for his word so that God will not give this nation over to uncleaness.

When God gives these people up to do their own lusts, he also gives them up to a very serious judgment from his own hand.

Changing Truth Into A Lie

25 Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen.

Of course, we know that God's truth cannot literally be turned into a lie. What he means here is that these wicked ones live a lie, not hearkening to the truth of God, living what in essence is a lie.

These wicked ones worshiped and served the creation more than the Creator. Some worshiped trees, rocks, wooden idols, animals, etc. Some worshiped certain men

whom they admired. Our worship and service is reserved for God alone.

The Creator is Jesus Christ.

Colossians 1:16 *For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether [they be] thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him:*

So, these wicked ones did not want to worship Jesus Christ, so they worshiped themselves and animals and idols of all kinds.

God Gave Them Up To Vile Affections The Women

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

Now Paul gets very specific as to what things they were doing that were unclean. He calls them “vile affections.”

The word “vile” means dishonoring, reproachful, shameful.

The Greek word for “affections” is the word PATHOS. It basically means “feelings.” So, God gave them over to “shameful feelings.” Sometimes we call these feelings “lusts.”

Now, he begins with the women, which have a natural use as far as these “affections” are concerned. They are to love and be loved by a husband and are to give him “due benevolence”

1 Corinthians 7:3 *Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence: and likewise also the wife unto the husband.*

But this was not being practiced among these wicked ones. They were changing their

natural use into that which is against nature.

So the Bible tells us that some things are natural and other things are not natural. These wicked ones were having unnatural feelings one for the other.

Now, if it is natural for a man and woman to have “feelings” one for the other and to come together in marriage and have children together, then that which is against nature would be something different from this beautiful bond of love and the reproduction of children, producing a wonderful and natural family.

God Gave Them Up To Vile Affections The Men

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

The women were not the only ones who left the natural way. The men, also, left the natural use of the woman. That natural use is marriage and children, one man and one woman.

Having left God’s natural way of marriage and love, they began to burn in themselves toward one another: men with men.

Before this could happen, they had to first leave the natural way, the way that God ordained in the beginning.

After they left God’s way, then they were free to exercise their lusts upon one another. This is unnatural.

They worked that which is “unseemly” or unfitting or unnatural.

By doing this they have received the recompense (or payment) of their sin (or error) which is meet, or fitting. It is only fitting and proper that God should bring

judgment against this wickedness, since to commit these sins one must put God out of his mind and reject his existence and his sovereignty.

God Out Of The Mind

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

They did not want to retain God in their knowledge. They wanted to take his name out of history, out of the textbooks, out of religion, out of heart and mind.

Because of this, God gave them over to a “reprobate” mind. The word “reprobate” means cast away or rejected. God gave them over to a mind of their own rather than being under the restraint of a merciful and longsuffering God.

As a result, they can pretty well do whatever they want, and God will not bring swift judgment upon them.

These sins he says are “not convenient.” By that he means that these sins are not fitting for God’s created beings, his human counterparts, for we were created in his likeness.

But they have not stomped upon that image and have marred it even further than Adam did when he sinned in the Garden of Eden.

Character of the Reprobate

29 Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, 30 Backbiters, haters of God, spiteful,

proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents,

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

Now that God has given them up to a reprobate mind to do things that are not fitting by nature, we notice how their character gets worse and worse.

Their character now is filled with all kinds of unrighteousness, which is a general term for all kinds of sin, forgetting that God even exists.

Fornication is sexual sin. We call it promiscuity. It is just a matter of being sexually active in the wrong way. The Bible is very clear about sexual matters, and we as God’s children do not need to allow the world to tell us how to think or live sexually.

Remember, one man, one woman in marriage only. This is the happy way to live, and God will bless that kind of life.

Read the rest of the words in verse 29 and 30. These are all characteristics of the wicked ones who have been given up by God for restraint. He no longer convicts them or reminds them; he simply allows them to continue in the sin they love so much.

Verse 31 tells us that they have no understanding, they do not keep their promises, and they have no natural affections, because their affections have been twisted and marred by the lusts in which they live daily.

They are “implacable.” This means they cannot be persuaded to change their ways, but they want to change laws to agree with their behavior. They also want to make their way of life the normal way of life.

Worthy of Death

32 Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are

worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.

The Bible says in Romans 6:23 *For the wages of sin [is] death;* When these wicked ones commit these sins, they are worthy of death, both physical death (which many times is brought about by the very sins they so much enjoy) and spiritual death, which God brings as a direct judgment upon these sins.

They actually know by nature that these sins can bring forth death physically. Note the problem with AIDS today. These wicked ones know that it is a fact, but they that does sway them to recant and turn from their sin.

Their sin is so hideous that, not only do they enjoy performing these sins, but they have pleasure in others to do the same things even though they know it will bring death.

Remember, birds of a feather flock together. They are not satisfied with being able to do whatever they please, but they also desire that their shameful acts be legalized and forced upon others in society so that their sin can be popularized and made acceptable.

This is happening on a grand scale in our country. Most magazines advertise this kind of life. Most TV programs and movies advertise this lifestyle. Even religion is sometimes playing a part in advertising this worldly and sinful lifestyle.

2 Corinthians 6:17 *Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean [thing]; and I will receive you,*

Romans 12:1 *I beseech you therefore,*

brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, [which is] your reasonable service.

This is the only body you have. Don't waste it on riotous living. Respect your body as a living sacrifice to God. He created it for you, and he will bless you if you will use it for him. God has a wonderful and prosperous and happy life for you if you will just live it according to his rules. He made rules for our happiness and joy, not just to keep us from having a good time.

Salvation opens up a brand new dimension for use for our bodies. If you are not saved, today repent of your sins and believe on the Lord, Jesus Christ, for the remission of your sins. You will see that I am right. If you live for the Lord, you will never need to put a shameful head on your pillow at night, but you can face every day with assurance and confidence that you have done the right thing, and God will bless you for it.

But before God gives you up to vile affections to do those things which are not convenient or fitting: before God turns you loose for the demons of hell to take charge of your whole life; before you fall headlong in these despicable sins mentioned in this chapter, turn to him who will have compassion and mercy on you and save your soul from sin.

Then give your body to him as a living sacrifice. You will never have any better joy than to know that Jesus Christ is your Savior.

Romans 2:1-29

Lesson #7 of Romans
By Pastor Ronnie Wolfe

The General Application of Judgment

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

It seems that Paul is inviting us to be judges of such sins as he has mentioned in chapter one, but he is careful in this place to tell us that everyone is guilty of sin against God.

Man is inexcusable when it comes to the sins mentioned. When we judge the sins of others, we condemn ourselves. We as judges we cannot be true judges, because we are all guilty before God.

We are all under the same law, and as human beings we cannot be judges of other men's sins lest we imagine that we have our own righteousness (See Job Chapter 25).

First Principle of Judgment
"According To Truth" (vss 2-4)

2 **But we are sure that the judgment of God is according to truth against them which commit such things.**

God's judgment is not according to man's opinion or whim. God's judgment is according to truth only.

What is the truth of God? First, we know that God is truth in himself. It is one of his basic attributes.

Exodus 34:6 *And the LORD passed by before him, and proclaimed, The LORD, The LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth,*

See Psalm 31:5; 86:15; Isa. 25:1

In Romans 1:25 we find that God's truth is also manifested in the law and light of nature. Everything that we see about God in nature is true, but men hold that truth in unrighteousness, as we have already studied.

Second, The Law of Moses is the truth of God. We know this from:

Romans 7:12 *Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good.*

If the law is holy, and just, and good, then it is truth. Whatever the law says, it says to them that are under the law, and it represents the truth of God

Romans 3:19 ¶ *Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.*

Third, the Gospel is the truth. It is God's good news of redemption.

Colossians 1:5 *For the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel;*

So, the judgment of God is according to truth. All the principles mentioned are manifested in the word of God, so we can

see that the truth of God is his word.

This judgment has to do with the judgment after the return of the Lord Jesus Christ. This is our judgment as we stand before a holy God. We know that this judgment will be done upon the basis of God's word, the Bible.

Revelation 20:12 *And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books (books of the Bible) were opened: and another book was opened, which is [the book] of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.*

To Recap

The truth is:

- (1) The law and light of nature.
- (2) The Law of Moses
- (3) The Gospel

These are all included in the teachings of God's word. So, we are judged by the word of God.

Them Which Do Such Things

The judgment of God is against everyone who does the things mentioned in chapter one. We who judge are just as guilty as they.

We judge others and then we do the same things, as we shall see next.

Shall We Escape?

3 **And thinkest thou this, O man, that judgest them which do such**

things, and doest the same, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God?

Some think that because they have a little knowledge in the things of the Lord that they can judge others; and being judges, they believe that they will not be judged by God.

But we shall not escape the judgment of God, says Romans 14:12.

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

Three things in verse four that people despise about God if they are judges and feel that they have escaped his judgment.

(1) Goodness – This goodness is the kindness of God toward men. This could be God's common grace to men of all kinds – it rains on the just and the unjust, or it could be the kindness of God which allows certain people to be born in a good land such as ours. In Paul's day, it was the goodness of God to be born a Jew, because they were his chosen and blessed people. The Jews think little or nothing of God's goodness toward them. Men today do the same with God's goodness.

(2) Forbearance – This is God's tolerance toward us. He was tolerant toward the Jews, also. He is very longsuffering. Do men despise or think little of this forbearance? Yes, I think so.

(3) Longsuffering – This is God's patience. He is very patience, also, with us.

Romans 15:5 ¶ *Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be*

likeminded one toward another according to Christ Jesus:

Men despise these three characteristics of God, and thus we have the following clause at the end of verse 4: **not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?**

This book of Romans is the story of God's bringing us unto himself through repentance and faith in Jesus Christ. It is God's kindness that does this. We cannot think little of his kindness, or goodness, because it is this goodness that brings repentance. It is not we ourselves who repent, but repentance is granted by God (Acts 11:18).

Second Principle of Judgment
"After Thy Hardness" (vs 5)

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

The ungodly will be judged according to the hardness of their hearts.

Every sin of the unbeliever will first be committed throughout his entire life before the scales of judgment are weighed against him.

Luke 17:28 *Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded;*

29 But the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all. 30 Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of

man is revealed.

And after the hardness of their hearts they were judged in Sodom. It will be the same in the day when the Son of man will be revealed.

These are laying up treasures of wrath against the day of wrath, day by day accumulating more and more judgment from God as they live their earthly lives until certain and swift judgments come upon them.

Third Principle of Judgment
"According To His Deeds" (vss 6-10)

6 Who will render to every man according to his deeds:

7 To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life:

8 But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath,

9 Tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile;

10 But glory, honour, and peace, to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile:

Two types of people are mentioned in these verses. The one kind is the believers, who are patient in well-doing, who seek for glory, honor and incorruptibility, eternal life.

The others are the unbelievers who are contentious and disobedient to the truth

The judgment of both will be according

to their deeds or works.

Revelation 20:12 *And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is [the book] of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.*

Psalms 28:4 *Give them according to their deeds, and according to the wickedness of their endeavours: give them after the work of their hands; render to them their desert.*

___Verse 6 says that God will reward every man according to his deeds whether that man be a believer or an unbeliever.

The difference is in the reward. The unbeliever will receive the wrath of God and judgment from God. The believer will not come before God to be judged of his sin, because he has come to Mount Zion where sin has already been judged (See Heb. 12:23-24).

Fourth Principle of Judgment “No Respect of Persons”

11 For there is no respect of persons with God.

12 For as many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law: and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law;

There is no difference between the Jew and the Gentile. Both will be judged without respect of persons, because there is no respect of persons with God. God does not respect any character, work, thought or nationality of any person. It

does not matter whether he is Jew, Greek or Barbarian. He will be judge by God accord to his works.

Paul mentions two classes of people here: those without law and those in the law. We will deal with these classes in the next verses.

Nahum answers this principle very well in Nahum 1:6 *Who can stand before his indignation? and who can abide in the fierceness of his anger? his fury is poured out like fire, and the rocks are thrown down by him.* The rhetorical question is answered by the word “none” except those who obey him through repentance and faith.

Those without law (Gentiles) will perish without law, but those who are in the law (Jews) will be judged by the Law.

Fifth Principle of Judgment “Doers, Not Hearers, Of The Law” (vss 13-15)

13 (For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified.

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

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

Paul warns the Jews here that just having the law of God and being

vouchsafed by them does not guarantee their salvation.

It is the doer of the law and not the hearer only who is justified in it. Many of the Jews thought because God had given them the Law of Moses that they were judges and not doers of the Law. Paul is telling them that, if they want to be justified by the Law, they must keep Law to perfection. This is God's requirement.

James 2:10 For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one [point], he is guilty of all.

In verse 14 Paul tells us that the Gentiles, by doing the things that are contained in the law, such as refraining from murder, theft, etc., they are a law unto themselves. They will be judged by the law that is written in their hearts (vs 15). So, the Gentiles, though they do not have the Law entrusted to them, they are still guilty before God and will be judged as sinners.

Verse 15 tells us that with this law written in their hearts, the Gentiles are in a constant dialogue with themselves about accusing or excusing themselves. They also have become judges of one another, but they are all guilty before God and will be judged by him.

Sixth Principle of Judgment
"According To My Gospel" (vs 16)

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

All men have secrets. Each one of us has something that we would not want the world to know. Other things we

would announce and pronounce to the world with pride.

It is the secret things which God desires to deal with in his judgment. These little secrets make up the real person. What you do in secret is the real you.

These secrets will be judged by Paul's Gospel. There is only one Gospel, as we all know.

Galatians 1:8 But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.

The Gospel is the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 15:1-4). In this Gospel, Jesus fulfilled his purpose in coming to the earth. His purpose was to die for his people and to give his life for his sheep.

Thus judgment will come through the One who executed the Gospel: Jesus Christ.

1 Corinthians 4:5 Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God.

Seventh Principle of Judgment
Circumcision in the Heart (vss 17-29)

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

Every Jew makes his boast of God, because he is a Jew. God has chosen him out of the nations of the world to be his

own nation.

He rests in the law, because he thinks that simply because he has been put in trust of the Law that he is reconciled to God.

18 And knowest his will, and approvest the things that are more excellent, being instructed out of the law;

These Jews know the Law and, therefore, the will of God, since it is written in the Law. They approve the things that are more excellent, because God has given them the more excellent way that is revealed in the Law.

1 Corinthians 12:31 *But covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet shew I unto you a more excellent way.*

Hebrews 1:4 ¶ *Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they.*

Hebrews 11:4 ¶ *By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaketh.*

The Jews have been instructed in the Law, which contained the prophecies of the Lord, Jesus Christ. Through it the Gospel was preached. All the more reason for the Jew to know about Jesus the Messiah, but we shall see that the Jews rejected him (John 1:11).

19 And art confident that thou thyself art a guide of the blind, a

light of them which are in darkness, 20 An instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes, which hast the form of knowledge and of the truth in the law.

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

22 Thou that sayest a man should not commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery? thou that abhorrest idols, dost thou commit sacrilege?

23 Thou that makest thy boast of the law, through breaking the law dishonourest thou God?

24 For the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you, as it is written. (Isaiah 52:5)

The name of God is blasphemed in Paul's day among the Gentiles, because the Jews had failed to either keep the Law of God perfectly or to preach it correctly to the Gentiles, telling of the coming Messiah and recognizing Jesus as that Messiah.

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

Circumcision is true and good only if the Jew keeps the Law. Just knowing the Law and judging others by it was not enough.

If the Law is not kept, then circumcision becomes uncircumcision.

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

27 And shall not uncircumcision which is by nature, if it fulfil the law, judge thee, who by the letter and circumcision dost transgress the law?

If you are looking for human judges of the Law, shall not the Gentiles (uncircumcision) judge you? You are the ones who by the letter and circumcision transgress the law.

—The Gentiles, then, are the better judges if they do what is in the Law, though they have not been put in trust of the Law.

This must have really injured the pride of the Jews at Rome. Paul puts them in their place here. They were thinking that they were better than the Gentiles on all points, but Paul says that God is no respecter of persons and that the Gentiles, though uncircumcized, are reconciled unto God by Jesus Christ the same as the Jew.

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

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

Here is the reason that the Jew and the Gentile are no different. According to verses 28-29, he is a Jew which is one inwardly, who has the circumcision of the

heart, in the spirit, and not according to the letter of the Law.

The national Jew cannot be a real Jew without a circumcision in the heart and spirit, which he could not have by the letter of the Law. The Gentile, if he is circumcized in the heart and the spirit, is just as much a Jew as the national Jew. See here Galatians 3:29. Here we are Abraham's seed and heirs according to the promise.;

The praise, then, is not for men (the Jews are probably meant here), but the praise is for God. God is to be praised for true salvation.

Romans 3:1-18

Lesson #8 of Romans
By Pastor Ronnie Wolfe

Responsibility of the Jews (1-8)

Actually the study of the Jews begins with Romans 2:17. This is the secondary study in the book of Romans. The first is the matter of justification by faith and the benefits and practical use of that justification.

The Superiority of the Jews (1-2)

1 ¶ What advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit is there of circumcision?

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

The word *advantage* in Romans 3:1 is the Greek word PERISSOS and is rendered “superior, abundant, supreme,” etc. So, Paul is asking how the Jew is superior to others of the nations of the world.

Along with this question he asks a second question which complements the first question. He asks what profit circumcision is. The word for *profit* is the Greek *opheleia* and is rendered as “usefulness, advantage, profit.”

The Jews thought there was no other nation like theirs, and this was an arrogant conclusion on their part, but Paul is suggesting that there may be a superiority that we must consider concerning this nation. What is it?

Verse 2 answers the questions. The Jews are superior to a great extent (much) in every way. This is hard for us

to realize as Gentiles. Why would God allow one nation to be superior to other nations?

But Paul gives one chief or primary way in which the Jews are superior to other nations. They were entrusted with the “oracles of God” or the word of God. All of the writers of the Old Testament scriptures were Jews, and they were entrusted by God to be the caretakers of this word and to teach it properly to others who may hear it and follow its teachings. Review Psalm 67.

The word *committed* comes from the basic Greek word for “believe.” It means entrusted or to credit or have confidence in something. Thus, the Jews were entrusted or given confidence in keeping the word of God.

The Faithfulness of God (3-4)

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

4 God forbid: yea, let God be true, but every man a liar; as it is written, That thou mightest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou art judged.

Paul argues here hypothetically that a Jew may have unbelief; therefore, he would be unfaithful or have “unbelief.”

If God has chosen this nation and has sworn to be with them and be their God, then how can some of the Jews have unbelief?

He uses this arrangement to argue that, if the Jews have unbelief (unfaithfulness), then perhaps God is also unfaithful. If God is the author of faith, and the faith of Israel is incomplete, then

how faithful is God? Is he unfaithful; is his faith (faithfulness) without effect?

Paul quickly answers with “God forbid.” God is God and men are men. We must let God be true, as he is. He must be true no matter what our situation is in his presence. Our sin does not change God. He says that we should let every man be a liar.

This does not mean that Paul is encouraging people to lie. It means that, when we are compared to God, we realize that we are all liars and that God is fully truth. John said that he is “full of grace and truth.”

It is written in Psalms 67:4 *O let the nations be glad and sing for joy: for thou shalt judge the people righteously, and govern the nations upon earth. Selah.*

David sinned against, but upon his confession and repentance, God forgave him. Then David reaped a good future as a result.

The argument may come, “Is it then good to sin against God so that good may come?” Notice how Paul puts it in verse 5.

The Consequence of Sin (5-8)

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

Paul states in this verse that, if Israel’s unrighteous commends or approves the righteousness of God, then God must be unrighteous for taking vengeance against man.

Some of the Jews have in their minds that the more they sin the more God’s

grace abounds, so they should not worry about their sin. If God judges them, God would be unjust in doing so, since their sin brings more righteousness to God, and the Jews will benefit as a result as seems to be the case with David.

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

7 For if the truth of God hath more abounded through my lie unto his glory; why yet am I also judged as a sinner?

Paul again says, “God forbid,” or “Let it not be.” If that were true, that our sin approves the righteousness of God, then God could not judge the world.

If God’s truth is verified and vindicated through my lie (or sin) to God’s glory, then how can God judge sinners?

The sovereignty of God does not meet man’s criteria. God does as he wants, and we must continue to always recognize him as a sovereign God who can do as he pleases.

He has said that he will bring vengeance upon the wicked, and he will do just that.

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

There was a slanderous report that Paul had been teaching “Let us do evil, that good man come.” This was a lie. Paul has never taught such a thing.

Some today are “antinomian,” which means that they believe they can do pretty much as they please, and the judgment of God will not come against them; because they are not under the law but under grace. Paul puts this to rest in these verses.

Reach of Sin’s Guilt (9-18)

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

Verse nine asks whether the Jews (we) are better than they (Gentiles). He answers the question that they Jews are not better, because both Jews and Gentiles are under sin.

All Have Sinner (10-18)

10 As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one:

11 There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God.

12 They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one.

We would do well to remember these verses. Verse 10 says there is none righteous. This is taken from Psalms 14:1 ¶ *The fool hath said in his heart, [There is] no God. They are corrupt, they have done abominable works, [there is] none that doeth good.*

Verse 11 is taken from Psalms 14:2 *The LORD looked down from heaven upon*

the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, [and] seek God.

Verse 12 is taken from Psalms 53:3 *Every one of them is gone back: they are altogether become filthy; [there is] none that doeth good, no, not one.*

13 Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips:

As a doctor looks into the mouth, he can tell many things. He can detect certain diseases and can determine how serious a condition may be.

As God looks into the mouth of man, he sees an open grave. He sees putrid, rotting souls of men who cannot stop their sinning.

Their tongues have used deceit from the time of the fall of man. They have poison under their lips, as a snake has his fangs hidden above his mouth, they protrude when he opens his mouth to strike. The deadly poison comes out, and men are hurt. Our words can ruin reputations and kill confidence and praise.

14 Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness:

The mouth is also full of cursing and bitterness. People every day use harsh words and cause divisions among employees and friends. They swear on God’s name and never think a thing about it. People are bitter with life and say it is not worth living. Some even curse God because he has not supplied them with specific good things.

15 **Their feet are swift to shed blood:**

Sometimes you will see a tiny child say with his fist in the air, "I'll kill you!" Death education has softened the reality of death today. Video games and movies have given young children the idea that death is fun.

Man has death in his heart if he is not taught by the word of God by the Holy Spirit. Today people do not have a very high value on life. They will abort or have aborted unborn children by the thousands; then they will scream and become angry when some animal is deprived of his environment. Many people today place more value on an animal than on another human being.

