

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS

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INTRODUCTION

During the winter of AD 56-57, Paul was at Corinth, in the home of his friend and convert, Gaius, (*Rom 16:23, 1Cor 1:14*). While there he dictated to his friend and secretary, Tertius, a letter designated for the Christians at Rome. This letter was to prepare them for the visit he hoped to make to their city, to explain the purpose of his visit and to set before them a full explanation of the Gospel as he understood and proclaimed it. His long-term aim was to visit Spain. He thought that Rome, and the Christians in Rome, would be a good base to launch out from, to distant realms of the Roman empire. One reason for writing this full statement, may have been his awareness that his opponents were misrepresenting his message in various places, and he took the opportunity to set the record straight. Furthermore he may have wished to involve the Roman Christians themselves, in reaching out with him into Spain, with the Gospel.

We do not know for sure how the church in Rome was established, but in *Ac 2:10*, the only visitors from Europe (who are mentioned), who attended the feast of Pentecost at Jerusalem, were “visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes.” Probably some of these were among the 3000 who believed and were baptised, and returned home to Rome with the Gospel in AD 30.

At the time of Paul’s writing, AD 57, Gentile believers were more numerous than Jewish Christians in Rome and he has to warn the Gentile Christians not to despise their Jewish brothers in the faith, *Rom 11:18*.

Romans has the first place among the epistles of Paul, because it is his longest letter and his clearest presentation of the Gospel which he preached.

It is thought by many, that in addition to the copy of Romans that was sent to Rome, other copies were made and sent to other churches, copies which were without chapter 16 and ended with the closing statement at the end of chapter 15.

Romans was Paul’s last letter written before his prolonged period of arrest, first in Caesarea and then in Rome. It is thus later than his letters to the Thessalonians, Galatians, Corinthians, but before Philemon, Colossians, Ephesians, Philippians and the three Pastoral Epistles of 1Timothy, 2Timothy and Titus. (See “Romans” – F.F. Bruce, p30.)

Romans is a comprehensive exposition of the great truths of salvation in the Gospel, set out in logical fashion and illuminated by the Old Testament Scripture. It is firstly doctrinal, setting forth the truth of the Gospel, and secondly practical Christian life. The basic theme is salvation, which is presented in terms of the righteousness of God, which, received by faith, issues in life.

The great themes of Romans are the Gospel, salvation, the righteousness of God, justification of sinners by faith in Christ, identification with Christ, life in the Spirit and practical Christian living. The key verse is *Rom 1:16*.

Section 1 Paul's Greeting and Personal Comments 1:1-15

A The Greeting 1:1-7

The Herald of the Gospel v1

Paul uses his Roman name which first appears in Scripture, *Ac 13:7-13*. He describes himself as a "servant," (*doulos*), in relationship to Jesus Christ, one fully committed to do His will. As "apostle" Paul is describing his appointment by Christ in the ministry, *Ac 26:17, 9:15, 13:2*, in which he has been set apart unto the Gospel of God, *Gal 1:1,15*.

The Gospel in Relationship to the Old Testament v2

God had promised the Gospel through His prophets in the Holy Scriptures, in typology, (the Ark, the Sacrifices, the Priesthood, the Brasen Serpent etc), in prophecy, *Is 53, Is 9:6,7, Gen 3:15*, and in typical persons, (Melchisedec, Moses, David etc).

The Subject of the Gospel v3,4

The Gospel concerns Jesus Christ our Lord and Paul mentions His Sonship, humanity, royal lineage, revelation in power by the resurrection according to the Holy Spirit, and His Name as Saviour, (Jesus), Messiah, (Christ), and Lord of all.

The Objective of the Gospel v5

Through Christ, Paul and His companions have received grace and apostleship to bring the obedience that comes from faith among all nations.

The Fruit of the Gospel v6,7

The believers in Rome are called to belong to Jesus Christ, as beloved of God, and called to be saints or set apart ones, *Phil 1:1, 1Cor 1:2, 1Thes 1:4*.

"Grace to you" is the Greek greeting and "peace" is the Hebrew welcome. God freely gives both of these to men and women through Christ.

B Personal Comments 1:8-15

Paul expresses his thankfulness for the believers at Rome and for the world-wide impact of their strong faith. He assures them of his constant prayers for all in the church, and adds that he is praying for a way, in God's will to visit them. His purpose for visiting the saints in Rome is to impart to them some spiritual gift, so that they may be established and in turn be blessed by them. One of the hindrances mentioned in *v13* may have been the Imperial Edict of AD 49, *Ac 18:2*. Paul had often planned to visit Rome, *v13*, and was ready and prepared to bring the Gospel to them, *v15*. By the time of Paul's writing Rome had become the inheritor of Greek civilisation and so probably the "barbarians" were those further to the west of Rome.

Section 2 Key to the Theme of Romans 1:16,17

Let us, in no way, be ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, because it is the powerful means, which God employs to save all that believe. In what way is this so? It is so because in the Gospel there is the revelation of God's way of righteousness, and the means whereby a sinner can be put right with God, on the basis of faith in Christ's death and resurrection, and not by good works. Paul quotes *Hab 2:4b* as the Old Testament authority for this statement.

