

**ROMANS: Heart & Soul of the Gospel**  
**A Devotional Study of Romans**  
**by Max Frazier, Jr.**

Welcome to our study in the book of Romans. Romans is one of my favorite books in the Bible. It shares the heart and soul of the Gospel. It is not an easy book to study, but it is well worth the time spent giving it a serious reading. What I will do almost every week is to share some thoughts on a few of the verses by way of study notes, then share a devotional thought or two from that section, and close with some study questions for you to use in your own devotions. By year's end, we all should be enriched with what God has taught us in this marvelous book!

Romans is an important book for us to study as it proclaims the foundation upon which our faith is built.

This letter, written by Paul, was sent to the Christians living in Rome, the capital of the Empire. This book portrays the revelation of the righteousness of God to sinful man and the application of this righteousness to man's everyday spiritual being. The letter was written during Paul's third missionary journey while he was in Corinth and dates approximately to the year 57 AD.

The twin themes of Romans are justification, found in the first eight chapters, and sanctification, found in the last five chapters. Between these two sections is a parenthetical section on the nation of Israel.

I believe the key verses of the book are found in chapter one, verses 16 and 17: I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentiles. For in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: "The righteous will live by faith."

Some of the characteristics of this book include:

1. A lengthy introduction because Paul is writing to a church that is not of his own planting.
2. A lengthy conclusion that contains the names of a large number of people whom the apostle greets personally.
3. Paul makes frequent use of the Old Testament, either by direct quotation or use of Old Testament terminology.
4. The doctrinal discussion (chapters 1-8) proceeds in the fashion of a debate.
5. The vocabulary is rich in theological terms.

The book of Romans can be outlined briefly as follows:

1. Salutation - Romans 1:1-17
2. Paul's relationship to the Roman Christians - Romans 1:8-15

3. Doctrinal exposition - Romans 1:16-8:39
4. Problem of Israel - Romans 9:1-11:36
5. Practical exhortations - Romans 12:1-15:13
6. Closing remarks - Romans 15:14-16:27

#### **VERSE ONE:**

**1. PAUL** stands alone. When the essentials in doctrines and directions are being laid down, no one is associated with the apostle in the authority given to him. (see Acts 9:15 and Acts 26:16-20)

**2. SERVANT (NIV), BONDSERVANT (NASB)** - lowest position in Greek society, but Christian thought raised it to a place of honor. Paul was a bondservant before becoming an apostle. (Note: Acts 9:5 - "who art thou, Lord?" and Acts 9:6 - "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" Also, Acts 22:8 and 10 and Acts 26:15, with verses 16-18 being his calling as an apostle.)

**3. CALLED TO BE AN APOSTLE** - designated and set apart by an action of God to some special sphere and manner of being and of consequent activity. Paul was called of God, not appointed by men.

**4. SET APART** - the Greek word means "to mark off from a boundary or a line." It is in the perfect passive participle that denotes a complete separation done to Paul by another, namely God. Paul was separated unto God's good news (Galatians 1:15). Others who were separated unto God included: Moses (Acts 7:20), John the Baptist (Luke 1:13-17), Jacob (Genesis 25:23), Samson (Judges 13:3-5), Samuel (1 Samuel 1:11), and Jeremiah (Jeremiah 1:5). The sovereignty of God is thus seen at the very beginning of this great epistle.

**5. GOSPEL** - two truths. First, it is God's good news. It never loses its divinity. It is always God's message of salvation to men. Second, it was promised through His prophets in holy Scripture (Romans 3:21). It was witnessed by the law, in that it provided sacrifices and a way of forgiveness for those who failed in its observance. It was witnessed by the prophets (Isaiah 53:11, Jeremiah 23:6 and Jeremiah 33:16, and Habakkuk 2:4). In the Old Testament the gospel is promised. In the New Testament, the gospel is fulfilled.

#### **VERSE THREE:**

**1. REGARDING HIS SON** - Paul names four things specifically in 1 Corinthians 15:3-5 about this Son: He died for our sins according to the Scriptures; He was buried; He was raised the third day according to the Scriptures; He appeared to various witnesses.

**2. WHO AS TO HIS HUMAN NATURE** - refers to human nature (John 1:14; Romans 9:5; Ephesians 2:14; 1 Timothy 3:16; Hebrews 5:7; Romans 10:20; 1 Peter 3:18; 1 Peter 4:1; 1 John 4:1; 2 John 7)

**3. A DESCENDANT OF DAVID** - Christ is the: 1) Seed of the woman (Genesis 3:15) to bruise Satan; 2) the Seed of Abraham (Galatians 3:16) to bring in salvation for the whole household of faith; and 3) the Seed of David to fulfill the Messianic promises to Israel.

## **VERSE FOUR:**

**1. WAS DECLARED** - better translated, "determine, appoint, ordain." Jesus was marked off to be the Son of God with power.

**2. JESUS CHRIST OUR LORD** - 1) Jesus - His personal name as Savior (Matthew 1:21); 2) Christ - God's anointed one to do all things for us; and 3) Lord - His high place over us all for whom His work was done.

## **VERSE SIX:**

**1. CALLED OF JESUS CHRIST** - compare with John 15:16

## **VERSE SEVEN:**

**1. LOVED BY GOD** - denotes the intimacy and tenderness of the love of God. While God loved the whole world, it is the saints who are called the "loved of God." a man loves his neighbors, but his wife and children are "his beloved." (see John 1:12; 1 John 3:1,2,21; 1 John 4:1,7,11)

**2. CALLED TO BE SAINTS** - we are saints. A saint is set apart for God's service.

**3. GRACE AND PEACE** - God is the Source of both and Jesus Christ is the channel and sphere of divine blessing.

## **DEVOTIONAL THOUGHTS:**

A key word in this passage is "call." In verse one we read that Paul was called an apostle. In verse 7, his readers are called saints. Moreover, in verse 6 those same readers are said to have been called of Jesus Christ. A couple thoughts struck me as I read these verses. First, unfortunately in the modern English versions, in both verses 1 and 7, the verb "to be" has been added, making it read: Paul, called to be an apostle, and called to be saints. This addition makes it seem that apostleship or sainthood is an end result of a process. Jesus, when He called Paul while he traveled the road to Damascus, did not say to him, "Paul, someday you will be an apostle. It is a long journey, but hang in there because you will succeed." The fact of Paul's apostleship began at that very moment. From that point onward, he could say that he was called an apostle. In verse 7, what happens when we add the words "to be" thus making the text read, "called to be saints?" It makes it sound as if sainthood is an honor that we must strive to earn. It is a process or a journey. But that is not what the Scriptures teach. Sainthood is not an honor to be conferred by another, but is a blessing already bestowed upon us. When I came to know Jesus as my Savior, I was called a saint. Now I did not act very saintly at that time, nor at many times since that decision back in June of 1956. But my actions do not negate that I am a saint. We all know what a bunch of rascals that congregation at Corinth was, but have you ever noticed that Paul called them saints? You will find that in First Corinthians 1:2. I am no more of a saint now than I was when I was saved the June night so many years ago. So, as I write these words, I can greet each of you as a saint. Now, go polish your halos. Just kidding.

The second thought that struck me was this: it is God who does the calling. I believe this truth is borne out in verse 6 where Paul states that his readers in Rome were among those called to belong to Jesus Christ. It is God who does the calling. I am reminded of those words of Jesus found in John 15:16 - "You did not choose me, but I chose you to go and bear fruit - fruit that will last." I am so thankful for God's calling to salvation. I never cease to be amazed as to why God selected me. It is one of those blessings that David, in Psalm 103, never wants to forget. And neither do I.

### **QUESTIONS TO PONDER AS YOU READ THESE VERSES:**

1. Why does Paul refer to himself first as a bondservant of Christ and then as an apostle?
2. Relate this to Acts 22:8-10 and note Paul's two questions.
3. Can a person be an apostle without being a bondservant? Why or why not?
4. How can we train people to become bondservants?

### **Paul's Purpose Statement ROMANS 1:8-17**

#### **VERSE EIGHT:**

**1. THROUGH JESUS CHRIST** - He is the mediator through whom thanksgiving is offered to God. Paul is giving thanks for people. The reason for the thanksgiving is their faith. Faith must find expression in a person's relationship to God. In all our approaches to God in prayer or praise, we must come in the name of Christ as the ground of our acceptance.

**b. OVER THE WORLD** - how readily people heard and identified with this faith/testimony of the Romans.

#### **VERSE NINE:**

**a. GOD IS WITNESS** - see further 2 Corinthians 1:23, Philippians 1:8, and 1 Thessalonians 2:5,10. The use is a devout recognition of God's omniscience and hence is an act of worship.

**b. I SERVE** - Paul's service to God was in his spirit, and therefore in the Holy Spirit. Paul's priesthood is not merely external, but the living service of God by a spiritually awakened, vital, and steadfast conscience.

**c. SERVE** - see further Romans 12:1, Romans 15:16, Philippians 3:3, 2 Timothy 1:3; Hebrews 9:14

**d. IN THE GOSPEL OF HIS SON** - Paul's spirit is the temple, the sphere of his service. The gospel is the substance and form of his service of God.

**VERSE TEN:**

**a. I PRAY THAT NOW AT LAST BY GOD'S WILL THE WAY MAY BE OPENED FOR ME TO COME TO YOU** - truths about Paul's prayer request:

1. Paul had a strong desire to visit Rome which he made as a specific request to God.
2. The fulfillment of that request had been repeatedly frustrated - see verse 13
3. But Paul kept on praying.
4. Paul was persuaded that his desire was consistent with God's will for him as an apostle.
5. He resigns himself completely to the will of God.

**VERSE ELEVEN:**

**a. SPIRITUAL GIFT** - we do not know what this gift was, but it was a special spiritual invigoration of the whole Christian life.

**VERSE THIRTEEN:**

**a. HAVE BEEN PREVENTED** - Paul was possibly prevented by three means:

1. His work - see further Romans 15:19, 22-23
2. Satan - see further 1 Thessalonians 2:18
3. The Holy Spirit - see further Acts 16:6

**VERSE SIXTEEN:**

In verses 16 and 17 we have the text of the whole Epistle of Romans. First, the words "the gospel" indicate something so very dear to Paul. Second, we notice the universal saving power of this gospel. Third, the secret of the gospel's power is the revelation of God's righteousness on the principle of faith. Fourth, the accord of all this with the Old Testament Scriptures - "the righteous shall live by faith."

**a. FOR I AM NOT ASHAMED OF THE GOSPEL** - here we have Paul's willingness to go to Rome. I am not ashamed is an answer to an objection that was readily

suggested by the word Rome, with all its associations of idolatry, worldly power, pride, pomp, corruption, decay, and approaching persecution of Christians. (see further 2 timothy 1:12 - Paul was not ashamed of his bonds in Rome)

**b. FOR IT IS THE POWER OF GOD UNTO SALVATION** - this is the reason for Paul's boldness. The message of Christ crucified, dead, buried, and risen - being believed is the "power of God."

**c. SALVATION** - God does not say unto reformation, education, progress, nor development. Salvation is a word for a lost man and for none other. Men are either involved in salvation or in its opposite, perdition.

**d. TO THE JEW FIRST** - how is the word "first" used?

1. No distinction between Jew and Gentile as to the fact of sin
2. No distinction between Jew and Gentile as to the availability of salvation
3. The word just indicates an order of sequence as it does in Romans 1:8

#### **VERSE SEVENTEEN:**

**a. RIGHTEOUSNESS** - A righteousness impartable as well as imputable, or sanctifying as well as justifying. A righteousness inherent in God, and manifested in Christ that becomes a part of the nature of the believer.

**b. REVEALED** - better translated "is being revealed." The present tense of the verb marks the continuous, progressive revelation of righteousness.

**c. FROM FAITH TO FAITH** - faith is the instrument. The saving power is in Christ's person and work, but becomes personally available, and is made our own, only by the appropriating organ of faith.

#### **DEVOTIONAL THOUGHTS:**

Four times in this section Paul uses the word "gospel." If we are to properly understand what he is saying, we must first define the term. What constitutes this gospel that Paul is so eager to proclaim? Let's see if we can put it into three or four statements.

1) The Gospel is the revelation of God through the person of Jesus Christ. It is our coming to understand God as we come to know Christ.

2) Its theme is our redemption through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. It is through the Gospel that we come to understand our separation from God because of our sin, and God's plan to reconcile us to Himself.

3) The Gospel is the presentation of this plan of God's salvation.

4) The Gospel will culminate in the victorious, glorious, kingdom of Christ. It is this Gospel that Paul desires to preach in Rome even as he has preached it elsewhere. It is this Gospel that God has entrusted to us when He declared that we were to be His witnesses to our Jerusalems, to our Judeas, to our Samarias, and to the uttermost part of our world (Acts 1:8). We really are telling people about Jesus.

Is anyone to be excluded from this proclamation of the Gospel? The answer is found in verse 14. It is no. In fact, Paul declares that he has an obligation to everyone to tell them about Jesus. Paul, in the following chapters of this letter outlines for us his presentation of the Gospel to the Greeks and non-Greeks. First, there must be the presentation of our present standing before a holy and righteous God - we are sinners. As we shall soon discover, Paul does not paint a very appetizing picture of who we are outside of Christ. Second, there must be the presentation of God's solution to our dilemma: how can a sinful man be reconciled to a holy God? This is known as justification. Finally, there must be the presentation of God's desire for our lives once we have placed our trust in Christ as Savior. This is known as sanctification.

In verse 16 Paul declares that the Gospel is the power of God. As has been noted above, the message of Christ crucified, dead, buried, and raised to new life is the centerpiece of the Gospel. But, it is not the cross that is powerful. It is the message of the cross that is powerful (see further 1 Corinthians 1:18,23). So our focus is to be upon Christ. All other messages pall when compared to Him.

### **QUESTIONS TO PONDER AS YOU READ THESE VERSES:**

1. Why must a Christian's approach to God in praise or in prayer be through Jesus Christ? Why can't we just go directly to God? What effect should this have upon our attitude as we pray?

2. One reason for Christian fellowship is encouragement. How can you plan to encourage another this week? Be specific.

3. In these verses Paul strongly declares his testimony about the gospel message of Christ. If we claim to believe this message as Paul did, then why are we not seeing our neighbors won to Christ? Are we ashamed of this gospel? Is it powerless for us?