16 **Destruction and misery are in their ways:**

Wherever the sinner, he takes with him destruction and misery. In the name of saving the planet, people are destroying it. In the name of compassion, men are making others miserable. Everywhere the wicked go, there is destruction and misery. This is the nature and character of the sinner and man's wisdom.

17 **And the way of peace have they not known:**

Isaiah 59:8 *The way of peace they know not; and [there is] no judgment in their goings: they have made them crooked paths: whosoever goeth therein shall not know peace.*

Man in his sinful state does not know

what real peace is. He things that peace means having no war or living luxuriously. But that is not peace.

Believers have a peace that passes all understanding: Philippians 4:7 *And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.*

There is no peace outside of Jesus Christ and him crucified.

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

This is the worst indictment of all. This is the crux of the matter. If God is not feared, then man resorts to his own wisdom and nature in order to attain happiness.

There is no happiness outside of trust in Jesus Christ by repentance of sin and turning to him, his death, burial and resurrection.

Today we are not afraid of use the Lord's name in a vain way. We are not afraid to shun his name. We are not afraid to stomp on it and censor it. We have no fear of God.

Proverbs 9:10 *The fear of the LORD [is] the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy [is] understanding.*

We should fear God with a holy and reverential fear. He loves his people and is saving them from their sins. We need a high, holy and respectful fear of our Father in Heaven.

We are all sinners, as Paul has just proven. We are all in need of salvation from our sins. The Jews were entrusted with the oracles of God, but they are just as guilty of sin before God as we who are Gentiles.

Whether you are Jew or Gentile, you

must repent of your sins (Luke 13:3) and believe on Jesus Christ. We are saved by grace through faith in Jesus Christ.

Romans 3:19-20

Lesson #9 of Romans
By Pastor Ronnie Wolfe

THE DOCTRINE OF JUSTIFICATION

Romans 3:19 - 5:21

Definition of Justification (19-31)

The Law and Justification (19-20)

Presumptions of the Law

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

In verse 19 we find some presumptions that are implied concerning the law and justification.

First, let's look at a definition of justification. Here is a dictionary definition from the Random House electronic unabridged dictionary:

*Also called **justificaÆtion by faithÆ**. Theol. the act of God whereby humankind is made or accounted just, or free from guilt or penalty of sin.*

Now here is a theological definition of the word justification.

Justification

A forensic term, opposed to condemnation. As regards its nature, it is the judicial act of God, by which he pardons all the sins of those who believe in Christ, and accounts, accepts, and treats them as righteous in the eye of the law, i.e., as conformed to all its demands. In addition to the pardon (q.v.) of sin, justification declares that all the claims of the law are satisfied in respect of the justified. It is the act of a judge and not of a sovereign. The law is not relaxed or set aside, but is declared to be fulfilled in the strictest sense; and so the person justified is declared to be entitled to all the advantages and rewards arising from perfect obedience to the law #Ro 5:1-10 It proceeds on the imputing or crediting to the believer by God himself of the perfect righteousness, active and passive, of his Representative and Surety, Jesus Christ #Ro 10:3-9 Justification is not the forgiveness of a man without righteousness, but a declaration that he possesses a righteousness which perfectly and for ever satisfies the law, namely, Christ's righteousness #2Co 5:21 Ro 4:6-8 The sole condition on which this righteousness is imputed or credited to the believer is faith in or on the Lord Jesus Christ. Faith is called a "condition," not because it possesses any merit, but only because it is the instrument, the only instrument by which the soul appropriates or apprehends Christ and his righteousness #Ro 1:17 3:25,26 4:20-22 #Php 3:8-11 Ga 2:16 The act of faith which thus secures our justification secures also at the same time our sanctification (q.v.); and thus the doctrine of justification by faith does not lead to licentiousness #Ro 6:2-7 Good works, while not the ground, are the certain consequence of justification #Ro 6:14 7:6

See Easton on GALATIANS, EPISTLE TO 1413

The full word justification is used only three times in the N. T., and they are in Romans 4 and 5 (Romans 4:25; 5:16, 18).

With these definitions we can then go to our presumptions or implications.

First Presumption: We Know

Certain things the Bible tells us that we can know, and in this instance it is that we know that everything the law says it says to them who are under the law. That is only logical and sensible.

Certain things we cannot know, and God has seen in his wisdom to not reveal everything to us. Remember De 29:29 *The secret [things belong] unto the LORD our God: but those [things which are] revealed [belong] unto us and to our children for ever, that [we] may do all the words of this law.*

Second Presumption: The Whole World

The law referenced here speaks to everyone. John Gill reminds us here that this is not the basic ceremonial law that belonged only to the Old Testament and the Jewish nation, but this is the moral law that pertains to all men everywhere.

We must remember here Romans 2:15 where Paul mentions the work of the law written in their hearts. This is to every man, not just to Jews.

When the moral speak, it speaks to every man, not just to the Jews to whom were committed the oracles of God. This law is to the whole world.

Third Presumption: Every Mouth Must be Stopped

The presumption here is that the mouth of everyone living in this world needs to be stopped, but stopped from what?

We have read in Jer 17:9 *The heart [is] deceitful above all [things], and desperately wicked: who can know it?*

Both Peter and Jude speak of "great swelling words" coming from the depraved heart. In our own nature we are all proud and speak against God, exhorting ourselves to be righteous in God's sight.

We presume here that every mouth

must be stopped from this boasting, for boasting must be excluded.

Fourth Presumption The Whole World Must Become Guilty

We know that the whole world is guilty before God, but the world at large does not know that. They must become guilty, or be shown to be guilty before God.

We who are saved were shown that we are guilty by the Holy Spirit who began a good work in us and brought us to repentance and faith in Jesus Christ.

But our verse tells us that the whole world must become guilty before God. When will the whole world become guilty?

In this very life all men are guilty of the breaking of the moral law of God, for "all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." Every person in the world, when compared to the moral of God, is revealed to be guilty here and now.

Then in the world to come, the wicked will be judged and come under the judgmental hand of God, and their guilt will be shown through the wrath of God.

Conclusion To Presumptions

So the law speaks, and it speaks to everyone; because everyone is under the law; that is, God's moral law.

Every mouth must be stopped from its proud and arrogant claim against God's justice and righteousness. No man can be saved through this law, because it is beyond him to keep this law to the degree required by God.

The whole world, then, is guilty before God, because God's law is perfect. This

includes both Jew and Gentile.

Notice Rom. 7:12 *Wherefore the law [is] holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good.*

Purpose of the Law (20)

20 Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin.

It is not the purpose of the law (moral or ceremonial) to justify men before God; therefore, it is stated here that no flesh shall be justified by the deeds of the law.

In every deed of the law no man has equaled the obedience of Adam in his innocence nor the obedience of the second Adam, Jesus Christ, in the perfection and full obedience of it.

We as men obey the deeds of the law in that imperfect way which guides every human and depraved heart and which always comes short of the glory of God.

Our deeds are not complete enough and our motives are not lofty enough to merit God's slightest recognition of our deeds for justification. Notice the following scriptures of justification by the law.

Ac 13:39 And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses.

Ro 3:20 Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law [is] the knowledge of sin.

Ro 3:28 Therefore we conclude that a

man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law.

Ga 2:16 Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.

Ga 3:11 But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, [it is] evident: for, The just shall live by faith.

Ga 3:24 Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster [to bring us] unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.

Ga 5:4 Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace.

In the second section of verse 20 we find the very purpose of the law. “For by the law is the knowledge of sin.”

If a person does not know that he is a sinner, he will do nothing about that sin; but if he knows he is a sinner before God and guilty, then he will have a desire to rid himself of sin and will change his mind about sin. It is the work of the Holy Spirit to bring sinners to this conviction (John 16:8).

Ga 3:24 Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster [to bring us] unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.

The law is our schoolmaster, and a good one it is. It gives us the knowledge of sin, convincing us that we are sinners before God.

Yes, the law acknowledges our sin, but

that is all it can. The inference here is that the law can go no further, and even that convincing of sin must be done through the Holy Spirit, as we have shown.

In other words, the law cannot save. It has no life within it. The letter kills (2 Cor. 3:6).

Notice Ga 3:21 *[Is] the law then against the promises of God? God forbid: for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law.*

So, we must tell sinners of their sin and make known to them their guilt before a holy God. This they must see before they will realize the need of a physician. They that are whole need not a physician, but they that are sick (Matt. 9:12).

Romans 3:21-31
Lesson #10 of Romans
By Pastor Ronnie Wolfe

Definition of Justification (Cont.),
21-31

Faith and Justification (21-31)

Justification by Faith Manifested, 21

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

This righteousness of God is taken up again by Paul from Romans 1:17. The book of Romans is basically about the righteousness of God. The word righteous in one form or another is found 37 times in this book.

The righteousness of God is not our “right-doing,” but a righteousness that is above man’s righteousness, even the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees. It is a righteousness that is “without the law” or “apart from the law.” We cannot reach God’s righteousness through the law, but we must point our concerns away from the law and toward heaven in order to obtain the righteousness of God.

This righteousness is manifested or shown by the law and the prophets; that is, through the witness of the Law of Moses (Genesis - Deuteronomy) and of the prophets of the Old Testament and the prophets of the New Testament.

Notice in Romans Chapter four the references Paul makes to the Old Testament saints who have manifested this righteousness (Romans 4:3-6). This

righteousness is also manifested in Genesis 3:15 and many other Messianic scriptures from the Old Testament.

This righteousness is also manifested by New Testament prophets in the churches of the Lord as they prophesied in the churches and received and preached the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Justification by Faith in Jesus Christ, 22-23

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

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

This righteousness of God is by faith of Jesus Christ (or IN Jesus Christ). The word “of” is subjective, but the construction here is Greek genitive: *in* Jesus Christ. This according to A. T. Robertson’s “Word Pictures ...”

This righteousness of God is specifically for those who believe. It is not for those who work. It is not for those who join churches. It is not for those who are baptized. It is for those who believe “in Christ.”

The reason that this divine righteousness of God is needed because “all have sinned” (verse 23), both Jew and Gentiles.

Justification by Faith by Grace, 24

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

This justification is free: It is “without charge.” Therefore, it must be by grace. Grace is that operation of God that works in our favor to accomplish his purpose in us to our good through salvation in Jesus Christ. See Romans 4:16.

This justification by faith is through Redemption. The Greek word here is APOLUTROS and means to release by a ransom. Matthew 20:28 *Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.* See also 1 Tim. 2:6.

So grace did what our own works through the law could not do, Romans 8:3 *For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh:*

Justification by Faith is a Propitiation, 25-26

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

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

The word whom is a pronoun and must have an antecedent. This is Jesus Christ. So, we could read “Jesus Christ God hath set forth to be a propitiation. This English word means “to placate, to make agreeable, to reconcile.”

Jesus Christ placated God the Father when he shed his blood for us. He

satisfied God’s justice. To pronounce that the unrighteous are righteous is unjust in itself, because they are not righteous. God required the payment of a ransom for our sins. This Jesus Christ did when he died.

Notice that it is “faith in his blood” that makes the propitiation or satisfaction. God is not satisfied until a man believes in the blood of Jesus Christ.

Two Declarations

First, in verse 25, we find a declaration of the righteousness of God for the remission of sins that are past.

These are the sins of those who lived before Jesus died on the cross and paid for their sins. God “forbear” them. God “winked at” the ignorance of Old Testament saints. He pushed forward their sins every year typically through the ceremonial law until Christ came to be a ransom for their sins. When Christ died, he paid for the sins of all the Old Testament saints.

The second declaration is one of his righteousness “at this time;” that is, at the time when this passage was written and including the whole time after Jesus’ death on the cross. So, Jesus paid the price for the saints of the time before his death as he reached back through history to put their sins upon himself. In like manner, he reached forward to the end of time to put on himself the sins of any who after his death would believe on him.

He did this so that he must be just, not simply proclaiming that the unrighteous are righteous, but actually making it possible that they could be declared righteous in God’s presence through the redemption in Jesus Christ.

He, then, is the justifier of each person who believes in Jesus. This is only right and proper in consideration of the death that he died and of the purpose of God in his grace.

Justification by Faith Excludes Boasting, 27-28

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

28 Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law.

As if Paul is looking for a boasting heart, a proud a haughty spirit, he asks the question, "Where is boasting then?" If all that Paul has just illustrated be true, where is boasting? It is excluded or put out of the way.

If boasting is excluded, then by what law? If it is by the law of works, that would be odd; for the keeping of the law engenders boasting such as we see in the Pharisees. But the law of faith excludes it; because if we need faith to surrender ourselves as helpless beings unto an eternal God, then the law of faith excluded any boasting on the part of the believer.

Then if boasting (therefore working and doing) are excluded for salvation, then we must conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law.

Justification by Faith For Jew and Gentile, 29-30

29 Is he the God of the Jews only? is

he not also of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also:

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

Yes, he is the God of the Gentiles also. There is one God for the Jew and the Gentile alike. He will justify them both.

He will justify the Jew "by faith," which implies that they have the oracles of God already and heard them daily. Therefore, all they need to do is believe. The phrase "by faith" shows the immediate channel through which God saves sinners.

But the Gentiles did not have the oracles of God, so they must hear the preaching of the Gospel. Therefore, Paul says the Gentiles are saved "through faith." This phrase shows the intermediate condition by which the Gentiles must hear the wonderful words of the Gospel and then believe in Jesus Christ, the subject of the Gospel. Of course, both must hear the Gospel, but the Jews claimed they were custodians of it; so they must believe it. The Gentiles must first hear it, then believe it.

Justification by Faith
Establishes the Law, 31

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

How does faith establish law? Have we not concluded that justification is by faith without the deeds of the law? Certainly, but the law now is to be obeyed because of our faith in Jesus Christ.

The laws of God and of Christ cannot properly be kept until a person has faith in Jesus Christ. The actions of many of the laws may be performed, but the true keeping of the law is not by the letter but by the spirit of the law. We have this mind in us as Jesus had so that we can keep his commandments more perfectly than we could before faith came. So, we establish the law by faith. We do not make it void altogether.

Romans 4:1-25
Lesson #11 of Romans
By Pastor Ronnie Wolfe

The Depiction of Justification by Faith

What Abraham Found (4:1-25)

He Found Glory Without Honor (1-2)

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

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

Abraham was considered among the highest of all of the characters of the Hebrew Scriptures to the Jews.

Joh 8:53 Art thou greater than our father Abraham, which is dead? and the prophets are dead: whom makest thou thyself?

But what did Abraham find in regards to the flesh? He found justification, but not by works. For if he had found justification by works, he could glory before men but not before God; because God knows his sin and his weakness. He had no righteousness without God. He could not honor God with his own righteousness.

Jer. 51:10 The LORD hath brought forth our righteousness: come, and let us declare in Zion the work of the LORD our God.

He Found Scriptural Vindication (3)

3 For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness.
See Gen. 15:6; Gal. 3:6; James 2:23.

In other words, Faith equals Righteousness. One does not come before the other; they are simultaneous in their application to man.

We shall find now that faith is the only thing that can be reckoned or counted for righteousness, the righteousness of God, true and right.

He Found Righteousness Without Works (4-8)

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

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

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

7 Saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered.

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

They that work are paying a debt; that work is not being counted of grace. Grace has its own identity and does not come from man but from God.

Rom. 11:6 And if by grace, then [is it] no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if [it be] of works, then is it no

more grace: otherwise work is no more work.

So the message of the Gospel is to them who do not work, not to them who do work. We must not work but believe. Verse six says that the ungodly can be justified before God by faith in Jesus.

Even David describes how blessed a person is when God imputes righteousness to him without works, verses 7-8. See Psalm 32:1.

He Found Righteousness
Without Respect of Persons (9-12)

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

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

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

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

We have now established that faith was reckoned or imputed to Abraham for

righteousness, but was it imputed while he was in uncircumcision or circumcision? This is important to direct the type to the antitype. Abraham is the father of us all (Rom. 4:16).

If he had received the promise of righteousness in circumcision, then the Jews could say that the promise was to them as a nation; but since it was given to him in uncircumcision, they cannot say that.

Luke 3:8 *Bring forth therefore fruits worthy of repentance, and begin not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to [our] father: for I say unto you, That God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham.*

The Jews might have thought to bring up the subject of Abraham as their spiritual father, but John the Baptist headed them off the subject with his pre-emptive strike against their argument.

So faith and righteousness are without respect of persons. It is not just for the Jew but for the Gentile also. Abraham received the “sign” of circumcision, which was a seal of the righteousness of faith before he was circumcised to show that faith would be imputed, not to the Jew only, but also to the Gentile.

Verse 12 tells us, then, that he is the father of the Jews (circumcision) and the Gentiles, whom he calls here those “who also walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham, which he had being yet uncircumcised.”

He Found That Righteousness
Is Not Through The Law (13-16)

13 For the promise, that he should

be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith.

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

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

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

The promise given to Abraham that he as well as all of his seed of the world would have righteousness was given before circumcision so that he could be the “heir of the world” (13). See Gen. 17:4-5 for a reference to this promise. The world here points to Gentiles, the term “the world” used to designate Gentiles.

In verse 14 we see that, since the promise was made before circumcision, then the law cannot disannul that promise. If the law is the catalyst to a right relationship with God, then Abraham had no right relationship to God, because he did not live under the law.

If righteousness is by the law, then, this makes faith void or of no value at all. We could just eliminate faith and proceed to keep the law in order to receive the righteousness of God. The law is not our father, but Abraham is our spiritual father.

If righteousness comes by way of the

law, then the promise has no effect. The promise or Abraham has no significance, for it is of no value concerning righteousness. God had no purpose, then, in making a promise to Abraham.

If Abraham were saved by grace through faith, then every person who is made righteous unto God is saved by grace through faith. There is no different way. Why would God save one man by way of faith in Jesus Christ and save the rest by the works of the law?

Then of what purpose is the law? If we are saved by grace through faith, why is the law important?

Verse 15 tells us that the purpose of the law is to manifest God’s wrath. We are under the “curse” of the law:

Ga 3:13 Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed [is] every one that hangeth on a tree:

This curse is the condemnation of God’s wrath.

If there were no law, then there would be no transgression. Man would be left to live his life as his own depraved conscience directs him. He would not know that he is a sinner before an eternal and holy God. The law must exist for man to know that he is a sinner.

Rom. 7:7 What shall we say then? [Is] the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet.

In verse 16 we find that the conclusion, then, is that it is of faith; that is, the righteousness of God, that it might

be by grace.

Eph. 2:8 *For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: [it is] the gift of God:*

The promise must be sure, otherwise God would have given it in vain to Abraham. It must be sure to Abraham and also to his seed, his spiritual seed: all of who believe, to all the elect of God.

The surety of God's righteousness, then, is by grace through faith to everyone who believes, not to those who are circumcised or to those who keep the law.

This righteousness is not to the Jews only but also to the Gentiles (nations) who believe in Jesus Christ. Therefore, Abraham becomes the "father of us all."

He Found Hope In His Faith (17-25)

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

___The passage alluded to here is Gen. 17:4 in which God tells Abraham that he will be the father of many nations.

This promise was made by God and "before him." God is the One whom Abraham believed. God is the One who quickens or makes alive the dead.

He quickened the body of Abraham so that he and Sarah could have a child, and he quickens the soul of the believer

through faith in Jesus Christ. He also makes alive the promise he gave to his friend, Abraham.

God is also the One who calls things which are not as though they were. Abraham was not literally a father of many nations, but in God's sight he was.

Abraham's seed were not actually his seed, but in God's eyes they were. The future seed were not the children of God as yet, but they may as well be; because God calls them as though they are, even though they are not (at this time).

God called Abraham's body alive when indeed it was not, though God made it alive and also the body of his wife, Sarah.

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

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

No hope existed in Abraham that he might be the father of many nations nor that he and his wife, Sarah, would have a child; but through God he believed in a hope that was against hope.

Abraham was not weak in faith as many of us are. Notice what the Lord said about his own disciples:

Mr 4:40 *And he said unto them, Why are ye so fearful? how is it that ye have no faith?*

Mt 6:30 *Wherefore, if God so clothe the*

grass of the field, which to day is, and to morrow is cast into the oven, [shall he] not much more [clothe] you, O ye of little faith?

Abraham believed God, that his and his wife's bodies were now "not dead" for the conception of a child. He hoped against hope that he and Sarah would have a child. He hoped against hope, also, that he would be the father of many nations. Both of these promises have been proven to be so.

20 He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God;
21 And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform.
22 And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness.

The Greek word for "stagger" is DIAKRINO, and it has to do with separation. In other words, Abraham did not separate himself from God.

The word also has to do with doubt or even a conflict within your own mind. But Abraham did not have any doubt or any conflict. He did not "stagger" at God's promise, but was strong in faith. Therefore, he glorified God.

The faith of Abraham was so strong that it is described as "fully persuaded." He had not the least variance with God's promise.

Therefore, it was imputed or counted to him for righteousness. This is the kind of faith that saves a soul and gives full assurance of God's eternal promises.

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

24 But for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead;

This promise was not given only to Abraham but to everyone who believes that God raised Jesus up from the dead, having died for our sins and paid the eternal price for us, being our substitute.

This promise is imputed or accredited to those who believe.

25 Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.

Verse 25 scans the whole of the Gospel when it refers to the action of Jesus Christ which is the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

We find in 1 Cor. 15:1-4 that the Gospel includes the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Here we find that he was delivered (or "delivered up" into the hands of the wicked) for our offences (sins).

But, being delivered up for our sins, he also was raised again from the dead. He was actually and literally dead, and God raised him up.

Rom. 10:9 *That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.*

He was raised for our justification. That is, he was raised to verify that his

work on Calvary, the cross or Christ, was beneficial and active.

This Gospel was accomplished for those who believe. We see this from the word “our” in verse 25. If you do not have faith, it does not matter for whom Jesus died. He must have died for YOU. That is the most important thing. Salvation is a personal matter between a man and his God. Jesus is the only mediator between God and men. Faith in Jesus alone saves, and his resurrection verifies that this is so.

Romans 5:1-11

Lesson #12 on Romans
By Pastor Ronnie Wolfe

The Dividends of Justification (5:1-21)

Eight Eternal Benefits (5:1-11)

First Benefit - Peace With God (5:1)

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

Once again we are reminded that justification is by faith, a benefit that comes from God and not man. We have already seen that it is not by the law or by works.