Section 3 The Universal Sinfulness of Man 1:18 - 3:20

A The Pagan 1:18-32

As things are, human beings are in the wrong with God, and His holy indignation and fiery anger is revealed against them. The whole of humanity is morally bankrupt and stands to be condemned at the judgment bar of God. It is not that they did not know the truth about God, for they did, but they deliberately closed their minds to it and suppressed it. Mankind was originally monotheistic, *v19,21*, (“Eternity in their Hearts”), and every man knows there is a God, for creation, *1:19,20*, and man’s conscience, *2:14,15*, proves it to him.

The moral corruption of humanity resulted from wrong ideas about God, which arose from man’s deliberate suppression of the truth, which God has made clear to them, *v18*. Instead of giving glory and thanks to the Creator, they turned and worshipped created things. This idolatry in turn led to immorality of the grossest sort.

Because man gave God up, God gave them up, *v24,26,28*, to the consequences of their choice, and to suffer His wrath which is the response of His holiness to wickedness and rebellion.

B The Moralist 2:1-16

In this passage Paul writes as though he was talking to someone in a manner of debate. He puts questions or objections in his critic’s mouth and then answers them.

His focus is on the gentile moralist, (and some say the religious Jews), of his day, who despised and judged the deeply depraved heathen of the preceding passage. The “enlightened” and cultured citizens of Greece and Rome prided themselves on their superior manner of life. Paul sets himself to show clearly that though the civilised moral man has not fallen to the depths of human depravity of the polluted Gentiles, he still stands guilty before God, because in his pride he stands as judge of others while in fact he also commits the same sins.

The judgment of God upon humanity will be according to man’ works, *v6-10*, with impartiality, *v11*, according to light received, *v12*, and will be a judgment upon the motives of men’s hearts, *v16*.

The providential provision of God for man, *Ac 14:15-17, 17:25-27, Rom 1:20*, is intended to lead him to repentance, *v4*, and to seek God for mercy.

In *v7,10,13,14* Paul is stating what is required of man if he is to be justified on the grounds of human merit, that is by his works. The apostle is not teaching that a man can be saved or justified by his good works, he is simply pointing out the standard required by God for this to occur. In fact no one ever has, or ever will, satisfy God’s standard of righteousness by his own efforts.

Both Jews and Gentiles are under law, but different laws. The Jew is under the Law of Moses, *v12*, while the Gentile is under the Law of Conscience, *v15*, which has been divinely written on the hearts of all men, *Jn 1:9*. The conscience of man witnesses to right and wrong and God’s law is written on the heart of every man. Fortunately for the human race, the common grace of God is upon all men, and in some measure men respond to this innate moral law in their hearts. Without this, human society would destroy itself.

C The Jew 2:17 – 3:8

1. The Jew and the Law 2:17-24

Paul commences by outlining the ten privileges of the Jew, *v17-20*, and then challenges them to take an honest look at themselves and see if they are keeping the Law they boast in, *v21-23*.

He concludes, *v24*, that it is the Jew's failure to keep God's Law that brings the Name of God into disrepute among the Gentiles, *Is 52:5*.

2. The Value of Circumcision 2:25-29

Circumcision is profitable as a sign of God's covenant with His people through Abraham, *Gen 17*, for those who live by faith, *Deut 30:11-14*, *Rom 10:6-8*, and obey God's Law. However circumcision brings with it an obligation to keep the whole of God's Law, and if a circumcised person does not do that he is no better than the uncircumcised.

Some of Israel's neighbours practised circumcision but it was not a sign of covenant with God, *Jer 9:25,26,AMP*.

On the other hand if an uncircumcised man keeps the righteousness of the Law he will be counted as circumcised, *v26*, and will show up the short comings of the unworthy Jew, *v27*, for being a true child of God is not an outward thing but is a true circumcision of the heart, *v28,29*. *Deut 30:6*, *Deut 10:16*, *Col 2:11*, *Phil 3:3*.

3. Answering All Objections 3:1-8

Paul now imagines someone challenging him with five likely questions and he responds confidently.

D All Humanity 3:9-20

Paul's questioner continues, "You have said it is an advantage to belong to the Jewish nation. does it not follow that we Jews are superior to those Gentiles who lack the privileges we enjoy?" "Not at all!" says Paul; "We Jews may have greater advantages than the Gentiles but we have fallen short of God's standards of righteousness, both Jews and Gentiles. All are bound to stand guilty before God. The Scriptures declare this to be so."

Paul follows with a series of quotes from Old Testament scriptures that sum up the general sinfulness of humanity and of the Jews in particular. These require Jews, as well as Gentiles, to admit their moral bankruptcy.

Paul's conclusion for every living person is in *v20*.

Section 4 The Way of Salvation God has Provided to Meet the Need of Sinful Man 3:21-5:21

A Justification by Faith 3:21-31

But God has provided a new way to acceptance with Him, which does not depend on legal obedience. It is the way of being declared righteous before God through faith in Jesus Christ, "apart from the law," *v21*, for Jews and Gentiles alike. Both Jews and Gentiles have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God, but God has freely provided full justification for all who believe, through the work of redemption accomplished by Christ on the Cross. God has set forth Christ as

the One whose sacrificial death has cleansed away our guilt of sin, and has removed His wrath that was hanging over our heads. What Christ has done for us we can receive by faith.