### **VERSE EIGHTEEN:**

#### **The wrath of God revealed**

a. The wrath of God is His holy aversion to all that is evil, and His purpose is to destroy it.

b. The wrath of God is revealed in three ways:

1.It is revealed in the Bible - it is revealed right alongside the love of God - John 3:16

2.It is revealed in the cross of Christ - the place where God reveals His righteousness is also the place where He reveals His wrath

3.It is revealed in the natural world. It is from heaven (Romans 1:18). It is a standing revelation ("is being revealed continuously")

c. The object of God's wrath:

1.Ungodliness - sin against the being of God - direct disregard of God

2.Unrighteousness - sin against the will of God - wickedness of conduct.

The unrighteous man lives as if there were no will of God revealed.

The ungodly man lives as if there were no God.

d. HOLD THE TRUTH - restrain, hinder (see 2 Thessalonians 2:6)

### **VERSES 19-23:**

#### **The wrath of God deserved**

a. BECAUSE - in verses 19, 21:

1.God had shown them His manifestations (verse 19). Everyone has the same revelation. It is the evidence of creation

2.They knew God, but did not glorify Him (verse 21)

Seven steps downward - verses 21-23:

1.They knew God, but refused to honor Him

2.They were not thankful for God's goodness to them

3.They began speculating foolishly

4.Their minds became senseless and darkened

5.They thought they were wise

6. In reality, they had become very foolish

7.Instead of worshiping the eternal God, they preferred idols patterned after moral man (see Isaiah 44:12-17)

### **VERSES 24-32:**

#### **The wrath of God inflicted**

a. **WHEREAS GOD GAVE THEM UP**

1.God gave them up to the lusts of their hearts unto uncleanness; they became depraved in heart (verse 24); the lie is the idols they made (verse 25)

2. God gave them up to shameful passions (verse 26); that state of unnatural appetites in which all normal instincts are left behind; goes from "between themselves" (verse 24) to "in themselves" (verse 27)

3. God gave them up to a reprobate mind (verse 28); reprobate means "tested and found to be no good"

b. Verses 29-32 - 9 phases or development states of human sin

1. All injustice - selfishness, enthroned against all rights of others

2. Destructiveness - wickedness in hostile activity

3. Covetousness - itch for more

4. Malice - desire to injure

5. Full of envy - hate that arises in the heart toward one who is above us, who is what we are not, or possesses that which we cannot have, or do not choose the path to attain

6. Murder

7. Strife - beating down in wrangling and contention

8. Guile - "a bait for a fish" - to beguile means "to catch with bait"

9. Malignant subtlety - taking all things in an evil sense

c. Verses 30-31 - kinds of people sin makes

1. Secret slanderers (verse 29) - privately peddling evil reports

2. Backbiters - open slanderers

3. Haters of God - show and feel hatred toward God

4. Insolent - people taking pleasure in insulting others

5. Proud - haughty pride toward others

6. Boasters

7. Inventors of evil things

8. Disobedient to parents

9. Without moral understanding (see Matthew 13:14-15, 19, 23, 51); without any understanding of divine things; having no proper moral discernment

10. Covenant breakers - faithless, bound by no promise; it does not intend to carry out its pledges

11. Without natural affection - affection for friends and family

12. Implacable - not willing to consent to a truce or cease hostilities

13. Without mercy

d. Verse 32 - the human conspiracy or agreement of wickedness of man against God

1. They know they are under divine condemnation and judgment

2. They persist anyway

3. They applaud others

**DEVOTIONAL THOUGHTS:**

With this particular passage Paul begins his discussion on the nature of man. His purpose is to show the serious condition man is in as he is contrasted with a holy and righteous God. And the picture Paul begins to paint is not a very pleasant one. As I read these verses I was drawn back to the truth Jeremiah stated in Jeremiah 17:9, "The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it?"

A few years ago, while attending a conference of International Messengers in southern Poland, I had the opportunity of visiting Auschwitz, the scene of that infamous Nazi death camp where nearly 3 million people perished. As Greg and I walked through the hallways and corridors of those barracks that now held a museum of memories of those who died there, our hearts pondered the reality mentioned by both Jeremiah and the Apostle Paul. How could man be so cruel to his fellow human beings? What kind of madness would drive someone to cause the destruction those buildings and pathways we were traversing had seen in the not so distant past?

More seriously we reflected upon the question of whether such events could ever happen again? Sadly we determined that the answer was yes, it could happen again. For, in the absence of God and a morality that flows from God, man's heart can be incredibly cruel. The listing of sins in this passage by the Apostle Paul includes those familiar to all of us. The degree to which we practice them may differ one person to another, but we know gossip. We know arrogance. We know disobedience to parents. We may have even invented ways of doing evil just to strike back at another or to get our own way. Outside of Jesus Christ, our lives demonstrate the truth-statement of David, "Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me" (Psalm 51:5). And, as Paul will state later in this book, even after knowing Christ as our Savior, we still wrestle with the question of sin's control over us.

Is there an answer? A few years ago I had the privilege of reading a book written by Robert Bork entitled, SLOUCHING TOWARD GOMORRAH. Mr. Bork is an outstanding Christian jurist, having been nominated for a seat on the United States Supreme Court, only to have his nomination defeated by a Senate Committee because of his conservative interpretation of the United States Constitution. In this book, Judge Bork describes the moral slide that the world in general and the United States in particular is descending. He asks the question if anything could stop that slide. He concludes: "What may be feasible is a moral regeneration and an intellectual understanding capable of defeating modern liberalism. In a discussion of that possibility with friends, we came up with four events that could produce a moral and spiritual regeneration: a religious revival; the revival of public discourse about morality; a cataclysmic war; or a deep economic depression. Though there was increased social discipline during the Second World War and perhaps even more, during the Great Depression, we may safely drop the last two items on that list, as, to say the least, social policies lacking broad public support."

so, if we eliminate options three and four, then those first two options should intrigue us as believers. Yes, the Church is still key to the changing of lives.

### **QUESTIONS TO PONDER AS YOU READ THESE VERSES:**

1. Why is God angry with our sinning world? (verses 19-23)
2. What is God's response to our sinning world? (verses 24-28)
3. How do these verses fit our world today? In the light of these strong statements of condemnation, what should be our response and our responsibility to the world we live in? (verses 18-32)
4. Is there a relationship between a religious revival and a revival in the public discussion and understanding about morality? If so, why?
5. What could be your role in bringing about a revival in your community?

### **Condemnation of the Moral Man ROMANS 2:1-16**

The key word in this passage is "judge" which is used 9 times. One other interesting note: in verse 1, man is on the throne of judgment, while in verse 16, it is God on the throne of judgment.

#### **VERSE 1:**

Moral man is condemned according to his own judgment

**1. YOU WHO JUDGES** - the identification of the man. It is the faculty of moral discrimination - judging right from wrong.

**2. YOU CONDEMN YOURSELF** - the man was condemned because while he was condemning others, he was doing the same thing; therefore he condemned himself for his own sins (compare the story of David and Nathan and the parable of the sheep in Second Samuel 12). God wants us to first judge things in our own lives.

**3. YOU DO THE SAME THINGS** - the inclination of the man

1. They may not have done all the things in Romans 1 (they were covetous, envious, boasters, etc), but there are things every moral man is guilty of

2. They may not do them outwardly but inwardly (verse 16)

3. They were doing in their lives the very things they disapproved

**4. YOU ARE WITHOUT EXCUSE** - the indictment of the man; both men were sinners, both did the same things, but the pagans did something of which they approved, and the moralists did something of which they disapproved.

The second is worse.

#### **VERSES 2-16:**

**Moral man is condemned by God's judgment**

Four great principles:

1. According to truth:

1. **Verse 2** - the moral man will have to face the naked and awful truth when he comes before God

2. **Verse 3 - THINKS** - do you think you are going to escape the judgment of God? False reasoning

3. **Verse 4 - DESPISES** - you are either the victim of false reasoning or you despise it

4. **Verse 4 - NOT KNOWING** = ignore

(Note: 3 stages of God's kindness during the earthly life of a man: 1. It is God's goodness in daily preserving him, providing for him, protecting him; 2. God's goodness being despised; God's forbearance is exercised; 3. All God's goodness and forbearance being despised, God's long-suffering keeps waiting (compare with Second Peter 3:9))

e. Verse 5 - **TREASURES** - treasure up wrath

2. According to his deeds - Verse 6 (compare Revelation 20:11-15)

1. Verse 7 - **WELL DOING** - obedience to the revealed truth of God When God reveals a certain truth in a certain age, there are two classes that emerge - obedience and rebellion Rebellious (verse 8) wrath and indignation from God; (verse 9) tribulation and anguish from man  
Obedient (verse 10) glory and honor and peace

3. No respect of persons - Verse 11 - God is absolutely and always impartial; principle is found in verse 11

1. **Verse 12** - Paul is saying that ignorance of the law will not save the Gentiles. In this verse, part one deals with the Gentiles, while part two deals with the Jews. The Jews will be judged because a man must DO the things, not simply hear them (compare Leviticus 18:5)

2. **Verse 13** - concludes this part

3. **Verse 14** - should begin before verse 12. The Gentiles do not have the written law. Their conduct proves that they have a standard of righteousness

4. **Verse 15 - HEARTS** - law was written there

**CONSCIENCE** - sat as judge

**THOUGHTS** - accused or excused him

all three bore witness to God's standard

God will judge every man by the standard that man actually has: For the Jews, it is the written law; for the Gentiles, it is the law of his heart.

4. According to my gospel - Verse 16 - God will judge the secrets of man.

#### **DEVOTIONAL THOUGHT:**

Judgment, wrath, sin, law, righteousness are key words in this particular text. I think we can outline the portion with three statements. First, verses 1-4, Paul states that we must exercise caution when rendering judgment. Often our judgment is flawed. Often our judgment is biased. When I was a young teen, someone told me to be careful when I pointed my finger toward another for there were three fingers always pointing back to me. I must be hesitant in rushing to judgment. I am reminded of that profound illustration of Jesus found in John 8. The Jewish leaders were quick to condemn the woman they had caught in an adulterous act. (Note: they did not bring the man...he also was equally guilty in the eyes of the law). Jesus, writing in the sand, said, "Go ahead and stone her, but let the one who is without sin cast the first stone." Jesus was reminding them that three fingers were pointing in their direction.

The second truth statement is found in verses 5-11 where Paul declares that there is a coming day when we must all stand before God and give an accounting of our actions. Those who have persisted in rebellion against God will be rewarded with His punishment. Those who have responded with repentance to the leading of God will be rewarded with His blessings. So often we are guilty of living just for today. But there is a tomorrow coming. What we do here does not go unnoticed by our heavenly Father. There is a coming day of reckoning.

The third truth statement is found in verses 12-16. Here Paul begins to answer that nagging question: what about those who have not heard? I believe Paul shares with us that God's judgment is based upon God's character not upon ours. God perceives the inward attitude of the heart. God's judgment is based upon our response to the knowledge that we had available to us. Paul certainly does not seem to be teaching that there is a second chance for salvation following death, but does state that our eternal state is conditioned by our responding to that understanding of God that is available to us.

At a time when our world seems to be spinning down a road toward war, it is good to be reminded that at the end of it is God. Each of us has a date before His judgment bar. There we will receive from His hand what we have requested of Him. Some, through acts of open rebellion, have asked for punishment. That will be given to them. Many others, through acts of repentance and contrition, have sought for blessings. That, too, will be given to them.

#### **QUESTIONS TO PONDER AS YOU READ THESE VERSES:**

1. It is so easy for us to judge someone else's faults and mistakes. According to Paul, why is this so dangerous for us?

2. In verses 2-5, Paul shares that God will judge men according to truth. In verses 3 and 4, two age-old questions are presented by Paul. What are these two questions? Have you ever met anyone who used either of those questions as an excuse for avoiding God? If so, what was your reaction?

3. There are only 2 kinds of people in the world: those who obey God's truth and those who do not obey. What are the rewards God promises to each group?

4. God is an impartial judge. In verses 14 and 15, Paul wrestles with the question of how God will judge those who have never heard about Christ. What does Paul conclude? Do you think this seems to be a fair judgment by God? Why or why not? Does this excuse us from sharing the gospel around the world? Why or why not?

## **Condemnation of the Religious Man ROMANS 2:17-3:8**

Four times the word "Jew" appears:

1. Romans 2:17 - "if you call yourself a Jew"
2. Romans 2:28 - "a man is not a Jew if"
3. Romans 2:29 - "a man is a Jew if"
4. Romans 3:1 - "what advantage is there then in being a Jew"

The Jews claimed exemption from condemnation on three grounds: 1) because he was a son of Abraham (see further John 8:33); 2) because he had the law; and 3) because he was circumcised.

### **VERSE 17-24: The Law cannot save the Jew**

There were 5 advantages upon which the Jew based his hope:

1. His name: "Jew", which comes from "Judah" and means "one who is praised." They believed anyone who bore that name was praised of God.
2. His trust: in the Law
3. His boast: that the God of the Jews was the true God
4. His knowledge: of the divine will
5. His confidence: involves 4 roles (see verses 18-20)

Everyone of these five areas revolved around the Law.

When Paul reaches verses 21, he begins to ask some searching questions:

1. Paul affirms the Jewish role: teaches, preaches, says, abhors, brags .

2. Paul doesn't accuse them of anything; he merely is inquiring about them. The mistake every Jew made was in not teaching himself.

3. Paul's direct charge in verse 24 - the Law condemns them (see further John 5:45 - Moses will condemn them; and Ezekiel 36:20 - the Gentiles saw how they lived and said, "if this is the people of God, what kind of God is He?")

### **VERSES 25-27: His circumcision cannot save the Jew**

Circumcision could not save the Jew because he had not kept the Law. Lack of circumcision would not condemn a Gentile just as the possession of circumcision would not save the Jew. The morality of the uncircumcised Gentile will judge and condemn the Jew who is circumcised.

### **VERSES 28-29: His birth cannot save the Jew**

There is no such thing as being a Jew merely in outward form. God demands an inward reality. No man is a Jew unless he is born outwardly as a son of Abraham, and born inwardly of the Spirit.

Contrasting word pairs: outwardly-inwardly; flesh-heart; spirit-letter; men-God

This circumcision of the heart is an Old Testament concept (see further Jeremiah 4:4)

### **VERSES 3:1-8: Argument cannot save the Jew**

Four objections and four answers: the real objection is in verse 1, the other three are just variations.

