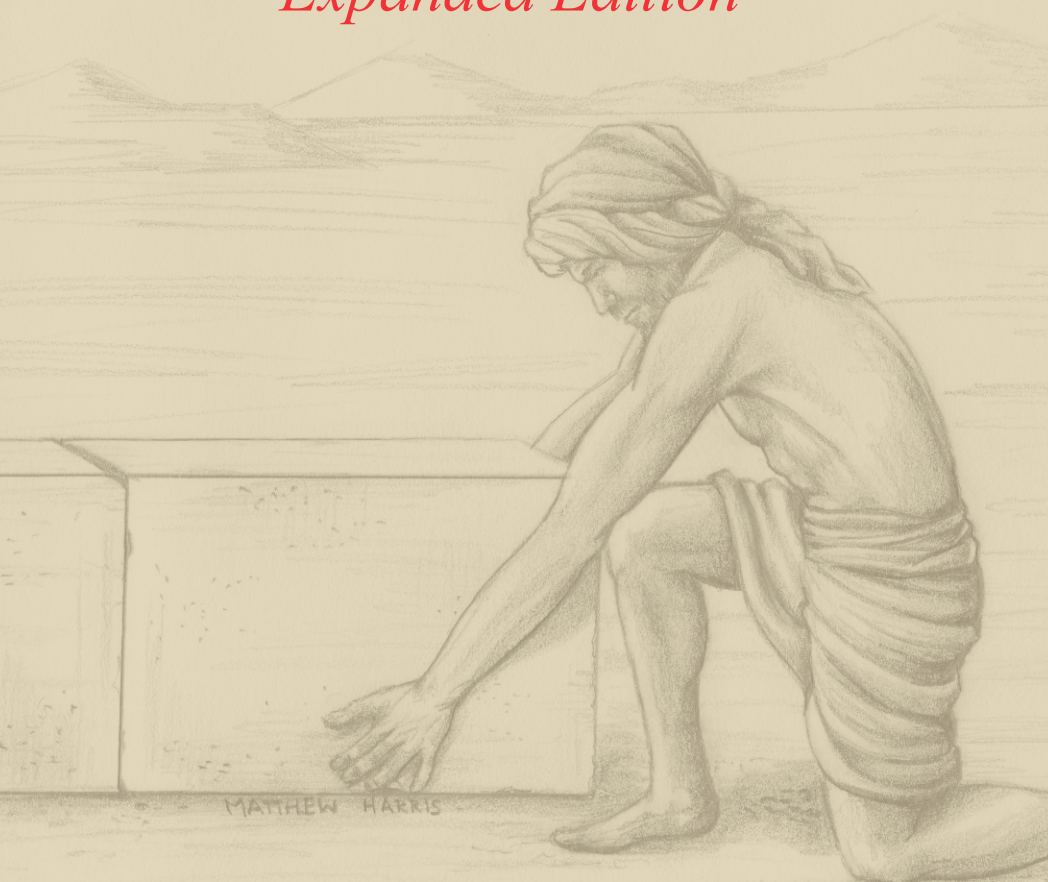


THE FOUNDATION

(a verse-by-verse commentary on the first eleven chapters of Paul's epistle to the Romans)

By: Leroy Surface

Expanded Edition



"According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation."

The Apostle Paul

“The Foundation”

**(A verse by verse commentary on the
first eleven chapters of Romans)**

By Leroy Surface

“I Am Not Ashamed...”

It was the apostle Paul who first said “I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation unto everyone that believeth.” It was given to him by “revelation of Jesus Christ,” and he was not ashamed to preach it, because it worked for everyone who believed it. It brought freedom from sin and sanctification through the power of the cross and blood of Jesus Christ. It brought Paul from being the chief of sinners to being the greatest of apostles. The gospel Paul preached is the original and only true foundation of the church of Jesus Christ. Over nineteen-hundred years after Paul wrote the gospel, I stand also and say, “I am not ashamed of the gospel of Jesus Christ ...that the apostle Paul preached!”

Calvary Outreach Ministries

PO Box 750

Porter, Texas 77365

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www.cochurch.org

Foreword

The scripture instructs us to “*earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.*” The reason given for this warning is that “*certain ungodly men*” in the churches had “*turned the grace of our God into lasciviousness*” (Jude 1:3-4). I was struck many years ago by this simple question: “*If ungodly men in the first century church changed our understanding of the grace of God into something it was not, who changed it back?*” Even with times of awakening and revival during the past centuries, what man or movement can lay claim to having restored the covenant of grace to the power and glory of that which Christ delivered to the early church. For this reason we recognize that it is not good enough for us to limit our understanding to that of our spiritual “*fathers*” or the founders of our particular movement. If they were in fact men and women who dared to look further into the word of God than others in their generation, then we only honor them when we “*stand on their shoulders*” and seek to see even further than they saw. This is not a call to seek a “*new*” revelation, but to seek clear understanding of the gospel of Christ as it was “*once delivered*” to “*the apostles and prophets by the Spirit.*”

The Apostle Paul not only received the gospel by revelation of Jesus Christ, but recorded that revelation in epistles for every generation that would follow. Consider his words:

According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon. For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.
I Corinthians 3:10-11

Paul makes several bold claims in his writings. For example, as he wrote in the text above, “*...I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth there-*

upon.” In Galatians 1:11-12 he writes, “...I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.” It is Paul’s claims concerning his “revelation of the gospel” and that he “laid the foundation” that every believer must consider. Paul said, “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. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, (from us) let him be accursed” (Galatians 1:8-9). Paul was aware that the gospel he received by revelation of Jesus Christ was unchangeable and even the slightest attempt to change it would strip it of its power to do anything for anyone. When stating that he had “laid the foundation,” Paul gave a warning to all who would come after him, saying, “let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon” (I Corinthians 3:10). This was not arrogance on Paul’s part. God had chosen to reveal His gospel to him in order that he might lay the foundation of the church for all generations. It is up to each of us to decide whether we believe Paul was an arrogant liar or the gospel he preached is in fact the foundation the church was built upon. There can be no middle ground on this issue. If we believe Paul was commissioned by God to lay the gospel foundation for the church, we then are responsible to seek diligently to know and understand the gospel that he both wrote and preached. It is not only the foundation for the church, it is the gospel foundation for our very soul.

Paul’s letter to the Romans is the most thorough presentation of the gospel that is given in the scriptures. It tells us why we needed Christ, how salvation is received, and what this salvation truly consists of. It clearly reveals how God saves sinners through death and resurrection with Jesus Christ. It is my prayer that this commentary will, at the very least, help some to see the glories of this great salvation in a fashion far beyond what they have seen thus far.

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Introduction

Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste.

Isaiah 28:16

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

Romans 9:33

The purpose of this commentary is not to lay a foundation, but to discover the original gospel foundation that Paul laid. It is the result of over fifty years of studying the King James Version of the bible along with the “*Strong’s Concordance and Greek Lexicon.*” I have not studied doctrine from any other source. If the message of this commentary differs from many others, it is because this writer believes that scripture can only be understood in the light of other scripture.

Paul speaks much about the “*righteousness of God.*” The purpose of his letter is to reveal the “*righteousness (justice) of God*” that saves sinners. Interwoven in this same epistle is Paul’s defense of God for His righteous judgment of Israel. He lays it out as the record of a court trial, complete with an indictment, prosecution, charge to the jury, findings of the court, verdict, sentence, and finally, the “*judgment of God*” of what to do with condemned sinners. It is here that the “*righteousness of God*” is revealed. Within days of His death on the cross, Jesus said, “*Now is the judgment of this world.*” Perhaps Paul’s letter is a record of that judgment.

Section One **THE FOUNDATION** Romans 1:1-17
Not Ashamed of the Gospel of Christ

Section One
“Not Ashamed of the Gospel of Christ”

Paul’s revelation of God’s righteous judgment is shown in his epistle to the Romans as a court case with God sitting in judgment of the world. The defendant in this particular case is the nation of Israel under the Old Covenant. The “*indictment*” of Israel begins with the eighteenth verse of the first chapter. For centuries, many have tried to show that it is the heathen nations who are “*without excuse,*” but Paul clearly proves by repeated quotations from the Psalms, that God’s displeasure, as revealed in this epistle, is with His chosen people, the children of Israel.

The sins of Israel, as related in this chapter, are those that led to the destruction of Jerusalem over five hundred years before the birth of Jesus Christ. In his “*indictment,*” Paul clearly defends and vindicates God for His judgment against them.

1-2 Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God, (Which he had promised afore by his prophets in the holy scriptures,)

The “*gospel of God*” was the “*good news*” the prophets of the Old Testament prophesied concerning the wonderful salvation which was to come through a redeemer who would be called “*The Messiah, the Prince*” (Daniel 9:24-25). Paul will show the salvation of which they prophesied *has* come through Jesus of Nazareth, who is “*the Christ, the Son of the living God*” (Matthew 16:16).

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

According to the prophets, the promised Messiah (Christ) would be born of the “*house of David,*” and would be called “*the son of David.*” Jesus was born of the seed of David according to His fleshly lineage.

Not Ashamed of the Gospel of Christ

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

The life and ministry of Jesus, though a “*sinless life*” and a “*miraculous ministry*,” aroused much hatred against Him from the religious hierarchy of the Jews. The high priests, along with the scribes, Pharisees, lawyers, and most of the Sanhedrin court plotted His death. It was His “*resurrection from the dead*” that proved He is in fact, “*The Son of God with power.*”

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

Paul said he had received “*grace and apostleship.*” “*Apostleship*” was his “*commission*” to preach the gospel to all nations. “*Grace*” was given to Paul to fulfill the commission. As you study the writings of Paul, “*grace*” will take on a different but more glorious meaning than most people understand today.

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

If Paul was called by God to preach the gospel, even so are we who are “*the called*” of the Gentile nations.

7-8 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. First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world.

The church in Rome was made up of both Jews and Gentiles who believed. It is likely that due to the influence of the Jews among them, the church, while believing that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, also held to the Law of Moses for righteousness. Paul’s desire was to give them the revelation of God’s righteousness, which is “*without the law*” (Romans 3:21).

Not Ashamed of the Gospel of Christ

9-11 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; Making request, if by any means now at length I might have a prosperous journey by the will of God to come unto you. For I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established;

Paul's concern for this church was such that he "*prayed without ceasing*" that he might come to them "...*to the end ye may be established.*" They were "*believers,*" yet as many others both then and now, they needed someone to "*expound unto them the way of God more perfectly*" (Acts 18:26). Paul had received the gospel of Christ by "*revelation of Jesus Christ,*" and was pressed in his spirit to bring it to them.

12-15 That is, that I may be comforted together with you by the mutual faith both of you and me. 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. I am debtor both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians; both to the wise, and to the unwise. So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also.

"I am debtor..." Paul had received something from the Lord Jesus Christ that belonged to the entire world; it was the "*gospel of Jesus Christ.*" In Galatians 1:11-12, Paul gave his guarantee that the gospel he preached was not from man, but from God; "*But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.*" In I Corinthians 9:17, Paul said, "*A dispensation of the gospel is committed unto me.*" The "*gospel of Christ*" was committed to Paul to "*dispense*" to the people, "...*both to the*

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Greeks, and to the Barbarians; both to the wise, and to the unwise...to you that are at Rome also.” It was his “debt” to pay.

We are also debtors. We owe the same debt, and if it is to be paid we must preach the same gospel Paul preached. It is the message of “*the Christ*” who came into the world “*to make an end of sins*” (Daniel 9:24-25). It is the message of “*Christ-crucified,*” who died on the cross to “*take away our sin*” (John 1:29, I John 3:5). Any other gospel is “*accursed*” along with the one who brings it, as Paul said in Galatians 1:8-9, “*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. 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 should strike fear into the hearts of many today that have “*adapted*” the gospel of Christ to modern times and circumstances. The gospel is as unchangeable as God Himself, and it is our debt to preach it exactly as Paul preached it.

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.

The “*power of God unto salvation*” is to everyone who believes the “*gospel of Christ.*” It is the message of “*Christ-crucified,*” and all that His death and resurrection means to the one who believes the message. Paul said, “*I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ.*” In Romans 9:33, Paul quoted Isaiah, “*As it is written, Behold, I lay in Sion a stumblingstone and rock of offence: and whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.*” Many stumble at “*Christ-crucified,*” and many are offended, but “*...whosoever believeth on Him shall not be ashamed,*” either in the presence of God or in the face of their enemies. Paul preached the only message that is “*the power*

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of God” to save a sinner “*from their sin*” (Matthew 1:21). Why would anyone be ashamed of such a gospel?

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

Paul explains why he is not ashamed of the gospel of Christ; “*For (because) therein (in the gospel) is the righteousness of God revealed....*” Almost five hundred years ago, Martin Luther was inspired by these two verses (16-17). The last phrase, “*The just shall live by faith,*” was the foundation scripture for the theology of the protestant reformation. The scriptures that Luther studied translated the words “*the righteousness of God*” as “*the justice of God,*” and so it is. The gospel of Christ reveals the “*justice*” of God in what He did to save sinners from sin.

“...from faith to faith...” From the faith of those who, like Abraham, “*believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness,*” to the faith of those who “*believe the gospel,*” and are “*made to be the righteousness of God in Christ*” (II Corinthians 5:21). Always remember, the “*gospel of Christ*” reveals “*the justice of God*” to save sinners.

The Indictment

Section Two

“The Indictment”

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

A common error, the one which brought about many of the horrors of the “*dark ages*” of Christianity, is the belief that God’s “*justice*” and God’s “*wrath*” is the same thing. They are not. If God were not “*just*,” He would not have sent Christ into the world to save His people from their sin (Matthew 1:21). The “*righteousness (justice)*” of God to save both the “*ungodly*” and the “*unrighteous*” is revealed in the gospel. The “*wrath of God*” is revealed from heaven against all “*ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who hold the truth in unrighteousness.*” Note that the wrath of God is specifically for those “*...who hold the truth in unrighteousness.*”

19-20 Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them. 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:

Traditional thought, passed on for generations, is that this first chapter of Romans is a condemnation of the Gentiles; that even those heathen nations which never received any revelation from God are “*without excuse*” when they perish eternally. This thought, even though many biblical “*scholars*” of the past and present believe it, is very foolish at the least. Those who “*hold the truth in unrighteousness*” cannot be, by any stretch of the imagination, those nations or people who never had a “*covenant*” with God. Israel alone was “*chosen*” by God. He “*set His love*” upon Israel. Listen to the words of the apostle

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Paul in Romans 9:2-4: *“I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart. For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh: 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.**”* Why was Paul in such “great heaviness and continual sorrow” for Israel? It was they who “held the truth in unrighteousness,” and against whom the “wrath of God was revealed from heaven.” It was Israel who was “without excuse.”

“...the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made...” Many teach that this passage refers to the Gentiles to prove that they are “without excuse” because they could understand God through seeing the creation. All such teaching is foolishness. The first book of Moses begins with *“In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth”* (Genesis 1:1). It was to Moses, and thus to the children of Israel, that God revealed the secrets of creation. He actually came down on Mount Sinai to speak to the entire nation of Israel as to one man, and they heard his audible voice. No other nation or people ever received such revelation from God. Certainly it was Israel who was “without excuse.”

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.

“...when they knew God...” Israel was the only nation that ever “knew God.” God “introduced Himself” to the children of Israel at Mount Sinai when He came down speak to them in an audible voice. His first words to them were, *“I am the LORD thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage”* (Exodus 20:2). God had

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chosen them to be His “*peculiar (special) treasure;*” they would be a “*holy nation,*” and a “*kingdom of priests*” if they would “*obey His voice*” (Exodus 19:5-6).

“...they glorified Him not as God...” They refused to hear His voice. They said to Moses, “*Speak thou with us, and we will hear: but let not God speak with us, lest we die*” (Exodus 20:19). God had chosen them, loved them, and delivered them out of the cruel bondage in Egypt, but they were not thankful. Their hearts were “*darkened*” by “*vain imaginations.*”

22-23 Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things.

“And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image...” Without question, Paul is referring to Psalms 106:19-20: “*They made a calf in Horeb, and worshipped the molten image. Thus they changed their glory into the similitude of an ox that eateth grass.*” This is an obvious reference to the “*golden calf*” which Aaron built and Israel worshipped while Moses was on the mountain with God to receive the commandments engraved in tables of stone. Within six weeks after God introduced Himself as the God “*which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt,*” Aaron introduced the golden calf, saying, “*These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt*” (Exodus 32:4). Oh what foolish children they were.

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

Stephen testified against Israel in Acts 7:41-42, “*They made a calf in those days, and offered sacrifice unto the idol, and re-*

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joiced in the works of their own hands. Then God turned, and gave them up to worship the host of heaven.” God explained the issue like this in Psalms 81:11-12, “*But my people would not hearken to my voice; and Israel would (have) none of me. So I gave them up unto their own hearts’ lust.*” In the light of these witnesses, there can be no doubt that it is God’s own people, the children of Israel, who are spoken of in this chapter, and not the heathen. “*Idolatry*” was their sin, and “*unclean-ness*” was their punishment. “*Given up*” by God, they became slaves to their own lusts, and worshipped demon gods in demonic orgies that are beyond the ability of decent minds to comprehend.

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

The second great sin of Israel was to “*change the truth of God into a lie.*” According to the Greek wording of this phrase, they “*exchanged the truth of God for a lie,*” a very common error among those who “*glorify Him not as God*” (verse 21). They served the creature (man) more than the Creator (God). Multitudes today have exchanged the “*gospel of Christ*” for religious philosophy, which in “*man-centered*” instead of “*Christ-centered.*” It has given us a very weak and sinful church.

26-27 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: 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.

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The Indictment

Because of their second great sin, God gave them up to “*vile affections.*” By the description given of their activities, it is clear that the reference is to “*homosexuality.*” Again, “*vile affections*” was God’s punishment for their sin, which was to “*change the truth of God into a lie.*” History repeats itself. America and the western world are following the same course as ancient Israel towards reprobation. In this day, America worships many gods and “*vile affections*” are given the protection of law. This became possible in America only because most of the churches have “*exchanged the truth of God for a lie.*” The “*truth*” they have “*sold*” is that Christ came into the world to make an end of sin. The “*lie*” they have “*bought*” is that sin doesn’t matter. The only hope for America and the western world is those who will take up the truth of God and declare it to the world. Nothing else will ever restore our nation to godly morality. We are very near to God’s “*wrath*” against those who “*hold the truth in unrighteousness.*”

If there should be any question whether “*vile affections*” filled the land of Israel those days, I will give four scriptures:

I Kings 14:24: “*And there were also sodomites in the land: and they did according to all the abominations of the nations which the LORD cast out before the children of Israel.*”

I Kings 15:11-12: “*And Asa did that which was right in the eyes of the LORD, as did David his father. And he took away the sodomites out of the land, and removed all the idols that his fathers had made.*”

I Kings 22: 46: “*And the remnant of the sodomites, which remained in the days of his father Asa, he (King Jehoshaphat) took out of the land.*”

II Kings 23:7: “*And he brake down the houses of the sodomites, that were by the house of the LORD.*”

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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;

Israel's third and final step toward reprobation was, "*they did not like to retain God in their knowledge.*" For Israel, this was the sequence of events that led to the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar about six hundred years before Christ.

For over a generation, America and the western world have been thrusting "*the knowledge of God*" from them. The attacks against prayer in schools, bible reading, the Ten Commandments, Christmas, etc., are all evidence of powerful forces in our nation who "*do not like to retain God in their knowledge.*" We will fare no better than ancient Israel.

29-31 Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, Backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, Without understanding, covenantbreakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful:

God does not destroy "*good*" nations. When "*good*" nations turn away from God, He lets them eat the "*fruit of their own way*" (Proverbs 1:29-31). They "*destroy*" themselves. "*O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself; but in me is thine help*" (Hosea 13:9). It is when they are "*filled*" with every unclean thing that they will come to their end.

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.

In Romans 1:18 Paul told us that the "*wrath of God*" is revealed against those "*who hold the truth in unrighteousness.*"

Section Two **THE FOUNDATION** Romans 1:18-32
The Indictment

It is these who “*know the judgment of God*” against sin, yet continue to “*enjoy the pleasures of sin*” (Hebrews 11:25). In this we see that God’s “*wrath*” is not against those “*heathen*” nations that do not know the word of God nearly so much as against those who do know, but pervert the gospel to their own destruction (Galatians 1:6-7, Jude 1:4, II Peter 3:16).

“...not only do the same...” While they may profess to believe and while they know the judgments of God against sin, they commit every sin that the unbelieving world commits, and not only so, but...

“...have pleasure in them that do them...” The words “*have pleasure*” are translated from the Greek word “*suneudokeō*,” which is defined as “*to think well of in common, that is, assent to, feel gratified with*” (Strong’s Greek Dictionary).

There is a “*key*” in the words “*not only*,” which is properly defined means “*not merely*.” They “*not only*” continue in sin, but their fellowship is among sinners. Not only so, but they also give their “*assent*,” that is, “*approval*” to sinful activities. They also “*find gratification in*” and are “*entertained by*” those same activities.

There are others who may never “*commit*” the horrible abominations that have filled our national culture, but they “*...have pleasure in them that do them*.” The words “*have pleasure*” speak of giving “*consent or approval*.” God’s judgment is equally upon those who consent and approve of such abominations as it is upon those who commit them. Both are equally guilty before God. Both are indications of a “*reprobate mind*.”

There are five sins that bring the wrath of God upon the nations of those who have once known Him. They are listed in Revelation 9:20-21 as “*idolatry, murder, sorcery, fornication, and theft*.” They are identified in America today as “*many gods*,

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abortion, drug culture, sexual immorality and perversion, and greed.” All of these things have existed from the beginning of time, but when they receive the approval of law, we know that the nation is in the last stages of the reprobate mind, and rejected by God. Those who “*approve*” reprobate conduct are condemned by God just as much as those who actually commit the reprobate act.

The Prosecution

Section Three

“The Prosecution”

This second chapter of Romans is written as a “*prosecution*” of Old Testament Israel which has been indicted in chapter one. The charge is that the Jew is no different than the Gentiles who surround them. The case will be proven beyond a reasonable doubt.

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.

Romans 1:21-32 is a history of the circumstances that led to the first destruction of Jerusalem almost six hundred years before Christ. In this second chapter, Paul speaks of the spiritual condition of Israel in the days of Jesus, which led to their second destruction in 70 A.D. Their forefathers had been “*without excuse*” (Romans 1:19-20) when Nebuchadnezzar’s armies destroyed them, because God had revealed Himself to them as to no other people since the creation. The present generation in the days of Christ was “*inexcusable*” because they judged the Gentiles for breaking the law of God while they were doing the same things.

2-3 But we are sure that the judgment of God is according to truth against them which commit such things. 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?

It is beyond incredible that there are so many who think a “*believer*” will be justified while committing the same sins for which an “*unbeliever*” is condemned. Others have cast aside all judgment, not wanting to “*condemn*” their own selves while

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judging others. Paul asks the question in I Corinthians 6:2, *“Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? and if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters?”* It must be understood that the church is not condemned when it *“judges”* the world; instead, it is condemned because it *“does the same things”* it judges the world for doing.

4-5 Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance? 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;

Many people often mistake the *“goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering”* of God for His approval. They do not know that in continuing in sin they have *“treasured up”* unto themselves wrath to be revealed against them in the Day of Judgment. The only *“reward”* they will receive is the anger and wrath of God in the day of His judgment.

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

Paul said, *“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad”* (II Corinthians 5:10).

7-11 To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life: But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, Tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile; But glory, honour,

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and peace, to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile: For there is no respect of persons with God.

In the seven letters to the churches in the second and third chapters of Revelation, Jesus said to each of them, “*I know thy works;*” literally, “*I see thy works.*” It was on the basis of their “*works*” that He knew their spiritual condition. To one He says on the basis of their works, “*thou art neither hot nor cold;*” to another, “*thou hast left thy first love.*” In Ephesians 2:8-10 Paul writes, “*For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: **Not of works**, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus **unto good works**, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.*” It is clear that we are saved by grace, through faith; “*not of works,*” but “*unto good works.*” Although it is possible for a sinner to do “*good works*” before men and not be saved, it is impossible for a “*believer*” to “*continue in sin*” and be saved. God who “*knows the hearts*” and “*discerns the thoughts and intents,*” yet judges us by our works.

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;

“**...As many as have sinned...**” It does not matter if the sinner is “*under the law,*” or “*without the law,*” both will perish.

13-15 (For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified. 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: 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;)

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These verses which are set aside by parenthesis are an explanation of the twelfth verse. God did not receive the Jew simply because he “*heard the law,*” but because he “*did the law.*” Paul gave the example of certain Gentiles who “*do by nature the things contained in the law.*” The “*work of the law*” was “*written in their hearts.*” Human nature has never pleased God or been accepted by God. Paul was the “*apostle to the Gentiles.*” These “*Gentiles*” he spoke of were obviously Christians. They were “*justified by faith;*” they were “*born again*” with “*new hearts*” and “*new spirits.*” God’s law was “*written in their hearts*” (II Corinthians 3:3). They were “*partakers of the divine nature*” (II Peter 1:4), and therefore “*did by nature the things contained in the law.*”

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

This verse is out of place, having been separated from the twelfth verse by the parenthesis. Read verses twelve and sixteen together as follows: “*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... in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel.*”

17-20 Behold, thou art called a Jew, and retest in the law, and makest thy boast of God, And knowest his will, and approvest the things that are more excellent, being instructed out of the law; And art confident that thou thyself art a guide of the blind, a light of them which are in darkness, An instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes, which hast the form of knowledge and of the truth in the law.

Paul’s letter to the Romans was written to Gentiles. It is likely that many of them were proselytes who had converted to Judaism. Paul’s purpose in the first two chapters of Romans is

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to prove that the Jews are also sinners, and that the entire world without Jesus Christ is under sin. Notice that they were “called” Jews. They “rested” in the law; “boasted” of God; “knew” his will according to the law, and were “confident” that they were “guides” of the blind, “lights” to those in darkness, “instructors” of the foolish, and “teachers” of babes. They certainly had no “self-esteem” problems. They had the “form of knowledge and of the truth” in the law, but they were also sinners. Paul will point this out.

21-23 Thou therefore which teachest another, teachest thou not thyself? thou that preachest a man should not steal, dost thou steal? Thou that sayest a man should not commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery? thou that abhorrest idols, dost thou commit sacrilege? Thou that makest thy boast of the law, through breaking the law dishonourest thou God?

Like so many today, they preached a law they could not keep and taught a lifestyle they could not live. Paul pointedly exposes the hypocrisy of their faith with these questions. Remember that Paul said in the first verse of this chapter, “*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.*” Certainly, these were “without excuse.”

24 For the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you, as it is written.

Wherever people claim to be the people of God and live sin-filled lives, the “name of God” is, by their actions, “blasphemed.” God spoke to Israel through Ezekiel saying, “*As for you, O house of Israel, thus saith the Lord GOD; Go ye, serve ye every one his idols, and hereafter also, if ye will not hearken*

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unto me: but pollute ye my holy name no more with your gifts, and with your idols.” (Ezekiel 20:39)

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

In Galatians 5:3 Paul told those Gentiles who were enticed to be circumcised, *“I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law.”* If the Jew did not obey the Law of Moses to the smallest detail, it was as if they were not circumcised.

26-27 Therefore if the uncircumcision keep the righteousness of the law, shall not his uncircumcision be counted for circumcision? 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?

God is more interested in *“reality”* than in *“theology.”* If your theology is perfect, but your reality is sinful, you will be judged as a sinner. Outward things like circumcision or water baptism have no bearing whatsoever on whether or not a person is saved from sin. It is as Paul said in Galatians 6:15, *“For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature.”* Jesus said those in Nineveh who repented at the preaching of Jonah will rise up in the judgment to condemn the Jews of His generation who kept every form of the law, yet transgressed the spirit of the law.

28-29 For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: 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.

Section Three **THE FOUNDATION** Romans 2:1-29
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Just as a person is not a Jew simply because he adopts the appearance and outward forms of a Jew, neither is a person “*circumcised*” simply because he cuts away the “*foreskin of his flesh.*” True circumcision is of the heart and in the spirit. As Paul told the gospel believers in Colossians 2:10-11, “...ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power: In whom also ye are (your heart is) *circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ.*” True circumcision is the work of Christ which was accomplished through His death on the cross. The “*body of the sins of the flesh*” is cut out of the heart of the believer to make him “*free indeed*” from sin (Romans 7:24-25; John 8:36). It is the work of God and not of man to do this, therefore all praise is to God and not to man.