In this way then, God has vindicated His own righteous character, while at the same time putting sinners “in the right” with Him, through faith. Here both Jew and Gentile alike are justified by God’s free grace and all grounds of boasting in one’s personal righteousness are removed.

Furthermore God’s Law is not negated by the principle of faith but rather it is established by the power of God in the very heart of one who believes in Christ, *v31*.

B Two Old Testament Examples 4:1-8

Abraham and David are brought forward as two Old Testament examples that obtained a righteous standing before God by their faith. Abraham is a supreme example. Although his works of obedience to God were outstanding, Abraham’s acceptance with God was not based upon His works but upon his faith, for it is written, “Abraham believed God and his faith was accounted to him for righteousness.”

C Example Of Abraham’s Faith 4:9-25

Abraham was justified by faith but where does circumcision fit in? Well, Abraham’s faith was accounted to him righteousness, *Gen 15:6*, at least fourteen years before the rite of circumcision was established, which was a sign and a seal of the righteousness which he had before he was circumcised, *v11*. In Abraham’s life the order was first faith, then justification and then circumcision. The Jewish legalists of Paul’s day reversed this order putting circumcision first. Abraham was not circumcised in order to be justified – but was circumcised because he was justified.

Furthermore we must consider how the gift of righteousness by faith relates to the Law of Moses. In *Gal 3:17* it says that the law came 430 years after the promise was made to Abraham. The promise that he would be the heir of the world was given through the righteousness of faith, and was prior to, and independent of the law. The law could not cancel or modify the original terms of the promise through faith. **God’s promise to Abraham of heirship of the world was given through the righteousness of faith, but the Jews expected the inheritance to come by keeping the law.** Paul says that the law was given to reveal sin, *3:20*, and for this reason the law and the principle of righteousness by faith are mutually exclusive.

Abraham’s faith was in the God who calls those things that do not exist as though they did, and gives them real existence by doing so. When God told Abraham that he would have a vast multitude of descendants he was still childless and he and Sarah were well beyond the age of parenthood. Abraham did not ignore the unfavourable, physical circumstances, but when he looked upon the promise of God he considered God’s Word far outweighed the physical improbability of having children. Abraham did not waver at the promise of God through unbelief but was strong in faith giving glory to God, knowing that what He had promised He was also able to perform. This won for Abraham the favour of God.

This principle of faith in God’s Word holds good for all believers in God as He has revealed in the Gospel, *Mk 11:22-24*.

D Reconciliation, Peace with God 5:1-11

The doctrine of justification deals with the sinner’s legal relationship with God as Judge, whereas reconciliation deals with the sinner’s personal relationship with God as Heavenly Father. This personal relationship with God is described as “peace with God.” The former rebellion and

enmity against God have gone and we have acceptance with the Father and access by faith into His abundant provision. There is not only peace but also joy in hope of His glory that continues through every tribulation, producing maturity of character.

The love of God has been poured into our hearts, *Rom 5:5*, by the Holy Spirit. He has justified us by His blood and we are more than certain of being saved from His wrath, *v9, 1Thes 5:9*.

He reconciled us to Himself while we were His enemies and now we are more than certain to be saved by His life, *v10, Col 1:21,22*.

E Identification – Adam or Christ 5:12-21

The “first Adam” and the “last Adam”(Christ) are discussed here and in *1Cor 15:22,45-49*. Christ was the one sent by God to undo the effects of the fall of the “first Adam,” and as the “Second Man,” *1Cor 15:47*, establishes a new humanity. All people are either in Adam or in Christ and are identified with the inheritance due to the one or the other. The inheritance of those in Adam is death whereas the inheritance of those in Christ is eternal life, *1Cor 15:22*.

In this passage of Romans, Adam is a reverse type of Christ. As death entered the world through Adam’s disobedience, so new life comes in through Christ’s obedience.

For those whom Christ has set right with God, the old way of sin and death, which was theirs in association with the first Adam, has been replaced by a new way of righteousness and life in association with “the last Adam.”

Adam was more than an historical figure, the first man. The whole of humanity is viewed as having existed at first in Adam, and because of his sin the whole human race is viewed as having sinned in him. Notice that *v13-17* are in brackets. I will now write out *v12-16* as I understand them, with added words of my own **in bold** to give you a clearer meaning as I see it.

- v12* Therefore just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all **in Adam** sinned.
- v13* For until the law sin **against conscience and the revelation of creation** was in the world but sin **against public law** is not imputed when there is no **public** law.
- v14* Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, **by sins against conscience and the revelation of creation**, even over those who had not sinned according to the likeness of the transgression of Adam **who sinned against a public law, Gen 2:17**, who is a type of Him who was to come.
- v15* But the free gift is not like the offence, **i.e. God did not treat man as man treated God**. For if by the one man’s offence many died, much more the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abounded to many.
- v16* And the gift is not like that which came through the one who sinned. For the judgment that came from one offence resulted in condemnation, but the free gift that came from many offences, **i.e. bestowed after many sins** resulted in justification.