1. What advantage is it then to being a Jew? (verse 1)

**Answer:** (verse 2) They had received the oracles of God - Scripture. Oracles are the prophetic element, the promise concerning Jesus Christ. The Jew did not use this advantage (see further John 1:11)

2. He argues that God must keep His promises to the Jewish nation, whether the Jew is a sinner or a righteous man (verse 3)

**Answer:** (verse 4) God's faithfulness cannot fail. If every man in the world becomes a liar, God will still remain true. It does not matter what happens.

3. If God's righteousness appears in a clearer light because of our sin, can God blame us for our sin? "If our unrighteousness makes clearer the righteousness of God, He would be unrighteous to take vengeance on us." (verse 5)

**Answer:** (verse 6) If God cannot judge a sinner because his sin makes the

righteousness of God more conspicuous, then He cannot deal with any sinner. There would be no judgment at all.

4. If the sin of man would make conspicuous God's righteousness, if man's lie made God's truth appear the greater, how then can God justly judge the sinner? (verse 7)

**Answer:** (verse 8) Let us do evil that good may come.

### **DEVOTIONAL THOUGHT:**

Perhaps the most difficult group of people with whom we share the Gospel message is those who have an understanding of religion. They base their acceptance before God upon their keeping of some rules or requirements. The Jews were such a group of people. They prided themselves upon two facts: their possession of the law and their provision of circumcision. Now neither one of these was necessarily a negative. But it is how they were used that caused the concern.

Concerning the possession of the Law, Paul states that the problem arose because they did not practice the Law. They knew it and I believe they even understood what it meant, but they refused to model it in their lives. And the hypocrisy came when they demanded of others an obedience they themselves did not follow. They championed the phrase, "Do as I say, not as I do."

Concerning the provision of circumcision, Paul states that the problem arose because the Jews performed an incomplete circumcision. Yes, they faithfully practiced the outward physical circumcision as stated in Genesis 17. But Paul said that they lacked the necessary inward circumcision of the heart. They performed the act without the proper attitude.

The more I study the Word of God, the more I am becoming aware that God is principally interested in our attitude. Jesus began His Sermon on the Mount with a statement about attitudes. Samuel, when he confronted a disobedient Saul, spoke of attitudes preceding actions (see further First Samuel 15:22-23). Our acceptance before God is never based upon what we do. But it is always based upon who we are. Our actions must necessarily flow out of who we are. Our actions do not determine who we are...our attitude, who we are, does determine what we do.

So, to those who were basing their acceptance before God upon what they were doing, Paul instructs them to stop! Then they were to check their attitudes and make the necessary adjustments so that their hearts were right with God.

### **QUESTIONS TO PONDER AS YOU READ THIS SECTION:**

1. In Romans 2:17-24, Paul shows that the Law cannot save the Jew. Read

carefully the probing questions Paul asks in verses 21-23. Where did the Jews go wrong? Is there a lesson for us to learn from their mistake? If yes, how can we correct our errors so as not to stand condemned?

2. In verses 25-27, Paul shows that circumcision cannot save the Jew. In verses 28-29 Paul states that the Jew's birth cannot save him. What really needs to happen to a person before God can accept him or her?

## **Condemnation of the Whole World ROMANS 3:9-20**

This section concludes the long argument from Paul that mankind is so estranged from God and is totally unable to do anything in his own strength to rectify that estranged relationship. In this section, Paul deals with both Jews and Gentiles - the only two classes of people in the world in the eyes of God. How many Jews and Gentiles are there who are righteous? The answer is alarming - NONE! Four times Paul uses that word in answer to the question of how many righteous there are. Three times he uses the word ALL in answer to the question of how many sinners there are. The problem is indeed a universal one affecting people in Hungary as well as in Haiti, in India as well as in Israel, in Poland as well as in Palestine. Let's break this text down just a little more clearly.

### **VERSE 9: THE CHARGE.**

Paul had proven his charge in the first three sections of this book. The charge is "all are under sin." They are not only under sin, but they are under all that goes with sin: guilt of sin, power of sin, condemnation of sin, and the doom of sin.

### **VERSES 10-18: THE INDICTMENT**

Paul presents a 14-count indictment:

1. "There is none righteous" (verse 10) -  
righteousness is being perfectly right
2. "There is none that understand" (verse 11)-  
spiritual incomprehension
3. "There is none who seek after God" (verse 11)
4. "All have turned away" (verse 12) - picture of  
a desert caravan that has gotten off the  
route; men have deviated from the right way of

God.

5. "They have together become worthless"  
(verse 12) - the word is a Greek word for the Hebrew word used to speak of milk that had turned sour; God did not make us that way - we became worthless
6. "There is no one who does good" (verse 12)-  
meaning a course of life, not just single acts
7. "Their throats are open graves" (verse 13)-  
sometimes in the east a grave was left open and it became dangerous for those walking at night; we defile ourselves and others with what we say
8. "Their tongues practice deceit" (verse 13)-  
they may speak nicely to you while at the same time they are intending to insinuate deadly poison
9. "The poison of vipers is on their lips (verse 13) -  
the poison of the asp was stored in a bag under the lip; so is human speech
10. "Their mouths are full of cursing and bitterness"  
(verse 14) - each one of us has this potential when we are born

11. "Their feet are swift to shed blood" (verse 15) -  
swift to do violence
12. "Ruin and misery mark their ways" (verse 16) -  
wherever man walks, there are destruction  
and misery
13. "The way of peace they do not know" (verse 17)-  
the WAY and PEACE are Christ, but He is  
unknown to the vast majority in the world
14. "There is no fear of God before their eyes"  
(verse 18) - source of all other sins is here;  
without reverential fear of God, there is the  
absence of wisdom, increasing mental  
confusion, and moral and spiritual darkness

We can summarize this indictment this way:

1. Man is depraved in his character (verses 10-12) -  
"What a man is"
2. Man is depraved in his speech (verses 13-14) -  
"What a man says"
3. Man is depraved in his conduct (verses 15-18) -  
"What a man does"

### **VERSE 19 - THE DEFENSE**

Every mouth is stopped. It is a silent world. There is no defense. The only reason human courts permit a defense is to protect against a mistake. But when God brings a charge against a man, He makes no mistake.

## **VERSE 20 - THE VERDICT - GUILTY!**

It means not only that he committed the crime, but that he obligated to suffer the penalty for doing it. Man is guilty for two reasons: 1) He is a sinner, and 2) By the deeds of the Law shall no flesh be justified in God's sight. Paul is leaving the specific Law of Moses here. (There should be no definite article before the word law in this verse. Paul includes all law here: moral law, ceremonial law, law of conscience). You cannot be justified by the Law of Moses, but you can be by the law of Christ. There is only one thing the Law can do: provide a knowledge of sin.

### **DEVOTIONAL THOUGHTS:**

In our previous studies we have noticed that Paul made a strong case that both Gentiles and Jews had difficulties in approaching God on the basis of their own merit. Religion, morality, and national heritage failed. In this text Paul proceeds to share the reasons for that failure.

The universal problem of man is related to his sin nature. We are all born with this nature, thanks to Adam. David, in Psalm 51:5 stated that he had been born in sin. An infant may appear innocent, but lying hidden within is the potential to be the next Adolph Hitler or Al Capone.

In verses 9-18, Paul carefully presents the case that we are all sinners. He excludes no one...not even himself. As a person reads this text despair can set in. The picture Paul paints is a dismal one. There is this sense of total rejection. I cannot please God! I have nothing to offer to God! I only have my sinful nature and its visible expressions in what I say and what I do!

To counter this dismal sense, Paul is driven to consider the validity of the Law (verses 19-20). Perhaps, in the keeping of some system of rules and regulations a person just might appear before God. But Paul is driven to the following conclusions: the more a person is aware of the Law, and seeks to live under the Law, the more that person becomes aware of his or her own sinfulness. The Law is very good at showing us our errors, but is not as successful in helping us to overcome those errors. The Law tells me when I am driving beyond the posted speed limit on the highway, but it does not help me to stay within that speed limit. So it is with all types of rules and regulations. They tell us what is right and what is wrong, but are powerless to assist us to always do what is right.

As Paul draws to a close this section (Romans 1:18-3:20), he has presented a convincing case that man has a problem if he wishes to encounter a holy God. And, seemingly there is nothing that he can do to overcome this obstacle. At least Paul says it cannot be overcome through any moral or religious basis. The problem then must be handled by God.

And that brings us to the next section in our study.

### **QUESTIONS TO PONDER AS YOU READ THIS SECTION:**

Read these verses and make a list of the characteristics of a sinful world. How can these verses be used to refute the belief that man is just getting better and better all the time? Also, do these verses teach that man's evil acts are a product of the environment in which he lives? Why or why not?

### **Salvation: The Blessing that Accompanies Justification ROMANS 5:1-11**

Verses 1-11 begin a discussion on the blessings that accompany justification, namely our salvation. Justification is not only the first or initial blessing, it carried with it every other blessing of the Christian life. When a man is justified, he has everything that God has to give. In this passage there are two key phrases: "we have" - some possessions come with justification; and "we shall be".

#### **Verse 1: "being justified by faith"**

Tense of the verb indicates an accomplished fact. It occurred at the time of faith. We cannot grow into justification. We cannot be more and more justified. It is not a continuous process at all.

"we have peace with God"

Does not mean a feeling of peace (see Isaiah 48:18,23). There is enmity between God and the wicked (see Romans 5:10 and Romans 8:7). When a man is justified, that enmity is taken away and there is peace between the sinner and God. There is both an internal and external peace, the latter is what Paul is discussing (see Isaiah 53:5 - Christ was punished for our sins, and that brought peace between us and God. See Ephesians 2:14 - Christ makes peace in our relationship with God; He does not make us feel peaceful. See Ephesians 2:17 - Christ took away the enmity and He preached peace to me).

#### **Verse 2: "we have access"**

God, in Christ, has not only taken away the enmity, but He has made it possible for the sinner to have access into the very presence of God. The perfect tense indicates that Christ has achieved a complete and continuous access for us (see Ephesians 2:18).

"our standing with God"

How can a sinner stand in the presence of a holy God? (see Psalm 130:3 and

Revelation 6:17 and Psalm 1:5). Our standing is in Christ Jesus, the only place any man will ever be able to stand. That standing is maintained by grace alone.

"our rejoicing in the hope of glory"

The glory of God is the likeness of God. God's glory is what God is in character, in essential power, and in external appearance. Our hope is to be like Jesus Christ in every respect (see Romans 8:29).

Glorification for the Christian is putting on fully the likeness of God Himself as it is revealed in Christ Jesus.

### **Verse 3: "our rejoicing in tribulation"**

It does not mean "I thank God in spite of my tribulations." It does not mean "I thank God for my tribulations." It means that we praise God for the things that come into our lives (see Romans 8:17, 18 - suffering leads to glory; see also Second Corinthians 4:17). We rejoice in tribulation because we know it works patience. Tribulation in the true child of God produces steadfastness, patience, and a closeness to God. Tribulation in the professed child of God produces only hardness of heart.

### **Verse 4: "experience"**

Experience is the proof of testing. Hope completes the circle. Hope of the glory of God (leads to) tribulations (which leads to) steadfastness (which leads to) experience (which leads to) hope of the glory of God.

### **Verse 5: "love of God shed abroad in our hearts"** (see Colossians 1:27)

"we have the Holy Spirit" (see Acts 1:8)

### **Verse 6: "Christ died for us"**

The proof of God's love is that we know He will not forsake us.

### **Verse 9: "we shall be saved from wrath"**

Wrath would be the thing that would destroy our "hope of glory." We have immunity from wrath to come.

### **Verse 10: "we shall be saved by His life"**

We shall be kept safe by His life (see Hebrews 7:25; John 14:19; Romans 8:32,34 - His death wiped out our sins. It is the death of Christ that wiped out all our sins and gives us justification and righteousness in the sight of God. It is His life that keeps

us safe forever.

### **Verse 11: "we rejoice in God"**

We are not afraid of Him any longer, but we actually rejoice in God.

### **DEVOTIONAL THOUGHTS:**

Three times in this section Paul makes the statement

that his readers were to rejoice over something. Of course, we know that Paul always carried about a spirit of rejoicing. Who else do you know who would sing praises to God while sitting in a dark, damp prison cell? In almost every epistle Paul encourages a spirit of rejoicing. But for what are we to rejoice?

In verse 2, Paul said that we should rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. This comes as a consequence of our being justified through faith resulting in our having peace with God. Because we are no longer at war with God, we can anticipate a home surrounded by the glory of God. I have always wondered at what this glorious home will look like. I have come to the conclusion that Paul was right when he stated that it was beyond anything we could ever think or see. Wow! It will be amazing.

In verse 3, Paul states that we should rejoice in our sufferings. Ouch! I find it very difficult to think of rejoicing when I am not feeling well, or when my family goes through a troubling time. But I don't think Paul is telling us to get excited about the actual suffering, but to rejoice in what those sufferings can accomplish in our lives. Those times of difficulties force us to draw closer to the Lord and become more dependent upon Him so that our hope increases. But, I will be honest, that does not make the rejoicing come any easier. But it is good to know that God has a purpose for them.

Finally, in verse 11 Paul tells us to rejoice through our Lord Jesus Christ. Why? Because it is through Him that we have experienced reconciliation. What does it mean to be reconciled? The dictionary says it means to settle an argument or disagreement. Paul, in previous sections, has presented a careful case that while we were in our sins, we were at war with God. But God has settled that disagreement with the sending of His Son to die for us. Praise God we have been reconciled. No wonder we can have peace with God.

### **QUESTIONS TO PONDER AS ONE READS THIS SECTION:**

1. What does it mean to you to have peace with God? How can our lives display this peace?
2. What does it mean to rejoice or exult in our tribulations? What are the proven

results of tribulations? But why is it difficult for us to rejoice in our tribulations and what can we do about this problem? (Note: think about Job 1 and 2, and Paul in Second Corinthians 1).

3. From what wrath of God are we saved? Does this mean that God never gets angry with the believer? Why or why not?

### **Salvation: Condemnation in Adam but Justification in Christ ROMANS 5:12-21**

This portion is a comparison and contrast between Adam and Christ. Our condemnation flows from Adam, but our justification flows from Christ. The key verse to this section is verse 14. The entire passage is an expansion of Paul's thoughts in First Corinthians 15:45.