Since we have been justified (made just before God), we have the first benefit of “peace with God.”

Now some make a difference between “peace with God” and “peace of God.” There may be some warrant in this, since the peace of God passes all understanding and is that peace which is our assurance that God has justified us and made reconciliation between us and himself.

The peace of God is that peace that rests between the believer and God in fellowship. That fellowship is sweet and assuring, but it can be hampered by our denial of surrender to his will and worship toward him.

We can have neither the peace of God or peace with God without justification, so they are both a benefit of justification by faith.

This peace comes “through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Joh 14:27 Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.

Second Benefit - Access Into Grace (5:2a)

2 By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand,

Notice, first, that we “stand” in grace. We do not fall into grace or fall out of grace; we stand IN grace.

Those who fall from grace are those who fall from it only in principle in not actually from grace itself. They lend themselves to the teachings of grace and even teach the principles themselves, but they tend to go away from grace, since grace is a divine attribute and not a human one. Those who fall from grace simply turn to another dimension of religious precedent than grace itself and by itself. Those in Christ do not fall out of grace, since they are sealed by the Holy Spirit.

Eph 4:30 And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.

Not only do we stand in this grace, but we have access into this grace in which we stand. That is, we may take advantage of this grace when needed. God has the grace for living and dying. We may use this grace by faith in him.

The Greek word PROSAGOGE here has the meaning of moving to something or approaching a thing. We have one example of this in the book of Hebrews.

Heb 4:16 *Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.*

Third Benefit - Rejoicing (5:2b)

and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

The word rejoice is found in one form or another about 70 times in the New Testament. There are some things, then, in which we should rejoice.

This verse brings out one very important thing in which we are to rejoice, and that is the future glory of God, that promise of eternal life, that coming place where many mansions are, that existence with God in his very presence where we shall never grow old and all suffering and sorrow is passed.

I am sure we do not rejoice enough in this blessed hope.

Fourth Benefit - Tribulations (5:3-4)

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

4 And patience, experience; and experience, hope:

We do not usually think of tribulations as a benefit, but Paul says here that we glory in them. The word glory here can actually mean to boast. We are not afraid of our tribulations, neither are we afraid to talk with one another about them and to deem them usual and ordinary for believers.

1 Peter 4:12 *Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you:*

The reasons we can glory in our tribulations is that we know that these work patience, experience and hope.

This brings us back to our rejoicing again, because we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. We know that this world is a passing one and that we are headed for a more permanent and eternal home.

Fifth Benefit - Love of God (5:5a)

5 And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts

We are not ashamed to announce this hope and boast of it, because we know that God's love is shed abroad in our hearts.

We love him because he first loved us; therefore, we are not ashamed of him or of his word. No wonder Paul said he was not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ.

Ro 1:16 *For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.*

Ro 9:33 *As it is written, Behold, I lay in Sion a stumblingstone and rock of offence: and whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.*

Sixth Benefit - The Holy Ghost (5:5b)

by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.

The Holy Ghost is given to us when we believe. We see this in this present scripture as it is a benefit of being justified by faith.

We also notice that a person is not justified without the Spirit of God.

Ro 8:9 But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.

We do not have to wait for the Holy Ghost after we are justified (saved), or we do not have to work for the coming of the Holy Spirit or pray for his dwelling presence. He dwells in every believer.

Ro 8:11 But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.

Reasons For The Aforementioned Benefits - Christ Died For Us (5: 6-8)

Paul takes a little break here from listing the benefits of being justified by faith and illustrates the reason why the benefits are possible.

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

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

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

Christ for the ungodly in a substitutionary way. He took our place on the cross and paid for our sins.

2 Cor 5:21 For he hath made him [to be] sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

Jesus Christ did this while we were yet sinners; because, if he had waited for us to be something else besides sinners, he would have had to wait an eternity. We are sinners for life and for eternity.

Verse seven (7) tells us that it is not very normal for a man to give his life for another, even for a good man. Someone may do it scarcely. He will not do it randomly or often.

But God showed his love to us in his offering of Jesus Christ for our sins. That is what John 3:16 is all about.

Seventh Benefit - Saved From God's Wrath (5:9-10)

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

10 For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.

Justified by faith does not mean that nothing substantiates that faith. It is the blood of Christ which substantiates the faith we have in Jesus, so we are justified

by his blood.

We are also justified or saved from his wrath. This wrath is God's wrath.

1 Thess. 1:10 *And to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, [even] Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come.*

When Jesus saved us, he saved from our iniquities, from this present evil world, and from the wrath of God to come in judgment upon the world.

We were his enemies in unbelief, but he reconciled us to God by Jesus' death. Now that we are saved by his life, not by our own works.

Gal. 3:3 *Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?*

Many today believe that a person can be saved by grace through faith but that they must continue in the flesh in order to escape the wrath of God that is to come.

2 Cor. 1:10 *Who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver: in whom we trust that he will yet deliver [us];*

Eighth Benefit - Joy in God

11 And not only [so], but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement.

Not only do we rejoice in our tribulations, but we rejoice (joy) in God through the Lord Jesus Christ.

The reason that we can rejoice in God is because Jesus has given to us the "atonement." This word is an old English word which has the meaning of "at-one-ment."

This is the same word as reconciliation in other passages, and the New Testament has a lot to say about this reconciliation.

Notice especially 2 Cor. Chapter Five.

In order to be reconciled, there must be a mediator, and Jesus Christ is that mediator.

1 Tim. 2:5 *For [there is] one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus;*

Since we have been reconciled unto God (atonement), we should enjoy God and serve God. Serving him is not a drudgery but a joy.

ILLUSTRATION

Men have pursued joy in every avenue imaginable. Some have successfully found it while others have not. Perhaps it would be easier to describe where joy cannot be found:

Not in Unbelief -- Voltaire was an infidel of the most pronounced type. He wrote: "I wish I had never been born."

Not in Pleasure -- Lord Byron lived a life of pleasure if anyone did. He wrote: "The worm, the canker, and grief are mine alone."

Not in Money -- Jay Gould, the American millionaire, had plenty of that. When dying, he said: "I suppose I am the most miserable man on earth."

Not in Position and Fame -- Lord Beaconsfield enjoyed more than his share of both. He wrote: "Youth is a mistake; manhood a struggle; old age a regret."

Not in Military Glory -- Alexander the Great conquered the known world in his day. Having done so, he wept in his tent, before he said, "There are no more worlds to conquer."

Romans 5:12-21

Lesson #13 of Romans
By Pastor Ronnie Wolfe

Dividends of Justification

The Reign of Death, 12-14

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

Death entered into heaven by Satan, but sin entered into the world by one man—Adam, which we see named in verse 14.

Sin was charged to Adam rather than Eve, because he was first made as the head and representative of the human race. We were all naturally and seminally in him in the beginning. When he sinned, he did so as our head, and we all have felt the repercussions from that.

Not only did sin enter into the world, but death entered, also, which means that there was no death nor any sense of death or possibility of death until sin had entered. Sin and death are joined together. One is the result of the other.

... the soul that sinneth, it shall die. Eze. 18:43

Rom. 6:23 For the wages of sin [is] death; but the gift of God [is] eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

So, then, death passed upon all men. Our first parent, Adam, sinned; and we all were affected by that sin. This means all men in number and all men in kind. We all have the same father, and we all

die alike.

Not only do we all die alike, but we all sin alike. All have sinned, and there is no exception to that.

Rom. 3:23 *For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;*

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

Paul in verse 13 brings up an objection probably in the minds of the Romans that there may not be any imputation of sin where the Mosaic law was not in force; but Paul here explains that there was a law in force before the Mosaic law, which we understand to be the Mosaic law by verse 14.

There was the law of nature, plus the law laid down to Adam when in the Garden of Eden telling him not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

There were also the laws of sacrifices and offerings that Adam taught his children from the direction of God. This was before the Mosaic law was in effect.

Paul establishes his argument by saying in the last part of verse 13 that sin is not imputed when there is no law, so a law must be present and in force before sin can be imputed, which was so with Adam and his posterity.

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

Even though there was no Mosaic law

before God gave it to Moses and executed it to Israel, death nonetheless reigned from Adam to Moses.

Death reigned over not just those who had actively and culpably sinned against God, but even to them who had not sinned after the "similitude" of Adam's transgression, those who had not sinned willfully and presumptuously. Many believe that this infers the very small children. It seems a shame that small children die. We despise their loss and sometimes blame God; but God is not the blame for this. Children have what is called "original sin" in them, though they are not held eternally responsible for that sin.

This could also intimate those who have not yet been born and have not sinned. They, too, are sinners, because they are the offspring of Adam; and since they sinned in Adam before they were ever born, the condemnation is effective to future generations.

Adam is the figure of him that was to come (Jesus Christ).

COMPARISON OF ADAM & JESUS

1. Both born miraculously, without the union of a mother and father.
2. Both were alike in their offices of Lord (Adam of the world; Jesus of all creation); Priest (Adam of his house; Jesus of all believers); Prophet to their prosperity; Marriage (Adam to his wife; Jesus to his church); and Head of all his offspring.

Although they were alike in all these areas, yet they were opposites in the sense that Adam brought sin and death to his offspring, yet Jesus brought life and

righteousness to his offspring, which we shall see in the following verses.

The Reign of Grace, 15-21

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

As the effect of the action of Adam flows in one direction, so the effect of the action of Jesus Christ flows in the opposite direction.

Adam's transgression flows in the direction of sin and death; the action of Jesus Christ flows in the direction of grace and the free gift.

If the offence or sin of one man (Adam) brings death to many, how much more shall the gift of grace through Jesus Christ abound to many.

Adam could give only an earthly life by his obedience, yet he abandoned that and instead gave death to all men.

But Jesus Christ gives more abundantly, because his grace gives life eternal, not the natural life that men would have if they had not sinned.

We have, then, much more in Christ than we would have in Adam even if he had not sinned.

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

The difference between Adam and Jesus Christ is here continued. By Adam's sin condemnation came upon all men.

But the free gift is not like this. The free gift is not simply for the sin of Adam in the beginning, but it is for the offences or sins of all his people unto justification.

So, there is a great difference in the condemnation brought by Adam and the justification brought by Jesus Christ. We see more detail on this as we progress through this book.

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

Notice here that death is alluded to as a great and horrible king reigning over its victims. This was due to one man's offence or sin.

Death in the fleshly body reigns, because it comes upon everyone and is appointed to everyone through the sin of one man, Adam. But not only so, death reigns in the soul and is eternal to those who are of Adam's offspring because of his one sin. Death reigns by one man, Adam.

Yet "much more" the abundance of grace is apparent and the gift of righteousness in those who are the offspring of the one man, Jesus Christ. The abundance of grace and the gift of righteousness are the same, our righteousness being not our own nor righteousness given to us by God infused into us to use on our own, but the gift of righteousness imputed unto us by Christ, for it is his righteousness, not ours.

We who are made righteousness are partakers of the reign of righteousness, which reigns by Jesus Christ.

Certainly we must die due to Adam's sin, but we shall overcome that death in the resurrection. But through the reign of righteousness in us through Jesus Christ, we have a life eternal in the spirit with Jesus Christ, for it is his own righteousness which will sustain us throughout eternity. We are in debt eternally to his righteousness.

18 Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life.

The repetition is almost redundant here, but nothing is actually redundant in the Bible; so we must take especial notice of this.

The offence of one (Adam) came upon all men, or all people, to condemnation. That is, all men related to Adam are condemned by his one sin and by the one man.

Even so by the righteousness of one (Jesus Christ) the free gift came to everyone who is related to Jesus Christ unto justification of life.

Notice the chart entitled "In Adam All Die - In Christ All Made Alive." This is also in reference to 2 Cor. 5:17 & 1 Cor. 15:22.

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

Now Paul changes the subject to disobedience versus obedience. Because Adam disobeyed, many are sinners. Because Jesus Christ obeyed, many shall be made righteous.

It is not because we obeyed that we are made righteous; it is because Jesus obeyed his Father's will and gave himself a ransom for many.

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

The law of Moses entered many years after Adam had lived and died. The reason for the law of Moses was to show the horrible nature and magnitude of sin.

This it did, and men were accounted to be much greater sinners than they ever had thought they were. Even Israel, to whom the law was given, complained about the sternness of the law.

Sin had abounded throughout the ages from Adam to Moses. A casual reading of the sacred scriptures will account for that. Yet, where sin abounded, grace did much more abound. No matter how far down into sin the sinner went, the grace of God was sufficient to abound beyond it. It is still true today.

By grace we turn from our abounding sin to an abounding service to Jesus Christ.

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

Sin is by the Jews, I understand,

referred to as a king. It has a dominion over every person. This dominion is by way of Adam's transgression and unto death. All must die because of sin.

But then grace reigns through righteousness, which means that grace is not a passive and reclusive attribute which abides in us without any action. Grace reigns through righteousness. Yes, this is the righteousness of Jesus Christ as an attribute, but it is also implied here that righteousness is goodness to action on our part as the righteousness of Jesus Christ works in our lives to make us servants of his.

Grace reigns unto eternal life by Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ expressed and executed his righteousness through his obedience to the Father in dying on the cross for our sins.

Notice the verb forms in verse 21. Notice it says that "sin HATH reigned unto death." We were all under the curse of eternal death until such time as the grace of God was active in our lives and brought us to repentance and faith in Jesus Christ.

Notice the verse says "so MIGHT grace reign" That is, after death has been put to death, grace will reign. That is future. The believer is assured through the reign of grace in his life unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.

Obedience to him is also implied in the word Lord. He is our Lord, and we should and must be obedient to him.

Romans 6:1-23

Lesson #14 of Romans
By Pastor Ronnie Wolfe

Justification's Rejection of sin

Baptism a Symbol of a New Life, 6:1-4

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

Paul continues here on the doctrine of justification, because there is a mental charge against this doctrine given even as there is the same charge given today.

If grace does indeed reign in us, then do we have a license to sin? Shall we continue in sin because we are justified completely by God's grace without the works of the law?

Baptists have been falsely charged that we teach such a thing, but Baptists have never been known to teach this. If ever one did, I do not know about it nor have heard about it in any way. There are those who call themselves Baptists, I know, who believe in the antinomian doctrine; but these are not historical Baptists. They are "new light" Baptists and do not belong to the true followers of the doctrines of Christ.

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

Paul's answer is quick and ready. He says "God forbid." The reason that the answer is a resounding "no" is because that we are dead to sin.

Eph 2:1 *And you [hath he quickened], who were dead in trespasses and sins;*

We have been made alive from the dead, the death of trespasses and sins. Paul asks the question why we should continue in sin when we are dead to it, and we no longer live in sin or in the ways of sins, the tendencies of sin, under the leadership of sin and in the course of sin in which we lived before we were made anew by his Spirit.

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

Paul assumes that everyone he is instructing here has been baptized by water, which is a symbolism of the teaching he has been delineating here.

Baptism is an act which impressed upon the believer the truth of justification by faith. It does not imply nor indicate in any way that water baptism can save a soul or justify anyone. Baptism is a figure of this justification, not the catalyst of this justification.

We were baptized "into" Jesus Christ, meaning that we were baptized in relationship to Jesus Christ. We were not put into Christ by baptism; we were associated with him in obedience in baptism.

We were also baptized "into" his death, meaning that we were baptized in relationship to his death. We were not baptized to bring us into the Kingdom of God, but we were baptized to associate ourselves in a public way with the death of Jesus Christ, for it was his death that made our justification possible.

Ro 5:8-9 *But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. 9 Much more*

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

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

Everyone who has been baptized in water has been buried with Jesus Christ, for this burial with Jesus Christ is a prerequisite to water baptism. We are symbolically buried in the water to symbolize our death in Jesus Christ.

Jesus Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, which means that Jesus' resurrection gave glory to his Father, that it was done completely in his Father's will and that it accomplished its goal. God is satisfied with the completion of this plan of salvation.

The resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead is symbolized in our water baptism, and it should encourage us to live in newness of life, because we are now dead to sin and alive unto God. We are no longer under the power of dreaded sin as we were when we were dead in our sins. We now have the ability to live for God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

So we reject sin through justification by faith in Jesus Christ and his blood, this justification having brought us to a new life in Jesus Christ, a life from which we should not fall back to entertain the world's lures.

Paul will deal with this again later in this book.

Planted and Raised in Christ, 6:5-14

5 For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection:

How were we planted together in the likeness of his death? The words "planted together" are from one Greek word meaning "to be born together, to be brought up together, to be begotten together." The word is translated "sprung up" in Luke 8:6.

1 Cor. 12:13 *For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether [we be] Jews or Gentiles, whether [we be] bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.*

We have all sprung up together by way of the death of Jesus Christ. We are all together with Christ in his Kingdom.

We have the benefit of a new life, and it comes because we have a togetherness or a connection with Jesus Christ in his death. He died a spiritual death; we must die a physical death.

If we have a connection with him in his death, being justified by faith in his death, burial and resurrection, then we have a like connection with his resurrection.

We have died to sin as he died for our sins; now we must live for him, being resurrected from the dead in a spiritual sense.

(Eph. 2:1).

We also have a connection with his resurrection in that we will also have a resurrection of the body in like manner as he did when he came forth from the

grave.

Ro 8:23 *And not only [they], but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, [to wit], the redemption of our body.*

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

It is not our body that has been crucified with Jesus Christ; it is our “old man.” This is the embodiment of the nature and tendencies of sin that is our innate nature. This Jesus died to crucify, and he did so for us.

The body of sin is that old nature which dwells with us even after we have been born again by God’s grace. It is called a “body” in the same sense that law is called “the body of law.” This is also called the “body of death” in Romans 7:24.

This body of sin must be destroyed so that we might not be under its bondage – “should not serve sin.”

7 For he that is dead is freed from sin.

We are dead from our sins, since Jesus Christ died for our sins, and we have been buried with him in baptism and have received a new life from him. Our old life is of no great consequence to us. It has no more dominion over us. We are freed from sin, or the dominion or rule of it. It has no more power to condemn us.

The allusion of physical may be meant

here, that a man who is dead is not under the authority of worldly magistrates and kings. He is freed from the world’s authority and the bonds of the flesh. So, we are freed from the bonds of sin and need not serve sin.

8 Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him:

Jesus Christ was dead and is now alive fore evermore.

Rev. 1:18 *I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death.*

Yes, we are dead with Christ. We died in him when he died on the cross. We resurrected with him unto new life when he resurrected from the dead.

We shall also live with him in the same eternal life that he now possesses and owns as its Creator and bestower.

Thus, we shall live forever because of our death in him and our life in him as it dwells in us through his own grace and mercy.

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

This is a summation of what Paul has just said. We know that Jesus Christ was raised from the dead and that he dies no more and that death has no more dominion over him.

This assumes, and rightly so, that death has no more dominion over us,

neither physical nor spiritual death. Our death in the flesh is just a shadow and a passing to a better life. Eternal death has been done away in Jesus Christ. We have no more worry or doubt concerning death. The more we learn about death and life from God's word, the more assured we are in Jesus Christ.

10 For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God.

Paul continues here to speak in comparisons. In that Jesus died, he died unto sin only once, for he dealt a death-blow to death and brought life and immortality to light by the Gospel (2 Tim. 1:10).

He died unto sin. That means that the subject and purpose of his death was to kill sin, and he did with one death, because he had no sin of his own but died for the sins of his people, specifically and purposefully.

Now he lives unto God in Heaven as our mediator and our expectant Deliverer from this evil world unto a place of many mansions and glorious, eternal existence with God, whom we shall see with our own eyes.

Job 19:26 And though after my skin worms destroy this [body], yet in my flesh shall I see God:

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

Believers are to consider or "reckon" themselves to be in two conditions:

(1) They are to believe and consider and reckon themselves to be dead indeed unto sin. If we do not consider ourselves dead to sin, then we will allow sin to take an advantage of us and cause us to serve the world rather than Jesus Christ and his Father.

(2) They are to believe and consider and reckon themselves to be alive unto God, but that only Jesus Christ.

If we will keep these two thoughts in our minds, then we will not consider sin so wonderful and beautiful or carelessly become engaged in its performance, but we shall be ever ready to serve Christ and forsake sin.

This is the whole life of Christian.

Ec 12:13 Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this [is] the whole [duty] of man.

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

To emphasize the force of his previous thoughts, Paul continues with the remarks here. If we do not do as he instructs us, then we shall allow sin to reign in our mortal bodies.

Sin cannot reign in our soul, because it has been eradicate; but it can subordinate our bodies and make slaves of our bodies if we let it. There are consequences to that, we know.

We should not obey sin. It is not our master.

Mt 6:24 No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and

despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.

13 Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.

We are not, then, to give over or yield our members as instruments of unrighteousness. These members are the faculties of our bodies, the mind, the hands, the feet, the eyes, our talents, even our money and possessions. If we yield our members to unrighteousness, then we are committing sin.

We are, rather, to yield our ourselves, our mind, body, spirits to God as being alive from the dead, dead in sin. First, we yield ourselves, then we yield our members or instruments.

Hebrew linguists say the word “instruments” is a word that designates weapons of war. In other words, we are to fight in the right battle—God’s battle, not ours or the world’s.

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

This verse does not say that sin shall not influence you, ensnare you, entice you and take you captive, but it does say that sin shall not have rule over you. It cannot govern you or have reign over you to drag you down to hell as a result of your sin.

If we were under the law, sin would have reign and dominion over us; because the law is strict, and we cannot attain to

its demands; but we are not under the law but under grace.

Grace now has dominion and reigns in our lives. Sin can no longer condemn us; grace has far abounded to the glory of God.

Of Whom Are We Servants, 6:14-23

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

Certainly we are free from the law, oh happy condition, but that does not mean that we are free from sin.

1 John 1:8 *If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.*

Therefore, we are not to sin. The directive is to every believer. God forbid that we should sin, because we are his servants.

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

If we sin, then we are servants of sin and are obedient to sin and unrighteousness. If we are obedient to righteousness, then we are the servants of righteousness.

17 But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of

doctrine which was delivered you.

When we were unregenerated, we were servants of sin, but we have obeyed the Gospel (that doctrine which was delivered you).

Rom. 10:16 *But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report?*

How do we obey the Gospel? We obey the Gospel by believing it.

Mark 1:15 *And saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel.*

Notice that we are to be thankful that we WERE the servants of sin. We are no longer servants of sin but of Christ.

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

So we are now servants of righteousness, because we have been made, through the Gospel, free from sin, but not sin itself but the dominion of sin. Sin has no dominion over us, so we can feel free and assured as we devote our lives to our Master.

19 I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh: for as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness.