Section 5 The Way of Holiness 6:1-8:39

A Freedom from Sin 6:1-23

1. An objection 6:1,2

“This emphasis in God’s abundant grace sounds like a licence to sin all the more,” some might say, but they do not understand that the old nature of sin was put to death with Christ.

2. Dead to sin 6:3-14

The truth is that when we were baptised into Christ we were baptised into His death and thereby became dead to sin. Moreover when we were raised again from the water of baptism we were also raised up with Christ, by the glory of the Father, to walk in newness of life. In baptism the former existence came to an end; a new life began. This understanding of baptism indicates its great importance in the Christian life, and why, in the book of Acts, baptism followed immediately upon confession of faith in Christ. Freedom from the rule of sin becomes a reality to those who believe that they are dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God in Jesus Christ our Lord.

3. From slaves to sin to slaves of God 6:15-23

The theme of freedom from sin continues but now it is a freedom, which results from the slave passing into the ownership of a new master, God Himself. Previously sin was the master but now the slave has passed into the service of God to do His will. There is a great difference between the kinds of things the slave has to do in the two forms of service, and there is a great difference between the wages or rewards given at the end of the slave’s service.

B Freedom from the law 7:1-25

1. The marriage analogy 7:1-6

Rom 6:14 indicates that to be “under the law” brings domination by sin, but to be “under grace” liberates from the dominion of sin and the regime of law.

Paul does not find fault with the law for it is God’s law and it is a revelation of His character, *7:12*. It forbids sin and decrees righteousness. It is a safeguard against sin. What is at fault is the human material on which the law operates for it is unable to fulfil the law’s requirements.

This passage of Romans tells us clearly that the law is inadequate as a way to secure a righteous standing before God, **and that freedom from law is necessary before the righteousness, which is through faith in Christ, can become a way of life.**

In *Romans 7:1-6*, freedom from law is illustrated in terms of the relationship between husband and wife. With this analogy of husband and wife we are aware of a reversal of the situation. The believer in Christ is compared to the wife and the law to her husband, but whereas in the illustration it was the husband that died, in the application, it is not the law that died but the believer. The believer that has died with Christ is no longer bound to the law, and is free to be united with the risen Christ. The believer’s death with Christ breaks the bond to the law, and he is now free to be united with the risen Christ.

2. The law brings consciousness of sin 7:7-13

The law is a stimulus to sin because as soon as the commandment is declared, sin springs to life. Before the law was expressed sin lay dormant but as soon as the law was revealed sin revived and I died. Many consider Paul to be describing his own personal experience but really, it is the biography of Every Man. Not that the law is at fault, *v12*. The villain of

the piece is sin. When the law showed me what was right and what was wrong sin seized the opportunity afforded it and brought me into condemnation and death.

3. **The conflict within 7:14-25**

In this passage we have a picture of life under the law without the aid of the power of the Holy Spirit and faith in God's word of deliverance. Here is a person conscious of the presence and power of indwelling sin in his life, which he hates, but against whose power he struggles in vain by his own strength. When he is overwhelmed by sin in his life, he does not recognise the resulting acts as his own for they are the very opposite of what he desires to do.

So many believers have passed through this phase of Christian life that Paul speaks of it as his own experience. As he cries out to God for deliverance he answers his own cry with a shout of triumph that issues forth from faith in Christ, *v24,25*.

C Alive in the Spirit and free from death 8:1-39

1. **Life in the Spirit 8:1-17**

The Holy Spirit has not been mentioned in chapter 7 but He is everywhere in chapter 8, which describes the life of victory for those who walk according to the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, *v2*. Compare: *Gal 5:16, Jn 8:31-36, 2Cor 3:17*, the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus is a higher law than the law of sin and death and sets the believer free from the tyranny of the latter.

God sent His Son as a sin-offering for sin, and in this way sentence was passed and executed on sin in Christ's flesh, in His human nature, and thereby in our human nature also. For all those who are united with Christ the power of sin has been broken, *6:6,7*.

Now by the inward life of the Spirit, the righteousness of the law, *13:9*, is fulfilled in us, *Ezk 36:25-27, Jer 31:33*. The Law Giver on the Throne has now become the Law Keeper in my heart. Holiness is now through faith in God's promises by the power of the Spirit. The renewed mind is the vehicle of the Spirit and so it is important to set the mind on things above, *Col 3:1-3*.

Christ indwells the believer, and though the body is still subject to temporal death as a consequence of sin, the indwelling Spirit imparts eternal life, which is the consequence of justification. Furthermore the indwelling Spirit also gives quickening life to our present physical bodies in this earthly walk, *v11*.

Through the Spirit, by faith in God's promises, we are able to consider or reckon dead the deeds of the body, *6:11*, and live to please God. The Spirit we have received does not bring fear, *2Tim 1:6,7*, because it is the Spirit of sonship and leads us to cry, "Abba, Father," *v15*.