The passage begins with Adam and ends with Christ (see verses 12 and 21). The passage includes six pairs of contrasts:

1. Adam and Christ (verses 14, 15)
2. Disobedience and Obedience (verse 19)
3. Sin and Righteousness (verse 21)
4. Law and Grace (verse 20)
5. Condemnation and Justification (verse 16)
6. Death and Life (verse 21)

The passage refers to four kings: 1) Death reigned (verse 14); 2) Sin reigned (verse 21); 3) Grace reigns (verse 21); and 4) Believers shall reign (verse 17).

The work of Christ is as deep as the work of Adam and is as far reaching in its effects. One phrase appears three times: "even so" (see verses 18, 19, 21). The effect of "even so" is to equate Christ's work with Adam's. But the work of Christ is greater. One phrase appears three times: "much more" (see verses 15, 17, 20).

#### **Verse 12:**

"Therefore" - Paul is about to sum up all that he has said about condemnation and justification. Sin has entered the world, but it did not come alone.

"Death through sin" - Sin and death always go together. Is death natural? No. Death is the most unnatural thing in the world, and it is possible to put your finger on the spot where it entered into the human race. God did not start out this world

with death (see Genesis 2:17 and Genesis 3:19).

"Death came to all men" - Sin entered. Figure of a house, someone opens a door and enters and death moved into all the rooms of the house.

"Because all sinned" - Can sin exist without law? Yes (see Genesis 6:5-8). Sin is vastly greater than mere transgression of the law. Sin is lawlessness. It exists where there is no law.

### **Verse 15: Adam and Christ contrasted as to Quality**

In Adam we got what we deserved - death. But, on the other hand, God gives the saved something they do not deserve.

### **Verse 16: Adam and Christ contrasted as to Quantity**

The contrast here is between one offense and many offenses. (Example: a man takes a match to the woods to light one tree, therefore, one offense. As a result there is a great forest fire, therefore, many offenses. Suppose someone came and put the first out, therefore a greater thing). Condemnation came from one offense, but justification blots out forever millions and millions of offenses.

### **Verse 17: Adam and Christ contrasted as to Certainty**

Reign of death is certain. Reign with Christ is also certain.

### **Verse 18: Adam and Christ compared - One Act**

"So also the result of one act of righteousness." Comparison here between the judgment that came upon all men and the free gift that came unto all men. The one goes just as far as the other.

### **Verse 19: Adam and Christ compared - One Man**

The comparison is to effects. If Adam's sin constituted all sinners, then Christ's obedience is going to constitute righteous all those who believe in Him.

### **Verse 20: the reign of grace**

The law came in to show man how great a sinner he was. The law does not make a man a sinner, but it provokes sin and proves him to be a sinner.

### **Verse 21: Christ, Righteousness and Life**

**Verse 12: Adam**                      **Verse 21: Jesus Christ**

**Sin**

**Righteousness**

**Death**

**Life**

**Grace (this side is much more than the other  
because of grace)**

### **DEVOTIONAL THOUGHTS:**

I notice in verses 15-17 a strong contrast between "the gift" and "the trespass." Both "the gift" and "the trespass" came into the world through the agency of one person: "the gift" through Jesus Christ, "the trespass" through Adam. The consequences of "the trespass" were judgment, condemnation, and death. The consequences of "the gift" were grace, justification, and life. The recipients of both "the gift" and "the trespass" were the many, including you and me.

Let's ask ourselves: how can a person receive either "the gift" or "the trespass?" Unfortunately we have to do absolutely nothing in order to receive "the trespass." That is part of our heritage. When we are born "the trespass" is part of who we are. David said that he was born in iniquity. In other words, sin or "the trespass" is as natural and universal for all peoples everywhere. But Paul has already emphasized this fact for us.

But what about "the gift?" As "the trespass" is inherited, so "the gift" must be received. As "the trespass" is something with which we are born, so "the gift" is something that we must receive from someone else. I can do nothing to thwart my receiving "the trespass", but I can do everything about receiving "the gift." Can I earn "the gift?" Absolutely not, else then it becomes a reward for a service rendered and not a gift. I just merely take by faith what Christ has provided for me.

And I say thank you!

### **QUESTIONS TO PONDER AS ONE READS THIS SECTION:**

1. Read verses 14-21. Locate six pairs of contrasts. What is the significance to you of these contrasts?
2. Read verses 12-14. What is the purpose of death?
3. Read verse 16. How many sins must a man commit before he is condemned? From how many sins can a man be forgiven?

**Sanctification**  
**ROMANS 6**

Now, let us turn our attention to Romans 6, that great chapter about sanctification, or as one writer has put it, "the right way of union with Christ." The following chart helps us to understand the differences between justification and sanctification:

## **Justification**

1. How does God deal with the sinner and his sin.
2. Deals with the guilt of sin.
3. God declares a man to be righteous.

## **Sanctification**

1. How does God deal with the power and pollution of sin.
2. Deals with the power of sin.
3. God makes a man to be holy.

There are two questions in this chapter.

1. (verse 1) - Shall we continue in sin in order that grace may abound?

verses 1-14 answer this problem of continuance in sin - "God forbid!"

verse 2- it is impossible for a Christian to continue in sin because we are dead to sin

2. (verse 15) - Shall we sin because grace does abound?

verses 15-23 answer this problem of committing single acts of sin - "God forbid!"

Three key words are found in this chapter: Know (verses 3,6,9); Reckon/Count (verse 11); and Yield/offer (verse 13)

## **ROMANS 6:1-14 - CONTINUANCE IN SIN?**

Notes on the word KNOW

**Verse 3-** If we are to know victory over sin in our lives, we must know that we died with Christ on the cross. When He died, we died. When He was buried, we were buried.

**Verse 6 -** Know our old man has been crucified. We cannot continually re-crucify our old man. He was crucified once for all (see Galatians 2:2). When we exercise faith in Christ, we enter into that crucifixion.

**Verse 6 -** What does it mean "body of sin be destroyed?" Does it mean

annihilation? No! Sin is still with us (see First John 1:8). The word "destroy" means "to be made of no effect, rendered powerless." The term "body of sin" refers to our own bodies. Sin finds its source in the will, but uses the body as an instrument.

**Verse 9** - Know death has no dominion over us. We do not die anymore. Christ paid the debt of sin in full. When the debt is paid in full, the creditor has no more power over the debtor.

**Verse 10** - summarizes these three points:

- a. When Christ died, we died.
- b. When Christ died, our old self was crucified.
- c. When Christ died, we died no more.

Notes on the word RECKON/COUNT

**Verse 11** - We are to know this truth and are to reckon/count it to be so. Don't ever lose sight of it! Don't ever doubt it!

Notes on the word YIELD/OFFER

**Verse 13** - The word "instruments" is a military term for weapons. Paul says, "Don't take your weapons and give them to the enemy." The first phrase in verse 13, "do not offer/yield" connotes the idea of continuous yielding. Do not yield your weapons all the time, day after day, hour after hour, to sin. The phrase "but yield/offer" connotes the idea of a once for all yielding.

**Verse 14** - The promise is stated here. If we know, if we reckon/count, if we yield/offer, then sin has no dominion over us. It is the grace of God that breaks the power of sin.

## **ROMANS 6:15-23 - COMMITTING SINGLE ACTS OF SIN**

The picture portrayed here is of a man with two masters. He will either serve Satan or he will serve God. He will either serve sin or he will serve righteousness. The word "servant/slave" occurs eight times in this passage: verse 16 (twice), verse 17, verse 18, verse 19 (twice), verse 20, and verse 22.

**Verse 16** - If you start to obey sin, you are thereby admitting the mastership of sin (see Matthew 6:24).

**Verses 17-18** - We are free from sin; we died to it. We have risen from the dead and now have a new life and a new master.

**Verse 20** - There was a time in my life when I was a servant of sin and righteousness had nothing to do with me. But once freed from sin, the opposite is true.

**Verse 22** - We have the fruit and the end right now.

**Verse 23** - If I serve sin, I get paid wages - death. If I serve God, I get a gift - everlasting life.

### **DEVOTIONAL THOUGHT:**

Two very precious thoughts emerge from this chapter. The first is found in verses 5-14 and could be stated like this: Because I have experienced death through Jesus Christ, I should live in a different manner. One of the great scriptural truths about salvation is that it is a death experience. When Christ died on that cross, I died. When those nails pierced His hands and feet, they also pierced mine. Paul says that we have been united with Him in His death. Paul stated it this way in Galatians 2:20, "I have been crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live, yet not I but Christ lives within me." Yet, even though dead, I still must daily choose whom my body will obey and serve. I was attracted to the imperative uses of the verbs in verses 11-14. Everyday I must make those conscious choices as to either serving sin or serving righteousness. But it helps when making those choices if I stop to consider that I am dead...it is Jesus Christ who lives through me.

The second thought is found in verses 15-23 and could be stated like this: The only way of life open to mankind is that of a slave. I know this flies in the face of what we are taught...that man is free and independent. But Paul paints an entirely different picture. We are slaves either to sin or to righteousness, to Satan or to Christ. I cannot be independent from either. Both masters have a standard of expectations for their slaves, and both reward their slaves for obedience. Satan's reward is that of death. Christ's reward is that of eternal life.

So, how should I live? Well, that is my choice. But, whatever my choice, I must be willing to bear the consequences that comes with that choice.

### **QUESTIONS TO PONDER AS ONE READS THESE VERSES:**

1. A key word in verses 3,6,9, is the word "know." Read each verse carefully and decide what three things we must know if we are to live victoriously over sin.
2. Look at your own life. How does sin express itself through you? What instruments does sin use in your own life?
3. How can you experience deliverance from sin? Why is this idea so hard to accept?

4. What are the rewards of serving sin? What are the rewards of serving Christ? For whom are you serving?

### **Sanctification: Not by works of law ROMANS 7**

I think this is the most difficult chapter in the book. One writer has expressed the relationship between chapters 6 and 7 in this way: Romans 6 - gives us the right way to be sanctified; Romans 7 - the wrong way. Here, in Romans 7, we have a picture of a saved man trying to be holy by keeping the law. Romans 7 states there is no holiness by works of the law. Romans 6 and 7 go together. The key verse is Romans 6:14. The first half of this verse is described in chapter 6 (the believer and sin); the second half is described in chapter 7 (the believer and the law). The key word in chapter 6 is "sin" (used 17 times). The key word in chapter 7 is "law" (used 18 times).

Note the personal pronouns used in verses 7-25: "I" (used 30 times); "me" (used 12 times); "my" (used 4 times); "myself" (used once). Those pronouns paint the picture of the defeated Christian, the Christian who has failed to reckon the "I" to be dead and has not yet experienced Galatians 2:20. Romans 7:1 is the keynote verse of this chapter.

### **ROMANS 7:1-6 - LAW AND THE CHRISTIAN**

Notes on verse 1 - Statement of fact: the law has dominion over a man as long as he lives.

Notes on verses 2-3 - illustration from the law itself. Use of marriage relationship after death versus adultery.

Notes on verses 4-6 - application of the illustration. A man is bound to the law for life, just as the woman was bound to her husband. Through the death of Christ, the man was made dead to the law. Being dead to the law implies two things: freedom from the law, and union with Christ.

#### **Summary of verses 1-6:**

1. Though we were joined to the law, having died with Christ broke that relationship.
2. While joined to the law, we brought forth fruit unto death.
3. When joined to Christ, we bring forth fruit unto God.

### **ROMANS 7:7-13 - LAW AND SIN**

Is the law sinful? Paul's answer is "God forbid!" What does the law do?  
Notes on verse 7 - The Law REVEALS sin.

The law did not do it, but sin took up a base of operation in the law itself and worked the sin of coveting.

Notes on verse 8 - The Law PROVOKES sin.

The law does not cause sin, but the law in the carnal mind provokes sin. When a man tries to be holy by keeping the law, the very commandments that came to him will provoke him into acts of sin.

Notes on verse 9 - Sin produces death.

Notes on verse 10 - The Law WAS INTENDED to be unto life.

Sin took up its base of operations through the commandment, and then deceived and slaughtered. (Verse 11 is a picture of the fall).

Notes on verse 12 - The Law is HOLY.

It is the work of the law to prescribe how man shall live, and if he does not so live, to slay him. The Law reveals sin, provokes sin, condemns sin, and slays the sinful man.

Notes on verse 13 - Sin is a terrible thing, whereas the law is good. The nature of sin becomes all the more plain, because it can take a good thing (the Law) and work evil through that good thing.

### **ROMANS 7:14-25 - LAW AND THE CARNAL MAN**

Unsaved men are sold under sin. There are three cycles, each stating a fact, offering a proof, and reaching a conclusion.

#### **Cycle One - verses 14-17**

**Fact** - verse 14, the law is spiritual

#### **Proof - verses 15-16**

**Conclusion** - verse 17 - Paul is not trying to shed responsibility here. Paul says, "I gave myself over to sin. The reason why this conflict is in my life is that I am under the mastery of sin, and I want to escape." Paul is responsible because he permitted himself to become a slave to sin.

#### **Cycle Two - verses 18-20**

**Fact** - verse 18a

**Proof** - verses 18b-19

**Conclusion** - verse 20 - Paul reaches the same conclusion as before. Sin is my master, my lord, and my king. I cannot break it. Paul has completed two cycles and still comes out the same place - still sinning.

#### **Cycle Three - verses 21-25**

**Fact** - verse 21

**Proof** - verse 22

**Conclusion** - verse 25 - same as before.

Do we have anything to do with law? Do we serve law? We are dead to law. When a man comes to this last verse, he should go back to the 6th chapter and consider that he is dead to sin, and then to the first part of the 7th chapter and read that he is dead to law. What is the only way to escape this situation? To present oneself to Christ. There is a parenthesis in this passage. "O wretched man that I am! What shall I do? Who will deliver me from the body of this death?" The answer is Jesus Christ our Lord!

**DEVOTIONAL THOUGHT:** This chapter has always been a fascinating one to read. As one person said, this chapter almost makes Paul seem human for he states that he, like us, wrestles on a daily basis with sin and righteousness. The theme of this chapter is the relationship between the law and the believer. I believe I see three truths.

First, when we came to know Jesus as our Savior, the law lost its authority over us. Paul says that we died to the law. The illustration he uses is that of a married woman who is freed from her marital bonds once her husband is dead. As long as I was separated from Christ, I was bound to the law. But, when I was crucified with Him, that death set me free from the law. I am now empowered to bear fruit for God.

Second, does this mean that I do not have to pay any attention to the law? Absolutely not! The purpose of the law is clear. It is to remind me of what sin is and of the consequences if I should choose to serve sin. The law is a reminder to me that there is a right way and a wrong way to live. The law is powerless to enable me to live the right way, but it is helpful in causing me to understand the difference that exists between these two ways.