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Section Four

“The Condemnation”

In this third chapter of Paul’s revelation of God’s “*justice*,” we come to the third phase of the “*trial*.” The first nine verses of this chapter contain several questions the jury must answer in order to arrive at a just verdict. The first question being, “*Did the defendant (the Jew) have an advantage?*” and the last question being, “*Is the Jew better than the Gentile?*” If you answer the first question “*yes*” and the last question “*no*,” then the jury must find them guilty. Amazingly, in this trial the “*defendant*” must also be the “*jury*.” No man can be justified by God that does not first find himself to be “*guilty before God*.”

Verses ten through eighteen are the “*findings of the court*,” while the nineteenth verse brings the verdict of “*guilty before God*.” It is not the Jew only, but “*the whole world*” that is found to be guilty, and of course, the “*sentence*” is death.

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

What advantage does the Jew have? Paul says their main advantage is that God gave them His law, the “*Ten Commandments*,” at Mount Horeb. When they rejected His voice (Exodus 20:19), He spoke to them through Moses and the prophets. God had long before chosen them, and set His love upon them to be His special people. In Romans 9:4 the apostle Paul spoke of Israel, “*...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.*” From the time of Abraham until Christ the Jew had much advantage over the Gentile nations.

3-4 For what if some did not believe? shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect? God forbid: yea, let

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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.

What if some do not believe? Unbelief does not change anything about God or the truth of God. God does not “*exist*” simply because someone believes that He exists. He exists because HE IS. He exists regardless of, and yet for, the atheist as well as for the saint, and for the unbeliever as well as for the believer. Neither does the “*truth*” adapt itself to what men believe. If no one believes the truth of the gospel as it is in Jesus, it is still the truth, and will continue to deliver from sin those who believe the truth and trust in Christ.

...as it is written, that thou mightest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou art judged.

David wrote these words in his prayer of repentance in Psalms 51. He let it be known that because of his great sin, anything God chose to do to him would be a righteous judgment. Yet from this passage people began to assume that our sin caused God’s righteousness to be more evident. It is this error that Paul deals with in the next four verses.

5-6 But if our unrighteousness commend the righteousness of God, what shall we say? Is God unrighteous who taketh vengeance? (I speak as a man) God forbid: for then how shall God judge the world?

David acknowledged his sin in great agony and pleaded with God to give him a new heart and a righteous spirit. He knew that if the state of his heart and spirit was not completely changed, he could never glorify God. In our day, many are taught that acknowledging our sinfulness is actually a sign of spirituality. Acknowledging sin is the first step towards God, but it is not spirituality. Yet it is commonly believed that the

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more we acknowledge how sinful we are the more God is glorified in us. This seems to be the way many think we are to glorify God; not through manifesting his righteousness, but through declaring ourselves to be desperately sinful. Multitudes find comfort and “*spirituality*” in the belief that we are all, and will always be, sinners. Somehow it is thought that God could never judge a believer for their sin, because they acknowledge it every day and extoll God’s righteousness. Paul deals with this error by letting it be known that if God cannot judge those who profess to be his people for their sin, he cannot judge the world for its sin.

7-8 For if the truth of God hath more abounded through my lie unto his glory; why yet am I also judged as a sinner? 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.

In this verse, Paul continues refuting the belief that our unrighteousness commends the righteousness of God. If our lie or deception was glorifying God, we would not be judged to be sinners. Paul makes the point that it is not possible for sin to glorify God. If it truly glorifies God, it is not sin. And if it is sin, it cannot glorify God even though some may think it produces good results. If a “*lie* (a fabrication)” could promote the “*truth of God*,” then every gospel preacher should also be a “*liar*.” Again, the very thought of such a thing is truly preposterous, because “...*all liars shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone*” (Revelation 21:8). Israel’s unbelief, or a professing believer’s sin, does not glorify God. Sin in those who profess God always causes his name to be blasphemed (Ezekiel 36:23). Paul says that damnation is the just (righteous) end for those who do evil in the belief that good will come of it.

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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;

This is the fifth question in a series of five. The question is, “*Are we (the Jews) better than they (the Gentiles)?*” We must consider the relevance of the question. The first question (verse one) was “*What advantage hath the Jew?*” It was established that the Jew had great advantage over the Gentile, “*in every way.*” Their main advantage was because God had chosen them, revealed Himself to them, given them His law, and visited them with His prophets, yet for all this they were “*in no wise (in no way)*” better than the Gentile nations around them. Their “*guilt*” did not justify the Gentiles, but rather proved that every person, both Jews and Gentiles, were in bondage under sin.

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

This statement is a summary of the next seven verses. Paul is using that which was written in the Psalms and the prophets to reinforce his point that the Jews were equally unrighteous as the Gentiles. The nineteenth verse confirms that this was spoken of those who are “*under the law.*” The previous verse shows that “*both Jews and Gentiles*” are under sin. “*There is none righteous, no, not one*” is the condition of every person on earth *without* Jesus Christ. In fact, it establishes the reason Christ came, suffered and died for us; that “*many*” would be “*made righteous*” (Romans 5:19).

11-18 There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God (Psalms 14:2). They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one (Psalms 14:3). Their throat is an open sepulcher (Psalms 5:9); with their tongues they have used deceit (Psalms 78:36); the poison of asps is under their

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lips (Psalms 140:3): Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness (Psalms 10:7): Their feet are swift to shed blood (Isaiah 59:7): Destruction and misery are in their ways (Isaiah 59:7): And the way of peace have they not known (Isaiah 59:8): There is no fear of God before their eyes (Psalms 36:1).

While many are quick to claim there is none righteous few would agree that there is none who seek after God or that no one knows the way of peace. Yet these things are the condition of those of whom it is spoken, “*There is none righteous, no not one.*”

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.

The Gentiles had no claim to righteousness under the Old Covenant. Before Jesus came and died for the sin of the entire world, the Gentile was “...*without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world*” (Ephesians 2:12). Unto this point everything Paul has written in his letter to the Romans was written about God’s “*chosen people*” under the Old Covenant, the Jew. If there had been even one person found with “*the righteousness of Christ,*” Jesus would have never suffered the cross. If even one could be righteous apart from the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, then everyone could. There was “*none righteous,*” therefore Jesus Christ died to “*make many righteous*” (Romans 5:19).

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.

The term “*deeds of the law*” refers to the offerings of animal sacrifices, the keeping of feast days, and the observing the new

Section Four **THE FOUNDATION** Romans 3:1-20

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moons, holy days, and the Sabbaths. These were all “*dead works*” (Hebrews 6:1, 9:14) which could never justify those who did them.

The law was not given to justify man. Instead, its purpose was to identify sin and thus establish a basis with which to judge sinners. Paul told the Galatians, “*Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions...*” (Galatians 3:19). The law was added to give the leaders of Israel a basis to identify and judge the sins of the people. Unlike man, God does not need a law in order to judge the sin of the sinner. This was proven by the great flood and also by the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, both of which happened before the law was given.

Justifying the Ungodly

Section Five

“Justifying the Ungodly”

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

Romans 1:16-17 tells us “*the righteousness of God*” is revealed in the “*gospel of Christ.*” The term “*the righteousness of God*” is better understood throughout the book of Romans as “*the justice of God.*” The fact that God is “*just*” is proven because God sent Christ into the world for the salvation of fallen man. It is the justice of God that demands salvation for the sinner, and it must be “*without the law.*” Both the law and the prophets foretold this wonderful salvation that would be wrought by the “*justice of God.*”

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:

As we have previously noted, the term “*the righteousness of God*” is better understood as “*the justice of God.*” The manifestation of God’s “*justice,*” is Jesus, who is “*The Christ, the Son of the living God*” (Matthew 16:16), shedding His precious blood and dying on the cross to “*take away the sin of the world*” (John 1:29).” It is “*Christ-crucified...the power of God and the wisdom of God*” (I Corinthians 1:23-24).

“...by faith of Jesus Christ...” Notice the term “*faith of Jesus Christ*” is used instead of “*faith in Jesus Christ.*” Everything God did to save man through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ is called “*The Faith of Jesus Christ.*” It is a finished work that is “*unto all,*” because “*Christ died for all*” (II Corinthians 5:14-15). The fact that Jesus died for all does not mean that all are, or ever will be saved. The wonderful redemption that was made for us in the blood of Jesus is “*unto*

Section Five **THE FOUNDATION** Romans 3:3:21-31

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all,” but it is only “*upon all them that believe.*” It is received by faith, which excludes only those who refuse to believe the gospel of Jesus Christ. The last phrase, “*for there is no difference,*” refers to both Jew and Gentile. Neither has an advantage in this New Covenant, because salvation is to “*everyone that believeth*” (Romans 1:16).

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

The reason there is no difference between Jew and Gentile is that “*all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.*” This is also the reason Christ came and died for all.

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

Both Jew and Gentile have sinned, but both are “*justified freely*” by “*His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.*” Both Ephesians 1:7 and Colossians 1:14 confirm this, saying “*we have redemption through His blood.*” In I Peter 1:18-19 we read, “*Ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold...But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.*” The definition of “*redemption*” is “*ransom in full.*”

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;

Verses twenty-five and twenty-six must be considered together in order to understand the message Paul gives. Verse twenty-five deals with our past, and verse twenty-six deals with our present and future. The sacrifice of Jesus Christ, the Son of God is sufficient for both our past and present in different ways. First, we will see the answer for our past as revealed in verse twenty five.

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“...whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation...” It is Christ Jesus (verse 24) whom God has set forth. The word “*propitiation*” speaks of an “*atonement victim*,” that is, a “*sacrificial lamb*.” John the Baptist declared Jesus to be that lamb, saying “*Behold, the lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world*” (John 1:29).

“...through faith in His blood...” “*His blood*” is not like the blood of animals that had been offered to cover sins for thousands of years past. His blood “*cleanses from all sin*” (I John 1:7). It is only “*through faith in His blood*,” however, that it is effectual to us.

“...to declare His righteousness (justice)...” Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, suffering and dying on the cross to “*take away our sin*” (John 1:29), declares to the ends of the earth that “*God is righteous*.” He is just! “*Christ crucified*” is the “*wisdom of God*” and the “*power of God*” to save every sinner who will believe (I Corinthians 1:23-24).

“...for the remission of sins that are past...” The Greek word that was translated “*remission*” in this verse is “*paresis*,” which means, “*pretermission, i.e. toleration*.” The word “*pretermission*” means “*to let pass without notice or making mention*.” In the Old Testament, the word “*Passover*” was translated from the Hebrew word “*pecach*,” which is also defined as “*a pretermission*,” which speaks of a “*passing by*.” For fifteen hundred years before Christ came into the world, the sins of the people were “*passed over*” by God when the “*Passover lamb*” was offered, yet there was a “*remembrance again*” (Hebrews 10:3) of sins every year. God “*set forth*” His Son Jesus to be our “*Passover Lamb*” for the “*passing over*” of sins that are in our “*past*.” Through “*faith in the blood of Jesus*,” there is “*pardon*” and “*acquittal*” for “*sins that are past*.” There is nothing in this verse that deals with “*present*” or “*future*” sins. Those who quote this verse as “*...remission*”

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for sins that are past, present, and future,” make a gross error, and damn many souls through their manipulation of the word of God. God made no provision at Calvary for those who “*continue in sin,*” but there is “*pardon*” for the past.

“...through the forbearance of God...” The proof that this verse deals only with forgiveness and pardon for our past sins is found in this phrase. The Greek word “*anochē,*” which was translated “*forbearance*” means “*self-restraint.*” Jesus Christ was the “*Passover Lamb*” that was offered for the sins of the world. Those who repent of sin and put their trust in Jesus Christ receive “*pretermission*” for sins in their past, which means that God will “*let pass without notice or making mention.*” Your “*past sins*” will never be remembered against you, neither now, nor in the judgment. For a child of God, thank God, sin is “*in the past.*”

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

“To declare, I say, at this time...” Two time periods are mentioned in the **twenty-fifth** and **twenty-sixth** verses. In the **twenty-fifth** verse there is pardon, acquittal, and tolerance for “*sins that are past.*” “*Sins that are past*” includes every sin committed in the lifetime of any person until the time they come to the savior. For the past there is “*pardon,*” for the present and future, there is “*redemption.*” Both are received “*through faith in His blood* (verse 25).”

The words “*...at this time...*” in the **twenty-sixth** verse, speak of the “*present time*” of every child of God. God’s answer for the present (and future) is “*justification by grace.*” The gospel must be preached that God “*pardons sinners*” and “*justifies the ungodly*” (Romans 4:5) through “*faith in His blood.*” This

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is more than the “*justification by faith*” as those of the Old Testament understood it. We will see the difference as we continue through the next three chapters of Romans.

The fact that the Son of God suffered and died on the cross to take away the sin of the world declares that God is righteous. He is “*just,*” and the “*justifier*” of those who believe in Jesus.

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

The child of God has nothing to boast in but the “*Lord Jesus Christ.*” We could not save ourselves; we could not sanctify ourselves; we could do nothing by and of ourselves to satisfy God. Salvation is of the Lord. We are “*His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus*” (Ephesians 2:8-10), and thus, boasting is excluded.

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

“**Therefore we conclude...**” It sounds like Paul is reaching a “*conclusion*” about the matter of “*justification by faith.*” In fact, the same Greek word that was translated “*conclude*” in this verse is used twelve times in the next chapter. It is variously translated as “*counted,*” “*reckoned,*” and “*imputed.*” Of course, the “*conclusion*” is that a man is...

“**...justified by faith...**” The word “*justified*” is translated from the Greek word “*dikaioo,*” meaning, “*to render just or innocent,*” or to “*show or regard as just or innocent.*” The English word “*render*” means “*to give back, or restore.*” Justification in that sense of the word is “*restoration to righteousness,*” and is that which is spoken of in the twenty-fourth verse of this chapter; “*Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.*” Previous to Calvary the “*old covenant*” definition of “*justified*” did not indicate a change in the heart of man wrought by faith as does the new, but in either case, justification is by faith...

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“...without the deeds of the law.” The *“deeds of the law”* are the animal sacrifices, keeping of feast days, holy days, new moons, Sabbaths, etc.

29-30 Is he the God of the Jews only? is he not also of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also: Seeing it is one God, which shall justify the circumcision by faith, and uncircumcision through faith.

There is one God who is revealed in the Old Testament as the *“God of the Jews.”* He is revealed in the New Testament as the *“God...of the Gentiles also.”* The God that justifies the Jews (referred to as *“the circumcision”*) *“by faith”* is the *“same God”* who justifies the Gentiles (referred to as *“the uncircumcision”*) *“through faith.”* The word *“by”* in this verse is translated from the Greek word *“ek,”* which *“denotes origin.”* The Jew, being justified *“by faith,”* denotes that *“faith,”* and not the law, was their *“righteousness”* as Paul will establish in chapter four. After redemption has been made through the shed blood of Jesus, justification is *“through faith,”* meaning that *“faith”* is the *“channel”* through which we *“have access into this grace wherein we stand”* (Romans 5:2).

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

The *“new covenant”* is the law of God written in the hearts of His people (Jeremiah 31:31-33). It is also known as the *“covenant of grace.”* It is grace alone that *“establishes”* the law of God in the hearts of His people. The *“law of God”* should not be confused with the *“Law of Moses”* which was nailed to the cross of Christ along with our old man of sin. The manifestation of God’s laws in the hearts and lives of the new creation establishes that the law of God is *“holy, just, and good”* (Romans 7:12).

The Righteousness of Faith

Section Six:

“The Righteousness of Faith”

A great doctrinal “*house of cards*” has been built around the fourth chapter of Romans. It is said that because of justification by faith, God sees you as innocent, righteous, and perfect. Such teachings completely miss the point of Paul’s writings on this subject. In this chapter, the apostle Paul reveals why any person can be eligible to receive the promised redemption if they will simply believe God. He uses Abraham’s experience as the pattern of what God looks for in those who come to him. This chapter does not define salvation, but rather who is eligible to receive it. Abraham, though justified by faith, did not receive the promised redemption until after Christ was crucified. The scripture says “*and these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise: God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect.*” (Hebrews 11:40)

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

Abraham is the “*fleshly*” father of the Jewish people. More importantly though, he is “*The father of all them that believe*” (Romans 4:11). Paul will remind us in the verses to follow that Abraham’s faith, and not his religious works, was the reason he received such great promises from God.

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

The prophet Isaiah said, “*...all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags.*” (Isaiah 64:6) “*Our righteousnesses*” (plural) speak of all the religious things a person does by which they think they become acceptable to God. For the Jews these were their keeping of feast days, holy days, and new moons, as well as the of-

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fering of sacrifices, and obeying religious ordinances and ritualism. Men may boast and trust in such things, but before God these have no value. To him these are just “*filthy rags*” that men use seeking to cover the sinful state of their own heart. None of these religious works were even in place when God counted Abraham to be righteous.

3 For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness.

The first account given that Abraham “*believed God*” is found in Genesis 12:1-2; “*Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father’s house, unto a land that I will shew thee: And I will make of thee a great nation...*” Speaking of the same incident, Hebrews 11:8 tells us, “*By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went.*” When God first called Abraham out of his own country, “*by faith Abraham ...obeyed!*” True faith affects every aspect of a person. Anyone who believes God, also obeys God. Ten years later God said to Abraham concerning the number of stars in the heavens, “*so shall thy seed be,*” and it was written, “*... he believed in the LORD; and He counted it to him for righteousness.*” (Genesis 15:5-6) The “*it*” spoken of in this verse is the fact that Abraham believed God. Abraham’s faith was counted by God to be righteous. It is an error to assume that God was calling something righteous that was not righteous. God was not saying that Abraham was perfect or righteous in every way, but that the faith Abraham possessed towards God was indeed a righteous virtue. God valued the fact that someone believed him far above all the religious works that someone else might do.

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

“*The reward*” speaks of the promise that was given to Abraham: “*I will make of thee a great nation*” (Genesis 12:2); “*so shall thy seed be*” (Genesis 15:5); and “*Thou shalt be a father of many nations*” (Genesis 17:4). Abraham’s “*reward*” would be would be the birth of a son that must be born of Sarah, Abraham’s barren wife. “*How to receive the reward* (the promise)” becomes the message of this chapter.

Abraham wasted fourteen years of his life, from age eighty-five until age ninety-nine, trusting in his own strength and abilities to bring to pass what God had promised. He “*worked,*” and all that he received for his efforts was the child “*Ishmael*” who was born to him by Hagar, the slave girl. Ishmael was said to be a “*wild man,*” and Abraham spent thirteen years trying to “*tame the little wild man.*” Every effort of man to make himself righteous through self-improvement will fare no better than Abraham did with Ishmael.

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

The promises of God are fulfilled only upon those who “*believe God*” (Romans 3:22). For them, “*faith is counted for righteousness.*” The eleventh chapter of Hebrews gives the account of many men and women who obtained promises from God, not based upon their religious works, but upon the righteousness of faith. To believe God and trust in Him is the highest form of righteousness a person can offer unto the Lord.

“**...him that justifieth the ungodly**” Abraham was not perfect, but neither was he an ungodly man. God spoke of Abraham saying, “*For I know him, that he will command his*

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children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the LORD, to do justice and judgment; that the LORD may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him.” (Genesis 18:19) Noah also was a righteous man when God spoke to him to build the Ark. In fact all who ever walked with God were godly people. When Paul speaks of *“him that justifieth the ungodly,”* he is referring to how God responds to a sinful person who repents and turns to Him.

“...his faith is counted for righteousness.” The meaning of this statement is simple. God considers the faith of the one who believes him to be an acceptable righteous virtue. Even a sinner can repent and offer this righteous virtue unto God. It is important to remember that *“justification by faith”* is the righteousness of faith that a man offers to God. On the other hand, *“justification by grace”* is the righteousness of God that is offered unto man through Jesus Christ. The first comes from the heart of man and is towards God. The second and greater justification comes forth from God and fills the heart of man.

6-8 Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, Saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin.

In order to understand what David is saying, we must go to the Psalm that Paul quoted in our text: *“Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man unto whom the LORD imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile”* (Psalms 32:1-2). When he wrote these words, David was speaking of himself **after he repented** of his affair with Bathsheba and having her husband, Uriah, killed. David describes his condition **before he repented** in the next two verses: *“When I kept silence, my bones waxed old through my*

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roaring all the day long. For day and night thy hand was heavy upon me: my moisture is turned into the drought of summer. Selah” (Psalms 32:3-4). David’s spirit was “*filled with guile*” as long as he covered his sin. He pretended to be righteous: he tried to justify himself to himself, but he could not. His own heart condemned him day and night (I John 3:21). He said, “*My sin is ever before me*” (Psalms 51:3). This continued and worsened day by day as long as David “*kept silence*” before God. The word “*Selah*” is a musical term. It is simply a directive to “*pause*” for a moment. After the “*pause*,” David tells the remedy he found for his sin; a “*remedy*” that brought great blessedness to him: “*I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the LORD; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin. Selah*” (Psalms 32:5).

What David received from God when he repented is described in Romans 3:25 as “*remission for sins that are past.*” David was forgiven and pardoned. His sin was not imputed unto him; therefore it would not be remembered in the day of God’s judgment. His pardon, however, was not a license to repeat the transgression in the future.

How is it possible that a person who had committed such ungodly acts as David could have righteousness accounted to him by God? Jesus gave us the answer when he spoke of the Pharisee and the publican who went to pray. The Pharisee exalted himself before God because of all the religious deeds he had done. The publican humbled himself in repentance saying, “*God be merciful to me a sinner.*” Jesus said, “*I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted*” (Luke 18:14). The Pharisee was rejected because he offered God the “*righteousnesses*” of

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religious works. The publican humbled himself in repentance and offered God the “*righteousness of faith.*” He believed that God is “*a rewarder of them who diligently seek him*” (Hebrews 11:6). Jesus said “*this man went home justified.*” He would never be the same again. The sins and iniquities of his past were forgiven and covered, and would not be imputed against him by God. If he continues in faith he will become a “*friend of God.*” The faith of a sinner that calls upon God in repentance is valued by God far above the “*righteousnesses*” of religious works.

9-10 Cometh this blessedness then upon the circumcision only, or upon the uncircumcision also? for we say that faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness. How was it then reckoned? when he was in circumcision, or in uncircumcision? Not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision.

“*This blessedness*” speaks of the “*blessedness*” of sins forgiven and the past pardoned, with no record found in the day of God’s judgment. It is also the blessedness of obtaining the promises of God through faith. The experience of Abraham is offered in this chapter as proof that the “*blessedness*” David spoke of is not “*for the circumcision only.*” Abraham was seventy-five years old when God called him. He believed God and by the righteousness of his faith he walked with God. By faith (believing God), he walked out of the land of idolatry and came to God (Hebrews 11:8). All these things happened twenty-four years before he was circumcised, and well over four hundred years before the law was given.

11-12 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: And the father of circum-

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cision 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.

Circumcision to Abraham was a sign that he “*believed God,*” therefore Abraham is the “*father of all them that believe.*” He is not, however, the father of “*all*” who are circumcised. Among those who are circumcised, it is only those who also “*believe God*” that are justified. Jesus told some Jews “*If ye were Abraham’s children, ye would do the works of Abraham*” (John 8:39). Abraham is the “*father of all them that believe,*” whether they are Jews or Gentiles, circumcised, or uncircumcised. The “*righteousness of faith*” is imputed unto all who believe God. Their “*faith*” is the “*righteousness*” they offer unto God and it is the righteousness that God accepts from them.

There is a greater “*circumcision*” and a greater “*righteousness*” than Abraham could know in his day, which was almost two thousand years before redemption was made by Jesus at Calvary. This greater circumcision is called “*the circumcision of Christ*” in Colossians 2:11: “*In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ.*” It is the “*circumcision of the heart*” which is made “*without hands.*” It severs the “*body (or source) of the sins of the flesh*” and takes it out of the heart and nature of man. This is the new covenant sign that we have received the “*righteousness which is through the faith of Christ*” (Philippians 3:9). This righteousness is not a righteousness that man offers to God, but it is the righteousness that God gives to man through Christ Jesus. This “*greater righteousness*” is to be “*justified by His blood*” (Romans 5:9), which we will discuss in the next chapter.

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Section Seven

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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.

None of the promises of God can be received by doing the works of the law. In His first promise to Abraham God said, *“I will make of thee a great nation”* (Genesis 12:2). In His next promise He told Abraham to look at the stars of heaven and said, *“So shall thy seed be”* (Genesis 15:5). The third time God appeared to Abraham, He said, *“Thou shalt be a father of many nations”* (Genesis 17:4). All these promises were given to Abraham over four hundred years before the law was given. Even so, Abraham tried to receive the promises of God through his own abilities by taking Hagar, the bondmaid, as a wife. In an allegory which Paul gives in **Galatians 4:24-25**, *Hagar represents the covenant of works*, and *Sarah represents the covenant of grace*. The result of Abraham’s marriage to Hagar (works) was the child Ishmael, whom the angel of the Lord had foretold that he would be a *“wild man”* (Genesis 16:11-12). The child of promise could not come through Hagar, but only through Abraham’s wife Sarah, who was a *“barren woman.”* The promises of God can never come through the works of the law (Hagar), but only through the righteousness of faith. The promise can only come through the *“barren woman (denoting human impossibility),”* therefore it must be received *“by faith.”*

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

In Paul’s amazing allegory, *“Ishmael”* represents those who *“are of the law.”* If God accepts Ishmael, there is no reason

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for Him to give Isaac, and the promise is void. If our abilities to obey carnal ordinances could produce what God has promised, there was no reason for God to give His Son. In Galatians 2:21 Paul says, *“I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain.”*

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

The purpose of the law is to discover and punish sin, thus, *“the law worketh wrath.”* God does not need the law to discover sin. He is *“a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.”* Notice John 2:23-25: *“Now when he was in Jerusalem at the passover, in the feast day, many believed in his name, when they saw the miracles which he did. But **Jesus did not commit himself unto them, because he knew all men, and needed not that any should testify of man: for he knew what was in man.**”* Jesus did not judge the people by the Law of Moses; instead, it was as Isaiah prophesied of Him, *“He shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears; but with righteousness shall He judge...”* (Isaiah 11:3-4).

The apostle John said, *“For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ”* (John 1:17). It was *“Moses”* who gave the *“Law of Moses.”* God had already spoken His *“Ten Commandments”* to the children of Israel from Mount Horeb. This was His law, which He purposed to *“write in their hearts”* (Jeremiah 31:33). The people refused to listen to God, but called for Moses to speak with them. *“And they said unto Moses, **Speak thou with us, and we will hear: but let not God speak with us, lest we die**”* (Exodus 20:19). It was in this moment and by these words that the Law of Moses was born. *“And the LORD heard the voice of your words, when ye spake unto me; and the LORD said unto me, I have heard the*

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*voice of the words of this people, which they have spoken unto thee: they have well said all that they have spoken. **O that there were such an heart in them**, that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments always, that it might be well with them, and with their children for ever!"* (Deuteronomy 5:28-29)

If Israel could have received the “*Law of God*” into their hearts there would never have been a “*Law of Moses*” (Jeremiah 7:22-23). The Law of Moses was “*added because of transgressions*” (Galatians 3:19). God did not need the law because He knows the heart of man. Moses did not know the heart of man, so he needed a law in order to judge the people. The Law of Moses not only contained commandments, but also punishments: “*...every transgression and disobedience received a just recompence of reward*” (Hebrews 2:2), and, “*He that despised Moses’ law died without mercy under two or three witnesses*” (Hebrews 10:28), hence, “*the law worketh wrath.*”

“For where no law is, there is no transgression.” This phrase is greatly misunderstood by many. Moses could only punish those who broke a specific law. God, on the other hand, destroyed every man, woman, and child in the flood except for eight who were in the ark, because “*...every imagination of the thoughts of his (man’s) heart was only evil continually*” (Genesis 6:5). Moses could punish the people in great wrath only because he had the “*law*” to judge them by. If he could not find a law to identify an offense, he could not punish because “*there was no transgression.*”

The absence of the law does not equate with the absence of sin, only with the absence of transgression. Paul tells us in Romans 2:12, “*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.*” Sin is of the heart, and God, who knows the heart of man, can judge the sin of the heart. The Law of

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Moses was given as a standard by which Moses, and all the judges who would come after him, would judge the people.