Paul here speaks as a man to bring

forth an argument that is not angelic or heavenly. This argument is reasonable and rational. He speaks to men as men. Serving the Lord is our reasonable service.

Rom. 12:1 *I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, [which is] your reasonable service.*

As we have given our members over to sin and have served sin so willfully and so faithfully, so must we now, since our salvation, yield our members to righteousness to bring holiness in our lives.

1 Peter 1:16 *Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy.*

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

When we were lost in our sins, we were servants of sin and, therefore, free from righteousness.

This is the reason that a person cannot be saved by his own righteousness. He has no righteousness of his own. He is free from righteousness.

Neither can a person come to righteousness on his own, but he must be regenerated by God's grace. This is the new birth wherein we receive the merit of Christ's righteousness that brings eternal life.

21 What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things is death.

Therefore, we had no fruit in our lost and unrighteous condition. We could not give any honor to God with out works.

When we were saved, then we were ashamed of our former life, and now we know that the end of those things is death, eternal death as well as physical death.

Now we are free from both eternal death and the horror of physical death, because our life is hid in Christ.

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

But now we are saved, born again, regenerated. We have a new life in Christ. We are now servants of God and can now bring fruit unto holiness.

Why should we live as though we were in our past unrighteous life when we can now live unto God and serve him. There is so much joy in serving God that we should not seek or even think of our previous life.

We also have eternal life. Knowing this should make us faithful believers in Jesus Christ. It should lead us on to faithfulness and dedication in his service.

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

In this final verse Paul brings the whole argument into agreement with the truth of his proposition.

In sin there is death, because sin brings about death.

James 1:15 *Then when lust hath*

conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.

Death is the only product of our past life. This is the only wages that we can attain through our earthly life.

But the gift of God has given us eternal life. This life is the result of the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ through faith in him.

Whose servants are we? Are we servants of sin, or are we servants of righteousness in Jesus Christ. Do we serve God or mammon?

This chapter should grant us the incentive to be better servants of our Lord, for to be carnally minded is death,

Rom. 8:6 *For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.*

Romans 7:1-25

Lesson #15 of Romans
By Pastor Ronnie Wolfe

Justification's Deliverance From the Law (7:1-8:16)

Dominion of the Law (7:1-6)

The Maxim (1)

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

The Example (2-3)

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

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

The Spiritual Application (4-6)

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

We are dead to the law in that

Christ has condemned sin in the flesh.

Rom. 8:3 *For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh:*

Jesus Christ condemned sin within his own body.

1 Pet. 2:24 *Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.*

5 For when we were in the flesh, the motions¹ of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death.

¹emotions

We were in the flesh when we were in our unregenerated state, when we were lost and without Jesus Christ.

During that time, the movements, the passions and emotions of sin worked in our members to bring forth fruit unto death.

The passions or motions were by the law. That is, these passions were aggravated by the demands of the law, which is not fault of the law but of our own depravity.

But, though the law pressed against these passions, they nonetheless worked in our members to bring forth fruit unto death. See James 1:13-15.

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

oldness of the letter.

Through Jesus Christ we are delivered. The word for DELIVERED means to destroy the force of a thing.

We are delivered from the force of the law, from its repudiation of our actions, from its curse unto death, but not to obedience of it.

“That being dead” means that the law is dead now wherein we were held under bondage for so long, having a condemnation to us because of our sins.

We had to become dead to the law and the law to us in order that we might serve the Lord, not that we can live any longer in sins and be delivered from it without a change in our lives.

We must serve in the newness of the Spirit of God, under the influence and leadership of the Spirit of God. We do not serve under the oldness of the letter, the outward keeping of the Mosaic law with its ceremonies, offerings and the like.

The Need For the Law (7:7-13)

Is The Law Sin? (7-8)

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

Paul here takes up a proposed objection to his reasoning that, if the motions of sins are by the law, then the law must be sin.

He objects to the objection by again reminding us of the reason for the law. By the law is the knowledge of sin.

Ro 3:20 *Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law [is] the knowledge of sin.*

Paul would not have known lust if the law had not said, “Thou shalt not covet” (Exodus 20:17).

8 But sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence. For without the law sin was dead.

This sin is indwelling of sin in the unregenerated heart. This sin took occasion by the commandment; that is, sin sprang from the commandment of God into emotions or passions of lusts. The word “occasion” refers to a place from which an attack is made.

Although Paul knew the law from a child, in his unregenerated state, he sprang from that law to lust and passions of sin, disregarded the spiritual nature of the law and obeyed his own lusts.

Without the law, or Paul’s understanding of the spiritual nature of the law and the light of God’s Holy Spirit, sin was dead to Paul. He had no knowledge of it.

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

In infancy, when children cannot discern between good and evil, Paul was alive without the law. He was not yet condemned by the law, had not any

worries about it, and rightly so; for the law does not condemn infants.

But when he was at a mental age to discern, then the commandment came unto him, sin revived and he died. He was no longer innocent before God but was held responsible for God's law. He died in sin and came into a need for regeneration.

10 And the commandment, which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death.

The law to Adam was ordained to life if it were completely obeyed, but Adam did not obey the law. The Mosaic law was ordained to life for Israel if it were completely obeyed, but it was not completely obeyed, so it was found to be unto death.

2 Cor. 3:6 Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life.

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

The metaphor given here is of a robber who leads a man away from the crowd in order to rob him and murder him.

Sin does that to the unregenerate. It launches from the law (the commandment), making the sinner think that he is keeping the law of God; then sin slays him, and he dies in sin.

12 Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just,

and good.

So now the law stands holy and the commandment holy, just and good; because it is not the cause of our sin.

There is nothing wrong with the law. It is our depravity and our weakness that is the cause of our breaking of God's law.

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

The law was not made death. The law does not kill, although it is the catalyst to death, because our sin is the breaking of the law of God.

So, the law is not made death unto us. It is sin that kills. The law works death in us or judges us concerning death, condemns us in our sin that we might know the exceeding sinfulness of sin, which we did not know before the law became apparent in us.

The Two Natures (7:14-25)

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

Yes, the law of God is spiritual. It comes from the Spirit of God and is sent to the spirit of man.

Rom. 8:16 The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:

The law of Christ is spiritual, because it must be obeyed in the spirit, and we are to send up a spiritual sacrifice of praise to him in our worship.

Paul says, also, that the law is opposed to him, because he is carnal and sold under sin.

Paul us speaking of himself as a saved person, because he speak in the present tense. He is in a battle, as we shall see, with himself and the law of God. He is saved, but he is in a battle between the inward and outward man.

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

Paul explains his predicament further here in verse 15. Paul does not here admit of committing horrible crimes, because even when he was lost he was an outwardly moral person, not a vile person.

Paul is saying that, although he is saved by the grace of God, yet there is a part of him which lusts after the things of the world, and his inward man does not desire this, although his outward man does.

The word “allow” is from the Greek word GINOSKO “to know.” Sometimes Paul did things that he was insensitive to as fare as their being wrong.

He puts this in the negative as well as the positive. What he would, that he does not do. Sometimes what he does, he hates. To the saved, sin is to be hated. Paul hated when he sinned. He did not make excuses for sin; he did not want to continue in sin. He hated it.

This is the nature of the generated man.

16 If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good.

So, if I actually hate sin, and the law condemns the very thing that I hate, I must admit that it is good.

We should be lovers of the law, because it condemns the very things that we condemn. God’s grace has brought us into agreement with his law, and we are amiable toward it.

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

Paul said in 1Co 15:10 *But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which [was bestowed] upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.*

If I hate what I do that is sin, it is not my spiritual nature that does it but sin that still dwells in me.

Paul is what he is, a new man with a new nature, by the grace of God; and this man cannot sin (I John 3:9).

We all shall have this indwelling old nature as long as we have this body, until this body and mind is changed by the resurrection promised to us by Jesus Christ (John 6:39-44).

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

Speaking of this old man or old nature, Paul admits that there is no good thing in it.

The will to do good is present in the inward man, but how to perform that which is good is not in himself as a human, carnal man, which destroys any effort on man's part to please God in the flesh.

19 For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do.

20 Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.

This verse is simply a summary of what Paul has already said. He wanted to be perfect in his obedience to God, but he could not because of his flesh. He was continually noticing that he was doing the wrong things and not doing the right things. This is sin that remains in each of us after we are born again, and as we read in

1 John 1:8 *If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.*

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

This is indwelling sin, the old nature that does not leave when we are saved by grace. The Holy Spirit is always present, but evil is also present in these present bodies. So, when we want to that which is good, evil is always there

to coerce us to do the evil or to refrain from doing the good.

22 For I delight in the law of God after the inward man:

The law is no longer an evil and disagreeable thing; it is a delight.

Psalm 40:8 *I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law [is] within my heart.*

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

This is the law that directs the members of our body. This law of the old nature wars against the law of the mind, the mental action of the Spirit of God on our minds when we are saved by God's grace.

The law in our members brings us into captivity to the law of sin which is in our members. We as believers have a problem with sin. We are not immune to it. We are susceptible to being drawn away by sin.

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

So Paul cried out for deliverance from this body which has an indwelling sin, because he wants to serve the Lord completely. He needs someone to deliver him from this carnal mind and body before he can do that.

This “is to him like that punishment Mezentius inflicted on criminals, by fastening a living body to a putrid carcass.” (Gill)

25 I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.

Now he is thankful that he has found a Deliverer. This Deliverer is Jesus Christ.

Paul is guaranteed of this deliverance and, therefore, thanks God in advance of it that he will be delivered through Jesus Christ.

Paul has had a change of mind, which is the meaning of repentance; so with this new mind he serves the law of God. He has been renewed in his mind. This speaks of the new birth and the inward man which is put on by grace through faith in Jesus Christ.

In Paul’s dichotomy he speaks not only of the mind but also the flesh. The flesh is still alive, and the flesh desires the things of the world. With his flesh Paul serves the law of sin.

Every regenerate person has two natures, the one of the mind and the other of the flesh.

Eph 4:24 And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.

Col 3:10 And have put on the new [man], which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him:

Romans 8:1-16
Lesson #16 of Romans
By Ronnie Wolfe

**Justification's Deliverance From
The Law**

(7:1 - 8:16)

Introduction

Chapter seven had to do with our indwelling sin. Even though we are saved by the grace of God, we still have indwelling sin. It will be with us until we are delivered from it in the resurrection.

Chapter eight has to do with the indwelling of the Spirit of God. Although we do have indwelling sin, we do not have guilt of sin; because Jesus Christ paid for our sins on the cross. So, we begin with verse one, which says:

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

The word therefore in verse one indicates that the purpose given here for our relationship with Christ is based upon what has already been said. Chapter seven told us that we have a new man within us which guides our conscience to do what God wants us to do. Because of the Spirit of Christ which makes this new man, we have benefits. Let's notice what this Spirit does.

**We Are Indwelt By
The Spirit of God, 1-11**

The word condemnation means judgment. Because of the work of God in us as we have seen in chapter seven, there is NOW no condemnation. There is no judgment. We will never stand in judgment of our sins, because our sins were judged in Jesus Christ when he died on the cross.

1 Peter 2:24 *Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.*

We who are in Christ walk not after the flesh as the old man does, but we walk after the Spirit. We follow after the Spirit of God as we read his word and surrender our lives to him.

John 10:27 *My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me:*

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

Referring back to Romans 7:1-4, Paul says that the death to the law makes us free from the law of sin and death. This is replaced by the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus.

We are free from the law so that we can live a new life, not a life that is dominated and suppressed by the law. We do not have to sin, a some would say. In fact, the Bible says:

Ps 4:4 *Stand in awe, and sin not: commune with your own heart upon your bed, and be still. Selah.*

1Co 15:34 *Awake to righteousness, and sin not; for some have not the knowledge of God: I speak [this] to your shame.*

Eph 4:26 *Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath:*

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

What could not law not do?

Ga 3:11 *But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, [it is] evident: for, The just shall live by faith.*

The law cannot justify. It cannot make us right before a holy God.

Ga 3:21 *[Is] the law then against the promises of God? God forbid: for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law.*

The law cannot give life. If so, then all we would need do is keep that law that gives life, and we could be saved.

4 That the righteousness of the law

might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

The righteousness of the law is complete and full righteousness as the moral requires in each one of us. This cannot be accomplished by the flesh, for we are weak; therefore, the law is weak through the flesh.

This righteousness, though it cannot be fulfilled in our own being, it could and was accomplished in the life of Jesus Christ. So, Christ not only died for us; he also lived for us. His perfect life and his perfect death were imputed to us. This imputation is that righteousness' being fulfilled in us. Therefore, we walk not after the flesh (after the law) for our salvation, but after the Spirit for our salvation and our life in service to the Savior.

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

The reason that we must be saved by Jesus' righteousness to the law is that we are flesh, and nothing can be accomplished toward true righteousness through the flesh.

Ro 8:8 *So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.*

So, if we are in the flesh, we tend toward the things of the flesh, which is only natural, but it is also predictable and inevitable.

But if we are "after" the Spirit, we tend toward spiritual things. That new

man in us will lean toward the righteousness of Jesus Christ; therefore, righteousness becomes active in us. It is not only imputed at salvation, but it is also imparted as we lean toward the Spirit of life in Jesus Christ.

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

Yet another comparison is given here between the flesh and the Spirit. In the flesh we are carnally minded, and that leads to death. Death to those who are not saved will be eternal death. Death to the believer who has a carnal mind is death to truth, to comfort and security in his mind, and even physical death, as sin always brings about death—the death of the body in this case.

But to be spiritually minded brings a life of peace, one that has comfort and security in all kinds of conditions, and a looking forward to a new body and an inheritance given to by God through his Son, Jesus Christ.

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

Now Paul goes even deeper into the argument concerning the carnal mind by expressing that this carnal mind is enmity against God. Then he explains what that means when he said that the carnal mind is not subject (or submitted) to the law of God. It is not the nature of the carnal mind to find

and respect and serve God. Neither can it be subject to God's law. In other words, it cannot bring itself on its own where it will surrender to the law of God. Our mind is depraved and remains such until the Spirit of God gives life.

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

No comment is needed here, because the verse is self-explanatory. We cannot please God in this flesh, so we must be regenerated, born again, a brought to new life in Jesus Christ before we can please God.

Heb 11:6 But without faith [it is] impossible to please [him]: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and [that] he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

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

As born in Christ through regeneration, we are not in the flesh, although the flesh remains, as we have studied in Chapter 7. If the Spirit of God dwells in us, we are not in the flesh to depend upon the flesh to approach God nor to please God. We must be indwelt with the Holy Spirit.

If, therefore, we do not have the Spirit of Christ (Jesus), we do not belong to him. The indwelling of the

Spirit of God is essential to having any spiritual knowledge or service in any spiritual capacity.

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

Being indwelt with the Spirit of Christ, elsewhere connoted as the Spirit of the Father (see verse 11), yet leaves our bodies (fleshly bodies) dead. When the Lord saves us, he does not regenerate our bodies, but he leaves them to die, since that is far better.

Ps 116:15 Precious in the sight of the LORD [is] the death of his saints.

Rather, life is given to our souls and spirits, that we might experience true righteousness. The Spirit (of God) is life. We see here Jesus and the Spirit as the same, since Joh 14:6 says, *Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.*

John 1:4 In him was life; and the life was the light of men.

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

The is the Spirit of God the Father.

It is also the Spirit of Christ (verse 9). If that Spirit dwell in us, the Father shall quicken (make alive) these mortal bodies the this same Spirit that dwells in us.

Yes, he leaves these bodies to die in the flesh, but he promises to resurrect them. This he will do in good time when he is ready. Read 1 Corinthians Chapter 15 for more detail on this physical resurrection.

We Are Led By
The Spirit of God, 12-16

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

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

Being indwelt by the Spirit of Christ, we are debtors to live after the Spirit and to mortify (kill) the deeds of the body and live for Jesus Christ.

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

Now, we are not only indwelt with the Spirit of God, but we are also led by the Spirit of God. This designates that we are genuinely and clearly the sons of God.

Joh 16:13 Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but

whatsoever he shall hear, [that] shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.

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

When we are saved, we do not receive the same spirit of fear that we had when we were unregenerate. We receive a new Spirit, one of adoption, realizing that God has chosen us for his own and has adopted us to be his own.

This grace of adoption precedes at least logically the grace of regeneration. When we are regenerated, that act of regeneration relates to us God's choice in us just as if you had gone to an orphanage and chosen to adopt a child, God chose us out of the world.

Therefore, we cry out "Aba, Father." These two words make up an interesting title. The word Abba is an Aramaic word, and it is a word meaning "my Father" which, according to Jewish writers, could not be used by slaves but had to be used only by freemen. This cry is a cry of joy or release now knowing that we have been made free by the Spirit of God.

The word Father here is a Greek word, the language used by the Jews at this time. So here we see the adoption of the sons of God both from the Jews and the Gentiles.

It is said that the word ABBA is the same forward and backward. This is said to indicate that he is our Father in good times and in bad times.

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

Now the comfort and assurance of the regeneration of a man comes through the Spirit of God bearing witness with our human spirit. That is the essence of the knowledge of our salvation. We know that we are the children of God by this. We feel and know that freedom of spirit that we are no longer to fear but to be thankful and comforted by his Spirit which is evident to us.

Romans 8:17-37
Lesson #17 of Romans
By Pastor Ronnie Wolfe

Justification's Patience (17-37)

Groanings For The Future, 17-25

In this section of scripture we shall find the patience of the saints as they await their redemption not only spiritually by physically, which God has promised to them.

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

Being now adopted into the family of God, we become heirs of his, heirs of all that he has promised to his children. This we must be patient for.

1 Peter 1:4 *To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, 5 Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.*

We are not only heirs of God, but we are joint-heirs of Jesus Christ, which makes him our brother.

Now we suffer with him, not only in his death on the cross, since that was vicarious for each of us, but also in our lives. Notice:

Php 1:29 *For unto you it is given*

in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake;

If we are not willing to suffer with Christ, then how can we be sure that we are indwelt with his Spirit?

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

The word reckon comes from our word for "logic." It has to do with thinking or figuring something out. It also means to infer.

Paul thinks, or infers, that the sufferings of this lifetime cannot be compared with the glory that we will have when Jesus comes back or when we are taken to heaven through death.

1 Cor. 2:9 *But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.*

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

Not only do the children of God wait for the inheritance of God, but the creation wait as well. They wait for the original manifestation of God's sons in regeneration, for before that time they were not known except in the mind of God. Then they wait for the ultimate manifestation of the sons of God when

our bodies are made new and we are in our new bodies and in our final abode with Jesus Christ.

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

The creation (creature), both animate and inanimate, was made subject to vanity. They were made subject to vanity by the influence of the Devil (“by reason of him”) in our parents, Adam and Eve.

The creation was not willingly made subject, though they willingly, at least depraved man, participated in idolatry and other sins.

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

The creation (creature) itself, the creation of all things, including animate and inanimate, will be delivered from the bondage of the corruption of the world when the Lord makes all things new, and they will enjoy this because of the glorious liberty of the children of God.

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

The whole creation groans in pain, waiting for this deliverance. Many specifics about this deliverance we do not know, and many guesses have been made, but we will leave that for a more

thorough study on these verses.

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

But not only does the creation groan, which designates the world without Christ. We who are saved, since we have not been completely redeemed, also groan within ourselves, waiting for the redemption of the body, this body of flesh that keeps hindering our service to the Savior.

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

This word hope (ELPIS) means “expectation.” We are saved with expectation of something better than what we have in this life.

Hope that is seen, or expectation that is seen, is not expected, is it? So, why would we groan for things that we now have and can see with our eyes?

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

We hope (or expect) that which we cannot see, so we have patience to wait for it. It is not now experienced; it is expected in the future. This is the patience of the saints of God, waiting for that redemption that is yet to come.

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

Without the intercession of the Spirit of God we cannot pray. Praying is not a carnal exercise but a spiritual passion and one of faith whereby we rely upon the Spirit of God to predict our desires, wants and needs and, with groanings that cannot be uttered, express to the throne of God in his language the essence of our prayers. This is needful and wonderful on his part.

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

To know the heart of man is God's office. We cannot know our own spirit in a complete way, and no other man can know our heart completely.

God know the mind of the Spirit. Whether this is speaking of the spirit of man or the Spirit of God is debatable, but it does not matter. God knows both.

The Spirit makes intercession only for the saints, not for the world at large or to the lost world or the wicked. He does this, of course, according to the will of God. This speaks, then, of the Spirit being in perfect harmony with God, and he is a third part of the Trinity, which we will no consider in detail at this

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

This verse works as a conjunction linking the previous verses (26-27) with the following. The verse makes an incredible statement concerning the purpose of God.

First, it states that "we know," which is above the theology of many denominations today. Some say that no one can know anything spiritual, especially of salvation; others say they can know but only for a time.

Second, the verse speaks of "all things," which shows the scope of the purpose of God. All things work together for good to us who are his saints (the called).

Third, "according to his purpose" is a phrase that relates both to the called of God, who are called according to his purpose, and to the "all things" working together for good. Notice Eph. 1:11.

In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will:

29 ¶ For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn

among many brethren.

Now the apostle Paul takes up the reason why everything works together for good. It is because God does everything. Nothing is left to man to accomplish regarding his salvation or security.

He begins with “foreknowledge,” that knowledge of God beforehand of the children of God, his saints, who are foreknown in the sense that his affections were set upon them before the world began. This cannot be prescience; otherwise, everyone would be predestinated to be conformed to the image of his Son. This is a special foreknowledge of God’s love and care, mercy and grace being directed toward a certain people on the earth who will hear his message and believe upon him and be conformed to the image of Jesus Christ. Jesus is the firstborn among these believers called “brethren.”

30 **Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.**\

Finished the discussion of the work of God in the believer, Paul links together the separate graces that befall all of God’s elect.

They are first in logic foreknown; then they are predestinated. Then they are called, then justified (saved), and then glorified.

There is no break in this logical chain. The work of God is working all things for our good. Once we were

foreknown, then we must be taken through the consequent steps all the way to glorification.

Now, looking backward at these graces, we see a quite different viewpoint and realize the depth of the grace and love of God in choosing us to himself. Think of it in this way: Who are glorified? Only those who are justified. Who are justified? Only those who are called. Who are called? Only those who are predestinated. Who are predestinated? Only those who are foreknown.

This characterizes the very nature of God and his purpose for us. These steps must be and will be taken by the just God to work our his purpose perfectly.