Third, the process of making daily choices is often very difficult. And, unfortunately, the wrong choice is made. Oh to know the experience of consistent daily victories. Can that ever happen? Yes, it can happen through the Lord Jesus Christ. The most important choice I make every day is to put Him first in my life for that day. Just as He does not give us stale blessings (they are new every morning - Lamentations 3:22-23), so God does not want stale choices, but ones new every morning.

Until we get to heaven, there will always be this tension between the law and the freedom we have in Christ. But it is helpful to remember that the law reminds us of our need for Christ.

### **QUESTIONS TO PONDER AS ONE READS THESE VERSES:**

1. For how long must a person live under the jurisdiction of a series of laws? What does the illustration in verses 2 and 3 represent? Can we relate these verses to marriage today? If yes, then how do they apply?

2. What three things does Paul say the law does, according to verses 7-9? If these are the results, are we then to avoid obeying the law? Can we do whatever

we please whenever we please? Use other passages to support your ideas.

3. Have you ever experienced the same type of conflict that Paul describes in verses 14-21? You know what to do but you don't do it, or else, you know what you shouldn't do but you do it anyway. What made you act the way you did? How could you have prevented this problem?

4. How can we keep our bodies from coming under the influence of sin?

## **CHRIST IS IN US ROMANS 8:1-4**

We could title Romans 8 - Preservation: Kept Securely in Christ Jesus. This chapter is the conclusion of the treatise on salvation:

Romans 1-3 - World shown condemned and lost in sin

Romans 4-5 - Condemned sinners were seen as justified and declared righteous

Romans 6-7 - Those declared righteous were now sanctified

Romans 8 - Those sanctified are found to be secure

Roots of Romans 8 are found in Christ's teachings:

John 5:24 - No condemnation in Christ Jesus; passed from death to life

John 17:22 - Christ's glory

John 10:28 - They shall never perish

Security - Relation of the Triune God to the believer

Romans 8:1-4 - Christ is in us

Romans 8:5-27 - Holy Spirit is in us

Romans 8:28-39 - God is for us

Ministry of the Holy Spirit:

Romans 8:1-13 - Spirit of life

Romans 8:14-17 - Spirit of adoption

Romans 8:18-25 - Spirit of glory

Romans 8:26-27 - Spirit of intercession

Series of contrasts in this chapter:

Romans 8:2 - "law of the Spirit of life" versus "law of sin and death"

Romans 8:5-13 - "in the flesh" versus "in the Spirit"

Romans 8:14-17 - "spirit of bondage" versus "spirit of adoption"

Romans 8:18-25 - "present sufferings" versus "future glory"

Romans 8:26-30 - "what we do not know" versus "what we do know"

Romans 8:31-39 - "God is for us" versus "no one against us"

Blessings we have "in Christ":

1. No Condemnation - Christ died for us (verse 1)
2. No Defeat - Spirit of God indwells us (verses 8 and 9)
3. No Fear - God has become a Father to us (verse 15)
4. No Despair - We know that our very sufferings reap the glory (verses 17-18)
5. No Calamity - We know all things work together for good (verse 28)
6. No Adversity - God is for us (verse 31)
7. No Separation in Christ - God has set His love upon us (verses 35-39)

## **ROMANS 8:1-4 - CHRIST IS IN US**

Notes on Verse 1:

"Therefore" looks back to the struggle of Romans 7 and the thankful shout of verse 25.

"There is no condemnation" - It is on account of the Spirit's acting as a law of life, delivering the believer from the contrary law of sin and death in his yet unredeemed members. The subject here is no longer Christ's work for us, but the Spirit's work within us. Without the Spirit within as a law of life, there would be nothing but condemnation, for the new creature has no power within himself apart from the blessed Spirit.

"In Christ Jesus" - expresses that glorious place God has given the believer. The question is not at all now one of justification, but one of position. There cannot be degrees here; men either are in Christ or not in Him.

Notes on Verse 2:

"Law of sin and death" - The power of sin working in our unredeemed bodies against which even man's renewed will was powerless.

"Law of the Spirit of life" - The Holy Spirit makes the deliverance through Christ an experience (read Romans 7:24-25)

Notes on Verses 3 and 4: - Several things appear from this passage

1. God did a thing that the Law could not do.
2. The thing that God did was to make possible a holy life for those walking by His indwelling Spirit
3. The reason that the Law was unable to bring about this holy life lay in the flesh, the "mind" that is enmity against God and not subject to His Law or will. Thus, though the Law was holy, just and good, in itself, it only irritated by its commands a sinful flesh that was not subject to it.
4. God's plan was to send His own Son, who had a body prepared for Him and was born according to the angel's words to Mary in Luke 1:35.
5. God's purpose, as revealed in this passage, was to get at sin as connected with human flesh and deal with it at the cross in the way of righteous condemnation, so that sin would no longer have rights in human bodies.

Two things happened at the cross:

1) His blood was shed for us in expiation of our guilt; and

2) We died with Christ. When we believed upon Christ, He became our Adam and God dated our history back to Calvary, and commanded us to reckon ourselves dead to sin because we died with Him (read Romans 8:9; Romans 7:5; Ephesians 2:1-3)

"Condemn sin in the flesh" - Dealt with sin, judicially. In Adam all sinned (read Romans 5:18-19). All, since Adam, have participated in the fallen nature of Adam. In Romans 8:3, God tells us that sin, as connected with flesh, has been condemned, dealt with, although it has not yet been removed. Not only did Christ, at Calvary, put away our guilt before God by His blood, but there our old man was crucified with Him; sin was condemned as having any connection with human flesh."

Notes on Verse 4:

The Law commanded a wholly righteous walk toward God and toward our neighbor. However the Law furnished no power to live such a life. But we have this righteous state now. It is not fulfilled by us, but it is fulfilled in us. It is fulfilled in us as we consent to reject the flesh and choose to walk according to the Spirit. In the Spirit lies all the power.

#### **DEVOTIONAL THOUGHT:**

In my estimation, Romans 8 is one of the greatest chapters in the Bible. I certainly consider it to be the greatest chapter penned by the Apostle Paul. I truly believe a student could spend hours mining the great truths that are found within these mere thirty-nine verses. It will be our joy in the coming weeks to spend some time gleaning some truths.

Perhaps you might have heard me say that Romans 8 begins and ends with two towers of strength for the Christian life. Today, let us focus upon that first tower. It is found in the very first verse. That verse reads, "Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus." That first tower I call - the Tower of No Condemnation. One can almost hear the joys erupting from the heart of Paul as he wrote those words. What a contrast to the earlier portions of Romans where there was a struggle whether anyone could ever be right with God, to be at peace with Him. Yet, because of what Christ did for us upon the cross, we now have the peace with God (we looked at this in chapter 5) and we now no longer stand condemned before God. I am not condemned; I am adopted in God's family. I am no longer under the sentence of death; I have received the entitlement of eternal life.

Friend, I invite you to take a few moments right now, and praise God for this

freedom from condemnation. Rejoice in the fact that you have been set free. Celebrate that because you are in Christ Jesus, therefore, there is now no condemnation for you!

### **QUESTIONS TO PONDER AS ONE READS THESE VERSES:**

1. If there is no condemnation for us as believers, and if Christ's death condemned sin in the flesh, then why do I still sin?
2. Why does God permit us to struggle with sin like we do?

### **OUR PRESERVATION IN CHRIST ROMANS 8:18-39**

As you might remember, the theme of this chapter is our preservation in Christ. That fact is clearly seen in those closing verses that lie before us today.

Notes on verses 18-25 - our new hope

Paul says the whole of nature is looking for just one thing - the manifestation of the sons of God. There are three realms that groan:

1. Creation groans - waiting for release from the endless cycle of corruption
2. We groan - because we are still in the body of flesh
3. The Holy Spirit groans - on our behalf

Notes on verses 26-27 - our new help

Our infirmity is that we do not know how to pray as we ought.

Notes on verses 28-30 - our new knowledge

God's eternal purposes come first, then His foreknowledge, then predestination. Then God calls and He justifies and He will glorify. These six words are the six golden links that bind the believer to the two eternities - the eternity that is past in the purpose of God, and the eternity that is future in glory with Him.

Notes on verses 31-39 - our new assurance

Paul is at the mountain-heights of the Christian position

**Verse 31** - "these things" - refers to everything said from chapter 3 and also his discussion of "divine election and foreknowledge"

"if" - since GOD IS FOR US

"who against us" - this is a direct challenge to all and any in the whole possible universe

**Verse 32** - proof that God is for us. God spared not. God delivered Him up.

"for us all" - sinners saved by grace. Since God gave Christ, He also will give us all things. If He gave us His most precious Son, how shall He not also freely give us trivial things.

**Verse 34** - evidence that the whole Trinity works for us:

(in verse 22 - the Spirit makes intercession for us

(in verse 31 - God is for us

(in verse 34 - Christ is making intercession for us

**Verse 35** - "tribulation" - direct troubles that afflict the saints because of the gospel. Satan has never succeeded in separating one saint from Christ's love by tribulations (see Matthew 13:21; First Thessalonians 1:6 and 3:3; John 16:33)

"distress" - anguish. Word means "a narrow, cramped place"

"peril" - see Second Corinthians 11:26

### **DEVOTIONAL THOUGHTS:**

As I shared a few studies previously, I believe there are two towers of biblical truth that bookend this great chapter. The first one is the tremendous reality that we no longer stand condemned before an angry God. Why is this possible? It is because Jesus Christ and His death on the cross appeased or satisfied the wrath of an angry God. As a member of the family of God, I no longer have to worry about facing the wrath of God. That simply will not happen. Praise God!

The closing verses of this chapter disclose the second great tower. We can state it simply, "Nothing can separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus." Let me state that once again - absolutely nothing can separate me from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus. In the preceding sections Paul has been careful to delineate those things that might try to cause us to be separated from Christ and His love. Included among these were:

1. Matters of life and matters of death - I think we could say that the uncertainties of life and the certainty of death cannot separate us from His love.

2. Angels nor demons - those represent the impact of the spiritual world, both for good and for evil, upon our lives.

3. The present nor the future - those present realities (the state that I am presently in) and the future possibilities (those conditions that I may be in tomorrow) cannot separate us from His love.

4. Powers - I think this could represent anything that has the potential of

influencing us in any way, or controlling us.

5. Lofty things or lowly things - No matter how inflated or deflated is my self-esteem, how I view myself cannot separate me from Christ's love.

6. Absolutely nothing else in all creation - I think Paul uses this phrase to include anything that might not fit into one of the categories above.

Friends, I can stand before God in the absence of condemnation because I can never be separated from His love. If these were the only two spiritual truths that we had from God's Word, how dynamic our lives would be. These two truths are the heart and soul of this chapter and of the writings of the Apostle Paul. It is no wonder that Paul could say in verse 37 that we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us.

### **QUESTIONS TO PONDER AS ONE READS THESE VERSES:**

1. When God saved you, He did not instill a spirit of fear within you. List some of the things Paul says we don't have to fear. Why don't we have to fear them?

2. What does the phrase "we don't know how to pray as we should" mean? Relate a time in your life when you didn't know how to pray about a matter. How did God answer and what did you learn from this experience?

3. What does verses 28 mean to you? How can you claim its truths?

### **OUR NEW LIFE IN CHRIST ROMANS 8:5-17**

This lesson we study that great chapter on being kept secure in Christ. Romans 8:5-17 focuses upon our new life in Christ.

Notes on Verse 5:

"mind" - Does not have reference to intellect or understanding, but to the attention or occupation of the person. There are two classes of mind:

1. Those according to the flesh - those not born of God (read Ephesians 2:3 - state of such people). Those people cherish (desire, are occupied with, absorbed in, talk about, think of, follow after) the things of the flesh:

- a. Physical lusts - gluttony, uncleanness, laziness
- b. Lusts of the soul - mental delights, pleasure of the imagination, aesthetic indulgences
- c. Spiritual lusts - pride, envy, malice

2. Those according to the Spirit - God's true children with the Holy Spirit dwelling

in them. Those people cherish (discern, value, love, are absorbed in) the things of the Spirit:

- a. Salvation
- b. Person of Christ
- c. The fellowship of the saints
- d. The Word of God
- e. Prayer
- f. Praise
- g. Prophecy
- h. The blessed hope of Christ's coming
- i. Walking as He walked before men

**Notes on Verse 6:**

"mind of the flesh is death" - a mind so set on death that it can be said to be death  
"mind of the Spirit of life and peace" - life is the life of the risen Christ. Peace is the peace of Christ. Both are supplied by the Spirit. God is not referring to people, but to flesh and the Spirit.

**Notes on Verse 7:**

This verse most clearly sets forth the hideously lost state of man after the flesh. In Romans 5:10 we were reconciled to God while we were enemies, but it did not in any wise consist in changing the nature of the flesh.

**Notes on Verse 8:**

This is God's sweeping announcement concerning all mankind that are outside of Christ. All in the flesh are outside of Christ. Those in the flesh (like Cain) who would worship God, would come in their own way - the flesh's way, which God cannot accept.

**Notes on Verse 9:**

Here is the great mark of a true Christian - that the Spirit of God dwells in him. The Spirit becomes now the element in which the believer lives (like water to the fish, or air to the birds), vital, supply, protecting.

"but if any man has not the Spirit" - Spirit of Christ is the Holy Spirit. He is called the Spirit of Christ because Christ promised and sent Him (read John 15:26; Acts 2:33; John 16:14).

"dwell" - the Spirit's making His home within us

### **Notes on Verse 10:**

"Christ is in you" - in this verse we have the answer to our Lord's prayer in John 17:21-22 (we are in Christ because of the work at Calvary). Christ is in us (read 2 Corinthians 3:17-18). Jesus Christ is in you (read 2 Corinthians 13:5). Christ in you, the hope of glory (read Colossians 1:27). Christ lives in me (read Galatians 2:20). That Christ may make His home down in your hearts through faith (read Revelation 3:20; Galatians 1:16; Ephesians 3:14-21).

"God is in us" - read John 14:10-11 and the Father is in me - John 17:21-23. There are two facts concerning those in whom Christ by His Spirit dwells:

1.The body is dead. Our bodies are contrasted with our spirits as they are in the Holy Spirit. Our bodies are in no sense redeemed yet. Our bodies are dead because they have no emotion toward God because of sin.