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 issue for Abraham was how he would receive the child of promise. It has been proven by God's rejection of Ishmael that the promise cannot come through Hagar (works). The child of promise must come through Sarah (grace), but Sarah is a barren woman, and cannot produce a child. Yet, God's promise to Abraham is "*Sarah thy wife shall bear thee a son indeed; and thou shalt call his name Isaac: and I will establish my covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, and with his seed after him*" (Genesis 17:19). At the time of this promise, not only is Sarah's womb dead, Abraham's body is also dead concerning reproduction. There is absolutely no course of action Abraham can take. He must "*believe God*" as simply as he had first "*believed God*" twenty-five years before. Only then will Sarah (grace) conceive and bear a son to Abraham. "*Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace.*" Since salvation is "*by grace, through faith*" (Ephesians 2:8), the promise is sure to everyone who will "*believe God.*"

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 first phrase of this verse, placed in parenthesis, interrupts the thought of the **sixteenth** and **seventeenth** verses, which are **one sentence**. These verses should be connected as follows: "*...Abraham: who is the father of us all ...before* (in the sight of) *him whom he believed, even God, who quickeneth the dead,*

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and calleth those things which be not as though they were (As it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations).” From the moment Abraham first “*believed God,*” he was destined to be “*the father of all them that believe,*” and God dealt with him as such.

“...I have made thee a father of many nations.” Notice that the place and time that God rejected Abraham’s abilities and works in Ishmael is the same place and time that He told Abraham, “*I have made thee a father of many nations*” (Genesis 17:1-5, 15-16). It is here we discover that God “*...calleth those things which be not as though they were.*” Abraham must believe to receive a human impossibility that God has already finished. “*I have made thee...*” speaks in the past tense. Even so, those who “*receive the promise of eternal inheritance*” (Hebrews 9:15) have believed God to receive what Jesus “*finished*” through death on the cross and in His resurrection. Notice also Acts 13:32-33; “*...the promise which was made unto the fathers, God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again.*”

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.

Every hope that Abraham had in Hagar and Ishmael was taken from him. Every hope he had in the abilities of his flesh was also gone in that neither he nor Sarah could physically produce a child, yet the scripture speaks of Abraham, “*who against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations.*” The man or woman who “*believes God*” is never without hope. The word “*against*” in this verse was translated from the Greek word “*para,*” which means “*near,*” “*from beside,*” “*at,*” “*in the vicinity of,*” and “*the proximity of.*” It was most often translated “*with,*” “*of,*” or “*by.*” It is true that Abraham

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lost all hope in his abilities to fulfill God's promise, but that had always been a "false hope." It was in the same day that Abraham lost all hope in the flesh that he received the hope of the promise. Abraham heard God say for the first time, "***I have made thee a father of many nations*** (Genesis 17:5)." It was with this hope that Abraham "*believed in hope....*" Abraham's "*faith*" became an "*expectant faith.*" He "*expected*" to receive what God had promised, because with God, it was already accomplished.

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 Sarah's womb:

Abraham was ninety-nine years old and his body was "dead" concerning reproduction. Sarah was ninety years old, and had been a "*barren woman*" for her entire adult life. At ninety years of age, she was also past the "*time of life*" (the reproductive years) for women. Abraham did not even consider these things; he simply believed God, based upon the promise. The promises of the gospel, which Paul will speak of in the next few chapters, are impossible for a fallen man to believe when he considers his sinful condition. The righteousness of faith does not consider the things that deny the promise. It just believes what God has promised.

20 He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God;

This is an amazing text. Religious people do not stagger at problems; they learn to live with them, and seek to overcome them. It is at the "*promise of God*" that religious people stagger. As Abraham first turned to Hagar for a child, and as the children of Israel turned to Moses for the Law of Moses, the "*church*" today turns to thousands of "*principles*" to deal with every problem. We "*stagger*" at the

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promise of God, which is so great, and so wonderful, that no law or principle can fulfill it. We stagger at the thought of both “*justification*” and “*sanctification*” being finished at the cross through His shed blood. Unable to believe for that which is already finished, we set about to accomplish it through our own abilities, will power, and religious principles: things that can never give life. In so doing, we also “*go in unto Hagar.*”

Abraham, at ninety-nine years of age, “*did not stagger*” at the promise. He was “*strong in faith,*” and “*gave glory to God*” after every false hope had been destroyed. Those who “*do not stagger*” at the promises of God, “*do receive*” the redemption that is promised.

21 And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform.

“...what He had promised...” The word “*promised*” was translated from the Greek word “*epaggello,*” meaning, “*to announce upon, i.e. to engage to do something; to assert something respecting oneself.*” When a promise is made, it speaks more about the one making the promise than about the one to whom it is made. When God told Abraham to look at the stars of heaven, and said “*So shall thy seed be*” (Genesis 15:5), in that moment God “*committed*” Himself to Abraham. From the time God “*commits*” to do a thing it is finished, even though it may not be manifested for some time. “*Believing God*” is the one essential requirement for receiving that which He has promised. Abraham was “*fully persuaded*” that God was well able to do all that He had promised. In this same manner the gospel believer must be fully persuaded that what the gospel promises, God will perform in them.

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22 And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness.

The word “*for*” in this verse is translated from the Greek word “*eis*,” meaning “*to or into* (indicating the point reached or entered), *of place, time, or* (figuratively) *purpose*.” The Greek word was used in the New Testament 1693 times, usually translated as “*to*,” “*into*,” or “*unto*.” About 145 times it was translated as “*for*” as in “*forever*,” meaning “*into the ages*.” Whenever the same word is used in the phrase “*for righteousness*,” the connotation of the word is “*to be*,” thus, “*his faith*” is counted “*to be*” righteousness. Abraham believed God’s promise when the promise seemed unbelievable. He did not stagger when the promise seemed too great for any man to receive. And he was fully persuaded that God would perform what he had promised. His faith was indeed righteous and he stood in the “*righteousness of faith*” to receive the promise.

The teaching that one who “*continues in sin*” is counted to be “*righteous*” by God because he “*believes*,” is ludicrous. In John 16:8-9, Jesus was speaking of the work of the “*comforter*” who was to come; “*And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: Of sin, because they believe not on me.*” Since the time Jesus died on the cross and arose again, people are sinners and continue in sin only because “*... they believe not on Jesus.*”

23-24 Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him; But for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead;

Abraham was “*justified by faith*.” God counted his faith to be righteousness, and his every righteous act issued out

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of his faith. He stood in the *“righteousness of faith”* to receive the promise, which was fulfilled in Isaac, the *“child of promise.”* There was, however, a much greater promise that Abraham did not receive. The eleventh chapter of Hebrews is a record of men and women who were all *“justified by faith”* before redemption was made at Calvary. The last verse of the chapter brings the conclusion and purpose for which the apostle wrote the chapter; *“And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise: **God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect**”* (Hebrews 11:39-40). The promise they did not (and could not) receive is given to us through the redemption that is ours through Jesus Christ. Paul, speaking in Acts 13:32-33, says, *“We declare unto you glad tidings, how that **the promise which was made unto the fathers, God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again.**”*

This entire fourth chapter was written to show us who it is that receives the promises of God. It is the one who believes God in the same manner that Abraham believed God. God counts their faith to be righteous just as he did Abraham's, and they receive the promises of God through the righteousness of faith. The difference between Abraham and the gospel believer is the promise they receive. Abraham received a son, and a promise that he would be the heir of the world. The promise the gospel believer receives is justification by grace (which is far greater than being justified by faith), sanctification, and freedom from sin through the blood of Jesus Christ. Abraham's total experience, from his *“works”* to *“faith alone”* to receive the promise, is given to us as an *“example”* to *“**believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead.**”*

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

In this last verse of the fourth chapter, Paul begins to turn our attention away from justification by faith, which is a righteousness that we offer unto God, unto justification by the blood of Christ (grace), which is a righteousness that God offers unto us. We will learn more of justification by grace in chapters five and six.

The word “*for*,” used two times in this verse, is translated from the Greek word “*dia*,” meaning “*through*” or in this case “*because of*.” He was delivered to death “*through* (because of) *our offences*,” and He was resurrected “*through* (because of) *our justification*.” Simply put, if we had not been sinners, he would not have died, and if His death on the cross had not been sufficient for our justification, He would not have been raised again.

Entering Grace

Section Eight

“Entering Grace”

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

Translated literally, the verse should read, “*Therefore having been justified by faith...*” Having been justified by faith, each gospel believer stands with Abraham in the righteousness of their own faith. We offer unto God the righteousness of faith when we believe the gospel of Jesus Christ.

“...we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

The first manifestation of “*justification by faith*” is “*peace with God.*” This speaks of a “*cessation of conflict.*” Until a person believes God, they are at enmity with God. John wrote that the one who does not believe the gospel has “*made him (God) a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son*” (I John 5:10). You cannot make God out to be a liar and have peace with God. No one will have peace with God without believing upon our Lord Jesus Christ.

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

“...access by faith into this grace...” Abraham’s faith in God is the reason he was able to receive the great and precious promises that God had spoken unto him. In the same manner, our belief of the gospel opens the door for us to receive the wonderful promises of redemption. The apostle Paul tells us that “*by grace are ye saved through faith*” (Ephesians 2:8). We are not saved by faith, we are saved by grace. But faith is the access, or channel, through which we enter the grace of God. Remember, faith is what we offer unto God. Grace is what God gives unto us in response to our faith.

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Faith was Abraham's access into receiving the promised son (Isaac). Even so faith (believing God) is our access into receiving the promised grace of redemption. The Old Testament prophets prophesied of "*the grace that should come unto you (unto us)*" when they foretold the "*sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should (would) follow*" (I Peter 1:10-11). Having entered into the grace of redemption through faith, we stand in "*this grace,*" and "*rejoice in hope (expectation) of the glory of God.*"

"...rejoice in hope of the glory of God." The Greek word translated "*hope*" means "*anticipation, expectation, and confidence.*" Hope to an unbeliever is a very different thing than to a believer. The unbeliever does not "*believe*" a thing to be so, he only "*hopes*" that it could be so; his "*hope*" actually expresses his doubt. To a believer, hope is the result of faith, and is actually a step beyond faith. "*Faith*" believes, and "*hope*" anticipates with great expectation. The hope of the righteous is "*an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast...*" (Hebrews 6:19). Those who have accessed grace through faith have great expectations of the glory of God, because they "*believe God.*" This is their hope and their confidence in which they rejoice.

The cause of "*rejoicing in hope*" in this verse is said to be "*the glory of God.*" This "*glory*" comes with "*The baptism with the Holy Ghost*" as we will see in the **fifth verse** of this chapter. It is also fully explained in the **eighth chapter**. It is "*the promise of the Father* (Acts 1:4-5; 2:39)."

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

"...we glory in tribulations also." The Greek word translated "*glory*" in this verse is the same word that was translated "*rejoice*" in the previous verse. It is also the word that is translated "*joy*" in verse eleven. "*Rejoice*" would have been the better

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translation in each of these three places. To better understand “*rejoicing in tribulations*,” we will see the apostle’s response to persecution for Christ’s sake in Acts 5:40-42: “...and when they had called the apostles, and beaten them, they commanded that they should not speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go. And they departed from the presence of the council, **rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name**. And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ.” In II Corinthians 4:17 Paul said, “For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, **worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory**” (II Corinthians 4:17). Those who “*stand in grace*” understand that our tribulations can only “*work for us*” as we rejoice in them.

“...knowing that tribulation worketh patience.” Strong’s definition of the word translated “*patience*” is “*cheerful endurance*.” That is another way of saying “*rejoicing in tribulation*,” for that is exactly what “*patience*” is. Those who believe that God afflicts his people, or even allows the devil to afflict them for the purpose of giving them patience, believe a foolish thing. Tribulation is not the source of patience. The source of patience is “*this grace wherein we stand*.” Paul’s entire ministry was in a time of personal “*tribulation*” (II Corinthians 11:23-30). He was persecuted from city to city for the gospel He preached. In II Corinthians 12:7, he called his persecutors “*the messenger of Satan to buffet me*.” In the next two verses he said, “*For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. And he said unto me, **My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness**. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory (**rejoice**) in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me*” (II Corinthians 12:8-9). This was the “*patience*” of the apostle Paul.

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4-5 And patience, experience; and experience, hope: And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.

“Patience,” defined as *“cheerful endurance* (rejoicing in tribulation),” brings *“experience,”* and oh what wonderful experience it brings. Paul and Silas were arrested in the city of Philippi because they preached Jesus among the idolaters of the city and saw many saved and delivered. After they were *“beaten with many stripes,”* they were cast into the *“inner prison”* with their legs bound in stocks. Acts 16:25 says, *“And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them.”* They *“rejoiced in* (the midst of) *tribulation.”* They *“cheerfully endured,”* and the next verse says, *“And suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken: and immediately all the doors were opened, and every one’s bands were loosed.”* Before the night was over the jailer and his entire household were saved. How wonderful is the *“experience”* patience brings. However, it must be understood that *“patience”* is not merely *“enduring,”* but *“cheerfully enduring”* the tribulations that come to a child of God.

“Experience” such as comes out of *“cheerful endurance”* brings *“hope that maketh not ashamed.”* Notice the full circle from *“hope”* in the second verse, through tribulation, patience, and experience, to the *“hope that maketh not ashamed.”* The *“circle”* begins with the believer *“rejoicing in hope of the glory of God,”* and ends with the believer *“receiving the glory of God,”* hence, *“...the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.”* Oh how different this is from those who struggle through religious efforts to please God, yet their every *“experience”* casts them down to despair.

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

The phrase “*when we were yet without strength*” refers to the time before Christ died for us when we had no access by faith “*into this grace wherein we stand*” (verse two). Remember that Jesus told Paul in his time of affliction, “*My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness.*” Our Lord used the words “*grace*” and “*strength*” synonymously. What was the “*remedy*” for a weak and graceless people? “*In due time Christ died for the ungodly.*”

7-8 For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

A good man may lay down his life for those he loves most; his wife or his children. A good mother would lay down her life to save her child. A few would lay down their lives for the defense of their nation, but Christ laid down His life for the ungodly (verse six), for sinners (verse eight), and His enemies (verse ten). Such love for enemies is the proof of divine life and love. God placed His love on display for all to see when Christ died for us.

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

Compare this verse with the first verse of this chapter: “*Therefore being (having been) justified by faith...*” Combined these statements would read: “*We who have been justified by faith are now justified by His blood.*” When by faith we are brought into the grace of redemption we receive a greater justification than Abraham knew. Being justified by the blood of Christ (grace), we are not only forgiven, but “*cleansed from all un-*

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righteousness” (I John 1:9). Our old man of sin is crucified with Christ and we are made free from sin (Romans 6:6-7). In fact, verse nineteen of this chapter tells us that we are “*made righteous.*” This is what Paul refers to when he speaks of “*being justified freely by His grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus*” (Romans 3:24). “*Justification by faith*” did not require the death of God’s Son because it refers to our faith towards God. However, “*justification by grace*” could never be until Christ’s blood was shed upon the cross because “*justification by grace*” does not account a person to be righteous; it makes them righteous!

“Much more then...” Paul introduces two words, “*much more,*” which he will use five times in this chapter. With these words he shows the great superiority of justification by grace through the blood and cross of Christ over everything that has transpired before. It is justification that is greater than the “*fall,*” and greater than the “*law.*” It is greater than that which Abraham and the patriarchs knew; greater than Noah, Moses and the other “*heroes of faith*” comprehended. The writer of Hebrews tells us, “*And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise: God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect*” (Hebrews 11:39-40). That “*better thing*” is “*justification by grace*” through the shed blood of Jesus Christ.

“...being now justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him.” Those who are “*justified by His blood*” have no fear of wrath to come. They have been “*washed from their sins in His blood*” (Revelation 1:5).

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.

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We were “*enemies*” to God by nature. In Romans 8:7 Paul says, “...*the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.*” We have been “*reconciled to God*” by (through) the death of His Son. Notice that reconciliation is “*to God.*” God is not reconciled to man, but man is reconciled “*to God.*” God has never changed. He was “*merciful, gracious, longsuffering, and forgiving*” from the beginning (Exodus 34:6-7). Since Christ came into the world to “*take away our sin*” (John 1:29), God does “*much more.*” He gave His only begotten Son to reconcile man unto Himself through His death. “*Reconciliation to God*” is the reality of what salvation is all about. It is what Christ died for. “*Saved by His life*” is the natural result of reconciliation.

The word “*by,*” which is used two times in this verse was translated from two different Greek words, the first being “*dia,*” which means “*through*”, and the second being “*en,*” which means “*in.*” This verse is correctly understood to say “*We are reconciled to God **through** the death of His Son,*” and “*we are saved **in** His life.*” We are “*born again...by (through) the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead*” (I Peter 1:4).

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

This is the third time in this chapter that the Greek word “*kauchaomai*” is used. In this verse it is translated as “*joy.*” The word is defined by “*Strong’s*” as “*to vaunt,*” which means “*to brag or boast.*” In the second verse of this chapter it is used in the phrase “*we **rejoice** in hope,*” and in the third verse, “*we **glory** in tribulations also.*” Paul tells us in Philippians 3:3, “*For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and **rejoice in Christ Jesus,** and have no confidence in*

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the flesh.” Certainly “*rejoicing in Christ Jesus*” is what Paul speaks of in each of these three verses. In this verse, the third cause of our rejoicing in Christ is the “*atonement*” which we have received “*through Him.*” The word “*atonement*” is used only in this verse in the New Testament, and should have been translated “*reconciliation,*” because that is the meaning of the Greek word which Paul used.

There is an interesting history attached to the word “*atonement.*” It is the only original English word found in the Bible. William Tyndale coined the word to better express the idea of “*reconciliation.*” To do so, he simply connected three simple English words, “*at-one-ment.*” The word expresses that those who are reconciled to God are “*at one with God.*” Later translators used the word “*atonement*” dozens of times in the Old Testament, thus losing the power and changing the meaning of the word.

Section Nine **THE FOUNDATION** Romans 5:12-21

God's Righteousness Revealed

Section Nine

“God's Righteousness Revealed”

The apostle Paul wrote his epistle to the Romans to reveal the righteousness (justice) of God to save condemned sinners. In doing so, he writes as though he were transcribing a criminal court case. The first chapter reveals the “*indictment*,” and the second chapter is the record of the “*prosecution*.” In the third chapter we see the judges “*charge to the jury*” (verses 1-9), the “*findings of the court*” (verses 10-18), and in verse 19 we find the “*verdict*,” which is “*all the world ... guilty before God*.” In verse 20, there is nothing found in the law that can justify the sinner, or even save him from his horrible end, so the judge, our righteous God, must give His justice “*without the law*” (verse 21). It must be “*by grace*” (verse 24), and it must be received “*by faith*” (verse 22).

In this section of our study, Romans 5:12-21, we find “the *deliberations of the Judge*.” God is the judge, and He is “*just*.” On one hand, the entire world has been found guilty before God, and every person is a sinner. On the other hand, there are “*extenuating circumstances*,” because man would not be a “*sinner*” if Adam, the “*first man*” had not disobeyed God. If sin entered the world and polluted the heart of man because of the first man’s disobedience, justice required that there be a “*second man*” to “*take away sin*” and provide a “*cleansing*” for man through His obedience to God. That “*second man*,” could not be “*of the earth, earthy*,” but He must instead be “*the Lord from heaven*” (I Corinthians 15:47). Though His obedience to God was perfect in life, it was through His “*obedience unto death, even the death of the cross*” (Philippians 2:8) that man was reconciled to God and made to be righteous. In this the “*righteousness of God*” is revealed.

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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:

“...by one man sin entered into the world...” In order to give us the true meaning of the *“atonement”* (reconciliation), Paul takes us back to the fall of man which came about through Adam's disobedience and the entrance of sin. He sees the pattern of our reconciliation in the pattern of the fall. We know there was no sin in man until Adam transgressed God's one commandment; *“But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die”* (Genesis 2:17). It was through Adam's disobedience to God and his obedience to the suggestions of the serpent, that sin, which is nothing more or less than the nature of the serpent, entered into his heart and nature. It was then passed to the heart and nature of every descendant of Adam, who is the common father of us all. Because of his transgression, we were all sinners by birth. Even though we had not yet committed sins, we were subject to death (mortality). Our nature was polluted with sin and the sentence of death was upon us.

“...and death by sin...” It was through the entrance of sin that death also entered. The entrance of death was more than physical death, because Adam must eat of the *“Tree of Life”* if he is to *“live forever”* in a flesh and blood body (Genesis 3:22). He was separated from God by spiritual death in the same day he disobeyed God and sin entered into his heart and nature.

“...and so death passed upon all men...” The Greek text literally says, *“...and in this way death passed into all men.”* Every descendant of Adam was born into this world *“spiritually dead to God”* but *“alive to sin.”*

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“...for that all have sinned:” The word “*for*” in this phrase should **not** be understood to say “...*because that all have sinned,*” but “...*with the result that all have sinned.*” The Greek word “*epi,*” which was translated “*for,*” is defined by “*Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance and Greek Dictionary,*” as “*superimposition (of time, place, order, etc.), as a relation of distribution [with the genitive case], i.e. over, upon, etc.*” A literal translation of this phrase from the Greek would say, “...*superimposed that all have sinned,*” which is somewhat difficult to understand. This last phrase of the verse should be understood to say, “...*with the result that all have sinned.*” Sin entered through Adam’s transgression; death entered through sin, and passed into every descendant of Adam with the result that every person has sinned. It does not require an act of sin by every individual before they are subject to death; we were all born into this world as sinners. Sin and death are inseparable companions. Wherever there is sin, there death also reigns.

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

We know that the law “*came by Moses*” about twenty five hundred years after Adam’s transgression. This verse brings out a very simple truth. An action may be inherently evil, but if it does not break an existing law, then it is not a transgression, and it cannot be counted as such. We must remember though, that God’s judgment is based upon righteousness and not upon the law.

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.

From Adam to Moses there was no written law for the people to transgress; yet death reigned. Moses gave a Law, yet death

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continued its reign until Jesus Christ. God destroyed the world in the days of Noah even though there was no law, thus, no transgression. God did not need a “*law*” to judge them because He knows the heart of man. “*And GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.*” None of them had “*broken the law*” because there was no law, yet they perished because of what they were.

“...who is the figure of him that was to come.” The key to this phrase is the word “*figure.*” Translated from the Greek word “*tupos,*” which is defined as “*a die (as struck), i.e. (by implication) a stamp or scar.*” Adam’s transgression is the “*die*” that was “*struck*” on the heart and nature of “*The first man, Adam.*” He became the “*prototype*” of fallen humanity. Paul said we have all “*borne the image of the earthy*” (I Corinthians 15:45-49).

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.

This first phrase, “*But not as the offence, so also is the free gift,*” seems difficult, yet it can be simply understood. In effect the “*offence*” and the “*free gift*” were opposites, but in principle they were the same. The offence of Adam separated him from God and His likeness, bringing every man down to depravity and slavery, while the “*free gift*” reconciled man back to God through the death of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. The principle is the same in that the one man, Adam, was proxy for every person in the fall, but in the redemption, the one man Jesus Christ was proxy for everyone who would trust in Him.

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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.

Another difficult phrase, but it is explained in the same verse; “*And not as it was by one that sinned, so is the gift.*” Adam’s one offence brought the judgment of condemnation (*the death sentence*) to every person, but the “*free gift*” of Christ brings a person from many offences unto justification. Consider “*justification*” for a moment. Many good and sincere gospel teachers have explained “*justification*” simply as “*just as if I had never sinned.*” The truth is, however, “*if I had never sinned,*” I would still be a sinner by nature, and thus condemned by Adam’s sin. Understand “*justification*” in this way; it is “*just as if Adam had never sinned.*” What would we be like if Adam had never sinned? We would all be in the image and likeness of God, breathing the breath (The Spirit) of God, and in perfect fellowship with God. That is what it means to be “*reconciled to God.*”

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.)

The “*reign of death*” spoken of in these verses must be understood to be much more than the death and decay of the natural body. God counts every person without Christ to be “*dead;*” they are “*dead in sins and trespasses.*” Jesus said, “*He that believeth on me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and he that liveth and believeth on me shall never die.*” The sinner, who exists from day to day, breathing the air, working on a job, and raising a family, is never counted by God to be “*alive,*” while the child of God whose body is laid in a casket is never counted by God to be dead. The person without Jesus is a slave

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to sin and a prisoner of death. The person who has received “*Jesus Christ*” has received “*abundance of grace*” and the “*gift of righteousness.*” They “*reign in life*” through Jesus Christ our Lord.

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.

Paul shows clearly that it is by the “*offence of one*” that every person came under the condemnation of death; yet in that same way it is by the “*righteousness of one*” that the “*free gift*” comes upon every person “*unto justification of life.*” The phrase “*justification of life*” indicates a complete change of the person who is justified. Here Paul sets the stage for a single verse of scripture to clearly define the gospel message as follows:

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

In the righteous judgment of God, if many were made to be sinners through one man's disobedience, justice required that another man's obedience would make many righteous. In effect, the obedience of the second man would undo what the first man did for as many as would believe. Paul said the second man “*is the Lord from heaven*” (I Corinthians 15:47). He is “*the Christ, the Son of the living God*” (Matthew 16:16). John confirms His mission in I John 3:8; “*For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy (‘loosen’ or ‘undo’) the works of the devil.*”

The “*obedience of Christ*” that made the believer righteous is revealed in Philippians 2:8: “*And being found in fashion as a*

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*man, he humbled himself, and became **obedient** unto death, even the death of the cross.”* It is by the “*obedience of Jesus Christ*” to the “*death of the cross*” that we who believe have been “*made righteous.*”

The eighteenth verse speaks of “*the righteousness of one,*” and the nineteenth verse speaks of “*the obedience of one.*” These both speak of the same thing, which is, “*the death of the cross.*” Romans 3:25 speaks of Jesus Christ, “*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....*” God “*set forth*” His Son to be “*an atoning victim (propitiation)*” for our sin. Paul said it was to “*declare His righteousness.*” Is God righteous? Look to that place called Calvary. Look to the one hanging on a cross between two thieves. Who is he? It is the Son of God. If He is the Son of God, why is He nailed to a cross, suffering as a deceiver and a blasphemer? If you can rightly answer that one question, then you know that God is righteous. “*Christ-crucified*” is the only proof that God is righteous, because “*Christ-crucified*” **is** the “*righteousness of God.*” To understand this is to understand the wonderful gospel of Jesus Christ.

In the judgment of God, it was not “*right*” that every person born into this world would be condemned to eternal death by the offence of one man who disobeyed God’s commandment thousands of years before. There had to be another man to undo “*for all*” what Adam had done “*to all.*” There was no descendant of Adam that could do such a thing, for all were slaves to sin and prisoners of death. The apostle John begins the wonderful story this way in John 1:1-3; “*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.*” In the fourteenth verse, John continues, “*And the Word*

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was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth." The creator of all things was made flesh to live among us. He would give Himself to save His people from their sin. As nothing else could, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, suffering and dying on the cross for the sin of the world, declares "*the righteousness of God*" for all to hear. God is just, and He is the justifier of everyone who believes and trusts in Jesus Christ.

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

The apostle John says, "*For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ*" (John 1:17). In these words of John we receive understanding of the words of Paul in our text. Paul says, "*Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound.*" Many have believed and have even taught others, "*the more sinful we are the more gracious God is.*" Oh what a soul damning thought. The truth of this verse is, "*the law entered,*" not as a remedy for sin, but to identify sin, and "*sin abounded.*" It was almost fifteen hundred years later that "*grace and truth came by Jesus Christ,*" and grace abounded "*much more*" than sin abounded. We will see more about this as we continue in these scriptures, but the "*grace and truth*" that came by Jesus Christ is "*much more*" than the offence that came by Adam and abounded under the law.