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

Then what is the lesson we learn from this theological delineation? Well, it is that “If God be for us, who can be against us?” The answer is a resounding “no one,” God has done all the work, so no man can break what God has done. This is a very good expression to keep in mind as a believer to give assurance to the heart.

32 **He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?**

If salvation and the whole purpose of God begins and ends with him, then why cannot we expect that it is all a gift of God?

God did not spare his Son, but instead he delivered him up for us all. Who are the “all” in this verse? Verse 33 tells us that it is “God’s elect.”

God, then, will gift us “freely,” as a gift, all things; that is, he will make all things work together for our good. When it is all said and done, and earth and sky are no more, we will know how he has worked all things together (good and bad) for our good and to his own glory.

33 Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God’s elect? It is God that justifieth.

34 Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.

If no one can be against us, then the next question answers itself. “Who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect?”

Don’t allow anyone tell you that you are not saved. That is no anyone’s call but God’s. No one can charge God’s people with a crime between him and his God. Men do not justify, but God does. These accusers must, then, take their accusations to God, not God’s elect.

Neither can anyone condemn (judge) us, because it is Christ who died for us, was buried and rose again the third day. He now sits on the right hand of the Father to make eternal intercession for us. Religious bigots and arrogant religionists cannot condemn us. A church cannot condemn us. A fellow human being cannot condemn us. We

have our advocate in Jesus Christ the Righteous.

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

Paul’s final argument of the sure mercies of our God is given in these final verses of chapter eight. He speaks of the love God, or the love of Christ, for his people.

No one or no thing can separate us from his love. Once his love has been executed, it is eternal and can never be taken away nor thwarted.

Take each of the enemies of love mentioned in verse 35 in their literal English meaning and think of them as enemies and yet not conquerors of God’s elect.

As strict and horrible as any or all of these enemies can be, not one of them is strong enough to break us away from that love that was shed abroad in our hearts when we were justified by his grace. Many a life has been laid down by martyrdom which realized in departing this life the wonderful, fascinating and adhering love of Christ that, even through the valley of the shadow of death, continues to love, abide and encourage.

36 As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.

This verse, quoted from Psalm 44:22, is a reminder that many have died for

the cause of Christ, yet those who died did not lose their love for him, and certainly he did not lose his love for them.

They were slaughtered in so great numbers that one may think certainly that the love of Christ was not there for them to enjoy and rely upon; but though they died very many in number, yet the love Christ was there and sustained them to their last breath.

37 Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.

So, instead of losing the love of Christ, we become, not conquerors, but more than conquerors in Christ who loved us and gave himself for us (Eph. 5:2).

38 For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, 39 Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Paul said earlier that “we know.” Now he says “I am persuaded.” To be persuaded has to do with our faith in Jesus Christ.

He trusts or has confidence in the fact that nothing can separate him from the love of God (now changed from the love of Christ to the love of God, which is the same).

Notice the listing of items which cannot separate us from this love.

Death, which can separate us from our bodies and this temporal life, but it cannot separate us from God’s love.

Life, which is frail here, and many sicknesses visit it, and the end will be physical death; but neither can this frail human life separate us from his love.

Angels, which are evil angels; because no elect angel would separate us from God’s love. They are enamored by the prospect of God’s loving and having mercy on anyone, since they do not receive this love and mercy and grace themselves. The demons would love for us to be separated from God’s love. Perhaps this is the reason that so many theologies today are so strongly against the doctrine of eternal security.

Principalities, which designate government rule or civil power. These can separate us from our homes, incarcerate us into their jails, place hardships, taxes and fines upon us, and even take our physical life; but they cannot separate us from this love.

Powers, which include not only the civil authorities but also religious authority. Much blood has been shed because of religious authority. The martyrs’ blood cries from their graves that, though they succumbed to the punishment of these powers, yet they are not separated from the love of God.

Things present, which are the cares of this present life. They may discourage us and even cause us to backslide, but they will certainly not separate us from God’s love.

Things to come, which are things that are yet to be experienced in our lives. These include, perhaps, even the fear of the prophecies of the scriptures of the Anti-christ, the mark of the beast,

etc. These may concern God's children to some degree, but they certainly cannot separate us from his love.

Height or Depth, which are the extremities of the universe and all that is created. Whether we go to heaven or consider the depths of hell, nothing in these places nor between can separate us from God's love.

Any other creature, which encompasses anything else that Paul may have forgotten to mention, cannot separate us from God's love.

Now he closes with the idea that this love is only in and through his Son, Jesus Christ. There is no love of God without its emanating from Jesus Christ. There is no other name but his name through which we can receive the love of God and be graciously born again by his mercy and guaranteed this security. Glory be to God!

Romans 9:1-29
Lesson 18 of Romans
By Ronnie Wolfe

Israel's Rejection

Paul's Great Desire, 1-5

1 I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost,

What Paul is about to say is the truth, but not by his own standard or his own wisdom; it is of the witness of the Holy Ghost. No greater witness could be had than that.

2 That I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart.

Paul was not always a happy man. It seems that he could have been because of his glorious salvation by the grace of God.

Paul sorrowed, remember, about his persecuting the church of God, and he even calls himself the least of the apostles because of that persecution.

Paul here sorrows because he desires to see his Jewish brethren saved. See also Romans 10:1.

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

Paul's desire was so strong that he seems that he could wish himself accursed from Christ for his brethren.

Now, Paul could not do that. Christ would never be author to such a thing.

But sometimes Paul's desire is so strong and his sorrow so intense that he feels that he could actually give up his own life in the most ignominious way by martyrdom or otherwise for theirs. This is the same attitude that Christ had when he died for our sins. See Phil. 2:5.

Paul's desire to be a true witness of the saving grace of God is burned in his soul to the degree that he could wish to die a horrible death in the service of Jesus Christ if it would mean the salvation of his Jewish brethren.

4 Who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises;

5 Whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen.

We are reminded here of Romans 3:1-2. There is a great advantage to being a Jew. Eight things are mentioned here.

3. To whom pertains the adoption
4. To whom pertains the glory
5. To whom pertains the covenants
6. To whom pertains the giving of the law, which in 3:1 is called the "oracles of God."
7. To whom pertains the service of God
8. To whom pertains the promises
9. Whose are the fathers
10. Of whom concerning the flesh Christ came.

Now, pertaining adoption, Israel was not adopted spiritually to be the

children of God, but they were adopted nationally to be his chosen nation upon the earth to propagate the message of God

Ex 4:22 And thou shalt say unto Pharaoh, Thus saith the LORD, Israel [is] my son, [even] my firstborn:

The glory of Israel was its duty to the world to preach the Gospel of the Messiah to Jew and Gentile alike. This included the law of God, the types in the tabernacle and the temple, the priesthood, the offerings, the prophets, and many other things.

The covenants were those given to Adam, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, etc. This was a covenant of works whereby Israel was to obey the law to receive blessings from God. They failed on all points (Rom. 9:31).

The giving of the law is referring to the Mosaic law which God gave to Israel on which were hung many other laws which Israel were duty-bound to keep as they promised they would. This law included both the moral and ceremonial law, which foreshadowed the coming of Jesus Christ the Messiah.

The service of God included the priesthood, the offerings, and other services that were to be done by the Jews. These services were ordained of God so that Israel could teach through them the wonderful message of the Gospel of the Messiah.

Promises were given through Abraham to his seed. These promises were not given to Gentiles, but to Israel. They, however will be realized by only those who have faith in Jesus Christ, as

Paul declared in Rom. 2:29 – “But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God.”

The fathers always relates to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. There was a great benefit to being of the line of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. But the Jews, however, took that benefit to an extreme and thought that salvation was in their lineage.

John 8:37 I know that ye are Abraham's seed; but ye seek to kill me, because my word hath no place in you.

The last and greatest privilege of being an Israelite is because pertaining to the flesh the Messiah (Christ) came. Israel was taught of him through the law and the prophets, and they were to look for him. But they so misrepresented the Gospel message that, when Jesus came, they did not recognize him as the Messiah.

Paul has an intense sorrow for these people who rejected the Messiah to their own peril. This should be the case with each one of us as we do the work of evangelizing the world. Where has that sorrow gone?

God Is Righteous In His Choice, 6-13

6 Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect. For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel:

Paul knows that Israel has not kept

the law. He knows that they have rejected the Messiah. So, does this mean that the word of God, the law of God, the oracles of God have had no effect upon Israel at all?

No, it does not, because there is an Israel that is not national Israel but is a spiritual Israel. This Israel is made up of the true believers in Jesus Christ.

Some object to this spiritual Israel, but we must notice the following verses:

Ro 2:29 But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God.

Ga 3:29 And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

Ga 6:16 And as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God.

This spiritual Israel is made up on both Jews and Gentiles (Romans 9:24; 10:12).

7 Neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children: but, In Isaac shall thy seed be called. (Gen. 21:12)

Those national Jews who are of the lineage of Abraham are not genetically the children of God. We are the children of God by promise, not by lineage. See Galatians 3:14, 17, 19, 22,

29.

Isaac was a miracle child. He was born by a miracle of God. God promised him, and he was delivered as promised. It is the same with eternal life. It comes through a promise (by faith) and not by lineage (Gal. 3:26).

8 That is, They which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed.

National Israel are not the children of God just because they are Israelites. It is the children of the promise that are counted for the children of God.

All Israelites (Jews) were the children of the promise that God gave to Abraham concerning those things which were physical, but they were not the children of promise that God gave to Abraham concerning his spiritual seed. Spiritually those who believe in Jesus Christ are counted for the seed.

9 For this is the word of promise, At this time will I come, and Sara shall have a son.(Gen. 18:10)

10 And not only this; but when Rebecca also had conceived by one, even by our father Isaac;

Here Paul rehearses the promise that is given to Sarah and Rebecca. Isaac was Sarah's son by promise, not by simply natural means. God had to intervene through his promise to make it possible.

Isaac is a type of the regenerated who are born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man,

but of God (John 1:13).

Even the birth of Jacob and Esau shows forth the principle that not national but spiritual Israel are the true children of God. This is so through the will of God and upon no effort or lineage on our part.

11 (For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth;)

12 It was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger. (Gen. 25:22-23)

Just as national Israel were chosen of God to be his seed according to an earthly promise for earthly benefits, so the spiritual seed of God are chosen through God's own election.

Jacob and Esau were twins. The one born first was considered to be the elder, and the elder was to be served by the younger according to Jewish tradition.

But God, by his own doing and will, changed this and reported that the elder shall rule the younger, not upon any good or bad that the twins had done, for God is no respecter of persons, but according to his own sovereign pleasure and purpose.

13 As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated. (Mal. 1:2-3)

Here is refer to John Gill for his splendid explanation of this verse:

“...everlasting and

unchangeable love is the true cause and spring of the choice of particular persons to eternal salvation; and hatred is the cause of rejection, by which is meant not positive hatred, which can only have for its object sin and sinners, or persons so considered; but negative hatred, which is God's will, not to give eternal life to some persons; and shows itself by a neglect of them, taking no notice of them, passing them by, when he chose others; so the word "hate" is used for neglect, taking no notice, where positive hatred cannot be thought to take place, in Lu 14:26.”

No One Can Claim That God Is Unrighteous, 14 - 29

14 What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid.

It may seem to us that God is unrighteous if he chooses one person over another, but the question is pertinent here to those who would ask such a question.

Many question the choices that God makes, but Paul labors the point here in the next verses, teaching us what our attitude should be concerning what God does.

15 For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.

(Exod. 33:19)

This is God's grand prerogative. He can do as he will.

Dan. 4:35 And all the inhabitants of the earth [are] reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and [among] the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?

Our verse mentions two graces of God, mercy and compassion. His mercy is his will to cast away the burden of our sin and its guilt, and his compassion is his will to show positive love and pity to us in our sins and remit them through his own death on the cross and his shed blood.

All this is done by his own sovereign will, a will that is from timeless eternity past, since God has no new will in time but only in eternity (See John Gill on this verse).

16 So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy.

Salvation is not of the will of man, though many depend upon the free will of man to bring them to salvation. Verse 16 says plainly, "not of him that willeth."

Salvation is not of him that runneth, or according to our good works. See Eph. 2:8-10.

Salvation is of God through his mercy.

Tit 3:5 Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;

17 For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might shew my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth.

God shows that he has mercy upon whom he will and hardens whom he will by giving the example of Pharaoh. He raised up Pharaoh to show his power and that God's name might be declared throughout all the earth.

18 Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth.

How did God harden Pharaoh? He did it by leaving Pharaoh alone and not having mercy on him. His heart was already hard. God just refrained from doing anything to make it not hard. See Ezek. 11:19; 36:26.

19 Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth he yet find fault? For who hath resisted his will?

Paul predicts a question from his readers that, if God will have mercy and compassion on whom he will, that would mean that God cannot find any fault with us. If he has such a strong and stern will, then how could we resist it; and if we cannot resist it, how can he

find fault in us?

20 Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus?

God is altogether sovereign, and we are the ones who have sinned against him in Adam and in our own lives. How, then, can we conclude what God can and cannot do? Can I say to my maker, “Why have you made me as I am?”

Some people are born blind, deaf, paralyzed, etc. Are they to ask God why he has made them like that? No. God is altogether sovereign.

21 Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour?

God is the potter; we are the clay. He can make his clay into whatever he wants. One lump may be a vessel of honor, such as a king, a president, a talented musician, a great orator, etc. Other vessels he may make unto dishonor as the potter may make a chamber-pot, which is not for public display but to be kept out of sight. That is God’s prerogative to make us as he wills, and we should not ask him why.

22 What if God, willing to shew his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction:

The question here is, “What if God is longsuffering to those sinners who will never trust him? Is that our business? No.

God can do pretty well what he wants to do, and we can say nothing against it.

Da 4:35 And all the inhabitants of the earth [are] reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and [among] the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?

Although to these he shows longsuffering, yet they are fitted for destruction. If they do not believe, they are destroyed in eternal hell.

23 And that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory,

If God wants, he may reveal the riches of his glory in salvation to vessels of mercy that he had prepared (predestined) unto glory, that glory that we will have with Jesus and his Father in heaven and on the earth when we live and reign with him.

24 Even us, whom he hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles?

We who are recipients of that glory are called, both Jews and Gentiles. There is no difference. See Rom. 10:12.

25 As he saith also in Osee, I will call them my people, which were not my people; and her beloved, which was not beloved.

To bring his point down to the proof of scripture, Paul quotes Hosea 2:23. He is speaking of the Gentiles, who were not called to a special people on earth in a national sense and were not beloved of him in the sense of a nation; but they were precious in his predestination and calling. So he may call them his people through faith in Jesus Christ, although they were not his people nationally.

26 And it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people; there shall they be called the children of the living God.

Here is a quote from Hosea 1:10, which shows that we as Gentiles were not the people of God in a national sense, but he called us to be his children, and we are by his marvelous grace.

27 Esaias also crieth concerning Israel, Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, a remnant shall be saved:

Israel is God's chosen nation upon the earth, and they are as the sand of the sea; but only a remnant of that great number will be saved. Then these who believe become a part of the Israel of God (Gal. 6:16).

28 For he will finish the work, and

cut it short in righteousness: because a short work will the Lord make upon the earth.

This remnant from among Israel is a "cutting." He cuts from the large nation a remnant for his name. Isaiah 10:23 says, "For the Lord GOD of hosts shall make a consumption, even determined, in the midst of all the land." This, many think, is the scripture quoted here. The Lord's work is to divide people from among men in the earth (Rev. 14:4). This is the cutting short in this verse.

29 And as Esaias said before, Except the Lord of Sabaoth had left us a seed, we had been as Sodoma, and been made like unto Gomorrha.

In Isaiah 1:9, he speaks of a "very small remnant." This is the spiritual seed of Abraham through Isaac, Jacob and Jesus Christ. If God had not done this, Israel would have been as Sodom and Gomorrah, gone. We would have no heritage, not hope, not faith, no Christ, no heaven, not reigning on the earth, no mercy and grace. We would be of men most miserable.

The majority of the nation of Israel have rejected the Messiah. Only a remnant is saved by grace. God is merciful to Israel to save even this remnant.

Romans 9:30 - 10:21
Lesson 19 of Romans
By Pastor Ronnie Wolfe

Israel's Righteousness

Israel Reject Pure Righteousness,
9:30-33

9:30 What shall we say then? That the Gentiles, which followed not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith.

Paul concludes his thoughts from the previous verses by saying that the Gentiles, who were not zealous of the righteousness that was through the law, have actually attained righteousness, but not through the law. They obtained it by faith in Jesus Christ.

Rom. 3:22 Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference:

31 But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness.

The nation of Israel rejected the Messiah and continued to work at keeping the law of Moses in order to attain the righteousness of God, but that they could not do.

32 Wherefore? Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the

works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumblingstone; 33 As it is written, Behold, I lay in Sion a stumblingstone and rock of offence: and whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.

Israel sought righteousness, not by faith, but by keeping the law, and righteousness cannot come by the law.

Ga 2:21 I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness [come] by the law, then Christ is dead in vain.

Now Paul quotes Isaiah 28:16 to show the downfall of Israel. They would not believe in what Isaiah called a foundation stone, a tried stone, a precious stone, a sure foundation. The righteousness of God comes only through faith in Jesus Christ.

Israel Seeks Their Own Righteousness,
10:1-21

10:1 Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved.

Paul has both a desire and a prayer to God that Israel will be saved. He is certainly praying here for the spiritual Israel, that God will bring all his elect together; but Paul is also praying and longing for the salvation of any and all of his kinsmen according to the flesh (11:1).

2 For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not

according to knowledge.

A zeal of God is one that works incessantly to accomplish what the carnal mind thinks that God desires and commands; but if it is not according to knowledge, then the end and purpose of the work done is not accomplished.

He could bear record (witness) to their zeal, because he was one of them at one time.

Php 3:6 Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless.

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

They, the Jews, were ignorant of God's righteousness just as Paul was before he met Jesus Christ on the road to Damascus.

The Jews were going about trying to establish their own righteousness, which is true with any person who has not been saved by God's grace.

The Jews were doing this, because they were not willing to submit themselves to the righteousness of God, which is required for salvation, since no one has any righteousness (Romans 3:10).

4 For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.

This is what the Jew was ignorant

of, that Jesus Christ was the end of the law for righteousness, especially to those who believe. The Jews did not want to believe that Jesus was the Messiah (Christ). They rejected him (John 1:11).

One cannot accomplish the righteousness of God; he must submit to it, believe in Jesus Christ for it; because it is imputed to us through faith.

5 For Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, That the man which doeth those things shall live by them.

The severity of the law is described by Moses in Lev. 18:5, which is quoted here. James explains it further when he says in

Jas 2:10 For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.

6 But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise, Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down from above:)

7 Or, Who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead.)

David describes the righteousness of faith when he turns from accomplishment to faith. No one can demand that Jesus Christ come down from heaven, and no one can command Jesus to come up from the dead. These things God the Father had to do. It was only in his power to do.

8 But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach;

9 That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.

10 For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

Salvation comes through faith. With the heart man believes unto righteousness, not through accomplishments or works.

When a man believes, he confesses of his salvation to the Father and is saved. Faith and confession are simultaneous and are twin graces that come with regeneration.

Faith is as close as the gospel that is preached and no closer. Paul explains in 10:17 that faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

Faith is not innate, inborn, but it is as close as the preaching of the gospel of Jesus Christ, for without the gospel no one can be saved.

11 For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.

The reason we shall not be ashamed when we believe is because we now have the righteousness that is demanded from God. He is satisfied with that righteousness, because it is the righteousness of Jesus Christ. He accepts us upon that righteousness, he

guides us through that righteousness, and he judges us upon that righteousness. If God be for us, then, who can be against us?

12 For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him.

13 For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.

The universal scope of the gospel is referenced here. The gospel is the power of God unto all them who believe whether they be Jew or Greek (Gentile). The conclusion is in verse 13 in the word “whosoever.” Anyone who calls upon the name of the Lord “shall be saved,” not those who attain unto righteousness. No one can attain to that righteousness required by a holy and just God. Only Jesus Christ can attain it, the gospel preaches it, and the heart believes it.

14 How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?

15 And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!

The meaning of these verses is self-explanatory, but let us list the events in their chronological order to see the

picture from a different view: The events must take place in this order:

11. A preacher must be sent
12. Someone must hear the preacher
13. He must believe what he hears
14. He must call upon the one in whom he believes.

Paul's point here is that one cannot call upon someone in whom he does not believe, so faith must come before calling, hearing before faith, preaching before hearing, and sending before preaching.

16 **But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report?** (Isaiah 53:1)

17 **So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.**

Paul endeavors here to teach us that belief must be substantial, not whimsical or subjective. We must first learn of Jesus Christ through the gospel in order to believe and be saved.

18 **But I say, Have they not heard? Yes verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world.** (Psalm 19:4)

19 **But I say, Did not Israel know? First Moses saith, I will provoke you to jealousy by them that are no people, and by a foolish nation I will anger you.** (Deut. 32:21)

Israel has both heard and known, because the sound went out to them

through the prophets and psalms. They were not ignorant of God's knowledge, just of his righteousness.

20 **But Esaias is very bold, and saith, I was found of them that sought me not; I was made manifest unto them that asked not after me.** (Isaiah 65:1)

God is to provoke the Jews by being found of them that did not seek him (the Gentiles), and a people who did not ask for him.

The Gentiles did not know of him; they were not zealous of righteousness; they did not have the oracles of God (Rom. 3:1-2). Yet, because of the election of God and his promise through Abraham, he turned to the Gentiles and called them by his Spirit to be a part of the Israel of God (Gal. 6:16).

21 **But to Israel he saith, All day long I have stretched forth my hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people.**

Israel sought him often as they performed their duties according to the law that God had given them.

They had their priesthood, their tabernacle, their temple, their feasts, their offerings, their holy days, the oracles (words) of God, etc. In all of this God was stretching out his hand unto them, but they were disobedient and gainsaying. They continually turned back to the Gentiles' gods and worshiped wood and gold, groves and idols of all sorts.

They rejected the Messiah when he came, and for this God turned to the Gentiles, as did Paul as an apostle to

the Gentiles (11:13).

Romans 11:1-36

Lesson 20 of Romans
By Pastor Ronnie Wolfe

The Return of Israel

It may seem, with the ending verse of Chapter 10 of Romans, that God has cast away his people; so Paul here instructs to the Gentiles that he has not just in case they may get the wrong idea. Paul brings up a question that may now be bearing on the minds of Gentiles who are reading this letter.