2.The Spirit is life because of righteousness. The Spirit is the maintainer and supplier of Christ's life in us (read 2 Corinthians 5:21; Ephesians 4:24).

### **Notes on Verse 11:**

The body, the mortal body, is the subject of this verse. Our spirits have been shown to have life, now. Body is still dead - as to God.

1.The Spirit of that God who raised up Jesus is dwelling in us. Jesus is our Lord's personal name (read Matthew 1:21). It was Jesus whom they crucified and buried in Joseph's tomb.

2.Christ Jesus is His resurrection name. Although our bodies are yet dead on account of sin - dead to God - the Spirit of Him who raised up Christ Jesus from the dead, Christ Jesus, in whom we now are, this God will give life also to these poor mortal bodies of ours! And it will be by His Spirit who now indwells us.

### **Notes on Verses 14-17:**

God adopted us as a son with every legal right as a son. He actually gave us His own Spirit so that we are in His family by nature and we are so conscious of this that we call Him "Father."

### **DEVOTIONAL THOUGHT:**

We live in a world where the word "control" is most controlling. We talk about those who control the oil fields of the world. We read of those who control the financial institutions and business conglomerates. We listen to those who control the judicial and governmental entities around the world. To control something is to be empowered or energized by that something.

The central theme of verses 5-17 is one of control. It is best stated, in a negative way, in verse 8: Those controlled by the sinful nature cannot please God. Do I control myself, or am I controlled by another? I believe Paul would say that another desires to control me, but I must decide whether to yield control to that one. In fact, it appears that there are two persons who would greatly desire to have control over me, the one who acts through my sinful nature, and the one who acts through His Spirit that has been given to me.

I remember the illustration used by Campus Crusade of the throne sitting vacant in a person's heart. Two persons sought to sit upon that throne. "I" represented the sinful nature while the "cross" represented Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. I am given the responsibility of making those daily choices as to the one controlling my life. And the consequences of that decision have a dramatic impact upon my life. If I desire to please myself, well then, I let the sinful nature have control and I will enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season. But, if I desire to please God, then it is absolutely essential that I allow the Holy Spirit to have control of my life.

Oh that it might be so easy to make a one-time decision, as with our receiving Christ. But this is at least a daily and often an hourly need. The one who controls my life empowers and energizes me.

#### **QUESTIONS TO PONDER AS ONE READS THESE VERSES:**

1. Compose a list of what you think the "things of the flesh are" and then a list of the "things of the Spirit." Which group is it easier for you to focus your attention upon and why?
2. Did you know that you live in a "dead body?" What does that mean to you? Do you consider it a promise or a curse to be saddled with this "dead body?"

### **EXHIBITION OF DIVINE SOVEREIGNTY IN GOD'S PLAN OF ELECTION ROMANS 9**

We are now at that place in our study in Romans where Paul discusses the nation of Israel and their relationship to God. Chapters 9-11 are considered to be a parenthesis in the text, but their message is an important one for each of us.

The theme of chapter nine is the Exhibition of Divine Sovereignty in God's Plan of Election. If the Jewish nation will not accept Jesus as Messiah, then the

unbelieving Jew would say there were two possible conclusions to be drawn:

1. Either the Gospel that Paul preached was not true, or
2. If it was true, then the promises of God to Israel had failed, because the Messiah and the blessing to Israel were connected inseparably. Either Jesus Christ is not the true Messiah or the Word of God has been proven false. How Paul proceeds to respond is important for us to understand.

In Romans 9-11, Paul answers the question, "Why is Israel rejected?"

1. Romans 9 - the absolute sovereignty of God is seen in election
2. Romans 10 - the moral responsibility of man is seen in rejection
3. In Romans 11 - the final purpose of God is seen in reception.

This section begins with a sorrowful tone (Romans 9:1-5), but closes with praise (Romans 11:33-36).

Notes on Romans 9:1-5: the problem stated

**Verse 1** - sets forth the reality of Paul's grief

**Verse 2** - sets forth the intensity of Paul's grief

**Verse 3** - implies that his sorrow was sacrificial.

"Cursed" - means "to be utterly lost forever" (see Exodus 32:32-22 of Moses' experience with Israel). Paul could not fulfill this curse. Why? Because he belonged to Christ. What Paul is stating is: "for I could wish." "It was in my heart to wish it, but I never completed it. That is the way I feel about my people, but when I come to wish myself accursed there is something that stops me. I could wish, if God would let me, but he won't. I could do it, if it were permissible, but it is not."

**Verses 4-5:** state the position of Israel. Eight respects in which Israel differed before God from all other nations:

1. Theirs is the adoption (see Exodus 4:22, Deuteronomy 7:6, Amos 3:2)
2. Theirs the divine glory (see Exodus 25:8,21,22 - glory of God in the tabernacle; Second Chronicles 5:13,14 - the glory of God in the Temple)
3. Theirs is the covenants - the many covenants
4. Theirs is the receiving of the law - no other nation had a code of laws that God gave
5. Theirs is the temple worship - the temple ritual, the sacrificial system
6. Theirs is the promises - God's salvation promises were lodged in Abraham; God's kingdom promises were lodged in David; promises pertaining nationally to Israel alone
7. Theirs are the patriarchs - Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Samuel,

David, the prophets

8. From them is traced the human ancestry of Christ - Christ in the flesh (see Romans 1:3, John 1:14, Hebrews 2:16, Matthew 1:1)

### **Notes on Romans 9:6-13: the explanation offered**

**Verse 6** - "for not all who are descended from Israel are Israel" - contains a hint of election

**Verse 7-11:** illustration of Abraham and Isaac

1. Abraham had two sons: Isaac and Ishmael; God elected Isaac
2. Isaac had two sons: Jacob and Esau; God elected Jacob

**Verse 11:** God chooses according to His own sovereign will and sets aside all human ideas of merit and superiority.

**Verse 12** - this act of election was before they were born

**Verse 13** - basis of the election

### **Notes on Romans 9:14-24: the objections answered**

Is God unrighteous because He takes one man and sets aside another? Example of Moses (see Exodus 32 and Exodus 33:19 - sovereign mercy - God's sovereignty shows His mercy). Paul says, if you are going to say that God is unrighteous because He chooses one man and not another, then God was unrighteous at Sinai when He let you all live.

God is sovereign when it comes to bestowing His judgment. Example of Pharaoh who hardened his heart. (Pharaoh hardened his heart - Exodus 7:14,22; Exodus 8:15,32; Exodus 9:34; God hardened Pharaoh's heart - Exodus 4:21; Exodus 7:3; Exodus 9:12; Exodus 10:1,20,27; Exodus 11:10; Exodus 14:17).

Verse 19: If all this you say is true, if every man is as God made him, why does God find fault with my sinfulness? I am what I am. God made me this way. Answer - God did make man, but He did not make the sinner what he is. What right do we have to say anything against God? God makes no man a sinner. God takes the clay as He finds it, and the clay here is man who is already a sinner.

### **Two classes of vessels:**

1. Vessels fitted for destruction - man fits himself for destruction. God never does that.

2. Vessels fitted for glory - God did that. God never fits anyone for hell. Man never fits himself for heaven.

## **Notes on Romans 9:25-29: the proof given**

Old Testament passages, referring to Israel: Hosea 2:23; Hosea 1:10; Isaiah 10:22; Isaiah 1:9

## **Notes on Romans 9:30-33: the conclusion drawn**

### **Two classes of people:**

1. Gentiles who did not follow righteousness, but got there
  2. Jews who tried, but failed. Why did they fail? They sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law
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### **DEVOTIONAL THOUGHTS:**

Perhaps of all the chapters that flowed from the pen of the Apostle Paul, this is one of the most troublesome. One of the reasons for this difficulty is in our understanding of the concept of election. Immediately one thinks of the radical Calvinists who proclaim that if God has elected you unto salvation, then nothing will prevent that from happening - you don't even need to be witnessed to. Now, I don't believe that is what Paul had in mind. But Paul is fascinated with the display of God's sovereignty over the selection of men in the Old Testament. His particular focus is upon the choice of two individuals: Isaac and Jacob.

Abraham had two sons - one a son of his flesh, Ishmael, and one a son of God's promise, Isaac. Ishmael was the product of Abraham's human efforts at having a descendant to inherit the land promised by God. The birth of Ishmael produced only bitterness and unhappiness within the family of Abraham and eventually Ishmael was driven from the family setting. The birth of Isaac, the miracle child produced by God through Abraham and Sarah, provided joy and happiness to his parents.

I believe there is a biblical truth here. The consequences of the works of our own fleshly efforts produce no satisfying results with God. We are haunted by such thoughts: have we done enough to please God, or have we done the right good works. However, when we accept the sovereign gift from God, blessings flow and our lives exhibit a joy that is very satisfying.

At times, God may ask us to wait for our "Isaacs" to be born. But, as Abraham was to discover, the wait was well worth it.

### **QUESTIONS TO PONDER AS ONE READS THESE VERSES:**

1. What did Paul wish that he could do? What does this tell us about his love for the lost? Why would his wish never be fulfilled?

2. Why is Israel so different from all other nations on the face of the earth? What is to be our attitude toward the people of Israel today? Are they still God's people? If so, how do we know that - what has God done for them?

3. Verses 6-13 are difficult verses dealing with election of why God chose some and rejected others. Read the story of Jacob and Esau in Genesis 25:27-34 and Genesis 27:1-46 and decide why God accepted Jacob and rejected Esau.

4. In verses 14 and 19, Paul asks two difficult questions. In verse 14 - "Is God unrighteous because he takes one man and sets aside another" (in other words, is God less than God because He picks and chooses who His followers will be? Doesn't this mean some have no chance?)

### **ROMANS 10: "The Exercise of Human Responsibility in Rejection."**

#### **Notes on verses 1-4: Introduction**

**Verse 1** - encouragement to prayer. The sovereignty of God should be an incentive, not a discouragement to prayer.

**Verse 2** - these people have a "zeal" for God. But this zeal was "not according to knowledge." This knowledge refers to a "full knowledge." The Jews had some knowledge, but they did not know God in Christ Jesus.

**Verse 3** - this was a willful ignorance on their part. They sought to establish their own righteousness. They did not submit to God's righteousness. God's righteousness is something not only that we believe, but also something to which we should be submitted.

**Verse 4** - Christ is the end when it comes to righteousness.

**Notes on verses 5-10:** The Gospel is within reach of all. The righteousness of the law can be summed up in three words: "do and live."

**Verse 6** - righteousness that is by faith. Paul is saying that man had nothing to do with the incarnation.

**Verse 7** - man had nothing to do with the resurrection

**Verse 9** - looks as though it were backwards, because it puts confession before faith - this is the outside view. Until you confess Jesus as Lord, I do not know whether you believe or not. If you confess Christ, then I know there is faith in your heart.

**Verse 10** - describes the actual order.

**Notes on verses 11-15: The Gospel is offered to all.**

Paul quotes to the Jews from their own Scriptures:

**Verse 11** - from Isaiah 49:23;

**Verse 13** - from Joel 2:32.

**Verses 14-15** - to show the Jews the necessity for taking the gospel, that is intended for all, to all. Christ does the sending: (see John 20:21, Isaiah 6:8)

### **Notes on verses 16-21: They have not all obeyed the Gospel**

**Verse 16** - Quotes from Isaiah 53:1. What kind of report was it they did not believe? The report of a Messiah, who was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, bruised for our iniquities - a Christ who was broken upon the cross.

**Verse 17** - Definition of faith. Faith does not just come by your hearing - that would be a human act. Faith comes from something heard - from the Word of God.

**Verse 18** - "did they not hear?" (see Psalm 19:4)

**Verse 19** - "did Israel really know? Did they understand this? Did not God spring something on the Jews, and without warning?" Quotes Moses (see Deuteronomy 10:19 and Deuteronomy 32:21), and Isaiah (Isaiah 65:1).

**Verse 21** - evidence of sovereign grace

### **DEVOTIONAL THOUGHTS:**

The dictionary defines the word "zealous" as "being ardently devoted to a purpose." We witness people today who are zealous for their particular sports team. They truly are a "fan-atic." Others are zealous for a social or political cause. Animal rights and environmental issues capture the hearts of many and we call them "fanatics."

The Apostle Paul, as he begins this chapter, proclaims that Israel had a zealousness for God. Now that sounds like a good kind of zealousness. We might call them "fanatics for God." Certainly this zealousness was a characteristic of such Jews who belonged to the Pharisaic party. They prided themselves on their commitment to God. But then Paul declares that their zealousness was not based on knowledge. If not knowledge, what then? As one reads the pages of the Gospels and Acts, one begins to understand that the zealousness of the Pharisees in particular was derived from their own interpretation of the traditions that had been handed down to them. Yes, they religiously kept the rules, but many had not understanding of what was the purpose of the rules. They just did it because that was the thing to do.

Paul's desire was that believers begin to become zealous based upon a full knowledge of what God had done for them in the person of Jesus Christ. I think Paul is saying that each person needs to have ownership of his or her belief system. It is a belief system not based upon the opinions of others, but is derived from my own personal study and reflection.

I want to be zealous. But I want that zealousness, that enthusiasm, to be based upon knowledge, not ignorance. Therefore, I need to be a zealous student of the Word and open to what God might teach me.

### **QUESTIONS TO PONDER AS ONE READS THESE VERSES:**

1. In verses 2 and 3, the word "knowledge" means "full knowledge." The Jews had some knowledge, but did not know God in Christ Jesus. According to Paul, in verse 3, what are the two dangers in having a zeal for God without a knowledge of Christ?

2. What was Paul's attitude toward the people he described in verses 2 and 3? What can we learn from him about our attitude toward the lost?

3. What is the difference between a righteousness that comes from the law (see verse 5) and a righteousness that leads to salvation (see verse 8)? What is the importance of Paul's statement in verses 9 and 10? What do they mean to you?

4. Why is belief in Christ never disappointing? Relate all the benefits we have in Christ.

5. What are the steps in reaching the lost? What is our part in this process?

6. Israel was obstinate and disobedient. They turned their back on God's plan. Read Psalm 19:4; Deuteronomy 10:19 and 32:21, and Isaiah 65:1. Yet, according to verse 21, what was God's attitude toward them, and why?