There are five places in this fifth chapter of Romans that the words "*much more*" are used. The purpose of these words is to establish that the redemption made by Jesus Christ is "*much more*" than the fall that came through Adam. If the offence of Adam cast man down from righteousness in the image and likeness of God into total depravity, then the redemption that is in

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Christ Jesus cannot leave man in his sinful state to continue in sin, because the redemption is said repeatedly to be “*much more*” than the fall.

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

Sin reigns “*unto death.*” Notice, however, the “*past tense*” that is used in the language: “...*as sin hath reigned unto death...*” as though the person has already died. It was “*unto*” the “*death of Jesus Christ*” on the cross that sin had its reign. Remember in the fourteenth verse, “*Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses*” over those who did not have a law. Death reigned from Moses to Christ over those who were under the law. It is the entrance of “*grace and truth*” that ends the reign of sin and death, through the “*death*” and resurrection of the Son of God. For those who believe that sin continues its reign until we are released from its power by the death of our natural bodies, nothing remains but the “*wages of sin*” which is “*eternal death.*”

Dead to Sin

Section Ten

“Dead to Sin”

In this sixth chapter, the “*justice of God*” is revealed in how the “*death sentence*” is carried out upon sinful man. We who believe, “*die to sin*” with Christ. The very heart of the gospel is revealed in the sixth and seventh verses of this chapter. Our “*old man is crucified with Him (Christ),*” and, “*He that is dead (with Christ) is freed from sin.*” The cross Jesus died upon was for us, and “*our old man*” died with Christ. The death sentence against man is carried out at the cross of Christ, “*by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world*” (Galatians 6:14). In I Corinthians 1:24, Paul calls this “*the power of God and the wisdom of God.*”

1 What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?

This sixth chapter of Romans begins with a simple question which is based upon an erroneous interpretation of Romans 5:20. The question is, “*If sin abounds, and grace abounds much more, why not continue in sin so that grace will be more abundant?*” Those who believe this error are ignorant of the truth revealed by both Peter and James that “*God resists the proud, and gives grace to the humble*” (James 4:6, I Peter 5:5). Those who continue in sin do so without grace.

2 God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?

Paul answers their question with a question. He notes the impossibility of one who is “*dead to sin*” to “*live any longer in sin.*” This truth is built upon his words in Romans 5:21; “*...sin hath reigned unto death.*” Paul will establish in the next verses that every child of God has died to sin through death with Jesus

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Christ on the cross. Sin has lost its power to reign over those who know the truth of Christ-crucified.

3 Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?

It was Jesus who first said, “...ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free” (John 8:32). In this verse Paul calls their “*knowledge of the truth*” into question. “**Know ye not that every person that is in Christ was baptized into His death?**” It is in His death that we are joined to Christ. It must be understood, however, that the “*baptism*” in this verse has nothing whatsoever to do with what is called the “*sacrament*” or “*ordinance*” of water baptism. Jesus introduced the baptism that is spoken of in these verses in Luke 12:50: “*I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!*” Jesus was speaking of His death on the cross as a “*baptism*” which He would suffer. Again, in Mark 10:37-38, James and John came to Jesus with a request, “*Grant unto us that we may sit, one on thy right hand, and the other on thy left hand, in thy glory.*” Jesus answers in the next verse, “*Ye know not what ye ask: can ye drink of the cup that I drink of? and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?*” The “*cup*” spoken of here was the same cup Jesus Himself prayed to the Father about in Matthew 26:39, “*If it be possible, let this cup pass from me...*” The “*baptism*” Jesus spoke of is His death on the cross. Water baptism is only a type and a shadow of which “*baptism into His death*” is the reality.

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.

The purpose of our being “*baptized into His death*” is our “*resurrection*” to “*walk in newness of life.*” Peter tells us that God

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has “*begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead*” (I Peter 1:3).

5 For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection:

Our being in the likeness of His resurrection is based upon and subject to our being in the likeness of His death.

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.

“**Knowing this...**” When Paul uses the terms, “*know ye not,*” or “*knowing this,*” he is calling special attention to very important issues. This sixth chapter of Romans may well contain the very foundation stones of the gospel of Christ. The Christian life that is founded on these will not fail in the storm.

“**Our old man is crucified with Him...**” The word “*with*” is of utmost importance, because it comes from the Greek word “*sun* (pronounced soon),” and denotes “*union.*” “*Our old man is crucified in union with Him.*” When Jesus Christ, the Son of God was nailed to the cross, our old man of sin was nailed to that same cross with Him.

“**...that the body of sin might be destroyed.**” This phrase denotes the reason our old man is crucified. It is revealed in the Greek word “*hina,*” which was translated as “*that,*” and means “*in order that.*” “*Our old man is crucified in union with Christ, in order that the body of sin might be destroyed.*” Next, we must look at the word “*body*” in this verse. It comes from the Greek word “*soma,*” which means “*the body (as a sound whole).*” It is used throughout the New Testament to identify the natural body of man, but it differentiates between a hand or a foot, which are simply “*members of the body,*” and the entire

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body, which is made up of many members. To clearly understand the term “*body of sin*,” think of the difference between a “*glass of water*” and the “*ocean*”. The ocean is the “*body of water*,” and the “*source of all waters*.” Now we read the text as follows; “*Our old man is crucified in union with Christ, in order that the entire body and source of sin might be destroyed...*”

“...might be destroyed.” This entire phrase was translated from the Greek word “*katargeo*,” which means, “*to be (or render) entirely idle (useless)*.” The word “*might*” in this phrase does not denote the “*possibility*” of man conquering his own flesh, as many seem to think. Instead it is used in connection with the word “*that (in order that)*,” to show the reason Jesus Christ died for us, and our “*old man is crucified with Him*.” It is very positive. In II Corinthians 5:14, Paul said, “*If one died for all, then were all dead (then all died)*.” If we believe that Christ died for us, then believe the rest of the gospel, that we died with Him. That is the “*faith*” of the gospel. “*Our old man is crucified with Him*,” and “*the body of sin is destroyed*.” In the eleventh verse, Paul will show that this is what we must believe if we are to live free from sin.

“...that henceforth we should not serve sin.” The Greek word translated “*henceforth*” is “*meketi*.” It is a combination of two Greek words, “*me*” and “*eti*,” which may rightly be translated either “*no further*,” or “*lest still*,” according to the usage in the sentence. This writer believes this sixth verse to clearly say the following: “**Knowing this, that our old man is crucified in union with Christ, in order that the entire body and source of sin might be rendered entirely idle and useless, lest we continue to be slaves to sin.**” If our “*old man*” is not crucified, and the source of sin disabled, we will continue to serve sin all the days of our lives.

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7 For he that is dead is freed from sin.

Thanks be to God we are not slaves to sin, because, “*He that is dead* (crucified in union with Christ) *is freed from sin.*” In this verse, though concealed by the translators, Paul gave us the scriptural definition of “*justified by grace.*” The word “*freed*” in this verse is translated from the Greek word “*dikaioo,*” which means “*to render just or innocent.*” It is used forty eight times in the New Testament, and in every place with the one exception in this verse it is translated as “*justified.*” The scriptural definition of “*justified by grace?*” “***He that is dead*** (with Christ) ***is justified.***” We can only be truly justified by grace when, by faith, our old man is crucified with Christ. No one can crucify their own self. Our crucifixion was eternally accomplished when Christ died for us. It becomes effectual to us when we believe, as Paul said, “*...our old man is crucified with Him.*”

8 Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him:

The message of our union with Christ is carried over from the sixth verse into this eighth verse. The Greek word “*sun* (in union with)” is used in two places. “*If we died in union with Christ...we also live in union with Him.*” Drop the word “*shall,*” as it is not found in the Greek text. Our union with Christ in life is now, even in this present evil world. Paul explains this “*mystery*” as “*Christ in you, the hope of glory*” (Colossians 1:27).

9 Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him.

This is the third time the matter of “*knowing*” has arisen in this sixth chapter of Romans. These are great and wonderful truths that we must “*know*” if we are to be free from sin. In this verse

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Paul begins an example for every believer in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Christ died once. Being raised from the dead, He will never die again, because death has no more dominion over Him.

10 For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God.

This verse is most important as establishing the basis for our great confession in the next verse. Christ died! He died unto sin and He died but once! Christ lives! He lives unto God. This is the pattern of our salvation through death and resurrection “*in union with*” Jesus Christ.

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Section Eleven

“Lest Sin Reign”

11 Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

“Likewise (in this way) **reckon ye also yourselves...**” The word *“likewise”* ties us to the facts that were stated about Jesus Christ in the previous verse. He *“died unto sin once; ...likewise we died* (with Him) *unto sin once.”* The teachings of self-crucifixion and dying daily to sin are not scriptural. The scripture always relates our death to sin as being in the past tense. In that our old man died with Christ, we are *“dead indeed unto sin.”* Paul’s statement, *“I die daily”* (I Corinthians 15:31), is speaking of his life being put in jeopardy continuously because of the gospel he preached. Those who believe they *“die daily”* to sin will never be free from sin until they *“reckon themselves to be dead indeed”* with Christ. In Him we die unto sin once so that we may forever live (in union with Christ) unto God.

He *“liveth unto God; ...likewise we live unto God.”* When Jesus *“died unto sin once,”* we were *“with (in union with) Him.”* In His resurrection, a *“new man”* was born, and we are *“alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.”* The Greek text says we are *“alive unto God in Jesus Christ.”* Our union with Christ is both **in His death** and **in His life**.

The sentence structure of this eleventh verse is very interesting. The word *“indeed”* is the key to understanding the power and reality of the confession. It is translated from the Greek word *“men.”* The *“Strong’s Concordance”* definition is as follows: *“men: a primary particle; properly, indicative of affirmation or concession (in fact); usually followed by a contrasted clause with 1161 (the Greek word for ‘but’).”* The

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“*concession*” in this verse is “***In fact, I am dead unto sin.***” The contrasted clause is, “***But I am alive unto God in Jesus Christ my Lord.***”

The “*reckoning*” in this verse is not only that we are dead unto sin, but also that we are alive unto God. The power of our “*reckoning*” is found in the word “*indeed;*” it is a “*fact*” that, “*in union with Christ,*” we are both dead to sin and alive to God. It is a fact, but until you reckon it so, you will continue to struggle with sin in your heart and nature. In the gospel, the believer simply *recognizes* what Christ has in fact already done.

12 Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof.

The translators truly did an injustice to this verse. Their error has bound untold millions of people to “*continue in sin,*” even though it is not their will to do so. “*Let not sin therefore reign...*” seems to prove that sin remains in the mortal body of the believer. The wording indicates a continuous struggle with sin. This is certainly not what the apostle Paul was saying in this verse. We must examine what Paul actually said to find the truth he reveals.

The first word in this verse, “*let,*” is not found in the Greek text. It was borrowed from the Greek word translated “*reign*” in this same verse, hence “*let reign.*” It is the word “*not*” that is the key to understanding this twelfth verse. It is translated from the Greek word “*me (may).*” “*Strong’s*” gives the definition as follows: “*a primary particle of qualified negation (whereas 3756 expresses an absolute denial); (adverbially) not, (conjunctionally) lest.*” As an adverb, the word would properly be translated as a very weak “*not.*” As a conjunction, it should be translated as “*lest.*” In fact, it is a conjunction, connecting the eleventh and twelfth verses in this way: “*Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto*

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*God through Jesus Christ our Lord, lest sin therefore reign in your mortal bodies, etc.” Paul establishes in this verse that **if you do not reckon the fact** that you are dead unto sin **with Christ**, and alive unto God **in Christ**, **sin will most definitely reign** in your mortal body.*

The last phrase of this verse speaks of the reign of sin in the mortal body, “...*that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof.*” The word “*lusts*” is translated from the Greek word “*epithumia*” which is defined as “*a longing (especially for what is forbidden).*” The same Greek word is also translated as “*concupiscence*” in several places, which is defined by the “*New Century Dictionary*” as “*illicit desire; sensual appetite; lust.*” There are those in religion who have successfully restrained their outward actions of sin, yet almost every imagination of their mind is unclean or about sinful things. These are “*obeying sin in the lusts thereof,*” for it is sin in the heart that man cannot control. Those who are “*dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through (in) our Lord Jesus Christ*” have no such struggle. It is of vital importance that you “*reckon (accept it as the truth that it is)*” the “*truth of the gospel*” to your life.

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.

The Greek word “*meede,*” which is translated “*neither*” indicates a “*continued negation.*” It is derived from two separate words meaning “*and lest,*” connecting the thirteenth verse with the previous two verses as follows: “*Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through (in) Jesus Christ our Lord, lest sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof;*

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and lest ye yield your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin.”

The last phrase of this verse begins a new sentence with the word “*but,*” which from the Greek word “*alla*” means “*contrariwise.*” “*Contrariwise yield yourselves unto God as those that are alive from the dead, and yield your members (hands, feet, mouth, etc.) as instruments (offensive weapons) of righteousness unto God.*”

14 For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.

This verse begins with the Greek word “*gar,*” translated “*for,*” and “*assigns a reason.*” The previous verse instructed us to yield our members as instruments of righteousness unto God, “*because sin has no dominion over you.*” It is impossible to present to God for His service that which sin still dominates. The reason is also given as to why sin has lost its dominion over us: “*because ye are not under the law, but under grace.*” Sin “*abounds*” under the law (Romans 5:20), and “*reigns*” unto death (Romans 5:21). Grace “*abounded*” at Calvary to all who believe, and “*reigns through righteousness*” unto eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord (Romans 5:21). “*Grace*” is the reason given that sin has no more dominion over us.

15 What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid.

This is the second time Paul answers an erroneous view of grace in this sixth chapter of Romans. In the first verse the question was, “*Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?*” Abounding grace never results in continuance in sin. In this verse a perverted view of grace is repudiated a second time. “*Shall we sin, because we are not under the law?*” Some believe that an absence of law translates into an absence

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of sin. The truth is there is never an “*absence of the law.*” The “*Old Covenant*” is the law written on tables of stone. The “*New Covenant*” is the law written in our hearts (Jeremiah 31:31-33, Hebrews 8:8-13). This is “*grace.*” Those under grace cannot continue in sin. It is not in their heart to do so.

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?

The apostle asks a question with an obvious answer. “*Do you not know that you are a slave to the one you present yourself (your body) to obey?*” A sinner has no choice as to whom he will serve. He is a slave to sin, and when sin calls, he will answer. The message of this verse is simple; your master is the one you must obey.

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.

This is an extremely important verse. Certainly God is to be “*thanked,*” not because you “*were the servants of sin,*” but because you are “*made free from sin*” (eighteenth verse). You have “*obeyed from the heart....*” In Romans 10:10 Paul says, “*For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness.*” In Galatians 3:1, Paul wrote “*O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not **obey the truth**....*” In Galatians 5:7: “*Ye did run well; who did hinder you that ye should not **obey the truth?***” The Galatians were obeying every command of Moses, beginning with circumcision, and trusting they would be saved through the deeds of the Law, but they were not “*obeying the truth.*” The “*truth that makes free*” is such that it cannot be obeyed by any action or work of man, but only “*from the heart.*”

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“But God be thanked...” The Greek word that was translated “thanked” in this verse is “*charis*,” which is most commonly translated as “*grace*.” This phrase should be understood to say “**But God’s grace....**” This seventeenth verse, and the eighteenth verse which we will see in the next section of this study, gives understanding to verse fourteen, which tells us, “*sin shall not have dominion over you: for (because) ye are not under the law, but under grace.*” How is it possible that sin shall not have dominion over us? Certainly “*sin*” would have dominion over every person except for the “*grace of God.*” He sent Christ into the world to “*make an end of sins*” (Daniel 9:24-25). He sent His only begotten Son to the cross to “*take away our sin*” (John 1:29, I John 3:5). That is the “*grace of God*” to make us “*free from sin*” (verse eighteen). He did it through *our* death and resurrection *with* Jesus Christ. Salvation is one hundred percent the work of God. It is a gift received by faith alone: “*only believe!*” Obey “*from the heart*” that “*form of doctrine which was delivered (for) you.*” That “*form of doctrine*” is “*Christ-crucified.*”

“...that form of doctrine...” The word “*form*” in this verse is translated from the Greek word “*tupos*,” which was translated as “*figure*” in Romans 5:14. Its primary definition is “*a die (as struck).*” Adam’s transgression is the “*die*” that cast every person as a sinner; “*Christ-crucified*” is the “*die*” that was cast to make many to be righteous. From the instant of Adam’s transgression it was forever settled that every descendant of Adam would be born in sin, a sinner. They would be “*cast*” in the image of Adam. From the moment that Jesus Christ, the Son of God died on the cross, it was forever settled that those who trust in Him would be “*born again*” in His likeness. They would be “*created (cast) in righteousness and true holiness*” (Ephesians 4:24).

Section Eleven **THE FOUNDATION** Romans 6:11-17

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It is a “*fact*” that Jesus died on the cross, was buried, and was raised again on the third day. The “*faith*” of the gospel is found in the sixth and seventh verses of this sixth chapter of Romans; “*our old man is crucified with Him, that the body (the source) of sin might be destroyed.*” If this is not true, we will never be free from sin, but Paul concludes in the seventh verse, “*He that is dead, (with Christ) is freed from sin.*” It is the “*grace of God*” that makes it to be so.

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Section Twelve
“Free From Sin”

18 Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness.

Paul’s language is clear; the gospel believer has been “*made free from sin.*” That “*form of doctrine,*” which is “*Christ crucified,*” has made us free from sin to become the servants of righteousness. In this verse, both “*sin*” and “*righteousness*” are personified. We are delivered from the cruel master to serve the loving 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.

In verses nineteen through twenty-two, Paul gives a simple illustration to explain “*freedom from sin*” in human terms. He begins, “*I speak after the manner of men....*” In the past they had “*yielded*” the members of their body to uncleanness and to iniquity, leading to more iniquity. Paul instructs them, “*Being made free from sin, and become servants of righteousness...yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness.*” Paul’s simple illustration begins in the next verse.

20 For when ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness.

How free is free? What does it mean to be free from sin? Paul answers with a simple statement of obvious truth; “*when ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness.*” Being “*free from righteousness*” did not mean they had “*power over righteousness,*” but simply that there was no righteousness

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in them. Sin was their master and everything they did was sin. Even their efforts to do good were unacceptable, as Isaiah said, *“But we are all as an unclean thing, and **all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags**; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away”* (Isaiah 64:6).

21 What fruit had ye *then* in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things is death.

The child of God, being a servant of righteousness, is always ashamed of the past life of sin. Everything he did, whether “good” or “evil,” was the fruit of what he was, a slave to sin, and a sinner. The end result for every servant of sin is always eternal death.

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...” Oh what a contrast between “*then*” in verse twenty-one, and “*now*.” “**Then**” you were “*servants to sin*” and “*free from righteousness.*” “**Now**” you are “*servants to God*” and “*free from sin.*” Your fruit is holiness, and your “*end*” is everlasting life, because...

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

Those wages have never changed, but neither has the “*gift of God*” which is “*through (in) Jesus Christ our Lord.*”

Dead to the Law

Section Thirteen

“Dead to the Law”

In the previous chapter, our death “*with Christ*” makes us “*free from sin.*” In this chapter, it is the same “*death with Christ*” that frees us from the law to be “*married to Jesus.*” The law entered because of sin; as long as sin continues, so does the law, but he that is “*dead to sin*” is also “*freed from the law.*”

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 apostle Paul makes it very clear in the very beginning of this seventh chapter that he is writing to “*them that know the law,*” which is an obvious reference to the Jews that have believed in Jesus as their messiah. He speaks to them about something they have known for their lifetime as a Jew: “*...the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth.*” Notice the similarity to the wording in Romans 5:21 which says, “*... Sin hath reigned unto death.*” As long as the man “*lives,*” both sin and the law have dominion over him. It is through “*death*” that a person is released from both sin and the law. It must be quickly added that it is only through our death by “*crucifixion with Christ (Romans 6:6-7)*” that we are released from the dominion of both sin and the law. The necessity of that “*release*” is revealed in I Corinthians 15:56, “*The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law.*” As long as sin reigns in man, he will be “*under the law.*” As long as a man is under the law, sin will continue to reign.

2-3 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. So then if, while her husband liveth, she be married to an-

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other 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.

In these verses Paul uses an analogy based on the union of marriage between a man and a woman. The woman is bound to her husband as long as he lives, but when he dies she is no longer under his dominion. She is free to be married to another.

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.

Notice the word “*also*” in this verse. In chapter six we saw how believers are “*freed from sin*” through death with Christ. Paul says we “*also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ.*” Here we understand the “*body of Christ*” to be as it is used in Colossians 1:21-22: “*And you...hath he reconciled in the body of his flesh through death....*” We who are “*dead to sin*” through the death of Christ are also “*dead to the law.*”

Those who are “*dead to the law*” are not “*lawless,*” neither are they “*without law.*” Instead, they are “*married to Christ,*” and “*under the law to Christ*” (I Corinthians 9:21). Paul tells Timothy, “*The law (of Moses) is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient...*” (I Timothy 1:9). The gentiles were considered to be “*without law*” because they were not under the Law of Moses and did not have a covenant with God (Ephesians 2:12). The “*lawless*” were those in Israel who did not have God’s “*law*” in their hearts, and had to be controlled by the Law of Moses. A believer, being “*married to Christ,*” has the law of God written in his heart. It is the “*law*” of a pure and holy bride who submits to her “*husband (Christ)*” in all things (Ephesians 5:22-33; notice verse 32).

Section Thirteen **THE FOUNDATION** Romans 7:1-4
Dead to the Law

The righteous man has the same testimony Paul gave in Galatians 2:20: *“I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.”* Being crucified (with Christ), we have died to both sin and the Law, to be married to the one who loved us, died for us, and raised again from the dead. We cannot have two *“husbands.”* We cannot be married to both Christ and the Law. Neither are we without a husband; we are either married to Christ and freed from sin, or bound to the Law and dead in sin. If we are *“married to Christ,”* we will *“bring forth fruit to God.”*

In the Flesh

Section Fourteen
“In the Flesh”

The message of this seventh chapter seems to be a parenthesis inserted between the sixth and the eighth chapters, interrupting the message of the “*glorious liberty*” of the children of God. This seventh chapter is written to reveal the plight of those who are both “*in the flesh*” and “*married to the law.*” It is one of the darkest chapters in all of Paul’s writings. Even the reading of it seeks to pull the reader down into the despair of the twenty-fourth verse. It is necessarily so, because Paul is telling of his own experience as it was before he met Jesus. Romans 7:7-25 relates the experience of Saul of Tarsus.

When Paul speaks of “*the flesh*” in his epistles, he is usually speaking of human nature and its feeble efforts to serve God through the Law. The Law totally depended on human ability in seeking to reform human nature and control the sin that occupied it. The futility of pleasing God through the Law is revealed in the fact that in order for the Law to make the flesh weak, it had to make the flesh strong. When the apostle speaks of “*when we were in the flesh*” in this section, he speaks of the time of his life before he believed upon Jesus Christ and when he “*trusted*” in the Law of Moses. This thought will continue through the remainder of the seventh chapter until his statement in Romans 8:8: “*So then they that are in the flesh (without Christ and under the law) cannot please God.*” Most Christians are not so foolish (Galatians 3:3) as to seek to serve God through the Law of Moses. Yet multitudes seek to walk with God through human ability and earthly reason. The results are the same. In chapters seven and eight we see a parallel between what Paul (Saul of Tarsus) discovered when trying to serve God under the Law and what Christians find when they seek to serve God through carnal religion.

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5 For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death.

“...when we were in the flesh...” The proper understanding of the word *“flesh”* as used in the book of Romans is *“human nature.”* The phrase, *“when we were in the flesh,”* however, speaks of more than human nature. To clearly understand this saying, we must see the end of this conversation in Romans 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 (and) if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.”* By this we can understand that to be *“in the flesh”* is to be *“without Christ.”* Jesus told Nicodemus, (when explaining to him the necessity of being born again) *“That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit”* (John 3:6). Everyone who has not been born of the Spirit of God is *“in the flesh.”* Such are *“soulish”* beings, and not *“spirit”* beings. Paul told us that *“The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit. Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual. The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven. As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy: and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly”* (I Corinthians 15:45-48). Paul uses the phrase *“in the flesh”* to describe the natural, or *“Adamic”* man or woman, but later he will use the phrase *“in the Spirit”* to describe the spiritual or redeemed man or woman.

In this passage Paul was speaking of the time before he believed that Jesus is the Christ when he was trying to serve God through fleshly means under the Law of Moses. The phrase *“when we were in the flesh”* is best understood in this passage to say **“...when we were without Christ and under the law...”** Every Jew that is *“without Christ”* is under bondage to the Law

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of Moses. Every Gentile that is “*without Christ,*” is under bondage to sin. In the remainder of this chapter, the apostle Paul reveals the secrets of his heart concerning his life when he was “*in the flesh*” and “*under the law.*” He discovered that he, while obeying the law to perfection (Philippians 3:6), was also a slave to sin.

“...the motions of sins, which were by the law...” The word “*motions*” comes from the Greek word “*pathema*” which means “*something undergone, that is, hardship or pain; subjectively an emotion or influence.*” It is almost always translated as *sufferings or afflictions*. This verse speaks of the internal sufferings and strong emotional disturbances a person endures as the rebellious nature of fallen man struggles with the law that is imposed upon it. It is a seldom understood truth that the inner struggle with sin will increase when a person is brought under a law of commandments. The law gives the nature of man something to rebel against, thus exposing its sinfulness.

The Law does not create sin; it only identifies and forbids it. The very nature of sin is to rebel against the law. “*The motions of sins (the emotions of sins)*” speaks of “*concupiscence,*” which is defined as “*longing, especially for that which is forbidden.*” It “*works in the members*” of every unregenerate person, but especially those who are “*under the law.*” When it is “*at work (in motion),*” every fiber of the human body will seem to crave what the law forbids. Its only fruit is “*unto death.*”

Just as the Law brought out the motions of sins in those who were under it, the laws, precepts, principles, and programs of carnal religion will produce the same turmoil in Christians who trust in such things.

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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.

“But now we are delivered from the law...” Jesus died on the cross to save us from sin. Being “*saved from sin*” we are also “*delivered from the law.*” And we are “*saved from sin*” in that we are “*dead to sin.*” It is in this same manner that we are delivered from the law. In this verse, Paul uses two corresponding phrases which mean the same thing. They are, “*...we are delivered from the law,*” and “*being dead wherein we were held.*” We are delivered from the law only “*through death*” in union with Christ. “*Our old man is crucified with Christ...*” (Romans 6:6) through faith in Christ, and we are freed from both sin and the Law. I cannot emphasize enough that “*sin*” and “*the Law*” are irrevocably connected. The “*law*” is the proper husband for a sinner. Wherever you find sin, there you will also find the law. Do not be deceived that the answer to the sin problem is to “*revoke the Law.*” A great shame in the church today is that so many rejoice that they are “*free from the Law*” even as they angrily deny that we are “*freed from sin.*”

“...that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter.” God promised a “*new covenant*” (Jeremiah 31:31-33), and the writer of Hebrews confirms (Hebrews 8:8-13) that the “*New Covenant*” is “*God’s law written in the heart of His children.*” This is “*newness of spirit.*” This is “*Christ in you, the hope of glory.*” It is Christ who now **lives** in us. To serve God in the “*oldness of the letter*” is to try to please God through human obedience to laws, whether they are written in ink, or engraved in stone.

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.

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Beginning with this seventh verse, and continuing through the end of the chapter, Paul is relating his experience as Saul of Tarsus. In this verse, he is speaking as one “*delivered from the law*” to “*serve God in newness of spirit,*” while looking back at his experience under the law. He shows that the law was not his problem, but even as a devout Jew, sin had been the problem all along. The law only identified sin. When the law said to Paul (Saul of Tarsus), “*Thou shalt not covet* (the tenth commandment),” Saul discovered that even the “*desires of his heart*” were also sin.

Jesus said, “*Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven*” (Matthew 5:20). The scribes and Pharisees had no problem keeping the first nine commandments, because these only regulated outward behavior. In these they were “*blameless.*” It is the tenth and last commandment, “*Thou shalt not covet,*” that destroys the “*righteousness*” of the “*self-righteous.*” It is the only commandment that discovers and uncovers the sin that is resident in the heart of man. It is the only commandment that no one can obey by the force of his or her will power. It is the source of the breaking of all the other commandments. Take covetousness out of the heart of man and he cannot break any law of God, because “*covetousness*” is the nature and source of all sin. This one commandment ultimately stripped Saul of Tarsus of all *his* righteousness that was by the law, and destroyed *him* in his own sight.