The Spirit bears witness that we are children of God, *v16*, children, heirs, and joint heirs with Christ, provided that we suffer together with Him in order that we may also be glorified with Him, *v17*. The suffering comes from the opposing influences of the kingdom of darkness as we serve Christ and live for Him. The opposition comes as the proof that we are serving Christ and that the powers of darkness are upset by our work. Keep in mind the truth of *Rom 8:28*, at all times.

2. **The coming glory 8:18-30**

The glory that is to come far exceeds the suffering of the present for the people of God. Also for creation there is coming a day when the effects of the Fall will be dispelled, and it will experience the glorious liberty of the children of God, *Num 14:21*. This creation belongs to God and it will not be annihilated and replaced by an entirely new universe, but this present creation will be transformed and filled with God's glory, *Hab 2:14, Mat 19:28*. The Holy Spirit aids us by His intercession as we go through the trials of the present, *v26*, and God's over-ruling grace works through all those distressing and perplexing times that are so hard to bear, *v28*. In fact before the world's foundation God foreknew and foreordained His people for the final day of redemption when they would be fully conformed to the image of His Son, *v29, Gen 1:26*.

3. **The victorious end of faith 8:31-39**

God is the strong salvation of every believer and no force can prevail against him or her. He who gave His own Son as a sacrifice on their behalf will not withhold any good from them. God has declared all that believe righteous and no one can condemn. The Counsel for their defence is actively declaring their acquittal, *1Jn 2:1,2*. Furthermore there is no spirit, force or event that can separate the believer from the love of God. *Ps 44:22* is quoted as a plea to God for His speedy aid in times of severe distress. So in all these things we are super conquerors and dwell secure in the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Section 6 God's Righteousness with regard to Israel and the Gentiles 9:1-11:36

A Romans 9

1. **Israel in Unbelief 9:1-5**

This section expresses Paul's deep concern for His own people, the nation of Israel. For the most part Israel had failed to accept the salvation proclaimed in the Gospel, even though it was preached to them first. Although the church in Rome had probably been established by believing Jews, Gentiles outnumbered them at the time of Paul's writing. Paul felt it necessary to remind the Gentiles of their debt to Israel and urge them to seek the salvation of the Jews.

In his exposition of the Gospel, Paul had drawn heavily on Old Testament examples such as Abraham and David, yet paradoxically it was Abraham's descendants who declined to believe the message, and rejected the Messiah when He came. Surely some might say, "If Paul's message is true, the Jewish people would have been the first to have accepted it!"

In these three chapters, *9-11*, Paul wrestles with the whole issue of how does Israel fit into the purposes of God and what should be the attitude of the believers in the church to the Jewish Nation.

2. **God's sovereign right to choose 9:6-13**

The failure of the Jews to receive the Gospel does not mean that the promise of God to Abraham has failed, because it is not natural descent that determines who are of Israel, *2:28,29*. As in Abraham's case, God chose Isaac and set aside Ishmael. Not all natural descendants of Abraham are God's spiritual children, but those who are of faith, *Gal 3:7*. God's sovereign right of choice is that He accepts all who repent and believe the Gospel, and rejects all who do not. As God rejected Ishmael so He would reject unbelieving Jews. He has sovereign right of choice. Furthermore when Rebecca conceived by Isaac, God sovereignly chose Jacob before Esau. In *v12* it says, "The older shall serve the younger."

This did not apply to them as individuals, because Esau never rendered service to Jacob. It relates to the periods where the Edomites served Israel, *2Sam 8:14*. Nor did God's choice relate to their eternal state, theirs, or their posterity. God's choice is based upon His foreknowledge,

1Pet 1:2, Rom 8:29, Jer 1:5. God has the right to decide who He will receive and reject.

3. **God's righteousness in His sovereign choice 9:14-18**

God's righteousness is unaffected by His choices. As He said in *Ex 33:19*, He is free to show mercy as He chooses, and this includes mercy to the Gentiles. However God dealt with the , Pharaoh had hardened his heart many times toward Israel before God hardened it unto destruction.

4. **A challenge to God's righteousness 9:19-24**

"As man is a created being He has no grounds for questioning the actions of the Creator." For example, v19, "Why have You made me this way?" or "Why have You made me capable of glory and immortality only by believing?" The Lord is the Potter, we are the clay, and He fashions us according to His own purposes. Not that God has made any man to be wicked, nor has He created any man for destruction. The truth is that men have rejected God and willingly given themselves over to be "vessels of wrath." Pharaoh is an example of this. In his brutal treatment of the Israelites, *Ex 5:14*, Pharaoh had hardened his heart many times before the Lord hardened his heart. The fact that God "endured with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath," v22, implies man's free will in operation, choosing his own evil way. All men are guilty before God and no one has a claim on His grace. If God chooses to extend merciful grace to some, the others have no grounds for arguing that He is unjust in not extending it to them.

5. **Old Testament references to God's purposes for the Gentiles and the Jews 9:25-29**

Quoting *Hosea, 1:10, 2:23*, Paul refers to God's purpose in the salvation of the Gentiles, while quotes from *Isaiah 1:9, 10:22,23*, declare that a remnant of Israel will be saved to become the nucleus of a new and purified nation.