### **ROMANS 11: "The Experience of Merciful Purpose in Reception"**

The theme of this chapter is found in verse 1: has God cast away His people? God is here speaking to national Israel and not to elect Israel. The whole of this chapter can be summed up in two statements:

1. Paul shows first that the rejection of Israel is not total, but partial.
2. Paul demonstrates that even this partial rejection of Israel is not final, but only temporary

**Notes on verses 1-10:** Has God cast off His people? Paul's answer is "God forbid!" Why? Because there is a present election. Two schools of interpretation:

1. In the church God has fulfilled everything in the Old Testament and there is no future for the Jew as a nation (I reject this interpretation)

2. God has set Israel aside for an age, and at some future time (in the next age) God will fulfill to the letter every promise He has made to Israel as a nation (see Jeremiah 31:36-37, Jeremiah 33:24-26).

## **Paul shows some evidence that God has not cast off His people:**

1. He takes his own case - "was Paul cast off?" - No!
2. Paul points to God's foreknowledge. If God's foreknowledge of us as individuals cannot fail, neither can it fail when it comes to this nation of Israel which He foreknew in ages past.
3. Paul uses the illustration of Elijah. There was a remnant of 7,000 in Elijah's time. In Paul's time there were Jewish Christians to indicate God had not cast off His people.

**Verse 5:** makes the application to Israel. They did not deserve to be saved, but it was grace that saved them.

**Verse 7:** Israel did not obtain what it was seeking. For what was it seeking? Righteousness (Romans 10:13).

**Verses 8-10:** Israel had been hardened and blinded, not because of any arbitrary decree on God's part, but because of the response in their own hearts.

**Notes on verses 11-24:** There will be a future reception. "Is the rest of Israel cast off?" "Why did Israel stumble and fall?" So that salvation could come to the Gentiles (see John 1:11). The Jews crucified Jesus and that opened the door of salvation to the whole world.

**Verse 12:** How much more shall their fullness be? If the Gentile world gained through their fall, think what it will gain when God received the Jews back again (see Psalm 67:7). When God blesses Israel, then all the ends of the earth will hear of the Lord Jesus Christ in a way that they have never heard before. That is the "fullness" here to which Paul makes reference.

**Verse 13:** "magnify my office" - How? The more Jews that are saved, the more Gentiles there will be saved, and the greater will be the ministry to the Gentiles.

**Verse 15:** Is there a contradiction between verses 2 and 15? Jonah was cast into the sea, and yet he was not cast into the sea. God cast Israel into the sea of the nations, and yet He has not cast them away. He has cast them away into the nations, but in the nations He has preserved them, just as Jonah was preserved in the whale.

**Verses 16-24:** Discourse on the olive tree. Olive tree is not the church for Jews are still Jews and Gentiles are still Gentiles. What is this olive tree? It represents the place of favor or privilege. The tree does not save anyone. The apostle is saying that because the Jew did not live up to his privileges and the light God gave him, he has been cut out and the wild branches (Gentiles) were grafted into the place of favor. All the Gentiles are here. The great lesson of the passage is: That just as the

Jew in the Old Testament became bigoted, proud, and exclusive, and thought that God knew him only, now that very same thing is happening in Christendom to the Gentiles. There is only one thing that can retain favor in the eyes of God - faith (see verse 20).

**Notes on verses 25-32:** There will be a final salvation. Verse 25: What is the "fullness of the Gentiles?" (see Acts 15:14 and Luke 21:24). When the body of Christ is complete, the Lord will come, Gentile times will finish and Israel shall be put in again. All Israel shall be saved - all Israel that is on the earth then is going to be saved.

**Notes on verses 33-36:** Doxology. Verse 33: Paul uses two words to describe God's wisdom: unsearchable and untrackable.

**Versed 36:** out of God all things come - He is the origin. Through God all things exist - He is the sustainer of all things. Unto God, back to God - He is the goal. There is the circle of eternity: out, through, back.

**DEVOTIONAL THOUGHTS:** The thought expressed in verse 29 has always been an encouragement to me. There Paul writes, "For God's gifts and his call are irrevocable." Now the word "irrevocable" means: "something that cannot be recalled or undone; unalterable."

There is a certain stage where my grandchildren came to me to give me something. It might be a piece of candy or a book or a toy. They would say, "Grandpa, this is for you." I would say, "Thank you." Pretty soon, they would come back and take the piece of candy or the book or the toy out of my hands. I would say, "Hey, I thought you have given this to me." And their response was usually, "Oh, Grandpa!" Now I usually knew when they gave me something that they would soon want it returned to them. So I learned not to value too highly what I had been given. But, praise God, the Apostle Paul declares that God does not operate like my grandchildren. When He gives us something, and He delights in doing that for His children - the Bible describes them as good things, they are ours. He never recalls them. He never comes and says, "Max, I want that gift back." His heart may be pained when I do not use such gifts as He would desire, but He never comes and takes it away from me. I may be disciplined for being lackadaisical, but the surrender of the gift is never part of the discipline. Friends, I take great comfort in that promise. I think it also pertains to salvation because it, too, is a gift to us from God. Therefore it cannot be recalled. Because my spiritual gifts are from God I must guard them jealously and carefully. I must never sit there and ponder, "I wonder when God is going to come and take them away." My grandchildren may do that; my God never.

#### **QUESTIONS TO PONDER AS ONE READS THESE VERSES:**

1. How is the remnant of Israel to be saved? How does this fact relate to your

salvation? Cite several verses to support your conclusion.

2. Why is the nation of Israel blinded to the things of God today? What is the believer's responsibility to Israel?

3. What was the result of Israel's fall and their refusal to accept Christ?

4. What is the time of the fullness of the Gentiles? Relate this to Jesus' statement in Luke 21:24.

5. Even though Israel has rejected Christ, what is to be our attitude toward the Jews today?

6. In verses 33-36, list all the various ways Paul uses to describe God. Which way is most meaningful to you?

## **ROMANS 12: "The Christian Life as Exhibited in Transformation"**

### **Notes on verses 1-2: A Life of Consecration**

Verse 1- "Brothers" refers to Christians. You cannot take this twelfth chapter and apply it to the man who is not a Christian.

"In view of God's mercy" - Paul is not talking about what we did, but what God did for us. And what has God done for us? We can make a partial list that would include the following: justification, identification with Christ, being under grace and not under law, the Holy Spirit indwelling us, help in times of infirmity, divine election, a coming glory, never being separated from God's love, and confidence in God's faithfulness as revealed in His plans for Israel.

"To offer your bodies as living sacrifices" - Why does Paul mention just the body? The body at the present time is the instrument of the soul and spirit, and God gets no service except it be manifested through the body - the hands, the feet, the mouth, the tongue, etc. How are we to present our bodies? As living sacrifices. We are called upon to live for Christ. God's service is freedom not slavery. God's service is life not death.

1. It is to be holy - you are a sinner and now come in His merit, in His blood, and the sacrifice is considered holy.

2. It is acceptable - God will receive it because it is well-pleasing (see Genesis 4:4)

3. It is reasonable - it is logical (It is the response of a man who recognizes that he was bought with a price and therefore belongs to the one who bought him - see First Corinthians 6:19); and it is reasonable (it is the response of a moral creature made in the image of God and unlike a beast - see Second Peter 2:12); and it is spiritual (it is the response of a creature who rises to the highest point of priestly service under the direction of the Spirit of God - see Hebrews 9:1, 6).

**Verse 2:** "Conform" - outward act without any necessary connection to the inward part of a person.

"Transform" - refers to an external form that clearly represents inner essence.

"To this world" - why not? See Galatians 1:4, Ephesians 2:2, and First Corinthians 7:31. Do we transform ourselves? No, we are to be transformed by the Spirit.

"Prove" - test out to discover and approve as the assayer tests the ore to discover and approve it. Two things are involved: first, God has a plan for our lives that He is willing and desirous we should discover; and second, only those completely surrendered to Him will find that will. What is the description of the will of God? It is good, acceptable, and perfect.

**Summary: the basis of holy living is revelation; the method of holy living is consecration; and the result of holy living is transformation.**

### **Notes on verses 3-8: A Life of Humility**

**Verse 3** - a general thought. A man should not aspire to be something that is not in the will of God for him because God has made him what he is and has a particular place for him as a Christian. The measure of God's dealing with you is your faith.

**Verses 4-8** - an analogy to a body. Our natural body:

- 1) has many members;
- 2) these are one body, a unity;
- 3) each member is a member of all the others;
- 4) all members do not have the same work to do.

### **Our body of Christ:**

- 1) has many members - see Romans 12:4;
- 2) we are one body, a unity - see Ephesians 5:28-32, Ephesians 1:22-23, and First Corinthians 12:12;
- 3) each member is a member of all the others - see Ephesians 4:25 and First Corinthians 12:27; and
- 4) each has a different work - see Romans 12:6 and First Corinthians 12:4-11.

Gifts:

1. **Prophecy** - usually referred to men who wrote God's Word but also refers to

those who preach it.

2. **Serving** - performed by deacons or laymen, minister to the saints material needs

3. **Teaching** - art of making the unchanging divine message understandable to the unlearned.

4. **Encouraging** - strengthening one another

5. **Contributing** - sharing our substance with others (see Second Corinthians 9:7).

6. **Leadership** - those in places of authority, example -church boards.

7. **Showing mercy** - relations to sick, needy, poor.

### **Notes on verses 9-21: A Life of Love**

**Verses 9-16** depict love within the church, while verses 17-21 show love outside the church.

**Verse 9** - love without hypocrisy; D. L. Moody said hypocrisy was "talking cream and living skim milk" (see First John 3:18); "cling" means to be glued to (see Philippians 4:8)

**Verse 10** - be tenderly affectionate to fellow believers in "brother love" or love like a brother loves

**Verse 11** - not slothful or neglectful in the business of the church, but "in enthusiasm be at the boiling point"

**Verse 12** - hope (refers to the second coming); patience (see James 1:2-4); instant in prayer

**Verse 13** - pursue hospitality (see Genesis 18:2-3)

**Verse 16** - love condescends (see Philippians 2:6-7)

**Verse 17** - love outside the church - honest, honorable, and beautiful

**Verse 18** - a hard thing to do (see James 3:18)

**Verse 19** - wrath of God; it is not our business to repay men for what they do to us

**Verse 20** - a Christian repayment is kindness; what does "heap burning coals on his head" mean? - we will destroy him as our enemy by our kindness.

### **DEVOTIONAL THOUGHTS:**

This chapter begins with the word "therefore." One of the first lessons I learned in my class on biblical interpretation concerned this word. The professor said that when a person saw the word "therefore" he was to ask himself the question, "what

was it there for?" So, I ask myself that question as I begin this chapter. "Therefore" is a connecting word linking what is to be said with what has already been said. It is like identifying a conclusion. So, with what is this chapter connected? It could connect with those powerful closing words of the previous chapter that describe the person of God. Certainly, in the light of who God is, it would be imperative that we surrender ourselves to Him. But, what is said in chapter 12 does not seem to relate well to the truths we have found in the preceding three chapters on Israel. Then what? I believe that "therefore" connects with the great thoughts expressed in chapter 8 where Paul trumpets those two strong towers of faith: that the believer no longer stands condemned before God, and that nothing can ever separate the believer from the love of God. Therefore, because there is no condemnation and no separation, it is imperative that the believer surrender himself completely to the will and purposes of God. How does this occur? It is not through a process of conformation - of striving to become like someone else. But it comes from a process of transformation - of allowing another to mold our life to become like His. I don't want to conform to the image of Christ. I want to be transformed by Him to become what He wants me to become. This word "therefore" is a powerful word. Oh the beauty of its teachings.

#### **QUESTIONS TO PONDER AS ONE READS THESE VERSES:**

1. Why does God need our bodies?
2. What is the difference between "conforming" and "transforming?" Why are we not to conform to this world? According to Paul, how does one get to know God's will?
3. How is the body of Christ like a natural body?
4. Make a list of the gifts of the Spirit given to the Church. How are these gifts used to enhance the ministry of the Church?
5. Make a list of all the demonstrations of love that are to characterize the Church (refer to verses 9-16). Why are these difficult to achieve? How can we cultivate them?
6. How are we to show our love to those outside the Church? Why is it easier to seek revenge than to show love? How can we overcome this?

#### **ROMANS 13: "The Christian's Responsibilities toward the State"**

Chapter thirteen is the shortest of the chapters in Romans, yet it packs tremendous influence toward our Christian walk. Its focus is upon the Christian and his or her responsibilities toward the State. During the first century, the Church held the doctrine of the kingship of Jesus, thus putting it in opposition to the doctrine of the Roman State where the Emperor was proclaimed not only as king but as god. This led to many early Christians wondering what the relationship was between the Roman State and themselves. In this chapter, Paul seeks to address that issue, in ways that probably shocked many of his readers. In fact, some today still find his teachings to be incredulous.

## **Notes on verses 1-7: The Christian's Duty to the State is one of subjection**

### **Verse 1 - "everyone" - refers to every believer**

"governing authorities" - refers to civil authorities, the rulers of the State. There is no governmental authority except through God (see Daniel 4:17 and John 19:10-11). All power comes through God. No ruler can hold his place except by permission of the God of heaven. People have no right to disobey the authority of existing powers in governmental reign. Opposition to government is opposition to God and results in judgment (see Acts 23:1-5 - to a believer's position to the government)

**Verse 3-** government rewards the good and punishes the evil

**Verse 4** - the officer of the State is a minister of God. The pastor ministers in the spiritual; the State officers minister in the temporal or material. Thus the government is established for good.

**Verse 5** - Believers are to be in subjection, not only to avoid earthly governmental dealings, but because of a loving conscience toward God. Is there no limit to my subjection to the State? Yes! The State is limited to the extent that the commands of the State agree with the duty that God lays down for you as an individual (see Acts 5:29). God has the prior right over the soul

**Verses 6-7** - believers are to pay taxes

"tax" - personal and property taxes

"revenue" - tax on imports and exports

"respect" - recognition of the position of high officials

"honor" - never speak in a disrespectful way about any officer of the State

**Notes on verses 8-10:** The Christian's Duty to the Citizens of the State is one of love. It is not subjection, but love.