There are Ten Commandments of God, six hundred and thirteen commandments of Moses, and many hundreds of “*traditions of the fathers.*” Saul of Tarsus kept all of these so blamelessly in their outward form that he found none that could condemn him. But from the moment he understood the tenth commandment, which exposed sin in his heart, it was as though there was but one commandment, “*Thou shalt not covet,*” and from

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that day he spoke of it in the singular as *“The Commandment.”* In the next six verses, he will use this term six times. In every case he is speaking of the tenth commandment: *“Thou shalt not covet.”*

8 But sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence. For without the law sin was dead.

“But sin, taking occasion by the commandment...” To this point, Paul has used the word *“law”* fifty three times in this book of Romans. This is the first time he uses the word *“commandment,”* which he will use five additional times within the next five verses, after which he will use the word *“law”* another twenty two times in the remainder of his letter. His brief usage of the term *“the commandment”* does not speak of the law in general, but of the one specific commandment, *“thou shalt not covet.”* Notice Paul’s words in the seventh verse; *“I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet.”* Something awakened Saul of Tarsus to the sin that was in his heart; the sin that could only be identified by the tenth commandment: *“Thou shalt not covet.”*

Saul of Tarsus had been taught the law from the time he was an infant. It was with him day and night. Saul was not, as the Jews called others, a *“sinner of the Gentiles”* (Galatians 2:15). His lifestyle was blameless (Philippians 3:6). No one could convict Saul of transgressing the law. He was *“exceedingly zealous”* of the traditions of the fathers, and *“profited in the Jew’s religion above his equals”* (Galatians 1:14). Saul was never *“without the law”* in the sense of being *“lawless;”* he kept the law to the smallest detail. He loved the law; he meditated on it day and night. To Saul, the law was not a harsh taskmaster. It identified no sin in Saul, for he was righteous

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according to all that he read and understood in the law. There came a day, however, that Saul “*read*” the law as it was written on the heart of a man.

Jesus said of the Pharisees, “*If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: but now they have no cloke for their sin...If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin: but now have they both seen and hated both me and my Father*” (John 15:22, 24). In the case of Saul of Tarsus, it was not Jesus, but Stephen who came to touch his life. It was Stephen, whose face was seen “*as it had been the face of an angel,*” even while he was being falsely accused (Acts 6:15). It was Stephen, who spoke the truth without fear to a court predetermined to slay him (Acts 7:1-53); who saw the glory of God and testified to seeing Jesus at the right hand of God even as the members of the religious court “*gnashed on him with their teeth.*” It was this same Stephen who used his last breath to pray for the angry mob who stoned him to death, saying, “*Lord, lay not this sin to their charge.*”

We know that the New Covenant is God’s law written on the hearts of His children. Oh what a contrast Saul of Tarsus saw that day between Stephen, who had God’s law written on his heart, and those devout Jews, including himself, who only had it as it was “*engraved in stone.*” For the first time Saul of Tarsus saw the “*Law of God*” written in life, and it identified him as a sinner. He now understood the tenth commandment, “*Thou shalt not covet,*” because in Stephen, he saw a man with a “*pure heart*” who was free from “*covetousness.*”

“But sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence...” “*Concupiscence*” in this verse is the same as “*lust*” in the previous verse. In Romans 5:20, Paul said, “*The law entered, that the offence might abound.*” It was by the tenth commandment (thou shalt not

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covet) that “*sin*” found the occasion to work in Saul “*every manner*” of sinful desire, and he became a “*wretched man*” filled with hatred and murder against the Christians. Saul was just like the Pharisees that Jesus spoke of; if he had never seen Stephen, he “*would not have had sin*,” that is, he would not be aware of his sinfulness, but now he had seen Stephen, and hated both Stephen and his Lord. In Saul’s sight, the “*Christians*” were the cause of his every problem. It was after Saul “*consented to the death of Stephen* (Acts 8:1)” that he “*made havoc of the church*” (Acts 8:3), and “*breathed out slaughter against the disciples of the Lord*” (Acts 9:1).

“For without the law sin was dead.” This phrase is best understood when connected to the next verse...

9 For I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died.

“For I was alive without the law once...” Over forty years ago, during the time of the civil rights movement in America, I knew of a man who was Sunday School Superintendent in a church near Houston. He was a good man, who served God along with his wife and small children. He loved the brethren and the church loved and respected him as a wonderful Christian man. One Sunday a godly black man visited their church, arriving just as the superintendent finished his duties. Upon seeing the black man enter, the superintendent walked down the aisle to his family, said out loud to his wife and children, “*Let’s go! If ‘they’ are coming, we are not*,” and with that, they left the service. The black man never came back, and the superintendent tried to continue as before, but he could not. Everything about him was changed, and it was not long before he quit the church and entered a life of open sin. That man had “*been alive*” in his own sight at one time, but when “*he*” discovered the sinfulness of his own heart (hatred), he died, and

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sin became his master. In fact, sin had always been there, but it had been dormant, or as the Greek word Paul used, it had been a “corpse.” The “corpse” revived that day, and slew the man. As with Saul of Tarsus, if he had never come face to face with the target of his hatred, he would never have known his sinfulness, but now, he knew, and he died.

In everything Paul relates about his experience with sin and the law before he was saved, there is a parallel experience for every “Christian” who is moved away from Christ-crucified to trust either in the law, or in the thousands of manmade principles of religion which promise righteousness. Notice the wording in this verse; “...sin revived, and I died.” Whether this chapter speaks of Saul of Tarsus, a man married to the law but never to Christ, or whether it speaks of one who was “married to Christ,” but turned once again to the law for righteousness, the results are the same; “sin” is “alive,” and the man is “dead.” This chapter cannot relate the experience of any person God will receive. He may have once known God, but if so, he is now backslidden and lost, though he may also be very religious.

10 And the commandment, which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death.

The commandment, “*Thou shalt not covet*” is life to one and death to another. Let me explain! A sinner is convicted of sin and repents. He comes to God believing the gospel that his “old man of sin” (Romans 6:6) is nailed to the cross with Jesus Christ. He hears the words, “*thou shalt not covet*,” and rejoices, because his former life had been destroyed by covetousness (as is every life without Christ). His heart, having now been “purified by faith” (Acts 15:9), has no covetousness in it. He rejoices that “*the Son has made him free*” and he is “**free indeed**” (John 8:36). “*Thou shalt not covet*” is good and wonderful news to this man, because covetousness has been taken

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out of his heart and if he “*abides in Christ*” he will never “*covet*” again. On the other hand, to those who are merely religious, “*thou shalt not covet*” is the most “*grievous*” of all commandments. For Saul of Tarsus in his self-righteous state, the commandment was “*unto death.*”

11 For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew me.

When Paul speaks of “*the commandment,*” he is still speaking of that one commandment, “*thou shalt not covet.*” Sin had no occasion against Saul of Tarsus in any other commandment. He was much like the “*rich young ruler*” who walked sorrowfully away from Jesus; “*All these have I kept from my youth up: what lack I yet?*” (Matthew 16:19-22) The “*lack*” of both these young men was revealed by the tenth commandment, “*thou shalt not covet.*” The rich young ruler walked away “*sorrowful*” because he had great riches. Saul, discovering the meaning of the tenth commandment, was deceived. He would obey this commandment also and be perfect. It was only then that he discovered the nature of “*sin*” that was in him. The warfare had begun.

Multitudes in the churches today are also deceived by sin and condemned by the same commandment. In order to make the fact of sin in their heart acceptable, they are taught that the Law of God has been abolished. Others teach that the things we have no control over cannot condemn us. In fact, the tenth commandment is the only commandment that exposes the sin that is in the heart of man, which is “*the sin*” Jesus died to take away (John 1:29). Saul of Tarsus found no remedy in the Law of Moses that would satisfy the Law of God. When “*the commandment came,*” that is, when understanding of the commandment came, it destroyed all his righteousness and he became as a living dead man.

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12 Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good.

Paul defends the Law of God, and specifically the tenth commandment as “*holy, and just, and good.*”

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.

Paul continues his defense of the tenth commandment. Remember that the commandment was “*ordained unto life*” (verse ten). It is the source of “*glorious liberty*” to the redeemed (Romans 8:21). Saul’s problem was not “*the commandment,*” it was the sinfulness of his heart.

“...that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful...” Saul of Tarsus was a man who could not be condemned by any of the first nine commandments (Philippians 3:6). He had never considered the desires of his heart to be sin because of the fact that he did not obey them. Now that he understood the tenth commandment, “*thou shalt not covet,*” Saul understood that he was not only a “*sinner,*” but that he was “*exceeding sinful.*” In the definition of the Greek word translated “*exceeding,*” we see that Saul saw himself as a sinner “*beyond others.*” Years later Paul confirmed this in I Timothy 1:15 when he said he was “*chief of sinners.*” As Jesus had told the Pharisees, he was like the sepulchers of the prophets; he was “*beautiful on the outside,*” but on the inside he was “*full of dead men’s bones,*” and now, he knew it.

It is a good thing when “*sin*” becomes “*exceeding sinful*” in the eyes of man. Saul’s “*perfect righteousness* (Philippians 3:6)” under the law, kept Him from Jesus, but his “*exceeding sinfulness*” caused him to cry for a savior, which he found in Jesus Christ.

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The doctrine of the modern church has guaranteed that sin will never become “*exceeding sinful*” to its members. Instead of allowing the word of God to have its perfect work in bringing a person to Godly sorrow because of sin, the church reassures them that “*we are all sinners.*” If sin never becomes “*exceeding sinful*” in the eyes of the one who sins, the “*sinner*” will never have need to discover this “*so great salvation*” (Hebrews 2:3).

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14 For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin.

With this verse we must make some distinctions between the “*Law of God*” and the “*Law of Moses.*” The Law of God is spiritual, and is written in the hearts of those who are “*born again*” of the Spirit of God (Hebrews 8:8-13). The Law of Moses, which was “*added because of transgressions,*” (Galatians 3:19) is a carnal law (Hebrews 7:16, 9:10), which was given to a carnal people. When God spoke from the mountain to give His Law to the congregation of Israel in the twentieth chapter of Exodus, they could not receive it because their hearts were “*carnal.*” God defined the problem to Moses in Deuteronomy 5:29, “*O that there were such an heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments always....*” They could not, because they were “*carnal, sold under sin.*”

The Greek word “*sarkikos,*” which was translated “*carnal*” in this verse, means “*similar to flesh*” and was translated as both “*carnal*” and “*fleshly.*” This was the state of Saul of Tarsus; He was “*...fleshly, and sold under sin.*” The Greek word for “*flesh*” is “*sarx,*” and speaks of the “*human nature*” which was “*sold under sin*” by the first man, Adam. In the verses that follow, he lays out the proof that he was sold under sin. It is important to remember when reading this passage that the children of God are not “*sold under sin*” but “*redeemed from all iniquity*” (Titus 2:14). Saul of Tarsus was once “*sold under sin,*” but when he met Jesus he became one who was “*bought with a price.*”

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15 For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I.

The great apostle Paul continues speaking as Saul of Tarsus for the remainder of this chapter. He offers proof of Saul's carnality until the day of his surrender to Jesus Christ; "...*what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I.*" It is here that he describes the "*motions of sin which were by the law*" that he spoke of in the fifth verse.

16 If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good.

Saul recognizes that if righteousness does not reign in his heart, he must have a law to control his actions, therefore he consents that the law is good.

17 Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.

Saul recognizes that if he is doing things he doesn't want to do, then something else is in control. It is not him, but sin that is in his heart and nature. The word "*dwelleth*" comes from the Greek word "*oikeo*" meaning "*to occupy a house.*" An unwanted guest was occupying Saul's "*house*" and had taken dominion over Saul. He is a slave to sin. This is how he came to understand that he was "*sold under sin*" as he said in verse fourteen.

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.

"... (that is, in my flesh,)..." The word "*flesh*" as used in this verse does not refer to the physical "*body,*" but rather to the "*human nature*" which controls the body. "*For I know that in me (that is, in my human nature,) dwelleth no good thing...*" Sin, through Adam's transgression, had made human nature its

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dwelling place. It is Saul of Tarsus who comes to this realization, and the proof of it is, “...*for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not.*” It was in his “*mind*” to serve God, but it was in his “*nature*” to serve sin. He had the “*will*” to perform, but he did not have the “*way.*” What a sad predicament for people to find themselves in, but there are far too many who are.

19 For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do.

This verse continues to prove there was nothing good in Saul of Tarsus, even though he had lived “*blamelessly*” according to the Law of Moses for his entire lifetime (Philippians 3:6). Remember the saying of the rich young ruler who walked sorrowfully away from Jesus; “*All these have I kept from my youth up: what lack I yet?*” (Matthew 19:20) Jesus revealed his “*lack*” in the next verse; “*If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me*” (Matthew 19:21). It was the tenth commandment, “*thou shalt not covet,*” that caused the rich young ruler to “*go away sorrowful.*”

20 Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.

Saul of Tarsus discovered that even if he had never committed an outward act of sin, yet sin dwelt in him. It was proven to Saul because he began doing things he did not want to do. Human nature was not created sinful. It was the entrance of sin through Adam’s transgression that polluted human nature. Sin is described as an entity that is separate from human nature, but it abides in human nature and takes dominion over it. As Paul said, “...*it is not I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.*” Only the shed blood of Christ can wash the pollutant of sin out of our nature. It is such a shame that in many churches today

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the proof of salvation is that *“you do not want to do the evil that you do.”* This same religious struggle, which is called *“concupiscence,”* is what proved to Saul of Tarsus that he was a slave to sin ...and lost.

21 I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me.

It is the nature of sin to resist the good and do the evil. As long as sin remains in the heart, he may struggle to do the good, and may even succeed in the working of good deeds, but sin is always present with its evil desires in the heart of the unregenerate man.

22 For I delight in the law of God after the inward man:

The *“inward man”* of Saul of Tarsus was his mind and intellect. Intellectually, he loved the Law of God, *“but...”*

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.

“Human nature” that is contaminated with sin, when left to itself, is no better or higher than the beasts of the field. It is the intellect that makes man to be above the beasts. The Law of God, being *“spiritual,”* was given to *“define”* the higher divine nature, but Israel could not receive it. The Law of Moses was given to *“control”* sinful human nature. Notice the level of some of the commandments: *“If a man also lie with mankind, as he lieth with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination: they shall surely be put to death; their blood shall be upon them. And if a man take a wife and her mother, it is wickedness: they shall be burnt with fire, both he and they; that there be no wickedness among you. And if a man lie with a beast, he shall surely be put to death: and ye shall slay the beast. And if a woman approach unto any beast, and lie down*

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thereto, thou shalt kill the woman, and the beast: they shall surely be put to death; their blood shall be upon them” (Leviticus 20:13-16). Sinful human nature, without the restraints of law, will descend to the level of the beast of the field. It is only the “*disciplines*” of law, whether religious or secular, that hinders that bestial level of sinful human nature.

Saul of Tarsus was well disciplined by the Law of Moses. Such behavior as described above was out of the question, yet he, as does every unregenerate person, had sin dwelling in his human nature, seeking control of his members. The “*law in his members*” that warred against the “*law of his mind*” was simply sin dwelling in his “*human nature*” warring against his mind and intellectual desire to please God.

“...warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin...” This phrase brings to mind the methods of ancient warfare. A city with strong walls would come under attack by a powerful enemy. For a time, the walls would hold against the siege, but the city would be cut off from all supplies from without. Daily, the battering rams and the catapults would batter the walls, while inside the city the food supplies would be rationed. The battering of the walls would continue night and day until the walls were breached, at which time the malnourished inhabitants would be taken captive and led away as slaves. This is the description of the warfare within Saul of Tarsus after the “*sin*” in his heart was discovered by “*the commandment* (thou shalt not covet).” His “*walls of defense*” built up by the Law of Moses were battered to the ground, and Saul could no longer keep himself. He was “*brought into captivity*” to that “*law of sin* (sinful human nature)” which was in his members.

24 O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?

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It must have been during the time that Saul of Tarsus was “*breathing out threatenings and slaughter*” (Acts 9:1), and “*making havock of the churches*” (Acts 8:3), that he became a “*wretched man*” in his own sight. It is very likely that his words “*the evil which I would not, that I do*” was speaking of his rage against the church. He who had thought himself to be so righteous by the Law discovered in himself an uncontrollable hatred that dominated his every thought. From within, though never publicly, there came the cry, “*Who shall deliver me from the body of this death.*” The term “*body of this death*” is used in the same way as “*the body of sin*” in Romans 6:6, and speaks of the “*entire body (or source) of sin and death.*” It was that “*cry for deliverance*” that brought Saul of Tarsus into a direct confrontation with Jesus Christ (Acts 9:3-5). There, he found the answer, given in the next verse, which is the basis for the gospel of Jesus Christ as the apostle Paul preached it.

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.

“I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord...” Thank God, there is deliverance from sin “*through Jesus Christ our Lord.*” It is “*by grace, through faith* (Ephesians 2:8)” How this was accomplished through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ is the incredibly “*good news*” which is called “*The gospel of Jesus Christ.*” The last sentence in this verse closes out the chapter, defining for one last time the dilemma of Saul of Tarsus before he met Jesus.

So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.

There are three words in this passage which are often overlooked, but are of great importance. The first is the word

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“So.” It comes from the Greek word “*ara*” and speaks of “*drawing a conclusion.*” This last sentence is Paul’s conclusion of this entire chapter that deals with serving God “*in the flesh.*” The second overlooked word of great importance is the word “*mind.*” This speaks of the “*intellect.*” Here Paul is referring to himself or anyone else who may seek to serve God through the keeping of commandments. The intellect says, “*If I know what is good and evil in my mind, I can do the good and shun the evil.*” Perhaps the most misunderstood word in this passage is the word “*but.*” It comes from the Greek word “*de*” which is a primary particle (adversative or continuative). In this case it should have translated as “*also.*” Properly translated this last sentence would read: *I **conclude** then (if) with the **intellect** I serve the law of God; (I will) **also** with the flesh (serve) the law of sin.* His conclusion is that if you are seeking to serve the “*law of God*” through your human intellect, you will also serve the law of sin with your flesh.

The Carnal Mind

Section Sixteen

“The Carnal Mind”

In this eighth chapter, Paul shows the “*glorious liberty*,” the “*overcoming power*,” and the “*complete victory*” of those who are “*in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit*.” The entire seventh chapter is a record of the struggles of those who seek to please God through their abilities to keep the law. It is not the record of a Gentile sinner, but of a very devout Jew (Saul of Tarsus) who trusts in the Law of Moses. As we enter the study of this eighth chapter, we should keep in mind the words of Paul in Romans 7:5: “*For when we were in the flesh (under the law), the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death.*” This thought will continue until the eighth verse of this chapter which says, “*...so then they that are in the flesh (under the Law) cannot please God.*” In the mind of Paul, “*religious flesh*” is just as damning as “*sinful flesh.*” He wrote in another epistle, “*The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ*” (I Corinthians 15:56-57).

1 There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

“There is therefore now...” The word “*therefore*,” translated from the Greek word “*ara*,” draws a conclusion about those who are “*in Christ Jesus*.” They are not condemned. They do not live under the “*death sentence*” passed upon them by the law because of sin; neither do their “*hearts condemn them*” (I John 3:20-21). The word “*now*” speaks of “*now...in Christ Jesus*,” and draws a contrast between those who are “*married to Jesus*” and those who are “*married to the law*.” It is a contrast between those who have received the “*glorious liberty*

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(from sin) *of the children of God*” (Romans 8:21), and those who must continually struggle *with sin* under the condemnation of the law as expressed in the seventh chapter.

“...no condemnation...” The word “*condemnation*” is translated from the Greek word “*katakrima*,” which means “*adverse sentence*.” It speaks of the “*death sentence*” that is upon every person because of the sin that entered with Adam’s disobedience. It is in the third verse of this chapter that Paul will tell us why we are not condemned.

“...to them which are in Christ Jesus...” It is evident that for someone to be in Christ Jesus, Christ Jesus must also be in them. In verse nine Paul writes, “*Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his*.” These are those who are Spirit-born children of God. Their old man is crucified with Christ (Romans 6:6) and they are sanctified by His blood (Hebrews 13:12). They are new creations (II Corinthians 5:17), and because they are born of the Spirit, they are spirit. Jesus said, “*That which is born of the flesh (fallen human nature) is flesh (fleshly); and that which is born (born again) of the Spirit is spirit*” (John 3:6). Paul will later refer to these as being “*in the Spirit*” (Romans 8:9).

...who walk not after the flesh...” “*In the flesh*” was the message of the seventh chapter of Romans. It speaks of anyone who has not trusted in Christ but is seeking to serve God through carnal religion, specifically the Law of Moses.

Beginning with this verse, Paul gives a warning to those who are “*in Christ*” against walking “*after the flesh*.” He will use the phrase “*after the flesh*” five times in the first part of chapter eight. Those who walk “*after the flesh*” are those who have come to Christ, but are still walking as “*natural*” or “*earthy*” men. Paul rebuked the Corinthians for walking “*after the flesh*” saying, “*are ye not carnal, and walk as men?*” (I Corinthians

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3:3) In this chapter he warns those who are in Christ of the spiritual death that awaits them if they attempt to serve God through fleshly religion i.e. the Law of Moses. Paul asked the question of the Galatians who turned from Christ to trust in the law, “*Are ye so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh*” (Galatians 3:3). They had been “*born of the Spirit,*” but they were seeking to fulfill their salvation through the keeping of ordinances, principles, holy days, feast days, and rituals, all of which are dead works of religion, and all of which are performed “*by the flesh.*”

“...who walk...after the Spirit.” Those who walk “*after the Spirit*” are those born again believers who walk by faith in the complete work of Christ’s redemption. Their source of life and victory issues from Christ within and the quickening power of the Holy Ghost. They have no confidence in carnal religious works, but serve God in Spirit and not by the “*letter*” of religious laws or precepts. Remember the words of Paul in Romans 7:6: “*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.*” It is beneficial to understand that Paul often used “*flesh*” and “*Spirit*” to identify the two covenants, “*law*” and “*grace*” (Galatians 3:3).

2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.

“...hath made me free...” Notice that Paul uses the personal pronoun “*me*” in this phrase. He is speaking of his own experience as a Jew while trusting in the Law of Moses. As long as he trusted in the law for righteousness, sin continued to work in his members. The law identified sin and condemned the sinner, but it could never make the people free from sin, because “*the strength of sin is the law*” (I Corinthians 15:56). It took a greater “*law*” to deliver him from the law of sin and death.

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The “*law of sin and death*” works in the members of every unregenerate person, whether they are Jew or Gentile. It is the grace of God through Jesus Christ our Lord who has made us free, and we are “*free indeed*” (John 8:36). The apostle declares that we are both “*freed from sin* (Romans 6:22)” and “*dead to the law*” (Romans 7:6). The “*laws*” spoken of in this verse are spiritual realities that are absolute in their dominion. The “*law of sin and death*” has dominion over those who are still “*in the flesh*” and “*under the Law*” because they have not been “*born of the Spirit*” (John 3:6). The “*law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus*” describes the reality of those who are “*in Christ.*”

“...the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus...” The “*law of the Spirit*” is “*life in Christ Jesus.*” Jesus Christ is the only source of “*life*” to man. This term is describing the glorious life and freedom from sin that is given us in Christ Jesus. The phrase “*...hath made me free...*” should have been translated “*hath liberated me*” from the law of sin and death.

“...the law of sin and death.” If the “*law of the Spirit*” is “*life in Christ Jesus,*” it follows that the “*law of sin and death*” is the “*sin and death*” that inherently reigns in the nature of fallen man. The “*law of sin and death*” speaks of the dominion that sin and death received over all mankind through Adam’s transgression. This is the same “*law*” that Saul of Tarsus discovered working in his members bringing him into captivity (Romans 7:23). Thank God, we are delivered from “*sin and death*” through the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ.

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 the law could not do...” This speaks of what the Law of Moses could not do. It could “*take life*” (Hebrews

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10:28), but it could not “*give life*” (Galatians 3:21). It could punish sin, but it could not give righteousness. It could kill a sinner, but it could not “*kill*” the sin that was in the sinner. Find in the scriptures the things the “*law*” could not do, and that is what God sent His Son to do. When Paul says in Hebrews 10:4, “*For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins*” we see a guarantee that Jesus Christ shed His precious blood to “*do*” what the blood of bulls and goats “*could not do.*” He is “*the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world*” (John 1:29).

“...in that it was weak through the flesh” The great weakness of the Law is that it depends upon human ability to obey it. It needs the perceived “*good*” of the flesh to be strong in order to control the sinful desires of flesh. Therefore it strengthens the thing it seeks to make weak. This is why carnal religion is never the answer for sin in the heart and nature of any man.

...God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: What Christ came into the world to do is defined in the last phrase of this verse: He “*condemned sin in the flesh.*” The law could “*condemn* (try, condemn, and punish) *the man,*” but it could never “*condemn* (try, condemn, and punish) *the sin that was in the man.*” God sent His Son in the likeness of sinful flesh (human nature) for the express purpose of condemning, not the man that was in sin, but the sin that was in the nature of the man. John the Baptist introduced Jesus to the world saying, “*Behold the lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world*” (John 1:29). This is what Jesus did through His death on the cross. Paul explained it best in Romans 6:6; “*Knowing this, that our old man (of sin) is crucified with Him, that the body (the entire body and source) of sin might be destroyed....*”

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4 That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

The Greek word “*hina*,” translated “*that*” means “*in order that*.” Jesus passed the death sentence against the sin which is in the heart and nature of man, and nailed it to His cross, “*in order that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us....*” The only “*righteousness*” the Law of Moses could give was “*death to the sinner*.” The righteousness of God at Calvary was to slay the sin which is in the sinner, hence “*the righteousness of the law* (of Moses),” which is death to the sinner, is “*fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit*.” The Law of God, which had been engraved in stone, is now written in the hearts of those who are “*born of God*” and thus the righteousness of God’s law is also “*fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit*.”

...who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. This is the second time Paul speaks of those who “*walk not after the flesh*.” He refers to those who have come to Christ, and the source of their walk is the Spirit of God, not carnal religion or the Law of Moses.

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.

This is the third time in this chapter that Paul speaks of “*after the flesh*.” Here also he refers to those “*believers*” who attempt to serve God through carnal religious effort. This verse may well be better understood to say: “*Those who look to carnal religion for their walk with God will be concerned about carnal things, but those whose source is the Spirit of God will have their mind set on and care for things of the Spirit*.” Those who serve God through the carnal mind are enamored by ritual, ordinance, ceremony, and forms of godliness. They would rather

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have the “*shadow of things to come*” than the reality that is found in Christ alone (Colossians 2:16-17). Their “*affection*” is on “*things of earth*” (Colossians 3:2), and they take care of those things. They are satisfied with forms and ceremonies, and trust in the ordinances they have obeyed, but their “*life*” remains in this present world. All their works are “*dead works*,” which can never please God, but they believe that they have met the “*minimum requirements*” to “*go to heaven*” when they die.

Those who are motivated by the Spirit of God think on and desire the things of God. Their affection is on “*things above*,” and they “*seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God*” (Colossians 3:1). Paul describes these as those who “*worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh*” (Philippians 3:3).

6 For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.

The translators used the words “*carnally*” and “*carnal*” in verses six and seven, but Paul actually used the same Greek word he uses for “*flesh*.” To be “*carnal*” is to be “*flesh*.” This verse is built upon Paul’s conclusions in verse five. Those whose walk is based upon carnal religion, and have their mind set on carnal things, walk in death. However, those whose source is the Spirit, and have their mind set on things of the Spirit, walk in life and peace. Paul says “*to be carnally minded is death*.” The carnal mind is the mind of the unregenerate person. It is the mind of one who is dead in sin. Paul tells the redeemed that “*we have the mind of Christ*” (I Corinthians 2:16). Paul’s warning here is for the “*spiritual*” not to fall in the trap of walking like the “*carnal*.” If they walk as those who are “*fleshly*” they partake of the death of carnality. Notice that he

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did not say the carnally minded will die, but *“to be carnally minded is death.”*

7 Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.