6. **The key of faith 9:30-33**

Referring to the teaching of the earlier part of the Epistle, this passage reminds us that God reckons righteousness on the grounds of faith. However the Jews, for the most part, refused the message of righteousness by faith, and continued to pursue the path of righteousness by law. The Gentiles, however, responded willingly to the truth of a right standing before God through faith. The Jews stumbled at the stumbling stone of a crucified Messiah and the message of salvation solely on the basis of faith in Christ and His Word, rather than by obedience to the Law.

B Romans 10

1. **The only way of righteousness is by faith 10:1-13**

The Jews had a great zeal for God, but through lack of knowledge they sought to establish their own righteousness by their works rather than receive the righteousness of Christ, as a gift of God's grace by faith, *Phil 3:9*. Christ is both the goal and the termination of the law, v4. Christ is the goal or fulfilment of the law as in *Rom 8:4, Mat 5:17*, but He is also the termination of the law as a means of obtaining a right standing before God, *Gal 2:16*.

Lev 18:5 is quoted as a possible means to righteousness by the law, *Rom 10:5*. However no-one has succeeded in obtaining righteousness before God by this means except Christ.

Further, quoting from the Old Testament, *Deut 30:11-14*, the way of righteousness is revealed, by declaring that with God's Word in our heart and mouth we are able to walk in obedience to His Will, *v5-8*. Consider the difference between *Lev18:5* and *Deut 30:11-14*. Paul uses the first reference to refer to man's own efforts to obey God's commands, while he uses the second to refer to the inward enabling of God unto obedience, when a person believes God's Word in their heart and confesses it with their mouth. *V9,10* explain more clearly what Paul is driving at.

2. **Proclaiming the message world-wide 10:14-21**

Because everyone who calls on the Name of the Lord will be saved, it is essential that the message is proclaimed throughout the whole world. The faith that brings salvation comes by hearing the Word of God.

Now with regard to the Jews, they did not believe the message, *v16*, and it was not because they did not hear because they did, *v18*. Further it was not that they did not understand it, because they did, but rather that they deliberately refused to obey it, *v21*. Therefore God has decided to provoke the Jews to jealousy by pouring out His mercy and blessing upon the Gentiles, who were not His people, so that the Jews may be drawn back to Him, *v19*.

C **Romans 11**

1. **Israel's separation from God is not final 11:1-12**

God has not written Israel off or cast them away. As in Elijah's day, **God has preserved a faithful remnant of Israel** for Himself. Paul, himself, was a part of that remnant. He was a member of the tribe of Benjamin but also a believer in Jesus. This remnant was the foundation of the New Testament church and the proof that God had not given up His purpose for Israel. The hardening of the majority is not to be a permanent condition. Wherever Paul travelled he first preached the Good News to the Jews. Some believed, many did not, and so he moved on and preached to the Gentiles who readily believed his message. If Israel's stumbling and fall has resulted in the blessings of the gospel flowing on to the Gentiles, Israel's revival and restoration will bring far greater blessing.

2. **How Gentile Christians should view Israel 11:13-24**

Paul addresses the Gentiles and reminds them that although he is an apostle to the Gentiles, he still strives to see some of his Jewish brethren saved. When Israel is restored to receive their Messiah, amazing blessing will be poured out on the whole world. Because the first fruits (of Jewish believers) are holy the whole harvest will come in, *Num 15:17-21*, *1Cor 15:23*, *Lev 23:10,11*, and because the root is holy so are the branches, *Mat 7:16-20*. This leads Paul to develop the parable of the olive trees where the cultivated olive is Israel and the wild olive is the Gentile world.

3. **Israel will be restored 11:25-29**

The hardness of Israel is **only partial**, (for many Israelites have become believers), and it is **only temporary** until the fulness of the Gentiles has come in. When this happens, the nation of Israel as a whole will see the salvation of God, *v26*.

The Deliverer who comes out of Zion, *Is 59:20*, may well be, in Paul's mind, identified with the parousia of Christ, *Zech 12:10*. God's purposes for Israel will be fulfilled.

4. **God's mercy for Jew and Gentile 11:30-36**

Neither Jew nor Gentile can lay any claim to God's mercy, it is all of God's grace. Both Jew and Gentile have been shown up to be disobedient, so that God might pour out His abundant mercy on all. The v33-36 form a doxology of unending praise to God as a conclusion to the whole argument of chapters 1-11.

Section 7 Practical Christian Living 12:1-15:113

A Romans 12

1. **Be a living sacrifice 12:1,2**

In the light of all that God has accomplished for His people in Christ, explained by Paul in *chapters 1-11*, he now turns to the practical out-workings of his message. The first requirement is that all believers in Christ should present their bodies to God as "living sacrifices" and be transformed by the renewing of their minds, fully able to prove God's will in all things.

2. **Faith and function in Christ's Body 12:3-8**

God has given to each believer the measure of faith to function in the Body of Christ effectively, through the particular spiritual gift the Lord has given. These seven spiritual functions are often referred to as the "motivational gifts."