A Remnant Set Aside, 1-4

1 I say then, Hath God cast away his people? God forbid. For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin.

To prove to the Gentiles that God has not put away the nation of Israel completely, he asks their question—the one that is abiding in their minds after hearing his argument thus far: Has God cast away his people?

The answer is firm: “God forbid.” God has not stopped saving people from the Jewish nation. He has not rejected them totally. He still saves everyone who comes to him through faith in Jesus Christ.

The proof is in Paul himself. He is an Israelite, and he has been saved by God’s grace; so this prove his point. He is of the seed of Abraham, and it is from the promise of Abraham that Paul establishes his argument that Gentiles can be saved as well as Jews. Remember that Abraham was given the promise in uncircumcision (pointing to

the Gentiles), and the promise was sealed in circumcision (pointing to the Jews). Paul is accepted in the beloved through the seed of Abraham (Christ Jesus), or as he says, “of the seed of Abraham.”

2 God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew. Wot ye not what the scripture saith of Elias? how he maketh intercession to God against Israel, saying,

In Israel there was a remnant set apart by the election of grace. God was saving people throughout the years, despite the fact that the nation of Israel were turning their hearts away from their God.

The example is given in Elijah (1 Kings 19). When Elijah thought that God had forsaken everyone but him, God told him that he was not alone. Notice Elijah’s complaint in the following verse.

3 Lord, they have killed thy prophets, and digged down thine altars; and I am left alone, and they seek my life.

4 But what saith the answer of God unto him? I have reserved to myself seven thousand men, who have not bowed the knee to the image of Baal.

God had to remind Elijah or reveal to him that he was not left alone and that the whole nation of Israel had not been cast away from God’s blessings. God answered him that he had reserved 7,000 prophets who had not bowed the knee to Baal.

Here a remnant of the nation of Israel were set apart by God’s grace. These are the ones he “foreknew.”

A Remnant Saved by Grace, 5-6

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

So, even in Paul's day, many years after the history of Elijah, God still has a remnant. God has been saving people throughout the generations, and he is still saving people today. He will save people in every generation until Jesus comes again.

6 And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work.

Now to emphasize that these whom God foreknew, to establish that this remnant were not set apart by their own doing or effort, Paul explains here that it is altogether by grace and not by works.

He explains that grace and works are totally separate and different and cannot be mixed together. Grace is grace, and works is works. If salvation comes by works, then there would be no need for grace, for grace would make works not works. If salvation comes by grace, then there is no need for works, for works would make grace not grace.

Since salvation is by grace (Eph. 2:8-9), then works and boasting are excluded.

Israel Blinded Through Unbelief, 7-10

7 What then? Israel hath not

obtained that which he seeketh for; but the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded

Israel sought after righteousness, but they could not obtain it (See Romans 10:3). But the election (God's elect) have obtained it. How did they obtain it? They obtained it by faith (Romans 3:22; 4:9).

As the remnant are being saved by grace, the rest are being blinded (hardened). As Israel were seeking after righteousness and not finding it, the Lord, by his grace, was giving grace to those whom he foreknew. These came to him through faith and became the remnant who were a part of God's Israel.

8 (According as it is written, God hath given them the spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear;) unto this day.

This scripture, quoted from Isaiah 29:10, is teaching us that God allowed these "other" ones to slumber. He left them in their own estate to stumble at the truth and reject the Messiah, because that was their natural condition. No election was needed for these ones to remain in their state of unbelief. They only had to be left alone to be hardened, and they were.

9 And David saith, Let their table be made a snare, and a trap, and a stumblingblock, and a recompence unto them:

In Psalm 69:22 David reveals this same truth that Isaiah reveals in his passage. As ones left to themselves, they did eat at the Lord's Passover in their religious

exercises, their table was to have national fellowship with God as their Head.

Their manner of eating was to eat certain things and to exclude others according to the law of God. They were blinded when they ate at the table of God without faith in the Messiah. They exercised their religion, but they did not believe in it; therefore, their table became a snare, a stumbling-block and a recompense unto them.

10 Let their eyes be darkened, that they may not see, and bow down their back alway.

The message of Jesus Christ was preached, the gospel was given to these Old Testament Israelites, but their eyes were darkened, etc. This is true until the grace of God opens the eyes.

*Open mine eyes that I may see
Glimpses of truth thou hast for me*

Israel Provoked to Jealousy, 11-16

11 I say then, Have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid: but rather through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy.

Paul is asking in verse 11 whether the entire nation of Israel has stumbled to the point to where none of them will be saved. His answer from God is "God forbid."

Israel has fallen, because they have

turned as a nation against him and are seeking their own righteousness. The majority of the nation of Israel have turned away from the truths of God.

God has allowed them as a nation to do this so that he may make the truth known in a more prominent way unto the Gentiles.

12 Now if the fall of them be the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles; how much more their fulness?

The fall of the nation of Israel refers to their rejection of the true Messiah, Jesus Christ, when he came to the earth. They were at that time diminished as a nation, and God turned then to the Gentiles through the apostles to accomplish his purpose as stated in Isaiah 49:6

Isaiah 49:6 And he said, It is a light thing that thou shouldest be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth.

13 For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office:

God had chosen Paul to be the apostle to the Gentiles, and here is magnifies his office by speaking of their salvation by grace and comparing them to Israel, who has fallen away from the oracles of God to which he made them guardians (Romans 3:1-2).

14 **If by any means I may provoke to emulation them which are my flesh, and might save some of them.**

God has not cast away his people; neither has Paul. He still has that strong desire to see his kinsmen, his flesh and blood, be saved by God's grace. He desires that God's turning to the Gentiles will provoke Israel to do as many of the Gentiles are doing, turning from works to faith in Jesus Christ for righteousness.

15 **For if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead?**

The casting away of Israel (not totally but partially, for he is still saving Jews as well as Gentiles), means the reconciling of the world (Gentiles) to God. This is a magnificent wonder to see God save Gentiles and bring them into his fold, especially on such a large scale.

If this is such a wonder, then what will the fulness of the Jews be? Their fullness will be accomplished when Jesus comes again and all Israel, the Israel of God, are saved and we see the work of Jesus Christ completed. This will mean life from the dead to the Jews. They are being saved (made alive) in this time of the Gentiles, which will end when Jesus returns.

16 **For if the firstfruit be holy, the**

lump is also holy: and if the root be holy, so are the branches.

The firstfruits are the original men who were used by God to illustrate faith in Jesus Christ. This began first with Abraham, for it is in him that the promises were made.

The promise was that Abraham would have his own son, Isaac, and that through him the nations of the world would be blessed.

These first believers established the promise which is by faith.

Galatians 4:28 Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise.

These first believers are holy; and if so, the whole lump (the Israel of God, Gal. 6:16) is holy. They are holy, because they are subjects of the promise. Read the third and fourth chapters of Galatians on this subject.

The same principle is stated a second time saying that, if the root (the promise made by God to Abraham) is holy, then the branches (those who are recipients of this promise) are also holy.

Now we know that we as Gentiles are the children of Abraham, so Paul speaks here of Gentiles and Jews alike. If they are connected with the promise given to Abraham, then they are all holy.

Warning To the Gentiles, 17-24

17 **And if some of the branches be broken off, and thou, being a wild olive tree, wert grafted in among them, and with them partakest of the**

root and fatness of the olive tree;

Paul here speaks of some branches being broken off. He refers here to the olive tree used as a metaphor for believers in Jesus Christ. Some of these Jewish “believers” are only professed believers, and they are broken off from the olive tree. We shall see later that it is because of their unbelief that they are broken off. These thought that, because they were of the blood lineage of Abraham, they were blessed of God, but the Lord warned them of this.

John 8:37 I know that ye are Abraham’s seed; but ye seek to kill me, because my word hath no place in you.

18 Boast not against the branches. But if thou boast, thou bearest not the root, but the root thee.

The Gentiles seem here to boast against the Jewish branches, thinking that God has turned away from them and has blessed the Gentiles because of something that is in themselves.

They became proud that they were now somehow better than the Jewish nation; but God tells them that the promise came, not through the Gentiles, but through the Jews. It is the Jewish promise, the root, that carries them. In other words, if it had not been for the Jews, the Gentiles would never have heard the glorious message of the Gospel.

19 Thou wilt say then, The branches were broken off, that I

might be grafted in.

This is a proud moment for the Gentiles to say such a thing. They were happy that Israel had “fallen away” so that they could be grafted into this spiritual olive tree.

20 Well; because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith. Be not highminded, but fear:

Well – That is all well and good that you know that God is saving you Gentiles, but you must know that it is because of unbelief that they were broken off; and you as Gentiles as stand only by faith, not by anything that you did or upon your own merit or work. Therefore, we as Gentiles are not to be high-minded, but we are to fear (speaking to Gentiles a body, not individual Gentiles). God was not required to save the Jews, and he is not required to save Gentiles. We are both saved by grace. The Gentiles as a body are to fear that the grace of God may turn away from them as it has the nation of Israel. There is no difference between the Jew and the Gentile.

Romans 3:22 Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference:

21 For if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee.

The Jewish nation was the natural, because it was unto them that God gave the oracles (words) of God, his doctrine, his

Gospel.

He spared them not as a nation, because they did not believe. If the Gentiles do not believe, he may as well, if he desires, turn away from them, also, as a nation.

22 Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off.

Two things, then, that we are to notice or “behold” are (1) the goodness of God. It is that goodness that brought us to repentance. The goodness of God is at this point being shed upon the Gentiles as a nation of people, because God is now saving mainly Gentiles. (2) the severity of God is upon the Jews as a nation at this time, because the majority of them are in unbelief.

If the Gentile nation turns from the truth that God has laid down, they, too, will be cast off; and there will be a diminishing of people being saved among the Gentiles.

I believe that we may very well be seeing that in our own day, for the Gentiles who ascribe to faith in Jesus Christ (professing Christians) have turned from the truths of God just as the Jews have done. Thus, we are not seeing as many people saved today as before. We are, as it were, being cut off.

23 And they also, if they abide not still in unbelief, shall be grafted in: for God is able to graff them in again.

We as Gentiles have been grafted into the natural olive tree (spiritual Israel). Now, if the Jews believe in Jesus Christ, they, too, will be grafted back into that tree. This is the return of Israel, not a nation as a whole being brought back in the last day when Jesus comes again, all being born again as a group or as a nation, but individual Jews hearing the Gospel of Jesus Christ and being saved even in our own time. This is the return of the Jews to their Jehovah. Remember, “no man cometh unto the Father but by me” Jesus said.

24 For if thou wert cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature, and wert grafted contrary to nature into a good olive tree: how much more shall these, which be the natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree?

If we, who are Gentiles, and foreigners to the commonwealth of Israel, can be cut out of that wild olive tree and grafted into the good olive tree (spiritual Israel), how much easier would it be for the Jews, who are a natural part of the promises of God, be grafted back in.

25 For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in.

This blindness is of God, for we read in Matthew 13:14 *And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive:*

This blindness was their unbelief. They rejected the Savior and their Messiah. They had rejected the true meaning of the law of Moses and the instructions of the Old Testament concerning him. As a nation Israel has rejected their Messiah; they have turned from him and hardened themselves against him.

But this blindness is not a complete and total blindness that affects every person in the nation of Israel. They have not all rejected him; they have not all hardened their hearts against him. Many individual Jews do believe in the Messiah and follow him. They will do that one by one throughout the ages until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in.

The fullness of the Gentiles comes in when Jesus returns, just as the fullness of the Jews will come in at that same time. This will reveal the true Israel of God. When all Jews and all Gentiles who will trust the Lord are all saved, then both the fullness of the Gentiles and the Jews will be come in.

This will make up the Israel of God (Gal. 6:16). The promise of Abraham is not to the Jewish nation but to those who believe are the promises given.

Galatians 3:22 But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe.

26 And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall

turn away ungodliness from Jacob:
Isaiah 59:20.

This “all Israel” is not all of the natural nation of Israel, for then the promise would be to the natural seed of Abraham, and Galatians Chapter 3 teaches that the promises were not to them but to Christ and then to us who believe.

This “all Israel” relates to an Israel that is spiritual made up of both Jews and Gentiles who believe in Jesus Christ. When the fullness of the Jews and the fullness of the Gentiles is come in, then “all Israel” will be saved. This is the same as the Israel of God in Gal. 6:16.

This is all accomplished by the Deliverer (Jesus Christ), through his death, burial and resurrection. See Isaiah 27:9; 59:20-21.

Remember our verse concerning this: Romans 10:12 *For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him.*

27 For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins.

Isaiah 59:20-21 And the Redeemer shall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob, saith the LORD. 21 As for me, this is my covenant with them, saith the LORD; My spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the LORD, from henceforth and for ever.

The Lord will take their sins away (the sins of this Israel of God) through the Redeemer's coming from Zion.

28 As concerning the gospel, they are enemies for your sakes: but as touching the election, they are beloved for the fathers' sakes.

Now again comparing the Jews and the Gentiles and their coming into the Kingdom of God, Paul here again shows that the nation of Israel and the Gentiles are different in the natural state.

Concerning the gospel, they (the Jews) are the enemies of the Gospel and of Jesus Christ for the sake that the Gentiles can be grafted in; but as touching the election of God into the Israel of God, they are beloved among the Gentiles for the sake of the forefathers, because the promises were made through them. These are Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, etc.

29 For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance.

Why is this verse important in this particular place? It is important here, because God made promise to the forefathers, and this verse verifies that he will not change his mind on the promise he made with Abraham. He will not change his way of salvation or his means of grace. Our God cannot change, and he cannot lie. Therefore, the promise is sure to all believers forever.

God never calls back the gifts of spiritual understanding and the calling of the Holy Spirit from those who

believe as Abraham did when he believed God, and it was counted to him for righteousness. The gifts and calling of God are more enduring than the laws of the Medes and Persians; they are forever the same.

30 For as ye in times past have not believed God, yet have now obtained mercy through their unbelief:

31 Even so have these also now not believed, that through your mercy they also may obtain mercy.

In time past, God worked among the Jews primarily concerning coming to faith in the Messiah. Now the Gentiles are the primary recipients of his grace, because God has blinded the Jews in part so the Gentiles would believe.

Even so, now the Jews, although they did believe in the major portion, now they are turning away from the Messiah and rejecting him so that the Gentiles may obtain mercy.

32 For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all.

The conclusion, then, is that all (Gentile and Jew) are in unbelief by nature, left alone by God. There is no preference as to which of the nations is more prone to unbelief; they are all in unbelief.

So, then, by the same token, the mercy of God is for both Jew and Gentile. God may have mercy upon whom he will (Jew or Gentile). God's mercy is not based upon the natural original of a person but upon the depth of the riches and mercy of God,

as we read in the following verses.

33 O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!

God is rich in both wisdom and knowledge. We cannot know it nor search it nor understand it ourselves except that part which he sees fitting in his mercy to reveal to us (Deut. 29:29).

This is a cry of praise unto the Lord who is so much wiser and more knowledgeable than we.

34 For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor?

35 Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again?

God is transcendent. He cannot be approached; he cannot be counseled; he cannot be given wisdom or knowledge that he does not already have that he might owe his great wisdom to any creature but only to himself.

36 For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen.

All things are of him: he is the Great First Cause.

All things are through him: no glory is had through any man or other creature. All glory is had only through God himself.

All things are to him: Every individual glory and the totality of glory

must redound to him.

This final doxology goes to this Divine Being, the Great God, the Father. To him be glory forever and ever.

Amen is an expression of approval, approving to ourselves in our own hearts and minds that God is still God no matter what happens. "Let it be" is the meaning of this simple but profound word, Amen. May we all with exuberant heart, humble minds and joyous lips say Amen to this God who has mercy upon whom he will, both Jew and Gentile.

Romans 12:1-21
Lesson 21 of Romans
Pastor Ronnie Wolfe

To Individual Church Members, 1-8

1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.

The Greek word for beseech is PARAKALEO, and it means to call to one's side. So, Paul is calling his brethren to his side to mimic his actions of serving the Lord Jesus Christ.

The word beseech is used two other times in the book of Romans. In Ro 15:30 *Now I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, and for the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with me in [your] prayers to God for me;* Paul calls for his brethren here to "strive together" in prayer. We should call all our brethren to pray together.

Also, in Ro 16:17 *Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them.* Paul beseeches or calls together his brethren here to "mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine" We should also call all our brethren together to be a separate people and to mark those who do not have Biblical doctrine. If this is not done, our churches will be filled with false doctrine.

Our bodies are the temple of the Holy Spirit. They are to be appreciated and used for the Master's use. Paul has

spoken about "bodies" twice before in Romans. Once in Ro 1:24 *Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves:* Here the wicked have given their bodies over to human and worldly lusts to dishonor their bodies in a despicable way. Then, in Ro 8:11 *But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.* Here Paul speaks of our bodies as candidates for resurrection. From beginning to end, our bodies are to be considered for God's service. First, let us not use our bodies for sinful purposes; second, let us not forget that he will quicken our mortal bodies.

Our text tells us to present our bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God. The Greek for present is PARISTEMI and means "to stand beside, or to be at hand." This means that we should make our bodies available for the Master, submitting to his calling at any time to do his bidding, keeping our bodies pure from sin and dedicated to prayer and study of God's word. This is our reasonable service, because he has saved us and given us eternal life.

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

The word conform means to fashion

according to a pattern. The implication here is that the world has a pattern of living, and that pattern is sinful. If we fashion our lives according to the world, then we are not going to be prepared for the Master to use us.

The word transform means to change into another form. We are at birth already in the form of the world, and living in this world according to its pattern will justly conform us to that image and pattern until we become more and more worldly as time goes on. But to be transformed means to be changed for this worldly image or fashion into a difference fashion.

This transforming must be done by the renewing of the mind. If our lives are to change, our minds must change. A good definition of renew is “to change to the better.” The only way this can happen is that we are born again by God’s grace and then present our bodies unto the Lord, submitting to his teaching and having a constant fellowship with him. We as brethren should be diligent in our communication with Jesus Christ and the Father through his Holy Spirit.

Thus, we can know the good and acceptable and perfect will of God for our own lives, not the others.

3 For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.

We must be careful, though, that we do not think too highly of ourselves. If

we renew our minds with a philosophical estimation of ourselves rather than with God’s estimation, then we will become proud and useless to him.

We must remember that without God’s grace we could not have come to him nor trusted in him. We are, then, to think soberly (with a sensible mind), realizing that God has given every man a certain measure of faith. Every person does not have the same measure of faith as another. We must not be concerned about the faith of other believers but simply apply our own faith to serving God.

4 For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office:

Referring again to our physical bodies, Paul reminds us that our own personal body has many members, yet it is one body. He also mentions that every member does not do the same work.

5 So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.

So, we as brethren in Christ, who are in a local church, are one body in Christ; and every member is a member one of another, or members along with the others.

6 Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith;

As noticed in our physical bodies, it is also true in the church body that we have different gifts according to the grace that is given us.

Some have the grace of prophecy, and those who do should perform their office according to their own faith and not be desirous of another person's gift of grace.

Special prophecy was an apostolic gift, but preachers today prophesy by teaching what God's revelation, the Bible, exhorts us to believe.

7 Or ministry, let us wait on our ministering; or he that teacheth, on teaching;

This DIAKONIA is one of service, waiting on others. This is the duty of deacons in the local church.

The office of teaching is one of instruction in a discourse. Whether the gift be ministering or teaching, one is not paramount over the other. Each is important in its own place, and each believer should perform his own duties according to what God has given him to do.

8 Or he that exhorteth, on exhortation: he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness.

Four gifts are mentioned in verse eight. The gift of exhortation, giving, ruling, and showing patience should all be done with the idea that God imparts the grace to perform each of these things.

The exhorter is to exhort; the giver

is to do it simply; the ruler is to be diligent (watchful), and the merciful must show mercy through cheerfulness, and each is to do his duty with grace given by God.

To The Whole Church,9-21

9 Let love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good.

Paul seems to change the perspective of his argument here away from each individual member of the local church to the entire church as a whole.

He first speaks of love, love that is not pretentious or false but genuine and pure.

A preacher from Siberia has been writing to me on e-mail. When he write, he speak of his LOVE (like) for me. He uses the word "like," because he is not sure that I will accept the word love.

I wrote to him and said that we are used to the word LOVE here and that he does not have to explain the word. We know that brethren in the Lord love one another with a pure love.

This love seems to the bond which holds this whole concept of service together making it work correctly according to God's will. With this love a church can be effective in its preaching, teaching, and communication.

He speaks of hating evil and cleaving to that which is good. This is a daily job for every church member. We must make this decision with God's help every day. We must turn from evil and

turn to God for guidance and help every morning when we face our day. If we do not, then our minds will not be transformed, but rather we will be conformed to the world.

10 **Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another;**

Here we find how to put Paul's instruction about love into practice. We must have affection to one another, and we must honor and prefer one another, not thinking of ourselves more highly than we should, but considering others as greater than ourselves. I know it has been a long time since we have heard this taught, but this is still the truth. Remember:

J esus first
O thers second
Y ou last

11 **Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord;**

Now Paul turns to the negative and tells us not to be lazy in our business of the church. We see so much laziness today in the world. People do not want to do their jobs. They want to sit around and drink pop or eat, neglect their work, and expect to be paid a large salary and get a raise periodically.

We should not be like this in our worldly jobs, but we especially should not be like this in the work of the church of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The church is the pillar and ground of the truth. We should do everything we can to build up the church; and our

worldly jobs, though important, should take second place.

The word fervent in the Greek literally means "boiling." It means that our human spirit should be charged with the Holy Spirit to be hot in service to him, serving the Lord with this same heat and intensity of heart and mind.

12 **Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer;**

We have a hope that both sure and steadfast (Heb. 6:19). We should rejoice in that hope. Jesus will come again and receive us unto himself that where he is there we may be also.

We should also be patient when trials (tribulation) come. The Lord promised them to us in this world (John 16:33). When they come, let us be ready for them and strong and patient to endure them.

To be instant in prayer means to be consistent in prayer, never ceasing to be in a practice of prayer (1 Thess. 5:17).

13 **Distributing to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality.**

Notice, this does not say that we as a church are to give to the hopes, dreams, wants, or even necessities of the world. We are to distribute to the necessity of the saints of God, those born again by his grace.

We should notice here that the church is not responsible for those in need if their own families have the means whereby they can be cared for. Notice 1Tim. 5:16 *If any man or woman that believeth have widows, let them*

relieve them, and let not the church be charged; that it may relieve them that are widows indeed.

We are to be given to hospitality. The Greek word for given is DIOKO and means “to pursue.” So, are to pursue hospitality, work hard at making it so in our lives and our churches.