No one can serve God through the carnal mind. It is earthy and it can only receive earthy things. To the carnal mind the things of Christ are foolishness. Paul wrote, *“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”* (I Corinthians 2:14). Those who seek to serve God through the carnal mind are as those whom Paul spoke of as *“Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth”* (II Timothy 3:7). The things that are for the carnal mind will destroy the spiritual. Consider that the Law of Moses was given for the carnal and not for the spiritual. Paul wrote, *“Knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners...”* (I Timothy 1:9).

The carnal mind is *“enmity against God.”* The Greek word *“echthra,”* which is translated *“enmity,”* is defined by *“Strong’s concordance”* as *“hostility; ...a reason for opposition.”* It is the *“quality”* that makes unregenerate man the *“enemy of God.”* In this verse, Paul gives the same warning he gave to the Ephesians concerning walking in the *“vanity of their (carnal) mind”* (Ephesians 4:17). The carnal mind makes the unbeliever to be an enemy of God, but it will do the same for any *“believer”* who turns to it for the source of their walk with God.

8 So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.

Since *“the carnal mind is enmity against God,”* it is impossible for those who have not been born of the Spirit to please God.

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Jesus told Nicodemus, “*Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God*” (John 3:3). Without a new birth, everyone is “*in the flesh.*” Paul began his teaching on the flesh saying, “...***when we were in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death***” (Romans 7:5). To Paul, being “*in the flesh*” also meant that as a Jew, he was under the Law of Moses. As long as he was “*under the law,*” he could not please God. It was the “*grace of God*” that was given to man through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ that at last delivered him from both sin and the Law of Moses. This verse stands as a warning to those who seek to serve God through religious laws, ordinances, ceremonialism, or ritualism. This warning extends to those who believe God can be pleased with anything that has human nature as its source or human ability as its strength. It is all “*flesh,*” and “*flesh*” cannot please God.

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Section Seventeen

“In the Spirit”

In this section, the Apostle Paul gives the solution for those who understand that *“they who are in the flesh cannot please God.”* It is for the Spirit of Christ to live within and for the Holy Ghost to occupy and quicken their mortal body.

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.

When the apostle Paul, as a Jew, speaks of being *“in the flesh,”* he speaks of his life before he surrendered to Jesus while he was still *“under the Law of Moses.”* He had not been born again of the Spirit of God, yet he sought to please God through carnal obedience to the Law of Moses, which Paul said he did *“blamelessly”* (Philippians 3:6). He discovered that *“in the flesh”* he could never please God. Now, being born again, he discovered that *“...if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law”* (Galatians 5:18). Paul has drawn several conclusions in previous verses, each of them proving more and more that man can never please God through his efforts or the inclinations of human nature. In this ninth verse, he brings yet another conclusion, this one with great hope.

“But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you.” This passage is used as a *“thesis statement”* of what this chapter is about. It leads into verses ten and eleven where Paul gives the reasons that those who are in Christ are not in the flesh. All previous conclusions were based upon the fact of sin dwelling in the nature of man. This conclusion is based upon the fact of the *“Spirit of God”* dwelling *“in us.”* It is impossible for the Spirit of God to *“co-habit”* with either sin or the law, therefore the conclusion, *“Ye are not in the flesh...if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you.”*

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“Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.”

The Greek word translated “*Now*” would have been more accurately translated as “*and*.” The statement is a continuation of Paul’s answer as to why we are not in the flesh. Having the Spirit of Christ speaks of having been born of the Spirit and being a new creature. God gave a promise in Ezekiel 36:26, “*A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you.*” This is the result of the “*new birth*” Jesus told us we must receive (John 3:6-7). The “*new spirit*” of Ezekiel 36:26 speaks of a “*new (divine) nature*” and not of the Holy Ghost, because in the next verse (Ezekiel 36:27), God promised, “*And I will put my spirit (The Holy Ghost) within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them.*”

Paul spoke to the Colossians about “*the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints.*” He said it is “*Christ in you, the hope of glory*” (Colossians 1:26-27). “*Christ in you*” indicates a “*new heart*,” and a “*new spirit (nature).*” Paul concludes, “*If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.*” Every person should take note of this.

10 And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.

Jesus said, “*He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life*” (John 5:24). Paul qualifies this “*life*” with the words “*If Christ be in you...*” The thrust of this verse is “*life because of righteousness (the righteousness of God at Calvary).*” Our spiritual redemption is complete; it is finished at the cross, yet we patiently “*wait*” for the “*redemption of our body*” (Romans 8:23), which is our resurrection and change at the return of Jesus Christ.

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The translators erred in this verse in that they neglected to translate the Greek word “*men* (indeed, or ‘*in fact*’)” which should be inserted just before the word “*dead*.” “*Strong’s Concordance*” defines the Greek word as follows:

“*men*: a primary particle; properly, indicative of affirmation or concession (**in fact**); usually followed by a contrasted clause with 1161 (the Greek word for ‘*but*’).”

The “*concession*” in this verse is “...*the body is (in fact) dead because of sin.*” The contrasted clause is, “**But** *the spirit is life because of righteousness.*” The construction of this verse is very similar to Romans 6:11, “*Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead INDEED (in fact) unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.*”

Notice that the body is dead “*because of sin.*” Our body is “*dead*” because of Adam’s transgression. Paul did not say “*our body is sinful*;” he said, “*Our body is dead.*” It is “*dead*” to doing any work of God, which Paul said we are “*foreordained*” to do (Ephesians 2:10). The phrase, “*the body is dead because of sin,*” lays the groundwork for the next verse, which introduces the reality of receiving and being filled with the Holy Ghost, “*which,*” as Paul said in Ephesians 1:14, “*is the earnest (guarantee) of our inheritance.*”

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 Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead...**” is the Holy Ghost. “*He (God)...shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit (the Holy Ghost) that dwelleth in you.*” In the tenth verse the body is said to be “*dead* (figuratively),” while in the eleventh verse, it is said to be “*mortal* (liable to

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death).” In the tenth verse, Christ living in a person makes their “*spirit*” alive, while in the eleventh verse, the Holy Ghost “*quickens*” their mortal body. This “*quickening*” of the “*mortal body*” does not speak of the resurrection of the dead at the return of Jesus, because it is still a “*mortal*” body that is quickened. A “*mortal body*” is one that is growing old and dying just as every man has since Adam’s transgression, yet our “*mortal body*” can be “*quickened*” by the Holy Ghost to do the works of God (John 14:12). This “*quickening*” is not a one-time event but a continuing work of the Spirit as we continually surrender our bodies to God.

“...by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.” Three times in verses nine and eleven, Paul states that the Spirit of God “*dwells*” in us. This means “*to occupy a house.*” Before receiving the Spirit of Christ, sin “*occupied*” our house as an unwelcome guest. Now that Christ has come and nailed our old man of sin to His cross and cleansed the house with His blood, we are a fit dwelling place for the Spirit of God. Christ has made us a temple prepared for the Holy Ghost and, if we receive Him, He will occupy us as his house.

12 Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh.

This is the fourth time Paul speaks of “*after the flesh*” in this chapter. He uses it as a warning to believers not to attempt to serve God through carnal religious effort. Paul says “*Therefore*” (based upon the fact that Christ has made you alive in spirit through righteousness and the Holy Ghost now quickens your mortal body), your debt is to serve God, but not through the Law or any other fleshly means. When Paul was “*in the flesh*” he was constrained by the Law to serve under it. That bondage was broken by the cross of Christ and that debt was nullified. He is now free to serve God “*in newness of spirit and*

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not in the oldness of the letter” (Romans 7:6). In the same manner, a child of God is not obligated to serve God through carnal religious effort, but by the working of the Spirit of Christ and the Holy Ghost within.

Our “*debt*” is to “*preach the gospel in every nation, to every person*” (Mark 16:15). Paul says in Romans 1:14-15; “***I am debtor both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians; both to the wise, and to the unwise. So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also.***” It is a debt that cannot be paid by human abilities, talents, wisdom, or anything that proceeds out of “*human nature,*” but only through the “*quickenings*” of the Holy Ghost.

Paul clearly states our commission in Acts 13:47: “*For so hath the Lord commanded us, saying, I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, **that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of the earth.***” This is the debt we owe. Such a debt cannot be paid through human abilities. Those who “*trust in the flesh*” will never settle their debt. It is from this point in his letter that Paul speaks to us concerning the necessity of the “*Spirit filled*” and “*Spirit led*” life.

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.

This is the fifth time Paul uses the phrase “*after the flesh*” in this chapter. He is speaking to those who have both “*received Christ,*” and have been “*filled with the Holy Ghost.*” These are the ones whom “*the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus*” has “*made free from the law of sin and death*” that once worked in them. Sin no longer “*pollutes*” their heart and nature. It is to these spiritual believers that he gives a somber warning with the following words:

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“For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die ...” The great deception of the Law and all carnal religion is it always promises to bring you closer to God. The believers in Galatia were embracing circumcision, keeping holy days, and all the ordinances of Moses’ law when Paul wrote to them *“Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?”* (Galatians 3:3) Paul let them know in clear terms that if they continued to trust in the fleshly works of the Law, they would end up in the ungodly works of the flesh (Galatians 5:19). If our life as a child of God is dictated by human nature with its inclinations, purposes and abilities, we will die a spiritual death exactly as Adam did. We should take note that *there was no sin in Adam* when he walked away from the *“Tree of Life”* to partake of the forbidden fruit. A child of God, though not attracted to sin, may often be enticed to observe *“laws”* and *“religious ordinances”* in order to please God. Adam was attracted to the *“knowledge of good and evil,”* which was the *“fruit”* of the forbidden tree and the source of *“law,”* to serve God. For a child of God to turn to law for righteousness is certain spiritual death, which will always bring a reviving of sin in their heart and nature (Romans 7:9).

In this chapter, Paul’s warning is against a fleshly walk in carnal religion, but there are many ways to *“live after the flesh.”* Those who walk in the wisdom of man are living after the flesh. If a child of God begins to walk after earthly pleasures and ambitions, they are walking *“after the flesh”* and their *“walk”* can only end in spiritual death. The same is true for those who choose to live for themselves. A child of God is a spirit and cannot survive as a natural man. Just as a fish cannot survive out of water, a child of God cannot survive outside of the Spirit of Christ and of God.

“...but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.” This statement must be taken in context

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with the preceding statement in this verse. These are showing us the end result of two different sources for those who seek to serve God. One is “*after the flesh*” and speaks of all carnal religious effort including the Law of Moses. The end of that walk is always death. This second statement brings us back to those who serve God through the work of Christ and the Holy Ghost within. If this is the source of their walk, then the blood of Jesus Christ purifies their heart and nature while the Holy Ghost establishes their body as His temple.

The latter part of this verse is badly translated. The words “*ye through*” and “*do*” are not found in the Greek text. What Paul said was, “***But if the Spirit mortifies the deeds of the body, ye shall live.***” The key to understanding this phrase is in the Greek word “*praxis*” that was translated “*deeds.*” “*Praxis*” is properly defined as “*practice,*” which should be understood in the same sense as the “*practice*” (the business) of a doctor or lawyer. The word is also properly translated as “*office*” in Romans 12:4. In this analogy, the human body is presented as an “*office*” just as it is presented as a “*temple*” in I Corinthians 6:19. It is an office that is operated by human nature, with its abilities, talents, and intellect. The Holy Ghost enters to destroy the “*office*” of the body, and establish His “*temple,*” from which He will “*quicken*” the mortal body for His service.

14 For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.

It is those who are led by “*the Spirit of God,*” and not by carnal religion or the understanding of human nature who are manifested to be sons of God.

15 For ye have not received the spirit of bondage (slavery) again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption (sonship), whereby we cry, Abba, Father.

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It is in this verse that Paul finally leaves the Law behind. The Law of Moses held the Jewish believer in such great bondage that Paul writes in Hebrews that Christ died to “...destroy...*the devil; And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage*” (Hebrews 2:14-15). Those who forsook Moses’ Law “*died without mercy*” (Hebrews 10:28). Knowing that Christ has delivered every believer from the Law’s bondage through his death, Paul reassures the believer that God has not brought us under the “*spirit of bondage again to fear;*” either to the Law of Moses or to any other carnal religious master.

The “*gospel of Christ*” is not a “*New Covenant law*” which is fulfilled in the obeying of thousands of religious “*principles.*” Instead, the “*gospel of Christ*” is fulfilled in the “*Spirit of adoption,*” whereby we are born again of the Spirit of God. In this verse it is the “*Spirit of Christ*” that is called the “*Spirit of adoption.*” God is our Father because Jesus Christ, the Son of God, lives His life in us.

16 The Spirit itself (the Holy Ghost) **beareth witness with** (in union with) **our spirit, that we are the children of God:**

There is no “*formula*” by which you may know you are “*born again.*” Many trust in a “*sinner’s prayer;*” others trust in their “*baptism,*” or “*church membership.*” All too many trust in a “*good feeling.*” It is only by the witness of the Spirit of God “*with*” our spirit that we know. The word “*with*” in this verse was translated from the Greek word “*sun,*” which means “*in union with.*” The proof that we are the children of God is that our “*spirit*” has been “*made one*” with “*The Spirit*” of God (John 17:20-21). It is a witness the world around us will see. The “*witness of the Spirit*” does not end with this verse, but builds into a crescendo in the next verse.

In the Spirit

17 And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with (heirs in union with) **Christ; if so be that we suffer with** (in union with) **him, that we may be also glorified together** (in union with him).

The ultimate proof that we are the children of God is that we are “one” with Christ, not only as children, but as “*heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ.*” There is a “*qualifying statement*” in this verse, however; “*...if so be that we suffer with Him....*” This phrase takes us back to Romans 6:6: “*Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with* (in union with) *Him....*” It relates to His sufferings on the cross, and our sufferings “*in union with Him.*” Peter said the prophets prophesied of the “*sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow*” (I Peter 1:11).

It is only as we are “*one with Christ*” that we have any claim to the things of God. The Greek word “*sun,*” which denotes “*union*” is used three times in this verse. It is found in the words “*joint-heirs,*” “*suffer with,*” and “*glorified together.*” The verse is clearer when understood as “*...heirs in union with Christ; if so be that we suffer in union with Him, that we may be also glorified in union with Him.*”

In the thirtieth verse of this chapter, Paul says “*whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.*” God “*justifies the ungodly*” at the cross of Christ. It is the Holy Ghost who comes to glorify the children of God in order that they may also “*glorify God*” (John 17:1). Those who have “*suffered with Christ*” at the cross will also be “*glorified with Christ*” by the Holy Ghost.

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Section Eighteen

“The Infirmary of the Body”

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 sufferings “*of this present time*” are those sufferings that are common to all of humanity because of our mortal body. There are also “*sufferings*” which are afflicted upon the righteous by the enemies of Jesus Christ. Paul has told us, “*Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution*” (II Timothy 3:12). Paul described the sufferings of his “*present time*” in II Corinthians 11:23-27 as follows: “*Are they ministers of Christ? (I speak as a fool) I am more; in labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft. Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep; In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness.*” Paul learned to rejoice in these sufferings, and found they were “*not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed.*”

The words “*of this present time*” show a difference between the sufferings of the seventh verse, which were inflicted on Jesus at the cross, and the sufferings of the eighth verse, which may be inflicted on the believer in the present. The believer suffered with Christ at Calvary, and Christ suffers with the believer in the present, but it is only those sufferings “*with Christ*” at the cross of Calvary that qualifies a believer to be

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glorified “*with Christ.*” Again, glorification with Christ is the work of the Holy Ghost in a child of God (verse seventeen).

“...the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory...” The Greek word “*axios,*” which was translated “*worthy,*” is properly defined as “*deserving, comparable, or suitable.*” The words “*to be compared,*” which were placed in italics by the translators, were not in the original Greek text. While it is true that by comparison, the horrible things the apostle suffered at the hands of his persecutors were so much less than the glory he experienced in Christ; that is not the message he brings to us. Instead, he would tell us that the sufferings of the present time are not sufficient to purchase for us the glory which God has prepared for those who trust in Him.

Paul tells us in I Corinthians 13:3, “*...though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.*” Human suffering does not purchase anything from God. It is too sad to consider, but there were those in history who were counted to be “*martyrs*” for the faith, who were also lost. Consider the thousands who died in the crusades of the middle ages, bound in the darkness of religion, and lost. Only those who have “*suffered with Christ*” through faith in His blood and cross are saved and it is only these who will also be “*glorified together*” with Christ.

“...that shall be revealed in us.”

The word “*shall*” was translated from the Greek word “*mello*” which, according to “*Strong’s Concordance and Greek Dictionary,*” means “*to intend,*” or “*be about to be.*” It indicates that the “*glory*” spoken of is not a distant hope, but a present expectation. It expresses that the glory that was promised is both “*intended*” and “*about to be*” for all who believe God and trust in Christ. It begins with the wonderful baptism with

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the Holy Ghost, and will continue eternally both in this present life and in the world to come.

19 For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God.

The word “*for*,” which in this place properly means “*because*,” connects this verse to “*the glory that shall be revealed in us*” in the previous verse. The word “*creature*” was translated from the Greek word “*ktisis*,” which is defined by “*Strong’s Greek Dictionary*” as “*original formation*,” and refers to the “*original creation*” which God created in the beginning; the heavens, the earth, and everything that is in them. With the disobedience of the first man Adam, God’s creation was cursed by sin, and man, who was made in the image and likeness of God, became a “*fallen man*.” Christ, who was “*in the beginning with God*,” and who “*was God*,” was born into the world as the infant Jesus for the purpose of redeeming and reconciling fallen man back to God. Those who believe in Jesus, that He is “*the Christ*” are “*born again of the Spirit of God*” (I John 5:1), and they are the “*sons of God*” (I John 3:2).

“...the earnest expectation of the creature...” The two words “*earnest expectation*” are translated from the Greek word “*apokaradokia*,” which Strong’s Greek Dictionary defines as “*intense anticipation*.” Another Greek word, “*elpis*,” which Strong’s defines as “*expectation*” is used in the book of Romans fifteen times, translated as “*hope*.” While these Greek words are from two different word families, they carry almost the same meaning. In fact, in the very next verse, Paul tells us that God has subjected the creature “*in hope*.” Fallen humanity has no hope within itself. Its only “*hope*” is in the Christ of eternity who became a man to redeem the world from sin. The promise of the redeemer came the same day sin entered into the world through Adam’s disobedience (Genesis 3:15). The

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promise of “*The Christ*,” who would “*make an end of sins*,” was delivered from God to the prophet Daniel by the angel Gabriel (Daniel 9:24-25). The apostle John says of Christ, “*He came unto His own, and His own received Him not.*” Based on the message the angel Gabriel brought to Daniel, the nation of Israel had waited for almost five hundred years for the advent of “*The Christ*,” but they refused to receive Him when He came, and thus continued in their sin. The nation of Israel would have been the “*vehicle*” to carry “*the knowledge of salvation through the remission of their sins* (Luke 1:77)” to the fallen creation in every nation, but they refused to receive Jesus Christ for themselves, thus leaving the world “*without hope.*” The phrase “*...the earnest expectation of the creature...*” should be understood to say, “*...the hope of the fallen creation...*”

“...waiteth for...” It is not the fallen creation that is “*waiting*,” because they have never heard. It is their “*hope*” that is “*waiting*.” In other words, the fallen creation has no hope until something else takes place in their behalf.

“...the manifestation of the sons of God.” David prophesied of the “*sons of God*” in Psalms 22:30-31, “*A seed shall serve him; it shall be accounted to the Lord for a generation. They shall come, and shall declare his righteousness unto a people that shall be born, that he hath done this.*”

The “*manifestation of the sons of God*” is not a great mystery. It refers to the “*glory*” which Paul said in the previous verse, “*shall be revealed in us*” (verse 18). Even so, most theologians have taught that this verse speaks of the state of the believer after Christ returns to give us our “*immortal*” and “*incorruptible*” bodies. They are sadly mistaken, because that will be too late for the fallen creation. The “*manifestation of the sons of God*” is the only hope for lost humanity. It must come in the present time, but until it comes, there will be very few saved.

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The “*sons of God*” were manifested for a season beginning on the day of Pentecost, which resulted in the greatest revival in history. Beginning with an hundred and twenty, three thousand souls were added to the church in the first day. Only days later, Peter, “*in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth,*” healed the lame man at the gate of the temple called Beautiful and five thousand were saved and added to the church. The apostles were doing the same works Jesus did, preaching the gospel, healing the sick, casting out devils, and working great miracles, all “*in the name of Jesus Christ.*”

The apostle Paul tells us in I Corinthians 12:7, “*...the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal.*” It is obvious that Paul was speaking about “*every man (person)*” who has been “*filled with the Holy Ghost,*” because he continued in the next verses to say, “*For to one is given **by the Spirit** the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge **by the same Spirit**; to another faith **by the same Spirit**; to another the gifts of healing **by the same Spirit.***” The apostle lays out nine different manifestations of the Spirit that are given variously to those who have been filled with the Holy Ghost. The “*manifestation of the sons of God*” has been seen in every instance that God has “*poured out His Spirit*” upon man. He “*fills*” His children (sons of God) with the Holy Ghost, and does His wonderful and miraculous works through them. The sons of God are “*manifested*” by the powerful presence of God that is with them and the miraculous works which God does through them. Let me hasten to say that such “*manifestation*” has not yet been seen in this generation (as of the year 2015). Instead, we have seen the words of Jesus for this last generation fulfilled; “*For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect*” (Matthew 24:24). When God once again “*pours out His Spirit*

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on all flesh” (Joel 2:28-32), we will see the “*manifestation of the sons of God*” and the greatest harvest of souls the world has ever seen, which will come during the time of great tribulation just before the return of Jesus Christ to earth.

Jesus commanded His disciples, “*Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature*” (Mark 16:15). In the use of the word “*creature*” in the “*great commission*” we know that Jesus was speaking of lost humanity. It is these whom Paul speaks of in this verse, that have no hope until the sons of God are made manifest by the Spirit of God. In that sense they are still “*waiting*” for the “*manifestation of the sons of God,*” and untold millions are perishing without hope. The present hope of the children of God is to be “*glorified together with Christ*” through the working of the Holy Ghost in and through them. The “*only hope*” for lost humanity is “*the manifestation of the sons of God.*” They will come; they will be full of the Holy Ghost to preach Christ to the lost world, and God will “*confirm His word*” in “*demonstration of the Spirit and of power*” (I Corinthians 2:4).

20 For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope,

Everything God created, the heavens, the earth, and everything that is in the earth, was “*made subject to vanity,*” which speaks of “*inutility*” and “*emptiness,*” because of the entrance of sin. The earth itself was cursed because of Adam’s disobedience and began to bring forth weeds and thorns. Sickness, disease, pain, and death entered into the world with sin. Not only man, but every living creature came under the dominion of death. Only Adam and his wife Eve were deserving of the things that came upon the entire creation. The children of Adam and their descendants after them were all made subject to vanity, not

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through any transgression on their part, but because of Adam's transgression. In the same day that man was "*subjected to vanity*," God "*subjected him to hope*." A "*seed of the woman*" would be born who would "*bruise the head of the serpent*" (Genesis 3:15). That promise, which was fulfilled through the death of Christ on the cross, is the hope, and the only hope, of the original creation. It is the "*hope of salvation*" which is extended by the gospel of Christ to everyone who will believe it.

The human body is "*subject to vanity* (inutility, meaning 'uselessness')." James said, "*The body without the spirit* (of man) *is dead*" (James 2:26). If the spirit of man leaves the body, it can do nothing, because it is "*dead*." Men bury it because it immediately begins to decay. The physical body of a child of God is also said to be "*dead* (verse 10)" until it is "*quickened* (verse 11)" by the Holy Ghost. It can do nothing for God unless it is quickened by God.

21 Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.

These words are better understood to say "*the creation itself*," speaking of everything God created in the beginning. The reality is that everything of the original creation will "*pass away* (II Peter 3:10)" to make way for the "*new heavens and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness*" (II Peter 3:13). We may not fully understand how these things will come into being, but we can see God's "*pattern*" for these things in the miracle of the "*new birth*;" our "*old man*" is "*crucified with Christ*" (Romans 6:6), our "*new man*" is "*quickened together with Christ*" (Ephesians 2:4-5), and we become "*new creations in Christ Jesus*" (II Corinthians 5:17). This verse gives the same promise to the inanimate creation as he gave to man.

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“...shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption...”

The entire creation is in the bondage of corruption, which simply means “*subject to decay*.” Paul tells us in Hebrews 1:10-11 that even the earth and the heavens will “*wax old as a garment*” and “*perish*.”

22 For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now.

We need only to look around us at the pain and suffering that is in the world because of sin. The entire planet we live on seems to be in convulsions and upheavals. We can hear the “*groans*” of the old creation growing louder and louder. It is the “*groans*” of a creation, both animate and inanimate, that is perishing without hope.

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.

With this verse, the apostle turns to the “*new creation*,” we which have the “*firstfruits of the Spirit*.” It is not only the lost world that is groaning, but we who are “*born again of the Spirit*” are “*groaning within ourselves*.” Our “*groans*” are different from those of the lost world, however. The world “*groans*” as those who have no hope. We “*groan*” for “*the hope that is set before us*” (Hebrews 6:18).

“...waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body...”

Our spiritual redemption is complete and perfect, but we wait for what the apostle calls “*the redemption of our body*” (verse 23). Our bodies will be delivered from “*the bondage of corruption* (decay)” just as our souls have been delivered from sin. The natural body of a child of God is not sinful, but it is “*cor-*

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ruptible,” which simply means that it is “*subject to decay.*” The “*blessed hope*” of the children of God is the resurrection and change of our natural bodies at the second coming of Jesus Christ. Paul explains this best in Philippians 3:20-21: “*For our conversation (our citizenship) is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: **Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body...***”

The “*redemption of our body*” speaks of an event that Paul called a “*mystery*” in I Corinthians 15:51-54; “*Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.*” And oh how we “*groan within ourselves*” for that blessed day.

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 scripture does not speak of the salvation of our soul, but the redemption of our body. Our spiritual redemption is complete, having been perfected on the cross. Our “*body*” belongs to God, having been “*bought with a price*” (I Corinthians 6:20). It remains “*corruptible (meaning subject to death and decay, but not sinful)*” until it is changed (redeemed) at the resurrection.

“...hope that is seen is not hope...” Those who are “*born of God*” are not “*hoping to be saved*” at the end. We have already received “*the end of our faith, even the salvation of our souls*”

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(I Peter 1:8-9), and it is a “*hope*” that “*can be seen.*” We have received eternal life in Christ Jesus, which can also be seen (I John 1:2). Our bodies, however, continue to grow old and will pass away one day. We are still “*hoping,*” with great expectation and anticipation, for the redemption of our physical body.

25 But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it.

The “*blessed hope*” of every child of God is the second coming of Jesus Christ, at which time the “*body*” of every person who has, throughout the ages, “*died in the faith*” will be “*raised incorruptible.*” We have never seen such changes for mortal man, but we fully expect it at the return of Jesus Christ, for it is the “*blessed hope*” (Titus 2:13) of every child of God. Until then, we will “*with patience* (cheerful endurance)” wait for it, “*cheerfully enduring*” the sufferings that come with a mortal body, whether through persecutions or infirmities, “*fully expecting*” the glorious appearing of our saviour, Jesus Christ.

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.

Our “*infirmity*” is our mortal body, which Paul said is “*subject to vanity* (inutility; emptiness).” As long as our bodies are controlled by human nature, they are absolutely useless for the service of God. Our bodies are, however, the “*temple of the Holy Ghost*” (I Corinthians 6:19). The Holy Ghost is sent to “*quicken*” our mortal bodies for His service.

The word “*helpeth*” is derived from the Greek word “*antilambanomai,*” which is a combination of three Greek words. They are, “*sun* (in union with),” “*lambano* (take hold of),” and “*anti* (opposite).” It is best understood by the mental picture of two

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people taking hold of a heavy object at opposite ends to move it. This verse actually relates to the sixteenth verse, which says, “*The Spirit itself (the Holy Ghost) beareth witness with (in union with) our spirit...*” This twenty-sixth verse says, “*Like-wise (in the same manner) the Spirit also helpeth (taketh hold of in union with) our infirmities (mortal body).*” He is with us in ministry, labors, sufferings, prayers and intercessions, and in whatever circumstance a child of God faces in this present time.