3. **Love in action between believers 12:9-21**

In a series of rapid-fire statements Paul exhorts the believers to walk in love towards one another, and those outside the church. The law of love is the law of Christ, *Jn 13:34,35, Jn 15:10,12,14, Rom 13:10, 1Cor 9:21, Gal 6:2, Mat 22:37-39*.

B Romans 13

1. **The Christian's relationship to secular authorities 13:1-7**

God is the source of all authority and those who exercise authority on the earth have been appointed by God to do so. Jesus said, "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's.....", *Mk 12:17*. To disobey the government therefore is to disobey God, and to dishonour the secular authorities is to dishonour God. **Human government is a divine institution** and has been entrusted by God with the powers of punishing evil and encouraging what is good. In *v4 and v6* the secular authority is referred to as "God's ministers", (NKJV). He has been appointed for good, to punish evil doers, and to collect taxes for administration and the benefit of society. For this reason Christians ought to obey the laws and pay their taxes, for in this way they are serving God, *1Pet 2:13-17, 4:15,16*.

However if an authority is unrighteous and legislates what is evil and contrary to God's Word, then the Christian, in humility, must obey the Word of God, *Ac 5:29*. The obedience of the Christian to the State is partial and conditional. It is never absolute. There is a tension between obedience to God and His Word as the higher authority and the secular authorities. The government has been authorised by God to punish evil doers, *v4*. The believer has been forbidden to do this, *12:17a,19*. God sanctions the use of force by secular authorities **to preserve society**. He forbids the believer to use force because the believer's responsibility is **to bring salvation, mercy and grace to society**, *Mat 5:43-48*.

2. **The law of love 13:8-10**

The law of love is the bottom line for the believers' manner of life, *Lev 19:18, Deut 6:5, Mat 22:37-40*. The law of love is the summary of God's requirements and is the fulfilling of God's law, *v8,10, Gal 5:13b, 1Jn 4:7-11*.

3. **Put on the Lord Jesus Christ and put off the works of darkness 13:11-14**

These last four verses of *Romans 13* exhort believers to come alive, make the most of every opportunity to mature in Christ, and be rid of every hindering work of the flesh, *Gal5:16, 3:27*.

C Romans 14

1. **The liberty of the believer 14:1-13**

Christians are **at liberty to have differences of opinion** on various issues such as **eating of foods**, (some of which may have been offered to idols), or whether or not **certain days** should be regarded more holy than others. [In *v5* the Scripture tells us that there is **no legal requirement to observe the Sabbath** for the believer in Christ. This is repeated by the Scriptures in *Col 2:16, Gal 4:10*.] Jesus' words are, "Judge not, that you be not judged," *Mat 7:1*. It is not for us to judge the servant of another, *v4*. To his own master he stands or falls. The important issue is that each believer be fully persuaded in his own mind and follows his own conscience faithfully before the Lord, *v5*.

2. **Do not let your liberty be a stumbling block to the faith of another believer 14:13-23**

Having established the liberty of the believer on issues such as these, Paul now goes on to show that this liberty must at times be limited, voluntarily, in love, for the sake of other believers who would be offended by our freedom. We are called to edify others, not offend them.

Take for example the issue of foods. From the earliest days, the Jewish food laws forbade the eating of certain animals and prohibited the eating of blood. Animals killed for food had to be killed in such a way that their blood was entirely drained away. Therefore it was not possible for a strictly observant Jew to eat with a Gentile, as one could never be sure if the animal had been slaughtered the right way.

So Gentile believers needed an exhortation to be prepared to **voluntarily limit their freedom** in the matter of eating foods, so as to maintain fellowship with Jewish Christians and not offend them.

Furthermore there was the issue of food offered in sacrifice to idols. Much of the meat sold in the market came from such sacrifices. Some Christians who had robust consciences would sanctify the meat with the Word of God and prayer, *1Tim 4:5*, and promptly eat it. However others who felt that the meat was still defiled by idolatrous influences could not eat it. Therefore Paul urged those with liberty in their eating to **voluntarily limit their freedom** so as not to offend their brother in Christ, *v13-15, v19-21, 1Cor 8:12*, or cause him to go against his conscience, *v20,23*. Take note of *v17*. **The Kingdom of God** that we seek first, *Mat 6:33*, is not in eating and drinking, but **in righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit, 1Cor 4:20**.

D Romans 15

1. **The example of Christ 15:1-7**

In this passage Paul emphasises the tender kindness of Jesus. Although He walked freely in the Spirit from limiting inhibitions, yet He did not please Himself and was careful to bear the weaknesses of others and not offend the struggling believer, *Mat 12:20*. From *v4-7* the Scripture encourages us to patient endurance in our labours towards true Christian love and unity with our fellow believers.

2. **Christ came for both Jews and Gentiles 15:7-13**

As Christ has received Jew and Gentile so we are to receive one another, *v7*. He came as a servant to the Jew, *v8*, but also to the Gentile, *v9-12*, *Mat 20:28*, *Lk 22:27*. This is our hope through the God of hope, *v13*.