14 Bless them which persecute you: bless, and curse not.

Thus did our Lord say in Matt. 5:44. We are not to pronounce a curse upon our spiritual enemies. We are to bless them. Cursing them is not in our power, and it is not a congenial thing to do.

Even though our religious enemies may not preach the counsel of God in its entirety, they may perchance preach the Gospel without even realizing it; and the Gospel is the power of God unto salvation, not the church. With this in mind, read Phil. 1:16-18.

15 Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep.

Rejoicing and weeping are two of the great affections of this world. Sometimes we rejoice and sometimes we weep. It is the lot of all people, saved and lost alike.

When those in our church rejoice, we can rejoice with them, because we are their brethren. When those in our church weep, we can be empathetic toward them, because they are our brethren. This should not be a hard command or grievous but a tender and willing one.

16 Be of the same mind one toward another. Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceits.

We are minded here again not to think of ourselves more highly than we should. We should all be of the same mind one toward another. You love me, and I will love you. This love is a mutual love.

We are not to be minded of high things or highly important people or organizations. We are to condescend to people of low estate, or be among those who are not the most important in the world. There is no estate in this life, no matter how low, that is so low that we can condescend, because we are proud by nature. If we do not act upon this principle, then we are wise in our own conceits.

17 Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men.

Neither are we in the vengeance business. God has charge of vengeance, not us. Notice verse 19.

We have all heard that “honesty is the best policy.” This is no truer in the world than it is in the churches of our Lord. Remember, people are always watching us, and they notice the consistency or lack thereof in our lives.

18 If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.

Of course there should be a striving for peace in our families and in our work places; but here he speaks of the

local church. We should be especially concerned about being at peace in our churches.

Sometimes this may not be possible because of the behavior or attitude of another person, but mostly I believe it is possible; because Paul here speaks to every member. The one who is guilty of making divisions should consider this command and should rectify and problem to bring the church into a state of peace.

This peace should be with all kinds of men (people). In the Roman church there were men of different nationalities. We should not be preferential toward any particular race of people but to be like the Lord in accepting them as our brothers in Christ;

19 Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.

Giving place to wrath means leaving it in God's hands: allow the Lord to take care of any wrath that may be meted out, for vengeance belongs to him (Deut. 32:35).

20 Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head.

In other words, we are not to wish death or destruction upon our wicked but only to the extent that it is consistent with God's will, and he will

take care of that.

If our enemies, who love not the truth, are hungry, then we are to feed them lest they die. We are also to give them drink lest they die. Our concern for the truth does not disguise nor nullify our love for humanity.

In so being humanitarian we can heap coals of fire on their head, or the enemy may feel ashamed of his thoughts or actions against you; because he thought that you were his enemy, too, but he finds that you are not his enemy. Some may even be converted to the truth through this humanitarian effort.

21 Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.

So, then, Paul gives here a trite summary of what he has proposed through the Holy Spirit. He summary is twofold: (1) Negative: do not be overcome with evil; (2) Positive: overcome evil with good.

You cannot simply leave evil alone for it to go away; you must replace evil with good or do good in the place of evil. This is the only way we can overcome evil: with good.

Dr. Bob Jones Sr. used to say "Do right. It's never wrong to do right; so always do right."

Romans 13:1-14

Lesson 23 of Romans
By Pastor Ronnie Wolfe

Subjection To Civil Powers, 1-6

1 Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God.

Paul here speaks of civil power, not angelic power. We know that we are made a little lower than the angels, but Paul is not here speaking of them in this context.

The civil magistrates are meant here, and this becomes a very important injunction, since the Jews were under the power of the Roman magistrates very unwillingly.

Paul is, however, telling these Jewish Christians to be subject to these higher powers, both nationally and locally, to teach other Christians by their example that all powers are of God.

The very power that these magistrates have flows directly from God, though they may not know it, realize it, or acknowledge it.

Also, the very government in which these powers operate is ordered of God, and no individual has that power with God.

We are not to be approving of men but of the position in which they abide or work.

2 Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall

receive to themselves damnation.

Those who may resist the power (not the man, but the position) that there should not be such a position or that it is against God's plan, resists against God; because God is the one who has ordained such an order in society.

Those who resist God order of society will receive damnation (judgment) at the hands of the very people who are in these positions. Those who are without redemption and salvation will also receive at the hands of Almighty God that eternal judgment coming upon all who do not believe.

3 For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same:

Rulers, if they are orderly as they should be, and if they perform their duties well, will be a terror, not to good works but to the evil works done by men in society.

Therefore we are not to be afraid of the power that God has ordained. These positions of magistrate, etc., are given to us for good, not for evil.

If we, then, do that which is good, right and just, the power will praise us rather than punish us.

4 For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon

him that doeth evil.

The rulers are God's ministers in the sense that they are performing God's order of society in which these magistrates protect us from evil men. If these magistrates were not executing their duties, then wicked men would overtake society, and anarchy would prevail.

So, then, we are not to do evil. If we do, then the rulers are in their right to execute wrath upon us. Therefore, we should be afraid of the magistrates, which fear will cause us to live a just and upright life.

5 Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake.

But we are not to obey the laws just because of the wrath that we shall receive if we do not obey them; we are to be subject to powers so that we can have a good conscience, knowing that we are obeying the Lord himself.

6 For for this cause pay ye tribute also: for they are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing.

Why do we pay taxes? It is simply for the provision of magistrates to be sure that they are protectors of society and executors of that which is right and proper.

Submission of Honor, 7-8

7 Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is

due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour.

We are to pay the salaries and support those who are our officers and magistrates. They deserve this in their position.

We are also to pay our tributes and customs such as taxes and fees on import and export of goods.

We are also to fear these who are our rulers in the sense that we are to fear that we may disobey their rules or offend them in some way. This is a healthy fear. If we do good, we are not to fear their judgment.

Everyone deserves honor on one level or another. We are to give honor to each according to his position and level of authority.

8 Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law.

We are not to be unlawful debtors to anyone, in which a person may depend upon the consistency of others in order to carry on his life and neglect his own responsibilities.

All monetary debts can be discharged in full at least logically. But the debt of love can never end or discharged from our responsibility.

If a man has a sincere and genuine love for his neighbor, he has fulfilled the law. Love is the fulfilling of the law, because in love we are willing and persistent in keeping the law.

Supremacy of Love, 9-10

9 For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

Paul begins to name some of the ten commandments and says that they are all “comprehended” or summed up in one saying or scripture, and that is found in Lev. 19:18 *Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself: I am the LORD.*

10 Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.

Another reason that love fulfills the law is that it never, never works any evil or bad thing (ill) against a man’s neighbor. No matter how much you love someone, you can never in that love do any harm to him.

Seriousness of Service, 11-14

11 And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed.

Since we have been made aware of our duties, both of work and love, now it is time to awake out of our sleep, being complacent about our duties as God’s

children. We cannot wait another minute; the time and duty are now both very urgent.

We know the time, how that it is a speedy deliverer. Our life does not last very long but is as a vapor passing quickly away, and time with it.

We are children of the light, not of the night. We must, therefore, be diligent and pursue those pious goals of being about our Father’s business.

We also know that our salvation, that complete and perfect salvation what shall come to us through the glory of God in Christ as we are delivered from this world and taken to our Paradise to live with him eternally. That salvation is nearer than when we believed. Every day it marches closer, and we should have our eyes upon it and work as though today would be the day when we would enter into that glory.

12 The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light.

In this life pursuit we are to remember how far the night is spent, the night of this world’s sojourning, and that the day of complete and perfect salvation is at hand.

Know this, we should cast off all the works of darkness, the sins that so easily beset us, put on the armor of light, which is the whole armor of God (Eph. 6:11), and look for the day to dawn and the Light to shine from heaven in his splendor and glory.

13 Let us walk honestly, as in the

day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying.

We are to walk honestly as in the day, as though men are watching us and seeing our works. May they be good works that men may see them and glorify our Father which is in heaven.

Rioting, drunkenness, chambering (sinful acts or a sexual nature), wantonness (desiring every type of sin, never being satisfied), strife and envying are all sins of the darkness, and we as God's children should not partake of them nor be found to love them or condone them.

14 But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.

Knowing the night is spent and the day is dawning, living in the light as others watch our every move, we are to put on the Lord Jesus Christ.

In doing so, we will not make substantial provision for the flesh only to fulfill our lusts, but we will be satisfied with his provision. He is our sufficiency; He is our fulness; He is our contentment; He all and in all. We should be satisfied with nothing less.

Romans 14:1-23

Lesson 24 of Romans
By Pastor Ronnie Wolfe

The Contest Over Meat, 1-4

1 Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations.

Those who are weak are those who are saved by God's grace but have not yet grown in the grace and knowledge of the Lord and know, understand and exercise the doctrines as they have been preached by the apostles and leaders of the churches.

Notice this said weak in "the faith," not weak in "faith." They had plenty of faith and strong enough faith, but they were not strong in "the faith," which designates the doctrines to be believed by Christians. It is the body of doctrine given to the churches of the Lord Jesus Christ.

This may especially denote the Jews, who were less wont to observe only the practices required by New Testament doctrine and more likely to continue in their old Judaism. They could not let go of their old ways.

The church at Rome, which may have been mainly Gentile, had a difficult time receiving Jews into their assembly; as they may have done with any weak believer.

But they were to receive them. This is Paul's instruction to them. But they were not to receive them simply so they could argue and debate with them, which would discourage and confuse them, but were to receive them without "doubtful disputations." We should do

the same today in our churches.

We are to make disciples, baptize them and teach them. We are not to make disciples, teach them and baptize them.

2 For one believeth that he may eat all things: another, who is weak, eateth herbs.

Those who are strong in the faith know and realize that God has no limitations in eating. A man may eat anything that he wants without question, giving thanks.

These who are strong in faith know that the ceremonial law of Moses has been abrogated and is no longer binding to believers.

Those who are weak in the faith have not yet learned this privilege, so they think that they must adhere to the eating law of the Old Testament. They Jews have been taught this from their youth, so turning away from this tradition is very difficult.

Because he is weak and thinks he must restrict his eating of meat, to be sure he does not eat anything unclean, he eats only herbs (vegetables).

3 Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not; and let not him which eateth not judge him that eateth: for God hath received him.

When I was a child, we were told that, although we did eat pork, we were not supposed to according to the Bible. We had friends who would not eat pork for this reason. When I grew up and learned that I was free to eat as I

wanted, I began immediately to question and doubt the sincerity of those who would not eat certain meat. I thought of myself as more enlightened than those who had a restricted diet.

But Paul instructs us not to despise those who do not eat. They are our brethren if they have faith in Christ Jesus.

On the other hand, I have met people who thought they were more spiritual than I because they knew to refrain from eating certain meats; but Paul tells them not to be a judge toward people such as I am.

The reason is that God has received us both through faith. No two people are equal in knowledge and understanding. We all must learn of Christ. This is a lifetime job. In the meantime, we must not be judges of other men's matters but mind our own.

4 Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be holden up: for God is able to make him stand.

We are all God's servants; we are not servants of one another. How, then, can we be judges of one another if we are God's servants?

It is to God that we stand or fall. Some will stand or remain in the faith and tenaciously hold to the doctrines; others will fall from them. Some will fall from them because they have never known Christ from the beginning of their profession. Others will fall away from their steadfastness of preaching and practicing the doctrines because of their backsliding. Whichever is the

case, it is before God. Both the weak and the strong are his servants only.

Contest Over A Day, 5-6

5 One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind.

First, we must realize that the days appointed for worship and the observances of the ordinances should not be considered here, because there was never any contention about these days.

These are Jewish days, as the eating of meat was mentioned in the earlier verses. These were Jewish days which were to be observed by them such as the Day of Pentecost, the Feasts, and the Day of Atonement.

Some of the believers at Rome thought that they must be continually observed even though Christ had died and fulfilled their purpose as a shadow. The disciples eventually stopped the observance of these days completely.

The strong in the faith believed that every day was the same and that they were not required to keep these days designated by the ceremonial law.

6 He that regardeth the day, regardeth it unto the Lord; and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it. He that eateth, eateth to the Lord, for he giveth God thanks; and he that eateth not, to the Lord he eateth not, and giveth God thanks.

Again we are not to be judged. Those who observe these days, if they have faith in Jesus Christ, are not to be considered brothers and sisters in Christ. Each one regard the day unto the Lord, and each one eats unto the Lord with thanksgiving.

Conclusion of Meat and Days, 7-9

7 For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself.

We do not live alone, nor do we die alone. This instructions teaches us that we need one another.

As we live, we must have fellowship with people of all degrees of spiritual growth. Let us not put off that fellowship.

When we die, we will need the fellowship and comfort of all believers, not the just the strong, but the weak.

You may find that the Christian who will be the most congenial to you will be the one who is weakest in the faith. I think I have already experienced that in my life.

Let us not cast aside our weak brothers and sisters. They may be weak in one area of Christ service; we may be weak in another area in which they are strong.

8 For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's.

We must remember that we are God's servants and live unto him, not unto one another. We are not

answerable ultimately to one another but to the Lord.

Whether we live or die, we are the Lord's servants. We belong to him by his own adoptive grace.

1 John 3:1 *Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not.*

9 For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living.

The Gospel is the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 15:1-4). This is his *mangum opus*, his great work.

The end or purpose of this great work was that he might be Lord to believers who are either dead or living.

He is our ultimate Judge; he is our ultimate Savior; he is our ultimate Lord. Therefore, our judgment should not be unto one another, but we should be servants only and not lord over God's heritage.

The Judgment To Come, 10-13

10 But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ.

___The weak brother judges the stronger brother for eating meat that

the weaker brother believes he cannot eat. The stronger brother, on the other hand, condemns or “sets at nought” his brother, determining that his weaker brother is to be condemned for his eating of herbs only, not knowing the liberty that is in Christ.

___ We must all remember that we must every one stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ. That is, every believer, not every man on the earth. This judgment is reserved exclusively for the believers.

11 For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God.

Isa 45:23 I have sworn by myself, the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, That unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear.

We shall not bow to one another and confess to one another, but we shall all bow before the Lord as his children and confess to him or answer to him as Lord.

12 So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God.

This is an emphasis of the fact that we will not give an account to one another but unto God. No one who is a believer will be excused from this accounting.

13 Let us not therefore judge one

another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in his brother’s way.

Paul instructs these Roman believers to stop judging one another and to judge another matter; that is, that we do not put a stumbling-block or an occasion to fall in our brother’s way.

If we can judge this, then we can be effective witnesses of the grace of God and will not fall into the temptation of making these small items tests of fellowship.

Self-judgment and Refrain, 14-23

14 I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that there is nothing unclean of itself: but to him that esteemeth any thing to be unclean, to him it is unclean.

Nothing that God has created is unclean of itself, because he said that it was good. Evidently the Lord Jesus had taught Paul, perhaps in a Arabian desert (Gal. 1:17-18), that nothing was unclean of itself.

But some think in their own consciences that a meat is unclean, so it is unclean to their conscience, and they cannot with good conscience eat that meat. They should, then, refrain from eating it.

15 But if thy brother be grieved with thy meat, now walkest thou not charitably. Destroy not him with thy meat, for whom Christ

died.

If the brother who is weak is grieved (saddened or sorrowful), you are not walking in a loving way if you condemn him for refraining from eating it.

We are not to destroy the peace in heart of those who do not eat meat, because Jesus Christ died for them, also, and they are a part of his kingdom.

The word “destroy” here may have the idea of considering a person to be dead or worthy of death. The “stronger” believer may consider the person who will not eat meat freely to be lost in his sin and worthy of eternal death; but this is not our call. This is God’s judgment, not ours.

This word also means “to lose.” If we do not receive the weaker brothers, then we may lose them and will have the opportunity to teach them the liberties available to them through Jesus Christ.

16 Let not then your good be evil spoken of:

If the weak brother sees what he considers to be wrong in you, he may speak evil of it. Thus that which is good (your liberty in Christ) is not recognized as something beneficial but something that is evil or disdained, and this all because you who are strong may speak down to those who are weak.

Therefore, the weak brother may never come to the peace of liberty in Christ if that liberty is evil spoken of.

17 For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.

The obtaining of God’s righteousness and entrance into his kingdom is not acquired by eating or drinking or by not eating or drinking. That is not what God’s kingdom is all about.

God’s kingdom is all about righteousness, peace, joy and the Holy Ghost, and no one can have that with everyone arguing over whether or not to eat meat, etc.

18 For he that in these things serveth Christ is acceptable to God, and approved of men.

If we serve Christ in righteousness, peace, joy and the Holy Ghost, we are acceptable to God, and we will also be approved of men.

Lu 2:52 And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man.

It is important to be acceptable to both man and God. This we can do with these graces.

19 Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another.

So, then, we are in the edifying business and not in the destroying business. We are not to destroy one another as brothers in Christ. We are to follow after these things.

Rom. 12:18 If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.

20 For meat destroy not the work of God. All things indeed are pure;

but it is evil for that man who eateth with offence.

First Paul said not to destroy the brother who is weak. Now he says not to destroy the work of God just so you can eat the meat you desire to eat.

The work of God is that grace which he works within us through regeneration and the gift of righteousness which he give to us by his blood. If we eat with offence, we are evil and will abrogate the work of God and count his work as nothing.

21 It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor any thing whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak.

So we who are strong are to be the ones who should adjust our lives rather than instructing the weak to do so.

If our eating makes our brother stumble, be offended or become weak, then we should not eat or drink anything that our weak brother considers to be unclean. He may stumble, be offended or be even more weak by our eating or drinking.

22 Hast thou faith? have it to thyself before God. Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth.

Although we may change our habits about eating and drinking so that our weak brother may not stumble, be offended, or become more weak that he is, we should not change our minds about our liberty in Christ.

We should merely keep to ourselves

that faith that we have in our liberty to eat what we want. Though we should not eat meat, we should not change our minds about eating it. We should not condemn ourselves and repent toward the strictness of the weak brother; we should keep that liberty in our own hearts, knowing that we have the liberty to eat and drink freely, though we may refrain from it for our brothers' sake.

23 And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith: for whatsoever is not of faith is sin.

But the weak man who doubts and yet eat the meat, he is “damned” or judged in his own conscience and cannot be happy as he eats that which he thinks he should not eat.

He is eating, yet he does not have faith in what he is doing. He should keep his own convictions about eating meat. He is not eating with faith and is in sin if he eats; for the Bible says that whatever is not of faith is sin, which becomes a very strong maxim from scripture which gives a general definition of sin, especially for believers.

Romans 15:1-12
Lesson 25 of Romans
By Pastor Ronnie Wolfe

Receiving One Another, 1-7

1 **We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves.**

Paul continues with his thoughts concerning the strong and weak brothers in Christ. He makes here a basic statement of fact in conclusion to his preceding instructions.

The statement is that the strong should bear the infirmities (weakness of mind) of the weak. We who are strong are the responsible ones, not the weak brothers.

We who are strong are not to please ourselves.

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

Every Christian is to please his neighbor, condescend to his neighbor, consider himself equal with his neighbor "for his good." That is, we are to please our neighbor in good things, not evil things. This will edify or build up our neighbor and not encourage him in the evil things of the world.

3 **For even Christ pleased not himself; but, as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me.**

Here is an example for us given by Christ himself, that he did not please

himself in the flesh. He learned obedience by the things that he suffered. He came to do God's will. See John 4:34.

Here Paul quotes Ps 69:9 *For the zeal of thine house hath eaten me up; and the reproaches of them that reproached thee are fallen upon me.*

The reproaches of those who were in the world and of the world who were to become God's children were the sins of the people by which they reproached God the Father. But those reproaches fell upon Christ, and he suffered for them. He thought not of himself but of us. The song says, "When he was on the cross, I was on his mind."

As an example, Christ is here teaching us that we should not be selfish and think of ourselves but think of others.

4 **For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.**

Paul speaks here of the Old Testament scriptures as writings for our learning. These have not been abrogated but are still useful for our Christian lives. They are for our recognition of the Messiah as a fulfillment of prophecy, a comfort to us seeing God as the Deliverer of Israel, and our hope of future glory in Christ.

Therefore, we should be patient in our Christian lives. See 2 Peter 1:5-8. We should consider the patience of Job and with patience wait for that which we see not.

Ro 8:25 *But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for [it].*

5 Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be likeminded one toward another according to Christ Jesus:

From the Old Testament scriptures we find that God is a God of patience and consolation. We see patience as he works with man in general and with Israel in particular, for they were a very stiff-necked people and rebellious against God; but God's patience was overwhelming to them and showed his love and longsuffering to them.

His consolation was shown to them in his delivering them from their enemies and leading them into the promised land along with so many other consolations with no room to mention them.

This is an encouragement for us to be like-minded one toward another as God's children. Remember the subject of the Romans 14.

With this consolation we can be assured of a hope that is both sure and steadfast and that gives us confidence in him that he will deliver us from this present evil world.

6 That ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

So then we can all with one mind, having our minds upon Christ and mimicking his mind having the same mind in us, glorify God.

But not only with one mind, all having the same mind toward God, but also with the mouth glorify God so that men may see our good works and also glorify God which is in heaven.

God is to receive the glory; that is, God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

7 Wherefore receive ye one another, as Christ also received us to the glory of God.

The strong believer is to receive the weak, and the weak believer is to receive the strong. We are to do this in the same manner in which Christ received us.

Christ received us, even though we did not come up to par with his expectation. We should receive one another in the same manner. Christ condescended to be among us who were his enemies. We should also condescend to things that are humble and receive those who may not be as strong as ourselves or may not see things exactly the same way that we do.

This is done to the glory of God, to which all glory should redound

2 Cor. 4:15 *For all things are for your sakes, that the abundant grace might through the thanksgiving of many redound to the glory of God.*

Christ As a Minister, 8-

8 Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers:

Jesus Christ was a minister or servant of the circumcision (the Jews) in order that he might prove and execute the truth of God and to confirm the promises made through the nation of Israel unto the fathers of Israel, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, etc.

He was also ...

Heb 8:2 *A minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man.*

9 And that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy; as it is written, For this cause I will confess to thee among the Gentiles, and sing unto thy name.

But Jesus was not a minister to the Jews for their sakes only but also for the sake of the Gentiles.

I am so happy to know that God's purpose from eternity was to reach out to the Gentiles and save them by his grace.