**Verse 9** - never assume an obligation we cannot reasonably be sure of repaying

**Notes on verses 11-14:** The Christian's Duty in view of Christ's coming is one of wakefulness.

### **DEVOTIONAL THOUGHTS:**

The clarion call, cited in verse 11, is for the believer to wake up from his slumber because the return of Jesus Christ approaches. One of the indictments against the modern-day church is its apathy toward the exercise of the biblical commands to go into all the world and to make disciples. It is not that we do not know the command exists. Most of us have memorized it at one time in our Christian journey. It is not

that we do not know what the command means. Volumes have been written on its meaning. It is just that we have chosen to ignore it, or have chosen to procrastinate in our observance of it. Paul encouraged his readers to be people of the day, of the light, and not people of the night, of the darkness. With this thought he echoed the words of Jesus that His desire for us to be lights to the world (see Matthew 5:13-16). How can a person become an effective light for Jesus, one that shines brightly in the midst of a dark age? I believe the answer to that question is found in verse 14. Paul begins with a positive statement - the clothing of ourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ. It begins with a commitment to make Jesus Christ the first priority within our lives. We desire to love as He loved. We desire to serve others as He served. We desire to rejoice with others as He rejoiced. We desire to stand firmly as He stood firmly. This does not happen automatically. I have to will it to happen. And when I do, then the apathy that afflicted me is removed.

Second, Paul shares a negative statement - not thinking about how to gratify my own sinful desires. I am glad he put these in this order. To begin with the negative is very difficult. To ask someone to not think about how they could gratify their own sinful desires, and yet fail to give them an alternative, is setting the table for failure. But, once I have made the commitment to clothe myself with the Lord Jesus Christ, then I am enabled to have my thoughts directed by Him and not by me. Why is this important? It is because of the day in which we live. The world is asking for someone to show character, to exhibit a different spirit, to mark to the beat of a different drummer. It seems we are trying so hard to be like the world, and then wondering why it is not impacted for Christ. I believe it is because we are going about it the wrong way. It is time to wake up and to be lights for Jesus. Top of Page

### **QUESTIONS TO PONDER AS ONE READS THESE VERSES:**

1. Paul states that no ruler can hold his place except by permission of the God of heaven. How should this thought affect our attitude toward such past leaders as Stalin and Lenin, Hitler and Mussolini, and Saddam Hussein?

2. Paul writes that opposition to government is opposition to God. Do you agree with this statement? Can a believer ever disobey his or her government? If so, when? Give some illustrations of when this would apply.

3. What does it mean to render tax to whom it is due? To render revenue? To render respect? To render honor? Why is the practice of these things so important to the believer?

4. Is Paul teaching in verse 8 that the believer is to never go into debt? What is he teaching in this verse? How can we make this a part of our lives?

5. How is love the fulfillment of the law?

6. What is to be the attitude of believers as we focus on Christ's coming?

### **ROMANS 14: "Consideration for the Weaker Brother."**

Chapter 14 of Romans can be titled, "Consideration for the Weaker Brother." Throughout this chapter the Apostle Paul considers this group. Who are they?

1. They are not morally weak.
2. They were men who were exceedingly sensitive to sin.
3. They were weak in the faith. They did not grasp the full and free salvation as it was revealed in Christ Jesus. They did not grasp the fact that there is no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus. They did not grasp the fact that salvation is apart from all works. Finally, they were incapable of comprehending the system of truth.
4. They were Jewish Christians.

Who are the strong?

1. They are those who know justification is apart from works.
2. They are those freed from legalism and ceremonialism.

Which group is the correct one? The answer - neither one. The weak need correction because their position is wrong - they condemn others who do not agree with them. The strong need correction because they have misused their principle which is right.

Notes on verses 2-5: The Concrete Examples Cited

Verses 2-4 - problem of food. Which is correct - to eat anything or to be picky? (see Genesis 9:3; Acts 10:12; First Timothy 4:3-5)

Verse 3- admonition to the strong: do not despise the weaker one admonition to the weak: do not condemn the strong

Verse 4 - admonition to the weak: the strength of the strong is not in himself because it is God who makes him stand.

Verse 5- problem of special days. As far as Christianity is concerned, everyday of your life is holy

**Notes on verses 6-12: Divine Principles**

Verses 6-7 - both the weak and the strong are seeking the honor of the Lord

Verse 7 - no true Christian lives unto himself; he lives unto the Lord

Verses 8-9 - both the weak and the strong worship the same Lord

Verses 10-12 - both the weak and the strong will appear before Christ's judgment seat

Notes on verses 13-23: Practical Exhortations

Verse 13 - Paul speaks to the weak

Verse 14 - Paul sides with the strong

Verses 15-16 - Paul admonishes the strong

Verse 17 - great principle - the kingdom of God is not a set of rules and legalistic ceremonies. It is righteousness, peace, joy in the Holy Spirit (see Romans 5:1-3)

Verse 19 - Paul speaks to the strong

Verse 21 - word "good" could be translated "beautiful"

Verse 22 - addressed to the strong. "Have it yourself" - do not go around displaying how much you can do and how far you can go because of your faith.

Verse 23 - Paul speaks to the weak

### **DEVOTIONAL THOUGHTS:**

Have you ever turned to someone and said something like this, "I wish so-and-so would grow up?" What you meant is that you desired the so-and-so to begin exhibiting some maturity in his actions and decisions. This is especially true of those who should be showing maturity, but are not. The Apostle Paul relates that in the Christian walk, some people are not as mature as they should be, or as they probably will be. He calls them "weak in faith." I have met many that I would call "weak in faith" and I am sure you have also. I must admit that at times these people frustrate me. At times I can even become angered by their attitudes and actions. I want to grab them and admonish them to "grow up!" Yet, I find that the areas where their "weakness" is demonstrated is in areas that are marginal at best. Paul tells us it is often centered on what to eat (not as much of a problem today), but I know of people who will not eat in a restaurant where alcohol is served. Does this mean they are "weak in faith?" Another area cited by Paul concerns the celebration of holidays. You might ask what the big deal is. But I know of some who joyfully celebrate a Lenten experience, while others think it a waste of time.

Who is the "weak in faith?" I find that a difficult question to answer. For I am quick to state that those who do not believe as I believe, or practice their Christianity as I practice mine, are the "weak in faith." So, I use myself as the standard. I am strong...they are weak. But, in my hastiness to judge another, I must realize that someone else may consider my actions and attitudes to be weak in comparison to his. It seems to me that our ultimate standard is Jesus Christ. This same Apostle Paul wrote to the Philippians that his one desire in life was to know Jesus Christ in more intimate ways. As one would read this Philippian Epistle, one might be led to conclude that Paul was the strong one. Yet I think Paul would say that he was still "weak in faith," that there was more need to grow in maturity. I need to learn not to be hasty in passing judgment upon another simply because he or she does not agree with me. I need to courteously express my beliefs and encourage them to consider my expressions even as I give consideration to theirs. Thus the body of Christ will grow as He desires it should.

### **QUESTIONS TO PONDER AS ONE READS THESE VERSES:**

1. What does it mean to be weak in the faith?
2. Who is correct - the weak in the faith or the strong in the faith? Why?
3. Verse 5 talks about special observances. What is the proper attitude to take in regard to special days?
4. Read verses 6-12 and discover three ways that the weak in faith and the strong in faith are equals.
5. According to verse 17, what is the great principle that should govern all that we do?
6. Read verses 15, 16, 19, 21, and 22. What is Paul's advice to the strong in faith? Why do you think he focused his attention on them and not the weak in faith?

### **ROMANS 15: "The Christian Life Exemplified in Ministry."**

Chapter fifteen of Romans can be titled, "The Christian Life Exemplified in Ministry." The key words in this chapter are "servant" and "service" (see verses 8, 16, 25, and 31).

#### **Notes on verses 1-13: The Ministry of Christ**

**Verses 1-7** - Ministry was sacrificial

**Verse 4** - "The hope" - the hope of the coming of the Lord

"Teach us" - heart knowledge (see John 6:45)

"Encouragement" - waiting for God to work

"Encouragement of the Scriptures" - see 2 Corinthians 13:11

**Verse 5** - "Endurance" - means comfort

**Verse 7** - We are to receive one another as Christ has received us

**Verse 13** - Five great facts:

1. God is named "the God of hope" (see Romans 5:2, Romans 12:12, Ephesians 2:7)

2. It is God alone who can fill us with all joy and peace, making us to abound in hope

3. It is by the power of the indwelling Spirit that we are "to overflow in hope"

4. It is in a believing heart that these blessed results are brought about; "believe" - living by faith in the Son of God.

5. It is the will of God that you and I be "filled with all joy and peace in believing"

#### **Notes on verses 14-33: The Ministry of Paul**

**Verses 14-17** - It was a personal ministry

**Verse 15** - A good many of us think of ministry as something hard and unpleasant. Paul says it comes by grace

**Verse 16** - "Proclaiming the gospel" - minister as a priest ministers (see Numbers 8). Paul was sanctifying the Gentiles as the Levites were offered up by Aaron to

God

**Verses 18-21** - It was a powerful ministry

**Verse 20** - Paul gives the reasons for his ministry

**Verses 22-29** - It was a purposeful ministry

**Verse 25** - Minister as a deacon

**Verse 27** - Gentiles owe a great deal to the Jews

**Verses 30-33** - It was a prayerful ministry. Three things for which to pray:

- a. Paul might be delivered from them that do not believe
- b. Paul's ministry might be acceptable
- c. Paul might come to Rome with joy

### **DEVOTIONAL THOUGHTS:**

As one whose vocation is the teaching of the Word of God, I was especially drawn to Paul's statement in verse 4: "For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through endurance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope."

I must confess that often I have asked myself the question as to why a particular story was recorded for us in the Bible. I have often wondered why God included the lives of such men as Balaam (he is so very troublesome), Samson (his is a life I have a great deal of difficulty pondering), or even a Solomon (I am working on this one). Yet Paul makes it very clear that their stories are given to us for our edification. We are to learn from their failures and successes. Now I have found that, at least for me, this objective becomes more attainable when I begin to consider these men and women as real life people. I remove them from any ivory-coated pedestals I may have placed them upon, and begin to view them as I would my neighbor next door. I can close my eyes and almost hear David hollering at his children, threatening them but never really disciplining them. I can almost hear the pounding of the hammers of a Noah as he works on the ark and yet is proclaiming God's message of impending judgment. I stand and listen to the reports of the twelve as they relate their travels into the land of promise, and think that perhaps I might have agreed with the ten rather than the two. I sit upon that flower-bedecked hillside overlooking the Sea of Galilee and enjoy that miraculous meal, then ponder the depth of Jesus' teaching and wonder if I would have continued following Him. "These were written to teach us...that we might have hope." What is this hope? I believe it is a hope in ourselves that God can and will work His will through us. I have often said, "If God can use a Jonah, He can use just about anyone." That gives me hope.

So, the next time you read one of the old familiar stories, close your eyes and picture yourself there. I can guarantee that the Bible will take on a whole new meaning for you. And yes, you will have a hope!

### **QUESTIONS TO PONDER AS ONE READS THESE VERSES:**

1. Why did God give us the Scriptures? What do they provide us with? Give some examples from your own life of how God used His Word to encourage you.

2. If we really believe in God's Word, what is to be our attitude toward others within the Body of Christ?

3. In verse 14, what three traits characterized the church Paul was writing to?

4. According to verses 18-19, what things did Paul want to speak about in his ministry? How is that different than what we usually boast about in our ministries?

5. In verses 31-32, what were Paul's three prayer requests?

## **ROMANS 16:**

This last chapter, the 16th, I title, "A Warm Conclusion." The key phrase in this chapter is "in Christ" or "in the Lord" (see verses 2, 3, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, and 22).

### **Notes on verses 1-2: Commendations**

Phoebe carried the Roman Epistle up to Rome. She had the following three credentials: 1) Our sister; 2) a servant of the church; and 3) a helper of many and of Paul.

Word "servant" - deacon. What lessons can we learn from these verses? We should always give our brothers all the assistance we can.

### **Notes on verses 3-16: Greetings**

1. Priscilla and Aquila - see Acts 18:2, 18, 26
2. The Church in their home
3. Epenetus - one of Paul's early Asian converts
4. Mary
5. Adronicus and Junias - fellow Benjaminites who were saved before Paul was
6. Ampliatus and Urbanus - slaves by name
7. Stachys
8. Apelles - tested in Christ
9. Household of Aristobulus - grandson of Herod the Great; these were his slaves
10. Household of Narcissus - tradition tells us he was a notoriously wicked man who had been put to death three years previously
11. Herodian
12. Tryphena and Tryphosa - sisters
13. Persis - an elderly woman
14. Rufus - son of Simon - see Mark 15:21

### **Notes on verses 17-20: A Warning**

The Christian is never to surrender even for the sake of unity to anyone who brings

some teaching contrary to the doctrines of this book.

Verse 18 - these people are selfish

Verse 20 - this has reference to Genesis 3:15; "will soon" means "done quickly"

### **Notes on verses 21-24: Salutations**

Verse 22 - Paul's secretary Tertius sends his own greetings

Verse 23 - Gaius - baptized by Paul at Corinth - see First Corinthians 1:14. Erastus - treasurer of the city of Corinth

### **Notes on verses 25-27: A Doxology**

"Mystery" - God was going to receive Jews and Gentiles into the same body, the Church of Jesus Christ.

### **DEVOTIONAL THOUGHTS:**

As he prepares to close this important letter to the Romans, Paul had one more warning to share with them. It is found in verses 17-19. Its message is one that must be heard today, for the very integrity of the Church is at stake.

Paul admonished the Roman believers to have nothing to do with anyone who came into their midst proclaiming a gospel that was different from what they had heard and now read in this letter. A watered-down gospel is dangerous because it does not proclaim the whole truth. A watered-down gospel does not proclaim a message from God, but one from man to man. It is not "Thus says the Lord" but "This is my opinion."

Friends, opinions cannot deliver a man from the entanglements of sin. Opinions cannot set a person free from addiction to sin. Opinions cannot lead one into eternal life. We are not saved by someone's opinions, but by what God has proclaimed.

Yet, there is a movement afoot today to water-down the gospel message so that we might get a better hearing from those who are lost. The reasoning goes something like this: If they don't come, how can they hear? Yet, when they do come, what do we tell them? Jesus never painted an easy pathway to heaven. He defined it as a narrow gate opening up to a narrow road. He stated that in order to follow Him, one had to deny himself and take up a cross daily. Hardly a message that appeals to the masses. Yet it is the only message that will bring life to someone who is dead in their trespasses and sins. Methodologies must change...but the message must never change.

### **QUESTIONS TO PONDER AS ONE READS THESE VERSES:**

1. What three phrases describe Phoebe? What do these tell us about the kind of

person she was?

2. The Christian is never to surrender, even for the sake of unity, to anyone who brings some teaching contrary to the doctrines of this book. What is the danger these people bring with them? What is our main line of defense against them?

3. Share with your group some of the things you have learned from your study of Romans. How has this study helped you grow in your faith?