Section 8 Concluding remarks 15:14 – 16:27

1. **Comments of a personal nature 15:14-33**

Here Paul assures the believers at Rome that he has not written this letter because they are ignorant of the basic doctrines of Christianity but simply to remind them. For more than twenty years he has been an apostle of Christ to the Gentiles and in this capacity he felt he had a mandate to write in this way. In his travels he had followed the roads from Jerusalem to Illyricum, (which is well up on the Eastern Shore of the Adriatic Sea), planting Gospel churches where none previously existed. He had preached the truth with mighty signs and wonders, in the power of the Spirit, so that many Gentiles believed in Christ.

“But now said” Paul, “My decision is to travel to Spain with the Gospel.” On his way there, his plan was to stop for a while in Rome and minister the Word. He also hoped that some of them would assist him in his mission to Spain. However before travelling to Rome, Paul tells them that he has arranged to visit Jerusalem. He is going to accompany a collection that the believers in Greece have made for the poor among the saints in Jerusalem. *Ac 21:17*,

Ac 19:21, *1Cor 16:1-4*, *2Cor 8:1 - 9:15*. Paul earnestly requests the Roman believers to pray for him so that his prior visit to the holy city will be safe and effective.

2. **Phoebe commended by Paul 16:1,2**

It appears that Phoebe was to be the one to take Paul’s letter to Rome. She was a Christian lady of means and was making a business trip to Rome. Back in her home church at Cenchreae, Corinth, Phoebe was a deacon, (Greek: diakonos, *v1*), and Paul exhorts the believers in Rome to assist her with accommodation etc., because she had been a helper to many people including Paul himself.

3. **Greeting various friends 16:3-16**

Paul now sends personal greetings to twenty-eight individuals and five households or “house-churches.” **Priscilla and Aquila**, *1Cor 16:19*, *2Tim 4:19*, *Ac 18:2,26*, were Paul’s fellow labourers in the Gospel and led a house-church. **Epaenetus**, *v5*, **Mary**, *v6*, **Andronicus and Junia**, *v7*, a Jewish couple who were also apostles. They had been imprisoned with Paul at some stage and had become believers before Paul. **Amplias**, *v8*, whose full name “Ampliatius” was common in the imperial household. **Urbanus**, *v9*, who had a common Roman name. He had previously worked with Paul outside Rome. **Stachys**, *v9*, who somewhere had gained Paul’s favour. **Apelles**, *v10*, has a common Jewish name of the time in Rome. **Aristobulus** and his household, *v10*, who, it had been suggested probably had close links to the household of Caesar. **Herodian**, *v11*, who was a kinsman of Paul and therefore probably a Jew. **Narcissus**, *v11*, and family are thought to be prominent in Roman society. **Tryphena and Tryphosa**, *v12*, were probably sisters

who were notable in serving Christ. **Persis**, *v12*, whose name means “Persian woman,” had impressed Paul by her dedication and service of God through Christ. **Rufus**, *v13*, means “red-haired,” and quite probably the son of Simon of Cyrene, who is called the father of Alexander and Rufus in *Mk 15:21*. **Rufus’s mother** was a minister to Paul and her son, a ministry that Paul greatly appreciated. **Asyncritus**, *v14*, and **Phlegon**, *v14*, receive greetings from Paul. **Hermas**, *v14*, was a common Roman name. **Patrobas**, *v14*, it is thought that he was a wealthy freedman who supported Paul’s ministry. **Hermes**, *v14*, whose name means the god of good luck, was probably a slave, as this was a common slave name. This group of five in *v14*, are representatives of a larger group, probably a house church. **Philologus and Julia**, *v15*, were probably a married couple working with **Nereus, and his sister**, *v15*, and with **Olympas**, *v15*, in the church. These five also appear to be representatives of a larger group or local assembly in Christ. At the end of this section Paul urges the believers to show genuine affection to one another.

4. **Concluding exhortation 16:17-20**

Paul now breaks out into sudden warning against false teachers, *Gal 5:12*, *2Cor 11:13*, *Phil 3:2*, and is possibly referring to the two issues covered in *Romans 14*. (That is the eating of foods and the observance of days.) If people come into the church and start causing division and offences on these issues they are to be avoided. Their motives are wrong, they are self-seeking, and will bring deception by their false teaching. The church at Rome had a reputation for strong adherence to the truth and Paul was confident of their victory over the schemes of the devil.

5. **Paul’s companions send greetings 16:21-23(24)**

They are **Timothy, Lucius, Jason and Sosipater**, *v21*. **Tertius**, *v22*, was the secretary to whom Paul dictated the letter to the Romans, and he sent greeting too. **Gaius**, *v23*, (*1Cor 1:14*), **Erastus**, *v23*, who was the city treasurer of Corinth and **Quartus**, *v23*, a brother in Christ, all send greetings. *V24* repeats the second part of *v20*, which is a benediction to the church at Rome.

6. **Final Doxology 16:25-27**

These final verses are written as praise to God, to acknowledge Him, who is able to establish us by the Gospel and the preaching of Christ. The revelation of the mystery is that both Jew and Gentile are to be brought together to God by the Gospel, through faith in Christ. The Old Testament Scriptures had declared that this would be so, but now through Christ, the apostles and prophets, it has become much more obvious. Therefore to God, who alone is wise, be glory through Jesus Christ forever. Amen!

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