Ps 18:49 *Therefore will I give thanks unto thee, O LORD, among the heathen, and sing praises unto thy name.*

Isa 42:6 *I the LORD have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles;*

10 And again he saith, Rejoice, ye Gentiles, with his people.

De 32:43 *Rejoice, O ye nations (Gentiles), with his people: for he will avenge the blood of his servants, and*

will render vengeance to his adversaries, and will be merciful unto his land, and to his people.

11 And again, Praise the Lord, all ye Gentiles; and laud him, all ye people.

Ps 117:1 *O praise the LORD, all ye nations: praise him, all ye people.*

12 And again, Esaias saith, There shall be a root of Jesse, and he that shall rise to reign over the Gentiles; in him shall the Gentiles trust.

Isa 11:10 *And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek: and his rest shall be glorious.*

This proves that the promise of God is true through Jesus Christ, the Messiah, the root of Jesse. Jesus fulfilled these prophecies and became a light unto the Gentiles, whom they shall seek and find.

2 Cor. 9:15 *Thanks [be] unto God for his unspeakable gift.*

Jesus Christ is a minister to us Gentiles. He is our Savior and our example of living and attitude. Let us be more like him every day.

Romans 15:13-16
Lesson 26 of Romans
By Pastor Ronnie Wolfe

Our Fulness In God, 13-16

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

This is the only verse in the Bible where the phrase “the God of hope” is used. There are, however, other verses which teach the hope that we have in God.

The God of Hope

Ps 71:5 *For thou art my hope, O Lord GOD: thou art my trust from my youth.*

Ac 26:6 *And now I stand and am judged for the hope of the promise made of God unto our fathers:*

Tit 1:2 *In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began;*

This God of hope is beseeched for the filling of all joy and peace. We know that there is great joy and peace in knowing and believing in God through Jesus Christ.

Ro 14:17 *For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.*

The God of Joy

Our joy in God comes through the atonement:

Ro 5:11 *And not only [so], but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement.*

Ps 43:4 *Then will I go unto the altar of God, unto God my exceeding joy: yea, upon the harp will I praise thee, O God my God.*

Eccl. 2:26 *For God giveth to a man that is good in his sight wisdom, and knowledge, and joy ...*

The word of God is a joy to us. We should spend much time in it. Jeremiah heard the word of God through inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Read how he rejoiced in the word of God.

We also have joy because we called by the name of God:

Jer 15:16 *Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart: for I am called by thy name, O LORD God of hosts (JEHOVAH ELOHIM TSABA).*

The God of Peace

We know that our peace with God is such that it passes all understanding; it cannot be comprehended by human minds.

Php 4:7 *And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.*

We know about the peace of God, that it should reign in our hearts as we serve the Lord through his church.

Col 3:15 *And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful.*

We also know about peace with God, which we have being justified by faith.

Ro 5:1 *Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:*

Our justification has reconciled us unto our God, and we now have peace within our hearts and between us and the Sovereign of the universe. That brings both joy and peace in our hearts.

Our text verse continues to tell us that this joy and peace comes by believing. Faith is a powerful thing, because it is a direct gift of God.

Eph 2:8 *For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:*

Faith is a gift from God, so we cannot boast of it. We cannot parade it as though we created it ourselves or conjured it in our own minds and hearts. Without the gift of God we would have no faith at all.

Ga 5:22 *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith,*

Here we see again that faith is a gift. It is the fruit of the Spirit, not the fruit

of our own hands or our own philosophy. Thank God for his wonder gift, Jesus Christ; but thank him, too, for the gift of faith.

Through faith is the only way we can have joy and peace with God. Baptism cannot bring peace without faith. Communion cannot bring peace without faith. Service cannot bring peace and joy without faith. In fact, in Hebrews we read the following:

Heb 11:6 *But without faith it is impossible to please [him]: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.*

This faith is given so that we can abound in hope.

Grace abounds: Rom. 5:15, 20; 6:1

Sufferings abound: 1 Cor. 1:5

Wisdom abounds: Eph. 1:8

Faith abounds: Col. 2:7

Love Abounds: 1 Thess. 3:12

Many graces abound in us: 2 Pet. 1:5-8

Hope abounds: Rom. 15: 13

In our text it is hope that abounds. Paul says about hope:

Ro 8:24 *For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for?*

This abounding in hope, then, is the character of looking to that which we have not seen and cannot see. We look and hope for that which is invisible. Notice the following popular verse:

2Co 4:18 *While we look not at the things*

which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.

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

Paul was persuaded or convinced about the believers at Rome that they had been filled by God's grace with goodness, knowledge and admonishing.

Eph 3:19 And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.

We would have no goodness without God. We would have no knowledge without God. We would not be able to perfectly admonish our brothers and sisters without God. To him be all the honor and glory!

We know that there is none good (Rom. 3:12). So, where does good come from? Jesus said in Mr 10:18 ... *Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God.*

Goodness, then, must come from God. With no good in ourselves, we cannot please him. We must be changed from that which is not good into that which is good; this is the grace of God in regeneration. John said so well, "Ye must be born again ..." (John 3:3).

We are also to be filled with knowledge. There is no real knowledge without God. Dr. Gail Terrell used to say, "An education without God is no education at all." This is so true.

Jas 1:17 Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.

A few days ago I was watching an interview on the Bill O'Reilly Show. He was talking with a Biology professor concerning the thoughts of the theory of evolution as it is contrasted with what is now called ID, or Intelligent Design.

Bill O'Reilly asked why ID could not be taught along side the theory of evolution. The professor said that he deals only with science and that they can talk about those things in religion class or philosophy class.

What is evolution if it is not a philosophy? It certainly is not science! The professor even admitted that this science will never be perfected but will change continually. Does he not realize that in a Christian religion class they will teach that God is Omniscient? Now that is science!

The Bible encourages us time and time again that we can know some things.

John 4:22 - we know what we worship
John 9:29 - We know that God spake unto Moses
John 9:31 - we know that God heareth not sinners
John 21:24 - we know that his

testimony is true.

Rom.7:14 - we know that the law is spiritual

I Tim. 1:8 - we know that the law is good

1 John 2:3 - we do know that we know him

1 John 2:18 - we know that it is the last time

1 John 3:14 - We know that we have passed from death unto life

... and so many more references of things that we know. Remember that Job said in Job 19:25 *For I know [that] my redeemer liveth, and [that] he shall stand at the latter [day] upon the earth:*

Paul's desire is that we be filled with knowledge. This is a gift from God.

We are also filled with admonishing.

Col 3:16 *Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.*

To admonish means to lift up or encourage. My, how we should be at work about this business! Just one word of encouragement will make a big difference in a believer. Instead of trying to find fault or dwelling on faults, let us find the right and respect in people and dwell on that. If a sin is committed, there are ways to deal with that, but just to fault someone because we may not like him is a sin in itself.

There was no one to encourage David because of the great horror of

war, but the Bible says in 1 Sam. 30:6 - *but David encouraged himself in the LORD his God.*

Paul here speaks of admonishing one another. This is in the context of the local church. It is so sad that sometimes churches do the opposite:

Ga 5:15 *But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another.*

Ga 6:2 *Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.*

15 Nevertheless, brethren, I have written the more boldly unto you in some sort, as putting you in mind, because of the grace that is given to me of God,

Paul in previous portions of this book has written some boldness unto them concerning some problems they may have in their church. He did not use the entire letter for scathing, but he used much of it for exhortation and encouragement and even praise.

Paul was merely putting them in mind or reminding them of things they had already been taught just as Peter did in his epistle.

2 Pet 1:12 *Wherefore I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, though ye know [them], and be established in the present truth.*

Finally, Paul alludes to his apostleship as a grace given to him. As an apostle of the Lord, he is in the

position to instruct and remind these believers in their duties concerning their faith in Christ.

So Paul here reminds us, too, of the duties to which we are called and are responsible for keeping. To this we should take present heed to both understand and to execute these great duties by which we can encourage and teach others the ways of the Lord in the proper way.

16 That I should be the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God, that the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Ghost.

Paul has written to them both in a scathing way and in an encouraging way in order that he might be a minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, which God had called him to.

He did no minister programs or promotions. He ministered only the Gospel of Jesus Christ, which Paul thought was the power of God unto salvation, and which there is no other to preach except the one that was given him by God (Gal. 1:8-9).

The Gentiles with the Holy Ghost were just as the word Gentile intimates: lost, undone, heathen, rejected, without hope in the world. But with the Holy Ghost through the preaching of the Gospel, Paul can be a minister to these foreigners of the wonderful grace of God.

Paul could have been a great teacher in Israel. He could have been a great scholar and perhaps head of the Sanhedrin in Jerusalem, but he chose

rather that better part and portion: the Gospel to go into the regions beyond and offer grace and freedom to those who were afar off – the Gentiles. May we be as dedicated to our ministry and work as Paul was to his!

Romans 15:17-33
Lesson 27 of Romans
By Pastor Ronnie Wolfe

Paul Glories in the Gospel, 17-21

17 I have therefore whereof I may glory through Jesus Christ in those things which pertain to God.

Paul might glory in many things. In the flesh he might glory about his education, his intelligence, his lofty position as a leader among the Jews, etc. Notice

Phil. 3:4-7 Though I might also have confidence in the flesh. If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more: 5 Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee; 6 Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless. 7 But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ.

But Paul was not glorying in the flesh but in those things that pertain to God through Jesus Christ.

Paul had a wonderful reason for this. Jesus Christ had come to him on the road to Damascus and had given him eternal life and a new understanding of spiritual things.

Jesus Christ, the one whom he had mocked and persecuted, had become the subject of Paul's ministry. Every action

of Paul was deeply affected by the person and work of Jesus Christ as it pertained to Paul himself. He was ever thankful and never forgetful of Christ's mercy toward him.

18 For I will not dare to speak of any of those things which Christ hath not wrought by me, to make the Gentiles obedient, by word and deed,

Paul is sworn to keep silent about any of the things he has done himself but will speak openly and bravely about what God had done through him. His words and his deeds were all accomplished by God through his power only and not upon the whim or work of Paul himself.

This all to bring the Gentiles to obedience of faith and to follow the Lord Jesus Christ in their lives. This is what God had called Paul to do, and his exalted God and credited him for all the work that was done through Paul.

19 Through mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God; so that from Jerusalem, and round about unto Illyricum, I have fully preached the gospel of Christ.

Paul's preaching was much like that of the Lord Jesus, since it was accompanied by signs and wonders. Many were the wonderful wonders of Paul as he healed people and did many other things.

Signs and wonders were used by God to vindicate and approve the work of the apostles as they preached the Gospel. This vindication approved their

message and their position as apostles. It also approved their writing of the scriptures.

Because of the power of the Spirit of God, Paul preached the Gospel of Christ from Jerusalem and Illyricum. He preached it to the full, not dismissing anything that God had given him.

20 Yea, so have I strived to preach the gospel, not where Christ was named, lest I should build upon another man's foundation:

All of the apostles had been preaching the Gospel in regions, mainly in Judea. Paul did not want to steal another man's crown to give credit to himself, so he was determined to preach the Gospel in places where it had not been preached before. This culminated in the Gospel's being scattered around the world.

21 But as it is written, To whom he was not spoken of, they shall see: and they that have not heard shall understand.

Paul does not apply this verse in Isaiah 52:15 as referring to the apostle himself but to his work as an evangelist and a propagation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ; so the prophecy is connected to the Messiah and not Paul.

This is a prophecy of the Gospel's going into the whole world even unto those whom the word of God was not directed in the Old Testament period. The oracles were given to the Jews, but now God has opened the oracles up to the entire world.

This is reflected in one of the most beloved verses in the Bible, John 3:16, "For God so loved the world ..."

Paul's Hindrance In Coming To Rome, 22-29

22 For which cause also I have been much hindered from coming to you.

Paul was so prolific in preaching the Gospel and meeting his itinerary that he was hindered from going to Rome at this time. He wanted everyone in the world to hear the Gospel.

23 But now having no more place in these parts, and having a great desire these many years to come unto you;

Paul had no place in the parts of the earth from Jerusalem to Illyricum left to preach the Gospel, because he had preached it fully to them. So there may be a time shortly that he may be able to come to them at Rome.

24 Whensoever I take my journey into Spain, I will come to you: for I trust to see you in my journey, and to be brought on my way thitherward by you, if first I be somewhat filled with your company.

Paul had a desire to journey into Spain, for it is likely the Gospel had not yet been preached in Spain. On his way he hoped to make company with the

saints at Rome and to fellowship with them and to be filled with their company or fellowship, fill up his own spirit with comfort and exhortation. He will also be filled with the knowledge that they are remaining faithful to the truths that he has taught them.

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

This trip to Jerusalem was to fulfill a plan that he made to help to poor saints at Jerusalem. He was to distribute the money that had been collected to these poor saints.

26 For it hath pleased them of Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor saints which are at Jerusalem

“That is, the churches of Macedonia, particularly Philippi and Thessalonica; and the churches of Achaia, especially the church at Corinth, which was the metropolis of Achaia:” (John Gill).

Paul was delighted to be a part of this collection for the poor saints at Jerusalem, and he was going to see that the contribution was going to be delivered to them.

27 It hath pleased them verily; and their debtors they are. For if the Gentiles have been made partakers of their spiritual things, their duty is also to minister unto them in carnal things.

Those of Macedonia and Achaia were pleased to be a part of this giving to the

saints at Jerusalem, because they owed them their carnal things. They had received a great spiritual blessing from the saints at Jerusalem, the Jews to whom were committed the oracles of God. Jesus was Jew and came from them, that is, the message of him. The church came from the Jews, and salvation is of the Jews. These ones owed the saints at Jerusalem a lot.

The least they could do and were very willing and delighted to do was to give of their carnal means to help these poor saints, and that they did.

28 When therefore I have performed this, and have sealed to them this fruit, I will come by you into Spain.

When Paul has made sure the delivering of the contribution was made at Jerusalem, he would come to them at Rome.

Let us know that a fruit came from Jerusalem to the Gentile at Rome through Paul’s preaching of the Gospel to them. Now this fruit is returning to these poor saints as is normally the case.

Whether Paul ever was able to go to Spain (Portugal) no one knows. He was, as we know, arrested at Jerusalem and taken to Rome. But his intention was to go through Spain and then to Rome to visit the saints there.

29 And I am sure that, when I come unto you, I shall come in the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ.

Paul was sure that he was going to

be at Rome, for he had purposed in the spirit to go, as we read in Acts 19:21.

Come what may, Paul would not be weary of the Gospel of Christ. He will be willing to preach the Gospel then just as he has always been since his conversion.

He was not ashamed of the Gospel, because it is the power of God unto salvation.

Paul's Farewell

30 Now I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, and for the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with me in your prayers to God for me;

Paul closes his letter by begging the saints at Rome to strive together with him in their prayers to God for him, that he would make a good trip and be able to see them shortly.

This was to be done for the sake of the Lord Jesus Christ and for the love of the Holy Spirit. We say we love God; we say we love the Lord Jesus; but how many of us consider whether we love the Holy Spirit?

31 That I may be delivered from them that do not believe in Judaea; and that my service which I have for Jerusalem may be accepted of the saints;

Some of the Jews at Jerusalem were opposed vehemently against Paul because he was preaching to the Gentiles (or Greeks) and forsaking, they thought, the law of Moses by preaching

the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Read Acts 21:27-31.

They were not believers, and they wanted to harm Paul if he came to Jerusalem. He wanted the Romans to pray for his safety there.

Paul also wanted his contribution to the saints at Jerusalem to be cheerfully received by the poor saints there, that they would not feel it a burden on other churches to bring contributions from them to help these poor saints.

32 That I may come unto you with joy by the will of God, and may with you be refreshed.

If his enemies at Jerusalem have opportunity and are successful in harming him, then he thinks he will not be able to come to the Romans with a joyful heart.

But be that as it may, he wants God's will to be done. So, if God is willing, he will be delivered from his enemies, and he will come to Rome and join with the brothers and sisters there and be refreshed and both will be satisfied that the Lord's work has been done and the saints at Jerusalem have accepted the gifts from them. This would indeed be a joyous occasion.

33 Now the God of peace be with you all. Amen.

As at the close of all his letters, Paul enjoins the peace of God to be with the saints at Rome and closes the letter with that familiar word, "Amen."

Romans 16:1-27

Lesson 28 of Romans
By Pastor Ronnie Wolfe

Salutations, 1-16

1 I commend unto you Phebe our sister, which is a servant of the church which is at Cenchrea:

Phebe was probably the woman who carried this letter to Rome for the church there to read.

Paul calls her a sister, not a blood sister, but a spiritual sister, because she is denoted "our sister."

She was a servant, or a deaconess in the church at Cenchrea, where she probably served the poor and perhaps the women of the church, since she was not allowed to preach or teach the word to men.

2 That ye receive her in the Lord, as becometh saints, and that ye assist her in whatsoever business she hath need of you: for she hath been a succourer of many, and of myself also.

Phebe was to be received or welcomed at the church at Rome. They were also to assist her in whatever she needed for her ministry among them. Phebe had been a great help in the ministry of Paul and the church of the Lord Jesus Christ.

3 Greet Priscilla and Aquila my helpers in Christ Jesus:

These are the husband and wife

team who took Apollos aside and instructed him in the things of the Lord more perfectly (See Acts 18:24-26). They were also helpers to the apostle Paul.

4 Who have for my life laid down their own necks: unto whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles.

This couple have put themselves in danger even unto death for the apostle Paul. No one knows of any occasion written in sacred or profane history which is alluded to here, but this is a testimony that they were a great help to him in this manner.

The apostle Paul was thankful for their testimony and their lives, and also are the churches of the Gentiles.

5 Likewise greet the church that is in their house. Salute my wellbeloved Epaenetus, who is the firstfruits of Achaia unto Christ.

Aquilla and Priscilla had a church in their house. There were no church buildings in those days, and many times churches met in houses of believers.

This Epaenetus is a man unknown to us whom Paul loved in the Lord and in the ministry. Some believe he may have been one of the seventy sent out by the Lord, but there is no Bible proof of that.

This man was either the first or one of the first to be saved in the region of Achaia, which I am persuaded lends to the sweetness of heart that existed between the two men.

6 Greet Mary, who bestowed much labour on us.

As the apostle Paul and those with him depended upon the mercy and charity of the saints in areas where they visited, so this Mary was one who was very generous, no doubt, to help them out and to labor with them.

7 Salute Andronicus and Junia, my kinsmen, and my fellowprisoners, who are of note among the apostles, who also were in Christ before me.

The two first mentioned ones in the verse were, no doubt, blood related to Paul, for he calls them “kinsmen.” Paul was thankful that even his own kinsmen, whether that be simply because they were Jewish or because they were of the same family, were saved by the grace of God.

During one of the many times that Paul was in prison, these fellow prisoners were with him and were an encouragement to him and a help in the ministry.

These prisoners were noted by the apostles as great helpers in the work of the Lord. They were also in Christ before Paul, so they perhaps had already gone through some of the sufferings that Paul was experiencing, or they may have even suffered at the hands of Saul (Paul) himself before his conversion and now are giving him encouragement and help.

8 Greet Amplias my beloved in the Lord.

This man (probably a Roman) was beloved by Paul in the Lord. No doubt he had also been a great source of help, encouragement and fellowship to Paul.

9 Salute Urbane, our helper in Christ, and Stachys my beloved.

Perhaps Urbane was a pastor, as some think, or just another helper in Christ. He is here mentioned, because Paul thought highly of him and appreciated him in the Lord.

Again another “beloved” of Paul was this Stachys, whom we know nothing about; but he was another helper to Paul and a great friend.

10 Salute Apelles approved in Christ. Salute them which are of Aristobulus’ household.

Apelles is not known for sure, but he is said here to be “approved in Christ,” which is the only way anyone is approved of God. Paul told his preacher friend, Timothy, “Study to shew thyself approved of God ...” Perhaps this man studied the scriptures and was a help to Paul and other believers in his studies. This is only conjecture.

John Gill relates that Aristobulus may not have been present at Rome at this time, so Paul is saluting his household. He also thinks that this man could also have died before this and that is the reason Paul is saluting his household.

11 Salute Herodion my kinsman. Greet them that be of the household of Narcissus, which are in the Lord.

Herodion is a relative of Paul, so he salutes him here as a believer in Christ.

Again another household is saluted here perhaps for the same reasons mentioned above.

12 Salute Tryphena and Tryphosa, who labour in the Lord. Salute the beloved Persis, which laboured much in the Lord.

First, we have two women mentioned who were a great help to Paul and the other believers and the churches of the Lord, who labored in the Lord.

Persis is another woman, but it is said of her here that the “labored much in the Lord,” which must mean that she went the extra mile or did that beyond what the average person would do.

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

Paul salutes Rufus and adds that he is chosen of the Lord, perhaps out of great sin or great danger or out of great harm. He also salutes his mother. She may have been an instrument to give the gospel to her son.

Paul calls this woman his own mother, but she was not his earthly mother. Paul was a Jew, but Rufus is a Roman name. Paul had a familial love for her, and she probably was very tender toward Paul due to his relationship with her son.

14 Salute Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermas, Patrobas, Hermes, and the brethren which are with them.

This seems to be a group of men with both Roman and Jewish names who worked together. Perhaps they traveled together to preach the Gospel. We know that they were an encouragement to Paul, for he mentions them here.

15 Salute Philologus, and Julia, Nereus, and his sister, and Olympas, and all the saints which are with them.

Philologus and Julia are probably husband and wife. The others mentioned in this verse may be either siblings who live in the same home or at least kinfolks who live in the same home.

16 Salute one another with an holy kiss. The churches of Christ salute you.

To all of these whom he salutes and to all the church that is at Rome Paul encourages them to greet one another in an appropriate way. At that time and place it was a holy kiss. In our culture there is no holy kiss in this way.

Paul then closes this section of greeting and salutations with a reciprocal greeting from the churches of Christ everywhere who are bound with common Christian love to God and for the apostle Paul himself.

Warnings

17 Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have

learned; and avoid them.

18 For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple.

19 For your obedience is come abroad unto all men. I am glad therefore on your behalf: but yet I would have you wise unto that which is good, and simple concerning evil.

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

21 ¶ Timotheus my workfellow, and Lucius, and Jason, and Sosipater, my kinsmen, salute you.

22 I Tertius, who wrote this epistle, salute you in the Lord.

23 Gaius mine host, and of the whole church, saluteth you. Erastus the chamberlain of the city saluteth you, and Quartus a brother.

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

Doxology

25 ¶ Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began,

26 But now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith:

27 To God only wise, be glory through Jesus Christ for ever. Amen. <<Written to the Romans from Corinthus, and sent by Phebe servant of the church at Cenchrea.>>