“...for we know not what we should pray for as we ought...”

We must be filled with the Holy Ghost if we are to “*pray as we ought.*” Without the Spirit, we do not know how to pray, or what to pray for. Very often even those who are “*filled with the Spirit*” continue to pray according to their human needs, desires, and ambitions.

“...but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us...” The prayers of most believers issue out of their own heart and understanding. This of itself is not an evil thing, but it comes short of the will of God. Paul says “*we know not what we should pray for as we ought.*” However, for those who are full of the Holy Ghost, there are times when their prayer does not come from their own heart or understanding, but issues from the Spirit of God as He begins to make intercession through them. At times this intercession will come forth in “*groanings which cannot be uttered.*” In such times the utterance is not of their selves, but is being given by the Spirit of God within them as He makes intercession through the believer of things they know not.

“...with groanings...” The word “*groanings*” is not describing the sound of the intercession but the great longing of God’s Spirit. Just as the fallen creation groans in pain (verse 22), and the redeemed groan within themselves for the redemption of

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the body (verse 23), the Spirit of God also “groans” for that which God longs for.

“...which cannot be uttered.” This phrase comes from the Greek word “*alaletos*” which means “*unspeakable*” and could properly be translated as “*which cannot be put into words.*” The “*groanings*” of the Spirit of God within a believer is often manifested as the Spirit prays through them in a language that they of themselves cannot speak. It is certain that the fullness of what God longs for in his church cannot be expressed in any language of man. Do not mistake the intercession of the Spirit for what some call a “*prayer language.*” The intercession of the Spirit is far beyond anything that a person can turn on or off at their will.

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.

Verse 26 tells us that we, even though we are the children of God, do not know what we should pray for. When the Holy Ghost “*makes intercession for us,*” He is praying according to the will of God, for that which we would be praying if we knew the will of God. Self-centered praying is never the will of God for His children.

In verses 22 through 26, we read of three separate “*groans.*”

1: The “groans” of the fallen creation. These are the same ones who are said to be “*waiting*” for the manifestation of the sons of God. They are “*groaning*” under the curse of sin and bondage of corruption.

2: The “groans” of the children of God. According to the apostle, the “*groans*” of the children of God is for “*the redemption of the body,*” which is the change from mortal to immortality and from corruptible to incorruptible, which will take

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place in a moment of time when Jesus Christ returns to earth. These “groans” grow louder as the child of God grows older.

3: The “groans” of the Spirit of God. The “groans” of the Spirit are more in tune with the groans of the fallen creation than with the groans of the children of God. This is what is indicated when the apostle says, “we know not what we should pray for as we ought” (verse 26). Jesus died to “take away the sin of the world,” yet in this twenty-first century there are far more people that have never heard the name of Jesus than the entire population of the world in the first century. The “groans of the Spirit” is for the fallen creation for which Christ came into the world to save. God does not “feel sorry” for His children, but He “groans” over the lost. When the children of Israel were still slaves in Egypt, God said, “I have also heard **the groaning** of the children of Israel, whom the Egyptians keep in bondage; and I have remembered my covenant” (Exodus 6:5). God’s “groaning” was in tune with the “groaning” of the slaves, and He sent Moses to deliver them. When our “groaning” is in tune with God, we lay aside our lives to reach those for whom Christ died.

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Glorified

Section Nineteen
“Glorified”

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 is often used to explain events in our lives that we may not understand. Regardless of how tragic a circumstance may be, we accept that it must be working for our good. This philosophical view contains fragments of truth but misses the power and glory of this passage.

“...all things work together...” The words “*all things*” simply mean “*all*” or “*the whole*.” This is actually referring to everything God has done according to his eternal purpose in order that He would have a people who would “*be to the praise of his glory*” (Ephesians 1:12). Paul will give the sum of these “*all things*” in the next few verses as “*foreknown*,” “*predestinated*,” “*called*,” “*justified*,” and “*glorified*.” God is the source of all these things that “*work together*” for good to them who love God. In verse 32, Paul tells us that God will freely give us these “*all things*.”

“...for good to them that love God...” Everything God has done works for the benefit of those who love him. Our greatest “*good*” is that God’s eternal purpose be revealed in us.

“...to them who are the called according to his purpose.” God’s “*purpose*” is the key to understanding this verse. Everything that God has done since the day sin entered into the world through Adam’s disobedience has been toward the redemption of fallen humanity. “*His purpose*” is that for which God “*groans*” (see previous verse). Those who are “*the called according to His purpose*” are not only “*called*,” but they have also accepted “*His purpose*” as their “*cause*” (Ephesians

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3:14). These are the same ones of whom Paul will speak in verse 31; *“If God be for us, who can be against us?”* Study closely the remainder of this eighth chapter of Romans, because in it Paul gives us a clear understanding of the calling and purpose of God, and how that nothing can thwart that purpose in those who seek Him.

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.

Before God made the first man, He knew what He would make. He had a *“pattern”* to make man by. *“And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness... So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them”* (Genesis 1:26-27). Mankind as God made him, *“in the image and likeness of God,”* is the foreknowledge and predestination of God. The entrance of sin was neither foreknown or predestined. In the redemption, however, God’s foreknowledge and predestination is a *“new creation”* made in the image and likeness of His Son, Jesus Christ. God’s *“purpose”* in redemption is that Jesus would be the *“firstborn among many brethren,”* with each of the *“brethren”* being *“born again”* in the image and likeness of God.

“...whom he did foreknow...” Everything God *“foreknew”* about man was that man would be in His image and likeness. That was settled in the words of God before He made man: *“Let us make man in our image....”* God never *“foreknew”* a sinner. He never *“foreknew”* a worker of iniquity. Jesus said, *“And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity”* (Matthew 7:23). If Christ *“never knew”* the workers of iniquity, it is obvious that He did not *“foreknow”* them. In Luke 13:27, He uses an even stronger term: *“I tell you, I know you not whence ye are; depart from*

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me, all ye workers of iniquity.” Literally translated, He said, “*I don’t know what you are, or where you came from.*” He did not “*foreknow*” a sinner.

This statement does not take away in the least from the “*omniscience*” of God. Of course God “*knows all things,*” but He only “*foreknew*” that which He “*predestinated:*” a people “*in the image and likeness of the Son of God.*”

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.

The phrase, “*whom he did predestinate...*” includes the thought from the previous verse, “*...to be conformed to the image of His Son.*” Predestinate means “*to predetermine or limit in advance.*” What is missed by many in predestination is that God predetermined *what kind* of people His people would be, and not *who they would be*. God did not predestinate some to be “*saved*” and some to be “*lost.*” Such is the description of God as a tyrant who would “*create*” only to “*destroy*” that which he created. Everything He foreknew and everything He predestinated was an image of Himself in flesh and blood. When sin entered the heart of man through Adam’s transgression, God’s foreknowledge and predestination did not change. Predestination does not indicate that God has chosen any one individual or group out of many, but the “*call to salvation*” goes out to “*whosoever will.*” He calls sinners and the ungodly. He calls the atheist and the idolater. It is only those who answer the call who stand as “*the called*” according to his purpose.

“...them he also justified...” Paul’s teaching on justification begins in the latter part of chapter three and carries on through the end of chapter six. It starts with how Abraham’s faith was counted for righteousness and increases until we see the work of the cross completely destroying our old man of sin and our-

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selves raised with Jesus as a new creature in Christ. To Paul, all of this is what it means to be “*justified*.” The idea that a sinner is “*justified*” and nothing changes is a gross error. It is true that a person is “*justified by faith*” exactly as Abraham was “*justified*” when he “*believed God*,” but we must remember that Abraham was one of those who “*died in faith, not having received the promise*” (Hebrews 11:13). In Hebrews 11:40, the apostle reveals that God has “*provided some better thing for us*,” who have “*trusted in Christ*.” We have what Abraham saw afar off, but could not receive in His day. Christ has come, and we are also “*justified by His blood*” (Romans 5:9), which Paul says is “*much more*” than Abraham received.

“...them He also glorified.” On the day of Pentecost, Jesus Christ glorified his church. They were all filled with the Holy Ghost and “*spoke with other tongues as the Spirit of God gave them utterance*,” but more important than the tongues, they went out in the power and glory of God bearing witness that Jesus of Nazareth had been raised from the dead and was in fact the Christ, the son of the living God. God worked with them by the Holy Ghost, clothing them with miracles, and through them He shook the known world of that day. Every generation, every church, and every believer must have their own “*Day of Pentecost*.” Not a feast day, but an hour that the Spirit of God comes upon and fills them so that God might be manifest in them. “*Glorification*” is the work of the Holy Ghost in a person to produce in this present world the complete image of Christ. He suffered the cross for our justification (Romans 6:6-7). He shed His blood for our sanctification (Hebrews 13:12). He sent the Holy Ghost for our glorification (Romans 8:17).

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

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“*These things*” in this verse is a reference “*all things*” in verse 28, which are delineated in verses 29 and 30: Whom God “*foreknew*,” what He “*predestinated*,” His universal “*call*” to “*whosoever will*,” and all those who answer the call, He both “*justifies*” and “*glorifies*.” What shall we say to these things?

“If God be for us, who can be against us?” A better rendering of this question for our understanding would be, “*If God be for us being to the praise of his glory, who can be against us in this eternal purpose of God?*” Everything God has done “*for us*” is to produce a people in whom He would be glorified. Who can withstand God?

Too often Christian people think that God is “*on their side*” when it comes to earthly disputes. Is God “*for us*?” Certainly God is “*for*” the salvation of everyone on earth, but God does not “*take sides*” in human disputes. Joshua had just crossed over the Jordan River by a great miracle when on the road to Jericho, he met the angel of the LORD with a drawn sword. Joshua approached the angel and said, “*Are you for us or for our adversary?*” Notice the answer he received. “*Nay; but as captain of the host of the LORD am I now come*” (Joshua 5:14). Joshua’s response to the angel of the LORD will determine the outcome at the battle of Jericho that is so very near. Joshua did not get the answer he wanted, but he got something much greater. The angel had told him, “*No, I’m not for you. I’m sent to be the captain ‘over you.*” In response, “*Joshua fell on his face to the earth, and did worship, and said unto him, What saith my lord unto his servant?*” (Joshua 5:14).

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 having a people conformed to the image of his son was important enough to God that He would give Jesus Christ to suffer

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and die, why would anyone believe that God would withhold from us the glories of redemption that Christ purchased for us? To understand the “*all things*” that are freely given to us, we simply review what the apostle has said the previous four verses, and know that everything God has done in and through Jesus Christ for our complete redemption from sin, He will freely give to us.

A thousand years before Christ died for us, David said, “*The LORD will give grace and glory: no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly*” (Psalms 84:11). Paul greatly magnifies the point by the fact that God gave His own Son to die for us. How would He not also freely give us “*all things*?” It is in Colossians 3:1-2 that Paul clarifies the nature of “*things*” that God will “*freely give us.*” He exhorts us, “*If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.*” The apostle John agrees with Paul in this analysis in I John 2:15; “*Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.*” Those who believe that God gave His Son to suffer and die for us in order to give us great abundance of “*things that are in the world*” are mistaken, and are in great danger of eternal loss.

**33 Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God’s elect?
It is God that justifieth.**

This is the first time the word “*elect*” is used in the book of Romans. The Greek word is “*eklektos*,” which means “*select*.” It is the same word that was translated as “*chosen*” in numerous places, including the words of Jesus in Matthew 22:14, “*For many are called, but few are chosen*,” and in Revelation 17:14, “*...and they that are with him (the Lamb) are called, and chosen, and faithful.*” Do not make more of this

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word than the definition gives. The call to salvation goes out to “*whosoever will.*” It is those who answer the call who are “*the chosen.*” They have been “*justified*” at the cross of Christ. Their “*past sins*” (Romans 3:25) have been forgiven, and they have been pardoned. They have been “*quicken*ed (made alive)” with Christ, and they are “*new creatures*” (II Corinthians 5:17) in Christ Jesus. It is of these the question is asked, literally translated, “*Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God’s elect whom God has justified?*” Those who were once “*alienated and enemies*” shall be presented before God, “*holy and unblameable and unreprou*nable” (Colossians 1:21-22). These are the “*elect.*”

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.

Who is he that can condemn those for whom Christ died, for whom He rose again, for whom He sits at the right hand of God, and for whom He makes intercession? Christ died for all, but again, it is those who come to God by faith, through death and resurrection with Christ, who cannot be condemned.

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

The “*love of God*” for us is revealed in that He “*spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us...*” (Romans 8:32). The love of Christ is revealed in that He gave His life for us (Galatians 2:20). Need we fear that God, who gave His Son for us, or Jesus Christ who died for us, will forsake us in the midst of the “*sufferings of this present time?*” (Romans 8:18). No! He has promised, “*I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee*” (Hebrews 13:5), and, “*lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world*” (Matthew 28:20).

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36 As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.

Even in the martyr's death, He has promised to be with us. It is not our Lord that has accounted us "*as sheep for the slaughter,*" but it has been the thinking of the world in times of great persecution against the church. The testimonies of the grace of God to His people in the midst of unthinkable suffering and martyrdom are absolutely amazing.

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

Nothing shall separate us from the love of Christ. His grace is more than sufficient (II Corinthians 12:9) for us, and we are "*more than conquerors through Him that loved us.*"

38-39 For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, 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.

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Section Twenty
“Whom God Receives”

Beginning with the ninth chapter, and continuing through the eleventh chapter, Paul takes up the “*defense*” of God for His treatment of national Israel. We remember that the “*righteousness of God*” was called into question in Romans 3:5; “*Is God unrighteous who taketh vengeance?*” Chapters three through eight of Romans were dedicated to revealing “*the righteousness of God*” to save sinners. “*But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets*” (Romans 3:21). The first chapter of Romans reveals the “*indictment*” of national Israel beginning with the eighteenth verse, “*For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness.*” The idolatry, immorality, and perversion that brought the wrath of God against Jerusalem six hundred years before Christ is clearly shown in this first chapter. The second chapter shows the spiritual condition of Israel that led to their rejection of Christ and the destruction of Jerusalem in seventy A.D. Paul wrote this letter to the Romans about twelve to fourteen years before that second destruction of Jerusalem, while the “*wrath of God*” was yet pending against national Israel. It is with this view that Paul, in defense of God, writes the next three chapters of Romans.

1-2 I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost, That I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart.

The Christian experience is not one of lighthearted frivolity, as many seek to display today. Instead, there is often an underlying heaviness in the hearts of the saints (I Peter 1:6), even as they rejoice in Jesus and preach the glorious gospel of freedom

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from sin. Most often the “*heaviness*” is for the souls of those who are lost. Paul said he had “*great heaviness and continual sorrow.*” It was a burden he was never without.

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

Jesus said, “*Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends*” (John 15:13). If it had been possible, Paul would have done even more for his “*kinsmen according to the flesh.*” He felt himself willing to be “*accursed from Christ*” if it would bring about the salvation of the Jews. Paul’s love for the Jewish people reminds us of Moses’ intercession for Israel in Exodus 32:32; “*Yet now, if thou wilt forgive their sin—; and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written.*” Paul understood very well the words God spoke to Moses, “*Whosoever hath sinned against me, **him** will I blot out of my book*” (Exodus 32:33).

4-5 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; Whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen.

The children of Israel, and especially the Jews, had the tremendous “*advantage*” that was revealed in the questions asked in Romans 3:1-9. Every promise had been theirs in Christ, but they rejected Christ and were cut off from God through their own unbelief. The children of Jacob became the spiritual heirs of Esau, who “*despised his birthright.*”

Israel was lost! They were “*broken off in unbelief*” (Romans 11:20) because they rejected their Messiah and did not believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. Paul expressed his great love for the Jews in the beginning of this chapter so it would

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be known that he held no prejudice against them, but only love for them. Nevertheless, he knows that God has rejected national Israel and the natural Jew because of their unbelief. Paul begins his defense of God in this ninth chapter, and reveals even further the “*righteousness of God*” concerning Israel and the salvation of the Gentiles.

6 Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect. For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel:

In the words “*For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel,*” we receive the first indication of the distinction God makes between “*the Israel of God*” (Galatians 6:16) and the nation of Israel. The fact that these were the natural seed of Jacob (Israel) did not mean that they were necessarily the seed of promise (the *Israel of God*). Paul knew there were many who were of the nation of Israel that had no part in the “*Israel of God.*”

7 Neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children: but, In Isaac shall thy seed be called.

After Ishmael and Isaac were born, Abraham had at least six more sons. Yet Isaac was the only one considered by God to be the son of Abraham. When God tested Abraham he said “*take now thy son, thine only son Isaac*” (Genesis 22:2). In Galatians 4:22, Paul speaks of Abraham’s two sons, Ishmael and Isaac. Ishmael was the “*seed of Abraham*” also, because he was “*born (of Abraham) after the flesh.*” Isaac, being the “*child of promise,*” was “*born after the Spirit.*” Both were the “*seed of Abraham,*” but only Isaac was the “*seed of promise.*”

Paul does not speak of the “*descendants of Ishmael*” versus the “*descendants of Isaac*” in this verse, however. Instead, he speaks of the two “*camp*s” of Jews in national Israel of his day; those who believed, and those who did not. It was only those who received Jesus as their Messiah who were the “*Israel of God.*”

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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.

Jesus told the Jew (Nicodemus), “*Ye must be born again.*” It was not enough that Nicodemus, who represented the entire Jewish nation that night, had been born to Jewish parents and was therefore the “*seed of Abraham*” according to his fleshly lineage. He must be “*born again*” of the Spirit of God. He was presently a “*child of the flesh,*” but if he were born again, he would be a “*child of promise,*” and a “*child of God.*” Paul is clear that the promised seed of Abraham is not through the fleshly lineage but through the righteousness of faith. He writes, “*And if ye be Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise*” (Galatians 3:29).

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

Paul uses the next nineteen verses to show that God alone sets the criteria for whom he chooses. Abraham labored for fourteen years to produce in Ishmael a son that God would receive, and could not. Nothing could make God accept what Abraham had produced through the abilities of his flesh. God had promised Abraham a son through the barren woman, Sarah, and when he “*believed God*” concerning this promise he received Isaac, the son of promise.

The birth of Isaac to Abraham and Sarah was a human impossibility. Nothing a man can do through his human abilities will ever stand before God. It is only a “*new man in Christ Jesus*” which is “*born again of the Spirit of God*” that is acceptable to God. It is impossible to produce a child of God through human abilities.

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10-13 And not only this; but when Rebecca also had conceived by one, even by our father Isaac; (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;) It was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger. As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated.

“And not only this...” In these verses, Paul gives a second example of God’s election. Before Esau and Jacob were born, God told Rebecca in a dream, *“The elder shall serve the younger.”* God was not bound by the traditions of men that demanded that the firstborn son should have dominion over the younger. Neither did God have need to wait and see which course these would take. Just as Samson was chosen before he was born to be a deliverer, so Jacob was chosen before he was born to rule over Esau. Paul uses this to show that they were chosen before having done either good or evil. God’s election begins with his calling and not with our works. It is important to remember in this that Paul is establishing and defending the fact that God has chosen to receive those who believe him, and he has chosen not to receive those who will not believe him. It is also important to remember that those who were once chosen can become the rejected. Saul was chosen to be king over Israel, but was later rejected. He was not chosen (as some may suppose) to be a temporary king, for Samuel told him the day he was rejected by God, *“...for now would the LORD have established thy kingdom upon Israel forever; But now thy kingdom shall not continue”* (Samuel 13:13-14).

“...that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth...” Paul is defending a salvation that is not offered based upon fleshly lineage or works, either good or evil, but based upon the heavenly calling. What many miss here is that God’s *“calling”* is to *“whoso-*

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ever will” and His election is to “*whosoever believes*” and “*whosoever comes.*” This was anathema to the Jews. They believed the promise was tied to their fleshly lineage and based upon their obedience to the Law of Moses.

It is in verse eleven that Paul first speaks of “*election.*” The Greek word for election is “*ekloge,*” which means “*selection,*” and is translated as both “*chosen*” and “*election.*” God’s freedom to “*choose*” between people or nations based upon faith actually disproves the traditional doctrines of “*predestination*” and “*election.*” Examples of God’s “*election (selection)*” throughout the scriptures are numerous. In Abraham, God chose a man; in Isaac, God chose a seed; in Jacob, God chose a nation; in Judah, God chose a tribe; in David, God chose a family; and in Mary, God chose a mother to give birth to the Son of God.

Abraham “*believed God,*” and Isaac, the “*child of promise,*” was the result of his faith. When God selected Jacob there was an alternate choice in Esau, who was the “*birthright son.*” Esau “*despised his birthright*” (Genesis 25:29-34), for which God later said, “*I hated Esau*” (Malachi 1:2-3). David was “*a man after God’s own heart,*” while the alternative was King Saul, who repeatedly disobeyed God. Mary was chosen as a chaste virgin, highly favored of God. She “*believed God,*” and submitted to His word concerning the birth of the Son of God. It should never be counted as strange when God turns away from “*unbelievers*” to those who “*believe*” and “*trust in Him.*”

“As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated.” When God spoke these words over a thousand years after the birth of Esau and Jacob (Malachi 1:2), he was reminding Israel how he had lifted up Jacob’s descendants (Israel), but tore down Esau’s descendants (Edom). Even so today he lifts up those he chooses and tears down those he rejects.

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14-16 What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid. 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. So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy.

“Is there unrighteousness with God?” Is God unrighteous for choosing those who believe him and rejecting those who do not? Absolutely not! Paul reminds us of what God told Moses; *“I...will shew mercy on whom I will shew mercy”* (Exodus 33:19). Paul concludes, *“So then it is not of him that **willeth**, nor of him that **runneth**, but of God that sheweth mercy.”* In the parable of the Pharisee and the publican, the sinner’s prayer is *“God, be merciful to me a sinner”* (Luke 18:9-14). This was the one who went home *“justified.”* The Pharisee sought to establish his own righteousness (Romans 10:3). He was both *“willing”* and *“running,”* but he was also *“lost,”* because his *“will”* was contrary to God’s purpose and his *“running”* was contrary to God’s working. When God said, *“I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy,”* He establishes the fact that it is He who sets the criterion for whom He will receive.

Jesus gave the criterion for to whom God will show His mercy. Wherever He went, He preached *“Repent ye, and believe the gospel”* (Mark 1:15). Paul told the elders of Ephesus at his farewell meeting, *“I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have shewed you, and have taught you publicly, and from house to house...repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ”* (Acts 20:20-21). God’s *“mercy”* is not randomly given based upon *“foreknowledge,”* or *“predestination;”* instead, *“...the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him. For **whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved**”* (Romans 10:12-13).

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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.

In the several analogies Paul gives in this chapter, each of the various people represents something different. For example, Ishmael, who is only implied in the seventh verse, represents all who are “*the children of the flesh.*” Isaac represents “*the children of promise.*” Jacob represents “*the nation of Israel,*” while Esau represents “*everything that God ‘hates’ in man.*” In this seventeenth verse, it is important to understand that “*Pharaoh*” represents “*Egypt,*” which represented “*bondage*” to the children of Israel. God did not raise Egypt up to enslave Israel, but to be a blessing and provision for them during the years they were developing into a great nation in the land of Goshen. Neither did He raise Egypt up for the purpose of destruction. Destruction came to Egypt and Pharaoh only when they hardened their heart against God’s purpose regarding the children of Israel. God “*endured with much longsuffering*” (verse 22) the hardness of the Egyptians hearts for over a hundred years before He hardened the heart of Pharaoh. If God could not be glorified through their righteousness, He would be glorified through their destruction. The purpose of God, which could have been fulfilled in righteousness, was instead fulfilled in wrath, for the “*name of God*” became great among the heathen nations when God destroyed Egypt. God’s purpose never changed; only the manner in which His purpose was accomplished changed.

18 Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth.

God has always been merciful to those who humble themselves and seek His will, but He has always hardened those who

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continually resist His will to walk after the imagination of their own hearts.

19 Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth he yet find fault? For who hath resisted his will?

This hypothetical question takes into account the fact that Paul has been speaking about Israel in each of his analogies. Ishmael, Esau, and Pharaoh are all representatives of the generation of Jews that refused Jesus Christ and rejected the “*gospel of Christ*.” It is important to understand the allegory Paul gives in Galatians 4:22-26: “*For it is written, that Abraham had two sons, the one (Ishmael) by a bondmaid, the other (Isaac) by a freewoman. But he who was of the bondwoman was born after the flesh; but he of the freewoman was by promise. Which things are an allegory: for these are the two covenants; the one from the mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage, which is Agar (Hagar). For this Agar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children. But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all.*” Keeping in mind that Paul stands in defense of God for rejecting the unbelieving Jew, the question to Paul is, “*Why doth he yet find fault (with national Israel)? For who hath resisted his will (as Pharaoh did)?*”

20-21 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? Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour?

Who is man to argue with God? In these two verses, Paul gives two analogies in which he shows that God is the creator, and we are the creation. The creation has no voice in what the creator creates. Since Paul is dealing with the rejection of national Israel, these two analogies speak more of nations than of individuals.

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22-23 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: And that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory,

In the “*embryonic*” stage and formative years of Israel, Ishmael, Esau, and Egypt all persecuted the children of promise (Isaac, Jacob, and “*the children of Israel*”). They were “*vessels of wrath*” against young Israel. God “*endured with much longsuffering*” their wrath against His people, and was willing to show His wrath, which He did against Egypt. All of these were allegories of the Jew and national Israel in the generation of Jesus and the apostle Paul. It was the unbelieving Jew that became the persecutor, being “*vessels of wrath*” against Jesus and the believers. It was the young church, called “*vessels of mercy*,” that was persecuted. Notice that the “*persecutor*” was “*fitted to destruction*,” while the “*persecuted*” were “*prepared unto glory*.” As was said of Jacob and Esau, God would “*love*” (lift up) one and “*hate*” (tear down) the other.

Read again the commentary on the **first chapter of Romans** beginning at the **eighteenth verse** to get a clear picture of the “*longsuffering of God*” as He strove to bring His chosen back to Himself before “*giving them up*” and finally “*giving them over*,” to prepare them for their own destruction, which came to pass at the hands of the Babylonians, and again at the hands of the Romans in the year 70 A.D.

24-26 Even us, whom he hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles? As he saith also in Osee, I will call them my people, which were not my people; and her beloved, which was not beloved. 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.

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God rejected the first-born, Esau, who “*despised his birthright,*” to accept the younger son, Jacob. In the same manner, God rejected unbelieving national Israel, and brought forth a “*son,*” made up of “*all who believe,*” whether Jew or Gentile. There is a sad but beautiful story in the book of Hosea that Paul relates to. Hosea was married to an unfaithful woman. When she gave birth to her third child, Hosea named it “*Loammi,*” which means “*not my people.*” The child was illegitimate, and Hosea refused to be its father. Hosea rejected his wife Gomer because of her unfaithfulness, saying, “*She is not my wife.*” Gomer followed after other lovers for a long period of time. Finally, God told Hosea to purchase an adulterous woman who was being sold into slavery, and love her “*...according to the love of the LORD toward the children of Israel, who look to other gods, and love flagons of wine*” (Hosea 3:1). Hosea said, “*So I bought her to me for fifteen pieces of silver, and for an homer of barley, and an half homer of barley*” (Hosea 3: 2). It seems that it was his wife Gomer, whom he had rejected, that he now purchased. Having bought her with a price, Hosea told her, “*Thou shalt not play the harlot, and thou shalt not be for another man: so will I also be for thee*” (Hosea 3:3). He received her as a faithful wife, and adopted her illegitimate children, hence the saying, “*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.*” This was an allegory of the redemption that was made at Calvary, not only for backslidden Israel, but for her illegitimate children as well. Salvation is for all who will believe, whether Jew or Gentile.

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:

“...a remnant shall be saved:” This should read, “*...only a remnant shall be saved.*” Paul is referring to Isaiah 10:22-23:

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“For though thy people Israel be as the sand of the sea, yet a remnant of them shall return: the consumption (the destruction) decreed shall overflow with righteousness. For the Lord GOD of hosts shall make a consumption, even determined, in the midst of all the land.”

There have been three “*destructions*” decreed against the land of Israel and the city of Jerusalem. Two have passed, and one is yet to come. Isaiah said the destruction that was coming would “*overflow with righteousness (justice)*.” This must relate to the question asked in Romans 3:5, “*Is God unrighteous who taketh vengeance?*” No! Jesus said the “*days of vengeance*” (Luke 21:20-22) would be fulfilled when Jerusalem was destroyed in the year seventy A.D. The most horrendous slaughter the world had ever seen until that time “*overflowed with righteousness (justice)*,” only because God had sent His only begotten Son to Jerusalem, and they murdered Him. Those few who received Him (the “*remnant*”) were saved, both from their sin and from the destruction in Jerusalem.

28 For he will finish the work, and cut it short in righteousness: because a short work will the Lord make upon the earth.

There is another destruction that is decreed to come upon Jerusalem and the entire earth. It will be “*cut short*” when the Jews “*look upon (unto) Him whom they pierced*” (Zechariah 12:10). In the midst of almost certain genocide, the Jews will “*look unto Jesus,*” for that is the correct meaning of the Hebrew words of Zechariah. They will “*believe upon Jesus,*” that He is “*The Christ,*” at which time He will return to destroy those nations that fight against Jerusalem (Zechariah 12:9-10).

A man asked Jesus the question, “*Lord, are there few that be saved?*” Jesus answered, “*Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be*

Section Twenty **THE FOUNDATION** Romans 9:1-29
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able” (Luke 13:23-24). In Matthew 7:14 Jesus spoke of the “*strait gate,*” saying, “*Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.*” The apostle John tells us of Jesus, “*He came unto his own (national Israel), and his own received him not. But as many as received him (whether Jew or Gentile), to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name*” (John 1:11-12). There were hundreds of thousands of Jews in the days of Jesus on this earth, but He founded His church with a “*very small remnant;*” the hundred and twenty Jews who believed and trusted in Christ.

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.

Paul again refers to Isaiah. It is true that very few Jews escaped the first destruction of Jerusalem to repopulate national Israel. These were those righteous Jews who were carried away captive by Nebuchadnezzar. The “*seed of promise,*” however, were those Jews that believed Jesus, and received the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost. They were only a hundred and twenty in number, but they were the “*seed*” of the greatest harvest of souls until that time. Out of them have come a “*...great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues*” (Revelation 7:9). These are the “*seed of Abraham*” (Galatians 3:28-29). They are “*the Israel of God*” (Galatians 6:15-16).

Believing unto Righteousness

Section Twenty-One

“Believing unto Righteousness”

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 said the Gentiles, who had been in times past “...without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world” (Ephesians 2:11-12), were “...made nigh by the blood of Christ” (Ephesians 2:13). They heard the gospel when it was first preached to the Jews, and pleaded that it should be preached to them also (Acts 13:42-48). The Gentiles simply “believed the gospel,” as Abraham had “believed God” almost two thousand years before, and they also “attained to righteousness.”

“...even the righteousness which is of faith.” The righteousness which is of faith is not an “invisible righteousness,” neither is it merely a righteousness that is “accounted” to the believer. It is the righteousness Jesus spoke of when He told His disciples, “For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 5:20). This “exceeding righteousness” does not consist of merely not “lying, stealing, or committing adultery;” instead, it is a heart that has been cleansed from the unclean lusts which are the cause of lying, stealing, and adultery. It is a righteousness that issues out of a clean heart, a right spirit, and a new nature, which can only be received through believing the gospel and trusting in Christ. It is the righteousness of God which is by faith “unto all and upon all them that believe” (Romans 2:22).

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31 But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness.

The law of righteousness was vastly inferior to the righteousness which is of faith, yet national Israel, who followed after the Law of Moses, and some of whom kept its commandments and ordinances “*blamelessly*,” could not even attain to the righteousness of their own law.

32-33 Wherefore? Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumblingstone; As it is written, Behold, I lay in Sion a stumblingstone and rock of offence: and whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.

They did not believe the words of Jesus. They did not receive Him as their Messiah. They had Him nailed to the cross in fulfillment of the scriptures, and stumbled over the “*stumblingstone*” of prophecy (Isaiah 8:13-15; Isaiah 28:16), which is “*Christ-crucified*” (I Corinthians 1:23).

Romans 10:1-21

1 Brethren, my heart’s desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved.

Paul continues his defense of God in relation to national Israel with a prayer that Israel “*might be saved*.” That should also be our prayer.

2-3 For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. 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.

The Jews were zealous for God through the Law of Moses. They were ignorant of “*God’s righteousness*” however, which

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was wrought at Calvary and is revealed in the gospel of Christ. They spent much time and energy trying to prove their own righteousness through the “*deeds of the law*,” which can never justify those who trust in them (Romans 3:20). They did not believe the gospel of Christ, and in their unbelief they refused to submit themselves to the righteousness of God, which is “*Jesus Christ, and Him crucified*” (I Corinthians 2:2), and “*our old man...crucified with Him*” (Romans 6:6).

4 For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.

When the Son of God shed His blood and died on the cross to redeem lost humanity, both “*sin*” and the “*Law of Moses*” was nailed to the cross with Him for “*everyone that believeth.*”

“*...end of the law for righteousness...*” Christ is not “*the end of righteousness*;” He is the end of **the Law** for righteousness. The first definition of the Greek word “*telos*,” which was translated “*end*,” speaks of a “*goal to be reached.*” The “*goal*” of the law was righteousness, which it could never produce in man. The apostle tells us in Romans 8:3 that God sent His Son “*in the likeness of sinful flesh*” to do “*what the law could not do.*” Jesus did it through His death and resurrection, and in so doing, He accomplished two things concerning the “*law*;” He “*abolished*” the Law of Moses (Ephesians 2:15), and He “*fulfilled*” the Law of God, in that it is “*written in the heart* (Hebrews 8:10-11)” of everyone who is “*born of God.*” It is thus that the ungodly are “*justified through the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law*” (Galatians 2:16).

5 For Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, That the man which doeth those things shall live by them.

It must be understood that the law could never at any time give “*life*” to those who obey it. Paul says in Galatians 3:21, “*If*

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there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law.” In Hebrews 10:28 the writer says, “*He that despised Moses’ law died without mercy under two or three witnesses.*” The only life the law could give was the “*life*” you already have. The law said, in effect, “*Do these things and enjoy long life; despise this law and die before your time.*” The idea that a perfect keeping of the law would give eternal life is a gross error. It is the nature of the Law of Moses that it could not give life, even to those it could not condemn.

6-9 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:) Or, Who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead.) 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; 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.

These four verses are somewhat difficult as they were translated, but very easy to be understood when the two totally different thoughts are separated. As it is translated it seems that Paul begins by telling us how faith speaks, when actually he is telling us how faith does not speak. The first phrase of this verse should be connected to the ninth verse in this manner; “*But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise, ...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.*” The “*speaking*” of the righteousness of faith is very simple; “*confess Jesus with your mouth, and believe with your heart that He died on the cross for our sins, and that God raised Him from the dead.*”

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The seventh and eighth verses should then be connected to the second phrase of the sixth verse, and placed in brackets, thus, [*Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down from above:)* Or, *Who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead.) 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.] Salvation is a perfect work, finished at Calvary by the Son of God. Christ has come down from heaven; He has died for us; God has raised Him from the dead; and He sits on the right hand of the Father as our intercessor and mediator. Simply believe that which God has already finished to perfection, and confess your faith to those around you.*

10 For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

The human nature with its intellectual reasoning cannot believe God. Paul has said in Romans 8:7, “...*the carnal mind is enmity against God.*” Our intellect argues against the truth of God. The “*heart*” that believes has received its faith from God, for saving faith is also a gift of God (Ephesians 2:8) to those who call upon the name of the Lord. It is when we believe the gospel “*from the heart*” that it is effectual in us.

“...believeth unto righteousness...” The result of saving faith is righteousness. This is the righteousness which is of faith. It is a clean heart and a righteous spirit (Psalms 51:10). It cannot be given by the Law, but can be received only through believing the gospel and trusting in Christ.

“...confession is made unto salvation.” The word “*salvation*” comes from the Greek word “*soteria*” which means “*rescue or safety.*” The question must be asked, “*what is the believer rescued (saved) from?*” The angel told Joseph, “*He shall save his people from their sins*” (Matthew 1:21). It is an

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evident truth that a person who is in their sin has not been saved from their sin.

11 For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.

“Whosoever believeth on him...” Salvation is for “*whosoever!*” No one is excluded. The call of the Spirit to “*whosoever*” is repeated throughout the New Testament. Within the last four verses of the bible we read the final call of God to man; “*And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And **whosoever will**, let him (come and) take the water of life freely*” (Revelation 22:17).

“...shall not be ashamed.” This is taken from God’s promise of salvation in Isaiah, “*Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste*” (Isaiah 28:16). It is a promise that those who believe the gospel and trust in Jesus Christ will never flee before their enemies. We are saved from sin, Satan, and all the powers of darkness.

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.

In this “*New Covenant*” there is not any one nation, race, or person that is “*chosen*” above another. The “*unsearchable riches of Christ*” (Ephesians 3:8) are for as many as call upon Him.

13 For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.

Here is another confirmation that Paul did not teach salvation by predestination of a chosen few. He confirms once again that salvation is for “*whosoever.*”

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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?

It is man that has “*predetermined*” that some must be lost. Jesus commissioned His church to “*go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.*” When men and women who are “*full of faith and the Holy Ghost*” (Acts 6:5) preach the gospel, it is God who convicts the hearts of those who hear. Not everyone will believe, and as Jesus said, many “*shall be damned,*” but “*he that believeth...shall be saved*” (Mark 16:15-16). We determine that souls must be lost when we refuse to either take or send the gospel to them. We must understand that we will also give account to God for those lost souls.

Shall we think that God has predestined billions of people to eternal damnation simply because they “*have not heard?*” Paul gave a list of reasons why they are not saved, leading straight to the door of the complacent church. They are not “*saved*” because they have not called upon the name of the Lord. They have not “*called*” because they have not believed the gospel. They have not “*believed*” because they have never heard the gospel. They have not “*heard*” because we have not preached the gospel to them. Paul says in I Corinthians 1:21, “*...it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.*”

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 Greek word translated “*sent*” is “*apostello,*” which means “*set apart.*” It is God who sets His people apart and sends them. In Acts 13:2-4 we see how Paul and Barnabas were **set apart and sent**; “*As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted,*

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*the Holy Ghost said, **Separate** me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away. So they, **being sent forth by the Holy Ghost...***” The modern church in America has sent men and women into every nation on earth. All too often, however, they have sent those who God has not sent, to preach a gospel that is not “*the power of God unto salvation*” (Romans 1:16).

16 But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report?

Jesus did not promise that everyone who heard the gospel would be saved. The promise is, “*He that believeth shall be saved,*” and “*he that believeth not shall be damned*” (Mark 16:16). Many of those who preach the gospel of “*Jesus Christ, and Him crucified*” in this generation can identify with Isaiah, “*Lord, who hath believed our report?*”

17 So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

Saving faith comes by hearing what God says. Jesus said, “*He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life. Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead (in sin) shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live.*” God spoke to Israel through Isaiah, saying, “*Incline your ear (listen closely), and come unto me: **hear, and your soul shall live;** and I will make an everlasting covenant (the New Covenant) with you, even the sure mercies of David*” (Isaiah 55:3).

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.

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It seems evident that this is speaking of the gospel being preached to the Jewish people. Paul begins this chapter expressing his great desire that they might be saved. They had heard the sound of the prophet's words, yet they did not hear them. Jesus spoke to them, but neither did they hear his voice. Finally the early church carried the gospel to the Jews everywhere they went, but found ears that were deaf to the gospel of Christ. As a nation, they heard the sound of the words, but they would not hear the message.

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.

Everything Paul preached had been foretold by the prophets before him. When he asked the question, "*Did not Israel know,*" he is remembering the words of their prophets who foretold the sufferings of Christ and the glory that would follow (I Peter 1:11). Those same prophets also foretold the gathering of the Gentiles to Christ. It was the Gentiles that Paul referred to as "*them that are no people,*" and "*a foolish nation.*"

This last phrase, which speaks of "*them that are no people*" and "*a foolish nation,*" must also be a prophecy of the last days just before Jesus' return to earth. "*Them that are no people*" speaks of the Gentiles who have believed and have been "*grafted into the good olive tree*" (Romans 11:24), which is His church. Peter spoke of these in I Peter 2:9-10, saying, "*But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light: Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God....*" These are the "*redeemed*" of all nations, the righteous people of God whom He will use in the last days to provoke the Jews to jealousy (Romans 11:11). He will also anger

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them “*by a foolish nation.*” This is being fulfilled even now by the nations of the world that are currently gathering against Jerusalem, seeking to destroy the Jews. The combination of these two, the nations that hate them, and a “*holy nation*” that loves them, will soon bring the Jew to look to Jesus for salvation.

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.

The fulfillment of this prophecy from Isaiah is explained by the words of Paul in Romans 9:30; “*The Gentiles, which followed not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith.*” The Gentiles simply heard the gospel of Jesus Christ and believed the true report.

21 But to Israel he saith, All day long I have stretched forth my hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people.

This scripture confirms the fact that it was towards the unbelieving Jew in Paul’s generation that God was “*longsuffering*” as spoken in Romans 9:22: “*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.*”

Whom God Casts Away

Section Twenty-Two

“Whom God Casts Away”

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.

Has God cast away His people? Absolutely not! Paul uses himself as proof that God has not cast “*His people*” away. He will further define “*His people*” in the next verse.

2 God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew.

It is “*His people which He foreknew*” that will never be “*cast away.*” In Romans 8:29 Paul tells us who they are. “*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.*” It was not any particular “*nation*” or “*individual*” which God “*foreknew.*” It is the redeemed; those who are of the “*new creation;*” those who bear the image of His Son by the “*new birth.*” It is those who “*believe the record God gave of His Son*” (I John 5:10). The apostle John said, “*He came unto his own, and his own received him not*” (John 1:11). Just as Esau had almost two thousand years before, the nation of Israel also despised their birthright. They disqualified themselves through unbelief. John continued in the next verse, “*But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name*” (John 1:12). These are “*God’s people which He foreknew.*”

3 Wot ye not what the scripture saith of Elias? how he maketh intercession to God against Israel, saying, Lord, they have killed thy prophets, and digged down thine altars; and I am left alone, and they seek my life.

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Paul reminds us of the time Elijah prayed to God against idolatrous Israel, establishing the fact that Israel's history had long been one of backsliding and rebellion. God loved them, chastened them, and restored and blessed them when they repented, yet their history, as Stephen proved in the seventh chapter of Acts, was one of backsliding and rejecting God. Stephen drew this conclusion in his defense before the Sanhedrin Court in Acts 7:51; "*Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye.*" His testimony cost him his life, for they stoned him to death.

4-5 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. Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace.

In all of Israel there were only seven thousand who did not worship Baal in the days of Elijah. The state of the nation was so bad that Elijah thought he stood alone just as he had at Mt Carmel. The "*seven thousand*" were the "*remnant*" God used to deliver Israel out of the hand of Syria in the twentieth chapter of I Kings. God has always done His work through a remnant that will believe Him.

The "*remnant*" in this verse is the same as the "*seed*" in Romans 9:29. Throughout history, when Israel turned away from God, He always turned to a faithful few, which He called "*the remnant.*" The remnant was always the "*seed*" of what God would do in the future. When Israel refused Jesus Christ as their messiah and Son of God, there was a remnant that received Him. The "*remnant*" was the hundred and twenty who received the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost. These were the promised "*seed*" through which Israel would be restored. They were all Jews, and they were the "*seed*" of what God's

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Israel would be in the future. When Paul wrote this letter to the Romans, the “*remnant according to the election of grace*” was made up of both Jews and Gentiles. Notice what he tells the Galatian church, which was made up of Gentile believers; “*There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise*” (Galatians 3:28-29). These believers, both Jews and Gentiles, are the “*remnant according to the election of grace.*”

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.

“Grace” and “works” speak of two different covenants. God promised a “*new covenant*” with Israel in Jeremiah 31:31-34, saying, “*...this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people.*” This “*New Covenant*” is the “*covenant of grace:*” it is God’s law written in the hearts of His people. Israel had been under the “*covenant of works (the Law of Moses)*” for over fifteen hundred years, but now, God has given them a new and better covenant. “*The election of grace*” does not speak of a “*select few*” who are “*predestinated,*” but rather the “*whosoever believeth*” of John 3:16. It is not by “*works (the Law of Moses),*” but by “*grace (Christ-crucified).*”

7 What then? Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded

This reference to “*Israel*” speaks of the nation of the Jews under the Law of Moses. After fifteen hundred years under the

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law the Jews still had not received the promise, but “*the election hath obtained it.*” The “*election,*” meaning “*selection*” or “*chosen,*” were those who believed in Jesus, that He is “*the Christ*” (I John 5:1). It was a small remnant out of the multitudes of Jews who lived in Israel in that generation. As Abraham had been “*justified by faith*” almost two thousand years before, so were these who believed upon Jesus Christ. Those Jews in Israel who refused to believe became so blind to the truth that they “*could not believe*” (John 12:37-40).

8-10 (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. And David saith, Let their table be made a snare, and a trap, and a stumblingblock, and a recompence unto them: Let their eyes be darkened, that they may not see, and bow down their back alway.

Paul quotes Isaiah and David to confirm the previous verse.

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.

It is with this verse that Paul begins to reveal a “*mystery*” to which the Jews had been blinded. In Ephesians 3:4-6 it is called the “*mystery of Christ.*” It is “*...that the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel*” (Ephesians 3:6). From the beginning of the world, it has been God’s purpose that every people, tribe, and nation would be gathered together in Christ and reconciled to God by the cross. His “*eternal purpose*” is the view from which God has dealt with man since the beginning of time. Did God predestine the fall of the Jew? No, but if they should fall, God will continue to work His will, and through their fall the gospel will be preached and salvation will

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come to the Gentiles. The phrase, “*for to provoke them to jealousy*” will be fulfilled in a very short time just before the return of Jesus Christ.

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?

It is in his own life experience that Paul understands the principle by which God “*worketh all things after the counsel of his own will*” (Ephesians 1:11). He told the Philippians, “*Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death*” (Philippians 1:20). God’s purpose for Israel had been that salvation would come to the entire world through their “*fulness.*” If the unbelief of the Jews hinders the purpose of God, He will use their “*fall*” to send salvation to the Gentiles. Paul will show that even though the Jew has been “*broken off through unbelief*” (Romans 11:20), they will, in fact, return to God through faith in Jesus “*whom they pierced*” (Zechariah 12:10), and immediately come to their fullness.

13-14 For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office: If by any means I may provoke to emulation them which are my flesh, and might save some of them.

Paul spent his lifetime preaching the gospel to the Gentiles, yet he never lost his love and desire to reach his kinsmen, the Jews, for Christ. He hoped to provoke the Jews to “*emulation* (jealousy).” This could only happen if the Jews saw the “*promise*” that was given to their fathers fulfilled in believing Gentiles even as he (Saul of Tarsus) had seen it in Stephen. A weak and sin-laden church will never reach the Jew for Jesus Christ.

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?

Section Twenty-Two **THE FOUNDATION** Romans 11:1-15
Whom God Casts Away

In the second verse of this chapter Paul said, “*God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew,*” yet in this verse it is clear that Israel had been “*cast away,*” at least for a period of time. This fact indicates the difference between the unbelieving Jew that made up the nation of Israel and the “*very small remnant*” that was the “*Israel of God.*” Paul longed to see the return of the Jews into covenant with God. He understands that if, in their unbelieving state, they were instrumental in the gospel going to the Gentiles, how much greater it will be when they also believe.

Section Twenty-Three **THE FOUNDATION** Romans 11:16-36
The Olive Tree: God's Israel

Section Twenty-Three

“The Olive Tree; God's Israel”

16 For if the firstfruit be holy, the lump is also holy: and if the root be holy, so are the branches.

With this saying Paul brings us to the analogy of the “*olive tree*.” It is the olive tree, and not the fig, that is representative of Israel. Jeremiah spoke of Israel in Jeremiah 11:16, saying, “*The LORD called thy name, A green olive tree, fair, and of goodly fruit.*” The “*firstfruit*” of the tree is Jesus Christ, the “*firstborn among many brethren*” (Romans 8:29). “*If the first-fruit (firstborn) be holy, the lump (many brethren) is also holy.*” The “*root*” of the tree is God, the Father of Jesus Christ, from whom the branches receive their life. “*If the root (God) be holy, so are the branches (the children of God).*”

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;

Jeremiah 11:16-17 is the text from which Paul draws the analogy of the olive tree: “*The LORD called thy name, A green olive tree, fair; and of goodly fruit: with the noise of a great tumult he hath kindled fire upon it, and the branches of it are broken. For the LORD of hosts, that planted thee, hath pronounced evil against thee, for the evil of the house of Israel and of the house of Judah, which they have done against themselves to provoke me to anger in offering incense unto Baal.*” Paul understands that the olive tree represents Israel, of which the Jews have been the branches. He also understands the words of Jesus in John 15:1-2, “*I am the true vine, and my Father is*

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the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away.” When the husbandman breaks branches off of a tree, it is not to destroy the tree, but to save it. Paul could see that the Jews, which were the natural branches of the olive tree, were “*broken off*” because of unbelief, and those Gentiles who believed were taken from a “*wild olive tree*” and grafted into the fruitful olive tree. It is still the same olive tree even though the branches are now both Jew and Gentile. It wasn’t long after the day of Pentecost that the olive tree began to be called “*the Church of Jesus Christ,*” but it was still “*the Israel of God*” (Galatians 6:16). In Ephesians 2:16, Paul was speaking of both Jews and Gentiles when he wrote these words: “*And that he might reconcile both (Jew and Gentile) unto God in one body by the cross...*” There is no such thing before God as both a “*Jewish Israel*” and a “*Gentile church.*” God’s “*Israel*” and His “*church*” are the same body, made up of believers, whether they are Jew or Gentile.

18 Boast not against the branches. But if thou boast, thou bearest not the root, but the root thee.

This is a warning to the Gentile believers. Don’t rejoice that the natural branches were broken off. Don’t exalt yourselves over or against the Jews. They are still the natural branches of the Olive tree (Israel). We who believe are totally dependent upon the root (God); the root is not dependent upon us.

19-21 Thou wilt say then, The branches were broken off, that I might be grafted in. Well; because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith. Be not high-minded, but fear: For if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee.

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There are those who argue that the Jews were “*broken off, that I might be grafted in.*” No! They were broken off because of unbelief. We stand by faith, and only by faith. We must not think of ourselves as better than the natural branches, but rather fear, lest we should also be broken off through unbelief.

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.

Dare we believe that we “*who believe*” can take the same course under grace that the nation of Israel took under the law and escape the judgment of God? Paul said we should recognize both “*the goodness and severity of God.*” Even under the law it was only those who “*believed God*” who were received by God. Others were as God said in Isaiah 29:13, “*...this people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men.*” They observed certain ceremonial things and believed that God would be pleased with their lip worship, even while their hearts were far away. Many people today live under the severity of God instead of His goodness for the same reasons. We who know His goodness are told to “*continue in His goodness.*” How shall we continue? Believe God! Trust Him and obey His voice, and you will see His goodness.

23-24 And they also, if they abide not still in unbelief, shall be grafted in: for God is able to graft them in again. 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?

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If God is able to graft a wild branch into a good tree and make it fruitful, how much more can He graft a natural branch back into its own tree? Those branches in the good olive tree, whether Jews or Gentiles, continue in faith. Those who are broken off continue in unbelief, but if they believe the gospel, they also shall be grafted in, whoever they may be.

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 fullness of the Gentiles be come in.

The word “*fullness*” in this verse should be understood in the same way it is understood in the twelfth verse. This scripture does not say, as so many believe, that the Jews must be blind and lost until after the last Gentile is saved and the church is caught away. The apostle Paul understands that the nation of Israel is “*blind in part* (partially blind)” until such time as they “*see*” the “*glorious church*,” for that is the “*fullness of the Gentiles*.” The sight of such a church will provoke the Jew to jealousy with the result that they will “*look to Jesus*,” believing at long last that He is their messiah. They will call upon His name, and salvation will come to the Jew. God spoke these things through the prophet Zechariah: “*And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced...*” (Zechariah 12:10); “*In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness*” (Zechariah 13:1); “*And I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried: they shall call on my name, and I will hear them: I will say, It is my people: and they shall say, The LORD is my God*” (Zechariah 13:9).

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26-27 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: For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins.

“All Israel” speaks of the “Israel of God,” which consists of “all that believe” (Acts 13:39-42), whether they are Jew or Gentile. It is typified in this chapter as the “Good Olive Tree” with its natural branches (believing Jews) as well as those Gentiles who have also believed and are grafted in among the natural branches. Just as God promised the gathering of the Gentiles to Jesus Christ, He also promised the return of the Jew through Jesus Christ.

28-29 As concerning the gospel, they are enemies for your sakes: but as touching the election, they are beloved for the fathers' sakes. For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance.

The unbelieving Jews of that generation, spoken of in another place as “*the children of disobedience*,” were enemies to the believer of the gospel, whether Jew or Gentile, yet Paul and other believers had a special love for them as the children of Abraham, Isaac, and of Jacob. Every “*true believer*” will have that same love for the Jew in this generation. We can know that God has not forever “*cast them away*” (verse fifteen), because, “*the gifts and calling of God are without repentance.*” That particular generation was “*broken off*” through unbelief, yet God has promised another generation of Jews that will believe and be grafted in once again.

30-31 For as ye in times past have not believed God, yet have now obtained mercy through their unbelief: Even so have these also now not believed, that through your mercy they also may obtain mercy.

Section Twenty-Three **THE FOUNDATION** Romans 11:16-36
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It is easy to forget that we who believe are of the “*Gentiles*,” which in times past were heathen and barbaric nations. At that time we were “...*without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world*” (Ephesians 2:12). Jesus died for all, regardless of race or color. It was when the Jews refused to believe the gospel that the apostles finally determined to preach it to the Gentiles (Acts 13:45-48, Acts 28:25-29). We Gentiles obtained “*mercy*” through the “*unbelief*” of the Jews; should not our “*mercy*” extend to the Jews of our generation? God has assured us that they will believe upon Jesus Christ in this, the last generation “*before*” His return to earth (Zechariah, chapters 12-14). We will extend God’s mercy to the Jew through preaching the gospel, that “*Jesus is the Christ.*” They were the first nation to hear the gospel, and they will be the last to receive it. Then, and only then, Jesus shall return.

32 For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all.

Paul said in Romans 3:9 that both Jews and Gentiles were “*under sin*,” establishing that there is “*no difference*” between them (Acts 15:9, Roman 3:22, Romans 10:12). God does not have both a “*nation*” and a “*church.*” Peter told the Gentile believers in the church that they are the “*holy nation...which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy*” (I Peter 2:9-10). If God accepts the Jew through their obedience to the Ten Commandments, then we Gentiles are deceived and lost. If Jesus Christ is the only way to God under the “*new covenant*” (John 14:6) which was promised to Israel (Jeremiah 31:31), then the gospel of Christ is the power of God unto sal-

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vation to “*everyone that believeth, to the Jew first, and also to the Greek*” (Romans 1:16).

33-35 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! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor? Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again?

Paul stands amazed at the wisdom and knowledge of God, who “...*worketh all things after the counsel of His own will*” (Ephesians 1:10). If the Jews will not believe, He will use their unbelief to show mercy to the Gentiles. He will then use the “*mercy*” of the Gentiles to reach the unbelieving Jew.

Paul’s amazement goes far beyond the immediate issue in these few verses. He stands amazed at the entire gospel design of salvation for whosoever will. It is such that the prophets who prophesied of “*the grace*” that would come to us, “...*searched diligently...what, or what manner of time*” was signified when they foresaw the “...*sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow*” (I Peter 1:10-12). The prophets enquired, “*What is this,*” and “*when shall it be.*” Even the angels desire to look into this wonderful salvation. Paul said they will understand the “*manifold wisdom of God*” when they see His glorious church (Ephesians 3:10).

The “*gospel of Christ*” is “*the power of God unto salvation*” (Romans 1:16). “*For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved, it is the power of God*” (I Corinthians 1:18). “*Christ-crucified*” is both the “*power of God, and the wisdom of God*” (I Corinthians 1:23-24). Who, besides our great, loving, and merciful God could have designed it?

36 For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen.