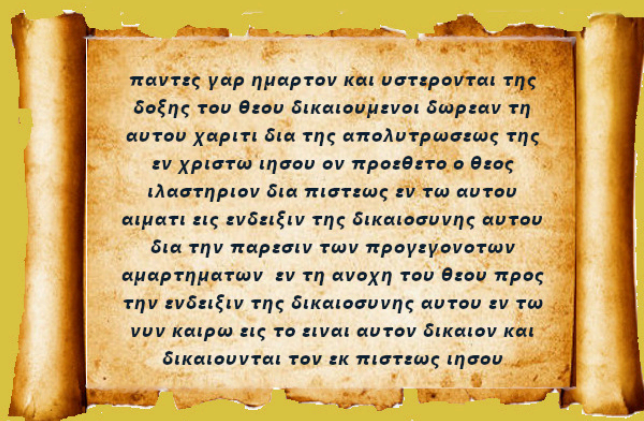


Romans

Paul's Covenant Theology



When the Epistle to the Romans appeared for the first time, it was to the church a word in season. Every time that, in the course of the ages, it has recovered the place of honor which belongs to it, it has inaugurated a new era. - Francis Godet

Romans

Paul's Covenant Theology

The Epistle to the Romans is about a Covenant God. Perhaps, we might say that when God made a covenant with Adam, He made it with mankind [Genesis 3:15]. In like manner when He made a covenant with Abraham, He made it with all Israel [Genesis 17:9]. And when He made one with Jesus at Calvary, He made it, by faith, with us all [Hebrews 8:6].

Coleridge calls the Epistle to the Romans "the profoundest book in existence." Chrysostom had it read to him twice a week. Luther, in his famous preface, says: "This Epistle is the chief book of the New Testament, the purest gospel... the daily bread of his soul..." Melancthon, in order to make it perfectly his own, copied it twice with his own hand. The Reformation was undoubtedly the work of the Epistle to the Romans; ... and the probability is that every great spiritual revival in the church will be connected as effect and cause with a deeper understanding of this book. ... the true understanding of this masterpiece of the apostolic mind is reserved for those who approach it with a heart described by Jesus in His Sermon on the Mount, the heart hungering and thirsting after righteousness.¹

1. Taken from the Introduction to Godet's Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans.

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Front Cover: The Greek Text - Romans 3:23-26

“**23** for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, **24** being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, **25** whom God set forth *as* a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed, **26** to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.”

Preface

It is worth noting that the New Covenant in Christ which Paul details in his letter to the Church at Rome is far more than a theological treatise on the Cross. Every chapter addresses some aspect of the ongoing conflict with a religious culture and the forces of evil which a believer faces in their Christian experience and which the covenant faithfulness of God effectively deals with.

We must not read The Epistle to the Romans as a Jewish argument against grace because it is *every* form of religious legalism against grace. There is often a struggle within the young and the immature believer who has been consumed with an effort to please God. What was a Temple experience for the Jews has become a church experience for the Christian who is comfortable with a weekly regiment that feels right just because it requires an acceptable amount of commitment and duty. But as Paul affirmed, ritual and ceremony cannot save us. God wants our participation in a Covenant faithfulness with Him, in the new Covenant, which was ratified by the Savior's death. In other words: Christianity is not a religion but a relationship. This Epistle shows us how.

Sadly, some have become comfortably familiar with the prison cell they have made of their lives, living a lax Christian witness instead of a dynamic testimony, while making some temptations pet experiences instead of escaping into a life submitted to the Spirit. And somehow a visit to church each week provides a repentant reset for the coming week. Even with the chains removed and the doors off the hinges of this prison of an old life—a freedom Paul trumpeted for all by faith in Christ—some accept, instead, a ritualized lifestyle defining righteousness not as a covenant relationship with God but a set of do's and don'ts, a comfortable mundanity, that supports an old lifestyle that does not require a prayer *life* nor a daily commitment to Christ. It is what Bonhoeffer called a “cheap” grace.¹

A living faith within a dynamic grace appropriates that for which Christ gave His life to provide. The Cross means more than a church service or the symbolism in a Jewish festival. To Paul, it meant what life should be all about for anyone who believes what it represents. How did Professor Lightfoot put it in his Preface to his commentary on the Epistle to the Philippians? “Though the gospel is capable of doctrinal exposition, though it is eminently fertile in moral results, yet its substance is neither a

1. Bonhoeffer. Page 46.

dogmatic system nor ethical code, but a *Person* and a *Life*.”² The Professor said it best about the Judaizers and also about many of the religious of our day, “The Christ of their anticipations was not the Christ of Saint Paul’s preaching. Grace, liberty, the abrogation of law, the supremacy of faith, the leveling of all religious and social castes – these were strange sounds in their ears...”³

Legalism replaces following Christ because following in His steps puts Him in charge of our lives, and that sounds too demanding and too strange, even though, it is the most practical and reasonable lifestyle for a believer. Reducing the Christian experience down to a weekend commitment can mistakingly become the Christian’s version of a Jewish sacrifice.

Some young believers are not yet aware of the transformation the Gospel is making within them. They need to be discipled. And “a life in the Son” [1 John 5:11] often seems to conflict with everything they once knew that is now morally unacceptable and culturally wrong for them. These do not fit their new life in Christ. Confused and ignorant of the possibilities that are theirs in Christ, the message of the Cross has become merely a religious status symbol or a ticket to heaven and not—as it must become—a transformation of the heart and life. Like the Judaizers of Paul’s day, a covenant of works, like the Torah with 613 injunctions, seems easier to follow than living daily in prayer, trusting God for direction and sustenance. A covenant relationship with God is a growing, deepening, relationship in which God’s grace supports the life He has called us to live.

Grace is hard to understand. I contend that the very language in our New Covenant [Testament] was specifically developed to begin in some small way to describe this indescribable love of God. He left Heaven, left the Throne, to come here, Himself, to die for us [John 3:16]. Nothing here seems reasonable to the natural mind [1 Corinthians 2:14].

How does one start a legitimate conversation with the young believer who is so vulnerable to the justification by works promoted by the Judaizers? This is Paul’s burden to the Romans. God’s definition of reasonableness is different than man’s. “He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also *freely give us all things?*” [Romans 8:32].

We also must not shy away from Paul’s description of sin and final judgment. It is terrifyingly unreal to the average person whose life is comfortably simple and ethical. God’s wrath is a word deserving special attention. For Paul, this is part of the Gospel message and needs to be said. A harvest of wheat requires God do something with the tares also [Matthew 13:30]. We would rather not, but this would then be a serious omission in the message of Mercy proclaimed from the Cross.

2. Lightfoot. *Philippians*. Page ix.

3. Ibid. Page 16.

As you study Romans, when you read “The righteousness of God” read instead, “the covenant faithfulness of God.” When you read about salvation as a declaration of righteousness imputed to us, read instead, “our covenant faithfulness to Him.” It isn’t the same covenant God made with Abraham but it is the same covenant God who now covenants with us under the terms Jesus ratified at Calvary. We, as Abraham, go into covenant with God by faith. But when you read “faith” ask yourself if this should also mean our *faithfulness*, since “faith” and “faithfulness” are one and the same Biblical word. A covenant with God is an agreement with Him that we freely participate in. Our faith is our trusting Him. Our faithfulness is His trusting us.

Lastly, the translation of the text is my own to avoid copyright infringements, but I consulted two commentaries: Dr. Lange’s and the Classical Commentary on Romans by Francis Godet. They keep me honest and straight.

May the Lord, direct my thoughts as I study this timeless Epistle. May the Lord bless you as you spend time with Him in conversation over its content. Spend time prayerfully in these verses. Find what your heart is searching for, if not in reading this commentary, somewhere else, in the testimony of another believer, in fellowship with a local gathering of saints, in sermon and song, in another book ... or, where it is always to be found, in reading God’s Word devotionally. Pick your favorite translation. Live in the pages of this timeless Epistle. I, too, will join you there in fellowship.

Romans 1:1-17

This introduction is intended to establish a relation between the apostle and his readers which does not yet exist.

Romans is Paul's personal testimony, and there's the rub; for, he lives the revelation given him by God. He has opened himself up to the most abusive criticism the religious world could level against him. He talks openly to a generation of the most pious opponents to His teaching. He stands passionately exposed to hundreds of years of established doctrine, traditions, and culture that has encased the hardened hearts and political ambitions of the greatest religious and philosophical minds of his day.

"The Epistle to the Romans," Francis Godet taught, "is so intimately bound up with the personal experience of its author, it so contains the essence of his preaching, or, to use his own expression twice repeated in our Epistle, *his Gospel*,¹ that the study of the book in this case imperiously requires that of the man who composed it. ...Paul's other Epistles are fragments of his life; here we have his life itself. ... his life as a Jew and Pharisee, his conversion, and his life as a Christian and apostle"²

It is remarkable in itself that he could keep his focus and composure in unwelcome debates with closed minded intellects. But then again, his doctrine of a faith by grace [Ephesians 2:7] *was* his life. This Epistle should be our life experience as well!

There is a tenderness in his writings. being burdened for the salvation of his adversaries [Galatians 6:1-2], while showing an uncommon longing to stoke the fires of a passion for his calling in Christ in fellowship with believers he has never met. And yet somehow in his heart, he already has met them and has been in continuous prayer for their spiritual well-being.

1. *Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called an apostle separated [appointed: limited in scope and ministry] unto God's Good News,*
2. *which was before promised by His prophets [Isaiah 53] in the holy writings*
3. *concerning His Son begat of the seed of David according to His humanity [His incarnation: Philippians 2:7-8],*

1. Romans 2:16; 16:25

2. Godet. Page 3.

4. *who was established [designated]³ God's Son in a triumphant manner as an expression of God's holiness⁴ resurrected from among the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord,*
5. *by whom we receive grace and apostleship unto an obedient faith among all the Gentiles for His names sake,*
6. *among them even you are the called of Jesus Christ,*
7. *all those who are in Rome beloved of God, called saints, grace to you and peace from God, our Father and of the Lord Jesus Christ.*
8. *First of all, I thank my⁵ God through Jesus Christ concerning⁶ all of you as your faith is spoken of throughout the whole⁷ world.*
9. *To explain, as God is my witness whom I serve in my spirit in the Gospel [good news] of His Son, as you are always on my mind,⁸ always⁹ in my prayers*
10. *requesting God how I might now find the way in God's will to visit you.*
11. *For sure, I long to see you that I might share a spiritual gift together to strengthen¹⁰ your faith,¹¹*
12. *This is [to speak more properly] to our mutual encouragement among you for the sake of the faith we have in common,¹² you and me.*

Verse 1: A Servant of Christ Jesus - Though scholars like to explore the testimony of Paul in the vacuum of history, it should challenge our understanding of truth by seeing ourselves in its pages. These are simple words but does that not speak to the life of every believer? If we are living

3. Acts 2:36 Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.”

4. “In the power of the Spirit of holiness” i.e. in the realm of the Spirit. Jesus’s resurrection was in every way a bodily resurrection but it was accomplished by a Holy God—and a just God— (as an expression of His holiness and justice) who was satisfied “pleased” [Isaiah 53:10] with His Son’s obedient service.

5. a personal relationship is evident

6. Some manuscripts read: on your behalf, which is more affectionate.

7. hyperbole is not sinful nor lying.

8. Leading others to Christ is an exhilarating experience that carries a serious commitment toward them in prayer. Every believer should ask God for such an opportunity, if they have not experienced this, to be so used of God.

9. Paul is, understandably, consumed now with the immediate need to see them! It is the subject of constant prayer.

10. a mutual encouragement and support in the work of God.

11. And what, in particular, does he want to do for them? He wants to participate in the exercise of their faith, almost as a cheerleader, to join in their effort to advance the Kingdom’s interests on their behalf. He can be an eyewitness to the answer. to his prayers.

12. Greek: “one another” — the true benefit of fellowship.

in the New Covenant [Hebrews 13:20-21]¹³, we are by definition *indentured*¹⁴ *servants* for life wanting to please Him in all we are and do.

Separated - Paul's calling was special, that is to say, limited to what God prepared him to do. Our Christian lives, too, our a testimony to the experience and the education God providentially provides each of us [1 Corinthians 12:11].¹⁵

Holy - The Scriptures are holy because they reflect the personality and the heart of God. I have a signed letter from my favorite instructor from Bible School days. He introduced me to the Biblical languages for which I hungered.¹⁶ I cherish that letter now that he is with our Lord. How much more should we cherish the words of Scripture coming as they do, from the pen of our Creator and Savior. God's bias is everywhere in evidence in His writings—as well they should be—because this is *His* story of *His* grace, now, at last, revealed to Paul, and through Paul to us.

Verse 3-4: Paul can never get far without talking about Calvary.

It was as if Paul interrupted himself or took a detour in his thoughts to share the preacher's text before continuing.

God's Son - Jesus' divine Sonship was not *acquired*. Some believe He was elevated to Sonship after His resurrection. Paul, like John, taught His sonship in relation to God, His Father, existed before time [John 1:1-3; 1 Corinthians 8:6]. Jesus has always been a member of the Trinity. He did not become one at His incarnation or resurrection. Why is it important to know that Jesus was "born of a woman" [Galatians 4:4] and that, consequently, He stood in line for the Judean throne in the lineage of King David? None of this was accidental or coincidental. It was by divine design:

As an Expression of God's Holiness- "according to the Spirit of holiness."¹⁷ Expositor's Commentary adds, "a unique expression generally regarded ...the same as..."the Holy Spirit."¹⁸ Martin Luther thought Paul to be saying that Jesus' incarnation was a *demonstration* of God's power¹⁹ [Romans 3:25-26]. Hebrews 9:14 offers us an explanation. Every step Jesus took was "ordered by the Lord" [Luke 22:42; John 8:28]. "How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself

13. Now may the God of peace who brought up our Lord Jesus from the dead, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you complete in every good work to do His will, working in you what is well pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom *be* glory forever and ever. Amen.

14. an agreement binding an apprentice to a master

15. But all these works that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will.

16. He even bounced in to our wedding reception for a quick handshakes.

17. Godet. Page 76.

18. Gaebelstein. vol X. Page 15.

19. Godet. Page 79. Luther's wording suggested more the birth of the Church at Pentecost than the resurrection.

without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" "...that you should follow in his steps." [1 Peter 2:21].

Theologians have always recognized that there is a difference between being church-ed and being saved. Here, Peter, encourages us to appropriate the provision of Calvary. Jesus died to free us from sin, walk with Jesus in newness of life. Or as Paul continued: Every believer receives grace.

Verse 5-6: We - Some call this the editorial 'we.'²⁰ Every believer receives grace but everyone is not called to be an apostle. But we are all called into ministry by our Lord [1 Corinthians 12:5].²¹

Unto an Obedient Faith - Faith is not "Christian Truth" or doctrine or creed in the New Testament. The meaning is "the obedience which consists in faith itself."²² Religious laws, legalism, or any attempts to define God in terms of our limited understanding of Who He is and how He works is—I speak respectfully—theological nonsense. We must trust His leadership, wherever it takes us. Our trust, our faith, is not in a dogma but only in *Him*!

Called of Jesus Christ - Our calling comes from our Lord. Each call is special, that is, each of us is prepared by our Lord for what it is He calls us to be that we might do what He calls us to do. But no one Christian is more special than another. Even in taking Peter, James, and John on an occasional excursion without the other disciples, it had, I am convinced, to do with their futures. It was part of their preparations for ministry. We need to be thinking in such terms also because our relationship with the Lord is covenantal. He is guiding us by the Holy Spirit.

Verse 7: Saints - Saints are saints because they have been separated unto God. We have been redeemed, freed to serve Him; we belong to Him [Ephesians 1:14].²³

Verses 8-11: There is much to discover about Christian fellowship in these verses that should encourage our gathering together. Paul's gratitude is far more than due to social contacts because He thanks God for not just a few of them or some small inner circle he might be a part of—he is grateful for all of the believers in Rome, and even though he has not met them yet. His thankfulness is based on what he has heard not personal knowledge about their faith. Perhaps it was Paul's enthusiasm that understood that the entire populated world heard. Maybe other Christian communities were equally as excited about what God was doing in Rome and they spread the word.

The Gospel of His Son, The story of the Cross. Paul found this message all consuming, not as an evangelist, alone, but as an apostle. Calvary was the foci of the history of the world and of the writings of the

20. The "plural of category" in the Greek language.

21. NKJV: There are differences of ministries, but the same Lord.

22. Godet. Page 82.

23. Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.

prophets as well as the substance of every covenant God has made with man. The Story of the Savior's life and death cannot be exhausted in books or sermons. But how easily the preacher can become fascinated with other subjects, tangential to the emphasis of God's Truth. How naively churches can labor in other things, organized with a social purpose instead of an eternal one.

Always in Prayer - Paul was asking the Lord to open the way for him to visit Rome.

Be careful what you ask for. Paul's journey to Rome would take him through stormy seas and a shipwreck [Acts 27]—this only after God rescued him from Jewish hands that sought his demise [Acts 26:19-21]. All this for the Gospel, but he would see Rome! It is easy for me to conclude that Paul's prayer was God's also for him, since he was so in tune with the great heart of God.

Verse 11: A Gift - is a *charismata*, which is "a concrete manifestation of grace."²⁴ These are also what the gifts of the Spirit are called [1 Corinthians 12:4]. Start with the word grace, but I prefer a different acronym: *God's Reach At Calvary Extended*. The gift God gives. As a God of covenant, is the gift of *Himself* in relationship with us. His touch heals [Luke 6:19], His Word creates [Genesis 1], His rule brings peace [Isaiah 9:7]. He is Jehovah-Shammah [Ezekiel 48:35]. His gift of forgiveness is the gift of reconciliation. His gift of salvation is the honor of entering into covenant with Him thanks to our Lord's death and resurrection. It is when gifts are disassociated from the giver, we begin to think of owning ministry which was not Paul's thought. He called the gifts in 1 Corinthians 12:1 *Pneumatika* or "as pertaining to the Spirit."

Paul looked forward to the opportunity of sharing his faith, his ministry, and personal testimony, with all the Roman believers. Perhaps, we should say that the gift of their fellowship is one of the most cherished. Sharing faith strengthens faith.

Verse 12: Comforted Together ... by the mutual faith. This construct is unique in Scripture here. How shall we interpret it? The word *comfort* speaks to the Spirit's ministry [John 16:8] designating here Paul and the Roman believers as receptacles (vessels) of such comfort—not the source of it, per se. This happens when they are together [the word *mutual*]. There are times when it is not best to be alone! There is much benefit in fellowship, in Christian community. Here, the Spirit's work is advanced in such a gathering of believers [*faith*].

13. *I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, that often I planned to come to you, I was hindered until until now. My desire and plan is*

24. Godet. Page 87.

to have a productive ministry²⁵ among you as I have with other Gentiles.

14. *I am indebted²⁶ to God for my salvation and ministry²⁷ unto Greeks and other gentiles,²⁸ both wise and those who lack understanding,²⁹*
15. *For this reason, I purpose to preach the Gospel in Rome,³⁰ too.*
16. *Indeed, I am never ashamed of the Gospel, because it is God's way of saving souls to everyone who believes, Jews and Greeks.*

Verse 14-15: I am indebted - As often as Paul uses conjunctives, connecting words, such as : *and, but, then*, he does not here because his thought bursts forth almost as a tangential thought, as though he must here interrupt himself, because this is important to say or so says his heart. He wants to see them because he wants to pay forward the joy of his salvation and calling that has given him purpose and meaning.

Preach - Some of us know what Jeremiah experienced: "His word burns in my heart like a fire. It's like a fire in my bones! I am worn out trying to hold it in! I can't do it!" [Jeremiah 20:9 NLT]

Verse 16: Shame, in the language of Scripture, regards one's reputation.³¹ Regarding the Gospel, this is paramount to hiding one's Christianity, perhaps, because it is deemed culturally unacceptable, socially awkward, or logically unreasonable. As believers, we, may feel unprepared to debate those who confront our testimony, but it is this testimony of our new life in Christ that must be shared if another has any opportunity to escape their past as well.

17. *Furthermore, The Righteousness of God, God's covenant faithfulness, is faith by faith [faith enriching faith³²] being revealed as Habakkuk wrote, "the just shall live by faith."*

Verse 17: The "righteousness of God" is His covenant faithfulness which is only made clear in relation with Him as the believer "follows in His

25. Paul comes as an apostle and not just a visitor.

26. There is no connecting word or phrase between verses 13 & 14. Paul is emotional and this comes out in his language. He senses a great debt. He is paying His salvation forward.

27. The Gospel transcends culture.

28. without regard for nationality

29. without regard for culture

30. All of Rome, not just the church.

31. Shame "continually expresses that feeling which leads to shun what is unworthy out of a prospective anticipation of dishonor." Richard Trench. *Synonyms of the New Testament*. Pg. 67 .

32. faith germinates more faith and grows more faith

steps" [1 Peter 2:21] exercising faith (trust and faithfulness). 1 Peter 1:15 *But as the one who called you is holy, you also are to be holy in all your conduct,*³³

"For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes," - Romans 1:16

33. ἐν πάσῃ ἀναστροφῇ - One's behavior or manner of living.

Romans 1:18-32

"If the Gospel reveals the righteousness of God, it is because there is another revelation, that is the wrath of God, and because this latter, unless mankind be destined to perish, requires the former " - Godet

Looking closely at the evil Paul outlines in Chapter 1, what is clear is the selfishness that reduces to greed and violence in the name of pleasure. There is no better description of the Biblical word *evil*. While praying for Israel's salvation, at the same time, it is necessary in an honest way, to speak plainly about *sin*. It is the sin from which man must be redeemed. It is not possible to talk about the need of a Savior if God's messenger does not clearly define that need. Holiness does not dwell with a selfish search for pleasure that is described here—no more than light dwells with darkness. When Jesus called out religious hypocrisy for what it really was, He was alerting the penitent heart of the real spiritual danger that lurks in the darkness of selfish ambition. In a word: this is *carnality*, a subject that must be expounded because it is the root that feeds every sinful act. [I recommend reading the appendix on Carnality.]

The principle here is: if one does not allow God to make them in His image (Christ's image), they will make Him in theirs. There is no safe space somewhere in which one can live indifferent to the God Who remains part of the heart's interest. The evil, which Paul here outlines is a detailed description of simple selfishness¹ when one, like Adam and Eve, seeks to be as God. This is a consequence of the soul having a place only God can fill.

18. *For this reason God's anger [wrath] is displayed from heaven because of a lack of reverence for Him and the evil men do who suppress² any consciousness of God.*

Verse 18: Knowing that Salvation would be provided someday by His Son's crucifixion, throughout the history of man, God literally overlooked sin—not, however, without warnings and curses, as, for example, written into the Mosaic covenant [Deuteronomy 27-30]. But from all appearances,

1. 2 Timothy 3:2 "For men shall be lovers of their own selves." and "self-willed" in Titus 1:7

2. The truth is held captive, i.e. they prevent it from shedding light as a just and natural rule on their conduct,

He forgave the masses, often, because punishment would have meant annihilation. His wrath in this context was described as a lion's roar [Hosea 11:10] intended to emphasize how serious He was. God, bluntly overlooked their sins, often [Romans 3:25]. But since Jesus' death and resurrection, repentance is required. But repentance from what? *Sin!* And this requires a serious introspective look, an honest self-awareness, from every one who seeks God's mercy.

It would be unconscionable of Paul not to clarify to the church what sin is. But the church, not wishing to offend the culture in which it resides, might dumb down the wisdom of Scripture leading congregants to believe there is a less transformative way to heaven. But there simply is not! "Be ye holy; for I am holy," is God's requirement [1 Peter 1:16].

The day of divine tolerance is now over.³ Where there is mercy there must be also judgment, God's *wrath*.⁴ "It is a vain delusion to imagine that we can separate the doctrine of redemption from that of wrath."⁵ N. T. Wright explained, "It is easy to see why a Creator who keeps covenant must eventually engage in a final showdown with the forces of evil"⁶ This is sometimes clothed in the narrative of the Exodus and other times "like a great court scene, a trial in which the powers of evil are judged, condemned, and overthrown."⁷

Verse 18 compared with verse 25: There is a process to sin: beginning with questioning and objecting to God's truth and finally providing an alternative.⁸ There is no true agnostic. It is not possible to ignore the God that is in our face, through natural revelation and the moral principle that prods the conscience. If one does not want Him, one must replace Him. There can be no vacuum in the soul that is not filled with a very human consciousness of the divine. Even if logic cannot define eternity, because we live in time, we know that there is such a state. So, whether one conceives

3. Acts 17:30-31 Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent, because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead.

4. ὀργή - "There is a 'wrath of God' (Matt. 3:7; Rom. 12:19, and often), who would not love good, unless He hated evil, the two being so, inseparable, that either He must do both or neither; a wrath also of the merciful Son of Man (Mark 3:5); and a wrath which righteous men not merely may, but, as they are righteous, must feel; nor can there be a surer and sadder token of an utterly prostrate moral condition than the not being able to be angry with sin." [Trench. Page 134]

5. Franz Delitzsch. Lange vol 10. Page 89.

6. Wright. Pages 24..

7. Ibid.

8. Did Paul have Greek and Roman mythologies in mind or can we see this in a more general sense to include any dedication and worship outside God? Could this speak also of climate change advocacy and a pantheism which includes: Animism, Totemism, Shamanism and even Wicca?

of a universe as needing a billion year rebirth or if one imagines that they want a legacy that will keep the dream alive, man envisions eternity.

19. *This being so, they had an awareness,⁹ in some regards, of God which God gave them.*
20. *To explain, God's involvement in creation though unseen¹⁰ is revealed¹¹ by what He has made, the orderliness in His created universe,¹² even His omnipotence and deity so that they are without an excuse.*

Verses 19-20: It is amazing how some persons can rationalize away the most obvious and apparent truth. There is a “natural revelation” of God as Creator that, even without the opening chapters of the Bible, shouts loudly, “The heavens declare the glory of God; And the firmament shows His handiwork.” [Psalm 19:1]. Logic must conclude that if there is no creator, then, the universe must have always existed from eternity past, for we cannot imagine its “beginning” short of a creation. *Something* or *someone* must have always been, and it seems more reasonable to some minds—against statistical probability and scientific induction—to¹³ stubbornly maintain that there has to be no God, lest we are required by moral necessity to deal with Him. And yet even the heart of the pagan or the simplest minded cannot shake free of an innate awareness of His existence.

Verse 20: Revelation does not contradict science!

21. *Thus, though they did know God they didn't celebrate Him as God or thank Him [as God] but, to the contrary, their reasonings¹⁴ were vain and their senseless heart was darkened.*
22. *Appearing or feigning [pretending, alleging] wisdom, they were fools.¹⁵*

Verses 21-22 Paul calls this “alleged” wisdom, because there was an earlier time in life—before all that education—when they knew God was real, and

9. If Adam & Eve discovered a knowledge of good and evil through disobedience, and if the consequence of their sin “came upon all” [Romans 5:12] we can conclude that the human conscience was educated that moment in the difference.

10. His attributes, His activity, agency

11. “spiritually contemplated... a primordial revelation addressed to all men” - Godet cp. Romans 3:29.

12. Natural revelation: “The heavens declare the glory of God; And the firmament shows His handiwork.” Psalm 19:1

13. the production of facts to prove a general statement

14. “the unregulated activity of the mind in the service of a corrupt heart” - Godet

15. “...the most civilized nations, Egyptians, Greeks, Romans, ... being at the same time the most idolatrous...” - Godet

on this account God's anger is reasonable. "Their thinking became futile", senseless, vain, which most translations interpret a word meaning "deliberating within themselves."¹⁶ They are "rationalizing," which is here the mental exercise of ignoring the boundary of known fact to go outside it and create in one's own thoughts a fantasy, to obligate one's conscience, or to convince one's self, of explanations that on any reflection, in the light of reality, will show themselves absurd [Jeremiah 10:3-6]. Beside all this is the moral aspect of their debauchery¹⁷ [Isaiah 57:5].

23. *They changed¹⁸ the glory of the immortal God into the idols¹⁹ of mortal beings and birds and four-footed creatures and things that crawl and slither.*

Verse 23: Everyone believes in "a" god. If it is not the true God, it is a false substitute, a surrogate, which might be the "self." It is worth noting a recent cultural interest which has not evolved (there wasn't time) but has, notwithstanding, become a part of the culture of the global north²⁰ by government fiat. "LGBTQIA+ has been called a "religion"²¹ for reasons, which should be apparent, because a sexual orientation or gender ideology are moral concerns and as such are part of a discussion on Christian values. As Paul proceeds he concludes that some passions lead a person so engaged away from God.

24. *For this reason, God gave them over²² in the lusts of their hearts unto uncleanness to dishonor, devalue, their bodies with those desires;*

16. Thayer. Page 139.

17. excessive indulgence in sensual pleasures

18. If God does not make us into His image [Romans 8:29], we will make Him into ours.

19. Greek: an image's likeness, i.e. the worshipper's imagination given material form.

20. Europe, the USA and Canada.

21. "I believe in the Bible and the God who wrote that Bible. This is actually where we go when Christian denominations reject the Word of God. Because once you reject the Word of God you can end up anywhere. This is modern idolatry where we create God in our own image rather than seeking a relationship with the One who created us in His image." - Tony Perkins President of the Family Research Council on Jesse Watters' Primetime, 6/28/23. Also see Appendix on Redefining Society.

22. not "impel." Exodus 8:32 "But Pharaoh hardened his heart at this time also; neither would he let the people go." Not permitted them...but "He ceased to hold the boat as it was dragged by the current" -Godet. Genesis 6:3 "My Spirit will not always **strive** with man." At some point the prodigal's father must give him his inheritance to spend wastefully.

25. *Those who exchanged²³ the truth of God²⁴ for the lie²⁵ and served with devotion the creation over the Creator, who is [and will be] eternally blessed, amen.²⁶*
26. *For this reason, then, God gave them over to disgraceful [vile]²⁷ passions,²⁸ for their women have changed that which is according to nature into what is unnatural,²⁹*
27. *likewise, even the men have left the natural use with women³⁰ burning in their sexual appetites toward one another, men with men, performing shameful acts and receiving the reward³¹ of their wandering³² lust which was a proper judgment [only right, necessary and inevitable].*
28. *And as such they have not recognize God in their experience,³³ God forsook them to a depraved mind³⁴ [a mind void of discernment], to do things which are not proper.³⁵*

Verse 24-27: It has been argued that the homosexual act mentioned by Paul was associated with cultic practices which we are asked to believe is no longer its purpose. Gayness now, we are told, is a love relation between two persons of the same gender. The word used in 1 Corinthians 6:9 and 1 Timothy 1:10 of those “that defile themselves with mankind” is a term

23. The word is intensified. Paul sees this act so odious, he ends the thought with a doxology to God [our “I need a shower?”] Paul reiterates his absolute support for God’s truth!

24. Isaiah 5:20 “Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil; Who put darkness for light, and light for darkness; Who put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!”

25. The serpent’s reasoning to Eve?

26. Paul experiences the exasperation of heart as he did at Athens in Acts 17:16 “Now while Paul waited for them at Athens, his spirit was provoked within him when he saw that the city was given over to idols.”

27. Same root as “dishonor”

28. compared with “lusts” in verse 24, this word is more passive, a resignation, a yielding, whereas “lust” is an active desire. Such “passions” are now being called not just natural but even genetic or biological (“Gay from a lad”).

29. contrary to nature

30. Not woman ...men, but female ...males. This is a raw reference not to the psychological differences but to the physical.

31. recompense. There is a law of God here which like gravity cannot be discarded. They are without excuse [liable] as was Adam and Eve.

32. NIV “error” but the word describes a deception.

33. Paul’s description of all sinners who by nature have no living concept of God’s holiness and their conduct confirms this. Even the most elemental concept of God or deity suggests a principle of morality—a list of commandments, that at the least define a rudimentary list of “don’ts” which must include laws against murder, covetousness, theft, and hate. It is fundamental to conscience to recognize “evil” as causing pain and harm. This is our human legacy from our first parents.

34. what is the conclusion from reason - reasonable conduct

35. “They lost the true sense of moral appreciation” - Godet

introduced into the language during the writing of the New Testament—perhaps, by Paul himself, which supposedly discredits its use as merely his opinion which is not clear. But this term is not used here. Here [verse 26] Paul describes the act as a passionate desire but in a dishonorable sense because, as Paul informs us, God gave up on them. The distinction between this word *passion* and the general word for *desire* [translated lust in verse 24] is that the term passion is pure desire whether or not acted upon. Lust is the act of seeking to fulfill it.³⁶ Professor Trench added “lusts ... dishonor those who indulge in them. The word belongs to the terminology of the Greek Schools.”

There are 3 synonyms for ungoverned desire or strong passion. Even though individually they may be used in a good sense, consider this passage on its own merit. All 3 words are used here.: *passion* [verse 26], *lust* [verse 24], and in verse 27 a *craving* for or appetite, where lust is understood to apply to desires extended beyond what is reasonable.³⁷

I think it is within reason to say that if Paul meant to address only pagan practices, would he not have treated it similar to the Jewish act of circumcision or the many laws regarding food in the Torah—subjects we are about to discuss in this letter. The apostles regarding the Gentiles at Antioch showed concern about sacrifices offered to idols [Acts 15:25] and about fornication or pornography in general. Paul, in writing the Church at Colossi [Colossians 3;5] included [in the King James Version] “inordinate affection” using 2 of our 3 synonyms. Bishop Lightfoot in his commentary called these *vices, ungovernable affections, evil longings*.³⁸ As Paul said as a positive note: “And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts” [Galatians 5:24].

All this makes it difficult for Christians to support homosexuality in any sense. The wider question is: What about the other letters in the acronym (LGBTQIA+)? Gender identity doesn't follow any Biblical pattern neither does gay marriage nor the introduction of new pronouns. It is not my purpose here to pass judgement on lifestyles because they are part of a culture, which the Gospel transcends. God can save anyone, including gay persons, when they call upon Him for mercy. But it is reasonable to affirm that since we are the Bride of Christ, by analogy to the natural marriage bond, the monogamous relation between a man and woman speaks best to that truth. Gay marriage falls to represent this analogy or type—and not primarily because it take a male and a female to produce offspring to populate the earth. The larger issue is the differences that exist psychologically between male and female, the contributions emotionally

36. See Trench. *Synonyms*. Page 323.

37. Ἐπιθυμία [lust], being τοῦ ἡδέος ὀρεξίς [an appetite for pleasure], as Aristotle (*Rhet.* i. 10), ἄλογος ὀρεξίς [unreasonable craving], as the Stoics, ‘immoderata appetitio opinati magni boni, rationi non obtemperans,’ [an immoderate appetite for the supposed great good, not compliant to reason] as Cicero (*Tusc. Quoes.* iii. 11) defined it, [Ibid.]

38. Lightfoot on Colossians. Page 212.

and spiritually they each bring to a marriage. The message of marriage oneness [Ephesians 5:31] describes an intimacy that when shared with multiple partners of the opposite gender is lost and which is not possible in a gay relationship. This is more than Christian love and far more than sexual pleasure. It is a mystical union that, perhaps, few have achieved but which speaks of Christ and His Church [Ephesians 5:32].

The Gospel has been brought to mission fields that culturally did not match the Christian ideal. The cultures of the world have some very—we might say—unchristian practices, to be sure, and if we could Christianize every soul who comes to Christ without any delay—an instant sanctification—the missionary's task would be greatly simplified. But like the Judaizers of Paul's day, cultural practices are often also religious practices and some of these conflict with a faith walk in Christ.

Jewish practices, however, that could support faith [Romans 14:22] were never at issue. Cultural practices that no longer have religious meaning for the young in Christ, that hinder a believer's desire and effort to serve the Lord, or give a false interpretation of the Gospel message, need to be replaced with a submissive heart to the Spirit's guidance. As believers in Christ, we should live introspectively and challenge ourselves to live for Christ and not for pleasure. Prayer is vital in this. It behooves the Church, however, to remain above culture—outside culture—with the pure Gospel message.

Paul avoided cultural concerns when they didn't become a matter of sin [1 Corinthians 11:16]. Paul's sole concern was the New Covenant confirmed at Calvary and our accepting it by faith and living by it. Satan robs some of their trust [they lose faith] in God,³⁹ Others fall to temptation⁴⁰ or prefer a life of pleasure⁴¹ instead of following Jesus our Lord. The best verse to describe this is about Israel, going by the name Jeshurun as a nation that God called to walk aright. "But Jeshurun⁴² grew fat and kicked; You grew fat, you grew thick, You are obese! Then he forsook God who made him, And scornfully esteemed the Rock of his salvation" [Deuteronomy 32:15].

Verses 29-31: Paul painted a picture of characteristics in which one brush stroke blends into the next starting with a hateful spirit which displays its venom in speech, then, a total lack of respect for family values and social integrity, finally completing the image with a merciless lack of caring for any and all except themselves.⁴³

39. Luke 8:12 the devil comes and takes away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved.

40. Luke 8:13 these have no root, who believe for a while and in time of temptation fall away.

41. Luke 8:14: choked with cares, riches, and pleasures of life

42. a symbolic name for Israel describing her ideal character

43. 2 Timothy 3:1-5 But mark this: There will be terrible times in the last days. **2** People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, **3** without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control,

29. *Completely⁴⁴ filled with all injustice⁴⁵ [unrighteousness, which entails all:] evil [perverseness]⁴⁶ greed [greedy for more and more money or whatever will purchase pleasure] harm [taking pleasure in doing harm],⁴⁷ full of [stuffed with] envy,⁴⁸ murder, rivalry [strife: often joined with 'envy'], a malicious deception [intent on harm],⁴⁹ secretly slandering [twittering?]*

Verse 29: Seeking pleasure, in the act of wanting happiness! “Before the English language had generated the word ‘selfishness,’ which it only did toward the middle of the seventeenth century, there was an [unsuccessful] attempt made to supply an evident want in our ethical terminology...⁵⁰ using Greek or Latin terms. Thanks to the Puritans we now have these 2 words:

- ◆ **Selfish** is providing of all which shall minister to one’s own ease.
- ◆ **Selfishness** speaks of the ungracious bearing towards others, the self-pleasing which is best pleased when it displeases others.⁵¹ The absence of an ethical awareness of one’s own hubris⁵² [2 Timothy 3:2].⁵³

Evil is defined as:

- ◆ Acts of cruelty or violence: *“lawlessness, immorality, greed and depravity, envy, murder, strife,*
- ◆ An abusive tongue: *divisiveness, deceit and malicious, whisperers [gossip],*

brutal, not lovers of the good, **4** treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God— **5** having a form of godliness but denying its power. Have nothing to do with such people.

44. “Paul evidently lets his pen run on as if he thought that all the bad terms which should present themselves, none would be out of place or exaggerated.” - Godet

45. unrighteousness. The Received Text adds here: fornication (pornography)

46. to behave in a way that is unreasonable or unacceptable, often in spite of the consequences

47. “This first group refer to injustices against the well-being and property of our neighbor.” - Godet

48. “either that of a desire to make war upon the good which it beholds in another, and thus to trouble that good, and make it less” - Trench XXVI

49. a “bitterness of temper” - Godet

50. Trench *Synonyms of the New Testament*. Page 352.

51. Ibid.

52. self-importance, self-conceit

53. For people are seeking their own ease and comfort, braggarts, in honor preferring themselves over others [then comes] scoffing at [dismissing] God [as a joke] and having no regard for parental wisdom, ungrateful (entitled?) and devoted to no one or anything but [themselves, i.e. unprincipled, incorrigible].

Evil, on its most basic level, is the act of causing pain or hurt in the quest for personal gain and pleasure. This is what makes money such a contender for the heart of man—a heart that should be given to God. Here is not the place to profile evil, but Paul has written a rather exceptional exposé to offer us a realistic sense of the forces that oppose simple faith.

30. *Publicly defaming, slandering [whom they hate, including God]. They detest God, [they are also] violent [despiteful: hubris]⁵⁴ proud⁵⁵ boastful,⁵⁶ inventing new ways of doing evil things, disobedient to parents,*

Verse 30 *slander, hatred for God,*

- ◆ Three forms of pride: insolence [hubris], arrogance and boasting,
- ◆ Depraved creativity: finding new ways of doing evil;
- ◆ Relationships: a disregard for parental authority, untrustworthy, detest God.

31. *Foolish [without understanding]⁵⁷ and cannot keep their word [faithless, untrustworthy, can't keep promises] without any human or natural affection [without tenderness]⁵⁸ no concern for others [without pity].*

Verse 31: *without understanding [without conscience], covenant breaking [truce breaking], without natural affection, merciless”?*

32. *These knowing God's judgment (justice) that those who practice such things are worthy of death, not only keep doing such things but, even worse, they consent to others who practice them.*

Verse 32: What is worse, Paul observed, is when evil persons encourage and train others, especially the youth, to practice the same vices.

54. excessive pride or self-confidence. “Hubris is insolent wrongdoing to others, not out of revenge, or any other motive except the mere pleasure which the infliction of the wrong imparts.” - Trench XXIX

55. “He that is sick of this sin compares himself, it may be secretly or openly, with others, and lifts himself above others, in honour preferring himself...” - Trench XXIX

56. “Denotes the man who seeks to attract admiration by claiming advantages he does not really possess.” - Godet

57. “incapable of lending an ear to wise counsel” - Godet cp. Psalm 1:1.

58. applauding violence

“Such things” (ejusdem generis)⁵⁹ are described in verse 30 as “inventing new ways of doing evil things.”

Our first parents wanted to know what evil was. This knowledge is now embossed on the human conscience as a moral principle⁶⁰ that can be seared, ignored, maybe even suppressed. But the conscience, too, will be resurrected on judgment day when all stand before the Creator-Judge to give an honest account [Hebrews 4:13]. We all will inevitably have the light of Truth shined into the darkest corners of our personality exposing whatever evil hides there—unless we confess it and accept God’s forgiveness [1 John 1:9]. Confession means in Biblical parlance “to agree with God” which can only happen if we are self-aware.

David of old murdered the husband of a woman he impregnated in an adulterous affair. For an entire year he lived self-unaware with a conscience that stopped talking to him while he rationalized, no doubt, that as king he could do as he pleased. This, until the prophet of God was given a divine commission to knock on his bedroom door and bring him to his senses and a genuine heartfelt, life changing, repentance.

But many lack a healthy self-awareness, a legitimate introspection, a conscience trained in the Truth of God’s Word. Many live rejecting the Spirit’s conviction, sadly, awaiting the day when all will be subpoenaed to the Court of Heaven to give answer.

Evil is real. When we, in Adam, rebelled against God which is what equality with God had to mean to Eve [Genesis 3:5] we denied God the right of supremacy, the place of honor, as Creator. There may be no better way to recognize “evil” in all its varied aspects listed here than to describe it as a desire to replace God in our own hearts by an overzealous lying ego that wants to take charge of its own destiny. It is assuming we now know better than the God who designed and made us for a life eternal with Himself. And since we have become “as gods” (the snake lied) we have earned our independence from God and the rest is a history of all manner of suffering and death. To complete the devilish coverup, evil blames God!

For since the creation of the world His invisible *attributes* are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, *even* His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse, - Romans 1:20

59. of the same kind: a general term accompanying a list of specific terms, but, unlike etc., the list is restricted to things of the same character of which the current list are examples. see Ephesians 5:27 “not having spot or wrinkle or *any such thing*”

60. See my work A Reasonable Salvation. Pages 37ff.

Romans 2:1-16

The Wrath of God suspended ...for now! But it is coming!

Paul linked a final judgment with the Gospel message in chapter 1 (Mercy requires wrath; the harvest of wheat requires also a harvest of the tares for burning). Now Paul addresses the rampant hypocrisy within Jewish religious life which is paralleled, no less of a grievance to God, within the Church. Religious minds can be most prejudiced because they tend to possess their knowledge of God as ancient gnosticism contended that they knew the secrets of God and salvation. Knowledge is power when it can be used to control the masses through guilt or fear.

"I was beginning to see," confesses Jim Palmer, "that it's not so much what one does but why one does it. Catholic Mass or Pentecostal praise-athon, High Church or home church, a person's motivation can be ... fear and guilt."¹ This is not an indictment on the Church; this is an "hypocrisy alert" that should signal our capacity for self awareness to look for the beam that is blocking a realistic view of our life [Matthew 7:5]. Palmer discovered something probably thought only possible of everyone else: "I've learned you can be technically right about God in seminary classes and church pews but still not really know him."²

It behooves the pastorate to clarify to all congregants that true worship honors God by seeking His will and not personal blessing or personal approval. Church should not accommodate us as much as it should challenge us. The Spirit of God is, in truth, the Paraclete, not to comfort us as much as to admonish us.

It is hard to talk about this using the first person, 'we/us' here; so, let's switch to 'they/them.' True repentance confesses sin instead of boasting of a false piety [Luke 18:10-13]. An appeal to Torah law, like any law, serves no true purpose when it is abused to indict others of the very thing they themselves are doing. But God never introduced Torah law to condemn the sinner but to alert him to his need for divine mercy. "For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved" [John 3:17].

Since salvation is by grace through faith, it is appropriate to note that if we, as verses 4 and 5 imply, realize God's kindness and the value of

1. Palmer, Jim. Page 158.

2. Ibid. Page 182.

repentance, we will not be in verse 1 passing judgment on others for *our* sins.

1. *For this reason, Oh, man, you who stands in judgment! You are without an excuse. For, indeed, you judge another, you condemn yourself, for you stand in judgment over the very things you are doing.*³
2. *We know that God's judgment is according to Truth upon those who practice such things.*
3. *And do you think, Oh, man! You who passes judgment on those who do such things and you do them too, that you will escape the judgment of God!?*
4. *or you brazenly ignore the riches⁴ of God's kindness and tolerance, while He holds back His wrath,⁵ unmindful of [ignoring]⁶ God's gentleness⁷ which leads you to repentance;⁸*
5. *But according to your hard⁹ and unrepentant heart you treasure¹⁰ to yourself wrath for the day of wrath and the revealing of the final [just] judgment¹¹ of God,*
6. *Who will give out to each according to his works [deeds and how he lived].¹²*

3. Matthew 7:2 For with what judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you.

4. The total revelation of God's benevolence up to and including the Savior's Crucifixion. Jesus' death and resurrection were and remain pivotal in history. A single even we all have witnessed must embrace or reject.

5. longsuffering or God's enduring restraint though often provoked. cf. Deuteronomy 9:7; Jeremiah 32:37-38.

6. "we do not see what we do not care to see" - Godet.

7. The gentle "touch" of a divine conviction drawing, not pushing, leading not driving, the sinner to come to the Cross.

8. In Hebrew: a return to God.

9. Cardiosclerosis is a word I use after the Greek - after "arteriosclerosis". Paul defines it immediately as "unrepentant."

10. No one action stands alone complete or insignificant. We cannot propose a life that shows a marked indifference to conviction and God's invitation to come without becoming harder and harder in our resoluteness to reject His call. To assume a last minute desire to follow Christ after a lifetime of finding Him undesirable.

11. This word is used in Romans 8:1 where believers are exempt.

12. Paul who speaks loudly and emphatically about justification by faith alone [Romans 3:22] seems to make justification here dependent on how one lives. But there is no contradiction. Elsewhere also Paul agrees with Jesus that faith and faithfulness are inseparably part of a salvation experience. (Romans 14:12; 2 Corinthians 5:10; Galatians 6:7; John 5:28, 29). It is only when one pre-supposes a belief that requires no interest in following Christ or a salvation based on a good life without Christ that we fail to appreciate the meaning of Paul's words here. "God demands from him, as the recipient of grace, the fruits of grace." -Godet.

Verses 1-6: Paul echoes the Savior's warning in Matthew 7:1, though he comes at this truth from another direction. "Judge not, that you be not judged," Jesus warned. Paul walks around this truth to offer another perspective. The Spirit's conviction guides the believer past the pitfalls of unreasonableness, bitterness, and a twisted self-interest. Evil rejects His help and, the consequence is grave. The very pit they dig for another traps them. "Whoever digs a pit will fall into it; if someone rolls a stone, it will roll back on them." [Proverbs 26:27 NIV].

This is the attitude of a person who indicts another for their own crime. What they find objectionable in another, ultimately, defines them! There is only a couple explanations for this: no self-awareness and no christian love.

Constitutions have been written and rewritten to restrict, marginalize, and criminalize otherwise people of strong ethical and moral character—all because they disagreed with "power." Driven by self-interest (not lead by God)—just described in Paul's opening salvo of evil thoughts and actions—and impassioned by vengeance (not good judgment) such persons will ultimately find that the poison they prepared for others is in their cup [Galatians 6:7]. Even the Torah teaches "you may be sure that your sin will find you out." [Number 32:23].

7. *On the one hand those who patiently through [persevering in] good works [living righteously] seek¹³ glory [to live a holy life, to glorify God, to be like Christ] and [seek to] honor [God, His approval]¹⁴ and seek immortality [incorruptibility], [they will receive] eternal life.*

Verses 7-10: Paul waxes somewhat poetic because, no doubt, he is, not only inspired but, emotional. He speaks first of the reward of the righteous, and he closes in the same tone. In between are dire warnings worth heeding. There are a few words in this text worth pointing out.

Verse 7: Patience is patient endurance under fire. It speaks of no option to retreat [Luke 21:19]. Paul uses this word 16 times in his epistles beside Hebrews. In Revelation 14:12, such patience is defined as "keeping the faith," no doubt a euphemism for faithfulness—keeping covenant even under oppression [2 Corinthians 6:4].

We also read about "**seeking**" those qualities that describe righteousness. What do righteous people seek or want to attain? Glory, honor, and eternal life. These are what J. P. Lange calls "striving souls" but they are not striving to have their own way; they are not contentious [verse

13. We are urged to seek or desire these even in our human imperfection.

14. Matthew 25:21 'Well *done*, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.'

8] but as Jesus spoke of them on the Mount [Matthew 5:6] “they ... hunger and thirst after righteousness.”¹⁵ God does not hand the believer the christian life on a platter because it would be unwise. Believing is another word for “trusting” and it is in tribulation we learn trust [Romans 5:3-5]. Ask Paul [2 Timothy 4:7]. The believer who perseveres will be “recompensed” for their faithfulness, eternal life, which will be glorious in a body that will never degrade, get ill or old [1 Corinthians 15:53, 58].

The Good News Translation refers to God’s anger and fury in verse 8: “...on them God will pour out his **anger and fury**.” This order is significant, for anger is a slow burn or boil before it erupts unto a full blown rage. Neither word with God suggests that He is “out of control” but rather fully engaged in judging a world that has rejected Him, in harvesting the tares [Matthew 13:30, 40].

8. *but those who through strife [are contentious, divisive, partisan], apathetic¹⁶ [refuse to be persuaded of] the Truth [of the Gospel message] who passionately cause hurt and injustice,¹⁷ [they will experience God’s] anger [that slow burn of His disapproval] and wrath [its manifestation or outburst as a conflagration of rage].*
9. *Tribulation¹⁸ and anguish¹⁹ upon every man’s soul whose efforts result²⁰ in evil, a Jew first²¹ and [the] Greek [Gentiles].*

Verse 9: Tribulation and anguish²² are words frequently found together. Together they describe the inevitability of a Divine Judgment but from different perspectives: outwardly and inwardly. No other words could better describe eternal punishment unless you are Jewish and understand the significance of the Valley of Gehenna [Mark 9:43-44]. For those who cannot believe in a literal hell [Gehenna] we can only affirm that the tribulation and anguish are real! Tribulation speaks of a confinement outwardly, a prison which is to be best taken in a literal sense, and the

15. see my work on the Beatitudes, <https://vimeo.com/showcase/10025475>

16. John 3:19-20 And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed.

17. selfish passions, vain ambitions, and unrighteous prejudices, which lead a man to close his eyes to the light ..and thus produce unbelief. - Godet

18. hard-pressed with calamity with no relief - great distress.

19. Isaiah 8:22 the prophet uses 3 different words for darkness to explain “anguish” cp. Deuteronomy 28:55.

20. effort with intent “implies something ruder and more violent and the cause of evil doing.” - Godet. cp.vs. 10 accomplish which is opposite of idleness.a spontaneous ccc

21. Distinctions by doctrine or ritual do not matter to God. [Isaiah 1:11]

22. A word speaks of a “narrow opening or path” It speaks of a restriction dire calamity, extreme affliction

inward anguish of the soul it occasions. These two words are used in the context of torture, though, I am not at all suggesting God's punishment is intended to torture the unjust. But the words are far from ordinary in their usage. My wife might argue with me and maybe even hurt me with misspoken words, but I wouldn't, nor could I ever, be in "anguish" over what she says or does²³ using these words.

There is, perhaps, nothing special about the terms for those who have experienced calamity that is barely survivable because of the pain, physically and emotionally, it causes. They might have a right to these terms. Oh that we could, however, convince all nonbelievers that there is nothing in all our nightmares that even approaches the horror felt when after a life long rejection of God's compassionate call, "come unto me" [Matthew 11:28] they meet Him in judgment.

10. *but glory and honor and peace²⁴ to everyone who accomplishes good [does, or lives a Godly life], both Jew and Greek;*

Verse 10: Interesting that Paul replaces "immortality" of verse 7 with "peace" in verse 10. What is peace without immortality but a 'RIP' gravesite. And what is immortality without peace but a self-made hell. God gives both because together they describe the milieu of God's Heaven.

11. *For with God there is no respect of persons.²⁵*
 12. *Whoever sins without law, perishes without law, and whoever sins in the law, will be judged by the law;²⁶*
 13. *For it is not those who hear the law that are just before God, but those who practice²⁷ the law will be justified.²⁸*
 14. *To explain, whenever someone not Jewish who by nature [spontaneously, by an innate moral instinct]²⁹ does not follow Jewish law, nonetheless, practices law,³⁰ these persons without*

23. Ezekiel 12:18 The Greek reads, "Son of Man, eat your bread with sorrow and drink your water with torment and affliction." *οὐκ ἐσθιέτω τὸν ἄρτον σου μετ' ὀδύνης φάγεσαι καὶ τὸ ὕδωρ σου μετὰ βασάνου καὶ θλίψεως πίεσαι.* See also Exodus 3:9

24. Living out the Gospel message by faith [vs. 7] "holiness with God's approval" leads to peace

25. 1 Samuel 16:7 For *the LORD* does not *see* as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart."

26. Jeremiah 17:10 I, the LORD, search the heart, *I* test the mind, Even to give every man according to his ways, According to the fruit of his doings.

27. The story of the rich young man in Mark 10:17-21 is informative. Jesus, however added, "follow me" which is noteworthy.

28. declared just or made righteous. See "Declared Righteous"

29. "...do instinctively what the Jew does in obedience to precepts." -Godet.

30. "They, too, have a law engraved on their hearts." - Godet.

having the written law, nonetheless, it is law to them³¹ [they have the law though they, too, do not follow it perfectly].³²

15. *There are those who demonstrate³³ [show] the works of the³⁴ law³⁵ written on their hearts , their consciences³⁶ bear witness and at the same time each one's thoughts accusing or confirming,*
16. *in the day when³⁷ God will judge the hidden³⁸ things of men according to my Gospel³⁹ through Jesus Christ.*

Verses 11-16: Here Paul is talking about the moral law, the Decalogue,⁴⁰ which the Ancients of many cultures followed even without the mediation of Angels [Galatians 3:19]. The conscience is uniquely human and plays a major role in ordering any society. In Greek society *law* was only understood in these terms.⁴¹ Societies are defined by the moral code by which they live and the conscience is most helpful when this code is impressed upon it. So in this regard, there is no difference between Jew and non-Jew.

So, whereas Israel had the Torah, other societies had a moral code as well. None of this matters to the Judge of all the earth. This social construct and the conscience is not how God judges. His law code is Paul's Gospel or a salvation by faith based on repentance and acceptance of Christ's Work

31. Salvation through Christ's crucifixion is "reasonable" and just because the concept of morality and a consciousness of wrong came through Adam. See my work *A Reasonable Salvation*."

32. if the hearing of it were enough, the Gentiles also could claim this advantage. since positive features in their moral life testified to the existence of a law engraved on their hearts, and the very definite application of it which they are able to make," - Godet.

33. A moral conscience alerts the need of salvation; it does not justify.

34. specific reference to the Mosaic Law. The distinction Jewry makes since Calvary no longer exists. cp Romans 6:15.

35. There is a sense in which God's Covenantal Law teaches a need to reconcile with a holy God. Galatians 3:24 "Therefore the law was our tutor *to bring us* to Christ, that we might be justified by faith."

36. "the distinction of good and evil." - Godet. This takes us back to Eden. cp *A Reasonable Salvation*.

37. connected to verse 13 ...justified ... in the day when....

38. Hebrews 4:12 For the word of God *is* living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

39. It is not the Mosaic law but the Gospel of Grace through faith that came through Christ's death and resurrection that God uses to justify motive as well as action. Hebrews 4:12 "For the word of God *is* living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."

40. Th Ten Commandments in Exodus 20:3-17.

41. "The law of nature" is a phrase that in Ancient times would have made no sense.

on the Cross. It was important for Paul to make this point because Israel thought obedience to Torah law meant salvation in God's economy.⁴²

Verse 16: To understand verse 16 we must connect it to verse 13. "... *those who practice the law will be justified* [verse 14-15 are a parenthesis] *in the day when God will judge the hidden things of men according to my Gospel through Jesus Christ.*" But since no one ever practiced the law faithfully and completely, accept Jesus, salvation had to be provided another way.

Hidden things are the true condition of the heart. Godet interprets, "He will demand holiness of heart."

The phrase "according to *my Gospel*," spoken by Paul, is surprising, but this has special significance, since no one else could claim to have received this revelation from God before Paul. Paul specifically received the revelation of a salvation by grace through faith [Ephesians 2:8-10) and not by works or effort.

Grace - Many—but sadly, not all—believers understand this. Additionally, however, what is not known generally is the process by which language needed to be developed, new words introduced, and old theological ideas tossed aside, to explain "grace" in the context of the living Word, from the heart of God. Reading the Bible devotionally is commendable, but we seldom hold its pages in our hands marveling at how it came to be! There is, no doubt, countries of this world where believers cherish what few pages they do hold while in wealthier nations many translations gather dust on unvisited book shelves. (We do not even need to carry bibles to church anymore since someone invented powerpoint.)

Paul returned to Antioch with a new message of grace that needed at the time an unprecedented move of the Spirit, the comforter, the teacher, to inspire and bring to life Old Testament texts. And what is this "new" word from God? *The Book of Romans*.

"Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent, - Acts 17:30

42. The Bible idea of economy references the administration of one's household.

Romans 2:17-29

After expressing himself in a general ...way, Paul addresses himself directly to the person he had in view ... giving a shock to inveterate prejudices. -Godet

Paul's language sounds exceptionally harsh but it isn't. Torah Law is not a theology to be taught to others; it is a tutor to point out to each his *own* need of a Savior. God's Spirit does not condemn but convicts because God's truth is always personal. What better way to see this than with an abrupt crassness to have the spotlight of truth turned inward. No one, but Christ, was ever sinless; so, Paul does not assume their guilt. He needs only to point it out!

Religious minds need to be self-aware that pleasing God is no longer a religious exercise, and lives that do not please Him pander instead to self. The best approach to discovering which one we are is always an inventory of what we say. What we preach compared to what we do is the best test. The Word is the mirror to the soul according to James 1:23 and the writer to the Hebrews adds that the Word can distinguish between the soul and spirit—what one does to please self and what one does to please God [Hebrews 4:12]. God distinguishes our thoughts and real intentions, something prayer and God's Word will always bring to our attention.

David, for example, in Psalm 51:4, saw his sin only against God even if we might think it was such that others were dragged into the net of his deception and crime. God alone was He with whom David had made a covenant and God alone could forgive him and restore his joy.

In this regard, Paul's conversation with his kinsmen was a discussion about Covenant, but not the Mosaic covenant of works but the Abrahamic one of faith. Circumcision, as the animal sacrifices, were no longer acts of repentance because obedience to law is no longer a provision of the Covenant God makes. It is now "New" and by faith.

If this is not understood, the subject of God's grace in chapter 3 cannot be reached for it is the heart more than the intellect that meets with God.

17 *Now if you call yourself a Jew and rely on the Law of Moses for salvation and boast in God [that you are therefore righteous]*

- 18 *and [you say] you know the will of God and are able to distinguish¹ the finer points, being orally instructed² out of that Law,*
- 19 *and you have convinced³ yourself that you can lead those spiritually blind to the light out of their darkness,*
- 20 *a disciplinarian of the foolish, a teacher of little children,⁴ having the essential⁵ knowledge and the truth from the law;⁶*
- 21 *you who teach another [not knowledgeable as yourself⁷] do you teach yourself? No! You who preach against stealing, do you steal!⁸*
- 22 *You who tell others not to commit adultery,⁹ do you commit adultery; An abhorrer of idols do you desecrate¹⁰ the Temple!¹¹*
- 23 *You who boast in knowing and following the Law, through breaking that law, you dishonor¹² God,*
- 24 *for God's name is blasphemed by the Gentiles because of you,¹³ as it is written [Isaiah 52:5;¹⁴ Ezekiel 36:20].¹⁵*

Verses 17-24: Talk about a lack of self-awareness or standing in judgment over others for what they themselves do! In His discourse against the religious leadership of His day [Matthew 23] Jesus, seven times, called them “hypocrites,” a word that meant “actor” or one who plays a part. The word came to mean in the Bible “impiety” or “profane living.” It is “presenting a righteous appearance so that the true face of evil is

1. “the two eminent doctors Hillel and Schammai gravely debated the question, whether it was lawful to eat an egg laid by a hen on the Sabbath day.” - Godet

2. a rather personal encounter with the law’s interpretation, perhaps, having been tutored or schooled in it.

3. compare Philippians 1:6; 2 Timothy 1:12

4. what the Jews called proselytes.

5. “The exact outline, the rigorous formula” - Godet. How one should understand the meaning, nuance, emphasis, etc.

6. The advantages of which the Jew boasts, 17-20.

7. The word “other” here signifies someone of a difference, i.e. level of knowledge.

8. theft, i.e. in commerce. Examples of greed and avarice.

9. Sensuality. It might be best not to limit the scope of this sin to spousal unfaithfulness.

10. refusing to pay the Temple tax and offering maimed animals for sacrifice

11. “the horror of idolatry does not go the length of preventing you from hailing as a good prize the precious objects which have been used in idolatrous worship when you can make them your own.” - Godet

12. arising “from their greed of gain, their deceit and hypocrisy, which were thoroughly known to the Gentile populations among whom they lived.” - Godet

13. Verses 21-24 enumerates the iniquities of the Jew who claims the advantages above.

14. My name *is* blasphemed continually every day.

15. When they came to the nations, wherever they went, they profaned My holy name—when they said of them, ‘These *are* the people of the LORD, *and* yet they have gone out of His land

disguised.”¹⁶ In Matthew 7:5¹⁷ there is a clear cross-reference to our text. “They claim to be declaring God’s will but in truth they are only trying to assert the traditions of men.”¹⁸ Hypocrisy is, therefore, a clear disconnect between what one says ought to be done, what is right, and what, in fact, they do. It is an acute lack of self-awareness. “For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer,” James wrote, “he is like a man who looks intently at his natural face in a mirror. For he looks at himself and goes away and at once forgets what he was like.” [James 1:23-24]. ““This people honors me with their lips,” Jesus exposed them as impostures, “but their heart is far from me;” [Matthew 15:8].

In Matthew 23:27 Jesus pointed out that a life of hypocrisy is “like whitewashed tombs which indeed appear beautiful outwardly, but inside are full of dead bones and all uncleanness.” He called them “blind” [Matthew 23:26] perhaps because when one plays a part long enough, the person most deceived is the actor, themselves. A person eventually will believe their own lie. Someone not in regular contact with God through a consistent prayer life, can eventually rationalize that the lifestyle they have chosen is an expression of their love for God and that they are in His will, when, in truth, He does not even know them [Matthew 25:12].

- 25 *Thus, circumcision¹⁹ is profitable if a man practice the law; but if you break the law, circumcision²⁰ becomes uncircumcision.*
- 26 *if, therefore, the uncircumcised keep²¹ the righteousness of the law, is not his uncircumcision counted as circumcision? Of course!*
- 27 *And while uncircumcision which is by nature fulfills the law,²² it judges²³ you, who through [in full possession of] the letter [of the law] and circumcision are the law breaker?*

16. Kittel. Vol VIII. Page 565.

17. Hypocrite! First remove the plank from your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother’s eye.

18. Ibid. Page 567.

19. “an engagement to holiness and not as a shelter from judgment” - Godet

20. A clear reference in Paul’s covenant theology: Genesis 17:10 *This is My covenant which you shall keep, between Me and you and your descendants after you: Every male child among you shall be circumcised;*

21. This is more an argument from logic than anecdotal [Romans 3:23] or Paul is referencing Gentile converts to Christian faith, who, indeed through faith are fulfilling the provisions of the New Covenant.

22. “Paul expresses himself in abstract terms [keep the law or fulfill the law] because here [he is dealing with] the principle and not the means by which it is realized [the new creation in Christ]” - Godet

23. Not “condemn” but “decide” A Gentile who follows Christ is thereby qualified—by virtue of their living the Truth—what, in fact that Truth is and the part played by Torah law in the covenant faithfulness of God toward us—our salvation.

- 28 *For he is not a Jew in appearance [outwardly, by ethnicity] neither [does] outwardly [bodily] circumcision in the flesh [make him a Jew].*²⁴
- 29 *But, contrariwise, he is a Jew inside,*²⁵ *and the spiritual circumcision of [the] heart*²⁶ *not the letter of the law, whose [his] praise is not from men but from God.*²⁷

Verses 25-29: In Galatians 2:13, Paul, confronts Peter and the Jewish believers at Antioch with the charge of hypocrisy because they failed to walk “straightforward about the truth of the gospel” [Galatians 2:14]. Paul's point was the same there to the Galatians as here to the Romans that a genuine fellowship exists between Jew and Gentile, that there is no such division within the body of Christ—no racism [Titus 2:11].²⁸ “For he [Christ] is our peace,” Paul reminded the churches of Asia Minor, “who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us;” [Ephesians 2:14].

In a modern paradigm: We do not (or should not) base our salvation on our denomination's theological position or our church's particular ritual, how it is choreographed on a Sunday morning. If salvation depended on these, the divisions that are now virtual among believers would be real and most churches that call themselves Christian would be self-deceived. Many “believers” would have their faith in the ceremonies as the Jewish believers in Paul's day had in error.

So, if Paul is being understood here: God does not view as essential for salvation²⁹ either a Catholic Mass or a Pentecostal Jericho march around the sanctuary or a Baptist song service. The essential aspect of our faith *is faith itself* [trust in His covenant faithfulness] ... in Christ's death and resurrection. And if God does not show favoritism when it comes to

24. Deuteronomy 10:16 “Circumcise therefore the foreskin of your heart, and be no more stiff-necked [intractable, obstinate].”

25. hidden or secret things: who and what we really are/ [Hebrews 4:12 “For the word of God *is* living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart.”

26. Isaiah 66:2 CSB “This is the LORD's declaration. I will look favorably on this kind of person: one who is humble, submissive in spirit, and trembles [awe & reference] at my word.”

27. “praise...from God” linked to a spiritual interpretation of the law and not the literal [the letter of the law] is a reflection of the Divine conscience [what God knows within Himself: His holiness]. cp. Matthew 25:21 “His lord said to him, ‘Well *done*, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.’”

28. For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men,

29. Father Vincent Donovan, Catholic missionary to Tanzania, in his work, “Rediscovering Christianity” wrote, “It is extraordinary the way people will play the gospel back to you, if it is presented to them in an uninterpreted way.”

judgment [Romans 2:11]³⁰ He shows no favoritism when it comes to His mercy either [Romans 10:13].³¹ We affirm that all partitions have been torn down. Our reliance for our salvation must be on God's grace and our faith in Him alone.

Jesus drew up the New Covenant which He guarantees [Hebrews 7:22]³² and by our faithfulness we agree to it [Jeremiah 24:7;³³ Zechariah 8:8].³⁴ This is Paul's point. Circumcision which was required under the Abrahamic Covenant has now been removed from the New Covenant under Christ. [This is Chapter 4.] Whether circumcised or uncircumcised, with God there is no difference. For some, circumcision has been replaced by water baptism. See the appendix on Water Baptism.

...you are not under law but under grace. - Romans 6:14

30. For there is no partiality with God.

31. For *whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved*.

32. [ESV] This makes Jesus the guarantor of a better covenant.

33. [ESV] I will give them a heart to know that I am the LORD, and they shall be my people and I will be their God, for they shall return to me with their whole heart.

34. [CSB] I will bring them back to live in Jerusalem. They will be my people, and I will be their faithful and righteous God.

Romans 3:1-8

Misunderstanding Grace: This argument "has always been sought to justify the greatest crimes in history by representing the advantages in which they have resulted to the cause of humanity." - Godet.

When grace as a free gift from God is misunderstood, it becomes a self-justifying principle. It concludes that no matter what evil man proposes or acts upon, God's grace, His faithfulness, guarantees a good end. Even Christians have been known to quote Romans 8:28, "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose" supposing that their now success and good fortune is God's approval to whatever they did. Grace becomes a divine entitlement, a right of passage through life, no matter how they live. This was never Paul's understanding.

If Paul was asserting that being Jewish, by itself, did not guarantee salvation, it must be equally true of all religion, even Christian "faiths." Church membership is not citizenship in heaven.

Salvation is more than status, it is covenantal which requires the believer's faithfulness to God in turn. Where the Jewish argument failed was assuming that good works bought God's favor [grace] instead of God's grace bringing forth good works in the believer's experience. Jewish theology failed to see faith as both trust in God's ability to conform true believers into the image of Christ and the believer's faithfulness as the clear and affirming expression of that newness of life within.

On verse 3, Lange remarked, "The *covenant* of God is always *perfect* according to its stage of development. If it generally fails to become apparent, the fault always turns out to be man's. The covenant of God is surely no *contrat social*! [social contract] —no agreement between equal parties. It is the free institution of God's grace. But this institution is that of a true covenant, of a personal and ethical mutual relation."¹

"Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure." [Philippians 2:12-13]. Whenever religious practices minimize or substitute the ethical obligation on the part of man in order to make religious requirements, instead, a path to salvation, their course leads to the desecration and weakening of this covenant.

1. Lange. vol X. Page 124.

David confessed his sin in covenant language because his covenant was with God alone, “Against You, You only, have I sinned, And done *this* evil in Your sight—That You may be found just when You speak, And blameless when You judge [Psalm 51:4].

1. *What then is the advantage being Jewish or the benefit of the circumcision?*
2. *Much every way. First off, the things of God were entrusted to them to keep unchanged.*

Verse 1-2: God has not cast away *His* people, Israel. [Romans 11:1].² They were custodians of the Truth, keepers of the vision, though they didn’t realize the significance of such nor appreciate what they had. It has always been God’s desire to reconcile with them, as the Lord said, “For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins” [Romans 11:27].³ Nothing in the message suggests God has given up on them! [Romans 11:28-29].⁴ God’s covenant is God’s faithfulness. “The covenant of grace ... is not contradicted by a divine judgment. “God’s wisdom ... justice and love, are glorified either in the punishment or conversion of the sinner.”⁵ He proves Himself just either way.

3. *But what if they were unfaithful does their unfaithfulness make God’s faithfulness [covenant] of no use-meaningless?⁶*
4. *No, never! Let God be truthful⁷ and every man a liar, as it is written,⁸ in order that you, Lord, might be justified in all You say and acknowledged [proven] right⁹ [faithful, just] in every thing you decide.¹⁰*
5. *If our breaking God’s Law proves God’s covenantal faithfulness, what are we saying: Is God unjust to bring down His wrath [when He gets furious with us]!¹¹ I am using your reasoning.*

2. Hath God cast away his people? God forbid.

3. For this *is* my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins.

4. as touching the election, *they are* beloved for the fathers' sakes. For the gifts and calling of God *are* without repentance.

5. Lange. vol X. Page 125.

6. 2 Timothy 2:13 “If we are faithless, He remains faithful; He cannot deny Himself.”

7. Psalm 115:1-3 [CSB] “Not to us, Lord, not to us, but to your name give glory because of your faithful love, because of your truth. **2** Why should the nations say, “Where is their God?” **3** Our God is in heaven and does whatever he pleases.”

8. Paul quotes the LXX [Psalm 51:4]

9. The word in the Hebrew is “pure” or “clean” “be regarded as just” - BDB Page. 269.

10. CSB “triumph when you judge.” Psalm 51:4 ESV “so that you may be justified in your words and blameless in your judgment [in a case against your faithfulness].”

11. “It is from the depths of the human conscience that the apostle fetches his question.”
- Godet

Verse 3-5: Sin's logic has always been faulty. But the Judaizers are attempting to discredit Paul. These are their comments and questions. Does our unfaithfulness commend God's faithfulness? Does not our sinning provide God with more opportunity to be merciful and forgiving? He cannot forgive or show mercy to someone who has not sinned!

Their syllogism went this way:

- ◆ When we sin, God shows mercy.
- ◆ When God shows mercy He is fulfilling His Covenant with us
- ◆ Therefore, let's sin so that God can be faithful.

6. *No! Never! Since, if that were the case, [if our unfaithfulness proves His faithfulness] how could He [rightly] judge the world?*¹²

Verse 6: Paul notes that any line of reasoning that concludes that a just God might be unjust is a non sequitur.¹³ One of God's attributes is justice or righteousness which we see as His faithfulness in covenant. God does not break covenant and therefore is not *unjust*.¹⁴

7. *Furthermore, if the Truth of God [which includes His faithfulness as a covenant God] is glorified and magnified by my lie [in my breaking God's Law; that is to say, if the more evil I do, the more God's grace and goodness shines upon me, as you suppose] why am I also*¹⁵ *judged a sinner [when I am, thereby, magnifying God]?*
8. *And why not go further —really magnify God's faithfulness— by my blaspheming, as some of you falsely imagine I am saying, "Let's do evil things that good things may come of it."¹⁶ Whose reasoning is right? May God judge!*

Verse 7-8: Following the Jewish spin on what Paul was saying: when we break God's commandment we give God more opportunity to be merciful to us; the more we sin, the more He has opportunity to forgive us. We would, in reality, be celebrating His goodness, magnifying His name before men by giving Him more opportunity to be gracious. And if this be true,

12. "No final judgment is any longer possible if the beneficial consequences of sin, human or Jewish, justify the sinner." - Godet

13. does not logically follow

14. See the Appendix on "Divine Justice"

15. "It is as if one saw the whole multitude of sinners appearing before the judgment seat one after the other, and throwing this identical answer in God's face;"-Godet

16. What Paul is accused of is exactly what sinful man argues and does as good. God's judgment on them is indeed just.

where's the sin? It can't be a sin to magnify the Lord's goodness! How can our sinning celebrate God's goodness (as the Jews supposed Paul to be saying)?¹⁷

Verse 8: As Godet reminded us: This argument "has always been sought to justify the greatest crimes in history by representing the advantages in which they have resulted to the cause of humanity."

If the "end justifies the means"¹⁸ and that end is beneficial or good, does it matter if the "means" requires disobeying God? If God works all things for the good [Romans 8:28] or , as with Joseph of old, "what man intended for evil, God purposed for good" [Genesis 50:20]—if these be so—is it just or right for God to judge? If He created the Torah only to accuse us of an evil, of what by nature we had become, have we not made Him more glorious by contrast? Why His wrath then?

Is it fair to say, "If good happens, it is God's grace; if evil, it is man's fault." One scholar, Professor Meyer concludes this is saying, "...the Christians converted the Gentile world to Monotheism, by betraying and corrupting the [old] covenant of the Jews."¹⁹

But what is Paul saying? Just this: because of sin, there could be no reconciliation with God and no heavenly kingdom, *unless* God remained faithful to Covenant. Our salvation is built on the foundation of *His* faithfulness—certainly, not ours! His mercy has to be infinite! His patience and forgiveness unbounded! "The Jews in unfaithfulness ... more clearly showed the covenant faithfulness of God"?²⁰

The concept of "grace" was difficult for a people who understood that obedience to Torah was required in order to please God. Jesus, through His death and resurrection, was a kind of interloper.²¹ He seem to come along and rewrite centuries of sacred history, rewrite the Law itself! After centuries of developing an elaborate ritual around priestly sacrifices and a belief in forgiveness by ceremonial cleansing from sin, Israel now was being asked to discontinue it all in the name of "grace." The word in their vernacular meant "merited favor" not *unmerited* and *undeserved*. A word more in keeping with their understanding of God's forgiveness would be "mercy" but in New Testament times, this word became "giving alms to those in extreme poverty." Israel could not see how our spiritual poverty

17. Paul taught that for His mercy to be merciful, we must respond to it by repenting and stop sinning! {Romans 6-7} God's goal in being merciful is to effect reconciliation between Him and us. "You ... once were alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now He has reconciled" [Colossians 1:21]. The New Covenant, His covenant faithfulness, needs our faithfulness as well [Romans 8]. But he is not there yet in his explanation and teaching.

18. Lange. vol X. Page 119.

19. Ibid. Philip Schaff, translator

20. Ibid. Page 119.

21. a person who becomes involved in a place or situation where they are not wanted or are considered not to belong

occasioned God's mercy, nor how Christ's death in some way brought real forgiveness.

We should be grateful Paul is explaining all this in his letter to the Romans. What God has written on our hearts is beginning to make sense.

Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. - Galatians 6:7

Romans 3:9-20

No Grandfather clause; Jewry is not exempt based on the Law but must come by Faith in Christ's death and Resurrection. "For God has committed them all to disobedience, that He might have mercy on all." Romans 11:32

God is no respecter of persons [Acts 10:34]. This is why in my studies I have coined the phrase: The Bible is not a record of what God *did*; the Bible is a record of what God *does*. This requires a deeper look into the Divine activity in the history of the Old Testament that will lead one to see that He has not changed in Christ [Romans 11:17-18]. God in the Old Testament is no different then He is in the New. Jesus and His Father have been from eternity past in total unity (to speak anthropomorphically) in heart and mind.

A. W. Tozier [in "The Attributes of God: A Journey Into the Father's Heart"] wrote, "When Jesus died on the cross the mercy of God did not become any greater. It could not become any greater, for it was already infinite. We get the odd notion that God is showing mercy because Jesus died. No--Jesus died because God is showing mercy. It was the mercy of God that gave us Calvary, not Calvary that gave us mercy. If God had not been merciful there would have been no incarnation, no babe in the manger, no man on a cross and no open tomb."

God's anger and wrath serve different purposes—as different as chastisement is from eternal punishment. God seems to treat some types of human offense with a marked indifference [Matthew 19:8] but with other issues, He commissions a contingent of prophets to write an entire Testament about His feelings and our sinfulness. Best read it and listen! Pick up a stick on the Sabbath in the Judean Wilderness and Moses would have you stoned to death [Numbers 15:33-35] or, like Ananias or his wife, Sapphira, sell off some property and lie about that amount of your pledge to the poor and you best have your grave dug already [Acts 5].

9 *What, therefore, are we sheltered somehow from God's wrath? not at all! For both Jews and Greeks are under an indictment under sin —all,*¹

1. under the responsibility of sin [trespasses] and the power of sin. Not just sins committed but "on the permanent state of human nature." - Godet

Verses 9-18: is descriptive of what humanity becomes without God, when they lose the purpose for which God created them. We were made in His image, an image not realized except in Christ [Romans 8:29]. Left to his own devices, human nature seeks self gratification. Humanity has lost an understanding of God, His purposes, His desires, His holiness. All have wandered off—the Psalmist said everyone is “all alike” in that we were all like “sour milk” to God—we failed in our purpose for being created. The predominate sign of all this is “the tongue.”

- 10 *as the Scripture says, “No one is righteous [who has not broken covenant with God] not one”²*
- 11 *No one understands; no one seeks after God;³*
- 12 *All have left God [gone away from God] and do not serve Him [are of no benefit⁴ to God]. No one does right by Him! not even one!*
- 13 *Their throat is an open tomb, their tongues are [continuously, always, ever, repeatedly] deceitful The poison of asps⁵ is on their lips.*

Verse 13-14: Is this profile descriptive of the worse of the worse or of all humanity? Deceitfulness is a “settled”⁶ characteristic and how can we claim a total truthfulness without Christ in our lives who is truth [John 14:6]?

The poison of asps - The snake is still slithering about undetected. James 3:8 “But no man can tame the tongue. It is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison.” “Full of curses,” i.e. Bitterest condemnation, “the animosity of their hateful selfishness.”⁷

- 14 *Their mouths⁸ are full of curses and bitterness;*
- 15 *Their feet⁹ swift to shed blood.*

2. Psalm 14:3 NKJV “They have all turned aside, They have together become corrupt; There is none who does good, No, not one.”

3. Isaiah 53:6 NKJV “All we like sheep have gone astray; We have turned, every one, to his own way; And the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.”

4. “useless” to God. The Hebrew in Psalm 14:3 “corrupt” in the NKJV is a word describing spoiled milk (sour). It is onomatopoeic alack: תִּלְשָׁל The Greek carries the idea unfit for what it was designed. Man was created by God to worship Him.

5. reminds one of the serpent in the Garden of Eden. Genesis 3:1 “more cunning than any beast of the field”

6. Lange. vol X. Page 121.

7. Ibid.

8. throat, tongue, lips, and mouth. Psalm 5:9 NIV “Not a word from their mouth can be trusted [certain, reliable]; their heart is filled with malice [engulfing ruin]. Their throat is an open grave; with their tongues they tell lies [smooth talk, flattery].”

9. Human depravity now shown also in deeds.

Verses 15-17: Sin is not only in what one says but also what one does. Man is at war with his fellow man on many levels from domestic to geo-political. Isaiah 59:7 [NIV] "They pursue evil schemes; acts of violence mark their ways." They leave a path a total destruction (a wasteland) in their path. Amos [3:10] speaks of violence and hostility making havoc or destruction. They cannot find their way to peace.

Jeremiah 4:22 "My people are morally corrupt and incorrigible; they do not know me. They are foolish, for they have not known me. Thoughtless children are they and without understanding [clueless and brainless]. They are very good at causing injury, at destroying people's lives, but to bring happiness and to benefit or bless others they have no idea how!"

But Paul speaks encouragingly, "They are *my people*, whom I have been in covenant with, and still have mercy in store for." [Romans 11:1].

- 16 *Ruin [extreme sorrow, brokenness, devastated] and misery [hardship, emotionally toilsome, a burdensome way of life] is in their ways*¹⁰
17 *and the way of peace they do not know.*
18 *The fear of God*¹¹ *is not before their eyes.*¹²

Verse 18: (Here's why) They don't respect God! They see God as no one to be concerned with.

- 19 *We know that whatever the Law says, it speaks to those in the Law, in order that every tongue is silenced [shut] and the whole world become guilty [liable, though not yet sentenced] before God;*
20 *This is why we say that the works of the law*¹³ *justifies no one before Him, for by [the purpose for] the Law is [only] the knowledge of sin.*

10. Isaiah 59:7, 8

11. "The apostle ... does not certainly mean that each of these characteristics is found equally developed in every man. Some, even the most of them, may remain latent in many men; but they all exist in germ in the selfishness and natural pride of the *ego*, and the least circumstance may cause them to pass into the active state, when the fear of God does not govern the heart. Such is the *cause* of the divine condemnation which is suspended over the human race." - Godet

12. Psalm 36:1

13. "works of the law" here written for the first time in Paul's writings. cp. Romans 3:28; 9:32; Galatians 2:16;3:2.5. 10. These speak pf both ceremonial and moral law which, though a man follow faithfully its letter, nonetheless, cannot without the Holy Spirit, live by it. [Galatians 3:21]. "...the spirit of the law [is] beyond his power to realize." - Godet.

Verse 19-20: Torah Law is the Spirit's textbook in the classroom of life [John 16:8].

We are about to turn the page from listening to Paul's defense of the Gospel (his apologetic) to His assault on the Gates of Hell. He said he wasn't ashamed of the Gospel. Now he will show us!

There is none righteous, no, not one; - Romans 3:10

Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law *is* the knowledge of sin. - Romans 3:20

Romans 3:21-26

The Marrow of Theology: The Historical Fact by which justification by faith is acquired.

We must memorize Romans 3:21-26 or if you prefer, the shorter text, Romans 3:23-26. If we know the meaning of this text, we have the Gospel in short. And if we can explain these verses to others we will answer Peter's quest to provide "to every man that asks ... a reason of the hope that is within" [1 Peter 3:15]. Let us take this portion verse by verse and include the King James Version, which I recommend for memorization.

21 *And now the righteousness of God has appeared without law being witnessed by the Law and the prophets.*

And now - The promise of the Savior goes back to Adam [Genesis 3:15], and He is at last here! He has come and was crucified! And He is risen from the dead and alive.

Without Law - The promise of Salvation was not by law but by grace [Romans 6:15]. Salvation is by grace through faith [Ephesians 2:7-9] but it was

Witnessed by the Law - The sacrifices all were types of the Savior. [Hebrews 8:5; 10:1] and

The Prophets - The miracle of Scripture is the Gospel message clothed in the language of Old Testament prophecies. The Old Testament is the New concealed; the New is the Old revealed¹ [Isaiah 53; Luke 24:27].

22 *Furthermore the righteousness of God is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all who believe;² for there is no difference.*

Furthermore, that is, to further explain

The Righteousness of God - the Covenant Faithfulness of God, He fulfilled His promise of Salvation

1. "Novum Testamentum in Vetere latet; Vetus in Novo patet."

2. Faith plays a double role: We are, thereby introduced to Christ and whereby we follow Him [faith and faithfulness] Godet calls it the disposition [imputation, declared righteous] and the appropriation of God's Righteousness [made righteous].

By Faith - The Reformers, Luther, Calvin, etc. said faith *alone* which Paul will illuminate in Chapter 4. But for now, we are not required to do anything for salvation other than accept it. Theories of the Atonement abound while scholars ask questions with answers hidden still in Heaven's vault of grace. God does not require a theological understanding or any knowledge other than this: Jesus died for my sins to reconcile me to God—if I want Him. ...and I do. [Romans 10:9-10]. Jesus is building us a place in His kingdom and will return to get us. How is this possible? What more do I need to know to accept this truth? John 14:1 "You believe in God," Jesus said, "then believe in me!" Nothing more.

Of - in Jesus Christ. The language is different from what we expected to read. John 1:12 and 1 John 5:13 read "believe *on* His name;" Romans 10:14 says "believe *in* Him." The word *in* and *on* speak of a trust in relationship with Christ. Scholars prefer to see the word *of* as the word *in*.

Unto all and upon all - Scholars think this is redundant; that "unto all" is sufficient in the text. But it seems that, if this be so, a copyist's eye raced ahead to see the words

No difference - Paul was thinking of Jews and Non-Jews [Gentiles]. All come by way of *faith*.

23 *For all have sinned³ and lacked the Glory⁴ of God.*

All have sinned - Jews and Non-Jews [Gentiles]. All "in Adam" were declared by God liable and guilty. [Romans 5 and 6]. The verse that I cherish here is Galatians 5:22, "But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe." And Paul adds Romans 11:32 "For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all." God wanted to show us His mercy and He wanted us to be reconciled to Him by faith alone. If we were not declared sinners, these provisions of Calvary would not be available to us. We would have to come on our own merit which was not possible because we

Lacked the Glory of God - We were not holy! We could not relate to Him; A relationship with Him was not possible because His world was spiritual and ours natural; He is holy but we were carnal.⁵

3. Adam's sin and us in him

4. The divine splendor -a ray was given to Adam when God made him pure and happy as he rose from innocence to holiness.-Godet. cp. Exodus 19:11-13.

5. See the Appendix on "Adam's Sin."

24 *Being freely declared justified by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ;⁶*

Justified Freely- Some say “being made righteous or being sanctified” which meaning is only disallowed on grammatical grounds.⁷ This is the word righteous which has to speak also of the covenant relation we have with God in Christ. In anticipation of our transformation into His image [Romans 8:29] He has already vacated our sentence of death [Romans 8:1].

Grace - Gift. God’s gift is that of Himself! (John 3:16). The gift of reconciliation, of relationship, of righteousness.

Redemption - a deliverance from the bondage to sin [Romans 6] through a ransom [the payment of Jesus’ shed blood [Matthew 20:28; 1 Timothy 2:6]. “Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you” [1 Peter 1:18-20]. And if we were purchased *by* Him, we belong now *to* Him! [Ephesians 1:14; 1 Corinthians 6:20; 7:23; Titus 2:14; 1 Peter 2:9].

Redemption is from the curse pronounced on Israel upon the reading of the Torah [Deuteronomy 27-29]. Galatians 3:13 speaks of Israel’s being redeemed from this curse.⁸

In Christ - Paul never calls Christ our redeemer but our *redemption*. He, His death, is the *means* by which the curse is fulfilled at Calvary.

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

Appointed - set forth - “Jesus Christ, whom God settled before hand as the means of propitiation on the condition of faith, through the shedding of his blood.” - Godet

Propitiation - This word used to mean the place where God’s wrath was appeased. Scholars thought it grammatically more sound to say “the *means* by which God’s wrath was appeased.” Paul’s word is used only here and in Hebrews 9:5 where it literally refers to the “Mercy seat” in the Holy of Holies. So, Wycliff translated it by a new word, “atonement” meaning reconciliation [from the Latin]. Jesus as our redemption was “the means”

6. [Galatians 3:13 redeemed from the curse]. Paul never calls Christ our redeemer but our redemption. He is the means of what the Father was the author. [On”cruse., see supplement]

7. See the Appendix on “Declared Righteous.”

8. See the Appendix on “The Curse.”

or the one who through His death would “appease” or deal effectively and totally with sin—as He promised to do [Daniel 9:24].

The propitiation does not represent a change in God’s sentiment (heart) toward us but a change in our relationship with Him, “a higher form of intimate communion.” - Godet

The commonly held view is that propitiation (Christ’s sacrificial death) was “....the indemnity offered to God’s justice to purchase the pardon granted by love” - Godet. but this asks too much of the word. How was His death propitious? God’s justice was satisfied [Isaiah 53:11].

Through Faith - Solely by trusting Him for Salvation [Romans 4].

In His Blood - “Propitiation does not take place except through *faith* on the part of the saved, and through *blood* on the part of the Savior.” - Godet. cp. Revelation 12:11 where “their testimony” reminds us of Romans 10:10 “For with the heart man believes unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.”

To Declare -to demonstrate [verse 26 explains]. God makes Christ’s death public, broadcasting the news through the ministry of His church [Acts 8:4].

His Righteousness - Covenant Faithfulness and His justice since both are part of His righteousness.

The Remission of — not forgiveness but the word means *to pass over* or *ignore*. God tolerated sin without punishing it . “The concept of His holiness was in danger of becoming dim, if not extinct.”⁹

Sins Past - original sin as well as all sins committed before Jesus’ death and resurrection.

26 *In God’s forbearance toward the demonstration of His righteousness¹⁰ in the present time to be just and the justifier of him who has faith [believes] in Jesus.*

The forbearance of God - not forgiven but overlooked through forbearance. Forgiven is not at issue, the *Covenant* is [Leviticus 26:25; Number 14:20]. Christ died not to forgive us but to reconcile us (although I will never argue against forgiveness since it is not reasonable to think God would reconcile us unto Himself without forgiveness).

Demonstration - to declare or demonstrate His justice and covenant faithfulness. God manifested justice in the Savior’s death. This means He

9. Thayer. Page 488.

10. Scholarship has put forth great mental effort to define this word in context here, where there is great disagreement. Godet argues that five other words might have been used if Paul meant: Holiness, grace, truth, faithfulness, or goodness. But Paul used what Godet defines as “Justice” but which Wright has tied to the covenant.

made sure Jesus' death and resurrection was not done in some private or hidden way. The Cross was on the most public display for all the world to take notice.

"The demonstration of His justice" is a manifestation of Divine Justice. When God manifests, He reveals. It is a revelation [Matthew 16:17]. "You are blessed, Simon; no person shared this insight with you, My Father in Heaven told you this" [Matthew 27:54]

God presented Christ- Put His own Son on public display—not by accident or mistake but—purposely and being determined before the world was created. "But [we are redeemed] with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you" [1 Peter 1:19-20].

But how was Calvary a manifestation of God's justice? Five reasons why Jesus' death had to be on public display.

1. Because Satan's defeat must not be a hidden truth. **Colossians 2:15** "He disarmed the rulers and authorities and disgraced them **publicly**; he triumphed over them in him."
2. Because God wants all to have opportunity to repent. **2 Peter 3:9** "From His cross there rose the most perfect honor rendered to the righteousness of God. How could His death for our salvation, for the atonement of the world, not be public!? "not willing that any should perish, but that **all should come** to repentance." The Jewish law is now replaced by a new life in Christ. This needs to be heralded as a public proclamation in the town square.
3. Because the harvest is plenteous. **Matthew 9:37** The Lord needs laborers. The **harvest indeed is plenteous**, but the laborers are few.
4. Because God commands or requires repentance for all and He shows no favoritism **Acts 17:30** "Therefore, having overlooked the times of ignorance, God now commands **all people everywhere to repent**."
5. Because salvation is good news through Christ *only*. Acts 4:12 "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." If Salvation is not publicized, how shall the world hear? **Romans 10:13-15** And **how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard?** And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!" "For four thousand years, the spectacle presented by mankind to the whole moral universe was, so to speak, a continual scandal. With the exception of some great examples of judgment, divine righteousness seemed to be asleep....." Our verse confesses, "God passed over the sins " But now, Hear ye! Hear ye!! He that hath an ear , let him hear!

Of His Righteousness - Scholarship has put forth great mental effort to define this word in context here, where there is disagreement. Godet argues that if Paul meant: *Holiness, grace, truth, faithfulness, or goodness*, He would have used these words. Godet defines *righteousness* here as *Justice*, which Wright, perceptively and astutely, has tied to the New Covenant. Christ righteousness, as Paul has been saying, is God's faithfulness to, now, the New Covenant in Christ.

That He might be Just- They He might show Himself faithful to His Word and fair. Paul explained that we were all considered unfaithful [held in unbelief] so that God could show us His mercy [Romans 11:32]. To be fair God now fulfills His promised to be merciful by Jesus' death and resurrection. I have no difficulty believing that God's prescience, knowing Adam and Eve would plunge the human race into sin, planned for our salvation beforehand [Matthew 25:34; Ephesians 1:4].¹¹

And the Justifier - Calvary was a penal substitution. Jesus died *in our place*. Therefore Christ's death was said to be *punitive*. In Romans 8:1 the word *condemnation* is a term of jurisprudence referring to the sentence of death. Believers will not be sentenced to this punishment because Christ was. "Christ suffered, not merely *on our behalf* and *for our good*, but also *in our stead*, and bearing that penalty of our sins which we otherwise must ourselves have borne."¹² [Hebrews 2:9; Titus 2:14; I Timothy 2:6; Galatians 3:13; Luke 22:19, 20; I Peter 2:21; 3:18; 4:1; Romans 5:8; John 10:15. In all of these verses Christ is said to have died in our place.]

Of Him Which Believes in Jesus - But Salvation requires a trust in the Savior to fulfill this promise. Faith is our part in a covenant relationship with God in which the heart participates by accepting trust and the mouth participates by confessing not denying Christ [Romans 10:9-10].

...being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed, to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus. - Romans 3:24-26

11. Infralapsarianism is the doctrine that God foresaw and permitted the fall of man and that after the fall he then decreed election as a means of saving some of the human race.

12. Trench. *Synonyms*. Page 311.

Romans 3:27-31

The Harmony of this mode of justification with the revelation of the Old Testament.

So, it might be shortsighted to view the Old Covenant as a “covenant of works,” since, no one followed it perfectly, nor could they. But it seems appropriate to see the Law collectively as God’s covenant righteousness with and for His people. Paul’s argument is that Israel misunderstood God’s purpose in writing the Mosaic Covenant. Put simply, Paul taught, “the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith.” [Galatians 3:24]. So, Paul would later write that his boast was in Christ alone: “I have therefore whereof I may glory through Jesus Christ in those things which pertain to God.” [Romans 15:17].

- 27 *Where, then, is boasting; It is denied. By what rule? Works? No!¹
But by the law of faith.*
- 28 *for we reason a man to be justified is so by trusting God without
obeying some law.*
- 29 *Is He just Israel’s God? And not also the God of everyone,² yes!
Every nation!³*
- 30 *Truly, and undoubtedly, God alone is He who justifies the Jew
[circumcised] from ⁴[by] faith and the Gentile [uncircumcised]
through⁵ this [‘same’] faith.*

Verses 27-30: Boasting is a one person celebration for some attainment or achievement [praising oneself]. In this instance, it is boasting of one’s salvation as if one has achieved perfection through total obedience to God’s law, the Torah, and therefore, to God, by personal effort and acumen. It is a false boast, a lie, since all have sinned and fallen short of such glorying, which goes to God alone [Romans 3:10; 23].

1. God does not legislate law.

2. every Maasai clan; every believer. The Gospel transcends cultures.

3. Jeremiah 10⁷ “The King of nations.”

4. God’s righteousness is His covenantal faithfulness to which Israel was committed, though unfaithful. Salvation meant now a commitment to the New Covenant having recognized Christ’s crucifixion accepting punishment for their breaking the Old. They were already in covenantal agreement which only needed to be restored. [out of faith].

5. Gentiles, or all others except Israel, were not under covenant agreement and there must first enter into such an agreement. The Covenant they accept by faith is the New. [in and then from== through]

Verse 30: By faith ...through faith. See Romans 11:16-18. Israel is saved *out of* faith because they already have the message of a salvation “by grace through faith” [Ephesians 2:8] contained in the Law and the prophets. They need not learn it, only interpret or learn its *meaning*. The Gentiles have no initial awareness of this truth which they now must “enter” or learn “through” faith.

31 *We, therefore, abolish the law through faith? Never!⁶ But we do prove it important [establish it].*

Verse 31: Establish - We maintain that God’s Old Covenant was never abrogated, repealed, avoided, or discarded. On Calvary the Law was honored and fulfilled [Matthew 5:17] and now, since it is rewritten upon our hearts, it is vindicated [Romans 8:4].

For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. - Ephesians 2:8-9

6. Paul was accused by annulling Torah Law as of no value, since Gentiles need not follow it to find salvation or please God.

Romans 4

Faith is the Principle by which Abraham was pronounced by God Justified. Abraham's simple "faith" or trust- faithfulness in God's Covenant Faithfulness predated the Mosaic Law.

Here is, sadly, a most controversial text which in its simplicity should be a Bible story read to children (but only carefully and in a way they can appreciate). God made a covenant with Abraham to make of him a mighty nation that would be a custodian of a wonderful promise of salvation. But was God's Covenant with Abraham nullified with the Mosaic Covenant given to Moses? Could Moses and Joshua be declared righteous by faith as Abraham was? Consider David [Psalm 51]. We should all be able to relate to this Psalm as a christian.

"The righteousness of faith is thus defined," said Lange, "(1.) It does not presuppose any good works; but, (2.) It presupposes a knowledge of sin."¹ [A need for grace]. Jesus' promise is fulfilled in saying that His burden would be light because all He requires of us is to trust Him [Matthew 11:30].

It seems almost inappropriate to say but God's promise to Abraham required only that he love his wife and trust God for Isaac. It might sound risqué but suddenly an old man's body came to life as if God had given Sarah and him back their youth. It is the science of the thing that puzzled them a bit but not the excitement of a renewed romance.

Trusting God is that simple. Trust is the bond in the covenant we have made with God. When we accept His salvation, we enter into covenant with Him. We accept Him!

1. *What therefore can we say Abraham, our forefather, found out while he lived [by his own labors]?*
2. *for if Abraham was justified by works, he could boast [of that achievement], but not before God ["toward," i.e. in relation to God.]*
3. *For what does the scripture say [Genesis 15:6]: And Abraham believed God and it was credited to him as righteousness.*
4. *The one who does the work the pay is not considered to be a gift but owed.*

1. Lange. vol X. Page 155.

5. *But he who does not work for it but believes upon Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted as righteousness [covenant faithfulness].*

Verse 2: Boast - Boasting of our achievements with God amounts to expecting a good life (works) to add up to our salvation instead of by faith.

Verse 3: Believed - "Faith consists in holding the divine promise for the reality, itself." - Godet.

God - "In laying hold of one promise, Abraham laid hold of all by anticipation; for he laid hold of the God of the promises" - Godet

Credited - The word *counted* or *imputed* means simply to *declare* righteous and God treated Abraham so.

Righteousness - This is more than forgiveness (justification). In the context of Abraham's faith, forgiveness was never center stage, but Abraham's trust in God's promise was. Abraham had a trust-relationship with God, a trust that left the miracle of birthing a nation from His loins up to the Creator.

Abraham's impregnating Sarah's Coptic servant girl, Hagar, became a lesson in the weakness of human reasoning, the adamic error of listening to one's wife [Genesis 16:1]. We are forever wanting to help God out. But Abraham's faith was unshakeable. The writer to the Hebrews [Hebrews 11:8-9] will acclaim Abraham's faith for his utter abandonment to the promises of God in leaving Ur and journeying into an unknown land. If faith is our part in a covenant relationship with a faithful Savior/Creator, it is our complete dependence on God for that Salvation.

If righteousness speaks on our part of a covenant relationship, the difference between "made" righteous or "declared" righteous is inconsequential. When we see righteousness only in terms of perfection [complete sanctification], which is the logic the words *made* and *declared* rest upon and which will be ours on Jesus' return [1 John 3:2], we fail to realize the dynamic of this covenant relationship. The word perfect implies works nor faith, but even in our desire to live faithfully for Christ, the relationship is maintained because God's grace through the Spirit's guidance are what make this relationship with God real.

Verse 5: Faith - Was Abraham's faith the same faith [2 Peter 1:1] Christians own after Calvary? Was it saving faith? "Abraham and Christians have in reality the same righteousness of faith."²

6. *As David said [Psalm 32:2] "Happy is the man whom God imputed [considered] righteous without working for it.*

2. Lange. vol X. Page 145.

7. *Happy are they whose iniquities are forgiven and whose sins are covered; [Psalm 32:1]*
8. *Happy is the man of whom the Lord does not impute sin."*
9. *Therefore is this blessing for the Jew only or also for the Gentile? For we are saying that faith was ascribed to Abraham as righteousness.*
10. *How is this to be understood? Was Abraham circumcised or uncircumcised? Not circumcised but uncircumcised!*
11. *Then he received the sign of circumcision [sign of the covenant] as a seal (proof, "signature") of the righteousness which is by faith which he received being uncircumcised, which led to his being the father of all believers [all the while being] uncircumcised,[the father] for all those unto whom also this righteousness is ascribed.*
12. *and a father of circumcision to those not only circumcised [the Jews] but [and] who also walk the walk [live the life] of faith [Habakkuk. 2:4] of our Father Abraham [while he was still] uncircumcised.*
13. *Furthermore, the promise given Abraham or to his seed [descendants]: that he would inherit the world was not written in Torah Law [not a matter of obeying the law], but by [the] righteousness of faith [trust in God's covenant faithfulness].*

Verse 6: imputed - See the comment on verse 8.

Verse 7: Iniquities - disobeyed Torah-covenant; in rebellion.

Verse 8: Impute - means to put to one's account. It is this idea that supports the interpretation of a *declared* righteousness.³ An imputation here is God's decision or judgment as to Abraham's faith. Paul's point remains simply that all that is required of us is trusting Him for salvation. Paul is contrasting this with seeking salvation through obeying law.

Verse 10 Uncircumcised - If circumcision was a requirement and not a token of salvation, Gentiles would be required to become proselytes of Jewry making Paul's entire doctrine of Grace and Faith valueless. But, as Paul points out, Abraham's *faith* was in Genesis 15; his *circumcision* in chapter 17 (14 years later).

Verse 12: What is clear: God was bringing a salvation by faith to the gentile nations as well as to Israel [Genesis 18:18; Galatians 3:8].

Verse 13: Descendants - What created controversy was not Abraham's faith but God's promise to him to bless his progeny, his *seed*. Was the covenant God made with Abraham a covenant of grace? Was Abraham's faith a spiritual blessing to His descendants as well and did it somehow

3. See the Appendix on Declared Righteous.

mean their salvation?⁴ The Baptism of infants is based partly on this interpretation.

But if by seed we mean *Christ*, this controversy should go away: 'Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ.' [Galatians 3:16].

That he would Inherit the World - What was the covenant God made with Abraham that involved Isaac? "Ask me, and I will make the nations your inheritance, the ends of the earth your possession." [Psalm 2:8 NIV].

14. *For if inheritance were a matter of Law [Jewish religious practices], faith would be meaningless [vain], and the promise of none effect [abolished].*
15. *Furthermore, God's Laws only incur God's wrath [when broken]; a law that does not exist [where there is no law, it] cannot be broken.*
16. *For this reason it is a matter of faith in order that as a free and undeserved gift [grace] the promise was sure to Abraham's descendants, not only those who devote themselves to Torah [the Jews who come by faith] but even those who have faith [Gentile believers, who are] like Abraham, who is the father of us all.*

Verse 14: Inheritance - Deuteronomy 4:21 and elsewhere God gave Canaan to Israel as an inheritance.

Of None Effect - Our ability to flawlessly obey the law was never thought possible. The Law became only a teacher of the truth that we needed a Savior.

The Law - Unlike in Galatians 3:15ff, Paul here does not reference Israel's inheritance of the Land of Canaan. The lesson is that God makes covenants: The Torah was Old, but the "New" covenant God already has in mind in His Abrahamic Promise. We are heirs of Salvation [Hebrews 1:14].

Verse 15 Wrath - is a punishment of death [Romans 1:18].

Transgression - is specifically used in reference to the covenant and the Torah."...thereby the consciousness of sin is intensified and the desire for redemption is aroused."⁵ "Without a law transgression is not possible." -Godet.

Verse 16: And how were the blessing to his descendants to be interpreted? Was the Old Covenant circumcision replaced with the New Covenant's water baptism? And if so, is Water Baptism a necessary part of the covenant of grace between God and Abraham's spiritual seed?

4. See the Appendix on Water Baptism.

5. Thayer, Page 479. cp Galatians 3:19

Faith ... by Grace - "There was positive intention on God's part, when He made the gift of inheritance depend solely on faith." - Godet

Sure - was fulfilled in Christ. How else could He guarantee our inheritance except by grace through faith! Ephesians 2:7.

Abraham ..Father of All - both Jew and Gentile.

17. *As it is written that "I have made [already appoint] you a father of many nations, before [face to face: a personal encounter with] God who he [Abraham] believed [God] who raises the dead [Sarah's body? God's power to quicken] and calls into existence things that are not [referencing Isaac's conception and birth. God's power to create].*
18. *[Abraham] Who when things were hopeless, still clung to hope, believed [put absolute, unwavering, trust in God] that [in order that] He would make him [Abraham] a father of many nations according to His word, "thus shall your descendants be [like the stars in the heavens],*
19. *And not being weak in faith he ignored the fact that he was old, 100, and his wife's, Sarah's, condition*

Verse 17: have made you - "In the eyes of God, the Patriarch is already what he shall become."- Godet. We are declared what we shall become "righteous" by grace through faith.⁶

Things that are Not - In the mind of God, who is eternal: what shall be by promise, is already. Hebrews 11:1.

Verses 18-19: Abraham believed what God told him, not without some discussion with Sarah, however [Genesis 17:16-22]. Later he accepted the divine promise. Abraham's expectation reveals an active, intentional, faith.

Against Hope ... Believed in Hope - This is the most accurate definition of Saving Faith because it is an unwavering expectation that God's promise is sure even when what we observe or experience doesn't agree.

Verse 10 noted there were 14 years between this moment (Genesis 15) and later when Sarah "laughed" (Genesis 17:17) which—in my mind—may have occasioned the calling the child by the name, "Isaac" [laughter]. Was Sarah's laugh a scornful moment of a relaxed faith?

Perhaps, we should be expecting God to bring us into an otherwise impossible situation; for, this clearly glorifies Him when His promise is fulfilled.

6. See the appendix on Eternally Secure

20. *But never doubted in disbelief God's promise but, contrarily, his faith was empowered [he strengthened himself, his hope and faith by] while he gave glory to God.*
21. *And he had unimpeachable confidence [filled with a conviction that leaves no doubt] that what God promised God would do*
22. *And this, then, is therefore why God called him righteous!*
23. *But this was not written of Abraham only, that is, that his trust in God was why God called Abraham righteousness*
24. *but we, too, will be in turn accounted righteous accordingly, those of us, who believe [and live that faith] that God raised our Lord Jesus from the dead,*
25. *Who was delivered because of our sins and then raised for [because of] our justification [we are now justified 1. justice was satisfied and 2. we now can be declared righteous].*

Verse 20: Giving Glory to God - There is every reason to believe that Paul is saying that Abraham's faith was strengthened while he was glorifying God for what would be. John 4:23 "The Father seeks such to worship Him" Israel would not through disobedience, but the Church ought to "by faith." "For we walk by faith, not by sight" [2 Corinthians 5:7].

Verse 21: And - Some versions omit this word making "Glorifying God" an expression of a stronger conviction.

Perform - With God what God promises (God's Word) and what He does (God's work) are inseparable aspects of His Creative and Covenantal faithfulness." So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it" [Isaiah 55:11].

Verse 22: Therefore - Faith is trust characterized by a confident respect [with God: an unwavering conviction and godly devotion] and a caring desire for intimacy and oneness [with God: an obedient love]. Nothing spells "righteousness" as well.

Verse 24: believe - Romans 6:11, 13 ESV "So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.... present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God"

Him - God! We do not "believe" in the doctrine but in God. This distinction is critical to an active or living faith. We have set aside a pure academic pursuit to know a person! Philippians 3:6-8 CSB "...regarding the righteousness that is in the law, blameless ...But everything that was a gain to me, I have considered to be a loss because of Christ. I also consider everything to be a loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord."

Raised - Romans 6:4 ESV “We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.”

Our Lord - “a very intimate relation.” - Godet

Verse 25: Delivered - Isaiah 53:12; Romans 8:32. It was God Who delivered the Savior over to be crucified!

Raised - “so long as the security is in prison, the debt is not paid; the immediate effect of payment would be his liberation. His resurrection is the proof of our justification only because it is the necessary effect of it.... If death is the payment of debt, resurrection is, as it were, the acknowledgment of it.” - Godet

Our Justification - By the same law of solidarity whereby our condemnation had brought him to the cross, our justification must transform his death into life. ... our lot is as it were interwoven with His: we sin, He dies; we are justified, He lives again. - Godet. “If Jesus be not risen, you are yet in your sins” [1 Corinthians 15:17].

Righteousness must retain the meaning here: a judgment which is “just.” Jesus’ resurrection was vindication [what I call a reasonable salvation] that His work was “finished” [John 19:30]. In the thought of François Turretini, His death was not *unjust*.

The words “it was credited to him” were written not for him alone, but also for us, to whom God will credit righteousness—for us who believe in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead. He was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification. - Romans

4:23-25

Romans 5:1-11

The certainty of our final and eternal salvation.

Was humanity's alienation from God Adam's fault? Did his guilt, his disobedience, somehow make me liable, personally responsible—not for his sin but—for my own? So, I might reason, whatever Adam broke, Christ fixed, whether in my nature or in my relationship with God or both. And, then, can I conclude that without Christ I would have to pay with my eternal soul for the sins I consequently *could not prevent* committing? Does this explain Adam's role in my relationship with God *before* salvation?

Is this reasoning Paul's? He had to go back to the beginning because God did. "The scripture hath concluded *all* under sin, that the promise [might be] by faith [and not works]." [Galatians 3:22]. And why? For the express purpose: "that he may have mercy on ... *all*" [Romans 11:32]. "in thy sight shall no man living be justified." [Psalm 143:2].¹

I, for one, would rather be a recipient of God's mercy through Christ than to start out sinless in the hopes of staying that way and winning my salvation by a perfect life.

I am, in my knowledge of what Jesus did for me, somewhat like the blind man whose sight Jesus restored. The theologians assembled to know how this was possible [John 9]. Some, not convinced, claimed this was another person, the blind man's doppelgänger. The explanation of his healing by Jesus using spittle and mud might have sounded even more fantastic. So they interrogated the man's parents, who could only add to their bewilderment.

The only thing his life would reveal before Jesus came by would be how utterly stone cold blind he was; Jesus' touch is transforming. He is, indeed, the Creator [John 1:3].

Some things the Savior does denies the logic of our childlike minds and we must say as the blind man regarding our salvation, "I don't know how He did it: one thing I know, that, whereas I was estranged from God, now, thanks to Jesus, I am reconciled" [John 9:25].

1. *Having been justified, therefore, by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ [His death and resurrection]*

1. See also Galatians 2:16; Deuteronomy 27:26.

2. *Through whom also we now stand at the threshold of this [God's saving] grace in which we [always] stand and celebrate among ourselves [in fellowship] the glory of God [how glorious God is] Whose return we expect with great anticipation.*

Verses 1-2: Our argument has been that if we are in covenant (The New Covenant) with God, the Father; we are in a trust relationship with Him—a relationship that is maintained and deepened through prayer. In this context, prayer includes worship and worship includes celebrating, in praise and song, how glorious a salvation He has given us—“making melody in our hearts to the Lord” [Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16].

Entering into covenant with God is the very definition of our peace with Him. Peace with God is reconciliation through Christ. “For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation, having abolished in His flesh the enmity, that is, the law of commandments contained in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one new man from the two, thus making peace, and that He might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity.” [Ephesians 2:14-16].

We have peace with God - This is why Christ died! To reconcile us to God and since He is eternal, our peace has no end. “We can henceforth regard God with entire serenity, not only as to the past, but also in view of the future, and even of the judgment....” - Godet [Romans 8:1; 1 John 4:18].

We have access into this grace wherein we stand - We have access speaks to the entrance into a relationship with God. But some see this as an introduction only. We are only on the “threshold” of Grace. Threshold is a word signifying an “introduction,” that is, we have only begun! The LSB and NASB translations read, “We have obtained our introduction.” Grace has been only introduced to us! Jesus taught “strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leads unto life, and few there be that find it” [Matthew 7:14] and we did find it! And have just entered through that gate.

This speaks of the newness of this relationship with Christ to which salvation has “introduced” us. Now before us opens up wide the possibilities that are in Christ, if we will participate in them by living out our salvation. “For through him we both have access in one spirit to the Father.” [Ephesians 2:18 CSB].

Celebrate - means to boast but here our boast is in the Lord and how glorious a salvation He has provided.

Hope of The Glory of God - is a phrase that supports the idea that we have only begun to experience the blessings of God’s grace. Hope is most alive!

I recall Laquida, a young lady who accepted the Lord into her heart and began attending Bible study. I was teaching on the Lord’s return and she lit up—as we say—like a Christmas tree. Her eyes were bright with

anticipation. Her excitement was uncontainable when she responded, "He's coming *back!*?" (She didn't know this yet.) She was on the threshold of a journey into faith. She had just begun to discover a whole new life in Christ and the blessings yet to come!

There is a sense in which Paul might be referencing the Holy of Holies. The veil has been torn in two [Mark 15:38] and we have free and open access into the Presence of God. "We need hardly mention that this permanent access is affected and conditioned by the life of prayer...."² The writer to the Hebrews added, "Therefore, brethren, having boldness [confidence] to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh," [Hebrews 10:19-20].

3. *And not only [do we celebrate how glorious a salvation with great expectations of blessings] but [perhaps, surprisingly!] we celebrate our trials, perceiving [learning?] that trials produce endurance [patience].*
4. *And patience, approval*
5. *And approval, hope and hope is not shamed because*

Verses 3-5a: But - is a strong disjunctive to awaken us to how glorious is our salvation and not even trials can change this. It shouldn't amaze us too much how God has made us, as new persons in Christ, capable of benefiting from trials or "tribulation." In a sense, the Christian character is best developed in the soil of tribulation, pressure, and restrictions, where "the easy way out" does not seem to exist, and pleasures and amusements of this life are noticeably scarce [Matthew 5:10-12; Philippians 3:10]. Tribulation can only be understood by the context of an apostle's or the Savior's remarks.

- **2 Corinthians 1:8** we were burdened beyond measure, above strength, so that we despaired even of life.
- **2 Corinthians 2:4** For out of much affliction [tribulation] and anguish of heart I wrote unto you with many tears; not that ye should be grieved, but that ye might know the love which I have more abundantly unto you.
- **2 Corinthians 1:4** Who comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, [tribulation] by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God.
- **2 Corinthians 4:17** For our light *affliction*, [tribulation] which is but for a moment, works for us a far more exceeding *and* eternal weight of glory;

2. Lange. vol X. Page 161.

- **Matthew 24:9** Then shall they deliver you up to be *afflicted*, [tribulation] and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake.
- **John 16:21** A woman when she is in travail hath sorrow, because her hour is come: but as soon as she is delivered of the child, she remembers no more the *anguish* [tribulation of labor pains] for joy that a man is born into the world.
- **Acts 11:19** they which were scattered abroad upon the *persecution* that arose

Good news must be represented—with an undying hope [Titus 2:13], an enduring peace [Philippians 4:7], an unconquerable love [1 Corinthians 13:4-7], an unquestioning faith [Romans 4:19-22], and an unquenchable joy [1 Peter 1:8].

I learned in raising Bonsai that a plant survives a lot of abuse if it has strong roots.

- If no root Matthew 13:21 “yet he has no root in himself, but endures only for a while. For when tribulation or persecution arises because of the word, immediately he stumbles.”
- But we have “root:” Ephesians 3:17 “that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted [perfect], grounded [well founded], in love.”

Tribulation develops **patience** which meets with our Lord’s approval. Our patience shows how real and effective faith is. What a testimony! The King James Version says *experience*, The NKJV says *character*. Peter agreed, “That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perishes, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ: [1 Peter 1:7]. And here is when tribulation leads us to a more lively hope.

Immaculee Ilibagiza’s struggle to survive the Rwandan genocide of the 1990’s wrote, ““I realized that my battle to survive this war would have to be fought inside of me. Everything strong and good in me—my faith, hope, and courage—was vulnerable to the dark energy. If I lost my faith, I knew that I wouldn’t be able to survive. I could rely only on God to help me fight.”³

The believer reacts differently to tribulation because it develops endurance and patience and strengthens hope culminating in an outflow of love.

5. *God’s love is shed abroad [poured out] into our hearts by the Holy Spirit given to us.*

3. Immaculee Ilibagiza. Page 60.

Verses 5b-11: How do we measure the power of God's love?

Poured Out - God's love is poured out. His Spirit is poured out [Acts 2:17-18]; Jesus' blood was poured out [Matthew 26:28]. God knows only abundance because He is infinite. "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? ... Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?" [Romans 8:32, 35]

The Holy Spirit given - There are some key evidences of the infilling of the Spirit: boldness [Acts 4:8, 20, 31] and here, love. A study of Romans is a study of the Spirit's Work in the heart. Paul's Epistle to the Romans is not just a study in the Cross but also a study in the role and ministry of the Holy Spirit because of the Cross. To ignore the need to be submissive to the Spirit, to use Paul's idiom in Romans 8:4 to "walk in the Spirit," is to discard the real message of this Epistle. Yes, the Spirit is given at salvation, but His work extends beyond this moment into life. We must learn submission.

6. *For while we are weak [without strength], yet in due time [according to the time appointed] Christ died for the ungodly.*

Verse 6: Weak - Mankind could not save themselves. Our resolve to deny self and serve God was weak. Every time we would yield to temptation we affirmed it stronger than us and our resolve *not* to yield. Augustine saw this as a result of Adam's disobedience (original sin). But a believer is not who they were. That's what the new birth is all about. Temptation is not stronger anymore but its persistence is a form of persecution that can weaken resolve on our part to say "No!" We were weak, then, but, as believers, no longer! "For once you were full of darkness, but now you have light from the Lord. So live as people of light!" [Ephesians 5:8 NLT]. A Christian should be able to testify to the power of Jesus' death and resurrection in their own life by remembering the person they *were* compared to the person they *are* now in Christ.

In Due Time - We are learning things about God. Everything He does is always wholehearted. If it is anger, it is wrath, if it is mercy, it is love. If it is grace, it is abundant. If it is life, it is eternal. Not only is He wholehearted but He knows *when* to manifest Himself to us. [Ephesians 1:10; Galatians 4:4]. He has appointed times which will no longer be necessary in Glory.

The Old Testament, too, speaks of an "appointed time and place."⁴ The "Tent of Meeting" was an appointed place at an appointed time for the

4. Genesis 17:21 But my covenant will I establish with Isaac, which Sarah shall bear unto thee at this set time מִן־הַזֶּמֶן. See <https://www.gotquestions.org/fullness-of-time.html>

High Priest to meet with God [Exodus 30:36]. He also knows when to send Jesus back to get us [John 14:3].

Christ Died For the Ungodly - *For* means *in their place*. As a man, Jesus was sinless, but He was also God. He triumphed! [Colossians 2:15] over Satan. He not only died for us in the sense, “for our benefit” or “concerning us” but His death was *substitutionary*.

Glen, an Episcopalian, and later Catholic, priest, recalled while in seminary: “We were studying atonement theory, and I thought, ‘Was there not a better way to save humanity than to resort to human sacrifice?’ But we were not encouraged to ask those kinds of questions. This particular professor mocked those who did.”⁵

The theology surrounding the Savior’s death gets theoretical because scholars like to dig deep into why His crucifixion became necessary to provide for our salvation. Perhaps, Paul’s explanation here seems too simplistic: He died or else the ungodly would die eternally. The following verses describe a love that exceeded the bonds of friendship to accept our punishment [Isaiah 53:5].

Ungodly - Paul already defined this word in Roman 1:21. It represents the Old Testament word for *rebellion* or *unfaithfulness* [Isaiah 43:27-28] of one who does not serve the Lord [Malachi 3:18] and is deserving of death [Numbers 35:31]. Jesus took that death so they—*we*—could live!

7. *For, indeed, it is rare [scarcely] that anyone would die for a just man, furthermore, perhaps, for the benefit of a good person anyone would be so spontaneously inclined to die.*
8. *God proves His love, Himself, to us because while we were yet sinners Christ died for us.*

Verse 7: Scarcely this term was also used by Peter⁶ to quote the Septuagint in Proverbs 11:31. This is a Greek word without a true Old Testament equivalent. It might be best defined “done with great difficulty and very rarely accomplished.”⁷ If taking the place on the gallows in their place of a friend or an innocent man is an improbable idea (and certainly not a culturally accepted practice), Jesus death for us while we remained His enemies is, frankly, impossible for the mind of man to fathom or imagine. Calvary was a Divine idea, alone, carried through by God, by Himself, alone. It should be unconscionable that the Church should ever promote any other doctrine beside this or that the church not treat our Lord’s death

5. Dennett. *Caught in The Pulpit*. Page 49.

6. 1 Peter 4:18 *If the righteous one is scarcely saved, Where will the ungodly and the sinner appear?”*

7. Thayer. Page 417.

with the honor He deserves in sharing His love near and far in life and voice.

Paul needed to speak of 3 more aspects of His being—in the form of a servant, because He would be the Son fulfilling the Father's will; in the likeness of man or human, because passibility⁸ is a human condition, and with a body that He might die for our sins [Philippians 2:6-8].

Verse 8: Many scriptures step forward to affirm what Paul is preaching: "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep." [John 10:11].

God proves His own love to us - The exceptional characteristic and quality of God's love ["For God *so* loved..."] supports this truth that Jesus' death for our sins was in every regard, and alone, a divine plan. God, alone, had the kind of love [John 3:16] that would go to a Cross of suffering for us.

- **Isaiah 43:25:** *I, even I, am He who blots out your transgressions for My own sake; And I will not remember your sins.*

9. *Therefore more, rather, having now pronounced us justified, we are saved by His blood [crucifixion] from wrath [Divine judgment, punishment].*

Verse 9: Wrath - We have been saved from wrath [a slow burn, anger]. This word wrath might be translated "anger" not because it is less intense but because it is not final. Even while tolerating man's sinfulness prior to Calvary, God found it a burden [Isaiah 13:1; 15:1; 17:1, etc.]. At no point would God, could God, compromise His holiness and justice with sin.

But because of Calvary, we are now exempt. [Romans 8:1; 1 John 4:18]. "For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him. Therefore comfort each other and edify one another, just as you also are doing." 1 Thessalonians 5:9-11].

10. *In other words, if while we were still enemies we were reconciled with God through the death of His Son, much more rather now we shall be saved in being reconciled by His life [resurrection].*

Verse 10: Enemies - If God, who is an eternal God, would go so far as to rescue His *enemies* from death in order to be reconciled as friends with them, this must mean *forever*, else why would He express such an extreme love!

8. capable of feeling or suffering; susceptible to sensation or emotion: *only the humanity of Jesus is regarded as passible.*

Much More - If His death removed the sin and reconciled us, what would His resurrection provide!! [Romans 6:4]. Not only does our Lord pour out His love [Romans 5:5] and His Spirit [Acts 2:17], there is a “much more” attached to His many provisions! Not only is He merciful, the Bible uses the plural, mercies, but they are much more, brand new daily, like the manna; so, He is not just faithful, His faithfulness is *great* [Lamentations 3:23]. Everything about our God is immeasurable or infinite:

- ◆ “To God who is able to do for us what will far exceed anything we might request or even imagine.....” [Ephesians 3:20].
- ◆ “in order that in the coming ages of forever He might demonstrate that immeasurable riches of his grace” [Ephesians 2:7].
- ◆ “If God did not spare his own Son but instead sacrificed Him in our place, what else would He not grant us!” [Romans 8:32].
- ◆ The wealth of God’s wisdom and knowledge are beyond our understanding! His decisions beyond logic and what He does on our behalf we could never presume to know [Romans 11:33].

We are:

- ◆ Not only justified but, *much more*, saved from wrath [Romans 5:9].
- ◆ Not only reconciled to God but, *much more*, forever [Romans 5:10].
- ◆ Not only forgiven but, *much more*, free from the sin [Romans 5:15, 17, 20].
- ◆ Not only the salvation of the Gentiles but, *much more*, God’s going to save His Old Testament people! [Romans 11:12, 24].
- ◆ Not only was the Old Testament Law glorious but *much more*, Our Lord’s ministry is among us. [2 Corinthians 3:9, 11].
- ◆ Not only is gold valuable but, *much more*, is our faith in Christ! [1 Peter 1:7].

11. *Not only this but we even make our boast of God through our Lord Jesus Christ through whom now we have received this reconciliation.*

Verse 11: Not Only This - There’s more!? Yes! A celebration! There is a level of celebration when a soul is saved that surpasses what we might imagine.

- **Luke 15:10** NLT In the same way, there is joy in the presence of God’s angels when even one sinner repents.
- **Zephaniah 3:17** The LORD your God in your midst, The Mighty One, will save; He will rejoice over you with gladness, He will quiet you with His love, He will rejoice over you with singing.

**Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God
through our Lord Jesus Christ, - Romans 5:1**

**For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the
death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved
by His life. - Romans 5:10**

Romans 5:12-21

The Universality of Salvation in Christ proved by the Universality of Death in Adam.

Adam! Why? What were you thinking would happen, Adam, if you disobeyed God? And did you think at all of us, the souls you would impact by your selfishness!

The best explanation offered by scholarship as to why I might be liable for something Adam did is in the concept in law of a “proxy.” Adam became our proxy, our representative.

You own stock in a company that is hundreds of miles across the country. They call for a meeting of all stock holders, but you can’t make the meeting. If you own stock, you have a vote in the corporate actions decided by the company. But you don’t need to go if you allow a “proxy” to represent you at the meeting. When your proxy votes, they record *your* vote, not their own. They represent you. They vote in your stead.

When Jesus was punished for sin, we were punished. He was our proxy. He was punished in our stead. Paul explained, “...we are become identified with him in the likeness of his death, so also we shall be of his resurrection” [Romans 6:5 Darby Translation].

Jesus not only took our place; we, too, were crucified with Him. His death became an inclusionary substitution... by proxy. John Stott clarified further, “A substitute is one who acts in place of another in such a way as to render the other’s action unnecessary. A representative is one who acts on behalf of another in such a way as to involve the other *in* his action. Christ did for us what we could never do for ourselves as a substitute: he bore our sins in judgment. But as a representative he did what we by being united to him have also done: we have died and risen with him.”¹

In this way, consider the possible explanation that Adam in the garden was our proxy. “...in Adam all die...” [1 Corinthians 15:22].

Perhaps, we might say that when God made a covenant with Adam, He made it with mankind² [Genesis 3:15]. In like manner when He made a covenant with Abraham, He made it with all Israel [Genesis 17:9]. And when He made one with Jesus at Calvary, He made it for us all [Hebrews 8:6].

1. Stott. Page 269.

2. For those scholars who find such debates fascinating, consider the word *supralapsarian* in the intro to Chapter 9.

But let's go deeper into what happened in Eden the day Adam and Eve decided to disobey God. The explanation offered here is the product of my own thoughts but rambled out first before God in prayer, wanting Him to give me a thumbs up if I was even close to what transpired that afternoon. (I imagine it was lunch time and Eve was hungry.) They yielded to a temptation, something every Christian knows well. The influence of a temptation is a powerful thing and when it persists we, sometimes, fish for excuses to rationalize some homemade justification. Been there; done that. Thank God for the Holy Spirit, Who faithfully—and with an infinite patience—convicts us [John 16:8-10]. Adam was created sinless but Jesus, also, was without sin and He, too, was tempted. The sin is not in the temptation; it is in the yielding to it—as the choir knows already. So, Adam was like us *after* salvation because we are no longer bound to sin [Romans 6:6]—as he was not created bound to sin.

Stay with me: When Adam yielded to the tempter—sinned—instead of theologizing that mankind “fell,” perhaps, we should conclude that Adam only proved he and Eve would need a Savior. God was Adam's Creator but now He would become Adam's Savior—at Calvary, thousands of years hence—an eternal God isn't hung up on “time” [2 Peter 3:8].

Here is a field of weeds we might step into before we go on: God's foreknowledge alerted God that His creation was going to sin. And we want to assume God could have made Adam above temptation. It is similar to asking, “Why did there have to be that snake there! Cigarettes and alcohol do not tempt me; my temptations lie elsewhere but temptations serve a purpose because we are drawn closer to the Lord when we say, “No” In fact, it was the Holy Spirit that led Jesus into the Desert where He was tempted and afterward angels ministered to Him [Matthew 4:1-11]. Why allow temptations? The answer is simple: free will. Automotons or robots don't have real relations with anyone, and God wanted a real—eternal—fellowship with His creation—you and me.

Okay, but how do we understand our Lord's prayer [Matthew 6:13] “Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.” Who would ever pray the opposite: “Lord, bring it on! I'll give Satan a what-for!” Our Lord's prayer recognizes our weakness and utter need of our Lord's salvation and deliverance. So when you are tempted, *pray!* And when God strengthens your resolve in prayer to resist the devil [James 4:7] —and He will [1 Corinthians 10:13] ... *run!!!*

Stepping back out of the weeds: Isn't it enough for God to be Adam's and Eve's Creator? No! It wasn't enough for Him to just create us: God wants to parent us because there is real affection here for us—God *is* love [1 John 4:8]. Love was not created for us; we were created for love—created in His image: after God's heart. Remember, it is all about having a relationship with God, a closeness, a binding or sense of belonging [a covenant]. When God made mankind He wanted family; He wanted to be wanted; He wanted us to willingly love Him back, and none of this is as

real as when there is a snake hiding in the tall grass of our circumstances giving us opportunity to prove the genuineness of our affection. God wanted children and He wants to be our Father [Matthew 6:9].

Let's ask Paul, now.

12 *For this reason even as, by one man [Adam] sin entered the world and through that sin, death,³ and thus, death came through him unto all mankind, on this basis⁴ [in consequence of which] everyone in Adam sinned.⁵*

Verse 12: "Adam, not Eve, is charged with the primal sin (also called 'original sin') as he received the command direct from God."⁶ What is original sin? Augustine (354-420 AD) coined the phrase which later Anselm (1033/4-1109) interpreted to refer to Adam's failure to obey God. Abelard (1079-1142) did not see original sin as a state of fallen humanity. To him intention is required if a crime (sin) against God was committed. You and I, Abelard maintained, would be punished for Adam's sin, grant it. But his sin was *imputed* to us.

We might say that we were liable but not guilty. Adam, indeed, ate the forbidden fruit but he did it as our representative. Scholarship admits that "The relation of each of us to that man [Adam] ... has nothing in common with the relation which we have ... to any other [person]...." Professor Godet admitted that none of this is really crystal clear! He concluded, "In the revelation of salvation given to the apostle, this mysterious connection was assumed, but not explained."⁷

Yet, Paul saw in Adam something similar to what he saw in Christ. Adam broke it and Christ fixed it! Adam brought spiritual death; Christ brought eternal life. When Jesus died to sin and gloriously rose again, He provide for us a new life in Him. The gift of an eternal life with the Father was not something His death brought Him ...but *us*. That's representation! The whole thing sounds very "covenantal" to me! Humanity needed to say "No!" to sin and yes to wanting to enter into covenant with God, for this creation thing to work.

3. Death is a consequence of nature not sin. Sin denied Adam and Eve a taste of the Tree of Life; thus, death came to all because no one until Christ rises first from the dead could know eternal life [John 11:25].

4. "All sinned when Adam sinned" - Meyer [1 Corinthians 15:22
propterea quod "because of this.. The universal reign of death [5:21] is caused by sin [Romans 6:23]

5. viewed as an historical fact. In Adam the entire human race sinned or all have become sinful or all are involved in the consequences of Adam's sin.

6. Lange. vol X. Page 175.

7. Godet. Page 204ff.

There appears also in Paul's reasoning that Jesus' obedience [to God's plan] and Adam's disobedience are analogous. "For if by one man's offense death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ" [Romans 5:17]. Christ's death was representative, by proxy, of all mankind—as was Adam's death. "For the love of Christ compels us, because we judge thus: that if One died for all, then all died" [2 Corinthians 5:14]. "Adam received the unique mission to represent the whole species [all mankind] concentrated in the single individual."⁸ God's reasoning—as I believe was already mentioned—is summed up in Ephesians 11:32 [ESV] "For God has consigned all to disobedience, that he may have mercy on all."⁹

- 13 *Sin was in the world from Adam to Moses but without Torah it was not recognized as sin.*
- 14 *But, nevertheless, death still reigned [all die] from Adam to Moses even though they did not commit the same or similar sin as Adam who became an example [a figure] of He who will come later [Christ].*
- 15 *There is a difference here noted between breaking the Law and grace; to explain, Adam sins and everyone dies, but the grace of God or the free gift of His grace by one man, Jesus Christ has much more rather abounded unto many;*

Verse 13-14: Figure - Paul must clarify to the Jews in his audience that sin, unfaithfulness to the God of covenant, was real before Moses wrote the Torah or the 613 injunctions contained in it.¹⁰ The comparison to make regarding our salvation is not between Moses and Christ but Adam and Christ. Adam was the figure of Christ. Two humans, both tempted, both representing all humanity. But Christ said "No!" to the tempter and that made the difference, making His death and resurrection ours—our redemption from sin and newness of life and our coming resurrection or glorification.

Verse 15: Much More - Dorothy Sayer reasoned: when Jesus (the man) rose, we rose. Resurrection from the dead is a reality now awaiting all (John 5:29).¹¹ Adam's sin and Jesus death and resurrection were *inclusionary*—a

8. Godet. Page 204ff.

9. see my work "A Reasonable Salvation" in which I wrote in part, "When God created the first couple, He did this for communion, fellowship, a relationship with them, but it had to be built on trust and for that to be real they needed to know there was a choice. "What it lies in our power to do," Aristotle reasoned, "it lies in our power not to do." They didn't need to know evil, only that it existed." See also Refer to the Appendix on "Adam's Sin".

10. which see in the Appendix.

11. Sayers. *Creed or Chaos*. Page 11.

proxy. If we died with Christ, we died to sin and sin no longer holds us prisoner; We are no longer enslaved to it. We walk in newness of life [Romans 6]. Jesus' resurrection was not required for Him, since He is the eternal God, but it made Him the first *human* to rise, thus making it understood that we, too, would receive glorified bodies [1 Corinthians 15:20].

Isaiah's "Suffering Servant," [Isaiah 53] Dr. Craig argues, "may not be described in inclusionary terms, but that does not imply that it is exclusionary. It would be very natural to take the Servant of the Lord to be a representative of the many before God... and so to *include* them representatively in his suffering. Indeed, this is precisely the move that Paul made."¹² This much, therefore, can be said, "Christ did not simply die in our place;" Dr. Craig explained, "rather, what our representative did, *we* did. Christ's death was representatively *our* death."¹³ (Emphasis added)

And what is the ultimate truth here? "...Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him, ...So, you too consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus" [Romans 6:8, 11].

- 16 *And this gift is not like what came through Adam's sin, for he brought a judgment and the sentence of death, but grace [through Christ] made [declared] many sinners righteous [grace justifies many offenders].*
- 17 *For to further explain: as by one man's [Adam's] sin death reigned [brought death to the world] more so through one man [Jesus Christ] those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness [justification] will live forever.*

Verses 13-17: Sin was not born with the Mosaic Law but with Adam's disobedience. There was "Sodom and Gomorrah" [1 Peter 3:20]. The law only exposed it [Galatians 3:24] to bring us to repentance and faith. The concept of law and social order [part of all recorded history prior to the Mosaic Law] are intuitive; man has a conscience.¹⁴ On this basis a divine instruction to avoid the tree of the knowledge of good and evil had significance and sin could be definable—exposed as sin.

Paul compared Adam's disobedience to Christ's obedience. Both had life-changing consequences for mankind. Adam brought death; Christ, by grace, brings eternal life: "The first man Adam became a living being. The last Adam became a life-giving spirit. ... The first man was of the earth, made of dust; the second Man is ... from heaven." [1 Corinthians 15:45, 47].

12. Craig. Page 83.

13. Ibid. Page 80

14. The concept of law in Greek thought is always "moral." There was no meaning of "a law of nature" attached to the word.

Adam became a “type” of Christ in this comparison; he was an object lesson which pointed to the significance of the Cross. Lange clarifies, “Christ corresponds to Adam in an antithetical sense.”¹⁵ In Adam all are condemned; in Christ by faith all are justified, Through Adam came a broken relation between God and mankind; Through Christ by faith we are now reconciled.

- 18 *Indeed, therefore, as by one sin all mankind was indicted [sentenced to death] likewise, even by the righteous [just & faithful to God's Plan] act of one unto all mankind is offered a righteous [according to the New Covenant] eternal life.*
- 19 *Even as, furthermore, through the disobedience of one man [Adam] many were deemed [made] sinners, likewise, even through the obedience of one [Christ] many shall be deemed righteous;*
- 20 *And the Law [Torah] was instituted [by God through Moses] to emphasize [augment] the offense [sin]; for when sinfulness is clearly identified as sin; grace can show itself more merciful [in forgiving it and removing it],*
- 21 *Sin reigned, as it were, in death, likewise, in order [God purposes] that also grace might now reign by righteousness [God's covenant faithfulness] unto life eternal through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

Verse 19: Made - God is not the author of sin nor does He “make” anyone sin [James 1:13].¹⁶ Adam’s “sin” was disobedience, rebellion, unfaithfulness, to what he agreed to with God, vis-à-vis, a covenant. Through Christ’s faithful obedience to the New Covenant (unto death on Calvary) many are now “made” righteous. See the Theological Note. See also the chapter on being “Declared righteous.”

“Many,” i.e. “The rest of mankind.”¹⁷

Verse 20: The Law under Moses was 613 injunctions.¹⁸ We are now under grace! [Romans 6:15].

The offense - sin, i.e. every act of breaking God’s Law!

Abound - Is in abundance—abundantly clear and undeniable. It was important to make clear God’s grief.

Much More - See again Romans 5:10. Grace is much more in abundance. Like mapping out the boundary of a lake only to discover we

15. Lange. vol X. Page 183.

16. “Let no one say when he is tempted, “I am tempted by God”; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone.”

17. Thayer. Page 529.

18. See Appendix.

have come to the immeasurable sea. This is the third time in this chapter Paul emphasizes Grace over sin. Verses 15, 17 & 20.¹⁹

Verse 21: “sin...reigned ...Grace reigns” Sin and Grace are opposites here, not the Law and Grace.²⁰ God’s plan was to fulfill the Law, as to its injunctions, validate it [demonstrate its wisdom] and as to its administration in justice, vindicate it [prove it reasonable and right]. See Theological Note on this chapter.

When Adam sinned, sin entered the world. Adam’s sin brought death, so death spread to everyone, for everyone sinned. - Romans 5:12

19. See also 1 Timothy 1:14.

20. Sorry Luther. [an inside comment.]

Romans 6:1-14

Sanctification in Christ's Death and Resurrection

Paul, now, agrees with John that "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remains in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God [1 John 3:9]. As Paul saw it, "Should we keep sinning? No. We are dead to sin." [Romans 6:1]. "Every man that hath this hope in him [the hope of being like Jesus when we see Him]," John wrote, "purifies himself, even as Jesus is pure" [1 John 3:3].

Peter, however, though recognizing the admonition to keep from sinning [1 Peter 1:5] - so it seems - wanted to tie sanctification to, or as a benefit of, suffering. Unlike Paul, suffering was a difficult proposition for Peter. He wrote in vague language of the remote possibility of suffering for Christ as if it were "hopefully" improbable: "it is better, if the will of God be so, that you suffer for well doing" [1 Peter 3:17]. But he found a benefit in suffering in that it was part of God's work to rid us of all sin. Peter taught, "He who suffers has ceased from sin [1 Peter 1:4]. Even Christ learned obedience through suffering [Hebrews 5:8].

We recognize sin as something that opposes the work of God on the soul and that sidesteps the covenant we signed onto when we accepted salvation, but some see this as inevitable in this life—and we are talking about believers! Some Christians look at sin nonchalantly, with a insouciant¹ attitude, like the man who slept through the preacher's sermon but told his wife, who questioned him afterward, "The preacher spoke about sin. He was agin it." Some Christians have coined the adage, "Just a sinner saved by grace" or "I'm not perfect, just forgiven." James euphemistically called sin "wandering from the truth" [James 5:19] admitting that it does happen. Christians have appealed even to the language in the New Testament to support the notion that God should not expect us as Christians, in this life, to be free totally of sin. The scriptures speak against continuous sinning—but once in a while it is unavoidable. Even John said, "...if any man sin" [1 John 2:1] ... And we like the word "if" because we can admit that we do occasionally sin without any sense of the grief it might cause to our Lord. We also translate the word *sin* or *sinning* to indicate *continuous* sin suggesting that the occasional sin is okay, even unavoidable. So when John argues, "You know that Jesus was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin. Whosoever abides in him sins not: whosoever sins has not seen him, neither known him" [1

1. showing a casual lack of concern; indifferent

John 3:5-6], Christians contend that he couldn't have meant this in any absolute sense.

That's the 6th chapter of Romans! Dare we attempt to explain it away, to rationalize some personal permission to do or say what we know is not God, to excuse a wayward moment as only human nature. Recall what Catherine Hepburn as Rosie, the missionary to Africa, told Humphrey Bogart, as Mr Allnut, in the movie *African Queen*. He was drunk telling her that he would perish without the "hair of the dog" and blamed his drinking on human nature. "Human nature, Mr. Allnut," she told him, "is what we are put here to rise above."

At last in his letter to Rome, Paul has begun to turn the corner away from any argument with dead religiosity and has begun to explain true spirituality and freedom from sin. If sin takes form, at last, so does righteousness. Paul's teaching begins to make sense [Romans 6:17] for those whose hearts have been created anew [Galatians 6:15] and whose minds are transformed [Romans 12:2].

At last there is an explanation of the change in them, who once enjoyed sin with shameless impunity, but now abhor it. The changes within the believer when Christ enters are monumental and had Paul not written about this truth, when would the young believer discover that they were not losing their mind—they were at last getting one [1 Corinthians 2:16; Philippians 2:5]. Their heart is new also. It pulsates with an unassailable love for the most vile sinner, burdened that the Lord would rescue them, too. And yet, at the same time, it finds sin as repulsive as vomit² [Job 1:1].

But first and foremost, we must affirm what we have discovered that we are, indeed, "dead to sin." [Romans 6:2],

1. *What shall we say; "Should we keep sinning in order that God's grace might be in abundance?"³ [Give God's mercy a continued practice of sinfulness to forgive?]*
2. *May it never be! We who are dead⁴ to⁵ sin, how can we still be living in it [It is impossible to return to our old life];*

Verse 1-2: One African tribe exclaimed, "The Cross of Christ condemns me to be holy."⁶ But holy has a couple meanings. It can mean separated unto

2. The Hebrew word for abomination speaks of what is most repulsive to God and is best typified by vomit [2 Peter 2:22].

3. Asked in reference to Romans 5:16 "And the gift is not like *that which came* through the one who sinned. For the judgment *which came* from one *offense resulted* in condemnation, but the free gift *which came* from many offenses *resulted* in justification."

4. historic aorist, seen as factual event.

5. dative of relation [in relation to sin. We are considered dead, that is, no longer in bondage to sin. How can we relate any longer to what we were or how we behaved!]

6. Godet. Page 237.

God for service—and Christians have managed to associate this primarily with the church service, often once a week for an hour. It is the Old Testament, Jewish, rituals, visited upon the New Testament Church. So Exodus 20:8 takes on special meaning: “Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy.” The term, holy, designated the sanctuary, itself. Kedesh (meaning a holy place) was a city of refuge in Issachar [1 Chronicles 6:72]. We use the phrase “sanctuary city.” You can see what happens to the meaning of *holy* that makes it friendlier.⁷ If this offends you, it should! Me, too. Because *holy* “comes to have the meaning of divine and is an adjective [descriptive term] for God.”⁸ And this is what it has to mean with Paul—not the church service but the church called out⁹ to sanctify the Lord’s name, represent Him, before the world. The KJV calls this “hallowing God in the eyes of the others” [Numbers 20:12]. Jesus taught us to pray, “Father in Heaven, *Hallowed* be thy name” Matthew 6:9] but this happens only by our witness if we live a holy life. It should mean living for Him. I guess you can see what I think of sin. I’m agin it!

We might fail to understand what Paul is saying. We slip back into a legalism that lists the worse social behavior known to us as sin—sins we are *not* committing. Then, if our conscience in a moment of self-awareness, accuses us, of anything, we complain that it is not possible in this life to be absolutely free of all these. The Judaizers mindset has infected the church. So, we lighten our conscience by changing the list to represent only Sunday activity. We admit that God’s forgiveness is the primary expression of His grace while we attend church services, give financial support, and live an ordinary life that doesn’t poke the hornet’s nest of cultural change.

And even if I commit a sin from time to time, I have no excuse. I am grateful to God for His patience and forgiveness. Turns out that getting older helps because, it seems, with physical weakness comes fewer temptations.

3. *Or are you ignorant that, we who were baptized into¹⁰ Christ Jesus [as His followers] have been baptized into His death;*
4. *Therefore we have been buried with Him through the act of baptism into death, in order that indeed as Christ was resurrected from the dead through the glory of the Father, likewise even we should be walking in newness of life [living a new and different life than before].*

7. Because our word took on the meaning “separated unto Temple service,” it was used to designate temple prostitution [Hosea 4:14].

8. Kittel. vol I. Page 90.

9. The term church comes from the Greek: to be called out.

10. “into” speaks of moment toward, viz. a growing closeness or active relationship with Christ. Lange remarks, “...baptized into the full, living fellowship of Christ.” -Ibid.

5. *To explain: if this is the case that we are united naturally in the likeness [similitude] of His death, and [also] similarly [as Jesus was raised from dead] we shall be resurrected;*
6. *Knowing this that our old man [who we were] was crucified with Him [Christ], in order to terminate all connections with the body of sin [that was natural to us] destroyed that we no longer would be a slave to sin;*

Verse 3-4: baptized - Baptism symbolized *burial* because the “old man” is *dead*. The Hebrew term for *atonement* is found in *Yom Kippur* or “The Day of Atonement” [a day of repentance and not ceremony]. It has the basic meaning of a *covering*. Whatever is covered is now “out of sight.” This does not speak of forgiveness as much as a *cleansing* from sin : “For on that day the priest shall make atonement for you, to cleanse you, that you may be clean from all your sins before the LORD.” [Leviticus 16:30]; “Aaron made atonement for them to cleanse them.” [Numbers 8:21].

If this was Paul’s thought, and I believe so, then, we bury the old nature or old life in the act of being baptized.¹¹ For some believers this is purely ceremonial and a personal testimony of their salvation. To others, it speaks of the actual moment when they confess sin and receive salvation. Others see the baptismal service as a sacrament. What seems important to Paul is not the means (the baptism, itself) but the end (the death of the old life).

Newness of life - Lange wrote, “not only a new life, but ... a life that never grows old.”¹²

Verse 5: And similarly ... resurrected - The KJV reads “ *also* in the likeness of His resurrection.” Paul here speaks of the future—our resurrection at time’s end [1 Thessalonians 4:14]. The word “and” [also] is a strong interruption of thought leaving behind what was said before and now totally involved in what follows. It is a “rapid and emphatic introduction,”¹³ Lange tells us. Here is a true biblical emphasis wrapped in Paul’s mantle of excitement. In the moment Paul appears to be mixing up truths. Does our resurrection refer to our new life or our bodily resurrection when Christ returns? But I ask, “How is there a real difference?” The Scriptures do not divide us into parts. The God who heals the soul, heals the body, too. “By His strips we are healed” [Isaiah 53:5; James 5:15; 1 Peter 2:24]. And Paul could tell the young believers in Thessalonica, “Now may the God of peace Himself *sanctify* you *completely*; and may your *whole* spirit, soul, and body be preserved *blameless* at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.” [1 Thessalonians 5:23]. The new life we now live is the guarantee of the resurrection to follow [2 Corinthians 1:22].

11. The word to baptize means to immerse. There is an expression: to be baptized in debt. I think the average persons can relate.

12. Lange. vol X. Page 207.

13. Ibid. Page 203.

Verse 6: Crucified with Him - with Christ—this has terminated the power of sin in us! Not water baptism. We are not dead through baptism [baptism does not save]¹⁴ but by way of Calvary sin has been defeated in our lives and water baptism symbolizes that death. “The justified is sanctified not vice versa; first we are freed from the guilt of sin, then from the dominion of sin.”¹⁵

The Body of Sin ... Destroyed - Not some sins but all. Paul does not speak of a list but a body because he speaks of the old life in all its sinfulness. Destroyed means to render it ineffective. “But God forbid that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which [the Cross] the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world” [Galatians 6:14].

Our old man - our “corrupted nature.”¹⁶ This phrase represents and describes the life we lived outside Christ [Galatians 2:20]. What must be emphasized is that the “newness of life” in Christ that we now are, and which is mutually exclusive of everything the old man was and did, saw the death of that old life as light dispels darkness. Furthermore our “new man, “life in the Son” [1 John 5:11] is a transformation¹⁷ not just a behavioral change. For this reason we refer both as “natural” or our nature [John 3:7].

Christians do not have 2 natures, only one new one.¹⁸ Paul also uses the word “carnal”¹⁹ [of or pertaining to the flesh, as opposed to “spiritual”] in Romans 7:14; 8:7; 15:27 which we can discuss later in this work. For now, carnality is the display of behavior natural for the unregenerate man. This behavior in a believer, which Paul acquiesced is shamefully possible, is never befitting them [Ephesians 5:3].

7. *Because: he who is dead has been freed [justified] from sin.*
8. *But if it is the case that we are dead with Christ, we believe that we will also be made alive with Him.*

14. See the appendix on “Water Baptism.” It is important to elevate the significance of water baptism to the place it earned in the Savior’s teachings. Perhaps, the word, “symbolizes” is a bit weak.

15. Lange. vol X. Page 201. See the Theological Notes on “Dead to Sin” and “Water Baptism.”

16. Godet. Page 244.

17. The Greek word form used in words like conformed [Romans 8:29] and transformed [Romans 12:2] speaks of permanent change. The KJV phrase “conformed to the world” more correctly reads “fashioned after the world speaking of something temporary [1 Corinthians 7:31].

18. I refer to my work on the “Jesus: God’s Gift of Himself” and “Girdling a Tree” [Page 14] as an analogy as an explanation.

19. Carnality is not what natural resources one has but how they use them. See verse 13.

9. *Knowing²⁰ that Christ was raised from the dead He is no longer dead [can no longer die]; death no longer is master over Him.;*
10. *To explain: [In that] He [Christ] died, He died [only] once for all time²¹ to sin [never to die again], and [in that] He came alive [was resurrected], He lives [now forever] unto God.*

Verse 7: Freed [Justified] - Death always ends what relationship once was. Dead persons don't sin. Romans 7:1 employs this analogy in regard to marriage with respect to the Law. Here it is in regard to any punishment for sin. Dead persons are not sentenced. Being raised from death, we are considered free now from any litigation or judgment.

Verse 8: We believe - Paul's logic is irrefutable because it is based on what Jesus did, not on Paul's character or achievements. We believe in our coming resurrection because

Verse 9: We know - we know He was raised from the dead: "that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved" [Romans 10:9-10].

Once for all Time - There is here an interesting play on the Greek word "ouketi" [no longer: once]. It is used twice: "Jesus will never die again and death has been forever dethroned! In Hebrews 9:28 and 10:10 the writer proclaimed Christ's death as a one time event never to be repeated. (His word was hapax meaning *once for all time*.) But here it is not Jesus' death in the spotlight but the awesome might of His resurrection that has overcome death, not just for Him, but for *us*! So, Paul didn't say He *has* risen but that Jesus *is* risen, alive forevermore [1 Corinthians 15:20, "and become the firstfruits of them that slept."]. And unlike the message in Hebrews that needed to clarify that Christ was the final sacrifice for sin, Paul here is alluding to *our* resurrection in Christ. Godet said it this way, "There is no return backward for the risen Jesus; how should there be one for us, from the time that we share His life as the Risen One?"²² It is a new life energy coursing through our spiritual veins. Sin does have the same relationship to us it once did.

[I think to argue the doctrine of "eternal security" here goes beyond the scope of Paul's emphasis, but it is spot on focus to say, we should no longer live in sin, and if we are living in covenant with God, how are we not secure.]²³ I mentioned the Greek word "hapax." It is found in verse 10 in total agreement with both Hebrews 9 and 10, as well as, what Jesus, Himself, declared from the Cross: "It is finished!" [John 19:30]. And, just in

20. The efficacy of Christ's resurrection is not imagined but factual.

21. Hebrews 10:10 By that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once *for* all time.

22. Godet. Page 248.

23. See Romans 8:31-39 and 2 Peter 1:1-11.

case, someone might argue that His resurrection has nothing to do with the newness of life promised in salvation, read the next word: *Likewise*.

11. *Likewise even you consider yourselves to be dead on the one hand unto sin but on the other [indeed] alive to God in [through or by] Christ Jesus.*
12. *Therefore, do not allow sin to reign in your mortal body to become obedient to its desires,*
13. *Neither commit²⁴ your members instruments of lawlessness [immorality] to sin, but, contrarily, commit²⁵ [yield] yourselves [not just body but soul also]²⁶ to God as [being really] alive from the dead and your members instruments of righteousness [faithful regarding the New Covenant]²⁷ to God.*
14. *To further explain, sin shall not be your master; because you are not under law but indeed under grace.*

Verses 11-14: Here Paul divides the provisions of Calvary into two: sin for believers has been defeated as master, through Christ's death; then, our Lord's resurrection provides a new master, *God*.

We have every reason now to say, "I am alive," as Paul exclaimed, "but it is not the old me; my life now is all about Christ. I am still human, but what Jesus' provided me through His death and resurrection, now, motivates and inspires me; it has given me purpose and direction, meaning and happiness. His faithfulness to me is life to me now! His love is, oh so, real to me! His crucifixion to me is everything!" [Galatians 2:20]. Godet wrote, "Become what thou art already in Christ."²⁸

Verse 12: Believers are no longer slaves to sin. For sin to achieve its end, believers must permit it. "Let not sin reign" must assume that it is still there, still tempting, still seeking a way into the heart and mind of every believer.

"Be sober [Be alert, keep your mind fixed on Christ, your heart pure], be vigilant [stay alert. It takes some effort in prayer to responsibly ward sin

24. The tense (Present) recognizes the constant vigilance requires since the flesh indeed is weak. (Matthew 26:41)

25. The tense (Aorist) indicates a simple and absolute instruction without controversy or exception.

26. Luke 10:27 And he answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbor as thyself.

27. "the fulfillment of all human obligations" [Godet. Page 252]

28. Godet. Page 249.

off];²⁹ your adversary[a legal term: prosecutor] the devil [he who accuses]³⁰ walks about³¹ like a roaring lion,³² seeking whom he may devour [consume].³³ Resist him [stand up to him],³⁴ steadfast [immoveable, firm] in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings [confronting evil]³⁵ are experienced by [imposed upon, appointed to] your brotherhood in the world [1 Peter 5:8-9].

Verse 13-14: Instruments - Different body parts have been references elsewhere in scripture: The eye and the hand (**Matthew 5:29-30**); the feet (**Mark 9:45**); the body as a whole (**1 Corinthians 6:16**).

Your members instruments of righteousness: “all those works of righteousness which God could not execute Himself here below without constant miraculous interventions, He accomplishes by believers, who eagerly lend their bodies and members to him as instruments for this end.”³⁶

The story goes of a young believer who was invited to play in a high-stakes poker game which he believed wholeheartedly was not something the Lord would want him to do. So he told the others he couldn’t because he didn’t have any hands. When they pointed out the ten digits dangling from the ends of his arms, he replied, “Oh these? They are not mine; they belong to someone else—God.”

Sin shall not be your master: Paul explained elsewhere, “having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it” [**Colossians 2:15**]. Jesus’ death became “a divestiture of the powers of evil, a liberation from the dominion of the flesh.”³⁷ This is why Paul could affirm confidently to the believers in

29. Matthew 26:41 Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.

30. Revelation 12:10 Then I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, “Now salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren, who accused them before our God day and night, has been cast down.

31. Job 1:7 And the LORD said to Satan, “From where do you come?” So Satan answered the LORD and said, “From going to and fro on the earth, and from walking back and forth on it.”

32. When a tempting thought lingers unchallenged, sin is crouching in the tall grass, lying in wait to strike. Genesis 4:7 “f you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin lies at the door. And its desire is for you, but you should rule over it.”

33. 2 Corinthians 2:7 [someone taken in sin but not forgiven] on the contrary, you *ought* rather to forgive and comfort *him*, lest perhaps such a one be swallowed up with too much sorrow.

34. 2 Corinthians 2:11 “lest Satan should take advantage of us; for we are not ignorant of his devices.” (My dream)

35. Philippians 3:10 that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death,

36. Godet. Page 252.

37. J. B. Lightfoot. *Saint Paul’s Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon*. Page 191.

Colossi “Lie not one to another, since you have **put off** the old man with his practices” [Colossians 3:9].³⁸ Paul makes reference to “the old man” which was the life he lived outside Christ [Ephesians 4:22].³⁹ Scholars concluded that for Paul, this phrase did not reference simply the “natural man” or one’s human side, but sin as an ethical or moral cancer invading, pervading, the body and soul.⁴⁰

Under grace: “Under” covenant [contract] with God. Grace His participation, His promises. God, by His grace, has effectively brought an end to the reign of sin. God’s grace, God’s involvement in bringing an end to sin, destroying its power, mediating on our behalf [Romans 8:27 “The Spirit makes intercession for us”; 1 Timothy 2:5 “[we have] one mediator..Christ”; Hebrews 8:6 calls Him the “mediator of a better covenant”] and the Spirit’s comfort and instruction are vital to living the Christian life [John 14:16, 26]. Peter explained it this way, “Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these you might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust” [2 Peter 1:4].

Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. - Romans 6:4

38. Of interest should be Paul’s use of a term not appearing in any literature before here, translated “spoiled” in the King James Version in 2:15 and “put off” [disrobe, take off the garment] in 3:9. This reflects the apostle’s unwavering conviction of [and commitment] to this truth, that we are no longer in bondage to sin—not in any sense!

39. Ephesians 4:22 that you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts,

40. See Romans 6:6.

Romans 6:15-23

The Power of Sanctification to Deliver From Sin

As already noted: This idea that all believers are still sinners—only—saved by grace found support in some interpretations of Romans 6 even though this belief is self-contradictory since it is grace that is supposed to “free from sin... servants of righteousness ” [Romans 6:18]. Peter would agree “He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we may cease from sinning and live for righteousness” [1 Peter 2:24].

Admitting with John the possibility—not the probability—of a Christian committing a sin was never intended to be an argument to sin. “I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin.” John wrote, “But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous One” [1 John 2:1].

Paul’s discussion was with supporters of the law as if any society could write the perfect law code to legislate righteousness. Mankind is creative [Romans 1:25] and imaginative [Romans 1:21] and if capable of doing the unnatural, breaks out of the restriction of any law.¹ Roman 1:29 describes them as “filled with all unrighteousness.” It is only grace that conquers sin and lustful desires [Romans 6:15]. A society might prescribe the perfect order but if its citizens are not virtuous—and virtue is not a word that defines the old life—society will inevitably be vandalized by the greedy who see the loopholes in the best law code.

Virtue is the first trait after faith that a follower of Christ exercises [2 Peter 1:5] and unto which we have been called [2 Peter 1:3]. It is the very first step of faith. Paul recognized the need for even virtuous thoughts [Philippians 4:8]. In the Old Testament it speaks of that which is praiseworthy and most often is referring to the Lord.

Chrysostom called patience the “king of virtues.”² Richard Trench referenced the fruit of the Spirit as a “list of Christian virtues.”³ And Plato regards justice as “the sum total of all virtue.”⁴

The Scripture that explains this best is Isaiah 43:21, “This people I have formed for Myself [God’s peculiar people]; They shall declare My praise [**virtue**].” Peter interpreted Isaiah using the Greek translation “But you are

1. nothing that they propose to do will be withheld from them. [Genesis 11:6].

2. Trench. *Synonyms*. Page 197.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid. Page 328.

a chosen generation, ... His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;" [1 Peter 2:9]. Virtue is simply living God's excellence or living the Christian life. That's virtuous and no law can make this happen, but God's grace can!

15 *What, therefore, Let's commit some sin because we are not under law [as a guiding principle] but under grace? No! Never!*

Verse 15: must be compared to verse 1 "Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?" In verse 1, Paul is raising the Jewish argument, they suppose, makes Paul's message of grace sound artificial and a license to sin. Here in verse 15 Paul argues that not a single sin is allowed to master us under grace.

"...the matter in question," Godet interprets, "is whether the new dominion [grace] will be strong enough to banish sin *in every particular case*."⁵ The argument is not "Let us sin *that* grace may abound," but rather "Let us sin *because* it abounds."

Paul does not say, "We are no longer under *the* Law, the Torah or Mosaic Law, but law in general as a matter of spiritual guidance, which must include Torah. "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law. [Galatians 5:22-23].

16 *Do you not know that to whom you commit [devout] yourselves servants to obey, you are their servants whom you obey [owe obedience], whether servants of sin unto death or of obedience [faith in the Gospel] unto righteousness [covenant faithfulness];*

17 *Thanks be to God that you were servants of sin but you have obeyed from the heart [heartfelt obedience, not just mental consent; an emotional decision] that kind [form or exact interpretation] of teaching which was delivered [unto you].*

18 *Having been freed from sin you have become servants of righteousness [in covenant with God].*

19 *I am talking in human terms for your sake, your being weak in your flesh, [easily tempted by selfish interests]. In other words, as you had committed your members [yourself?] servants to uncleanness [immoral] and lawlessness [lacking self-discipline in seeking pleasure] unto lawlessness [without conscience], now, likewise yield yourselves, your bodies, servants of righteousness unto holiness [give God the same dedication and fervor].*

5. Godet. Page 253.

Verse 16-19: Believers are not free in some absolute sense to do whatever whim or desire draws them. We are free now to serve God! Freedom within limits, free to do what the Bible does not specifically condemn, is not Paul's message, for the message of Scripture is "spiritually discerned" [1 Corinthians 2:14]. It is the Spirit's opportunity [John 16:8-10] to describe sin contrasted with righteousness.

Servants - Jesus already taught this lesson: "Most assuredly, I say to you, whoever commits sin is a slave of sin." [John 8:34]. "Every act of the will," Godet warned, "creates or strengthens a tendency. Which drags [a] man with increasing force, till it becomes altogether irresistible."⁶ For a slave, "will" is no longer the point, but required service. The choice here is between sinning and believing [trusting God and God's grace] not following law. What flows from sin? Death. And what flows from "trusting God"? Covenant faithfulness and fellowship, viz. righteousness.

Verse 18: For you were once darkness, but now *you are* light in the Lord. Walk as children of light [Ephesians 5:8]. "Now to Him who is able to establish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery kept secret since the world began" [Romans 16:25].

If Paul's covenant theology or Gospel doctrine were presented in a single sentence or theme, it should be 1 Corinthians 1:30 where Christ is presented,

- ◆ First, as our *righteousness*: The Provisions in the New Covenant not found in law [Romans 1-5].
- ◆ Secondly, our *sanctification*: The Holy Spirit's role in virtuously living the Christian experience [Romans 6-8:11].
- ◆ Lastly, our *redemption*: what freedom to serve is all about [Romans 8:12 to end].

"It is Christ Himself who, after having freed us from sin by His death, by uniting us to His life as the Risen One, has made us subject to righteousness."⁷

Verse 19: Weak in your flesh - King James Version: Infirmary of the flesh. Whether Paul was talking about simplifying the Gospel message instead of diving into language which as Peter noted was "hard to understand" [2 Peter 3:16] or Paul was referencing their spiritual immaturity—some believers were still unaware of the danger in some social or cultural practices which could not please God—Paul knew that he had to shape the form of his discourse in an encouraging way and which, in turn, could be understood, without in anyway compromising the message itself. This is always the teacher's challenge.

6. Ibid. Page 254.

7. Godet. Page 257.

Paul wears many hats or offices. His apostleship [1:1], his teaching ministry [2:16], His evangelism [1:13] and his prophetic ministry which is God's way of encouraging young believers in the faith, here, are all in evidence. [Ephesians 4:11]

Yield yourselves ...Servant of Righteousness - Godet interprets Paul to be saying, "you became servants of righteousness ...as I have shown you [verses 12-13] ; you have now nothing else to do than to yield your members to righteousness."⁸ In verse 12 he said, "Do." Here Paul in effect admonishes, "You cannot do otherwise."

Paul seems to have all four ministries working here: "Now to Him who is able to establish you [apostolic] according to my gospel [teaching] and the preaching of Jesus Christ [evangelical], according to the revelation of the mystery [prophetic] kept secret since the world began" [Romans 16:25].

Unto holiness⁹ - Agiōsmós [separated out to serve God and, as such, morally clean]: There are three words used in the New Testament which seem to be completely synonymous [The Greek is written here because the English uses only one word to translate all three].

- ◆ **Ἀγιασμός** - Agiōsmós (an act of holiness or a *completed* work in a believer's life) Found in Romans 6:19: "...present your members *as* slaves of righteousness for **holiness**." The act of holiness is in the act of allowing God instead of sin to use our lives. This is divine agency. Everything that God supplies is holy.
- ◆ **Ἀγιότης** - Agiōtes (Holiness as an abstract *idea*) "For they indeed for a few days chastened *us* as seemed *best* to them, but He for *our* profit, that *we* may be partakers of His **holiness**" [Hebrews 12:10]. Perhaps the word abstract is too harsh. The point is that holiness does not have a set of rules that define it or specific expressions that display it. Holiness is submission to the Spirit, and how He will lead us is often surprising and miraculous. This is the divine nature. Everything that God is is holy.
- ◆ **Ἀγιωσύνη** - Agiōsúne (holiness as a quality or characteristic, *personal quality*) "so that He may establish your hearts blameless in **holiness** before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all His saints" [1 Thessalonians 3:13]. We can define the fruit of the Spirit, collectively, by this word. This is the New Man. This is the divine attribute. Everything that God does is holy.

KJV: "yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness." Or "give God your life in covenant relationship to make you into His image in service to Him alone."

8. Ibid. Page 258.

9. Perhaps, a study of the Beatitudes would fit here to explain holiness since it would describe the Savior we are intending to follow.

- 20 *When you were servants to sin, you were free from righteousness*
21 *Therefore then you had certain fruit of which you now are ashamed because the end of those things is death.*
22 *But now being free from sin and instead serving God you have your fruit unto holiness,¹⁰ and the end is life eternal*
23 *Thus, the wages [payment in kind] of¹¹ sin is death [separation from God] , but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord [Master].*

Verses 20-23: No middle ground on which to take a stand. With Paul everything is binary [0 or 1]: ashamed or not; good fruit or bad fruit; eternal life or spiritual death; servants of God or sin; in covenant with God or not; free from righteousness or free from sin; sin's wages or God's gift.

"For a good tree does not bear bad fruit, nor does a bad tree bear good fruit. For every tree is known by its own fruit. For *men* do not gather figs from thorns, nor do they gather grapes from a bramble bush. A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his **heart** brings forth evil. For out of the abundance of the heart his **mouth** speaks." [Luke 6:43-45].

"if you confess with your **mouth** the Lord Jesus and believe in your **heart** that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." [Romans 10:9-10]

Fruit ... the end - The fruit is the results of our lives either as a witness for Christ or a witness for self. The end is the consequence: "Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life. And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart" [Galatians 6:7-9].

Verse 21: ashamed, believers are morally repulsed by what use to be a lifestyle and common practice without Christ.

Verse 22: Paul is not scolding nor is he warning but commending and encouraging the believers.

Verse 23: Not wages paid *for* sin but paid *by* sin.¹² "Hell," says Hodge, "is *always* earned; heaven, *never*."

10. Ἀγιασμός

11. subjective genitive: what sin pays out.

12. 2 Corinthians 5:10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things *done* in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.

In Christ Jesus our Lord - “In” not “by” or “through” as we have seen in Chapter 5. *Through* Christ or *By* Christ speaks of some gift for which He is the source and giver: His peace, His Presence, His reconciliation, His grace, eternal life. Here are examples from chapter 5:

- ◆ 5:1 “peace *through* our Lord ,”
- ◆ 5:2 “*through* whom an entrance into God’s presence was made,”
- ◆ 5:11 “*through* Christ we have been reconciled,”
- ◆ 5:17 “*through* or *by* Him there is abundance of grace,”
- ◆ 5:21 “eternal life *through* or *by* Jesus.”

The Bible also speaks of believing *in* and believing *into* and believing *on* the Lord Jesus Christ. I recall a conversation with a Presbyterian pastor over the use of these *prepositions* and what I thought was the difference.

In is more in keeping with sanctification, that is, “after being justified *by* Him, we are sanctified *in* Him, in **communion** of life [in covenant] with Him.”¹³ *In* is believing in the heart [Romans 10:9]. *Into* represents movement closer and speaks to following Him. “When they heard this, they were baptized *into* the name of the Lord Jesus.” We also took a brief look at Romans 4:24: “We believe *on* him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead.” *On* here means “on the basis of,” that is to say, that genuine faith in Christ is based on a trust that, like Abraham, *acts* on God’s promise. In Romans this means living the provisions of Calvary. To make the point clear I might add that forgiving others is acting on Christ’s forgiveness of us.

In English we can note a distinction worth considering: Believing someone does not mean, necessarily, believing *in* them. I might consider someone to be generally truthful but I might not want to follow them. We believe in Jesus; we want to follow Him. We know He is truthful—He *is* the truth [John 14:6]. But we also want to develop a growing relationship with Him—which can use the word “into” and not just “in.”

What is the aim or reason for Paul writing verse 23? Is it a simple observation between the Christian and the sinner? No! Verse 23 is to *believers*! It is in reply to the question of verse 15: “Shall I commit an act of sin since I am under grace?” Billy Sunday, the preacher from early 20th century, is credited with saying, “I would rather be one foot from hell heading away from it, than a thousand miles away heading toward it.”

There is never a reason to sin nor should a believer see it as harmless play. We should always see sin worse than putting an open flame near a toddler or the dangers inherent in handing a small child a loaded hand gun. Sin might be more like an addiction that leads to overdosing.

Paul is not raising the issue of how secure we are in Christ. This would be a poor verse for that since He has been emphasizing the believer’s

13. Godet. Page 262.

commitment to Christ because of the work of grace in the believer's life. Paul is admonishing in the gentlest tones and in the most direct way how cherished this grace should be and how dedicated we should be who have received it to serving our Lord and not serving the old lifestyle and its sin.

**For the wages of sin *is* death; but the gift of God *is* eternal life through
Jesus Christ our Lord. - Romans 6:23**

Romans 7:1-6

The Believer is set free from the Law at the same Time that he is set free from sin. "It is a fundamental thought of the Apostle, that the αμαρτια [sin], which has unmasked itself in the nature of man, is compelled by the law to reveal itself in human life as παραβασις [transgression] —as deadly unnaturalness. Thus the law drives the serpent from its concealment." - Lange

The marriage contract, the marriage covenant, is by far the best type of Christ and the Church [Ephesians 5:32]. It is recognized in all cultures as a unique relationship and bond between two persons in which they grow together with time and maturity into a single mind and heart. Through the marriage union two persons find a source of strength greater than the sum of both, a love that could be described as eternal. It is a relationship that requires an unbroken faithfulness. It is spiritually symbiotic and mutually beneficial while each one contributes to the other the resources gifted them by God. They eventually conclude that they must have been made for each other—even if this sounds unscientifically silly. In the words of one bride about her groom: *"To feel the inner strength of someone for whom you were created. To realize being with him is opening up your mind and heart to endless possibilities. To hear yourself say 'I like myself when I'm with him.'"*¹

All this to say, this is far truer of Christ and His Church because we were created for Him and made anew in His image, getting ready for the marriage supper prophesied in the final words of the Bible. All this tells us that a covenant relationship with Christ, with God, is far more than a wedding, far more than just the moment of salvation or a contract that defines legal status. If status were the goal, why would two people need to love one another as long as they stay together for any reason.

And God did not "fall in love" with His creation. He created us for a love that defined Who He is and which gave Him His identity as God [1 John 4:8]. A believer's espousal to Christ is an entrance into an intimate relationship with the God who created them for His love—not the other way around.

All this to be able to show why salvation is more than status; it is a bond, an intimate relationship, with God through prayer, living for Him, serving Him, worshipping Him, just being in love with Him. [Psalm 18:1; 37:4].

1. This quote is from The Next Generation Season 5 Episode 21 The Perfect Mate.

This describes, on our Lord's part, His grace, and, on our part, a faithful submission to His grace [1 Corinthians 15:10; 2 Corinthians 6:1]. It is important, therefore, that wives submit to their husbands *as unto the Lord* [Ephesians 5:22] to typify our heavenly relationship with Christ. Without this monogamous love relationship as part of the social fabric of a community, grace becomes harder to explain.

But if we can understand "the two shall be one" even in principle, we can begin to understand what Paul is teaching. In his analogy, we were married to the law as the moral and religious guide that defined all our relationships. And this law, which represents the husband in this analogy, could not be divorced because, you and I, the woman in this story, in the biblical world, did not have that right. If she was to be free from her husband, there was only one way: "'til *death* do us part."

If we wanted to be free from the law to be able to marry Christ, either the Law must be abrogated [die] or we must die.

Well, we died! We were not just dead to sin [Romans 6:2] but dead is dead—dead to the law, as well [Romans 7:4]. But we didn't stay dead! "Likewise reckon also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord." [Romans 6:11].

Now, Christ is our moral guide—for those who can appreciate it—our husband to be. Here, though, is where I take great liberty in saying that with the dissolution of our marriage to *the law* [the Torah], we were no longer under it—under any form of legalism [Romans 6:15]. We are free from the Law of Moses [Colossians 2:15-17]. We are not free to do our own thing; but free to love our Lord and Savior. We are free from sin, and therefore, free from law. [The law was a tutor, Galatians 3:24-25, to alert us of sins to which we no longer are in bondage!] We are free to follow Christ with whom we have a growing relationship. We are getting to know Him because we are betrothed to Him [Hosea 2:20]. We are free to listen to Him and disregard any law or social code that contradicts Him [Acts 4:18-20]. We are free to learn His voice, music to our ears, and its sound alone can calm anxious hearts and bring increased strength to faith. In a coquettish innocence, like a young school girl's first crush, talking to Him in ceaseless prayer [1 Thessalonians 5:17] is now the highlight of the day as we await His return to receive us [John 14:2-3].

Carnality amounts to unfaithfulness if we occupy our days with a self-interest in pleasures and comfort, because, in so doing, it is the *flesh*² we are appealing to. It is possible to objectify God by seeing Him only as a means to answered prayer and blessings instead of participating through prayerful conversation with Him in a deepening relationship.

Now we can hear from Paul.

2. See Appendix on "carnality."

1. *Or are you ignorant brethren, for I say this to those who know [the] Law [Jewish converts] that the Law rules a man as long as he lives.*
2. *You see, a married woman is bound by law to a living husband; but if after the husband dies, she is released [as a wife] from the marriage law [legal bond].*
3. *Indeed, therefore, while her husband lives, she shall be publicly known an adulterous while she remains with another man.*

The explanation is offered here to Jews who now have faith in Christ [converted Jews]. They were still pious Jews clinging to the sacrifices as significant in themselves for salvation. Nonetheless, Paul's meaning should be obvious to us, even if the language seems a bit culturally ancient.

Verses 1-2: "Are you afraid ...to yield .. to ... grace?"³ Godet asked, interpreting Paul. There is something to be said, here, about being released from prison after a lifetime under its schedule and requirements. Some freedom requires an adjustment and is not immediately embraced. Even church rituals and man-made requirements to measure or define spirituality are often used as a support to faith. "Do you have faith? [The faith which you have] have it to yourself before God. Happy is he who does not condemn himself in what he approves." [Romans 14:22]. So much of what we do in the name of religion has more to do with conscience than conviction.

Brethren - is a word not used since Romans 1:13 where it exhibits the warmest of personal feelings. There is no condemnation in his words. He offers a natural explanation that carries no offense with it. Paul does not condemn the law—a misunderstanding that might be occasioned from Colossians 2:14: "having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was **against us**, which was **contrary to us....**" To the contrary, Paul makes clear, "the law is holy, and the commandment holy and just and good" [Romans 7:12]. The appeal to "law" and the use of legal language is in keeping with the idea of covenant faithfulness on God's part. The Law was not annulled or invalidated but fulfilled: "Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill." [Matthew 5:17]. Here, in Romans 7, the Law has not died, *we have*.

Adulterous - One biblical word for sin is unfaithfulness or a breach of trust [1 Chronicles 5:25]. Paul used the New Testament equivalent of this Old Testament idea in Galatians 2:21, "I do not nullify the grace of God [breach⁴ God's covenant of Grace in Christ], for if righteousness [God's covenant faithfulness] were through the law, then Christ died for no purpose." I wonder if Paul were implying that somehow sensing an

3. Godet. Page 263.

4. violate, break, transgress, or neglect

obligation to a legalistic system while claiming to follow Christ might be paramount to spiritual adultery.⁵ We know sin is! [Daniel 9:7].

4. *So then, my brethren, you, too, are dead to the law through the body of Christ [His death] so that you are now [can be legally] married to another [Christ], to Him who rose from the dead, in order that you might produce fruit [live] unto God.*

Verse 4: Dead to the law through the body of Christ - does not offer a reason for the Savior's crucifixion but the outcome or consequence of His death.⁶ We no longer need the written law because through His death and resurrection, it has now been written on our hearts. "I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do them." [Ezekiel 36:26-27]. Chapter 6 verse 14 might sound more relevant to Gentile ears, It is the *sin* not the *Law* that we must be divorced from or freed from through death—the death of the Savior. But in any congregation, there is a mix of experiences and ethnicities—as here in Rome. Paul's words are to be valued by both and all.

5. *For when we were in the flesh [carnal, self-satisfying, pleasure-seeking], sin's passions [desires given over to self-gratification] were effective [operating powerfully] through law in our members, that we produced works that bring death.*
6. *But now we, being dead, are released from the law in which we were held, [being released] resulting in our becoming servants in newness of spirit and not oldness of the letter.*

Verse 5-6: Through law - Always in Paul, the law was designed by God to expose sin "that sin through the commandment might become exceedingly sinful" [verse 13].

In the flesh - Living a carnal existence, scholarship tells us, is living "under the dominion of the love of pleasure and fear of pain."⁷ As a principle, human tendencies without Christ are self-gratifying and pleasure seeking, that which Satan draws on in order to tempt [Mark 8:33;⁸ James 1:14].⁹ "For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters,

5. Perhaps chapter 14 will bring forth this idea.

6. The reason for His death was punitive and substitutionary.

7. Godet. Page 268.

8. [Jesus] , rebuked Peter, saying, "Get behind Me, Satan! For you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men

9. But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed.

proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy" [2 Timothy 3:2].

Passions - are affections seeking self-satisfaction or self-gratification which produce every kind of sin. Girdlestone noted, from a study of the Old Testament words for sin, that much of what man seeks to achieve without God in the name of selfish interests is hollow, vain, and unrealistic. "...human nature ... is distorted and out of course; ...the chain of love which ought to bind the great family in one has been snapped asunder."¹⁰ The ideas of, sorrow, hurt, guilt, mourning, and wasted effort all derive from words descriptive of sin in the Bible.

Newness of Spirit - speaks to the new life under the Holy Spirit's operations and Christ's Lordship.

Oldness of the Letter - can have a number of meanings, all which amount to a legalistic system that cannot make anyone righteous. Moral obligations, whether Torah Law written as guidance, or another law code, cannot represent holiness. Righteousness cannot be legislated, either because any legal system is an incomplete system to address all evil or simply because it does not have clear language to address any evil. Only God knows the heart. We all, I am sure, have observed a justice that was not blind but designed to free one and imprison another based on biased interpretations of law. We have seen the law broadened to indict the innocent and interpreted more narrowly to free the guilty. Only "God is a just judge" [Psalm 7:11].

Man's law condemns more than it exonerates. It is like a fireman who serves no purpose unless the house is burning. But that is not God! The Spirit's work on the soul is to transform and conform us unto holiness. We are "...ministers of the new covenant," Paul reminded us, "not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life." [2 Corinthians 3:6].

...our old man was crucified with *Him*, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin.

- Romans 6:6

10. Girdlestone. Page 76.

Romans 7:7-25

The Powerlessness of Law to Sanctify. [Righteousness cannot be legislated]. "Paul means to show how utterly unavailing are all efforts to get rid of sin by mirroring nature, however much intensified by views of law and the acting of conscience, until the power of sin is broken by faith in the source of spiritual life." - M. B. Riddle

The Story of The Girdled Tree.¹

What best explains who Paul is describing in this chapter? Is this a life before Christ, before salvation, unregenerate? Perhaps, this is a religious person who still does not know salvation. Perhaps, this typifies the life of a believer struggling with temptation. Or perhaps, this is someone being drawn by the Spirit of God, someone under conviction, but not yet submitting repentantly to Christ.

Perhaps, in an analogous explanation, here is a person in whom the seed has been planted. The soil of the heart is deep, rich, and prepared for that seed of the Word, but now the seed must break through the ground and stretch forth to the sky, to sunlight—and this is a struggle. We must also ask: Do believers have a dual-nature? The Old Man and The New Man? Who are we if chapter 7 is our testimony?

This last question bubbles up out of the boiling controversy around believers being sanctified and still sinning. How could the "Old Man" be, indeed, dead if he appears so alive and well in the believer's day to day behavior? How can believers be living in harmony with cultural practices that do not line up with a Biblical understanding of God's will? "The question before us," says Lange, "is not concerning a permanent condition [the status of salvation] but a movement and a crisis [relational]."²

The struggle is not a legalistic one: a matter of doing the do's while not doing the don'ts of some creed or code that proposes to define sin. Sin is a broken relationship with God, a matter of our unfaithfulness to Him. To be faithful, we need to know *Him*, we need to be conformed to Christ [2 Corinthians 3:18] and our minds transformed so that His will becomes our will, good, acceptable, and perfect [Romans 12:2]. Sin represents a broken

1. to cut through the bark all the way around (a tree or branch), typically in order to kill it or to kill a branch to make the tree more fruitful: *sometimes the trees were completely girdled and died.*

2. Lange. vol X. Page 245.

relationship with God which makes any other study into the meaning of this chapter merely academic.

My college teacher shared a story from his past that may encourage us as we endeavor to follow Christ. Hobart was a young lad who observed his dad “ring” a tree in the back yard. Ringing a tree, went the explanation, is cutting into the bark deep enough into the cambium layer to prevent the sap in the tree from flowing back down into the root system when Autumn comes. Hobart saw his dad ring the tree and he expected the leaves to wither and drop off but the Summer went into Fall and the leaves were still there. Hobart thought to correct his dad, an excited boy about to prove himself right and dad wrong, “The tree is still alive, dad!”

“The tree is dead, son.” His dad corrected the lad with gentle words but an unwavering confidence.

Winter turned to Spring and small new leaves broke out on every branch of that tree, giving Hobart renewed confidence that the tree was not dead. He alerted his dad, who again reiterated in fatherly tones the lesson of the rung tree.

“Hob, the tree is dead.”

Dad didn’t need to look. The leaves turned brown and fell off. The tree was indeed ...dead.

Reverend Grazier shared that story of his life to explain that even if we sin from time to time, the old nature, like the old tree, has been disconnected from any source of nourishment that would feed it. As we follow Christ and serve Him, expect old habits, old ways, old thoughts, old feelings to drop off, that are not representative of God and His kingdom that is now very much a part of who we are becoming in Him (Romans 8:29).

But God never removes something unless He replaces it. There is another tree, He has planted in the heart, with good fruit, the new you, which Paul explained using another metaphor of wearing clothing to depict our behavior: “Wearing the new man who is created by God in right living, faithful to God’s will” (Ephesians 4:24).

Following the Savior

Carrying a Cross for Christ, following Christ, seems heavier to some than a legalism possibly imposed by the church. It is easier to attend an hour a week and give a few coins in the basket than to involve God in every aspect of one’s life through prayer and living that life “in the Son” [1 John 5:11]. When the Gospel is viewed as a code of ethics, “do this and don’t do that,” instead of an invitation to reconcile with God and join Him in covenant faithfulness, it becomes another form of bondage. As Godet

called it, “nothing more in the Gospel than a law, and a law more burdensome still than that of Sinai.”³

Living for Christ is not a matter of do’s and don’ts. We are not assigned tasks but a way of life in which we are empowered by grace to be consistently faithful. Paul recognized this principle that “we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter” [Romans 7:6]. Herein lies the secret to understanding this passage before us: Here is a religious, a pious, soul not yet aware of what God’s grace can do. Seeking God to do *for* them something He wants to do *in* them and then *through* them in ministry. Here is someone who would follow our Lord but on his own strength and wisdom ... and he fails miserably.

For lessons in living victoriously, we must wait for chapter 8.

- 7 *What, therefore, are we saying? The [written] Law is sinful? No! Never! But, [the relation of law to sin] If it were not for the Law I would not have any perception of [knowing] sin [as sin]; For one, lust would not be identified as lust if the law had not said, “You shall not lust”!*

Verse 7: The Law - does not produce sin; it reveals it. The Law does not legislate righteousness. Following the law does not make one righteous because it is the “spirit” of the Law that must be followed not the letter [verse 6]. The “letter” is imposed on a person as something foreign to nature, whereas, the “spirit” is a spontaneous and natural response to God’s love. The “letter” would also need to anticipate every relational problem and address it, something most impossible since the number of relationships equals the number of personalities in them which is limitless since we are ever learning, changing, growing, etc. Constitutions are intended as guidelines for the virtuous and those with integrity enough to understand the “spirit” in which it was drafted. There are not enough laws to dictate every circumstance of life.

Can law decide a form of discipline? No. Discipline is useful with very small children to alert them to the dangers in their surroundings. Discipline should never be used to control or stifle creativity, or quench curiosity or for power over them. Discipline is a first lesson in self-discipline which characterizes people who contribute to a society and not destroy it.

God’s Law also is a revelation of Who God is and insight into His love in our relations. Much of the Torah was “a shadow” [Hebrews 10:1] of the Cross,” of good things to come.” The Ten Commandments basically reveal God’s heart and character—especially the don’ts. But to follow Him, a relationship must be established, a reconciliation based on the New Covenant by which the Law [Love] of God is written on the heart.

3. Godet. Page 293.

Know - "I did not perceive in myself the present of ...evil [by] instinct except [but] by the law."⁴ I became conscious of my sinfulness.

- 8 *Sin taking occasion [incentivized⁵ or the point of support]⁶ through the commandment has accomplished every lustful act in me. In other words, without law sin is dead.*

Verse 8: As Eve, "man always inclines to forbidden fruit."⁷ Solomon said, "Stolen water is sweet, and bread eaten in secret is pleasant" [Proverbs 9:17]. But does law aggravate sin? Would this suggest people would be holy without law. Would Eve have not gone near the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil if God never mentioned it? But would have her innocent desires still been inflamed by the serpent's tempting words?

Occasion - We must return to the Garden because there was where sin invaded human thought! Some like to translate our word "incentivized" to mean only "manifested," i.e. "sin was manifested by the law" but this is not the meaning of Paul's word! Before the law or command was given sin was dead. In what way? One cannot break a law that does not exist; so, one's actions, though violent or destructive, may go undisciplined but not unnoticed. Confession was based on law. Confessing or admitting to a crime which is not defined as a crime cannot cleanse the conscience. One must know what sin is to recognize it when it is committed.

By *law* Paul means the "moral" law, what exposes sin which God abhors.

- 9 *I was alive without law, then, after the commandment came sin revived [took life] and I died,*
10 *And I died and the command which was for life, the same, was found in me to be unto death,;*
11 *because sin incentivized by the commandment deceived me and through it killed me.*

Verse 9: Commandment - Referenced 21 times in Psalm 119,⁸ David equates these to a way of life, living righteously [Psalm 119:40]. David called these God's guidance.

4. Ibid.. Page 272.

5. Derives from a word meaning: "what in man is domineering or imperative" in his desires that he must act on. Something that propels one to do, i.e. an appetite.

6. Godet. Page 273.

7. Ibid. Page 274.

8. See the Section of "The Law" under the Appendix: "Adam's Sin." There we outline various OT terms of law, commandments, precepts, testimonies, etc.

I was alive without law - in childhood before he turned twelve. “From the age of twelve young Israelites were subjected to the legal institutes.”⁹ Even parental discipline is an ongoing education in right from wrong for a child. Before they knew that touching a hot stove was wrong, they were inclined to touch it with a natural curiosity and no sense of wrong. Children are alive with innocence and faith. When taught the stories of Scripture, they see only the “lived happily ever after” parts and come to see how good the God of the Bible is Who keeps covenant, keeps His promises and does the right thing always and only.

But to be human is to learn discipline, to discover moral wrong, to discover within one’s self the powerful draw of temptation, to be introduced to “the commandment of God”

Sin revived, that is, sin awakened in him an active sinfulness. At some point in childhood development that conscience is stirred alive as a child discovers shame—and guilt.¹⁰

I died - At some point, in the age of accountability, there is aroused within each a moral consciousness that judges actions as good or bad. This becomes a self-awareness, a self honesty, that begins to monitor the natural inclinations that favor self: self-gratification and self-love. Law, unlike the Gospel, could only caution against such thoughts and actions when they hurt others. The New Covenant under Christ, however, can address it in accordance with the desire of God.

Because sin - Sin is the real culprit, not the law. Any description of sin must recognize it as a form of deception, a temptation that, once indulged, dissipates like cotton-candy or a morning mist in the heat of the sun, leaving its victim left with shame or guilt and an unsatisfied longing that has now grown stronger in the act. And temptations promise no future, no reward other than final death, a life wasted, spent, on trivial pursuits of shiny but meaningless objects of interest, or moments of fleeting pleasure. And we indulge them even when we know we will inevitably regret ever doing it. But this last confession is ahead [verses 15-19]

12 *Thus, the law is holy and the commandment holy and just and good.*

13 *Therefore, should we conclude, that what was good become death to me? No! But contrary, it was the sin, that it might be exposed for [appeared to be] what it really was—sin, [Sin exposed] by the good [the commandments, the law] most effectively producing*

9. Godet. Page 275.

10. A feeling of guilt is not a good thing. Godly sorrow is conviction to be distinguished from a sense of guilt. Guilt is destructive. 2 Corinthians 7:10 “For godly sorrow produces repentance *leading* to salvation, not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world produces death.”

death, in order that sin might become all the more sinful through the commandment.

Verse 12: Law - the Mosaic Law.

Commandment - There were 613 instruction in the code.¹¹

Holy - The Word is Holy because it speaks for God, Who is Holy. It has been appointed by God as the earlier messenger of man's need for God and His salvation.

Just - The word righteousness also speaks of justice. The Word is just in defining and guiding us in our relations to God and man [peace and unity in covenant faithfulness].

Good - Good means beneficent and fitted for life [Romans 12:2 "...what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God."].

Justice and goodness are attributes of God's holiness.

Godet recognized sin's work as a "masterpiece of perversity"¹² Paul's language here emphasizes the importance of God's invested interest in the Mosaic law and the principle of law to alert and warn humanity. Sin is in our simplest understanding *unfaithfulness* or breaking Covenant with our Creator. "Law" in Biblical terms is not science but morality, what is right opposed to wrong, holy as opposed to evil. And because it is covenantal, breaking it brings a curse, punishment, or divine wrath and separation from God. How should God impress upon His creation that He created us for His own sake, to have someone that would volunteer with unsolicited spontaneity an unrestrained and unfeigned, wholehearted love for Him. How else shall He impress upon all of us that snakes and evil exist for a short time to purify this faithfulness, this love, "that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ" [1 Peter 1:7].

Paul is narrating his own story as a Jew and a man. His testimony is a witness to the futility anyone experiences while applying moral law to an effort at sanctification or being free from sin. What might be a bit blurred is the meaning of sin unless Paul is writing this from a believer's viewpoint, since persons of faith are under the New Covenant and would be Spirit-led [Romans 8:14]. And the Spirit defines sin [John 16:8].

If Paul writes from the Jewish perspective, He must be assuming a Midrashic understanding of Torah which would emphasize the ten Commandments. As a "man" the moral code is intrinsic as part of a human conscience, part of God's creation in man made in the Divine Image.

11. See the appendix on "The 613 Injunctions."

12. Godet. Page 279.

Any way his story is viewed, it is a story of the regret and shame of moral failure which God revealed to Paul as a necessary consequence of his—and everyone's—need to be brought back into conformity with the Divine Image they were originally created in when God formed Adam.

- 14 *Indeed, [I came to this inescapable personal indictment: the problem is me!] we know that the law is spiritual [It is God's Word], but I am carnal [naturally sinful]¹³ sold under [in bondage to] sin.*
- 15 *I confess, I do not really know what I can do [about this] for, what I want to do, I do not practice, but what I hate, this I do..*
- 16 *So, if what I do not want to do, I do, I agree with the law that it is good.*
- 17 *And now it is no longer I accomplishing it but sin resident in me.*

Verses 14-17:

Carnal - Is Paul describing his life before his conversion, as many scholars interpret? Is this the testimony of a believer? Or non-believer? Unbelievers are more likely to project their blame on the law as unnecessary but designed to instill guilt and fear to control the religious minded.

Paul, here, expresses a strong abhorrence of things he has done, knowing God did not and would not approve. But he doesn't blame the law. There may be more than one reason for this "struggle" even after a well-respected Law or religious practice ceases to be of spiritual value.

- ◆ Here was a ritual that was followed devotedly in a life-long practice that gave meaning and a sense of peace with God, It must never be dropped [cold turkey] without question or adjustment.
 - Lifestyles need to be replaced; things of value need to be replaced if they are considered no more important. The Beatitudes, as a case in point, each comes with a blessing.
- ◆ One should not be asked to discredit a life time of practice thought all this time to be "good, holy, and just." Are we suddenly telling hungry hearts that they wasted their entire lives in vain and meaningless commitments!
- ◆ But here is a man who thought his religious devotion was practical wisdom and he could look forward to God's acceptance, only to be awakened from a dream that didn't parallel real life.

13. Some manuscripts read carnal in practice or characterized by sinful behavior. See the Appendix on "Carnality."

- ◆ New practices are not easily welcomed. It is often easier for a child to accept Christ because there is no lifetime of cultural or social practices that stand in the way and might misinterpret the truth they are hungry now to learn.

- 18 *Furthermore, I perceive that in me, this is in my flesh, there is no good because the act of wanting [to do good] lies within, but to accomplish good [I find] not;*
- 19 *Furthermore, the good which I wish I could do, [I find not] but the bad I want not [to do], this I practice.*
- 20 *So then, if I do what I do not want to do, it is no longer I accomplishing it but sin living in me.*

Verses 18-20: Paul repeats verses 14-17. "There is no good ... sin resident in me" is verse 17. "There is none righteous, no, not one:" [Romans 3:10]. We had broken covenant. There were irreconcilable differences between God and us and a broken trust *before* Calvary. "Sin" here is not a particular act but sinfulness.

Verse 18: In My Flesh - I am carnal repeats verse 14. "The complacent care of his person, in the form of pride and sensuality."¹⁴

I perceive - an introspective look.¹⁵

Without excuse - [Romans 1:20], that is, no defense on judgment day. "For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one *point*, he is guilty [liable] of all." [James 2:10].

Find - we know the Greek word for find: *Eureka!* A simple term but what a discovery! Better than Archimedes' Principle. Though, Paul here is explaining what he could *not* find—within himself the ability to flawlessly live the moral life and follow every injunction faithfully. This in itself was a great find! And when he finally asks "Who will rescue me?" He finds the person who can and does [verse 25].

Flesh - "the whole nature of man, turned away from God, in the supreme interest of self..."¹⁶

Verse 19: I wish I could - Not a decision but a "want to want to..."

What I hate, this I do - I practice, i.e. "work at." Ongoing, a way of life not a single sinful act but a life estranged from God.

Verse 20: Sin living in me - sold under sin [verse 14]. "I am not master of myself; a stranger has forced his way into my house and held me captive."¹⁷

14. Godet. Page 285.

15. the examination or observation of one's own mental and emotional processes

16. Lange. vol X. Page 236.

17. Godet. Page 286.

No longer I - Not a projection of blame but recognizing his undeniable need for God's merciful intervention.

- 21 *I have discovered that, indeed, the law [this principle], while I desire to want to do good, that the bad lies within me [human depravity].*
- 22 *I rejoice in the law of God according to the inner man [in my heart and mind],*
- 23 *But I perceive another [different] law [entirely] in my members [actions] at war against the law of my mind [and heart] and taking me prisoner by the law of sin which is in my members [actions].*

Verses 21-23: Paul's remarks here are identical in substance with the previous section.

Verse 21: Discovered - Paul's conscience was first to engage his heart in a discovery that would lead to his salvation.

The law - No where in Ancient Greek literature is law used as today: laws of nature. "Law" in biblical parlance is a well established "moral" principle.

The principle Paul defines here, that he observed introspectively but is true of all mankind, is a quest for a God who remains distant because we have not found our way back to Him after Eden.

- Psalm 119:176 I have gone astray like a lost sheep; Seek Your servant, For I do not forget Your commandments.
- Isaiah 53:6 All we like sheep have gone astray; We have turned, every one, to his own way; And the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.
- Jeremiah 50:6 "My people have been lost sheep. Their shepherds have led them astray; They have turned them away on the mountains. They have gone from mountain to hill; They have forgotten their resting place.

Verse 22: Here Paul rejoices in the law. In verse 16, he agreed with it. To agree is similar to a confession¹⁸ whereas here "rejoice" is praising God for His wisdom in allowing us to walk this path to repentance and reconciliation.

Paul references four laws or principles.

- ♦ **The Law of God** - The moral principle seeded in every man which finds the 10 Commandments and the like reasonable. They did not

18. To agree with God. 1 John 1:9.

keep the *covenant* of God; They refused to walk in His law, [Psalm 78:10].

- ◆ **Verse 23: The law of the mind** - The moral consciousness, conscience, an honest self-examination often unwelcome since it threatens shame.
- ◆ **The law of sin** - “bad lies within me” [verse 21]. An instinct for self-gratification, reigning over mankind since the Fall imprisoning any desire to serve God.
- ◆ **The law in our members** - The body’s desire for self-gratification. How we respond to what we see, hear, etc. Temptation is the trigger because the body craves attention.

We are “at war” Only now, we can win! “For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood [people], but [the battle is within] against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.” [Ephesians 6:12].

The battle within is a fight, before salvation, between our own consciousness that knows God’s Word is reasonable and right and a natural inclination or proclivity to selfishness, all things for personal comfort.

- 24 *What a miserable man I am! Who will rescue me from the body of this death!*
- 25 *Ah! But thank God [He will and does] through Jesus Christ my Lord. Therefore, indeed, on the one hand, I, myself, serve the law of God with my mind, but on the other hand, [with and in] the flesh, [I serve] the law of sin.*

Verses 24-25: Paul’s conclusion. In my mind, I really would put God first, but in practice I care only about myself. How can I serve God as I want to? The answer is through Jesus. That’s why He died. The spiritual liberation is Romans 8. The question is not “Who will forgive me?” but “Who will *rescue me* from this sinfulness?”

But now we have been delivered from the law, having died to what we were held by, so that we should serve in the newness of the Spirit and not in the oldness of the letter. - Romans 7:6

But to him who does not work but believes on Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness, - Romans 4:5

Romans 8:1-11

The Victory of The Believer Over Sin and Death.

Through chapter 7 Paul avoids terms specific to the new life in Christ. The Holy Spirit in particular is not mentioned. In Chapter 7. Paul made “use only of terms denoting the natural faculties of the human soul, like ...the mind.”¹ The contrast in this respect with 8:1-11 is striking. As Paul shared with the saints at Philippi, “My aim is to know him, to experience the power of his resurrection, to share in his sufferings, and to be like him in his death” [Philippians 3:10].

The Holy Spirit has replaced will power and law, human effort and legalism. He is God’s grace active in our lives, the representative of God’s covenant faithfulness. What God works in, we now are alive in newness of life to work out [Philippians 2:12]. It is now not personal achievement but “Christ in us, the hope of Glory” [Colossians 1:27]. Recall in the Preface of this book where we quoted J. B. Lightfoot at length, “... the gospel is neither a dogmatic system nor [an] ethical code, but a **Person** and a **Life**.”² Without submission to the Spirit, faith becomes a dogma that it was never intended to mean³ or a code which alone is pure legalism.

Now that the foundation of “through faith, by grace” has been laid, Paul can proceed to talk about the Spirit’s work within the life of the believer. Here is the secret to living above carnal desires, of moving past Chapter 7. It is here the Spirit’s work is revealed as Jesus promised, “I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever—the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you. I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you” [John 14:16-18]. Christians have translated the word “helper” as a “comforter” emphasizing the Spirit’s ministry to address our fears and anxieties—and grief—in the physical absence of the Savior after His ascension. But the word includes all levels of guidance and admonition. So when the Savior promised not to leave us orphaned [parentless: John 14:18] He was telling us that the Spirit would be a life-long, ever-present, help. Obeying His instructions and following the path of His conviction and

1. Godet. Page 292.

2. Lightfoot. *Philippians*. Page ix.

3. Romans 1:5 speaks of an obedient faith which has been translated submission to “Christian Truth” or dogma “a meaning the word never has in the New Testament” [Godet. Page 82].

peace is the first secret to getting out from under the guilt and condemnation of any form of religious legalism.

The Secret to Living For Christ

The secret to living the Christian life and above the guilt and shame that legalism imposes is revealed in Romans 8. These 7 points are only suggestions. You must study them for yourself and let the Lord enrich your faith and strengthen your resolve to follow our Lord wherever the call of God leads you. It has been said, "The will of God will never lead you where the grace of God cannot keep you."

1. :1-4 Study the message of the Cross. Learn the many provisions of Calvary: What our Salvation's death and resurrection means for this life. Live in the light of it. We often imagine what heaven will be like but the Spirit's work in us is for this life, now. His convicting should be a cherished gift because herein are revealed what sin, righteousness and judgment are. The judgment has been resolved in Jesus' substitutionary death [Philippians 3:10].
2. :5-14 Be refilled often with the Spirit, yielded to the Spirit, Let Him lead. There is no special key in either a written prayer or orchestrated church service. Just get together and sing His praises; worship Him and if He is welcome, He will move in your midst. Just enjoy His presence and let yourself go [Ephesians 5:18-20].
3. :15-17 Develop a prayer life. Appeal often in prayer for our Heavenly Father's help. [The Lord's prayer]. This should be first, because nothing good comes without prayer. God does not want us to recognize the cookies and not the baker. He wants us to "ask." Talk to God as our Father. Understand what that relationship means [Matthew 7:7; James 4:2b].
4. :18-25 Let Hope do its work. Live in His promises. Keep looking for—not what you want, but what He offers! Don't look at your sinfulness after you have repented. Look at His forgiveness and the work He is and will do in you to remove this roadblock to your spiritual happiness in Christ. Expect Him to fulfill His promises. "Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these you might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust." [2 Peter 1:4].
5. :26-27 Realize you are never alone in suffering or temptation. The Spirit is interceding for you. and so is Christ [verse 34]. One of the chief encouragements for all Christians should be our Lord's nearness. We will never be forsaken. In Hebrews 13:5 the apostle uses the word no, never, *five* times. He is Jehovah-Shammah

according to Ezekiel [the last verse of his prophecy]. This means "The Lord is There." This is huge!

6. 28-30 Realize that the Christian life is a process not an instant result. Some Christians see sanctification as an instant thing but most of us see it as progressive. We are all agreed that spiritual perfection did not come at Salvation, only the assurance of it [Philippians 1:6]. Expect Him to complete what He started at Calvary in your life. We are like children that are capable of walking at birth but must learn how as we grow.
7. :31-39 Respect prophecy— support end time prophecy as a requirement before ultimate victory. Realize the end times are the end of time. [Revelation 2:10] We have read the end of the book and we win!" Play the tape and even at half time, knowing we win makes a difference regarding our fears and anxieties.

1. *There is, therefore, no sentence [of death] to those in Christ Jesus*
2. *Because the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set them [you] free from the law [principle] of sin and death.*

"Since you are dead to sin and alive to God [Romans 7:6], ...subject to Grace and ...free from the Law, all condemnation has disappeared."⁴ "Condemnation" is a legal turn taken from the language of jurisprudence. As such it means acquittal for someone on trial for crimes committed. But such language may be only analogous to the reality that is in Christ.

To be sure, "Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment ... perfect love [God's love] casts out all fear [of punishment]." As John noted [1 John 4:17-18].

We may caution against making too much of the analogy beyond this, for we are more than "Not declared guilty." There was an injustice here against God and Christ dealt with it. His work was two-fold: accept the chastisement [punishment] on behalf of all and then turn on the sin, itself, and destroy it and the devil who authored it! And now, Jesus is one defense attorney who knows His work on our behalf is not finished yet⁵ until we are presented to His Father at Heaven's gates: "Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy," [Jude 24].

We might add that we are not only free from condemnation, we are forgiveness and declared righteous.

The Law of the Spirit - The use of the word "law" is powerful because we often appeal to law for justice, mercy, even rights. The point being that

4. Godet. Page 296.

5. Romans 8:34 at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us.

it establishes irrevocable truth to which we may appeal for help. The “Law of the Spirit” represents the promised work of the Spirit in our lives to which we may appeal in time of temptation and persecution.

3. *Furthermore, What the Law could not do [the law is powerless] in that it is weak through the flesh. God sent His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh [as a human, a man, incarnate] , only sinless] and concerning sin condemned sin [passed sentence upon sin] in the flesh.*
4. *In order that the justice of the law might be fulfilled in us who walk not after the flesh [are not living carnal lives] but after the Spirit [spiritual lives, following after Christ]..*

What the Law could not do - The law. was powerless to demand obedience of sinful man. The law could not defeat sin but Christ did [Daniel 9:24, 27;⁶ Romans 6:14; Hebrews 9:26].⁷

Likeness - “Jesus was in our likeness, that is, he had a human nature subject to the same conditions of bodily existence [as we].”⁸ He was like us, human, but sinless.

In the flesh - Jesus had a human body, to live sinless and then die. Christ’s life was the means appointed by God to effect [sins] destruction in ours.”⁹

Walk not after the flesh but walk after the Spirit... There is a true transformation happening here: We are encouraged to not live carnal lives any longer, but allow the Spirit to guide our thoughts and actions. “But we all, with open face [no veil anymore like Moses had] behold the Glory of the Lord as in a mirror [we see Christ in us the hope of God’s glory] are being changed from Glory to Glory into the same image, even as by the Spirit of God [exactly as The Holy Spirit produces].” [2 Corinthians 3:18]

5. *This is to say that those who are carnal aspire after [have carnal things on their minds] but those who are spiritual, spiritual things [the things of God].*

6. “Seventy weeks are determined For your people and for your holy city, To finish the transgression, **To make an end of sins**, To make reconciliation for iniquity, To bring in everlasting righteousness, To seal up vision and prophecy, And to anoint the Most Holy... he shall confirm a covenant...”

7. He then would have had to suffer often since the foundation of the world; but now, once at the end of the ages, He has appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.

8. Godet. Page 300.

9. Ibid. Page 301.

6. *Furthermore, carnal thoughts [end in spiritual] death but staying mindful of spiritual things [the things of God brings eternal] life and peace .*

Aspire - a word which includes both thinking and willing, to be occupied in thought and desire with something which becomes part of one's actions.

7. *For this reason [we know] carnal thoughts are enmity against [enemies of or oppose yo] God because they do not submit to [obey] God's law—indeed, they are not able to!*
8. *And those who are in the flesh [carnal] are not able to please God.*

Verse 7: Enmity - speaks of a total lack of love, an outspoken hostility here against God.

In the Flesh - not only "after" the flesh, as there is a difference between going after something and then finally finding it and living in it.

Verse 8: Flesh - here means living for self and not God. "All it gives its idol it takes from God ...all it would bestow on God it takes from its idol."¹⁰ There is no "sharing" or "common ground." No common ground between the unsaved person whose interest is only in themself means no fellowship, no covenant relation.

NOTE: ""How could God take pleasure in beings who have as the principle of their life the pursuit of self."¹¹

9. *But you are not carnal but in spirit [spiritual] if really [indeed, if it is the case that] God dwells in you [you are in a covenant relation with Him]. And anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ, that person is not His.*

Verse 9: Really, indeed - Not expressing doubt. The truth remains: "Where this vital bond does not exist between a soul and Christ, that person remains a stranger to Him and His salvation."¹²

- 10 *But if [it is the case that] Christ is in [covenant relation with] you, on the one hand, the body [self-gratifying] is dead [brings death] because of sin, on the other, the spirit is life [brings newness of life] because of [His] righteousness [the covenant faithfulness of God].*

10. Ibid. Page 303.

11. Ibid.

12. Ibid. Page 304.

- 11 *Also, if [it is the case that] the Spirit that resurrected Jesus from the dead resides in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also quicken [bring to life] your mortal bodies because of [some read: through or by] His indwelling Spirit [which is] in [relationship with] you.*

Verse 10: If it is the case - The language here speaks of someone not known to Paul to be saved or not saved.

The Body is dead - When someone accepts Christ, the body is dead. The carnal nature, the old man, is no longer living and leading the believer. The body, therefore, ceases to be an instrument of sin. "Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin" [Romans 6:6]. The believer's experience, if the old habits try to revive, is a spiritual struggle not a acquiescence. It is no longer in our nature to live the old life.

Because of Sin - Light and darkness cannot occupy the same space and neither does the Spirit dwell where the old hostile nature is alive.

The Spirit is life - Paul does not say "alive" because this offers no additional revelation. But the Holy Spirit gives life to us— the line of communication and communion with God is open; we see the rent veil and can walk past it now into God's presence.

Our spirits have life - We are "partakers of the divine nature." [2 Peter 1:4].¹³ Both

1. The Holy Spirit brings life because we are partaking of the resurrection and now walk in newness of life.
2. Our spirits are alive now in communication [conversing] with God through prayer.

Because of [His] Righteousness - Because we have been justified and brought back into covenant relationship with God.

Righteousness - the word "His" is not there, but we can add it: "because of His covenant faithfulness."

Verse 11: Jesus...Christ - Jesus was raised but Christ quickens us. Jesus' resurrection is historical but ours will be a transformation. He was conquering "death" but we must be made like Him, immortal [1 Corinthians 15:43-44]. We will be treated by God, the Father, as He has treated His Son, Jesus.

There is, therefore, now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus. - Romans 8:1

13. Galatians 2:20

Romans 8:12-17

The new state into which the Holy Spirit has brought the believer, is represented as the state of adoption, which confers on him the dignity of an heir.

There is needed on man's part a persevering decision, an active docility in giving himself over to the guidance of the Spirit."¹ The natural man, who sees no investment of this life in a life to come, as scholarship points out, "imagines that he owes it to his flesh to satisfy it."² But we must be struck with some amazement at Paul's unsolicited outburst to the Corinthians, "No, I strike a blow to my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize." [1 Corinthians 9:27].

There would be, little doubt, some interest by Christians, if they made a pill for that, a pill that could turn temptation docile, that could take the craving or drive away for what is wrong or evil, but this is not God's solution. The Holy Spirit provides the antidote to lust and greed and all such selfish acts. The modern idea concludes: whatever is genuinely wrong, because it is considered destructive or harmful, is a chemical imbalance or a genetic defect or some physical addiction and not a moral issue at all—not sin. The infilling of the Spirit has been replaced with, not just alcohol [Ephesians 5:18] but, drugs that numb emotional pain and even bring feelings of elation and ebullience. The secret to overcoming a life of stress, fear, guilt, and all unwelcome thoughts of the heart is the infilling of the Spirit—not a pill! This takes us back to Romans 1:23 that man without God has "changed [replaced] the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man [man's solution]."

There is clearly in Paul's understanding an antagonism that can develop between natural desires and the Spirit's directives: "For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish" [Galatians 5:17]. The secret to living the Christian life and affirming one's own salvation is contained here in Romans 8.³ Jesus taught the same truth but with different words: "He who finds his life will lose it, and he who loses his life for My sake will find it" [Matthew 10:39; 16:25]. In other words, "If you live a carnal life, you will lose that life in eternity, but if you let the Spirit guide your decisions and actions, you will gain eternal life."

1. Godet. Page 307.

2. Ibid. Page 308.

3. To study Peter's approach to a victorious and assured salvation, read 2 Peter 1:1-11.

"The carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be" [Romans 8:7].

Paul is not talking about Stoicism⁴ so as to deny the pleasures of this life altogether. [See the section on "carnality."] All desires and feelings must be under the control of a God-ordained wisdom. Said enough way, we must always put God's will above our own.⁵ Interestingly enough, "selfish" is one of the few words used in the scriptures always in a *bad* sense.⁶ Godet astutely summarized, "In all these acts of life, the body should not guide, but be guided."⁷ Later Paul will say this another way, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service" [Romans 12:1].

12. *Therefore, most assuredly, brethren [and sisters] we are in debt, not to the flesh [to please self] to live accordingly,*
13. *Because, if [it is the case that] you live carnally, you will soon die [spiritually] , but if [it is the case that] you [starve] kill carnal practices [and habits, ways of life] you will live [eternally].*

Verses 12-13: "It is not enough to have received the Spirit; it is also necessary to walk according to Him."⁸

In Debt: We are under obligation or we ought to live according to the Spirit. We owe Him *ourselves*, from the moment he indwells us at salvation.

14. *Said succinctly, whoever are lead by [follow] the Spirit of of God [and Christ] these are God's sons [and daughters].*
15. *In addition, you have not received the spirit of servitude again to fear [a return to bondage through legalism] but [quite the opposite] you have received the spirit of adoption [you have been adopted into the family of God] in which we cry [we loudly, unabashedly and without fear, proclaim and address] God as our Abba, Father!*

Verse 14: One becomes a son or daughter at Salvation [John 1:12] but it is the Spirit that makes our adoption a real part of our Christian experience and not just a promise of inheriting the Kingdom in eternity.

4. an ancient Greek school of philosophy founded at Athens by Zeno of Citium. The school taught that virtue, the highest good, is based on knowledge; the wise live in harmony with the divine Reason (also identified with Fate and Providence) that governs nature, and are indifferent to the vicissitudes of fortune and to pleasure and pain.

5. See the note on Romans 1:29

6. 2 Timothy 3:2 "For men shall be lovers of their own selves"

7. Godet. Page 308.

8. Ibid. Page 307.

Verse 15: Fear here is, no doubt, an overwhelming dread of God's wrath. The fear of God can lead one to a life of devotion but not out of love, however. Paul was in this regard stirred in his soul while observing the Athenians, "'Men of Athens, I perceive that in all things you are very religious;" [Acts 17:22]. "Very religious" has been translated in different ways coming from a word meaning "to fear deity" The fact that the Athenians did not even have a name for this god tells us such a god would have been worshipped as an act of appeasement—just in case. "St. Paul himself employed it in no ill meaning in his ever memorable discourse upon Mars' Hill."⁹ He introduced them to Christ. Contrary-wise, Jesus said, when you pray, call Him "Father."

Abba - As opposed to fear, Paul wrote to the Galatians, "because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying out, "Abba, Father!" [Galatians 4:6]. Paul is not here speaking of the "gift" of the Spirit but of the wonderful consequence of *surrendering* to Him, the glorious awareness of the relationship we now have with God!

Father. - Paul translates the Hebrew into Greek pointing out how common "Abba" was in addressing a father in Jewish culture..

16. *The Spirit, Itself, affirming in our spirits [hearts] that we are God's children!*
17. *And if we are His children [and we are, then, we are] heirs; on the one hand, inheritors of all that is God's, and on the other, also, jointly with Christ, that is, indeed [we can say, God's idea is this], if so be [really] we endure suffering with [for] Him there is a glorious heritage with Christ [awaiting us].*

Verse 16: The Spirit affirms what the heart tells us about our relationship with God as our Father. He bears witness *with* our spirits. He shares what we willingly accept and know that we are God's children.

A person's relationship with their natural father often defines for them who a father is or the role a father plays in their life. If this relationship is damaged or non-existent, a young believer is disadvantaged in their understanding of God as *their* Father. But the excitement of finding a true and loving Father in their life in God makes the Christian experience that much more fulfilling.

The Spirit, Itself - Paul could have said, "For the Spirit, Itself, confirms what our heart is telling us about God." But Paul left the word "for" off! The lack of a connecting word like "for" or "therefore" is a sign here of deep feelings in writing. The revelation of his sonship with God was not an incidental memo read and discarded by Paul. He built his life on this truth, because now he was praying—not to a God distant and untouchable, but

9. Trench. Pages 172ff.

his Heavenly Father! The Spirit's "witnesses" to him, confirming his heart, was an exciting revelation to his faith.

Children - Verse 14 we are sons and daughters. Here we are simply His children. *Child* is a term of relation—our relationship with God as our "Abba." Son and daughter are terms of honor. "Child" is more personal in meaning. We are heirs of God because we are His sons and daughters. But God's grace includes and is primarily the gift of Himself. Heaven's blessing are only heaven's blessings because He is there. As sons and daughters we inherit *from* Him; as His children we inherit [possess] *with* Him. In a real sense: We inherit *Him*.

Suffering - "Paul knows well that, as ambitious as we are of glory, we are equally ready to recoil from ...suffering."¹⁰ "Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you." [Matthew 5:12]. Suffering together creates a stronger bond between us and Christ.

If really: Provided that we suffer with Him. Paul accepts suffering as a necessary part of his calling now. [Romans 5:3; Philippians 3:10]. Suffering should not be seen as a requirement but a privilege—a Hebrews 11 badge of honor—for serving *with* the Savior.

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

Romans 8:14

10. Godet. Page 311.

Romans 8:18-30

The misery of the present state of things is contrasted with the Glory to which believers have been eternally destined.

Our present suffering¹ and the Glory to come, which we will share in, make up the theme of this section [Romans 8:18-30]. Godet calls this “a career of suffering”² for a believer in Christ. Expect it! ““For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake” [Philippians 1:29]. It is common to interpret this section of Paul’s theology as the voice of comfort [verse 28] instead of—what the context requires—a recognition of, what Godet called, “a state of misery”³ in which all creation shares [verse 22]. There is always a “but” with God in which He shares the blessing following the trial.⁴ All creation groans along with us, a state of suffering not unnoticed by the Spirit [verse 26], whose intercession is timely and undeniably effective.

Here’s the “but” [verse 28] —namely the love relation we have with the omnipotent, omniscient, God of all creation. The suffering is temporary [verse 18]. The glory is coming! The problem is that we don’t like any suffering. In Peter’s words, “But even if⁵ you should suffer for what is right, you are blessed.” [1 Peter 3:14 NIV]. The fact that God (forgetting He thinks in eternal terms) puts a clock on it [Revelation 2:10] is little comfort at times. Yet His Spirit explains, what we now know, having undergone such trying circumstances, that faith is bolstered: “the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ” [1 Peter 1:7]. This, in turn, leads to a greater and emboldened resolve to witness: “knowing that the testing of your faith produces

1. see Moulton. Page 473 where our word is defined generally as experiencing evil. Perhaps Job 29:25 might be insightful translating a form of our word as “mourners” for the Hebrew term meaning “to lament” To suffer along with someone, συμπάθεια is our word sympathy. 4 Maccabees 14:13 references a mother’s love for her children in this regard. “Observe how complex is a mother’s love for her children, which draws everything toward a sympathy felt in her inmost parts.” Our word is not found in the Greek translation of the Old Testament.

2. Godet. Page 311.

3. Ibid. Page 312.

4. compare the Beatitudes in Matthew 5:3-12.

5. Peter writes of suffering in a form called “the optative” which speaks of something possible but not thought probable. Burton calls it a “concession” [Burton, Page 115 section 286: “It is probable that he (Peter) intends to affirm that blessedness comes, not in spite of, but through, suffering for righteousness’ sake.”] See also 1 Peter 3:17.

patience" [James 1:3]. Patience (in our language "hangin' in there") actually accomplishes in us what God wants to perfect in us: "But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing" [James 1:4]. Or as Paul explains here: "It all works for good...." [Verse 28].

Thus we begin by announcing that suffering for Christ will always be followed with the most glorious blessings:

18. *To explain, I reckon [reason], that sufferings we endure now presently [in this life] are not worthy to be compared with [in proportion to] the coming glory that is about to be revealed in [for] us [in which we shall share].*

Reckon - Paul calculated the cost of serving Christ. Paul never rationalized away suffering but accepting it, gave it its true value in relation to all the blessings of heaven that await us. [Romans 5:3-5]. "For which of you, intending to build a tower, does not sit down first and count the cost, whether he has enough to finish it ...Or what king, going to make war against another king, does not sit down first and consider whether he is able with ten thousand to meet him who comes against him with twenty thousand?" [Luke 14:28].

Worthy - Paul puts his sufferings on the scale (balance) with God's glory. God's glory is far weightier. The word, *worth*, comes from an old term meaning to move the needle of the scale. Suffering does not, but God's glory does.

Glory - In fact "the Hebrew for "glory" means heavy. "fear this *glorious* [weighty] and awesome name, THE LORD YOUR GOD, [Deuteronomy 28:58]. [This word comes from the idea of weighing silver, the heavier, the more valuable or its worth.]

Sufferings - Here, sufferings,⁶ has to include or encompass all hardships, circumstantial and by evil design, as well as all physical pain and misery as well as emotional or mental.⁷ The word encompasses the entire gamut of unwelcome feelings and hurt associated with or as a consequence of our witness for Christ.⁸ If this were not the case, Paul might

6. There is an interesting reference in Acts 26:23 "that the Christ would suffer, that He would be the first to rise from the dead," Here "suffering" is the capability of suffering [passibility] which required Christ to be also human, since—theologians maintain—God is not capable of suffering. What is most informative here is that Paul did not say "Jesus" but "Christ" referencing His messiahship and in that regard His resurrection.

7. The modern question still remains unanswered as to whether or not this word includes physical malady, illness and sickness. The word represents those feelings which accompany the hardships that, mostly, are associated with Christian witness.

8. It is understandable that many believers want this word to embrace physical illness or sickness in general but this cannot be proven in the language.

be suggesting that some forms of suffering were either not compared with the glories of Heaven to come [he left them out as if God might not care?] or, most objectionable, some hardships might be weightier matters (more important to God and us than heaven!) and somehow outside the purview or purview of an all seeing and loving God. This is clearly not possible! Francis Godet, one of the scholars, you have already observed that I often consult, calls our suffering “the actual condition of our earthly life” and he includes “*bodily infirmities* and the necessities of life.”⁹ In other words *all* suffering!

In 2 Corinthians 4:17 Paul referenced the trials that comes with our witness that, in his words, “for the moment” [verse 16] exhaust us, weary us. These are put on one side of the scale and the prospects of a glorious eternity on the other side. God’s blessings outweigh them!

Here in Romans, Paul thought—to be fair—we will add to that side of the scale every source of unhappiness, pain, and misery that is a consequence of our faithfulness to God’s Word. It didn’t even move the needle. Even the lightest or smallest, most incidental blessing of God alone would outweigh all the trials and infirmities of this life. [Romans 8:35, 37–39].¹⁰

In us - The word used here for “in” includes the idea of “for” It is a weakness of the English language that we do not have an equivalent of this Biblical word. *In us* and *for us* means “The glory will not consist only *in our* own transformation [in], but also in the coming of the Lord himself, and the transformation of the universe [for us].

19. *Indeed, the expectation of [God’s whole] creation longs for [with anticipation excitedly] the manifestation [revealing] of the sons [children] of God.*

Verse 19 - “As to the spirit, we are in the *age to come*; as to the body, in the *present age*.”¹¹

Expectation¹² - means to wait “with the head raised, and the eye fixed on that point of the horizon from which the expected object is to come”¹³ as I did while looking down the tracks for my morning train to work.

9. Godet. Page 312.

10. **NIV: 35** Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? **37** No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. **38** For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, **39** neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

11. Godet. Page 313.

12. ἀποκαρδοκία

13. Godet. Page 313.

Longs for - The word speaks of a strong desire “to receive something from the hands of one who extends it to you from afar.”¹⁴

Creation - There is coming “the times of restoration of all things, which God has spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began” [Acts 3:21].¹⁵

Manifestation - “When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory.” [Colossians 3:4].¹⁶

20. *To explain: [God’s] Creation has been subjected to frailty [the limitations of this existence—as a consequence of “The Fall”?], not voluntarily, but, indeed, in a submissiveness based on [the] hope*
21. *Because they, [all of creation] shall also be set free from the corruption [subject to decay and death] of such a servitude into [sharing in] the glorious freedom of the children of God.*
22. *Indeed, we know all of [God’s] creatures share in the grief, sorrow, and intense pain they have [continually suffered] to the present time.*

Nature suffers from a curse which it cannot have brought upon itself because it is not morally free.

Subjected - by whom? Godet suggests that nature yielded willingly only because hope was extended that this was temporary and that Christ would bring restoration. The idea of “cause” has multiple meanings. Adam’s sin was the moral cause [Genesis 3:17] but God was the effective cause (author) of the curse on nature. It seems superfluous to blame Satan since he might be considered the initial cause of all evil but this serves no purpose here.

Because - of the hope of liberty. “there is nothing to show that the apostle has in view the return to life of the individual beings composing the present system of nature.... We have therefore to think here only of a new nature in its totality, differing from the old system and its constitution and laws.”¹⁷

We know - The evidence is anecdotal, based on hearsay. But whom did we question? Nature itself! The extinction of species, the imprisonment of animals in “zoos,” the introduction of non-natural predators into a species domain, animals used in medical research, animal sacrifice, slaughterhouses—all by man beside natural predation, famine, forest fires

14. Ibid.

15. See Revelation 21:1 “a new heaven and a new earth”

16. Compared I John 3:2 “Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.” [cp. Matthew 13:43]

17. Godet. Page 315.

(We could go on). But some day “The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, The leopard shall lie down with the young goat, The calf and the young lion and the sacrificial animal together; And a little child shall lead them.” [Isaiah 11:6].¹⁸

Is it not possible that man became carnivorous providentially as a vehicle of animal sacrifice in preparation for the ancient ritual that would eventually speak of Christ? If this be true, we can say that the bondage of all nature was indeed connected with the “Fall” of man, morally and spiritually. Godet adds, “the soul of the world is man. The whole Bible, and this important passage in particular, rests on this profound idea.”¹⁹

23. *And they are not alone; we, too, having the first fruits of [which is the arrabon or guarantee given by] the Spirit, even we, are groaning [grieving] for the anticipated adoption, the redemption [to be released from this mortality and its decay] of our bodies.*
24. *Our salvation rests in this expectation! But hope for what we have already is not hope!*
25. *But now if the case is that we do not have it, we expectantly anticipate it. We patiently [with perseverance] keep waiting.*

Verse 23: Groaning - Grief is the longing for something or someone essential to happiness but missing—having left or died or simply not present.

First Fruits of ... the Spirit²⁰ - is a divine gift. “And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever— the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you. I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you.” [John 14:16-18]. Paul called the Spirit the **arrabon**, God’s guarantee:²¹ “who also has sealed us and given us the Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee.” [2 Corinthians 1:22; Ephesians 1:14].²²

Is there a Christian who is not groaning? For a believer, whose walk with God, like Enoch’s, is life, itself, is it possible there is one who claims Christ as their Lord but they do not see and feel the emotional force of this

18. Isaiah 65:25 The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, The lion shall eat straw like the ox,

19. Godet. Page 317.

20. An objective genitive or genitive of apposition in which the Spirit is the initial gift of God to affirm what awaits us in its fullness in Heaven.

21. τὸν ἀρραβῶνα τοῦ πνεύματος a transliteration of the Hebrew word עֲרָבוֹן a pledge, that the full amount will subsequently be paid.

22. which is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory.

enduring hope? Could any child of God be comfortable in a world, a society, built on selfish ambition and not on Kingdom truth!

The Redemption of Our Bodies:²³ - "it is the body itself which is to be delivered from the misery of its present corruption."²⁴ "For we who are in this tent groan, being burdened, not because we want to be unclothed, but further clothed, that mortality may be swallowed up by life." [2 Corinthians 5:4]. Later Paul will talk of our "glorification" [Romans 8:30].

Each saint will receive a glorified body like that of Christ's. "But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. ... But each one in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, afterward those who are Christ's at His coming." [1 Corinthians 15:20, 23]. There are hints of this new body in Scripture [Matthew 26:29;²⁵ Luke 24:42-43;²⁶ 1 Corinthians 15:40].²⁷

Verse 24: Hope - distinguished from faith with which it has a relation. [Hebrews 11:1].²⁸ Someone once said that faith can live without hope but hope cannot live with faith. And Paul seemed to imply that love was greater than either [1 Corinthians 13:13]—some say—because only love will characterize the Kingdom of God. Faith and hope which were part of our prayer life will go the way of that sweetest of hours when we finally get there. William W. Walford wrote:

Sweet hour of prayer! sweet hour of prayer!
 May I thy consolation share,
 Till, from Mount Pisgah's lofty height,
 I view my home and take my flight.
 This robe of flesh I'll drop, and rise
 To seize the everlasting prize,
 And shout, while passing through the air,
 "Farewell, farewell, sweet hour of prayer!"

Hope implies non-possession and the expectation of what remains to obtain, "the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, of which you heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel," [Colossians 1:5]. The Hope Paul defines ultimately "looking for [to wait for expectantly] the blessed hope [with joyous anticipation: the source of all our happiness] and [even, which is the] glorious appearing of our great God and [even] Savior Jesus Christ," [Titus 3:13].

23. Subjective genitive, that is, our bodies will be redeemed.

24. Godet. Page 319.

25. But I say to you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father's kingdom.

26. So they gave Him a piece of a broiled fish and some honeycomb. And He took *it* and ate in their presence.

27. There are also celestial bodies and terrestrial bodies; but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another

28. Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

If I might say, not as a pun, that I hope we can still hope living in Heaven. We think of hope in the context of suffering and sorrow but the word in the Bible speaks of anticipation. We will live with untold excitement and a joy, which cannot now be described, which means we will continue to anticipate greater and greater blessings from our Heavenly Father. As His children we should be, at least, a bit curious about what we will inherit that will take uncounted ages for God to share with us!

Verse 25: Perseverance - means to remain under: enduring hardship and suffering; keep keeping on, hold out under the burden this life imposes on us as ministers of the Gospel. There is a doctrine of the perseverance of the saints which concludes this must be predetermined [verse 29] because it is God's gift which cannot be revoked [Romans 11:29]. But, here the King James Version correctly calls this patience which requires a freedom to follow Christ in enduring sufferings. The following verse tells us that the Holy Spirit is a helper in this effort—not a controller.

Our propensity to theologize Scripture instead of just living it makes us no better than the Judaizers of Paul's day—something we do not want to become.²⁹

26. *Likewise, even the Spirit helps [takes our burden on Himself] us in our [spiritual?] weakness, because we do not always know what to pray [talk to God about] as we ought [how to talk to Him about our needs] but the Holy Spirit will meet with God on our behalf in ways our grief cannot express [it would be too heavy to bear: "unutterable anguish"].³⁰*
27. *And He [the Spirit] searching out the hearts [all our issues, passions, pain and hopes], He knows [aspires to]³¹ what is the mind of the Spirit [what should be asked for] because according to God [He is God's appointed comforter] for all the saints [all believers].*

Verse 26: Infirmities - Not only do we not know "how" to pray and "what" to pray but this word addresses the weariness we are prone to exhibit: "let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart" [Galatians 6:9]. In one more way here the Comforter has come, as Jesus promised, "I will not leave you comfortless" [John 14:18]. Jeremiah's prayer has been answered, "Remember, O LORD, what is come upon us ... We are orphans and fatherless..." [Lamentation 5:1, 3].

29. I became personally aware of this possibility when I was dismissed from pastoring one church in which one elder complained that I was turning the Word into a kind of christianized psychology.

30. στεναγμοῖς ἀλαλήτοις - a phrase once spoken by the famed anthropologist, Margaret Mead—her context is lost on me but the phrase is appropriate here.

31. Both knows and wills.

Helps - carries our burden for us. Consider the lesson here: “But Martha was distracted by all the preparations that had to be made. She came to him and asked, “Lord, don’t you care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself? Tell her to **help me!**” “Martha, Martha,” the Lord answered, “you are worried and upset about many things, but few things are needed—or indeed only one. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her” [Luke 10:40-42]. Godet adds, The Holy Spirit is there to help “when we are ready to faint.... Those times in which our tribulation is such that in praying we cannot express to God what the blessing is which would allow the distress of our heart.”³²

Pray - What should we be praying for? Where are the words! Here emphasizes the importance of a prayer-life yielded to the Spirit’s wisdom and guidance. We may not find the words, but He knows.

Ought - what is required or necessary or fitting [Matthew 6:1-4; Luke 11:1] Where are the words and how should the heart react?

- ◆ Let the Spirit guide you. Paul sought God for a “thorn in the flesh” which God acknowledged as fitting for him. The Lord’s consent and awareness of our need should suffice to restore our joy in serving Him [2 Corinthians 12:7-10].
- ◆ Perhaps, our burden is His! [Zechariah 12:1; Malachi 1:1].

Inexpressible Grief - Grief is a longing, an indication that something is missing in our life that cannot be substituted. There is a serious hint in saying, “We were made for God.” There are those times when there are “no distinct words [which] fully express to God the infinite good after which He [The Spirit] sighs.”³³

Verse 27:Searching - The Spirit is the “knower of hearts” [Acts 1:24; 15:8]. Perhaps, we should not skim over this. “The Knower of Hearts”³⁴ is a New Testament term *not* found earlier in the language. “And they [the 120 in the upper room at Pentecost] prayed, and said, Thou, Lord, which *knows the hearts* of all men, shew [us]” The Apostles testified, “God, which *knows the hearts*, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as he did unto us;” Jeremiah was told, “I the LORD search the heart” [Jeremiah 17:10].

According to God - The Spirit prays how and what ought to be prayed. He knows how to petition heaven and intercede for us. “The Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God.”[1 Corinthians 2:10].

For all the saints - “The Saints are beings in whom the Spirit already dwells. ... Is it not natural for Him to interest Himself in the completion of their salvation? It is to the accomplishment of [a divine plan] that the

32. Godet. Page 320.

33. Ibid. Page 321.

34. The Greek reads ὁ καρδιογνώστης θεός, “The heart-knowing God”

operation of the spirit tends.”³⁵ Paul adds, “... the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory: ... revealed ... unto us by his Spirit:” [1 Corinthians 2:7, 10].

28. *But we know that to those who love God, all things work for good to those who are called [chosen] according to His purpose [as arranged beforehand].*

Verse 28: His purpose arranged beforehand is “The glorious goal marked out beforehand by the plan of God.”³⁶ The obvious truth here is that with God nothing is crisis managed or a course correction or a change of thought [Isaiah 55:11].³⁷ All things are in accordance with His holiness. The Simplicity of God recognizes God to be infinite, eternal, immutable and indivisible, in which all His actions and attributes are always and at the same time in perfect unity and collaboration. As such all things are planned from the foundation of the world [Matthew 25:34] “just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love” [Ephesians 1:4].

All things - all that comes on us, especially everything painful in consequence of the miseries of the present time and of our sins [and of others].”³⁸ But if we sin, we might in error think, God is not obliged to honor His promise? Never! [Romans 3:3-4]. Is there a “second-best” with God? This is human reasoning: God Who knows the end of all things mapped out the course “beforehand” knowing how He would get us there “for good”!

Our perspective is not always God’s. He lives in an eternal perfection; we live in a temporal imperfection, learning, and discovering with suffering. With God “beforehand” speaks of His grace, Paul taught, “according to His own purpose and grace which was given to us in Christ Jesus before time began,” [2 Timothy 1:9].³⁹

Because God thinks in eternal terms of our salvation much of what appears significant to us as relates to the direction of our lives can often be to Him of temporal value as, for example, suffering has been [2 Corinthians 4:18]. His good pleasure is invested in our becoming like Christ [Romans 8:29].

Called - Nothing spiritual happens until God calls us, until Jesus walks up and says “Follow me” [Luke 5:27]. Even Peter understood this truth.

35. Godet. Page 322.

36. Godet. Page 322.

37. So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; It shall not return to Me void, But it shall accomplish what I please, And it shall prosper *in the thing* for which I sent it.

38. Godet. Page 322.

39. Ephesians 1:11 in Him also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will,

When he wanted to walk to our Lord on the lake, he asked, “Bid me come?” [Matthew 14:28]. “We love ... because He first loved us” [1 John 4:19].

The theological truth is “No man can come to me,” Jesus taught, “except the Father which hath sent me draw him”⁴⁰ [John 6:44]. Godly sorrow [2 Corinthians 7:10] is a gift of repentance from God. “God’s way ... as God intended”⁴¹ is the Spirit’s work of conviction [John 16:8].

In Matthew 22:14 Jesus exclaimed, “For many are called, but few are chosen.” This is in the parable of the Wedding Feast for the king’s son—referencing, no doubt, the coming Marriage Supper of the Lamb [Revelation 19:7-9]. “Blessed are the called” a voice from the Throne of heaven was heard to trumpet that the happy hour has come! Christians are “set apart .. as dear unto Himself and ...citizens of the Messianic Kingdom”⁴² [Romans 8:33].

29. *Because those whom He foreknew [knows personally] He has predestined [decreed, planned] to conform them into the image of His Son for him to be the Prototokos [firstborn, eldest brother] of many brothers [and sisters].*

Verse 29: It is God’s purposefulness, determination, coupled with His omnipotence and wisdom, that leads theologians to discuss predestination. Either way, I would not want God to be less than wholehearted in His resolve to rescue me from my waywardness and sin. “For whom the LORD loves He trains, And spans every son whom He receives. You live through an upbringing, God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom a father does not discipline?” [Hebrews 12:6-7].

Foreknow - Believers are “those on whom His eye [has been] fixed from all eternity with love.”⁴³ [Ephesians 1:4] “For... God who lives above time, foreseeing is seeing.”⁴⁴ “God decided in advance to adopt us into his own family by bringing us to himself through Jesus Christ. This is what he wanted to do, and it gave him great pleasure” [Ephesians 1:5 NLT].

Predestinated - God did not say, “You shall believe because I choose you” but “I know you to be a believer [compliant clay, submissive, malleable and yielding] [Romans 9:21] “But now, O LORD, You are our Father; We are the clay, and You our potter; And all we are the work of Your hand.” [Isaiah 64:8]. The larger question which no one can answer is

40. draw is a strong term: drag. pull along. Conviction by the Spirit will always precede repentance. “godly sorrow produces repentance” [2 Corinthians 7:10]

41. Gaebelein, vol X. Page 363

42. Thayer. Page 197.

43. Godet. Page 325.

44. Ibid.

“Why would anyone reject the gentle conviction of the Spirit to lead them to Christ?” Why are some hearts open and others closed, hardened, to the message of love and grace? We may never know but God has always known in His omniscient foreknowledge. The message here is that not a single heart that God can mold into the spiritual likeness of His Son will go unnoticed. He will mold all who are open to His call. “Therefore be patient, brethren, until the coming of the Lord. See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, waiting patiently for it until it receives the early and latter rain.” [James 5:7]. As Godet points out: Paul does not speak of a “predestination to faith” but a “predestination to glory... founded on ... faith.”⁴⁵

In the King James Version in verses 28 and 29, these 3 words, what God *purposed*, *foreknew* and *predestined*, indicate His intentions which He had planned before He called the universe into existence and these included in the one and only, same, plan that sent Jesus to the Cross. [Ephesians 1:4; Hebrews 4:3]. God is, indeed, determined but not because we do not have free will. We are free to participate in a loving relationship with Him. Relationships by definition are never coerced. Relationships are built on trust which requires a willingness to bond with another. God’s predestination is only God’s wholehearted participation in relation with us. The “pre” is indication of His omniscience, His foreknowledge and that He had been thinking of us even before He created the world. The order of events is thus: First there is a God of love Who has us on His mind and therefore He created a world for us to live in with Him. He will create it new⁴⁶ after all evil is destroyed. In this regard, we can understand verse 28. When all is said and done, God’s desire for us is all good [Psalm 37:4; Jeremiah 29:11; Romans 12:2; James 1:17].

Conform ..image of His Son - As we noted from Romans 1:23 If God does not make us into His image, we will make Him into ours. That happened when Adam and Eve wanted to know good and evil, as Satan explained with his lie, “you will be like God” [Genesis 3:5]. The heart and the spirit of man, and all humanity, was in that moment no longer God’s to commune with. Adam had another god—self. But God’s plan to have a family as loving as His only Son was still His “dream,” His desire. He wanted sons and daughters! He wanted to be called “Father” by His creation as He was by His Son, Jesus. Godet explained, “the Father’s intention in acting thus is to glorify the Son by causing His beauty to be reflected in a family of living likenesses.”⁴⁷

The Greek use of this word, *conformed*, teaches us that this is not speaking of an outward change, like wearing the newest fashion. By

45. Ibid.

46. Revelation 21:1 speaks of a new heaven and earth. According to Trench’s *Synonyms* [Page 220] new here is of different quality not just another just made but like the old one.

47. Godet. Page 326.

definition, the term “fashion” would speak of a temporary change. Our word “conformed” is an inward and permanent change. We are being made Christlike which, to me, is another way of saying, “For He made Him who knew no sin *to be* sin for us, that we might become the righteousness [faithful to the New Covenant] of God in Him.” [2 Corinthians 5:21].

Image - Thayer defines this word *image* as referring “not only to the heavenly body (cf. 1 Corinthians 15:49; Philippians 3:21), but also to the most holy and blessed state of mind, which Christ possesses: 2 Corinthians 3:18.”⁴⁸ Trench adds an image of another is “that which it not merely resembles, but from which it is drawn.”⁴⁹ Heaven must be peopled only by those who like Christ have a sinless heart toward God, their Father—what Godet calls “a great family ... Made partakers of the divine existence and action, in the midst of which the glorified Jesus shines....”⁵⁰ We follow Christ in perfect harmony because we have been changed from the inside out.

30. *And so, for whom He predestined [planned such a glorious salvation] these He also called [appointed] unto salvation and these He declared just [and righteous and forgiven in covenant with Him] moreover [and finally] these He glorified [will glorify]:⁵¹ body, soul, and spirit: the goal of God’s love for us to share in all things glorious in His kingdom.].*

“And of his fulness have all we received, grace upon grace,” said John [John 1:16]. Paul is not saying that only those predestined are called, but rather, all those who are called have been in His plans before the earth was formed. And in like manner not only those who were invited to the wedding of the Lamb were forgiven but that all those who are forgiven and now reconciled to God are called. Not one is left behind. And thus, all these are to be glorified at the return of Christ. No believer is excluded or as Godet worded this, “Not one of those foreknown shall be forgotten.”⁵² This truth needed to be spoken clearly to the Thessalonians [1 Thessalonians 4:13].

Predestined - Much more has been written on God’s foreknowledge and the idea of our being predestined to salvation. I think it correct to maintain that whatever interpretation each holds to, we should not

48. Thayer. Page 175.

49. Trench. *Synonyms of the New Testament*. Page 49.

50. Godet. Page 326.

51. The past tense here is not past time but used descriptively in Greek as an accomplished fact for God fulfills His promises. See Burton on the Historical and the Resultative Aorists. Page 19ff.

52. Ibid. Page 327.

interrupt Christian unity. There are some doctrinal boundaries we cannot cross upon which our Christian unity is defined.

"Salvation is by grace from beginning to end, and the apostle delights to trace its origins back ... before the foundation of the world (Ephesians 1:4). He ... presses the divine efficiency even where one would least expect it, as when he tells the Philippians to "work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure" [Philippians 2:12-13]. Repentance is a divine gift [Luke 5:32;⁵³ Acts 5:31;⁵⁴ Romans 2:4⁵⁵], Faith results from Divine illumination [2 Peter 1:1],⁵⁶ [and] every excellence of the Christian is a fruit of the Spirit, and no man has anything which he has not received."⁵⁷

And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to *His* purpose.- Romans 8:28

53. "I have not come to call *the* righteous, but sinners, to repentance."

54. "Him God has exalted to His right hand *to be* Prince and Savior, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins.

55. the goodness of God leads you to repentance

56. To those who have obtained like precious faith with us

57. Godet. Page 524.

Romans 8:31-39

A hymn of the assurance of salvation crowns this exposition of sanctification, adoption, and glorification by the Spirit.

We are reminded of Isaiah 50:7-9:

Because the Sovereign Lord helps me,
I will not be disgraced.
Therefore have I set my face like flint,
and I know I will not be put to shame.
He who vindicates me is near.
Who then will bring charges against me?
Let us face each other!
Who is my accuser?
Let him confront me!
It is the Sovereign Lord who helps me.
Who will condemn me?
They will all wear out like a garment;
the moths will eat them up.

There is really no reason to dig into the meanings of words in this hymn written by Paul out of real experiences, real opposition to his message of grace and a salvation by faith alone.¹ Many words do not begin to tell the story of real persecution or the day to day labors of a child of God in the yoke with Christ. Sometimes it felt like we were swimming upstream against a very strong and violent current and how we made it to where we are now, resting in a quieter place, had to be undeniable part of the story of grace.

Supply other words! Write your own hymn! Study this text offering your own real life understanding of Paul's praise song to God and you cannot go wrong as long as through a life time of serving the Savior, following Him, and being Spirit-led you can honestly say that it makes sense to you and that you can vouch for its message.

Here is my interpretation:

1. By "alone" we mean not by law [Romans 6:15], but faith must bear fruit! [John 15:4].

31. *What therefore shall we say regarding these things? If, as is the case, God is for us [does all things ultimate for our benefit] Who, indeed, is against us?*
32. *Of all the things He could give us, God did not spare His own Son but to the contrary gave Him over [to be crucified] in place of us all. How would He, then, not with Him freely bequeath to us everything else [He is and has]?*
33. *Who will accuse God's chosen? It is God who adjudicates [He is the Judge!].*
34. *Can anyone pass sentence? Christ Jesus was He who died, Ah! Rather was resurrected and who is even at Gods' right hand, and who meets [pleads our case] with God on our behalf!*
35. *Who shall separate us from the love of Christ [mutually: our love for Christ and His love for us]? Shall great distress and anguish [of soul] or persecution or extreme hunger or the lack of clothing [to keep one warm] or dangers or life-threatening circumstances?*
36. *According as it is written: For your sake [Lord] we are near death daily, We are resigned to be sheep reserved for sacrifice!*
37. *But, nonetheless, in all these things we are more than conquerors [victorious] through Him Who loves us.*
38. *Furthermore, we are absolutely convinced that neither death nor life nor angels nor demons nor current circumstances nor whatever might be*
39. *Nor violence [exalted powers] nor depth [trying to plunge us into the greatest agony or despair] nor any other creation of man or hell will be able to separate us from God's love which is [what we have from and] in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

Here are, however, some simple comments and thoughts that might be gleaned from this hymn.

Verse 33: A believer has many accusers from their own conscience because of temptations that scandalized them to haters of their accomplishments or happiness and contentment in Christ to Satan himself, who, as his name alerts us, is a professional at telling lies and spinning interpretations, writing the narrative of life in a way that belittles and scorns, mocks and misinterprets what our faith is all about. He seeks vengeance against us because he seeks it against God, Whom he cannot touch. [Read the Book of Job]. We labor for Christ opposed by—if not for grace—an overwhelming evil [Ephesians 6:12].

Verse 34: We will not accept guilt since Christ forgave us. Since “Against You, You only, have I sinned” [Psalm 51:4].

Verse 35: **The love of Christ** [mutually: our love for Christ and His love for us] is immune to the ravages of such evils. As Paul wrote to the

Corinthians, “Are they ministers of Christ?—I speak as a fool—I am more: in labors more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequently, in deaths often. From the Jews five times I received forty stripes minus one. Three times I was beaten with rods; once I was stoned; three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I have been in the deep; in journeys often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils of my own countrymen, in perils of the Gentiles, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; in weariness and toil, in sleeplessness often, in hunger and thirst, in fasting often, in cold and nakedness— besides the other things, what comes upon me daily: my deep concern for all the churches. Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is made to stumble, and I do not burn with indignation? If I must boast, I will boast in the things which concern my infirmity [weakness]” [2 Corinthians 11:23-30].

Verse 36: “Yet for Your sake we are killed all day long; We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.” [Psalm 44:22].

Verse 37: “There is in this love a power that will overcome all the weaknesses of despondency, all the sinking of doubt, all the fears of the flesh, all of the horrors of execution [martyrdom].”²

Through - Him Who loved us. This wording is stronger than “Because of.” We do not only love Him because He loved us first, but our love is empowered to love others through His love directly. He is our source of strength.

Conquerors - The Greek reads *super* conquerors. “That we might surmount still worse trials.”³

Verse 38: Death - is martyrdom and

Life references the many distractions and seductions in life.

Verse 39: Creation - speaks of any other kind of alien world. There are absolutely no conditions ever placed on His love and grace. Still our faith is in Christ who died for us. “And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand. My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of My Father’s hand. I and My Father are one.” [John 10:28-30].

For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified. -

Romans 8:29-30

2. Godet. Page 333.

3. Ibid.

Romans 9:1-13

The Liberty of God in regard to the Election of Israel. Will Israel yet be saved as a nation? Does the salvation of the Gentile mean God has turned His attention away from Israel?

The Gospel offends those that have dedicated their love of God to the exercise of a religious ritual instead of following Christ in simple trust. Israel, as an example, for generations labored in vain to please the God they loved through Torah law. We now call this religious legalism. To throw this all away: the sacrifices, the temple worship, the Midrashim [the Jewish commentaries of the Scripture], the Festivals, the Ten Commandments, and all, was an assault on their conscience and a rewrite of their history that declared their best scholarship and interpretation of the Scriptures, mere ignorance.

With us, as with them, years of faithful devotion to a system of religious obligations and directives that we now learn had no power to save leaves us emptied of purpose and direction. It hurts to think that decades might have been spent in meaningless endeavors seeking a spiritual connection that could not be obtained.

Life is never wasted when God is our quest. Christ is the answer to the search for spiritual truth. Christ is the answer to all spiritual longings and emptiness. In the meantime, the past is not tossed away as if it had not been lived or lived in vain. It has become a wise teacher by giving a believer in Christ added insight. Life is never a loss when it is given to the Savior to use. Paul's Pharisaic education is an example of God's preparation for his apostleship. To write *The Book of Romans* required a calling that had to know Jewish Law, Greek thought, and the mystery of God's grace.

The lesson of grace through faith [Ephesians 2:8] challenged the reasoning of the disbelieving Jews because it sounded like God had planned to spurn Jewry and elevate the Gentile in this new religious effort. Only Paul was uniquely qualified to appeal to a parable of the potter and the clay, or of a grape arbor with grafted wild grapes, and demonstrate through an inspiring explanation the miracle of the Cross, *prepared first for Israel*—and only after that, the Gentile World. Israel has not been forsaken; though, this was the fear.

Israel was comfortable believing in a forgiveness based on personal effort because they were in charge of their own salvation. A rich young man, as an example, after asking Jesus how to obtain eternal life, was advised to keep the commandments, to which he proudly replied, "... I

have What do I still lack?" [Matthew 19:20]. I have wondered why he pursued this matter further. Perhaps, his heart was telling him that that was not it! Jesus' response: "Sell all, give it away, and follow me" suddenly turned a bright sunny day, overcast. "He was gloomy at this word, and went away sorrowful," Mark recorded [Mark 10:22].

Jesus was offering him the free gift of eternal life—*grace*—that required only one thing of him, *trust*. Trust the Savior enough to follow Him! The young man's reason for turning the offer down? Was it a matter of risk or poverty?

No one wants to be the passenger when they can be the driver. So, grace, freely given and undeserved, if it is urged by the Spirit's conviction, might sound like determinism, predestination, or as if God was deciding without you that you must be saved. Or somehow, God's grace decided to turn you down as a candidate for eternal life! And nothing sounds less fair than this. But grace motivated by love is the most just kind of mercy because it is without favoritism. Grace gives God opportunity to do for us what we cannot do for ourselves.

Grace is not Determinism

When an omnipotent and omniscient God decides to love us while we remained hostile to His love, we are prone to see His determination, His resoluteness, as a form of control. We know that a relationship with God cannot be encouraged until He gives us a new heart. Had He consulted us first on this matter, what might we have said? Beside, to consult us would not be grace because His love could be construed as approval in payment for our response. He loved us because we first loved Him? Not possible!

The ultimate form of determinism? We, also, cannot imagine God wanting to love beings that were nothing more than robots, automatons, like B. F. Skinner,¹ who considered free will to be an illusion. Perhaps, God's grace is rightly more evident since we were *not* predisposed to obey Him. And if there were a "god gene"² it does not mean man would incline toward the Savior [Romans 1:18ff]. Some say we are just animals, descended from monkeys. Aside from the established arguments that successfully refute this theory, if we were, we would have been wild animals, because we were *enemies* with God. I apologize for taking the space to remind you of these, man's ideas, that have no awareness of divine grace. A study in God's grace leads us away from these because grace is God's gift of Himself in a reconciled relation with us through the Savior's death and resurrection. I know no better definition: God's Reach At Calvary Extended.

1. Skinner promoted the view that the proper aim of psychology should be to predict behavior and hence be able to control it.

2. The god gene called vesicular monoamine transporter 2 (VMAT2), predisposes humans towards spiritual or mystic experiences.

As already noted, Adam and Eve were created free to choose, else the temptation, to eat forbidden fruit, is not temptation. Herein lies the miracle of reconciliation. As Paul taught, "And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled" [Colossians 1:21]. And here is where grace comes in. Grace cannot be determinism because this would tamper with the freedom needed to sustain a healthy relationship with God. Said another way: What could *submission* mean without the freedom to rebel?

A substantial prima-facie argument, contrary to Pauline doctrine, the modern proposal of scientific materialism³ has gained in popularity. According to this framework all behavior is to be interpreted in biological or chemical terms. Love is hormonal and a lack of affection or empathy and antisocial behavior are examples of genetic⁴ factors or environmental influences. Since this requires a disbelief in the soul and no belief in a "personal" God [theism], such a theorist cannot presume to have an intelligent conversation with Paul. Why people do or don't do anything, especially as regards a love interest in the Savior, remains out of reach for a worldview that sees every disorder in terms of disease and has no concept of sin. We have to admit that anyone who holds to such a rigid view of the behavioral sciences cannot integrate the Biblical message of the covenant of grace into their understanding of life.

But this belief in determinism, as it became known as, just wouldn't go away. Zwingli,⁵ a true Supralapsarian,⁶ believed sinners were made for eternal destruction: "whom divine providence created, that he (the sinner) might live and he would live impiously."⁷ This is not supported in Paul's letter to Rome.⁸ Nor is this Paul's burden in writing. Paul even suggests the possibility of *falling* from grace.⁹ But we do a grave injustice to the text arguing such things. Not only is this aside from Paul's emphasis of justification by grace through faith, but it tangles us up in a web of controversy which divides us taking our attention away from the importance of the text. Suffice it to repeat the Savior's lament over Jerusalem, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your

3. The proposition that human beings are created in the image of God," and that humans are instead "animals or machines who inhabited a universe ruled by purely impersonal forces and whose behavior and very thoughts were dictated by the unbending forces of biology, chemistry and environment.

4. "It's likely shaped by inherited genes as well as life situations and experiences." [https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/antisocial-personality-disorder/symptoms-causes/syc-20353928]

5. Huldrych Zwingli (1484-1531) was a major figure in the Swiss Reformation

6. The doctrine that God decreed both election and reprobation prior to creation and then allowed the fall of man as a means of carrying out his divine purposes

7. Godet. Page 370. "quem divina providentia creavit, ut viveret atque impie viveret"

8. Romans 2:4, 6-10; 6:12-13.

9. Romans 8:13; 1 Corinthians 10:1-12; Galatians 5:4; Colossians 1:23.

children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but *you were not willing!*" [Matthew 23:37].

Universalism

Some see a universal salvation in the idea of predestination, but this, too, is unscriptural. Suffice it to quote again Romans 8:13-14 "For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God."

The Heart-knowing God

But Paul's discussion with his countrymen will inevitably lead to a quagmire of theological controversy unless, as we have maintained from the beginning, we see righteousness as a *covenant faithfulness* which required on the Christian's part: faith *and* faithfulness. For this to be explained, the Apostles needed new words; so, they began to speak of God as the "heart-knower" [Acts 1:24; 15:8]. This sobriquet for God must be the theological fulcrum point between God's grace and man's free will to define the relationship. Like the Sower that went forth to sow seed [Matthew 13:1-9] the ground is the heart and God is the seed-sower, the heart-knower.

What dynamics are at play that leads one person to fall humbly at the feet of a merciful God and another to push away is a mystery still hidden away in the human heart—but God knows the heart. We appeal to the heart-knowing God for understanding [Romans 8:27]. It is not our place—at least not now in this life—to understand what causes the human soul to respond as it does to the call of God, this way or that. It is our place to only know that God desires "none to perish but that everyone would come to know Him" [2 Peter 3:9].

So when Paul affirms God hated Esau [Romans 9:13] in the providential moment of Jacob, his twin, being born second, Israel is not thinking grace—but we are!. In our theological world, the terms used, such as, predestination, foreknowledge, determinism, unconditional election, and irresistible grace, are our efforts at explaining the spin on the potter's wheel in Paul's parable [Romans 9:21], borrowed from Jeremiah [Jeremiah 18:4, 6, 8]. But Paul prefers words like *adoption, covenant, and promises* to explain grace. [Romans 9:4].

Paul appealed to Hosea and Isaiah [Romans 9:25-29] to show that grace is not a new idea with God and Israel is not forsaken!

1. *I am telling¹⁰ the truth in Christ, I am not lying, My conscience bearing me witness in the Holy Spirit,*
2. *There is for me a great pain and unending travail in my heart.*
3. *Furthermore I could have prayed¹¹ that I, myself, were anathema [accursed] for the sake of [on behalf of —rather than they] my brethren [my nation], my kinsmen naturally speaking,*
4. *Those who are Israelites, of whom is the adoption and the [shekinah]¹² glory and the` covenants [plural] and the enactment of Torah law¹³ and [its associated] service [the cultus: sacrifices and worship] and the promises [plural],*
5. *Of whom are the fathers [The patriarchs: Abraham, Isaac, & Jacob] and from whom Christ as to the flesh [incarnate] came [Jesus, Himself, is Jewish] , He is God over all blessed [praised] forever! Amen!*

Verses 1-9: Paul affirmed he is no liar (something most obvious to us) and also that the Spirit is in agreement with his own conscience on this matter, He could pray¹⁴ also to God [like Moses who associated with Israel's sin as an act of compassion while he interceded for them: Exodus 32:32] but the language suggests Paul knew that to be fruitless since God decides to whom to be merciful [Exodus 33:19]. Yet Paul's heart is burdened for Israel.

Verse 3: Anathema - There are two meanings not distinguished in the New Testament Greek, (1) to bring an offering consecrated to God [Luke 21:5]¹⁵ and (2) "to destroy utterly" [1 Samuel 15:20]¹⁶ As Godet interprets here: "Paul has evidently in mind the breaking of the bond which unites him to Christ as his Savior."¹⁷

10. There is no connecting word here such as "and" or "but" showing Paul's deep feelings and love for Israel.

11. Godet. Page 339, footnote #3: "desires..expressly designated as impossible ... I should like certainly, but it cannot be.""

12. A rabbinical understanding of the visible presence of the Lord among them [Exodus 24:16; 29:43].

13. "He sends out His word and melts them; He causes His wind to blow, *and* the waters flow. He declares His word to Jacob, His statutes and His judgments to Israel. He has not dealt thus with any nation; And *as for His* judgments, they have not known them. Praise the LORD!" [Psalm 147:18-20].

14. Burton. Page 16. "The apostle shrank from expressing a deliberate choice in regard to so solemn a matter, or because he thought of it as beyond the control or influence of his wish."

15. NIV "Some of his disciples were remarking about how the temple was adorned with beautiful stones and with **gifts dedicated to God**" See also Micah 4:13 "I will consecrate their gain to the LORD"

16. "I have utterly destroyed the Amalekites."

17. Godet. Page 340.

For the sake of - is one word in the Bible here. Throughout Paul's writings this single word refers often to the penal substitution or vicarious atonement of Christ [2 Corinthians 5:14; Galatians 3:13].¹⁸ Paul would have taken their place at the Bema of Divine Judgment if he could.

Verse 4: Adoption - Israel was always God's firstborn among the nations. "Thus says the LORD: 'Israel is My son, My firstborn' [Exodus 4:22]. Here is a powerful argument that God still loves them which now includes us! Adoption was a choice on God's part and He didn't consult us no more than in the natural world prospective parents of a new born consult the baby first. But God adds, "all my promises and every covenant I made ... was all about *you*, for you, on your behalf, and because of you and my love for you."¹⁹

The Flesh - speaks of Jesus' humanity, "...coming in the likeness of men" [Philippians 2:7].²⁰

Verse 5: Who is God over all²¹ - Christ was human but also and first and foremost, He is *God*. In this brief overview Paul proclaims Christ the God-man who died for Israel. This is what saddens him so greatly, that Israel does not know or consider [Matthew 13:15].²²

Jesus did not become God; He has always been God. There is a brief appendix added, if you want, to discuss 5 centuries of church wrangling over Jesus' true nature. That He was both God and Human finally prevailed in orthodox teaching and church tradition which had led some scholars to doubt the sincerity of the conclusion. Should we be calling persons heretics who, for example, do not understand the trinity or the humanity of Christ. Too much logic, not enough faith. Paul, however, uses language that is clear to myself that Jesus was both God and man, as Martin Luther taught, "truly God and truly man."²³

Over all - "For 'He [Jesus] has put all things under His [The Father's] feet.' But when He says 'all things are put under Him [The Father] ,' it is evident that He who put all things under Him is excepted. Now when all things are made subject to Him [the Father], then the Son Himself will also be subject to Him who put all things under Him, that God may be all in all." [1 Corinthians 15:27-28].

Christ is not replacing God, the God of the Old Testament. Christ is God incarnate. Christianity embraces the true meaning of the prophets'

18. ὑπὲρ πάντων ἀπέθανεν. "He died for all" See Thayer. Page 639. I.3.

19. See Godet. Page 341.

20. See John 1:14 "The Word was made flesh."

21. ὁ ὢν ἐπὶ πάντων θεὸς εὐλογητὸς εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας ἀμήν does not read "Christ is over all; God is blessed" but rather "Christ is God, who is blessed.

22. *For the hearts of this people have grown dull. Their ears are hard of hearing, And their eyes they have closed, Lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears, Lest they should understand with their hearts and turn, So that I should [heal them.*

23. wahrer Gott und wahrer Mensch.

message and the Covenants with both Abraham and Moses. It was all always and only about Christ—the Jewish Messiah!

6. *But the thing is not such as this [brethren, you got it all wrong], that the Word of God has fallen to the ground. [That the Word has come to naught. Not so, but, to explain] Not all Israelites are from Israel!*
7. *Neither are all the children of Abraham of his progeny. But from Isaac shall [his] offspring [Israel] be called.*
8. *That is, the biological children are not [what is meant by] the children of God. But the promised children [promised to Abraham] are considered his [Abraham's] progeny.*
9. *Because this is the promise: according to this time [the period of gestation], I shall come and a son will be [born] to Sarah.*

The rejection of Christ by Israel as a nation must not be interpreted to mean that the Word of God is nullified or that God's promises would not be fulfilled. The explanation is: by Israel God does not mean Abraham's *progeny* [biological descendants] in particular, but all those who accept God's promise of salvation by faith and are faithful to the new covenant as Abraham did regarding the covenant God made with him.

Isaac was the Son of promise, for which Abraham believed [trusted] God.²⁴ Isaac simply represents God's promise of salvation given Abraham by faith and not because he was circumcised [he wasn't at the time] nor because of obedience to Torah Law [which didn't exist then].

What might sound clear to some of us, is still a riddle to others. Isaac as the "son of promise" or the promised son was also a miracle child, since Sarah was passed the prime of life for having children. Some still maintain that the line of lineage goes through Isaac's bloodline, in other words, the Judaizers believed that true salvation goes through Judaism. Gentile believers must first be proselytized.

The question remains, "Who are Abraham's descendants, if they were not the Jews?" And there were 2 different answers:

(1) **Verse 6:** "Not all Israelites are from Israel" or all those who believe on Jesus Christ as their Savior. It is a matter of *faith* with Abraham and not genetics.

Verse 7-8: From Isaac, not Ishmael, will come the children of promise who are children *by faith* not genetics.

But (2) later Paul would teach, "Now to Abraham and his Seed were the promises made. He does not say, 'And to seeds,' as of many, but as of one, 'And to your *Seed*,' who is *Christ*" [Galatians 3:16]. This is interesting since

24. See Chapter 4.

in the Old Testament language the word *seed* is a collective term (there is no plural, like in our word “sheep”).

Verse 9: Isaac is the son of promise because of Sarah’s age.

What might cause a concern for the Rabbis is Genesis 12:7 which does not say all this. Then the LORD appeared to Abram and said, “To your descendants I will give this land.” And there he built an altar to the LORD, who had appeared to him.” Paul’s message of “by faith, through grace” was understandably unknown to them. But this does not explain the Christian’s interpretation of Paul’s words.²⁵

- 10 *And not only [Sarah] but also Rebecca conceived by one, Isaac, our forefather;*
- 11 *[The children] not yet born, doing neither good or bad, in order that by election the purpose of God might remain [true],*
- 12 *Not from works but by calling, it was said to her that the greater [older: first born] shall serve the lesser [younger],*
- 13 *As it is written, Jacob have I loved and Esau I hated.*

Verse 10-13: And it is equally true that the bloodline goes through Jacob, not Esau. But Jacob is not a son of promise. The fact here is that God chose the younger over the older son. It is a lesson in grace. God’s choice was not a matter of temperament nor of works or favor since this was prophesied of Jacob *before* they were born and later Esau fulfilled the prophecy [Genesis 25:31].

Verse 11: Grace is based on the purpose of God in order that it might be in every regard, pure grace without works. If foreknowledge plays a part, it might be contended that grace has become favor based on something God knew about the person which God favored. This would discredit Paul’s point. God’s choice is by “calling” not favor.

To *accept* and to *merit* are two different things. ... it was no merit on Jacob’s part which constrained God to organize his plan as he did.”²⁶ But *faith* constrains God, that is, God works within a trust relationship based on covenant or *faith*.

Election - God’s freedom to choose would be ended if man could claim “a right to be chosen.” Godet adds, “The liberty of God would be compromised if any human merit regulated His choice.”²⁷ But, according to Romans 8:29, neither is it arbitrary! Augustine taught, “God does not

25. See the appendix on “Water Baptism.”

26. Godet. Page 349.

27. Ibid.

choose us because we believe, but that we may believe.”²⁸ Salvation is not because of faith but through faith.

Jacob ...Esau - [Malachi 1:2-3] The meaning: “I have taken Jacob to be mine; I have set Esau aside.” God’s right to choose here as everywhere is a general principle of election or calling, but, here, its application is theocracy not salvation. [Malachi 1:2-3]. Jacob was chosen as keeper of the divine vision [Romans 3:2], the Old Covenant, the Torah. As regards salvation, the message is also to Edom (Esau’s descendants).

If God is for us, who *can be* against us? He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things? - Romans 8:31-32

28. See Ibid. Footnote.

Romans 9:14-24

Does God's freedom to elect, choose, violate His moral character? But like Job, whose going to ask Him! [Job 40:4]

Chapter 9 is a study in Divine *Justice*. Paul addresses the question of his fellow countrymen, but it would not be beyond the educated Greek to argue along with Israel: A salvation based on faith and not effort seems unfair. Does this mean God is unjust? Never!

The religious mind, which we speak of here, cannot see God's blessings as anything but based on favor or merit. But dare we oppose God on this point!" Ask Job. "Behold, I am vile;" he confessed, "What shall I answer You? I lay my hand over my mouth." [Job 40:4].

But we must follow this discussion where it leads us to appreciate how it was worthy of inclusion in this timeless Epistle.

14. *What shall I say, then, God is unjust? Never!*
15. *To explain: He told Moses, "I shall show mercy to whom I will show mercy and pity whom I will pity."*
16. *Therefore, indeed, it is not the one who wishes [by human will] nor the one who runs [by human effort] but God Who is merciful.*

Verse 14: God ...unjust! Never! But it is never beyond the mind of the natural man, who knows injustice, himself, to accuse God of the same. It is rather easy to argue from an ethical standpoint. If God chose Jacob out of hate for Esau, that's not ethically fair. Or if God hardened Pharaoh's heart—egged him on until he exploded with rage—pushed him into war in order to get him to fight and lose, that's not fair because who could possibly beat God! There are many possible motives behind any action—the ends justifying the means—and the "means" might be devious. Often, with persons, the reason for doing something is hid behind an altruistic lie because sin needs to cover its path lest it be exposed for what it really is.

But none of this explains God's actions because we have come to realize that there is a simplicity connected with His actions. All that is being concluded here is that God is eternal, infinite, and immutable. He has nothing shameful to hide! He has no thought or desire that is deceptive. No part of His actions are of temporary consequence. I apologize, again, for putting you through this discussion but God is not unjust because He

cannot be unjust! If He were unjust, He would be only and always unjust because He is unchanging. And how does this accord with His *mercy*.

1. "First, all of his attributes are in the background of all of his actions; He is at the same time or in the same action both just and merciful."¹ "He is gracious, compassionate, and righteous." (Psalm 112:4)
2. "Second, all of his actions will exhibit a unity and consistency worthy of **perfect** agency."² "God is not a man, that he might lie, or a son of man, that he might change his mind. Does he speak and not act, or promise and not fulfill?" (Numbers 23:19).

We cannot separate between God's mercy and wrath, between His grace and judgment. He cannot exercise the one without exercising the other. Every attribute is demonstrated in every act. God's counsel, what He deems necessary and best, and His good pleasure, what brings Him joy, are inseparable, one and the same. "It is God which works in you both to **will** and to **do** of his good **pleasure**." [Philippians 2:13]. If God will harvest wheat, He must burn the tares [Matthew 13:30].

Laura Story's prayer "*Blessings*" contains a line: "And what if trials of this life are Your mercies in disguise?"

Merciful - God's "mercy" is God's love, and in this context, God's intervention to rescue us from ourselves, and the exercise of selfish motives that lead us away from God's purpose in creating us. "You have loved my soul out of the pit," the prophet confessed gratefully, "because You have cast all my sins behind Your back." [Isaiah 38:17].³ The context of Exodus 33:19, in which God spoke these words to Moses ("I shall have mercy on whom I will") was Moses' prayer to see God's glory. This seems out of context until we realize what this conversation is really about: *Calvary*! One gets the impression that God's willingness to pass before Moses and give him a glimpse of His Glory might have been God's way of telling Moses that someday He will have the most glorious display of mercy, of an all encompassing mercy when His Son comes to die for the sins of the world.

The Hebrew words for *mercy*, *compassion*, and *love* are inseparable in meaning and are often translated as if no real distinction existed among them. But there are differences in nuance. Compassion, like pity, is more a condition of the heart whereas mercy is the outward act or expression of compassion, usually in the giving of alms to the poor, widows, and orphans. The concept of love attaches to many divine attributes—God *is* love. The dictionary says of mercy [and therefore "love"] that it is "an attitude ... that arises out of a mutual relationship."⁴ David prayed, "Oh, continue Your lovingkindness to those who know You" [Psalm 36:10].

1. Vidu. 248

2. Ibid.

3. BDB. Page 366.

4. Kittel, vol II. Pages 479.

All this comes together in talking about *grace*. Through covenant God binds Himself to His people, to us. It is no mystery why one word for love [as in Isaiah 38:17] speaks of the *bond* between God and us. It is this love for a reunion with His creation that impassioned God to deliver us [Psalm 91:14; Deuteronomy 7:7; 10:15] from our sinfulness: Paul's entire Covenant Theology based on God's covenant faithfulness as an expression of His grace can be seen clearly in the language of the Old Testament (The Old Covenant) record. This is how *mercy* in the Old Testament comes to speak of *grace* in the New Testament.

17. *For The Scriptures say to Pharaoh that the same man, this one [Moses], I raised up that he might demonstrate my power in your presence and that my name would be proclaimed in all the land [of Egypt & The known world].*
18. *Indeed therefore, on whom He [God] wants, He is merciful, and who He wants, He hardens [them].*

But now there is Pharaoh, whom, the Word records, had a heart hardened by God! This was God's opportunity to demonstrate His power: God against the Egyptian army. And in so doing, this was God's opportunity to show mercy to His people, Israel.

Pharaoh has often been recalled in argument to, fundamentally, accuse God of making him a villain to make him a victim to display God's magnificence, performing the impossible in delivering an enslaved Israel from, at the time, the world's most renown military force. The imprint of this single event upon every heart and mind in Israel should have carried them much farther that just across the Red Sea. It should have been Miriam's song sung at countless Sukkoth celebrations, preached boastfully in countless synagogues, and worn as an undying faith in and love for God on every heart for generations to come until Christ went to Calvary. If God had predestined the Egyptian monarch to sclerosis of the heart, it would have been worth it, to save a world because Israel was in Covenant with God [Isaiah 43:3].⁵ Grace is God taking action as His love sees fit without consulting us, as Paul, will soon explain, using the parable of the potter and the clay—even if this makes us uncomfortable.

But God's grace cannot consult us, not only because it is *grace*, but because our self-will has been under the influence of an evil beginning—a piece of fruit and a snake and there is consequently no advice we could give God that would *merit* His attention. Even prayer is a submission to the mercy of God. No one, to be blunt, has any right to advise God. “The LORD brings the counsel of the nations to nothing; He makes the plans of

5. For I *am* the LORD your God, The Holy One of Israel, your Savior; I gave Egypt for your ransom, Ethiopia... in your place.

the peoples of no effect. The counsel of the LORD stands forever, The plans of His heart to all generations." [Psalm 33:10-11].

So what about Pharaoh? He hardened his own heart [Exodus 8:15].⁶ God would use this recalcitrant spirit against him and for His, God's, own personal glory. Godet wrote, "There is nothing strange in Scripture describing to God the right of dispensing grace, since it describes to Him even the yet more incomprehensible right of condemning to hardness. These two rights indeed mutually suppose one another."⁷ A harvest of wheat is also a harvest of tares [Matthew 13:30]. Mercy must presuppose wrath, not as an emotional outburst or enraged passion but as an act of deliverance for those who seek His mercy. The choice for all humanity has always been with God, accept mercy or accept wrath. There never was nor will ever be any other possibility [Habakkuk 3:2 "In wrath remember mercy."]. There is no middle ground between God's pleasure and His anger, between love and hate, between submission and hardheartedness, between old and new⁸ [Ezekiel 36:26]. Thus, as the doctrine of Simplicity shows, God does not show mercy without also a display of His wrath. Wrath is judgment; vengeance is judgment—and there can be no mercy without it.

Hardens - means "to take from a man the sense of the true, just, and even the useful, so that he is no longer open to the wise admonitions and significant circumstances which should turn him aside from the evil way, which he has entered."⁹ [Romans 1:24]. They are no longer sensitive to the conviction of the Spirit [John 16:8-10] or "godly sorrow" [2 Corinthians 7:10]. And Pharaoh knew. His magicians told him [Exodus 8:19]. His servants told him [Exodus 10:7]. He even began to doubt the wisdom of his own decisions regarding Israel [Exodus 9:27]. But ultimately he was unreachable [Exodus 9:33]. As we have been told: The same sun that melts wax hardens clay.

19. *Then, you say to [ask] me, why then am I to blame! Indeed, dare anybody set themselves against [resist] God!!*

6. But when Pharaoh saw that there was relief, he hardened his heart and did not heed them, as the LORD had said.

7. Godet. Page 353.

8. The Greek word for new speaks of new in time or quality See Trench, *Synonyms*, Page 219.

9. Godet. Page 354-5.

20. *Oh man! Dare you indeed¹⁰ now, whoever you are, reply to [dispute with] God?! What [are you saying!] Shall the clay tell the potter mold me thus?*
21. *Does not the potter of [who molds] the wet clay have full authority over the same lump to make, on the one hand, a valuable vessel, or, on the other hand, one of dishonor [that he throws away]?*

Verse 19: Then - Paul's answer to verse 14: Is God unjust? The Jew argued, Okay, if God is just, hardening Pharaoh's heart, choosing Jacob over Esau, and making me as I am, "how am I to blame for my sinning?" How, then, can God judge me a sinner when I am unable to be or do otherwise!

Here, the matter before the Apostle is *mercy* not judgment or wrath. The argument goes: If it is good in my life, it is grace; if it is bad, sin. If grace, it is to God's glory; if it is sin, I deserve the guilt or blame.

Verse 20: Indeed! Paul expostulated, "Dare you talk of God that way!" The word *indeed* is the best we can do in translation. It is more than *but*. I am inclined to add force to this word adding, "Watch yourself! This is God we are talking about! This reminds us of Job before God being dressed down for all his theologizing and his friends' discursive bloviating [Job 40:4]. There is a lot of feeling here.

Reply - Actually reply to God's reply [Isaiah 1:18]. The sad part of this debate with God is the inability to listen and learn while contending for their own opinion ..and this against *God!* "God, You made me this way! Why!?" And now you fault me for what I am!

God already say on 2 occasions that He concluded everyone under sin [in Galatians 3:22 and in Romans 11:32] that He might be *merciful unto all*.

Verse 21: God does not need to be justified by man. Life is the other way around! God is the potter, we, the clay. This line of arguing was ridiculous, if not inappropriate bordering on blasphemous. God wants to be merciful and because He has reason to choose when and where, we dare accuse Him on being unjust! We need to ask for His mercy not spurn it! The parable of the potter is most enlightening since it leaves God to be God! And it is the pliability of the clay (how submissive it is) that determines how the potter may form it. Think on this!

10. There is in the language of the New Testament a short word which scholarship lists among the "particles of affirmation" [Thayer. Page 397.] The closest we get to this in English is the use of a word to add urgency, emotion, or emphasis. Often such words are treated like expletives, but in a good sense, as filler and left untranslated as if they didn't add to the interpretation. Our word is 'men' [μεν - found 193 times in the Received Greek Text according to the Blue Letter Bible.] often compounded in menounye [μενοῦνγε]. It has been translated "Nay but," "Yea rather," "Yes, verily," and "Yea, doubtless" It's meaning, if constructed from the 3 particles would be "indeed therefore at the least." The point? Paul wrote with a lot of emotion!

Like Jesus, Paul, does not purpose to strive with minds not open to the Gospel [Matthew 12:19]. Scholarship interprets “Oh man! Dare you indeed now”¹¹, Oh Man! Whoever you are! ...” As if to hear Paul saying “I do not examine the intrinsic truth of what you allege; but, however that may be, what is more certain is, that you are not in a position to dispute with God.”¹²

Never argue theology with those who simply oppose the truth but have no genuine interest in learning it. The only response is your own testimony of what God’s mercy has done for you. Be like the blind man Jesus healed when the religious leaders interrogated him and his parents, some thinking he was never really blind. To paraphrase: “Whether he be unjust or no, I know not: one thing I know, that, whereas I once feared His judgment, now I know His mercy.” [John 9:25].

The larger question must be “why do some yield to conviction (to the potter’s hand) and others do not? For that, sadly, we have no answer, yet. “...it belongs only to the Potter, and His knowledge of clay, to determine what he shall make of the different parts of the mass in his hands, to extract from each the best results possible. So, it belongs to God alone to assign to the different portions of humanity ... the use which suits Him [God] best with a view to His [God’s] final aim.”¹³ In simpler terms: God “knows the secrets of the heart” [Psalm 44:21; Acts 15:8,¹⁴ 1 John 3:20].¹⁵ God alone is the “Heart-knower.”

22. *So, when [though] God wants to display His anger and to make known His power, He bears with much longsuffering vessels of [His] anger prepared [made, put in order] for destruction,*
23. *In order to make known the riches of His glory upon vessels of mercy which He prepared ahead of time for glory.*
24. *[Them along with] us, whom He has called, not only from Jewry but from among [all] nations*

Verse 22: Prepared - This word in verse 22, which Paul chooses “to get ready for a particular purpose” is used only here in this sense: “to prepare the lost for destruction.” The verb is passive saying they have been prepared but not saying by whom. In reality, this is an act of self-preparation. Everything about life for a person, a relationship, an education, growing up, are all acts of preparation which cannot be undone

11. μενοῦνγε is 3 words: μεν “certainly,” οὖν “therefore,” γε “at least” which is a way of saying “I am not having this debate”

12. Godet. Page 357.

13. Ibid. Page 358.

14. So God, who knows the heart, acknowledged them by giving them the Holy Spirit, just as *He did* to us,

15. For if our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart, and knows all things.

[to coin a word: undid]. “they voluntarily extinguished the light which burned in them by natural revelation.”¹⁶ [Romans 1:18-32]. “Thus it is always that the two factors, the human and the divine, concur in the tragic development of such a moral state.”¹⁷

Destruction - A difficult word to define exactly. It is found in John 3:16. But in this context, are they not chards of discarded pottery heaped in some forgotten corner of the potter’s world, never to be of any use again. What might this say about lost souls, the discarded chards? Perhaps, we have gone beyond the parable’s purpose. But we can reasonably conclude that the purpose of a life is to worship and commune with their Creator, to be of honor for the Potter of souls, and this they have failed at utterly.

Verse 23: He Prepared - Is a different word meaning prepared beforehand and totally by God alone] by His grace, which is the theme of this chapter. The word often signifies “to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.” [Luke 1:17]. This has to be what Paul meant in 2 Corinthians 3:18, “changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.”

Verse 24:Nations - Was it more offensive to Israel to hear their many rituals and much Torah knowledge is now given a new understanding based on a Covenant of Grace, which they were unaware of even with all their studying? Or is the greater offense that the Gentiles, educated and uneducated, barbarians and savage, from all races and peoples were now welcomed into the fold of God!

**I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities
nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth,
nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of
God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. - Romans 8:38-39**

16. Godet. Page 361.

17. Ibid.

Romans 9:25-29

Calling the Gentiles is nothing else than the fulfilling of God's very word; for, it was announced to the Prophets beforehand. But a remnant in Israel shall also be saved.

God exercised the right of His justice and holiness to rewrite His Covenant with Israel in more merciful terms that would include the Gentiles. Israel assuming that the Mosaic Covenant of Works was irrevocable, or that there would never be a day of its final fulfillment when God might replace it [at Calvary], was sadly, for them, as a nation, a consequential error in judgment.

Before we judge them too harshly, though, is not the Church, in part, as guilty of such shortsightedness? Perhaps, more so, because salvation has come through Christ! I thought of Godet's quote, which was placed on the cover of this book. Godet called Paul's Epistle to the Romans "a word in season ... in the course of the ages." Paul's words having "recovered the place of honor" belonging to it. And "every time ... it has inaugurated a new era." The church keeps rediscovering the depth of riches in the Gospel whether through reformation or revival.

One of my Bible college professors lamented the sad truth that this didn't occur for each generation of young adults. Every young believer needs to search out in their living the power of this, Paul's, Gospel—not in an academic but in a spiritual way. Each new Christian is robbed by the church that does not encourage them to find their calling, find their life, in the humble act of submission to the Spirit of God. Every believer needs to learn to recognize the voice of the Shepherd in their day to day. Faith must not be reduced to a creed. It needs to be a way of life!

We have a New Covenant in Christ's death and resurrection which, indeed, is irrevocable. Jesus declared it so! "It is finished!" [John 19:30]. Yet, how to get Israel to understand that this is great news! Israel is like the older child who somehow thinks they are being replaced when mommy comes home with a new baby [the Gentiles].

God's mercy never did show favoritism. If God refused the Gentile nations of the world, that would be make Israel His favorite. Paul had a divine commission to introduce a new thought to Israel—*grace*. Even Christians may have a weak understanding of why God does what He does just because He wants to. But at the same time He asks for our worship and submission.

As Godet explained it, "... By concluding a special covenant with Israel, God had not abdicated the right of judging them, [nor] alienated His

liberty in respect of them and the rest of mankind.”¹ In other words—if I may: The Mosaic Covenant never limited God’s right to show mercy to whomever He would—even Gentiles! Nor did the Mosaic Covenant preclude Israel’s rejection by God if He chose to do so. If Israel were honest with themselves, they should have expected God to annihilate them as a people for how they so totally disregarded the Commandments—especially the first couple. But, here, too, grace was at work—God having planned ahead to tolerate their insolence until the Savior arrived.

We have said all this already; so, what remains is for Paul to show them, that what he is teaching has been shared by the prophets. And I—if I am not sounding too presumptuous—would have also chosen Isaiah and Hosea to speak for me.

It only remains, first, to point out, when we get there, that verse 28 was never intended as a reprimand or a threat but to be a comfort and encouragement. (We so often confuse the roles of our own conscience and the Spirit’s conviction.) Sadly, many in Israel were offended by the very message that should have been most welcomed, the Jewish “faith” vindicated in Christ, the Messiah.

25. *As even Hosea² says, “ I shall call a people that are not my people, my people and [she who is] not beloved, beloved.”*
26. *And it shall be in a place where it is said to them, ‘You are not my people.’ There they shall be called ‘sons of the living God.’*
27. *And Isaiah,³ cried out over Israel, “Although the number of the sons of Israel might be as the sand of the sea, a remnant shall be saved.”*
28. *For the Lord shall make a quick end of the thing [finish and cuts short—quickly] upon the earth,*
29. *Just as even Isaiah said before, “Unless the mighty Lord leaves us seed [some left alive]⁴ we become as Sodom and we will be like Gomorrah.*

Verse 25-26: I suppose we should not turn our thoughts into a commentary on Hosea, but unless we see where God is coming from in His instructions to the prophet, we may misinterpret the divine heart. Hosea had 3 children, 2 boys and a girl and God named them after a description of His own

1. Godet. Page 366.

2. Hosea 1:10 & 2:23.

3. Isaiah 10:22 καὶ ἐὰν γένηται ὁ λαὸς Ἰσραὴλ ὡς ἡ ἄμμος τῆς θαλάσσης τὸ κατάλειμμα αὐτῶν σωθήσεται λόγον γὰρ συντελῶν καὶ συντέμνων ἐν δικαιοσύνῃ ὅτι λόγον συντετμημένον ποιήσει ὁ θεὸς ἐν τῇ οἰκουμένῃ ὅλη

4. Isaiah 1:9

relationship with Israel: Jezreel was the first born, whose name means God has sown [seed] or given birth. Scholars say this is a moniker for Israel.

Hosea's wife was named Gomer. Her name meant *complete* or *perfected*, *finished* and one can wonder if this, too, has some significance. David wrote, "The LORD will *perfect* [gimor]⁵ that which concerns me: thy mercy, O LORD, endures for ever: forsake not the works of thine own hands [Psalm 138:8]. Spurgeon explained this Psalm to mean, "God does not leave off til He has finished."⁶ Amen!

Her other 2 children beget by Hosea were named [in English] "Not My People" and "No Mercy." Scholars say that the daughter's name, "No Mercy" means "Unfavored." My initial understanding was that her name represented Hosea's rejection of her and her mother, but, since this story ultimately reflects God's love toward Israel. and since, after Gomer ran away, Hosea found her and brought her back, the story begins to sounds like Colossians 1:21 "And you, who once were alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now He has reconciled." The prophecy might read: "While she was yet Not My People and Unfavored, yet now Hosea was reconciled." Even Hosea's name means salvation.

In Hosea 2:23 God says, "I will sow her [Jezreel's name] for Myself in the earth, And I will have mercy on her who had not obtained mercy [Unfavored, the daughter's name]; Then I will say to those who were not My people [the younger son's name], 'You are My people!' And they shall say, 'You are my God!' Scholarship tells us "God betrothed [Israel] to Himself, forever."⁷

This prophecy is an allegory. I wonder if John Bunyan might have gotten the idea for Pilgrim's Progress from Hosea. So the Savior sought out an unfaithful nation, Israel, to complete His desire toward her—determined that she should be His and to be merciful to her—and she gave birth to children whose names, themselves, tell the story of grace and God showing His mercy to all nations [Hosea 2:23]. God will make Israel, His bride. He wants to be their husband and not a master to them [Hosea 2:16]. But before this can happen, she needs to be bought back for she has been unfaithful and sold into slavery [bondage to sin: Hosea 3]. The Savior purchased Israel—and us—back with His own blood.

The story goes on to describe a very rocky relationship between Israel and God, and God's personal pain [Hosea 11] even though scholars claim God cannot feel pain [Impassibility].⁸ I will leave that argument alone for now. But this story has a happy ending [Hosea 14]. Israel is no longer "Not my People" but now, according to Paul's interpretation [verse 26]: "Sons of the Living God."

5. The actual Hebrew word.

6. Spurgeon, vol II. Page 1313.

7. Keil. vol X. on Hosea. Page 66.

8. incapable of suffering or feeling pain: belief in an impassible God.

Verse 27-29: Isaiah's prophecy makes clear that there will be a remnant saved. This might be equally so of the "churched" peoples of the world—not everyone who attends church is a child of God.⁹

Verse 28: is a quote from Isaiah 10:22-23, the Greek Translation reads, "And though the people be as the sand of the sea, a remnant of them shall be saved. He will finish the work, and cut it short in righteousness." The Hebrew says, "a quick annihilation,¹⁰ overflowing with [washed away in a deluge of] righteousness. Godet says, "God cuts, this time, short righteously."¹¹ This sounds very much like the end times. As Jesus, Himself, taught, "And unless the Lord had shortened those days, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake, whom He chose, He shortened the days." [Mark 13:20].

And that's Paul's point, despite the judgment of God, Israel is not rejected! In fact, we might view this in quite the opposite way, "For whom the LORD loves He chastens, And scourges every son whom He receives." [Hebrews 12:6].

God has always loved Israel and, as He spoke to Elijah about 7,000 who had not bowed the knee to Baal or any false god, there will be a remnant¹² who will be saved.

*"And it shall come to pass in the place where it was said to them, 'You are not My people,'
There they shall be called sons of the living God." - Romans 9:26*

9. Some Christian religions actually differentiate between the "regenerated" and the "churched": the "invisible" and the "visible," respectively.

10. See the BDBD Page 479. Keil reads "destruction is firmly determined. [Isaiah. Page 272. Keil interprets "In these esoteric addresses, however, it is not the prophet's intention to threaten and terrify, but to comfort and encourage." [Page 273].

11. Godet. Page 366.

12. Revelation 14:1-3, 144,000 [12 times 12 times 1,000] perhaps, a symbolic number and not a literal count from the nation Israel.

Romans 9:30-10:21

Israel- the Cause of their own Rejection. To assail the changes that have unmoored us from the past is futile, and, in a deep sense, I think it is wicked ... This cannot be an easy life. We shall have a rough time of it to keep our minds open, and to keep them deep ... in a great, open, windy world; but this is, as I see it, the condition of man; and in this condition we can help, because we can love one another. - J. Robert Oppenheimer

Before we continue along this line of reasoning and understanding God's covenant faithfulness, we should enquire whether or not God is now asking Israel to close out that chapter in their religious life in which they participated since Moses' time. "...there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins." [Hebrews 10:26].

How should we understand the Savior's prophetic insight given to the Samaritan woman at the Well of Jacob, "believe Me, the hour is coming when you will neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, worship the Father. ... But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him." [John 4:21, 23]. Or is Israel allowed to devote themselves to the sacrifices, now, perhaps, as only a ritual symbolizing their commitment to Christ, as long as they accept Christ's offer of salvation *by faith*?

Before we toss away those parts of Torah Law we dislike either as cruel or merely cumbersome, we must question our own religious commitment. This question occupied the first Council at Jerusalem in Acts 15. And even though it was raised regarding Gentile believers in Antioch, does it not speak to all?

How are we to interpret the apostles' unity on this matter: "We write to them to abstain from things polluted by idols, *from* sexual immorality, *from* things strangled, and *from* blood. ... Since we have heard that some who went out from us have troubled you with words, unsettling your souls, saying, "*You must be circumcised and keep the law*"—to whom we gave no *such* commandment" [Acts 15:20, 24].

Since this is not Paul's immediate concern, we will not dive too deeply into the waters of controversy surrounding the Council's decision. What is clear is that Gentiles would not need to be circumcised. The general tenor of this letter as well as sending it along with Barnabas, the official "Son of Comfort," was to keep Jewish rituals Jewish but protect the Gentiles from their past in cultic practices that might draw them back in.

Was the envoy's primary concern Christian unity or the spiritual wellbeing of the new believers? In what areas could a compromise be

encouraged between believers whose devotion to God differed? And if the Gentiles, who were genuine believers, could not lose their faith, was all this counsel intended only to lessen their confusion or to promote Christian fellowship and spiritual growth in spite of the differences?

These issues are important because our world of religious ritual represents our need to legitimize an expression of our love for God. How can I know I love God? I attend church! We still display a certain denominational commitment and even zeal. All Christians believe their doctrine and practice to be the “full Gospel.” In a recent discussion about the early beginnings of the Church [Acts 2] the question was raised whether God expects us to exhibit the same level of unity and fellowship the believers experienced in the beginning or is it acceptable that the church move past such a naive innocence? Does this sound too harsh? Which one of us did what Barnabas did—selling property to buy food for the poor!

Regarding our theological differences Paul admonished us, simply, that “whatever you do, do all to the glory of God” [1 Corinthians 10:31]. Differences in church doctrines, styles of worship, and interpretations of Scripture, should never lead to judging or disunity [1 Corinthians 10:29] which cannot be justified in any form as acceptable before God [1 Corinthians 10:32].

Although part of Paul would always be faithfully Jewish [Acts 18:18], as one studies Paul, one wonders what type of service He favored [Acts 16:25]. No church ritual is endorsed in his letters as essential to our spirituality.

But proselytes to Judaism which later accepted Christ still believed in the value of Torah Law that it was important to “pursue.”

- 30 *What, then, shall we say that a people shall take hold of righteousness who did not pursue righteousness, a righteousness by faith,*
- 31 *Israel, pursuing the Law of [Torah as] righteousness, didn't come upon it.*
- 32 *Why is this? Because [they sought it] not by faith but by works. They stumbled over the rock¹ [Christ] of stumbling.²*

1. Isaiah 8:14 He will be as a sanctuary, But a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense To both the houses of Israel, As a trap and a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem.

2. Christ is an offense to all who seek God's favor by anything other than faith in Him [John 14:6; Acts 4:12].

- 33 *Just as it is written, “Behold I place in Zion a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense³ and he who believes upon Him shall not be ashamed.” [His faith will be vindicated].*

Verse 30: Scholarship calls this, “a declaration of painful solemnity.”⁴ The Gentiles received what they didn’t seek to obtain, while the Jews missed altogether what they sought to gain—salvation. How is it possible to conclude that peoples outside Israel were deemed righteous though they never sought it? This is not fate or fortune, nor is it, God imposing on them what they did not want—only what they did not seek. It is in a language, perhaps, only the religious can appreciate, that believers from other nations and nationalities could discover that saving faith is not earned but simply accepted, that even faith is a divine gift [2 Peter 1:1].

Jewish believers in Paul’s day were—and many modern church attenders in our day are—pursuing righteousness by striving to be the best they can be. Trying to honor a commitment they made to the religious practice, following a routine. The assurance of knowing that we are forgiven and redeemed does not rest in a doctrine about faith but in our *faith*, itself. Reconciliation with God is not a conversation *about* God but a conversation *with* Him. Pastor Lenny Evans had an inspiring way to sum this up:

“What was reality? Was it the regular church services which were so lacking in excitement and so routinely dull? Worship was not a celebration of joy but a somber exercise, repetitiously boring. ...it seemed to me that we were simply playing church.”⁵

Faith - I find myself wanting to define this faith and put a verse or two to it. But I must not dogmatize its meaning, that is, make faith some practice or ritual that if one performs it habitually they would be said to have faith or if one is said to have memorized or confessed it they have faith. Faith can mean many things to Christians from our walk with God to our church’s doctrinal position. But here, I am specifically understanding faith as *an awareness of that relationship we enjoy with God* and which is well documented in the record of Scripture. Faith, then, is the source of all conviction and confirmation in the existence of God [Hebrews 11:6].

I don’t want to analyze faith. I only want my faith to peacefully acknowledge the presence of God in my life. Albert Einstein cautioned about describing everything scientifically. Like a beautiful piece of music as a variation of wave pressure, faith can be understood merely in theological terms, lifeless descriptions, dead dogmas, instead of the very quality that

3. Isaiah 28:16 Behold, I lay in Zion a stone for a foundation, A tried stone, a precious cornerstone, a sure foundation; Whoever believes will not act hastily.

4. Godet. Page 367.

5. Evans. Page 1ff.

inspires vision and breathes life into hope.⁶ Faith is not the foot, but the step in our walk; it is not the eye but the twinkle that shows us alive and in love, it is not the face but the peaceful smile upon it that responds with a joyous anticipation of better things to come. Faith is the breath of God reviving dead form because by it we come alive to love and to live for Christ.

Faith, like love and hope, has, as it should, real meaning for anyone who desires a relationship with God. It has, as the writer to the Hebrews (11:1) affirms, *substance*.⁷ Faith in our Lord is trust in Him—and trust is something we know that we do or don't have in someone else. I would surmise—and I don't mean to be sharp-tongued—if we have no prayer life we might have a problem with trusting Him [Philippians 4:6].

Verse 31: The Law of Righteousness is not the righteousness of the Law. "Paul means that they did not attain the kind of righteousness the law speaks of."⁸

Verses 32-33: The Rock is Christ. "Coming to Him as to a living stone, rejected indeed by men, but chosen by God and precious," [1 Peter 2:4].⁹

Stumbling - The message of grace is shocking [the nuance in this word] The Cross as a solution over sin was never in the heart or mind of man. It was drawn up in secret chambers of Heaven by God Himself, to be revealed through the Apostles' Gospel message. Israel stumbled at **grace**. If salvation is an unearned gift of God, which it must be because the gift is a reconciliation with God brought about through Calvary, we must only accept it and live in that relationship. Christ's coming was an enigma that until His Resurrection and the birth of the Church was hidden in parables and prophetic utterances and riddles as Daniel was told "sealed up" [Daniel 12:9].

Believes - Faith is all that is needed for salvation. 2 Peter 1:1 reads "like precious faith." If a religious commitment divides us, it is not faith. Genuine faith not only unites but it confirms that we are in Christ!

Ashamed - Christ will not disappoint. "One who trusts [in Him] will not panic"¹⁰

6. Hebrews 11:1 *Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see.* NEW INT.

7. This section taken from my own work, *Challenged: Living Our faith in a Post Modern Age*. Page 33ff.

8. Gaebelstein. vol X. Page 109.

9. Luke 20:17-18 Then He looked at them and said, "What then is this that is written: *'The stone which the builders rejected Has become the chief cornerstone'*? Whoever falls on that stone will be broken; but on whomever it falls, it will grind him to powder."

Also see Psalm 118:22 The stone *which* the builders rejected Has become the chief cornerstone. [See also Luke 2:34].

10. Brueggemann. *Isaiah 1-39*. Page 226." The summons to Faith is the only "safe place" in a world severely under assault."

Stumbling ...offense - Jesus cautioned, “Happy is he who is not offended on my account” [Luke 7:23]. Some things the Savior taught, I confess, are above me; some things He taught I would like to spin differently if I could with real conviction: I cannot be His disciple unless I hate my wife [Luke 14:26]! Or when I am verbally assaulted, rejoice [Matthew 5:11-12]! Embrace the Word! Make up your mind ahead of time that it will take you somewhere you have never been before, but you want to go, you must go. You would follow the Savior anywhere He leads you. Why? Because you trust Him. After all, you are a *believer*.

Chapter 10

1. *Brethren, the desire of my own heart and [my] request to God on their [Israel's] behalf [is] for [their] salvation.*
2. *Because I am witnessing about you, that you have a zeal for God but without knowledge.*
3. *For being ignorant [lack of discerning] of God's covenant faithfulness [righteousness], seeking to be justified in themselves [by their own righteousness] they have not submitted to God's covenant faithfulness [God's righteousness].*
4. *Christ is the end of [the fulfillment and reason for] the law [The torah, ceremonial and moral] in covenant faithfulness [righteousness] to all who believe [accepted only by faith, as Abraham had].*

Verse 1: This was the end of the “legal dispensation.”¹¹ Paul’s ministry as a steward of the mystery¹² required a prayer life that must allow God an absolute freedom to share His thoughts without endless debate. His Lord’s message of grace could be reconciled—not with the law, but—with Israel’s *love* for the Law [Torah]—a love God, Himself, instilled in them. It is when we place no limit on God’s grace that the heart can cry out for those we ache to see saved regardless of how hopeless things otherwise seem.

Verse 2: Paul knew on a personal level the dangers associated with a zeal without wisdom.¹³ The Pharisees would “travel land and sea to win one proselyte” [Matthew 23:15]. Paul knew from his own experience¹⁴ how his fellow-countrymen thought and felt. “And profited in the Jews’ religion

11. Godet. Page 374.

12. 1 Corinthians 4:1 Let a man so consider us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God.

13. Galatians 1:13 For you have heard of my former conduct in Judaism, how I persecuted the church of God beyond measure and *tried to* destroy it.

14. Acts 22:3 I am indeed a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, taught according to the strictness of our fathers’ law, and was zealous toward God as you all are today.

above many my equals in mine own nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers." [Galatians 1:14].

Verses 3-4: The word righteousness is repeated 4 times in these 2 verses. Paul contrasts the righteousness obtained by faith with his own obtained through effort [works]. He discarded a rabbinic education now for the revelation of the Gospel message. As he told the Philippian believers, "Yet indeed¹⁵ [His resolve is unshakeable] I also count all things loss [Salvation is not obtainable from the Law.] for the excellence [Jesus is his only interest] of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of [I forfeited] all things, and count them as rubbish [filth], that I may gain Christ and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ [Matthew 16:26], the righteousness which is from God by faith;" [Philippians 3:8-9].

Jesus' parable of the garment comes to mind here: "No one sews a piece of new cloth on an old garment; or else the new piece pulls away from the old, and the tear is made worse" [Mark 2:21]. The Gospel of grace will require a new birth [John 3:3], a new heart [Ezekiel 36:26], and a transformed mind [Romans 12:2]! Paul had "put on the new man" [Colossians 3:10].

End - Christ did not bring an end to the Law [the 613 injunctions] as if to abrogate or repeal the law. Christ *was* the end *of* the Law; He fulfilled it: "Think not that I came to destroy the law or the prophets: I came not to destroy, but to fulfill." [Matthew 5:17 ASV].

5. *Moses wrote*¹⁶ *[what God required] of the righteousness of the Law that the man who practices [some of] them must live by [all of] them.*¹⁷
6. *And [of] righteousness by faith in a similar way [as Moses] said*¹⁸ *[wrote]: "Do not say in your heart "who will ascend into heaven, this is to bring Christ down,*
7. *Or who will go down into the abyss this is to bring Christ up?"*
8. *But what did he say? "The word is near you in your mouth and in your heart." This is the word of faith, which we herald*
9. *So if you with your mouth confess that Jesus is [your] Lord and you believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.*

15. See the footnote on Romans 9:20.

16. Leviticus 18:5 You shall therefore keep My statutes and My judgments, which if a man does, he shall live by them: I *am* the LORD.

17. James 2:10 For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one *point*, he is guilty of all.

18. Deuteronomy 30:12-14

10. *Because in [the] heart one believes unto righteousness [the heart trusts in God's faithfulness] and by the mouth one confesses unto salvation [the need for God's saving mercy].*
11. *For the Scripture says: everyone who believes on Him will never be ashamed for trusting in Him.*

Paul inaugurated a wholly new order of things opposed to the old legal system. In covenant terms: the Old has been fulfilled, the New ratified and invoked [Hebrews 13:8].

Verse 5: Must live by them. It is difficult to imagine Israel "living" by all 613 injunctions¹⁹ in the law. We who are this side of Calvary and who realize the importance of having a Savior and the Spirit have come to humbly depend on His guidance along this path of holiness. From time to time in the Old Testament record there is that sacred glimpse of this New Testament truth. David affirmed "Create in me a clean heart, O God, And renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me away from Your presence, And do not take Your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of Your salvation, And uphold me by Your generous Spirit. ... For You do not desire sacrifice, or else I would give it; You do not delight in burnt offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, A broken and a contrite heart—These, O God, You will not despise." [Psalm 51:10-12, 16-17]. David would have been first to cry out "Amen!" to Paul's message of grace—only calling it: God's mercy.

Here, too, is an effective argument for God's covenant faithfulness - for Calvary! Israel tried to be holy, but the attempt at being righteous by keeping all the Law, because of man's carnal nature, can lead only to "self-deception and pride."²⁰ Such an effort was exhausting and proven impossible, leading them to one of two re-interpretations of what God said through Moses. One, they re-evaluated the importance of some commands which seem extreme²¹ and disregarded them. Or they simply judged others but not themselves [Romans 2:1]. Few were Davids, whose heart was after God's heart.²²

Verses 6-8: To those without a belief in the Lord Jesus Christ, faith is opinion, but to us, who believe, faith is knowledge. We do not need to search through the mystical teachings of ancient wise men or ascend the mountain to consult the Oracle of Delphi or seek the wisdom of the most renown philosophical minds, God's meaning of His truth is already in our

19. which see in the appendix.

20. Gaebelin. vol X. Page 111.

21. Leviticus 24:23 allowed capital punishment for blaspheming. Compare Jesus' words in Marks 3:28-29.

22. Acts 13:22 "And when He had removed him, He raised up for them David as king, to whom also He gave testimony and said, *'I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after My own heart, who will do all My will.* [see also 1 Samuel 13:14].

hearts, written there, by New Covenant mandate. Just look within and let God's peace in your heart direct you. The problem is the many voices that might drown out that still small voice within. "Be still,²³ and know"[Psalm 46:10].

The verse Paul uses as his text, Deuteronomy 30:12-14²⁴ describes the righteousness that is by faith. The entire passage discourages one from aspiring to follow what is "too difficult and out of reach."²⁵ But we are continuing to ascend to heaven for answers. One Youtube video featuring the testimony of a woman who died and went there had over 5 million views; another over 200,000! There are countless others who have gained similar notoriety, of which I am not speaking disparaging. Paul had some information available to him also but refused to share with us: "he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter." [2 Corinthians 12:4]. This is encouraging news. The answers are already in your heart—all you need know in this life, "all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue:" [2 Peter 1:3].

The "Law" has been completely fulfilled in Christ. The New Covenant of Grace is written upon every believer's heart. The Spirit is ready to give spoken meaning what in the believer's heart remained unspoken. "But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God" [1 Corinthians 2:10]. As Godet summarized: "Christ having charged Himself with the *doing*, and having left us only the *believing*."²⁶

Verses 9-10: Here are our memory verses.

◆ What Paul is *not* saying.

- **Lord** - Paul is not saying that unless Jesus is the **Lord** of your life totally you cannot be saved, for making us into His image is a process [2 Corinthians 3:18]. That would make salvation depend on more than faith alone. Like small children in whom are all the potential to become what they will eventually be, every born again believer has been authorized [has the right to] become²⁷ children of

23. in Hebrew: relax, cease from your labors and anxious thinking, etc.

24. Deuteronomy 30:12-14 It is not in heaven, that you should say, 'Who will ascend into heaven for us and bring it to us, that we may hear it and do it?' Nor is it beyond the sea, that you should say, 'Who will go over the sea for us and bring it to us, that we may hear it and do it?' But the word is very near you, in your mouth and in your heart, that you may do it.

25. Gaebelein. vol X. Page 111.

26. Godet. Page 382.

27. Greek thought supports the idea that becoming expresses a state of being and not the process. We are not being saved in the sense of gradually becoming more and more saved. Paul does not speak of salvation in the present tense in Romans, only in future terms [5:9,

God [John 1:12].. The old self no longer rules. All that Jesus provides through His death and resurrection are theirs to be realized as they grow in Him [Hebrews 5:13-14; 1 Peter 2:2].

- **Mouth** - Paul is not asserting that we do not also witness with our lives. "let your conduct be worthy of the gospel of Christ" [Philippians 1:27].
- **Believe** - By Faith Paul is not distinguishing between trust and faithfulness, nor is Paul alluding to a creed.
 - Paul is not separating out faith and confession as to imply it is possible to have one and not the other. As Jesus taught, the mouth always and inevitably agrees with the heart [Matthew 15:16-18]. The relationship is well established in Scripture: "My mouth shall speak wisdom, And the meditation of my heart shall give understanding." [Psalm 49:3].
 - Confession without heart is hypocrisy and lies [Isaiah 29:13; Matthew 15:7-8].
 - A Heart without confession is easily led astray because the passions have not been brought into the light as a witness: "So that my heart has been secretly enticed, And my mouth has kissed my hand [worshipped the Sun as an idol]" [Job 31:27].

◆ What Paul *is* saying:

- **Confession** is the opposite of denial.²⁸ "Therefore whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven" [Matthew 10:32].
 - **FAITH:**
 - Following Jesus as a co-laborer fellow laborer in the gospel of Christ [1 Thessalonians 3:2].
 - Associating with the Savior in His death and resurrection [Romans 6:8].
 - Identifying with Jesus or becoming like Christ [2 Corinthians 3:18].

10; 8:249:27; 10:9, etc.]. His use of the present tense speaks only of those who are presently saved, not "becoming" saved. [1 Corinthians 1:18].

28. John 1:20 compares the words confess and deny. See also John 12:42 Nevertheless even among the rulers many believed in Him, but because of the Pharisees they did not confess *Him*, lest they should be put out of the synagogue;

- Testifying of the Saviour or professing, declare openly, the Lord Jesus Christ [1 John 4:2]
- Honoring or celebrating the Savior [Ephesians 1:3; Hebrews 13:15] in worship.
- Calling Him your Messiah [Christ] was more than admitting boldly you are His follower or disciple. "Simon Peter answered and said, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." Jesus answered and said to him, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven" [Matthew 16:16-17].
- It is a revelation directly from God's heart to ours—a clear sign of our salvation.
- **Mouth** - Paul is asserting that "out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks." [Matthew 12:34]. Our confession or profession of Christ is spontaneous and natural. It is a part of conversation because it is part of our conversation [King James for walk or life].
- **Believe** - in the resurrection from the dead is the affirmation of faith that gives hope meaning or "substance."²⁹
 - First, That our Lord was crucified but is now alive interceding for us. "what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places," [Ephesians 1:19-20].
 - Second, this is a clear indication of our future resurrection. "But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep." [1 Corinthians 15:20].
- **Righteousness** - If we see this as covenant faithfulness on God's part, it becomes simple trust on ours. Righteousness is a term of relationship and therefore our trust [faith] participates in that relationship with God—what Lange called the "exercise"³⁰ of that faith.

29. Compare Hebrews 11:1 and Titus 2:13 and John 14:1.

30. Lange. vol X. Page 347.

Verse 11: Ashamed - The assurance of salvation. Let your witness out. God will vindicate your trust in Him. Our hope is real; our salvation is real; God never disappoints genuine witness and faith [Romans 1:18].

12. *For the covenant is not for the Jews [only] but also the Greeks; for He is the same Lord of all, being rich [affluent in resources to give the blessing of salvation to all]³¹ unto everyone who call upon Him.*
13. *For anyone who calls on the Name of the Lord will be saved.*

Salvation is universally offered for free to all peoples or whomever calls on the name of the Lord. The division had been made by Israel having the Torah which no Greek, no Gentile, followed or endorsed. The Jewish religion with its sacrifices were peculiar to that nation.³² A Christ-centric Salvation through His death and resurrection brings us together.

Verse 12: The Same Lord - A friend of Jesus is of friend of mine. We are able to practice our faith in a diversity of rituals and creeds but our faith is singularly in Christ. We serve "the same Lord".

In Ephesians 2:13-20 the word *one* is found 4 times speaking of our unity in Christ [and the word *peace* is found 3 times in this passage]. The NIV says in verse 15 that we are one humanity in Christ. Verse 19 records that we are members together of God's household [family] because the dogmas [verse 15] that separated us were rendered of no purpose since the Cross [verse 13]. So, verse 19 adds that no one is any longer considered a stranger nor is anyone considered only visitors but members of the family of God whose faith is in Christ. Jesus brought us together. We belong together in the same family with God as our Father. We are at peace. There is no further tension or conflict of interest or differences of religious zeal among us [or shouldn't be] since are focus is on our Lord. Verse 20 calls Him the cornerstone because our eternity is built on His ministry, alone.

31. Thayer. Page 519.

32. Ephesians 2:13-20 "But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For He Himself is our **peace**, who has made both **one**, and has broken down the middle wall of separation, having abolished in His flesh the enmity, that is, the law of commandments contained in ordinances, so as to create in Himself **one** new man from the two, thus making **peace**, and that He might reconcile them both to God in **one** body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity. And He came and preached **peace** to you who were afar off and to those who were near. For through Him we both have access by **one** Spirit to the Father. Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, 20 having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone,"

Rich: “For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.” [2 Corinthians 8:9].

Verse 13: Even the most basic message of the Cross is Old Testament! “And it shall come to pass that whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved” [Joel 2:32].

14. *How, however, will they call on Him they do not believe [trust]; and how will they believe [trust] someone of whom they have never heard, how then will they hear without a preacher [One to herald the good news],*
15. *And how might one herald [this message] unless they are sent [to do so]; as it is written how beautiful the feet³³ of those who evangelize [spread] the good news?*

Paul was not promoting a Greek philosophy nor was he tending for the abolishment of Torah law, something sacred to all Israel, himself included.³⁴ Paul knew that laborers were needed if there would be a harvest—a great harvest was anticipated by His God—and there could be no harvest unless God sends forth laborers. “The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few; therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest” [Luke 10:2].

It is important to note that this message has not changed nor has God decided to call mankind to Himself through any other means. If God’s grace wants to rescue someone who calls upon Him, knowing Him only as the Creator [verse 18] but not the Savior who died for us—perhaps, someone living in the spiritual darkness of a lost tribe in some distant jungle—we know of no other way than through God sending out the missionary who comes with the good news. We cannot surmise what God’s wisdom might do or not do; we only know what He has sent *us* to do and say.

Verse 15: Sent - No believer takes it upon themselves to herald the Gospel Message. God sends us forth. Lois Sheldon, an A of G missionary to Africa told the story of sailing to China to be a missionary there with a burden for *Africa*. Unlike Jonah, it took no large fish to put her on the right course. She testified, “He had called me and in a measure prepared me for the great responsibility of being His ambassador to Africa. ... I was fulfilling the purpose for which He created me.”³⁵

33. Isaiah 52:7 How beautiful upon the mountains Are the feet of him who brings good news, Who proclaims peace, Who brings glad tidings of good *things*, Who proclaims salvation, Who says to Zion, “Your God reigns!” See also Nahum 1:15.

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

35. Sheldon. Page 21.

Beautiful - This word speaks of coming of age, blossoming into fullest bloom. So the Gospel in seed kernel stayed in the ground of prophetic thought hidden until John prepared that ground through his baptismal ministry and with Jesus' death and resurrection, that seed germinated and now is in full bloom [Mark 1:15]. "How beautiful [desirable]³⁶ upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news, Who proclaims peace, Who brings glad tidings of good things, Who proclaims salvation, Who says to Zion, 'Your God reigns!'" [Isaiah 52:7].

Feet - "the feet of the runner are said to be "beautiful" (welcome) because the runner runs lightly and exuberantly with the good news; one can tell at a distance by the way the messenger runs that the news for Israel is good."³⁷

"Such was to be the end of the old covenant," says Godet, "not the extension of the law to all nations, but a joyful and universal proclamation of peace and of ... grace³⁸ on the part of a Savior rich unto all."³⁹

16. *But not everyone hears [obeys] the Gospel. As Isaiah⁴⁰ said, "Lord, who has believed our report!"*

17. *Therefore, faith comes through [hearing] the message and the message through [is] the word of Christ [the message of Christ's death and resurrection].*

Verse 16 But - tragically, some hearts are not "good ground" [Matthew 13:23].

Verse 17: Message of Christ - "Christ must be heard either in His own person, or the person of His preachers, through whom His own word is spoken; otherwise faith in Him is impossible."⁴¹

This is why we sow the Word the old fashion way by broadcasting it: scattering the seed here and there: "The sower sows the word,"⁴² on prepared ground [hearts] and where there are thistles and on rocks because God alone knows which heart is which or the condition of one's heart. He is the heart-knower. Just get the Word out! Let them hear it and let them read it and let God do the talking!

36. The Hebrew word speaks of something or someone desired—like a beautiful woman.

37. Brueggemann. *Isaiah 40-66* Page 138.

38. Ephesians 2:7 that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in *His* kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

39. Godet. Page 386.

40. Isaiah 53:1 Who has believed our report? And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?

41. Gaebelein. vol X. Page 114.

42. Mark 4:14

18. *But I say, have you not heard indeed at least [this truth] therefore: Throughout the world [all creation] has gone out their music⁴³ [sound: the Revelation of God] even unto the ends of the earth.⁴⁴*
19. *But I am saying, Has Israel not known? Moses was the first one telling us⁴⁵ [what God told him]: “I shall provoke you to jealousy by people [outside Israel] I will arouse you to anger with a [foolish] nation without understanding [of your Torah].”*

Verse 18: Music - A word meaning “a musical⁴⁶ sound,”⁴⁷ the preacher’s voice while heralding the good news of the Gospel.

Israel must hear Paul, “But when they opposed him and blasphemed, he shook his garments and said to them, “Your blood be upon your own heads; I am clean. From now on I will go to the Gentiles” [Acts 18:6]. They would not be able to claim ignorance because Moses and Isaiah clearly spoke of this day when God would extend His salvation to all nations. It was not the case that Israel was taken by surprise that the message of God’s grace would be proclaimed “to the end of the earth” [Acts 1:8]. As God informed Hosea, it was time to roar. [Hosea 11:10]. If God makes them jealous by giving His blessings to another [the Gentiles who call upon Him] it will turn to anger and they will return to Him. It’s a plan!

Verse 19: Jealousy - For relevance, dare we ask, “Would God do this today to a complacent Christian religion—that fulfills their duty to God one hour each week without any serious commitment to Him—by bringing revival to millennials attending secular universities or by bringing His salvation with celebration to nations of poor who cannot even read [“a nation without understanding”]? We should be jealous!

43. Einstein’s “Music of the Spheres” Saul Singer wrote, “Einstein, who professed a general non-belief in God, nonetheless saw a guiding hand in the symmetry and beauty of the universe and manifested an abiding contempt for atheists. As he once wrote: ‘The fanatical atheists are like slaves who are still feeling the weight of their chains which they have thrown off after hard struggle. They are creatures who – in their grudge against traditional religion as the ‘opium of the masses’ – cannot hear the music of the spheres.’” [cp <https://www.jewishpress.com/sections/features/features-on-jewish-world/albert-einsteins-music-of-the-spheres/2018/07/05/>]

44. Psalm 19:1-4 The heavens declare the glory of God; And the firmament shows His handiwork. Day unto day utters speech, And night unto night reveals knowledge. *here is* no speech nor language *Where* their voice is not heard. Their [message] has gone out through all the earth, And their words to the end of the world.

45. Deuteronomy 32:21 They have provoked Me to jealousy by *what* is not God; They have moved Me to anger by their [f]foolish idols. But I will provoke them to jealousy by *those who are* not a nation; I will move them to anger by a foolish nation.

46. Only the vulgate translates Psalm 19:4 as a “sound:” in universam terram exivit **sonus** eorum. Whether the universe praising Him or the preacher’s message, God’s revelation should be music to our ears.

47. Thayer. Page 652.

20. *And even Isaiah boldly tells⁴⁸ [what God said to him “without mincing matters”]:⁴⁹ “I have been found by those who did not seek me; I have been manifest to those who did not enquire of me.”*
21. *But to Israel He [God] says, “All day long I held out my hands to an unfaithful [untrusting and disobedient] people who [all the while] refused to have anything to do with me.”*

Verses 20-21: are Isaiah 65:1-2, “I was sought by those who did not ask for Me; I was found by those who did not seek Me. I said, ‘Here I am, here I am,’ To a nation that was not called by My name. I have stretched out My hands all day long to a rebellious people, Who walk in a way that is not good, According to their own thoughts.”

- ◆ God never leaves mankind to stumble over His truth. If needs be a jackass will speak for Him [Numbers 22:28]⁵⁰ and even the stones [Luke 19:40].⁵¹ “For what had not been told them they shall see, And what they had not heard they shall consider” [Isaiah 52:15]. God’s providential oversight often arranges to have a hungry soul hear the Gospel [Acts 8:26-39].⁵²
- ◆ Ignorance and corruption are an easier obstacle to overcome of those never educated in religious things than the pride and obduracy of the religiously cold. Israel of old sought to maintain their religious monopoly over the interpretation of God’s Word [Romans 10:4]. God opening the message to “whomever would come” diminishes the importance of their position and authority.⁵³
- ◆ “Did Not Seek Me” - God called on us! Bishop Vincent Donovan, a missionary to the Masai in Tanzania, had to clarify to the tribe’s people that they were not choosing God; He was choosing them: “He has searched us out and found us. All the time we think we are the lion. In the end, the lion is God.”⁵⁴
 - “You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that **whatever you ask** the Father in My name He may give you.” [John 15:16].

48. Isaiah 65:1-2

49. Godet. Page 389.

50. Then the LORD opened the mouth of the donkey, and she said to Balaam, “What have I done to you, that you have struck me these three times?”

51. But He answered and said to them, “I tell you that if these should keep silent, the stones would immediately cry out.”

52. Now an angel of the Lord spoke to Philip, saying, “Arise and go toward the south along the road which goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza

53. See Malachi 1:6-7 on “and you say...”

54. Bishop Donovan. Page 61ff.

- **“Ask of Me**, and I will give You **The nations** for Your inheritance, And the ends of the earth for Your possession” [Psalm 2:8].

If you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation,;

- Romans 10:9-10

Romans 11:1-10

The Rejection of Israel is not Total but Partial

Paul's teaching as regards the condition of God's relationship with Israel since the Cross suggests that even with a nation "the calling of God is irrevocable" [Romans 11:29], that God finds a way always to honor His commitments to His people even when they pose an impossible challenge to human reason.

This way of talking suggests to some that "once called, always called," but it might be more accurate to conclude "once chosen, always chosen" since Jesus cautioned "many are called, but few are chosen" [Matthew 22:14]. The difference between called and chosen should be clear—some¹ don't answer the call! Perhaps we may say "many are invited" and God's invitations are still valid while this life exists. The term "chosen" has been reserved for those "called out" [chosen]. The *Chosen* is used everywhere of the Church in the New Testament [Romans 8:33] and the pious Israelites in the Old [Isaiah 65:9].

Perhaps, before we ask whether or not we might lose our salvation, we should wonder if Israel, as a nation, might lose theirs! Has the Church replaced them? Paul argues here, No! Never! Godet agrees, "the entire nation shall be restored, and with the Gentiles shall realize the final unity of the Kingdom of God."² Is this Paul's conclusion in Chapter 11?

We know that not everyone who occupies a seat in a Christian church owns the faith taught them in sermon and homily, but the community of regenerate believers collectively are known as the Church or Bride of Christ. Does this characterize Israel? Not every Jew but do those who are of Jewish ethnicity or religion who now accept Christ represent the nation, scripturally, as a whole as regards the covenant? Hosea's prophecy, especially chapter 11, as Hebrews 8 in the New Testament, gives the unmistakable impression that God still sees them as a nation.

If we are correctly understanding Paul, this suggests that Daniel's 70th week [Daniel 9:27] is prophetically relevant: "God will confirm the covenant with many for one week. In the middle of the week He shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering." It seems the tribulation period of 7 years is reserved at the end of time for Israel, as a nation. The promised

1. Thayer. Page 197. "[The chosen] those who have become true partakers of the Christian salvation are contrasted with [the called], those who have been invited but who have not shown themselves fitted to obtain it...."

2. Godet. Page 391.

New Covenant for which the Church has signed up will be offered to Israel—as a nation, according to the Book of Hebrews (written especially for their eyes). “For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people” [Hebrews 8:10]. At which time the sacrifices will officially be discontinued forever. “In that he saith, A new covenant, he hath made the first old. Now that which decays and waxes old is ready to vanish away—but hasn’t yet until then” [Hebrews 8:13].

If this be true, the Pretribulationists have an argument worth considering. [I have been a Posttribulationist who now must revisit my thoughts.]³

My point is not eschatological. Believe what you will about the tribulation period—whether or not the Church still lingers about or if it has been snatched away into the third heaven. But God is decidedly not through with His Old Testament people—and for reasons, even we can appreciate. After repeated appeals by God through the prophets to get Israel and Judah to tear down their idols, they finally, after devastating captivities, found their way back to Jerusalem and to God as the only God—the only God to worship and the only God who ever was and ever will be.

And then Jesus shows up, God incarnate! And the Church after a few hundred years of councils finally settled on a belief in the Trinity—something, understandably Jewry would have difficulty accepting. This seems logically to violate the very core of their faith. Neither did they expect the Messiah to come to die on a Roman Cross.

Now nothing in the prophetic record contradicts the New Covenant ratified at Calvary, by God, Himself. In fact, the Old Covenants—all and any, whether with Adam, or Abraham or Moses or David—confirm and verify the New as something God always planned—even for Israel! And when we understand that it was the God of the Old Testament that hanged there that Passover day and we are given to understand His reasons, everything begins to make sense. Israel deserves to know this! They are still God’s people.

1. *I say then, has God push His people [Israel] away? Never! For I, too, am an Israelite, of the lineage of Abraham, the tribe of Benjamin.*

3. Dr. Chet Robertson, my philosophy instructor, brought this matter to my attention while I was in Bible college but I never, then, gave it the serious attention it obviously had with St. Paul. Daniel’s 70th week is the one point of theology Mid and Post tribists cannot reconcile with their interpretation. But in College two of my most respected teachers for their scholarship and spirituality were *not* pretribulationists.

2. *God has not pushed away His people whom He foreknew; or have you not heard about Elijah⁴ what the Scripture says as he met with God concerning Israel;*
3. *Lord, they have killed your prophets, they have demolished your altars, and I alone am left alive and they seek my life.*
4. *But what did the oracle of God say: I have remaining to me [to myself]⁵ 7,000 men, who have not bent the knee to Baal.*
5. *And likewise in the current time there is a remnant [from Israel] by the election of grace;⁶*
6. *But if it is by grace, it is no longer of works, since then grace would no longer be grace.*

Verse 5: Grace - The reference to the election of grace is not in the Old Testament text—not in so many words. But it is there in spirit just as our constant reference to the Covenant which God made, first with Israel and then with us all on Calvary. We know Paul has shifted from referring to a purely historical instance and is now discussing the relationship Israel has with God after the Cross. In Acts 4 Jews are the beginnings of the Church and the crystal around which all other nations will crystalize.

Election - Was Paul speaking of individual Jews who have now become believers in Christ or is he speaking in a collective sense about Israel? Are Jewish Christians Christian or Jewish in God's eyes ... or both? Such a question needs to be asked because it encapsulates the larger question: What of Israel now that Christ has come? Is the nation Israel still God's chosen people, His Old Testament "Church"? Is there still an unfinished promise God has made through Abraham or David that applies exclusively to Israel and *not* the New Testament Church? When Godet assures us that "the entire nation shall be restored," He was saying, "The apostle put the question whether the present relation between God and Israel was that of an absolute divorce; and he began by answering: no, in the sense that a portion at least of Israel have obtain grace, and form henceforth the nucleus of the church."⁷

Verse 6: Paul's recurring theme is grace [Ephesians 2:8]. But why say it here? In effect Paul is saying "Trust God's grace, especially when what appears to be happening under His hand is painful to accept. Grace speaks to the justice and mercy of God always. We often question our freewill in the decisions we make in life, but let us never question God's. No one merits any decision from Him. It comes always and only from within

4. 1 Kings 19:11, 14, 18

5. These 2 words are not in the Old Testament record.

6. According to grace is also a Pauline interpretation. This might be a clear example of an inspired idea being in the text although the words are not.

7. Godet. Page 395.

Himself, His love. What if both the farmer and the builder merited God's favor, the one wanting rain and the other not?

Paul had just warned the faithless of a pending wrath [Romans 9:22] which God had every right to bring—the same as in Sodom and Gomorrah [Romans 9:29]. If only they could see the practical link between *righteousness* and *faith*. [Romans 9:30]. Paul's heart was transparently honest. He was answering their question, "Why does God blame us?" [Romans 9:19]. But now in these verses Paul is honored to proclaim the good news of a remnant that will be rescued—not because they have merited anything from God but because their spiritual eyes are open and they, like Abraham before them, see how simple trust and faith in the Messiah's death and resurrection marks the way to reconciliation with God.

7. *Therefore what [does this mean]? That which Israel sought after, this they did not come upon; but the elect have obtained [it]; and the rest were hardened [thick-skinned and lost the ability to understand true from false, good from bad].*
8. *As it is written: God gave them a spirit of stupor [like a drunk or a man falling asleep], eyes they could not see with and ears they could not hear with to this present day.*

Verse 7: Israel's efforts to win salvation, forgiveness, by obeying Torah law was—what Godet called—chimerical⁸.

Hardened - of heart, insensible. The heart is the soul's means of perceiving or discerning spiritual truth, "they considered not the miracle of the loaves: for their heart was hardened." [Mark 6:52].

Verse 8: How is God responsible for the hardened hearts of Israel? "the LORD has not given you a heart to perceive" [Deuteronomy 29:4]. The answer is found in Paul's letter to Corinth: "the things of the Spirit of God...are spiritually discerned" [2 Corinthians 2:14]. God ceased conversing with Israel over matters they could not learn on their own by natural reasoning. Paul borrowed from Isaiah's description of Israel being in a "deep-sleep."⁹

Stupor - may come from a word meaning "to bend the head in order to sleep."¹⁰ The idea in this euphemistic colloquialism is, in a word, *insensibility*. The man who shrugs off conviction punishes himself¹¹ because God will back off at some point when a person is blatantly rebellious against Him,

8. Ibid.

9. Isaiah 29:10 ASV For Jehovah hath poured out upon you the spirit of deep sleep, and hath closed your eyes, the prophets; and your heads, the seers, hath he covered.

10. Godet. Page 396.

11. Ibid.

time and again, after repeated calls by prophet and sear (and preacher and God, Himself) to reconsider [Isaiah 1:18] and repent. "God also gave them up" [Romans 1:24]. No one should treat the conviction of the Spirit [John 16:8-10] with disinterest or indifference. Conviction has to be a bothersome or pesky reminder to the conscience or it isn't working effectively. When sin is crouching in the tall grass of selfish intentions [Genesis 4:7], we need to keep God in our picture. We can complain respectfully to Him in prayer asking Him to, at least, explain Himself more and help us overcome the evil that would harm us [1 Corinthians 10:13]. But God's ultimate goal, out of love, is to get us to see things His way: agree with Him. This is the word *confess*. And this agreement is more than consent, it is eye opening knowledge about God, about ourselves, and about our relationship with God. And that is a lot of perception!! Don't disregard all this for a moment of selfish ambition, pleasure or gain. Israel sadly did.

9. *And David said:*¹² *May their table be a snare and a trap and a scandal [trap-stick] even in pay back*
10. *May their sight be darkened that they cannot see and their backs [as slaves] bowed down [hunched over by the yoke of slavery].*

Verse 9-10: The context of these verses [Psalm 69:22-23] for David, the Psalmist, is the scorn¹³ he experienced at the hands of his own countrymen [Psalm 69:8, 19]. In verse 20 of this Psalm, the writer confesses "Reproach has broken my heart" to which Spurgeon remarked, "There is no hammer like it."¹⁴ It is common to attribute these verses to a prophetic reference to the Savior¹⁵ but our verse which Paul quotes here do not sound "Savior-like." Spurgeon concludes, "From this point David and our Lord for awhile part company."¹⁶ Our verses in the Psalm also quoted here by Paul, Spurgeon calls, "the terrifying, degrading, and enfeebling influence of unbelief ... the retaliations of justice."¹⁷

Table - is the emblem of material pleasures and a life of self-centered enjoyment which has become, in Paul's analogy, "the emblem of presumptuous security founded on their [Israel's] fidelity to acts of worship ... [their] sacrificial feasts."¹⁸

12. Psalm 69:22-23 Let their table become a snare before them, And their well-being a trap. Let their eyes be darkened, so that they do not see; And make their loins shake continually.

13. In the Old Testament this is the taunt of sharp tongues because one is disgraced and shame [verse 19].

14. Spurgeon. vol 1, Page 1233.

15. Psalm 69:21 They gave me also gall for my meat."

16. Spurgeon. vol 1, Page 1234.

17. Ibid. Page 1235.

18. Godet. Page 397.

Snare and a trap and a trap-stick - the 3 ways of catching prey. Aside from repentance through faith, there can be no escape from a just retribution.

Backs [as slaves] bowed down -A state of fearful bondage “in which the Jews shall be held as long as this judgment of hardening which keeps them outside of the Gospel shall last.”¹⁹

It is important to see that the cause of Israel’s rejection of Christ was *not* the hardening of the hearts. It was their self-righteousness, the arrogance of a soul who does not understand a need for Mercy but who seeks to please God by working for His approval. The hardened hearts was the effect or result. [John 12:37-40].²⁰

There is an interesting reference to Ahab, King of the Northern Kingdom in Israel, who “did more evil in the eyes of the Lord than any other [king] before him.” [1 Kings 16:30]. He was the one who was married to Jezebel, whose own record became a parable in the Revelation of Jesus Christ [Revelation 2:20]. Ahab claimed eminent domain over Naboth’s vineyard [1 Kings 21:1-16] something that God could not let stand, so, God arranged a lie—yes, a lie—to be prophesied, knowing Ahab would believe it and, as a consequence, lose his life.

“And the Lord said, ‘Who will persuade Ahab to go up, that he may fall at Ramoth Gilead?’ So one spoke in this manner, and another spoke in that manner. Then a spirit came forward and stood before the Lord, and said, ‘I will persuade him.’ The Lord said to him, ‘In what way?’ So he said, ‘I will go out and be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets.’ And the Lord said, ‘You shall persuade *him*, and also prevail. Go out and do so.’” [1 Kings 22:20-22].

God didn’t “make” Ahab believe a lie; God simply kept the truth to Himself, since Ahab was not open to that truth. This condition is not uncommon when arrogance and pride consume a person’s passion and dreams and they see no place for God or His guidance. This is the state of anyone who does not humbly see their need for God’s mercy and wisdom. And sadly, these persons are most often characterized by a religious fervor or commitment to a cause that is, when opposed to the Gospel, essentially cultic.

The good news for Israel is that God isn’t writing them off completely, but He will use this opportunity to open up the Gospel to all nations, hoping, thereby, to provoke them to jealously give the Gospel another look.

19. Ibid.

20. But although He had done so many signs before them, they did not believe in Him, that the word of Isaiah the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spoke: “Lord, who has believed our report? And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?” Therefore they could not believe, because Isaiah said again: “He has blinded their eyes and hardened their hearts, Lest they should see with *their* eyes, Lest they should understand with *their* hearts and turn, So that I should heal them.”

Perhaps, in our day, a revival among the peoples of the Southern Hemisphere [the global south] will wake up the Church in the “north” to seek to be included in all God is doing in these final days before our Lord’s return.

Whatever happens, Lord, may we embrace Your truth. May we never embrace lies!

And if by grace, then it cannot be based on works; if it were, grace would no longer be grace. - Romans 11:6

Romans 11:11-24

God extends His Salvation to the Nations that they in turn might Evangelize the Nation Israel. The Converts to Christ by the missionary have become the missionaries, themselves, to the very land that had sent them.

Even though we are accustomed to thinking of our salvation on an individual basis: God saves persons and not nations, per se, Romans 11 challenges such a supposition as regards *Israel*. All along in Romans 11, Paul has been speaking of the *Nation* Israel. Somehow, an individual Jewish believer must represent not just the Christian faith but the nation. They have been called the “pith and kernel”¹ of the nation, not just individuals out of the masses. In Romans 11:1 Paul references his own status as a Jew as an example of God’s saving grace still working in Israel.

The main theme of Romans 11 is the ultimate national restoration of the Jews. Perhaps, this explains the unusual use of words as Paul proceeds to outline this truth to a nation that thought him unapologetically cruel and accusatory, to a nation promoting an orthopraxy they—turns out, in error—thought brought them salvation.

- 11 *Am I saying, then, [that] they [Israel] stumbled [spiritually] in order that they might miss out on [disqualify for] a Messianic salvation. [Was this what God had in mind?] Absolutely not! But [something completely different] salvation [was] extended to the Gentiles [in] their [Israel’s] fall to provoke them [Israel] to jealousy.*
- 12 *If, then their fall [unbelief] became the world’s riches [a free salvation offered to all] and their lessening [being few or a remnant] [the] riches [of salvation and God’s grace] to the Gentiles, how much more rather [would be] their fulness [restoration² to God’s fulness]?³*

Verse 11: Stumble ...fall. Similar to our expression, *to stumble and fall*, the question is, *will they not rise again?* Paul hears them asking, “Does this mean Israel, as a nation, has missed out on any opportunity to participate in a

1. Lange. vol X. Page 360.

2. “to a perfect spiritual state” - Godet. Page 400.

3. Ephesians 3:19 to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

Messianic Salvation, even though it was promised to Abraham?" And Paul's response is, that is not God's intent! But this is an open door of opportunity, an open invitation, for the Gentiles to come to Christ.

The implications in Paul's language are worthy serious study:

- ◆ If Israel had not rejected Christ [Jesus of Nazareth as their Messiah] Israel could have [would have?] extended the invitation of salvation to the Gentiles but it would not be solely by grace through faith but encumbered with the many injunctions, including circumcision, which Judaism, as a religion, maintained [Romans 14:21; Acts 16:3]. God wanted to "disentangle the cause of the Gospel"⁴ from the Jewish religion.
- ◆ "Israel, having been unwilling to concur with God in saving the Gentiles, must end by being themselves saved through their [the Gentiles'] salvation [solely by Grace through faith].

To Provoke to Jealousy is wanting back something they feel was theirs in the first place. "Seeing all the blessings of the kingdom, pardon, justification, the Holy Spirit, adoption, shed down abundantly on the Gentile nations through faith in Him whom they have rejected, how can they help saying at length: These blessings are *ours*?"⁵ [Romans 9:4].

Verse 12: Paul's language here has generated a couple interpretations making it rich in meaning:

The Riches of the World ...of the Gentiles. The Church made up of countless numbers whom Jesus has "redeemed .. to God by [His] blood out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation" [Revelation 5:9].

Their Fulness - Fulness has 2 meanings to Paul. Commentaries offer various meanings which fall into these 2 categories, a quantitative look at the harvest, everyone who is going to be saved, and a qualitative look, everyone mature in Christ and perfected in His image. "The word *fulness*," says The Expositor's Bible Commentary, "refers to the conversion, meaning the full compliment in contrast to the remnant. It will mark an end to the state of hardening that now characterizes the nation."⁶

- ◆ The fulness of God [Ephesians 3:19] or "The fulfillment God intends for man is the maturity that is measured by the full stature of Christ"⁷ [Ephesians 4:13].
- ◆ The "fulness of the Gentiles" [Romans 11:25] or all those souls that would be saved before Christ returns [Matthew 24:14].

4. Godet. Page 399.

5. Ibid.

6. Gaebelien. vol X Page 120.

7. Ibid. vol XI Page 52.

“It is, however, to be understood,” says Rev M.B.Riddle, “that the spiritual fulness will necessarily include the conversion of the nation as a whole.”⁸

13. *I say to you, Gentiles, in so far as I am an apostle to the Gentiles. truly then I honor my ministry [excel in serving God in this way],*
14. *If by what means I might provoke those in my flesh [Judeans] and save some.*
15. *If therefore their rejection will be the reconciliation of the world, what is their acceptance if not life from the dead;*

Paul maintains that there has always been a spiritual relation between the Jews, as God’s people, and the Gentiles to whom he has been sent to evangelize. This bond speaks to the influence each one’s testimony has on the other, whether to provoke or simply to bless.

His ministry to the Gentile world does not go unnoticed by Israel as a provocation to jealousy. I agree with those who do not see this word “jealousy” as envy. Jealousy is wanting back what another has taken which you believe was and is yours in the first place. Envy is wanting what another has in their stead.

While the Gentiles provoke Israel to jealousy, Israel still has a role to play toward the Gentiles. If the salvation of Israel is, indeed, prophesied, there are unimagined blessings awaiting us when it is finally fulfilled. Godet wrote, “...for the salvation of his fellow countrymen, [Paul] strives all the more ... as the apostle of the Gentiles, because the conversion of his people must end in loading the Gentiles with all the riches of the blessings of the gospel.”⁹

Verse 13: Honor - Paul deeply appreciates his calling. There is a sense in which he celebrates the grace and goodness of God bestowed on him. “By the most devoted administration,” the dictionary adds, “endeavoring to convert as many Gentiles as possible to Christ.”¹⁰

Verse 14: Some - The word “some” for me was unexpected, It is difficult to see Israel as a nation—as a whole—being saved when Paul says *some* or his word first-fruits in verse 16. But then, again, probably *not* every evangelical, based on church membership, is ready to meet the Lord. “Some” is a realistic evaluate of any ministry, since, we labor not alone. It is only pride that would think my ministry to be greater or more important than yours. We all have *some* work to do.

8. Lange vol X. Page 365.

9. Godet. Page 402.

10. Thayer. Page 157.

Verse 15: Rejection ...reconciliation - As stated already, Gentiles do not need to convert to Judaism to please God. The wall has been torn down between them..¹¹ The relation between rejection of Israel and reconciliation of the Gentiles by faith is not causal as if they had to be rejected before Gentiles could be saved. If Israel had accepted Christ on a national scale, the Gentiles would still have had the same path of grace through faith offered them. The logic is faulty that says: because Israel lost out on Salvation, God could offer it to the Gentiles (as if it had to be one or the other).

Lange explains: "Not as causality, but as condition."¹² That is to say, had God retained the Jewish religion (the Mosaic covenant) reconciliation for the Gentiles would not have been solely by faith and therefore a far more complex approach to justification—not of grace, then, but—of works. It is unlikely the Gentiles could be any more successful than Israel was in such an arrangement.

Life from the dead - If Paul meant to say that prophetically Israel's salvation must happen first before the resurrection of all the dead in Christ at His return, then, I, for one, would have preferred he had said that in a plainer way. Paul nowhere else refers to the resurrection as a "life from the dead." Is Paul thinking about Ezekiel's vision of the dry bones [Ezekiel 37:28]? "Then the nations will know that I am the LORD who sanctifies Israel, when my sanctuary is in their midst forevermore." The Expositor's Commentary understands, "It is perhaps better to see in [this phrase] the promise of a world wide quickening and deepening of spiritual life when Israel is restored to divine fellowship."¹³

Israel becoming a nation in 1948 ignited Christian faith and brought an unprecedented celebration to believers' hearts because in their lifetime, they were watching end time prophecy being fulfilled. How exciting will it be for us, Gentiles, then, when Israel experiences the restoration and revival of Joel 2 and unnumbered Jews are visiting the Temple court of the Gentiles like they did in Acts 4 and combing the clouds with their eyes wide open anticipating now their Messiah's return! According to the Revelation [11:13; 14:1ff] the conversion of the Jews *precedes* Christ's return. Perhaps, this is more detail than Paul wish to cover at this occasion. He is only wanting to excite the Gentiles in Rome to prayer and faith and defuse any proud thought.

16. *Now if the first-fruits [dough] is holy, the entire batch [all the bread made from it] will be holy, and if the root is holy the branches [will be] too.*

11. See the section, "The Curse," [Romans 3].

12. Lange. vol X. Page 365.

13. Gaebelein. vol X. Page 121.

17. *If some of the branches are cut off [pruned], and you being [a branch from] a wild olive [tree] were grafted in to them [among the other branches] and became a participant in the root's fatness [nourishment] of the olive tree,*
18. *Don't boast of yourself over the [other] branches; but if you boast [keep in mind] you do not support the root, but the opposite, the root [supports] you!*

Verse 16-18: Israel's future restoration is not only possible but necessary having been promised in the prophets. Every prophetic reference to Jesus was a reference to Christ, who is *Israel's* Messiah. So, every prophecy became part of a national religion. Torah law *was* Israel. God knew that there would have been no other way for them to embody His truths so that they would safe guard them as the "oracles of God" [Romans 3:2].

So, we might maintain, that it wasn't their nationality nor their ethnicity that concerned our Lord, but their *faith*, their religious zeal expressed primarily in their piety and dedication to serve God through Torah law. No other nation was so characterized. Although it is the same faith for all, there was a difference in the exercise of that faith. Paul wrote, "Seeing it is one God, which shall justify *the circumcision by faith*, and *uncircumcision through faith*." [Romans 3:30]. The Gentiles would enter [through] this truth by apostolic ministry. The word *by* means *out of* or *exit*. Israel by faith would take the message of which they already were the keepers and, at last, embrace its true meaning. They just needed to "come out." But the Gentiles first had to "enter and then go through" in order to join those Jews who now believed. As we, they could learn [only as history] the *types* of Christ revealed in the sacrifices; they were on their way to learning Him [Ephesians 4:21].

Gentiles, beware any pride that lies within you that thinks you have replaced Israel in God's heart! While it is true that salvation is an individual matter of faith, Israel, collectively or as a nation, must be treated in a special way because they were historically commissioned by God to introduce man's *need* of a Gospel message to be revealed in Christ.

Verse 16: First-fruits - The term *first-fruits* speaks of the initial cake made from a harvest of wheat reserved for the priests [Numbers 15:20].¹⁴ There is in this act of consecrating the initial ball of dough made into bread, a consecration of the entire batch of dough from which it came. We must not fail to understand the significance of such a consecration. The first-born, likewise, were consecrated to God representing the entire congregation. "I have taken them for Myself instead of all who open the womb, the firstborn ... For all the firstborn among the children of Israel are

14. Numbers 15:20 "a cake of the first of your dough" LXX: ἀπαρχὴν φουράματος ὑμῶν Paul is referencing Numbers 15:18-21 "The cake offered to God's representative impressed the seal of consecration [holy] on the entire mass

Mine, “ [Numbers 8:16-17]. It is easy to see who is on God’s mind: His Son. “But each one in his own order: Christ the firstfruits,” Paul explained, “afterward those who are Christ’s at His coming.” [1 Corinthians 15:23].

Holy - Because He is holy, so are those who believe in Him. Believers are consecrated exclusively and totally to God as an offering [Romans 12:1].

Root - is Christ. “I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman.” [John 15:1].¹⁵

Verses 17-18: Some have attempted to understand Paul in a truly horticultural way: exactly how, when, or why would a scion be grafted into a tree? Some see in Paul’s language the possibility of being lost after having been a part of Christ. But both ideas exceed the scope of Paul’s analogy. Paul is discouraging any Gentile believer from thinking in terms of works for salvation. Paul continues to describe grace. What we should be seeing here is what Jesus said, “And other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they will hear My voice; and there will be one flock and one shepherd.” [John 10:16].

It seems reasonable to see these verses in a modern setting between the orthodox branch of Christianity and the evangelical, which is more recent in church history. Evangelicalism has to a great degree replaced certain branches of the “mainstream” of the Christian faiths in importance according to recent statistical findings. Pentecost, in particular, is widely favored among young believers. While there is a general attrition with mainstream Christianity [a lopping off of branches?] there is an almost exponential growth within Evangelicalism which evangelicals attribute to God. Historically speaking, they have been grafted in as the new scion of the Church. Sadly, these younger churches tend to boast of a membership growth which reveals God blessings [the fatness of the root]. Once again, Paul has to teach the message of God’s grace to—as a consequence of their boast—some of the most venerated of the faith. What if revival comes to the Orthodox churches as it did to the Catholic Church in the 1970’s with the birth of neo-pentecostalism. In verse 23 Paul reminds us that “God is able” to do this very thing again. In fact, the orthodox faiths are under heavy persecution in some areas of the globe because they have been outstanding promoters of the Faith while many evangelicals quietly slip in and out of church on a Sunday morning while the devil roams loose.

19. *You are saying, then, those branches were pruned that I might be grafted in [I am worth more than the original branches?].*
20. *Truthfully, they were pruned in unbelief, and you stand by faith; don’t think of yourself so highly [high-mindedness] but fear [show respect for God’s grace].*

15. See also Isaiah 5:1ff.

21. *Because if God didn't spare the natural branches neither might He spare you.*

Verses 19-21: For the most part these verses are self-explanatory. But what does Paul mean by not sparing me if I boast! I should be afraid?

First off: God never bumps one to make room for another, as if this were a game of musical chairs. There is no direct link, no causative connection, between Israel's unbelief and our faith. We are, sadly, prone to interpret events in a causative way, however. In Acts 18:6 at Corinth Paul seemed to have had enough with Jewish descent, blurting out, "Your blood be upon your own heads; I am clean [I fulfilled any commitment I might have had to you. God asks no more of me!]. From now on I will go to the Gentiles." As far as Paul seemed concerned, the music didn't stop yet and Israel's chair had not been removed from the circle. We, too, are cautioned against pronouncing "Ichabod"¹⁶ upon the traditional churches as we sit down in our pride.

How simple the phrase "saved by Grace through faith" and yet how theologically profound, that we would think God had to reject anyone on our account as if at the Wedding Supper of the Lamb there will be only so many invitations. The seating arrangement is somehow limited—and this for an eternal, limitless, and infinite God!

Verse 20: High-minded - High-minded means "haughty" [1 Timothy 6:17] or "arrogantly superior to and disdainful of others less fortunate or blessed."¹⁷ High-mindedness is self-exaltation. The dictionary adds, "to seek honor or riches."¹⁸ This is not a word for pride in Scripture, but it certainly is an expression of it! High-mindedness is thinking oneself superior in some way and acting on that thought. This idea is very close to hubris (another greek word brought into English).

Verse 21: Spared ...fear - Such language suggests God is not pleased with such thoughts and we are talking about God's people, the branches in His olive tree which He has cultivated! Godet calls God's argument a *fortiori*¹⁹ meaning it is based on a conclusion for which there is strong evidence. In a natural sense, the horticulturalist might be more likely to pull out the scion than a natural branch if it is not producing. How are we to understand the word *spare*? The idea here is God will not treat the scion any different than the natural branches. "Every branch in Me," Jesus warned, "that does not bear fruit He [God] takes away" [John 15:2]. So Paul cautions *fear*. Paul encouraged the Philippian Church with similar language: "Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in

16. The glory of the Lord has departed. See 1 Samuel 4:21.

17. Godet. Page 407.

18. Thayer. Page 646.

19. Godet. Page 407.

my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling" [Philippians 2:12].

Fear and trembling generally are spoken together suggesting that they are two aspects that are not seen separate in an alert and sober mind and heart. They are distinguished from being terrified or amazed because these latter ideas are momentary emotions triggered by some sudden, perhaps unexpected, event or circumstance. Fear and trembling are more a perspective on life.

The Old Testament use of these words is more severe. There they speak of an anxiety that threatens life itself and a deliverance for which we must trust God [Psalm 55:5]. In the Old Testament parlance "fear and trembling" is something you never want to experience but with Paul, they are a necessary aspect of Christian character.

Paul's use is less alarming. The analogy that comes to mind to explain Paul's use is: driving at night down an unfamiliar, winding country road with no shoulder which should require a consistent alertness lest you drive into a ditch. But keep in mind, you are an expert driver! Elsewhere Paul uses the terms to indicate a serious commitment, as when Titus was commended to the Corinthian believers and Paul recalled "how with fear and trembling [they] received him [2 Corinthians 7:15]. Slaves were invited to serve their masters "with fear and trembling, in sincerity of heart, as to Christ" [Ephesians 6:5]. And when Paul went to Corinth, knowing the controversies that were circling in the churches there, he made what I call an emotional decision ahead of time to talk about Jesus and nothing else. His resolve was unshakeable because as he put it, "For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified. I was with you in weakness, in fear, and in much trembling. [1 Corinthians 2:2-3].

"Fear and trembling" describe me for decades of ministry each time I ascended the pulpit or lead a prayer meeting or taught a group of believers whose hunger for God's Word required nothing less.

22. *Know, therefore, God's goodness [gentleness] and His severity; on the one hand those who sin, severity, on the other, toward you God's gentleness. If, indeed, you remain in His gentleness [on His good side], since, even you can be pruned!*
23. *And those, too, unless they remain in unbelief can be grafted [back] in; because God is able to again graft them in.*
24. *For if you not [a branch] of [the olive tree] by nature cut from a wild olive [tree] and in contrary to nature were grafted into a good [domesticated] olive tree, much more so those who are natural [branches] shall be grafted back into their own olive tree.*

Goodness vs. Severity - Goodness, Professor Trench called “a beautiful grace.”²⁰ If we want to define it by its opposite: it is *not* severity. Goodness is better translated as *gentleness*. It is a kinder approach, so when Jesus drove the money changers from the Temple court, He wasn’t gentle [Matthew 21:13] though what He did was very good. The penitent woman spoken of in Luke 7:37-50, whom Jesus forgave of all sin, while she washed His feet with her tears offers a closer look at the tender mercies of God in His Son—how gentle He spoke toward her; how caring were His words of forgiveness. Perhaps, one of the better illustrations is the story of the good Samaritan that rescued the traveler who had been beaten severely by robbers and left to die. “So he went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine; and he set him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him.” [Luke 10:34]. Is not this the salvation experience? “He heals the broken in heart, and binds up their wounds.” Psalm 147:3].²¹

Matthew Henry explains: “This parable does excellently set forth the kindness ... of God our Saviour towards sinful miserable man. We were like this poor distressed traveller. Satan, our enemy, had robbed us, stripped us, wounded us; such is the mischief that sin had done us. We were by nature more than half dead, twice dead, in trespasses and sins; ... then comes the blessed Jesus, that good Samaritan (and they said of him, by way of reproach, he is a Samaritan), he has compassion on us, he binds up our bleeding wounds, pours in, not oil and wine, but that which is infinitely more precious, his own blood. He takes care of us, and bids us put all the expenses of our cure upon his account.”²²

Severity is sharp, rough and abrupt speech and behavior toward another. It is more at Jesus cleansing the Temple. In Paul’s analogy, it is the swift stroke of the ax in one swing to chop off a branch.

Paul’s point is not eschatological but soteriological. He is not warning about what may happen at some future time. He is asking his reader to look at the present condition of their own heart and seek God’s mercy rather than experiencing inevitably the swift sword of His judgment.²³

Verses 23-24: Unbelief - The only thing that keeps a branch from living in the vine is unbelief—the lack of saving faith. The only sin that keeps one from heaven is that of not accepting God’s mercy through Christ at Calvary. Now Paul is talking pure grace. The Law which characterized the

20. Trench. *Synonyms* Page 232.

21. Isaiah 61:1 The Spirit of the Lord GOD *is* upon Me, Because the LORD has anointed Me ... He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted....

22. https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/mhc/Luk/Luk_010.cfm?a=983034

23. Hebrews 4:12-13 For the word of God *is* living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things *are* naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we *must* give account.

life of a “true” Jew is no longer mentioned. Salvation has become simply, purely, and totally, a matter of trusting Jesus to rescue us from our sins and that is, exactly what His grace does.

**For if the firstfruit *is* holy, the lump *is* also *holy*; and if the root *is* holy, so
are the branches. - Romans 11:16**

Romans 11:25-36

“All things” are from Him [Genesis 1:1], through Him [Psalm 103:19], and to Him [1 Corinthians 15:28], to Who be Glory forever [Romans 11:36].

There is no more appropriate introduction for this section than Romans 11:33 “Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out!” We open and close with this. Here is the Divine plan and the parts both Israel and the Gentiles play in it. They will learn their parts because God patiently will work with them as the providential director of His own desires toward them both. Before us lies the mystery of the Gospel. Before us is the genius of our Creator and Savior.

- 25 *Because I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, of this mystery that you think within yourselves wiser than you are [wise in your own conceits] because [what has really happened is] hardness has happened somewhat to Israel until the fulness of the Gentiles comes in*
- 26 *And thus all¹ Israel will be saved according as it is written:² A deliverer shall come out of Zion, He shall turn [remove] ungodliness from Jacob.*
- 27 *And this is the covenant I will make with them: when I will forgive [take away] their sins.*

Verse 25: Mystery Only God can give understanding, as Paul testified, “... by revelation he made known unto me the mystery” [Ephesians 3:3]. I love the analogy, which I found written in a commentary by Tyndall, that trying to understand grace is like a man mapping out the boundaries of a lake only to discover that he has come to the immeasurable sea. Grace depends exclusively on God’s love and not our ability to obligate God by something we have done to obtain His favor. We will never reach the unfathomable depth of His kindness toward us; so, God’s grace will in this life, especially, be a step by step revelation which we must accept by simple trust—*faith*.

1. In the New Testament there are two words for ‘all’ one is more emphatic meaning completely or totally [Acts 4:32]. Here the lesser word is used meaning ‘all that will be saved.’

2. Isaiah 59:20 “The Redeemer will come to Zion, And to those who turn from transgression in Jacob,” Says the LORD. See also Psalm 14:7.

Paul is about to remind us that God is not done with Israel. Whatever made us think that He was! Paul here sets aside his own wisdom. The church at Rome—like today's Christian churches—might have had their own ideas about Israel's future in the light of their "temporary" rejection of Paul's Gospel of "grace through faith."

Within yourselves - The King James Version reads "lest ye should be *wise in your own conceits*." The New King James calls this "your own opinion." But this word means more than opinion. It is a synonym of the counsel one accepts by which they govern their own actions. It is the Old Testament word for *wisdom* which speaks to the knowledge one acts upon. This is why Solomon contrasted our own opinion to fearing God! He admonished, "Do not be *wise in your own eyes*; *Fear the LORD* and depart from evil." [Proverbs 3:7].

This is not an academic exercise in book learning, but a personal lesson in living. This is another reason *faith* is so critical to our salvation. If we govern our lives based on our own understanding, where do we think that will lead? But if we trust the Lord to lead, every believer knows this is where they really want to be. Act on God's directive not our own faulty reasoning. David spoke to this matter in Psalm 16:7. My translation of the Greek version: "I will kneel in humble obeisance before the Lord who has counseled me [caused me to understand] and through the night, deep in my heart,³ I am [like a child] ever learning [from Him]." This Psalm is worth reading (only 11 verses). Dispersed throughout are words like: *hope, pleasure, inheritance, restoration, joy, delights, rejoicing*, and "I shall not be moved." When we are talking about God's grace, write no one off in the ignorance of a personal opinion. Keep praying!

Until the fulness of the Gentiles - Perhaps, this phrase is worthy an eschatological comment. If by God's deliverance in Zion we mean the salvation of Israel on a national level, the fulness of the Gentiles has to refer to the number of the New Testament Church being complete. This appears to line up with Daniel's 70th week [Daniel 9:27] during the Great Tribulation when God will confirm His New Covenant of Grace with Israel. The Church is not involved in this scene, suggesting its absence—rapture?⁴ Godet concludes "till the accomplishment of the conversion of the Gentiles, there will be among the Jews only individual conversions; but this goal reached, their conversion *en masse* will take place."⁵

It is appropriate to reference here Zechariah 12:10 in which the prophet seems to speak in New Testament terms (grace here is grace and not favor) which should explode the mind of the unbeliever, since the prophet lived in the 6th century before our Savior came to die: "And I will pour upon the

3. The LXX reads kidneys because it spoke metaphorically of the seat of deep emotions.

4. Matthew 24:14 And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.

5. Godet. Page 411.

house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourns for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn.”

Verse 26: All Israel - The language does not require us to think that every Israelite will then accept Christ. It means only that Israel as a nation, as a people, shall be saved.⁶ There is here, perhaps, a vague reference to the Jewish religious festivals and sacrifices as part of a national religion which will then be explained and replaced with the Gospel message. Israel will be given opportunity on a national level during the tribulation period to accept Jesus as their Messiah. John’s prophetic vision is indeed, as the title serves notice, *The Revelation of Jesus Christ*.

Ungodliness - This word means: “withholding from God His due in prayer and service.”⁷ Ungodliness is an antonym of righteousness [God’s covenant faithfulness]. It is not living in the covenant. It has been said, Godliness is living life with one eye on God; so, ungodliness is living for self.

Verse 27: Paul references the New Covenant, here, in the context of a national revival and restoration, and Isaiah provides the text. “And the Redeemer shall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob, saith the LORD. As for me, this *is* my covenant with them, saith the LORD; My spirit that *is* upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed’s seed, saith the LORD, from henceforth and for ever” [Isaiah 59:20-21], The colloquialism; “thy seed’s seed” speaks of God’s intervention on a national level or as a community⁸ that reaches into future generations—forever.

“By this therefore shall the iniquity of Jacob be purged; and this *is* all the fruit [the result of Jacob’s iniquity being purged] to take away his sin [forgiveness and expiation]; when he makes all the stones of the altar as chalk that are beaten in sunder, the groves and images shall not stand up.” [Isaiah 27:9]

When - The text says “whenever” meaning in New Testament parlance: When “as is customary.”⁹ It was customary always when God made a covenant He wiped clean the record of sin. A new covenant is always a new beginning and through the Cross, a new birth. Forgiveness was a necessary provision God’s grace provided as written in the covenant itself. “You have come to Jesus, the one who mediates the new covenant between God and people, and to the sprinkled blood, which speaks of forgiveness

6. Gaebelein. vol X Page 123.

7. Trench. *Synonyms*. Page 242.

8. Brueggemann. *Isaiah 40-66*. Page 203.”

9. Tayer. Page 458.

instead of crying out for vengeance like the blood of Abel." [Hebrews 12:24 NLT]

28. *According to the Gospel, on the one hand, enemies [hated] for your sake; on the other, according to the election, beloved for the sake of the patriarchs.*
29. *For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance [any regret].*

In every man there co-exists a being whom God hates [who is estranged from God, enemies], the sinner, and a being whom He still loves, the man He created in His image. It benefits the Gentiles when Israel angered God through their rejection of the Savior as their Messiah because now the Gospel message would not be tainted by Jewish religious requirements and Torah ceremonial law. The Gospel could be by faith alone. But Israel is loved because they were and are chosen by God [elect] and because God will keep His word to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob that the nations would be blessed through them. God also promised a restoration and salvation [Exodus 20:6; Isaiah 58:20].

Verse 29: Gifts .. Calling - If you think about it: His gifts are His *grace* and our response to His calling is *faith*. The Gospel message of a salvation by grace through faith is here clothed in covenant language easier to understand [Romans 11:27].

Without Repentance - His gifts and calling are an irrevocable commitment to His promises. The Westminster Confession of Faith describes God as *infinite in being and perfection, immutable, eternal, and most absolute.*"¹⁰ A God this consistently faithful will not change His mind. "And also the Strength of Israel will not lie nor relent. For He is not a man, that He should relent." [1 Samuel 15:29; Numbers 23:19]. Godet calls God's gifts and calling to Israel as the irrevocable character of Israel's destination.¹¹ His grace may not be irresistible (I apologize again to those who find me harsh) but His grace *is irrevocable* because His gifts and calling are

- ♦ *eternal* or with an eternal outlook in mind. Eternal things cannot change because time [not eternity] is a measure of change. Israel's restoration, therefore, must be true - eternally true. Paul encouraged us to "not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal." [2 Corinthians 4:18].

10. <https://www.johnhking.com/wp-content/D-ConfessionOfFaith.pdf>

11. Godet. Page 413.

- ◆ *perfect* or never needing to be improved upon. We are “partakers of the heavenly calling” [Hebrews 3:1].¹²
 - ◆ *absolute* because it is collective¹³ or without favoritism. “Favorite” is a relative idea not an absolute one. He is “not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance” [2 Peter 3:9].
 - God has a *collective* interest in Israel because His promise to Abraham was, “I will make you a great *nation*. I will bless you And make your name great; And you shall be a blessing” [Genesis 12:2]. “And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel to Abraham beforehand, saying, “*In you all the nations shall be blessed*” [Galatians 3:8].
- 30 *Just as you once refused to believe God, but now you have received mercy in the refusal of others [to believe God].*
- 31 *Likewise even those others now not persuaded they, too, will by the mercy shown you receive mercy.*
- 32 *Because [to explain] God has locked up everyone [the all] in unbelief, in order that He might show mercy. Upon all [the all].*

Paul is soon to burst forth with praise to God for his profound wisdom and the way He works providentially [Romans 11:33]. But before this he shares a revelation I doubt we would have considered: to save the Gentiles through the disobedience of Israel and then turn around and use these very Gentiles to lead Israel to Christ!

Verse 32: “But the Scripture has confined all under sin, that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe” [Galatians 3:22]. The question ever arises as to the reasonableness of God’s judgment against Adam that it should include us as liable. Some Christians confine the sense to original sin pointing out that we are personally responsible after that for our own (temporal) sins and that Jesus died only for the original sin that imprisoned mankind. But some Christians say Adam’s sin and our own are all our responsibility and Christ died for them all. Either way we were held under guard, locked up without an escape [without a justification by effort or works]. There is only one way out: Jesus said, ‘I am the way.’” [John 14:6]. And why, why have all humanity been sentenced for Adam’s faithless act?! The answer: That God might do what God does so well and what God always wants to do for us—it is His schtick, what He

12. 2 Timothy 1:9 who has saved us and called *us* with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was given to us in Christ Jesus before time began,

13. Godet. Page 413.

loves doing ...showing us *mercy* ... *His mercy*! Don't use reason to deny Him what He wants most to do for you! [Hebrews 11:6].

The all: all men, all mankind, everyone without partiality or exception. Paul's use of the word 'the' before all, which is not good English, emphasizes the word *all*. This is not universal salvation which would require another word for "all" but a way of underscoring the fact that whoever calls on the name of the Lord will be saved—without exception. [Joel 2:32; Acts 2:21].

33. *Oh, Deep riches¹⁴ both wisdom and knowledge of God! Like His judgments [decisions] unsearchable and His ways untraceable.*
34. *Indeed, Who knows the mind of the Lord [His knowledge] or who became His counselor [His wisdom]?*
35. *Or who has first given [supplied] Him, even recompensed Him [His grace]?*
36. *Because from Him [Genesis 1:1; John 1:3] and through Him [Psalm 103:19] and for Him [1 Corinthians 15:28] are all things; to Him be the Glory into the ages, Amen.*

Paul's "Doctrinal Thesis on Grace" to the Church at Rome is, in a practical sense, completed with verse 32. These four verses bring out the song of praise in him. The rest of his letter to Rome is part 2, a practical treatise on the life of the justified believer.

Verse 33: Riches - "rich in mercy ... the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us " [Ephesians 2:4, 7].

Deep - "But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searches all things, yea, the deep things of God." [1 Corinthians 2:10]

Judgments ... Ways - Here are a couple entries for your I.Q. Test:

- ◆ Judgment is to knowledge as Ways is to ??? Hint: next verse.
- ◆ Unsearchable is to knowledge as untraceable is to ??? Hint: verse 33.

Unsearchable - God's plan of salvation was pure brilliance with genius [glorious] as only God could think of: *by grace*. If salvation would be earned *by man*, it would first have to be thought up *by man*.¹⁵ Logically we can say

14. 1 Kings 17:16 *And the barrel of meal wasted not, neither did the cruse of oil fail, according to the word of the LORD, which he spake by Elijah.*

15. In verse 25 we spoke of being wise in one's own conceit, which speaks of one's actions based on one's own opinions and not God's wisdom. The word "conceits" in the Bible speaks of thought and intent. We noted that man's opinion speaks of his thoughts *and intentions*. How could we intend to "earn" God's favor when we could not think of the way to do so— through the Cross!

this backwards as well: If man cannot think of it, man cannot speak of earning it! "God's grace is unsearchable" is—in effect—tautological.¹⁶

It was not only beyond man's means but beyond his intellect. As Peter affirmed, "which salvation the prophets have enquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace *that should come unto you*" [1 Peter 1:10]. Paul wrote, "To me, who am less than the least of all the saints, this grace was given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ," [Ephesians 3:8].

Untraceable - We follow the Savior *step by step* [Romans 4:12; 1 Peter 2:21]. That is what *faith* is all about. —Trusting His guidance. We could never map His wisdom into our future.

As His grace knows what is for us unsearchable; our *faith* takes the next step since the way of His wisdom is untraceable.

Verse 34: Wisdom .. Knowledge - God's judgment is His decision based on what He knows. Remember: He is the heart-knower. His ways are his wisdom or His knowledge in action. "Wisdom refers to the end aimed at by the Divine mind; knowledge to the means employed for the attainment of the end."¹⁷

Wisdom - Godet says, "the admirable skill with which God weaves into his plan the free actions of man and transforms them into so many means of the accomplishment of the excellent end which He set originally before Him."¹⁸

Verse 35: Supplied - Supplied is my interpretation of giving God anything *in advance*. This is impossible. Grace, as already noted, is unearned. Even science maintains the birth of the universe as something *out of nothing*¹⁹ —as the theologian understands Genesis 1:1. In advance refers to works upon which grace and salvation would depend. And there is nothing provided by mankind. Salvation is God's grace from beginning to end.

Verses 34-35 - Three questions:

- ◆ The first question: "Who hath known the mind of the Lord?" "Who has directed the Spirit of the LORD, Or as His counselor has taught Him?" [Isaiah 40:13]. "We must stop trying to complete His sentences." This entire discourse started with our "opinion" [verse 25].
- ◆ The second question: "Who hath been his counsellor?" Prayer is not a tool to advice God or give Him suggestions but our

16. a statement that is true by necessity or by virtue of its logical form

17. A quote from Shedd [Talbot Chambers, translator of Godet. Page 417, footnote.]

18. Godet. Page 417.

19. Creatio ex nihilo (Latin for "creation out of nothing") is the doctrine that matter is not eternal but had to be created by some divine creative act. It is a theistic answer to the question of how the universe comes to exist.

opportunity to seek *His*. “Shall he that contends with the Almighty instruct him? he that reproves God, let him answer it. Then Job answered the LORD, and said, Behold, I am vile; what shall I answer thee? I will lay mine hand upon my mouth. Once have I spoken; but I will not answer: yea, twice; but I will proceed no further” [Job 40:2-5].

- ◆ The third question: “Who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again?” (A justification by works?) “Who has preceded Me, that I should pay him? Everything under heaven is Mine” [Job 41:11]. Our service to God is not based on paybacks to merit but *calling* and *grace*.

Verse 36: Nothing sums up *by grace through faith* as this verse. “All things” are from Him [Genesis 1:1], through Him [Psalm 103:19], and to Him [1 Corinthians 15:28], to Who be Glory forever [Romans 11:36]. “Nor is He worshipped with men’s hands [by man’s efforts], as though He needed anything, since He gives to all life, breath, and all things” [Acts 17:25].

For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable. For God has committed them all to disobedience, that He might have mercy on all.-

Romans 11:29, 32

Part Two: The Practical Treatise

The Life of the Justified Believer.

It seemed, at first, somewhat unexpected of Paul to talk so much about holiness and righteousness but say nothing in this letter to Rome about *godliness*—or as some call it, *piety*. Holiness is moral purity, an inward change of heart, that separates us for service to God. Such persons were called *saints* [Romans 12:13]. Holy is an attribute of God and a description of His very nature [Psalm 99:5]. Godliness or piety, then, should be the expression of that holiness, living it out in reverence for God.

Peter understood. He called godliness: holy conduct [2 Peter 3:11]. He spoke of godliness in terms of living it [2 Peter 1:3] and he saw godliness as the expression of trust in Christ, experiencing Him, and patiently living a virtuous life in following in His steps [1 Peter 2:21; 2 Peter 1:5-6].

But Paul avoided such language, perhaps, because it was tied too closely to Torah law. A study of the synonyms for *godliness* might explain. There is a separate term for being religious [James 1:26] which speaks more of the church service rather than ministry or service to our Lord. Another speaks of piety under the Law, “walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless” [Luke 1:6]. This was unachievable, and it was not the purpose for the Law, anyway, according to Paul. There was also a participation in religious worship out of the fear of God [Acts 17:22]. Paul confronted this attitude at Athens and preached the freedom from such fear of eternal punishment.

Also, the word generally used in Scripture for “worship” Paul referenced only once speaking of the unbeliever who walks into the church and, coming under genuine conviction [1 Corinthians 14:25], falls down on his knees [worships] and says, “truly God is here!” It seems that this word for *worship* was too attached to the church service and not the service of the church. There is, also, another word commonly used for *organized* or official service. In Romans 13:6 this word is used of government officials.

So Paul in Romans 12:1 went off script in talking about our “worship.” He employed a word which spoke of service to God volunteered, or freely offered, not as an administrative function, or in an official capacity, nor in an orchestrated ritual, nor as something done as a legalistic requirement for service, or for membership in Wow! Jesus simply said “worship in spirit and truth” [John 4:24]. Paul’s choice of words best describes the *service* done in the exercise of one’s calling in Christ.

In Paul's letters we have to interpret righteousness as a faithful commitment to our Lord recognizing the growing relationship and closeness we have with Him. It is holiness lived out [Philippians 2:12].

So Paul will in the few remaining chapters offer us a practical Spirit-led, Christianity. It is what having a transformed mind, conformed to Christ, looks like *in action*.

Romans 12

In chapters 1-11 God worked His work in us that now it might be manifest [chapters 12-16] through us. [Philippians 2:12].

Is the apostle about to trace the “model of Christian conduct”?¹ And is this legalism? Dietrich Bonhoeffer wrote, “the grace of His [God’s] call bursts all the bonds of legalism.”² He further explains, “The only way of overcoming ... legalism is by real obedience to Christ when He calls us to follow Him; for in Jesus the law is at once fulfilled and canceled.”³ Bonhoeffer is talking righteousness as covenant faithfulness on our part as it is always true about our Lord. Relationships are built on the freedom to be involved, upon an intimacy which would expose us to abusive criticism and misunderstanding unless it is built on a foundation of absolute love-*agape* love. And love requires freedom. It cannot be legislated. This we have in Christ in which our faith in Him includes an unfaltering trust. As Godet taught, “He [Paul] assumes the inward consecration of the believer as an already consummated fact; and it is from this fact, implicitly contained in his [a Christian’s] faith, that he [Paul] proceeds to call him [the believer] to realize his Christian obligation”⁴

Now Paul can proceed to discuss each one’s measure of faith, the talents our Lord has distributed to each of us in which some seem more or less important—more or fewer talents. But Paul elsewhere tells us that this is not an issue with God [1 Corinthians 12:24].

There is another question worth asking: Is all this the beginning of church organization, and, if so, is it reasonable to assume that the church government, due to cultural, governmental or social conditions, might develop beyond these humble beginnings?⁵ Paul only outlines the essentials within the Church to meet both spiritual and material needs, but how we organize to do that is up to us. Again, legalism means that some form of government has been enforced not just recommended. Nowhere is this Paul’s mindset. I wrote elsewhere: “The church is not an organization as much as it is an organism.”⁶ The church does not need to be incorporated

1. Godet. *Epistle to the Romans*. Page 424.

2. Bonhoeffer. Page 59.

3. Ibid. Page 83.

4. Godet. *Epistle to the Romans*. Page 424.

5. As Acts 6 implies. The church needed organization to stem the neglect apparent regarding ministry to Gentile widows.

6. I Corinthians 12:27 Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it. NEW INT.

as much as it needs to be empowered.⁷ The church does not follow a constitution; it follows a commission.⁸ The church's success was never dependent on finance but faith, not planning but prayer, not ritual but righteousness, not size but the Spirit, not government but God, not our vision but His."⁹

1. *Therefore I would encourage and exhort you, brethren, through the compassion of God, to present [offer to Him] your bodies [your lives] as living sacrifices, holy [separated totally unto Him and clean of sin and], pleasing to God, which is your reasonable service [a most reasonable calling];*
2. *And do not be fashioned after this present age, but, be transformed by [letting God] give you a mind [and heart]: how to discern what God desires, [and that this is] proven to be good for you, pleasing to you and most perfect in you [to complete all God wants for you].*

Verse 1: I exhort you - An exhortation is not a command, but a heartfelt voice of reason which "appeals to a sentiment already existing in the heart, faith in God's mercies."¹⁰ (See verse 8 and the ministry of exhortation which is the same word.)

Present your bodies as living sacrifices - "I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called" [Ephesians 4:1].

Present is a term employed in the act of gifting or offering something to God's service.¹¹ For Hannah, this was her son. Hannah told Eli of Samuel, "Therefore also I have lent him to the LORD; as long as he liveth he shall be given to the LORD. And he worshipped the LORD there." [1 Samuel 1:28].

Bodies - Godet points out that "Justification by faith provides the principle of sanctification."¹² How would we make Him our Savior and not our Lord! This cannot be. It makes absolute sense that our bodies not our spirits or souls are placed on this altar, since not only does the body contain the soul and spirit but it is the *body* that left to its own devices and selfish interests turns *carnal*.¹³

7. Acts 1:8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you NEW INT.

8. Matthew 28:19 Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit NEW INT.

9. Taken from my work: *Challenged*. A Lulu.com publication. Page 418

10. Godet. Page 425.

11. Luke 2:22 And when the days of her purification according to the law of Moses were accomplished, they brought him to Jerusalem, to present *him* to the Lord;

12. Godet. Page 425.

13. See the appendix on carnality.

Living Sacrifices - Scholarship credits Paul with cloaking God's grace in sacrificial language: The sacrifices pre-reconciliation where for forgiveness such as the sin and guilt offerings. These Jesus became which Paul explains throughout the preceding 11 chapters. Now Paul talks about the post-reconciliation sacrifices: the peace offering and, in particular, the burnt offering which speaks of total dedication to God. It is this sacrifice referenced here.

The word used here is actually *victim*—not because we bemoan our lot or feel abused in some fashion. Quite the contrary. Victimhood here means that we have submitted in every sense to the blade. We are true sacrifices and, like Isaac, willingly stepping up unto the altar to give ourselves, body, soul, and spirit, as an offering, a gift, of our love to Him Who first loved us. What God wants, we humbly offer, without complaint or sorrow [Romans 5:3].

Living - We believe that if we were martyred we would need a special gift of His grace to endure it, but we need a special daily gift of His grace to *live* for Him.

Holy - means free from moral blemish, forgiven, *cleansed*, and *separated* unto God.

Reasonable - Some say, "*spiritual*" which in 1 Peter 2:2 is translated "*pure*".

I watch my share of westerns and cannot stop admiring horses. Their rider (and horses can be particular whom they will allow to ride them) leads them about by a bit. There is an expression "to break a horse" meaning to break it from its wildness after which they comply in the most docile manner—even to standing around waiting for the next time they are needed. This picture comes to mind when I think of service to our Lord.

Paul is saying that giving ourselves to God's service, to what He has called us to be in Christ, is *most reasonable*. This is a spiritual endeavor and commitment.

Service is not used in the sense of one's office or official duty. There are no accolades or badges that come with it, only labor. It is not a religious duty, either, (like the high priest who after atoning for the people would change cloths and blend into the crowd in the market place unnoticed). Service here means a *willing* surrender of our lives to whatever God asks of us.

Paul connects the word *sacrifice* with the word *service*. We are not the priest but the sacrifice! Our service to our Lord is not defined here in terms of duty but dedication, not what we do for the Lord but who we are in Him, not activity but calling. A horse is not trained to perform, as if when it is not performing it returns to the wild. The life of a "broken" horse is a life of total and permanent submission to its master. Our lives become the burnt offerings totally consumed in service to our Lord.

Verse 2: Fashioned - This word is formed on the root idea of fashion over form. It speaks of something that is temporary as in our phrase “out of fashion.” As Paul wrote elsewhere, “for passing away is the fashion of this world” [1 Corinthians 7:31].¹⁴ Fashion is outward appearance or the form something takes but which does not define it, which is not essential to what it is. The world’s fashion speaks to its cultural changes, its changing mores, the ideas that decorate it or make it attractive to those who live in it. We are not to be walking with the world [Matthew 16:26;¹⁵ Mark 4:19;¹⁶ 1 Corinthians 1:20].¹⁷ We need a transformation.

Transformed - this word speaks of a *permanent* change. Thus we are to be “conformed to the image of His Son” [Romans 8:29] which is an eternal change. We must be less influenced by the world’s thinking and have a mind and intent that is looking to God always for guidance and direction.

Renewal: The natural mind without God is carnal, a “fleshly mind” [Colossians 3:18]. In terms of our horse analogy: carnal is wild. Carnal is a bucking horse that wants to throw its rider. Salvation and the work of the Spirit must give us a new “nature,” a totally different mindset, in order for us to be able to appreciate what God wants in our lives and we can submit to His desires—what Godet calls “God’s viewpoint.”¹⁸ A transformed mind can perceive these 3 characteristics about God’s will for it:

- ◆ **That it is Good** - Gramma used to say, “Eat your dinner, it’s good for you.” And I always knew what she meant. Follow Jesus, it’s good for you! The best thing we can do as believers is follow the Savior wherever He leads. His will is our spiritual well-being, that we would be holy as He is, that we would find a covenant relation with Him the meaning to life. Pleased and perfected are aspects of total goodness [Philippians 1:6].

- ◆ **That it is Pleasing** - When what pleases God pleases us, we have arrived at a renewed mind. “Delight yourself also in the LORD, And He shall give you the desires of your heart” [Psalm 37:3]. Nothing can possibly bring us happiness or satisfaction or fulfillment except living in His will [Matthew 5:3ff]. Carnal self-interest will hereafter frustrate our every effort to be happy. Carnal is no longer who we are! [1 Peter 2:11]. His will is to give us happiness in Him.

- ◆ **That it is Perfect** - Hebrews 2:10¹⁹ calls what is perfect for Christ what was *fitting* or *proper* to effect our salvation through His death

14. The Spanish reads “porque la apariencia [appearance] de este mundo se pasa.”

15. what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world

16. the cares of this world

17. God made foolish the wisdom of this world

18. Godet. Page 428.

19. For it was *fitting* for Him, for whom *are* all things and by whom *are* all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the captain of their salvation *perfect* through sufferings.

and resurrection. We are being transformed into His image which is the image God intended for us on creation day. We were made for His will! Nothing fits so right as when we are obeying our Lord. His will is to perfect us [Romans 8:29].

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, *which is your* reasonable service - Romans 12:1

Ministry

Is there some gauge that will enable a person to estimate his position with respect to spiritual gifts? Paul answers in the affirmative, pointing to "the measure of faith." - The Expositor's Bible

When Paul wrote to the Corinthian Church about spiritual gifts, the King James Bible uses the word, *severally*, to interpret the individuality of the Spirit's choice in using believers in body ministry. The New Living Translation reads, "He alone decides which gift *each person* should have" [1 Corinthians 12:11]. We do not understand this to mean that each believer takes ownership of the gift in which they are used, as if to say, they could decide where and when to exercise it. The Spirit of God remains always in charge and the believer remains submissive. Paul is simply calling attention to how suited each one is for the ways in which God uses them. We are prepared to serve God in places and ways consistent with the calling He has given each of us. God never asks us to serve Him in ways that realistically we were never equipped in character, in emotional strength and physical endurance, and the like, to serve Him.

Here, in these following verses Paul widens his view, zooms out, to discuss the ministries that suggest these gifts. And as with the gifts, submission to the Spirit is a requirement. We are instruments not owners.

3. *For I say through the grace which is given me to every one among you not to think more highly than you ought to but to think realistically, each of you as God apportions you a measure of faith.*
4. *Because just as we have in one body many members. And all the members do not have the same function,*
5. *Likewise we have many [members] in one body of Christ, and the [body of Christ] are members one of another accordingly.*
6. *And having gifts according to the grace given us distributed, whether prophecy according to the consideration [proportion] of faith,*
7. *Whether service in service [ministering], Whether the teacher in teaching,*
8. *Whether the exhorter in exhortation; He who gives, wholeheartedly, He who administrates or governs with a sense of urgency; He who shows mercy with cheerfulness.*

Verse 3-8: The 7 ministries listed in these verses deserve special attention. Most scholars would probably consider them incomplete since churches are creative developing different kinds of governing bodies that come with new responsibilities that do not seem to conveniently fit inside Paul's paradigm. As the early church, itself, grew, it added ministries not deemed necessary at first.¹ But allow me a gentle pushback. These 7 ministries address all aspects of church need: spiritual, emotional, physical and material.

Although, Paul might have listed only some of many possible ministry opportunities, would God do that? The word (it is a single word) for *such* is found 61 times and translated *such things* 11 times in our New Testament. Paul used it in Romans 2:2-3 [or Galatians 5:21] to alert us to an *incomplete* list of what evil men are capable of. Most incomplete lists are lists of different kinds of sin, but there is 1 "good" list: "But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with *such* sacrifices God is well pleased" [Hebrews 13:16].

The argument has been presented that there are other lists of service to the Lord in Paul's writings which seem to add other equally important "callings."² But I would contend—in the most caring way—that Paul, here, is talking about ministry as distinct from the callings of Ephesians 4 and the Pneumatika [gifts] of I Corinthians 12. The gift of prophecy is not the ministry of the prophet and is to be distinguished just as the gift of faith is from saving faith.

If I may: My calling is who I am: pastor, teacher, evangelist, and administrator, etc. [Ephesians 4:11]. The Spirit's ministry through me would be a gift or grace: Word of knowledge, wisdom, miracles, healings, etc.

Here are listed 7 services: ministries that need to be performed for the health of the church in order that the callings of God might thrive through a vibrant church witness. English sadly does not give us a special word for these 7 but Paul did in verse 1, a *reasonable service*.³

It is more important to define this phrase here than in verse 1 lest we fail to connect the dots and we fail to see that these 7 are the reasonable service spoken of in the giving of ourselves to God's service. Service is performed by those who serve and thus our word becomes a synonym for slave [in the biblical context]. The verb, *to serve*, is only used in the Old Testament as service *to God*.⁴ The word speaks of volunteered service, not compulsory, as the term slave indicates. So, perhaps, because it is freely

1. Compared Acts 2:44 with Acts 6:1.

2. Ephesians 4:11 adds, evangelists and pastors. even the apostolate is not listed in Romans 12 but is in Ephesians 4. Also consider 1 Corinthians 12:6-10 and the charisma.

3. τὴν λογικὴν λατρείαν ὑμῶν

4. Trench. *Synonyms*. Page 125ff.

offered, Paul employed the word reasonable [logical]. *Unlike the word ministry used in Hebrews 8:6 our word service does not speak of an official office. (Jesus as our mediator holds an official title in Hebrews 8:6.) We are only in his service. [like the horse?]*

Each ministry or service is characterized by a calling and certain traits that might be prominent. None of this is to suggest that a human resource group should screen individuals or approach anyone in particular regarding certain needs. This is God's work! As a living sacrifice we are gifted to *God*. Because He has called us and prepared us for service, the choice of interest should be natural. Most Christians do not participate in service to the Lord in this regard only because they have not learned to recognize the call of God on their heart.

Verses 9-16 have additional insight into characteristics of sacrificial service to God. What is important to keep in mind is that these are acts, services, which can be attached to various callings.

- ◆ **Prophecy**, *let us prophesy according to... faith* - Prophets are frank, emphatic, bold and intolerant. In every way and every thing trusting God is sacrosanct and paramount. They cannot sympathize with doubt or weakness in commitment. [Acts 13:46; 15:36-38].
 - **Called:** Prophecy affirms, motivates and calls to accountability. They are likely used in the gift of Prophecy [1 Corinthians 12:29].
 - **Leading:** They are characterized by being "fervent in spirit serving the Lord" [Romans 12:11].
- ◆ **Ministry**, *let us wait on our ministering* - These are deacons who are blessed with physical stamina, a sense of urgency [urgent caring] and a great desire to serve others.
 - **Called:** Deacons tend to the material needs within the Christian community [Acts 6:3]; they might be primarily occupied especially with the care of the poor, widows and orphans. They are likely called to be "Helps" 1 Corinthians 12:28].
 - **Leading:** Paul might say that they are "given to hospitality" [Romans 12:13].
- ◆ **Teaching**, *on teaching* - are detailed, objective, noted for strict adherence to Scripture. "Teachers" [1 Corinthians 12:29].
 - **Called:** Being a teacher is a calling. Teaching is a ministry or sacrificial service to the Lord. These servants of God teach the Word and create a greater interest in and hunger for God's Word to apply the Word to real life situations.
 - **Leading:** Teachers promote a Christ-centric fellowship. They promote unity. Unity is based on the allelous [the

“one another”] principle of Scripture. or being, as Paul wrote, “[of the] same mind toward one another” [**Romans 12:16**].

- ◆ **Exhorting**, *on exhortation* - Exhorters, or those like Barnabas, have a positive and simple message, which almost seems naive and without depth because this is a heart to heart ministry. If you were needing to learn to swim but were afraid of the water, you don't want the prophet, who would just toss you in the deep end and yell admonitions at you. You probably don't want the teacher, who will sign you up for a hundred lessons, the first 10 about showering without fear. You want the exhorter who will step into the shallow end with you and start tossing a beach ball back and forth while he talked to you about floating for fun. And then he will say, “See, how much fun it is, and if you can swim in 3 feet—and you can, you are— you can swim in 9. There is no difference.” Incidentally, this word is also the specific work of the Spirit in a believer's life [John 14:16; 16:8-10].
 - **Called:** Exhorters uplift the heart (emotions); encourage, bring hope, instill faith, offer positive assurance (and not the odds for recovery). They make excellent worship leaders.
 - **Leading:** Their ministry is all about “rejoicing in hope” [**Romans 12:12**]. (Did you know that rejoicing and hope go together? There probably are a few Christians that live with a pessimistic brand of hope. They need the exhorter.)
 - Exhortation means to encourage, comfort, cheer, refresh, console as well as beseech or entreat, and admonish. We sometimes in error see what we should do but without the heart we won't go the distance.
 - Jesus exhorted His followers on the eve of His departure for Calvary “...sorrow hath filled your heart. Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you.” [John 16:6-7].
 - The gift of prophecy has an emotional element to it which, as already noted, desires to stir the stale embers of our zeal [2 Timothy 1:6]. Prophecy can include teaching and comfort, however, but prophetic exhortation suggests the coach's instructions at half time in a losing effort. “But he that prophesies speaks unto men to edification [instruction], and exhortation [admonishment],

and comfort [the ministry of exhortation]." [1 Corinthians 14:3].

- Godet adds, "Edification denotes a new development and a confirmation of faith, by some new view fitted to strengthen the soul. [Exhortation] denotes an encouragement addressed to the will, an energetic impulse capable of affecting an awakening in [faithful commitment to service]. *Comfort* (the exhorter's ministry) points ... to hope ... to soothe the fear ... putting pain to sleep and reviving hope."⁵
- ◆ **Giving**, ... *with simplicity* - Givers are wholehearted and spontaneous, and wise investors, sensitive to financial matters and needs. Simplicity means wholeheart, spontaneous, liberal [Romans 12:8].
 - **Called:** Givers are called to communicate love through sharing of their resources. When you have money to burn, you have money to give to God's work. In the parable of the Unjust Steward, Jesus cautioned, "'And if you have not been faithful in what is another man's, who will give you what is your own?" [Luke 16:18].
 - **Leading:** They lead in "distributing to the needs of the saints" [Romans 12:13].
- ◆ **Ruling**, *with diligence* - Rulers are motivated by vision, able to see the finished product and utilize resources; challenged and willing to endure stress and hardship.
 - **Called:** Rulers or leaders are called to organize the distribution of resources to care for the needs of the Christian Community. Some pastors have been called specifically to rebuild a ministry. Paul also used the word "Administrations" [1 Corinthians 12:28].
 - **Leading:** Leaders have to be "patient in tribulation" [Romans 12:12]. They serve *with diligence* - with a focused urgency, not slack but prompt in administering care. They naturally "make every effort" [2 Peter 1:5].
 - A ruler is more a guardian or one who cares about the people over which they have oversight—as a parent over their children [1 Timothy 3:4]. "And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; And to esteem

5. Godet. *The Epistle to the Corinthians*. Page 267.

them very highly in love for their work's sake. And be at peace among yourselves" 1 Thessalonians 5:12-13].

- ◆ **Showing mercy with cheerfulness** - The merciful are gifted with sensitivity, empathic understanding, and the ability to perceive real need. They are nurses. They are not deacons, who tend to material needs. The merciful address physical suffering. They serve with a smile-cheerfully, joyously, ready to do anything to lessen suffering.
 - **Called:** They have been called to lessen another's pain, hurt, distress. They are most likely (but God knows) to be used in the gift of "Healings" [1 Corinthians 12:28].
 - **Leading:** They lead in real empathy but are able to stay objective. They will "weep with those who weep." [Romans 12:15].
9. *Love without hypocrisy or acting a part. Being horrified of evil, bind to the good.*
10. *With brotherly love be affectionate toward each other, Show preferential honor of one another,*

Three of four words used for love are found here: Agape love, brotherly love and familial love [affection]. Only eros, the common classical term is not found in the New Testament. Eros is a selfish love. We all have it because we were born with it. Babies hug grownups for security not because the adult enjoys it—though they do.

The difference in the love spoken of here is what characterizes Christian love: an abhorrence of all evil and a love for Christians, both individually and in community [fellowship]. It is interesting that the word *righteousness*, The Expositor's Bible Commentary tells us, "which has so dominated the book up to this point [our covenant relationship with God] occurs only once in the closing chapters [Romans 14:17] and then ... in the practical meaning of right relationships with one's fellows."⁶

Verse 9: Hypocrisy - is dissimulation or covering one's true feelings or thoughts, pretending at love.

Verse 10: Show preferential honor - Godet translates this "making others pass before him."⁷ The word means "to go on ahead or before others" and thus "to take the leadership in" honoring and in loving the brethren. King James Version says "preferring one another."

6. Gaebelin, vol X Page 126.

7. Godet, Epistle to the Romans. Page 434.

11. *As regards a sense of urgency, never indolent [lazy] but fervent [hot] in spirit, serving the Lord,*
12. *Rejoicing in hope; patient in trials, persevering in prayer,*

Verse 11: Fervent - "He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water." [John 7:38]. Let the water flow; don't damn up the enthusiasm of the young believers even if they have precious little Bible knowledge. There is a lesson here in Apollos who had much still to learn. "This man had been instructed in the way of the Lord; and being *fervent* in spirit, he spoke and taught accurately the things of the Lord, though he *knew only* the baptism of John" [Acts 18:25].

Verse 12: Rejoicing ... in prayer - The secret to all ministry is this verse. Godet calls these "admirable dispositions."⁸ Hoffmann paraphrased, "in so far as we have cause to *hope*, let us be *joyful*; in so far as we have cause of *pain* [trials], let us hold out [patient]; in so far as the door of *prayer* is open to us, let us continue [persevere] to use it."⁹

For those Christians who do not see the seriousness of such simple admonitions, let them understand that until this foundation of a joyful hope, Christian love and a commitment in prayer is laid, any ministry built will be on sand and it will not survive the storms of opposition that will blow upon it [Matthew 7:24-29].

13. *Sharing in common for the necessities of the saints, pursuing a love [friendship] for strangers.*
14. *Speak well [to God?] of those who pursue [persecute] you, Bless and don't curse [pray down damnation].*
15. *To be joyful with those who are joyful, to cry with those who cry.*
16. *Be of the same mind toward one another, not thinking proud thoughts but associate with those who are humble. Don't be wise in your own conceit.*
17. *Repay no one evil for evil, Make up your mind ahead of time that in all your relations you will do only what is right.;*
18. *If it is within your ability, be at peace with all people;*
19. *Do not be vengeful toward each other, beloved, but give place to anger [let it go], For it is written: "'Vengeance is for me,' says the Lord, 'I shall recompense.'"*
20. *But if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him to drink; For in so doing you will pile on his head [a load] of burning coals.*

8. Ibid. Page 435.

9. Ibid.

21. Do not be conquered by evil but conquer the evil with the good.

Verse 13: love of strangers, i.e. hospitality. Is this a reference to the act of entertaining travelers with whom we were not already acquainted or it is a reference to the christian attitude and heart that should appreciate such an opportunity when God sends them our way? Should we search out the stranger and invite them into our home for a meal or two? Or should we wait for God to bring them to our front door knocking? Gaius was a host to Paul in Rome [Romans 16:23]. One thing we know, that Christians should not be xenophobic.

Verse 14: Pursuing - We are not to confine ourselves to being asked always but must at times seek opportunities to be hospitable to someone passing through our world—even those who pursue you to disrupt and hinder your work for God. We are instructed¹⁰ to *bless* them. Jesus admonished, “Love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you” [Matthew 5:44; Luke 6:27-28].

Bless - A Christian is challenged by such language to do something that probably—at least in part—feels strange and strangely inappropriate. The word *bless* found in Luke but not Matthew probably is synonymous with *pray*. Prayer makes sense, but we are not to ask God to strike them hip and thigh [Judges 15:8] but, at least, pray for their souls. This probably is what Jesus meant by *love*. That is what He did when it was you and I that were His enemies [Colossians 1:21]. Luke defined the persecution as abusive words and actions, spreading lies and accusations as well as adding generally to the stress and burden of the ministry [1 Peter 3:16]. Then Peter added this word of encouragement, which sounds a bit blasé but true: “For it is better, if it is the will of God, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil” [1 Peter 3:17].

Verse 15 To be Joyful - It is not our place to analyze Paul, but what made him think of joy after talking about persecution [Romans 5:3; Philippians 3:10]? The immediate truth here is: “Stop thinking only of yourself and your problems!” That truth is contextual: “I now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up in my flesh what is lacking in the afflictions of Christ, for the sake of His body, which is the church” [Colossians 1:24]. We often admit that we can be thankful to God in spite of trials but that is not Paul here. He is looking at the circumstances which Jesus led him into and he is downright glad about something real and personal happening at the time.

In the language of the Old Testament this *joy* is celebratory [Zephaniah 3:14] and speaks of something from which one receives pleasure. Here is a

10. Paul uses a command here; earlier he spoke in gentler terms using dependent clauses instead of a command. We are encouraged to entertain strangers but admonished to pray for those who hate us.

simple example: When God at the burning bush appeared frustrated with Moses' excuses and consented to have Aaron join him to deliver Israel, God admitted, "he will be *glad in his heart*, to see you" [Exodus 4:14]. This verse needs no further commentary. Again Paul is telling us to get over ourselves and for fellowship's sake participate in another's joy. Unlike pain, joy is reciprocal; joy is contagious. Tell me you never smile when a baby laughs heartily over the simplest thing!

To weep - But we can shed a tear with another in their sorrow. For both joy and weeping, Paul used a form that translates simply "*the act of rejoicing and weeping with others*" Unlike blessing our persecutors, this is *not* a command but assumed as an impulse of the Christian heart that needs to get out.

Verse 16 - One another. Everywhere Paul teaches the allelous¹¹ principle.¹² The idea is self-forgetfulness. Godet reminds us, that "There frequently forms in the congregations ... an aristocratic tendency, every one striving ... to associate with those who, by their gifts or fortune, occupy a higher position. Hence, small coteries,¹³ animated by a proud spirit, and having for their result chilling exclusiveness [exclusivity]. The apostle knows these littlenesses, and wishes to prevent them."¹⁴ If you must have preferences, associate with the humble.

Don't be wise in your own conceit. There is a slight problem with this translation. The word *you* is plural referring either to all the church or the word *in* means *among* yourselves (in cliques). *Wise* means more at perception or how we interpreted our Christian experience [or maybe here, what we are thinking about others, who are *not* in our group]. Godet excoriates these persons, "it is this feeling which leads you to seek contact especially with those who flatter you, and who's familiar discourse does you honor."¹⁵ Comparing Romans 11:25, this time, Paul is not talking about our opinions but our relationships. Paul is on a roll, as we say:

Verse 17-19: Don't repay evil. This is in essence the definition of forgiveness. Some hurts run so deep we might entertain a stray thought or feeling of imagining some form of payback—if not from us from another source. But we will never act upon it either in word or deed. And how

11. The Greek word ἀλλήλους used here for "one another"

12. "comforted together" (Romans 1:12); "kindly affectioned one to another" (Romans 12:10); "same mind one toward another" (Romans 12:16); "edifying another" (Romans 14:19); "likeminded" (Romans 15:5); "Wherefore receive ye one another, as Christ also received us to the glory of God" (Romans 15:7); "admonishing one another" (Romans 15:14); "having the same care one for another [without partiality or favoritism]" (1 Corinthians 12:25); "by love serving one another" (Galatians 5:13); "Bearing ... one another's burdens, and so fulfilling the law of Christ" (Galatians 6:2)" ...and more.

13. a small group of people with shared interests or tastes, especially one that is exclusive of other people - a clique.

14. Godet. Page 437.

15. Ibid.

might we know this? Vengeance (what we just described) is not a Christian trait because forgiveness *is*. Evil's reward is inevitable unless there is true repentance. And that inevitability is not far away because death and judgment are inevitable [Hebrews 9:27].

So, it should be in the believer's new nature to leave such matters to the Judgment of all the universe [Genesis 18:25].

Verse 17: Recompense to no man evil for evil. This is the law of *lex talionis*¹⁶ so common in Torah Law [Exodus 21:23-25; Leviticus 24:19-21]. Jesus fulfilled this law at Calvary when He became our substitute on the Cross. So He could teach us "'You have heard that it was said, 'Eye for eye, and tooth for tooth.' But I tell you do not resist an evil person. If anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to them the other cheek also. And if anyone wants to sue you and take your shirt, hand over your coat as well. If anyone forces you to go one mile, go with them two miles. Give to the one who asks you, and do not turn away from the one who wants to borrow from you" [Matthew 5:38-42].

Make up your mind ahead of time. The King James Version reads: *Provide* things honest. The word means to think ahead of time or what we might say in our own colloquial way: *Think first!* Godet wrote, "Preoccupy yourself with good things."¹⁷ Solomon is credited with saying this first: "So shalt thou *find favour* and good understanding in the sight of God and man" [Proverbs 3:4].¹⁸ The Old Testament phrase *good understanding* speaks of such "wise insight." Perhaps, we could speak of astuteness but with a christian flavor: having or showing an ability to accurately assess situations or people and not turn this to [personal advantage, but] to the good. The Expositor's Bible Commentary says, "conduct of believers ought not to be regulated by habit, but rather that each situation that holds prospect for a witness ... be weighed so that the action taken will not bring unfavorable reflection on the Gospel."¹⁹

Paul's next words reveal the direction of his thoughts.

Verse 18: Live peaceably because this is what a child of God *is*—not just does! . "Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God." [Matthew 5:9]

Verse 19: Give place to wrath - refrain from vengeance. Let God take care of it (whatever it is that has you thinking of arming yourself)! "[Jesus] who, when He was reviled,²⁰ did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges

16. the law of retaliation, whereby a punishment resembles the offense committed in kind and degree

17. Ibid. Page 436.

18. Paul borrowed from the Septuagint Greek translation: "you shall provide things honest in the sight of God and man."

19. Gaebelein. vol X Page 134.

20. They were in his face yelling abusive things.

righteously;" [1 Peter 2:23].²¹ If the opportunity arises to do good for even your enemy- *carpe diem*, seize the opportunity!

Verses 20-21: If - we are not encouraged to go looking for such opportunities but when they arise take them as God's moment to "heap coals of fire [benefits] on their heads." God will reward you [Proverbs 25:22]. Is this forgiveness? Is this "conquering evil by doing good"?

It is proverbial: "Don't let the past, rob you of the future." Nelson Mandela noted, 'Resentment is like drinking poison and then hoping it will kill your enemies.'

Jesus said it best. I call this the 614th injunction in Scripture, the one remaining, after the first 613 were nailed to the Cross [Ephesians 2:15]. Here is number 614: Matthew 6:14, Forgiveness: "Forgive us as we forgive them."

Godet completes the thought, "Such is the masterpiece of love."²²

Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer, -

Romans 12:12

Be not overcome with evil, but overcome evil with good. - Romans 12:21

21. 1 Corinthians 4:12 And we labor, working with our own hands. Being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we endure;

22. Godet. Page 439.

Romans 13

The Life of the Believer as a Member of the State.

For those who cherish their political freedom, who live under a small government that exists only to protect and not control, that is not taxing its citizens into a penury dependency, or telling them how they can and cannot live, Paul's instruction in Romans 13, to submit to such authorities, is probably understandable. It sounds reasonable because political independence and the freedom to live one's life as they please do not generally bring on prayerful tears for deliverance. But for those living under a tyrannical power, like the Israelites of old had in Egypt, prayer brings hope. Believers especially need to know that God knows, as He testified, "I know their sorrows" [Exodus 3:7].

Some may, incorrectly, think Paul was a proponent of human injustice because he didn't speak up against such tyranny. He only admonished prayer—not curses. He went so far as to implicate God in political despotism as if we should be grateful! "I urge," Paul wrote Timothy, "then, first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for all people—for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. This is good, and pleases God our Savior" [1 Timothy 2:1-3]. Did I hear this correctly: "First of all prayer with thanksgiving for those in authority ...pleases God"? If I may say so: I am only glad this chapter has only 14 verses [God forgive me]!

Was Paul imagining a form of government more benevolent? Was this part of the vision God gave him [2 Corinthians 12:2-4]¹ during those silent years in Arabia when he received the message of a salvation by grace [Galatians 1:16-17]?² This was when God clarified to him and all of us, "My grace is enough for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness" [2 Corinthians 12:9]. Somehow, tribulation would never be a big deal to him other than having the undeserved honor of sharing in our Savior's

1. I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago... was caught up to the third heaven. He was caught up into paradise and heard things too sacred to be put into words, things that a person is not permitted to speak.

2. to reveal his Son in me so that I could preach him among the Gentiles, I did not go to ask advice from any human being, nor did I go up to Jerusalem to see those who were apostles before me, but right away I departed to Arabia, and then returned to Damascus

sufferings [Philippians 3:10].³ A person of this mindset is most likely to discourage us from arming ourselves against a government we think is—somehow—hurtful.

On top of all this Paul saw himself as a citizen of heaven [Philippians 1:27 NLT]⁴ and just a stranger here [Hebrews 11:13].⁵ Was he shutting out reality? To him all governments are temporary [2 Corinthians 4:18]⁶ and, beside, he longed soon to be with His Lord? [2 Corinthians 5:18 NIV].⁷ He resigned himself to be God's sacrificial servant [Romans 8:36]⁸ and, little doubt, this had to season his view of things, including tyrannical leaders. In Paul's mind, the eternal God he served would bring judgment and he was going to leave the matter to Him [Romans 12:19 RSV].⁹

But there is another reason Paul asked us to live peaceable with all men—no revolutions, please. If we are following Christ—and we should be as believers and His servants—we are by nature “peacemakers” [Matthew 5:9]. Jesus, as already noted, never got into a shouting match or a shoving match with His opponents much less the Roman government—which, incidentally, eventually nailed Him to a cross [Isaiah 53:7]. And this is Paul's point, that we should live the Gospel message and be what we are becoming, holy as He is.

Never compromise your witness or contradict your testimony of our Lord's salvation. This is not passivity or only playing defense. “They *triumphed* over him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony; they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death.” [Revelation 12:11 NIV].

So Paul writes:

1. ***Let every one submit to the authorities [higher powers over them] because there is no authority [power] other than God's. And all existing authorities have been ordained [appointed] by God.***

3.

That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death;

4. Above all, you must live as citizens of heaven, conducting yourselves in a manner worthy of the Good News about Christ.

5. These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of *them*, and embraced *them*, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.

6. While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen *are* temporal; but the things which are not seen *are* eternal.

7. We are confident, I say, and would prefer to be away from the body and at home with the Lord.

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

9. Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God; for it is written, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord."

2. *The result is this: whoever resists authority, opposes God's ordinance; those who resist shall receive judgment.*

Verse 1: Authorities, higher powers - Higher powers would not be my choice of words. These are rulers who see themselves or are recognized as prominent. Yes they are "over" a nation or group of people but they are not in power. The word power is not here. Who is in power? "No power but God," the King James reads.

Paul uses here the word *authority* and not *power*. Authority can be usurped; power cannot be. The word *power* speaks to one's ability to do such and such. Authority does not; some authorities have been historically seen as incompetent. Paul was saying what Isaiah saw, "I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up" [Isaiah 6:1]. God has not abdicated His throne and He never will!

Appointed - Scholars say that government is a divine institution because God made us social beings and every ruler is, in effect, given a divine dispensation. Even the most corrupt leader, in order to hold on to his or her control, must provide some protection from anarchy or wars they cannot win and this means protecting the people from themselves and other tyrants. A world of tyrants means mutual destruction if anyone starts anything. Beside, no one is going to start anything that God cannot or will not finish!

I find it noteworthy that one of Jesus' disciples, Simon, was a Zealot [Luke 6:15], a revolutionary, until Jesus called him. He was among the 120 at Pentecost [Acts 1:13] which tells us he forsook his violent ways to follow the Giver of peace [Ephesians 2:14]. It was said of our Lord that He "refused to endorse their [the Zealots] use of violence."¹⁰

Some think Paul was addressing a current political situation. The Jewish community was divided over the Messiahship of Jesus and that meant a resurgence of zealot activity. Paul choose to defuse this tension in Rome by calling for allegiance to the Roman government as peacemakers. But then again, some will say anything to sweep this portion of Scripture under the historical rug.

Verse 2: Judgment - The King James reads "damnation." But we get our word "crime" from the Greek word: a judgment against. This is logical: if government [as an institution] is God appointed and you or I, through civil disobedience, set ourselves against that government (I am sure Paul meant outside the provision of law) then we have set ourselves against God. It is safe to say that "Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord" [Romans 12:19] is absolute! To be blunt, vengeance is not a Christian trait! [This does not mean you cannot vote them out of office.]

10. Gaebelein. vol X Page 136.

Is this what Jesus meant: “Put up again thy sword into his place: for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword.” [Matthew 26:52]? Scholars say that God will avenge His institution. Was the American revolution wrong!? Paul appeared to be admonishing the Christians of Rome to submit to the emperor whom many thought answered to the antichrist of the Revelation!

Defiance of government is not only dangerous but futile and quite unwise. “No leadership” is worse than “bad leadership.” Ironically, it is the patriot that will complain the loudest against unfavorable leadership. But patriotism means it is not the government they fault but the people who run it. This distinction is not made here by Paul.

But, goes the argument, *submission* is not *worship*!

Another Perspective:

But let’s look at this from another perspective. Solomon wrote, “A man’s heart devises his way: but the Lord directs his steps.” [Proverbs 16:9]. Let’s pick up Isaiah again: In the year King Uzziah died [after reigning for 40 years in Judah and the nation was, consequently, in political turmoil] Isaiah had a vision: “I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne....” [Isaiah 6:1]. God never abdicated the throne, for if He ever did, He would be nullifying His first commandment that no one take His place in the heart and lives of His people—you and me [Exodus 20:3]. Uzziah was never over Israel; he only appeared so in a political sense. God was! And is and will always be! [1 Corinthians 15:28].¹¹

If any ruler were not under the oversight of God, how would God be—well—*God*. Our faith in Him rests on His Supremacy over all the circumstances of our lives. Thomas a Kempis wrote: “*For the resolutions of the just depend rather on the grace of God than on their own wisdom; and in Him they always put their trust, whatever they take in hand. For man proposes, but God disposes; neither is the way of man in his own hands*”.¹²

Here is one of my favorite scriptures. “You wilt keep *him* in perfect peace, *whose* mind is stayed on You: because he trusts in You” [Isaiah 26:3]. Can you see the relevance?

3. ***For rulers [government authorities] are not a terror to [people who do] good but wrong [doers]. So do you wish to fear the authority? No! Then do good and you will have praise of the same [the authority].***

11. And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all.

12. His celebrated ‘Of the Imitation of Christ’, is the second most widely read Christian text after the Bible itself.

4. *Because it [the authority] is God's minister for good to you; but if [ever] you do wrong, be afraid! For it [the authority] does not carry the sword [the symbol of punishment] in vain; because it is God's minister, judgment unto [leading to] wrath [punishment] to whomever does wrong.*
5. *For this reason, it is necessary to submit, not only because of punishment but for conscience sake.*

Verse 3-5: Good ... wrong - are determined by law. "The state is called to encourage the doing of good and to repress the doing of evil."¹³ But what happens when, as Isaiah prophesied, "[they] call evil good, and good evil" [Isaiah 5:20]? "An unjust law or a tyrannical power make [the good] appear falsely as evil."¹⁴ When anyone follows the law, the state should consider them on that basis praiseworthy, but what if the government is corrupt?

Peter and John, after a reprimand from the Sanhedrin to cease preaching in the name of Jesus as Messiah, confessed, "We cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard." [Acts 4:20]. Is this an argument then for civil disobedience? No! Paul here can promote civil *obedience* and respect for authority for 4 reasons:

- ◆ One, because it is reasonable to assume that no society would ever intentionally promote its own dissolution. Even when the means seems destructive, like in a revolution, the end sought is not its own destruction.
 - Here might be the best place to argue for a relationship between Church and State [secular government] that avoids 2 extremes.
 - A separation of Church and state should not suggest that the church is holy and the state evil. This would argue for no relation at all, which Paul cannot be meaning. Many of the persons in his closing chapter [16] have names that tradition suggests may have been of Caesar's household. Should the Church and state oppose one another?
 - Follow this logic: In Galatians 5:17 Paul told us that "the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another" which seems to suggest that the *body* has no use to God. But we know this be be untrue. If that were the case, how could Paul

13. Godet. Page 443.

14. Ibid.

admonish you to yield your members [your *body*] as instruments unto righteousness" [Romans 6:13]? We should no more villainize, ipso facto, the management of the state than the members of the body.

- Nor should we "confound"¹⁵ the 2, as if to put the government in the hands of clergy or ordaining politicians. Must a governor be Christian? Is it wrong to elect an atheist to federal office? Should the Church have a greater voice in the administration of justice or should government decide what is or isn't moral? Paul kept the 2 distinct and separate. The state works on law, the Church on grace; the state deals in justice; the Church in love and forgiveness.
 - And just for the record, Cyrus was anointed by God [Isaiah 45:1] and God could get involved in politics when it served His purpose regarding His people [Exodus 4:21; Daniel 2].
- The relationship between them depends on their distinct functions in society. The Church should function to worship God and promote the Gospel message. It also deals in the sphere of morals since the Church must explain *sin*. The state to ignore the Church's role in society is to create a church of itself, a government run religious institution, even if it is not so named. Neither state nor Church should be described as evil.
- James Madison in Federalist #56 wrote, "The aim of every political Constitution is, or ought to be, first to obtain for rulers men who possess most wisdom to discern, and most virtue to pursue, the common good of the society; and in the next place, to take the most effectual precautions for keeping them virtuous whilst they continue to hold their public trust."¹⁶ But this isn't always the case, sadly. But again, God is still on His throne!
- ◆ Secondly, and most importantly, since God remains very much enthroned over His creation, Paul taught that there is no reason to revolt in disobedience, else we might find ourselves against God.

15. Godet's word

16. Hamilton, Alexander. The Federalist Papers [with Biographical Introduction] . Neeland Media LLC. Kindle Edition.

Government exists in His providence. They are God's ministers [Verse 4]. In Romans 12:18

- Paul recognized that some situations are inherently confrontational or adversarial because we cannot discard a life of holiness to placate someone offended by our witness [Acts 4:19].
- There is a line of reasoning that says it is not the man but the office I defend or respect. Some are more adept at making this distinction than others. It is not the government I am honoring, but God who sees no threat to His authority over it.
- ◆ Thirdly, **Verse 5**: “for conscience sake” not just to avoid a punishment. Conscience speaks of a self-awareness. Paul seems to be saying that, all along, we appreciate some form of Government. They say of our government, “It might not be perfect, but it is the best around.
- ◆ A Fourth reason for not getting involved in opposing the government is the time [Verse 11]. There is simply no time for such activity when our calling is the Gospel not a rebellion or revolution. For Paul, the focus was always singularly the Cross [1 Corinthians 2:2].

The principle by which all Christians must live is this: The Gospel message—which we proclaim with our lives as well as our voices—*transcends* culture. That is, to say simply, that anyone in any culture can be saved by calling on the Lord [Acts 2:21; Romans 10:13]. But culture is another matter because it is definable in terms of its language, history, art, etc. and not the Gospel. What if these characteristics conflict with our message! Then, we hold to the message with our lives [Verses 13-14].¹⁷

6. *This explains why also we pay tribute [taxes]. They are God's ministers for this very purpose, to maintain public order and for the general well-being of the people].*¹⁸
7. *Pay up everything owed. To whom you owe taxes [per-capita, property] , pay your taxes. Use [poll] tax to whom it is due; To those in authority that ask for your respect, show it to them; highly value the government you are under.*

Verse 6: Tribute - in today's world this might be property tax. It was also a per capita tax which could be representative of the modern income tax. Nehemiah and the Jews who returned from the Babylonian captivity were

17. See Appendix: Redefining Society.

18. Godet. Page 445.

still required to pay taxes. In their poverty, they had to borrow the money—or owe it to the king. Matthew Henry commented, “Perhaps it was a poll-money that was required, and then, their sons and their daughters being many, it rose the higher. The more they had ... the more they had to pay.”¹⁹ Ahasuerus levied a tribute upon the people, which was exacted in the form of forced labor, i.e. serfdom [Esther 10:1].

The Old Testament term also refers to a “conquered population”²⁰ There is a second meaning which is interesting: *despair*, coming from the word meaning to melt away. A tax bringing despair?²¹ An interesting word association. Solomon exacted tribute of Israel [1 Kings 9:21] but when his son, Rehoboam, tried it, the people stoned the tax collector [2 Chronicles 10:18].²² Don’t laugh! Here the word used means “an indirect tax on goods.”²³ Perhaps, one of these is comparable to our sales tax or a consumption or use tax but, as they say, a tax by any other name is still a tax.

The Romans in Jesus’ day had a poll tax associated with the census [Matthew 22:19] which Paul did not mention here.

Ministers - a term which designates an office with a portfolio with specific governmental duties assigned. As we have already noted, this word is distinguished from the word service [12:1] or ministry [12:7] because this word speaks of an office held rather than humble volunteered service.

Verse 7: I took liberties at interpreting this verse and why not: “honor ...all men in office,” says Godet.²⁴ Peter said, Do it “for the Lord’s sake ... Live as those who are free to do only God’s will at all times. Show respect for everyone. Love Christians everywhere. Fear God and honor the government.” [1 Peter 2:13, 17 Living Bible]. Doing anything for the Lord can mean a number of things, all of which are applicable: Do it because He would want you to. Do it to sanctify His name among others that they will see your good works and glorify God. Do it as unto Him because your relationship is with Him and not doing it means rebellion and rebellion is sin and that disrupts that relationship. Do it because you are following Jesus, the Great peacemaker. Do it because all this is temporary and your citizenship is in Heaven. I was told once on a new job to keep my head down and quietly go about my job. Politics being what they are, I could draw attention and if misunderstood ... [you fill in this blank]. Do it because it is the godly thing to do, the right thing to do, the only thing to

19. see https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/mhc/Neh/Neh_005.cfm?a=418004

20. BDB Page 587.

21. Job, though a rich man, seemed to empathically understand the connection: “To him that is afflicted [in despair] pity should be shewed from his friend” [Job 6:14].

22. There is no suggestion in this tidbit of Biblical history.

23. Thayer. Page 620.

24. Godet. Page 445.

do, so you can continue to redeem the time and let God use you in His harvesting of souls!

8. *Be in debt to no one for any reason except to love one another; for he who loves another [of a different class or race] fulfills law.*
9. *To explain: don't commit adultery, don't kill; don't steal; don't lust [for what is another's] and if there is any other command it is summed up in this: love your neighbor as yourself.*
10. *Love will not wrong a neighbor; that is why [we say] love fulfills law..*

Verse 8: Another - This is not our word *allelous*.²⁵ This is the simple word “other” but since Greek has 2 words for ‘other’ we must differentiate this word from the other *other*. This *other* is speaking of another of a *different* kind. The example was given of a bow tie which is a tie but an other tie of a different kind from a clip on or the regular necktie.²⁶ If I had a necktie and wanted another of the same kind, another necktie, I would use the other word *other*—not used in this verse. The word *other* here [of a different kind] suggests categorizing people: by race or class, or some other designation. I have found that persons of another culture tend to be “different” as do some with special career interests and goals. We are, in short, all “others,” all different.

We are to love ‘the other.’²⁷ This philosophy of the *Other* is powerful because it encourages us to rethink our attitude toward difference. It acknowledges there are real differences between us but tells us that’s OK. Instead of getting caught up stigmatizing the things that set us apart, we should be open to learning how to embrace each other in Christian fellowship – no matter how much or how little of ourselves we see in the other person.

Such an idea seems to challenge the Pauline admonishment: “Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers.” [2 Corinthians 6:14] or David’s observation in Psalm 1:1 that happiness depends on disassociating from anyone purposing to do evil. But ‘the other’ refers here to the acceptance of people regardless of ethnicity—not without regard to evil. If there is any doubt, read on:

25. See Romans 12:16

26. I understand that there are 8 different kinds of tie.

27. The Other is a term used to capture the ways other people are different from us. It’s also used to describe the people who we keep distant from us because we decide they’re not like us. The process of Othering occurs when we turn fellow humans into abstract entities we can distance ourselves from or treat as less-than-human. [THE ETHICS CENTRE <https://ethics.org.au/ethics-explainer-the-other/>]

Verse 9-10: These injunctions should be recognizable as part of the Decalogue [Exodus 20:13-17]: Do no wrong or evil. The larger point is that the 10 commandments are fulfilled by love, and taken together with the fact that God is love [1 John 4:8, 16], we might view the commandments as a profile of God's character.

Perhaps, we might say, "we are capable of loving the *other* because He, God, first loved *us*" [1 John 4:19]. He poured it out (of His heart) into ours [Romans 5:5].

Verse 8 What did God expect us to do for others that He did not first do for us? We can now say this: *Pay it forward!*

11. *And knowing what time it is, that now already [it is high time] to wake up out of sleep, because now is our salvation nearer than when we believed [came to faith].*
12. *The night is far spent [is over] and the day is near [here]. Renounce the works of darkness, and put on the apparel of light [how believers should behave].*
13. *As one walks [lives] decently [properly for a believer] in the day [light], not rioting or frolicking about drunk. Not sleeping around, living immorally [in wantonness], not starting fights and stirring up trouble.*
14. *But put on the Lord Jesus Christ and do not be preoccupied with the body [carnal desires] to excite them to lust.*

Verse 11: "The hour is solemn; time is short; we shall soon be no longer able to labor on the work of our sanctification; there is not a moment to lose."²⁸

Verse 12: Night ..light [day] - There is a curious correlation between natural night and illegal and immoral activity; between daylight and wholesome activity. Plato is credited with saying, "We can easily forgive a child who is afraid of the dark; the real tragedy of life is when men are afraid of the light." It was said of the Savior's incarnation, "The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world" [John 1:9]. Good works that glorify the Father are accordingly symbolized by light: "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven" [Matthew 5:16].

Verses 13-14: Wantonness - There was in Bible days a town in Pisidia called Selge that was infamous for their vices²⁹ that a word was invented for wanton, lawless, insolence behavior. Aselgeia is the word *wantonness*

28. Godet. Page 449.

29. The etymology of ἀσελγεία is wrapped in obscurity; some going so far to look for it as to Selge, a city of Pisidia, whose inhabitants were infamous for their vices; while others derive it from θελγειν [cheat, beguile], probably the same word as the German 'schwelgen [revelry]: - Trench.

[immorality]³⁰ in **verse 13**. Paul's letters disclose some of the most abhorrent evils active even within the churches!

The Greeks during a military tour in Biblical times would take shore leave on the island of Lesbos, even the married men, because the girls welcomed them. Paul needed to point out how repulsive and shameful such acts should be considered within the body of Christ [Romans 6:21; 2 Corinthians 4:2].

So, what does a Christian do when a society is sanctioning immorality and violence? What should a believer do when a community—which is a microcosm of the society at large—supports or promotes what Paul admonishes against in **verse 13**: “frolicking about drunk, sleeping around, living immorally, starting fights, and rioting.” Believers should renounce such behavior [verse 12]. Paul admonished them instead to “put on Christ”³¹ [verse 14] “and be found in Him, not having [their] righteousness, ... but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith” [Philippians 3:9].

Verse 14: Preoccupied - The King James Version reads “provision” which is difficult to explain. Most English translations follow suit and probably mean “to envision first in one’s mind” And some use the word “think.” This happens often when Greek attaches the prefix, *pro* [pre or before], to a word or that meaning is attached to the word, that, in our language, doesn’t seem to require it.³² So, I agree with Godet that the better translation is “to be preoccupied³³ [mentally] with a thought.

Paul is not disparaging good hygiene or exercise or a proper diet. Taking care of your body is not the issue here. This word, preoccupied, means more at being occupied with forms of pleasure seeking to satisfy certain lustful desires. In simple words: we shouldn’t be dwelling on such things we know we should not do or cannot have [Philippians 4:8].

Satisfying physical needs within moral boundaries is not at issue here. Lust, on the other hand, is never satisfied [as one Greek word says: “wanting more, getting more, having more, wanting more...” and the cycle continues]. “So put to death the sinful, earthly things lurking within you. Have nothing to do with sexual immorality, impurity, lust, and evil desires.

30. The Expositors translates this word as “debauchery.”

31. The best study for putting on Christ is following Him and this is the beatitudes.

32. An example is the word φθάνω [phthano] meaning “to come before” and thus “to precede or anticipate” So in 1 Thessalonians 4:15 reads, “We shall not get the start of [precede] those who have fallen asleep.” Romans 9:31 Israel, pursuing the law of righteousness, did not arrive at the law of righteousness; The Greek phrase “if ever he preceded to die” ἐάν φθάσῃ τελευτῆσαι translates “if he dies before his time” [Wisdom 4:7]. Our word here is to *mind before* and like the words to foreknow and to predestinate we need to exercise theological caution when arguing for or against the doctrine of eternal security. [See Romans 8:29].

33. Godet. Page 451.

Don't be greedy, for a greedy person is an idolater, worshiping the things of this world." [Colossians 3:5 NLT]

So, we are discouraged from spending an inordinate amount of our day dwelling on the things we would do in secret and away from peering eyes while attempting to gratify ourselves. This may include: entertaining erotic thoughts, or daydreaming about the next drug fix, or simply living life hungry for a junk food break, to name a few.

But what exactly is Paul saying? "A preoccupied mind would thus stir up or awaken these lustful desires" or that "one so preoccupied is seeking to satisfy existing lustful desires"? Maybe both!

An interesting anecdote is found in St. Augustine's 8th book of *Confessions* in which these 2 verses [13-14] occasioned his conversion to Christ. Verse 13 so accurately described his past that he wanted to put on Christ [verse 14]. And indeed did. Godet tells us that thereby these verses acquired a sort of "historical celebrity."³⁴

**But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to
fulfill its lusts. - Romans 13:14**

34. Ibid.

Romans 14

We must learn the difference between religious piety and heartfelt godliness, between legalism and following Christ, between a faith imposed and a faith owned. And we are no substitute for the Spirit in teaching another believer this distinction.

The ceremonies connected to the Exodus now would no longer be the supreme example of God's power and salvation. Passover would take on a new meaning: "For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us" [1 Corinthians 5:7]. The Temple sacrifices would become, ceremonially speaking, obsolete under the New Covenant ratified by the Savior's death. "In that He says, A new covenant," The writer to the Hebrews exclaims, "He has made the first obsolete. Now what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away" [Hebrews 8:13]. The Moral law could be summarized now in a word—love, agape love, "the fulfillment of the law" [Romans 13:10].

So, when God shared with Paul all about a salvation by grace through faith, we should marvel at the apostle's restraint in not tossing Judaism away outright. Paul's wisdom was seen in connecting the faith of his Jewish brethren with the moral law which even proselytes to Judaism found practical [such as the Decalogue] and those aspects that supported a simple, healthy, lifestyle, such as, what to eat and what not to eat. It is the view of some scholars that the Essenes, in particular, could be referenced in Chapter 14 as examples of "weak" brethren.¹ An example might be Leviticus 10:9 where Jewish priests were forbidden from drinking wine. The Essenes forbid all from drinking wine, prompting Paul to remark, "It is good [not] to... drink wine ... by which your brother stumbles or is offended" [Romans 14:21].

Paul called God's grace "a mystery" [Romans 11:25]. It is a marvel we understand as much as we do about whatever passion seemed to drive God to such extremes as to require His only son's crucifixion to save us [John 3:16]. 613 commandments after awhile might become second nature to us following them, but that was, according to Paul, not their purpose... ever!. "The law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith" [Galatians 3:24].

Religious people, however, seem to find reason to replace Torah law with a form of legalism, maybe to give spirituality and worship a form: a ritual, a list of do's and don'ts, or an orchestrated routine that more than

1. Godet. Page 453.

symbolizes devotion to God but becomes the very meaning of spirituality. Piety has replaced godliness.

With the crucifixion and resurrection of the Savior came revolutionary changes in the interpretation of Torah Law. 613 laws, 365 negative, 245 positive, both ceremonial and moral, have been, for religious purposes, at least for most Gentiles (happily) discontinued in one way or another.

To miss a Wednesday night Bible study, I was informed as a youth, was next to blasphemous. At least that was my interpretation because we were told that this service was for those who truly loved God and not just church. So when my wife and I, newlyweds, skipped out for a jaunt to the market one Wednesday and got a flat tire, I knew it was God's punishment. Well, it wasn't. I know that now. Wednesday night was the *form* [piety] not the *substance* of our love for God [godliness].

In writing to the Romans, Paul dedicated chapter 14 to this one subject: distinguishing between the form and the substance. He would not condemn religious form because every idea, even our worship, must have some expression, and often that is how we know what worship is [3 songs and a chorus]. A table is a table not because it is made of wood (it might be metal), nor because it has legs (ask the Japanese) but because of its function to eat off or whatever else we use a table for. We must discover in our own experience what the difference is between the table and its function, between a church service and our worship while in it.

In Paul's world, some believers were strict vegetarians as part of their act of obedience to God; but someone probably brought a ham to a fellowship banquet. There were a number of injunctions about eating in Torah law. I counted over 100 references to food.² I am glad Paul addressed this conundrum. It may not be food with us; it might be a question of wine, though, or a thousand other do's and don'ts; so, this chapter is most relevant if you can plug in our religious world as you read.

Piety can become legalism, but godliness correctly understood is liberating. The solution is faith *owned* not faith *imposed*. But it is a matter of understanding the importance of God's gift of our faith [2 Peter 1:1].

The argument over eating becomes for us an example of the division that results when Christ is not the center of our fellowship. "It was in the love-feasts that the difference broke out," Godet wrote, "and gave rise to certain painful manifestations to which the apostle desired to put an end."³

1. *Accept [into fellowship] him who is weak in the faith, not to argue opinions.*

2. See the appendix on the Injunctions.

3. Ibid. Page 454.

2. *One person, on the one hand, believes he can eat anything [any meats], on the other, another who is weak is a vegetarian [eats herbs].*

Verse 1: Accept - or “receive” means to “grant one access to one’s heart with kindness, into friendship.”⁴ It is a warm term, perhaps, best understood in John 14:3 where Jesus, speaking as our bridegroom coming for His bride, assures us, “...I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and *receive you to Myself*; that where I am, there you may be also.”

To argue opinion - “enter into discussion of opinions.”⁵ The King James reads “doubtful disputations” but it is more at: debates [over religion] based on reason [and not revelation]. In the New Testament this is always understood in “the service of evil.”⁶ It never leads to a good place in terms of peace and fellowship. “The LORD knows the thoughts [disputes and debates] of the wise, that they are futile” [1 Corinthians 3:20].⁷

Verse 2: Believes - Everything now for a Christian is a matter of faith not reasoning—a difficult concept to comprehend and practice because we are, thanks to the Ancient Greeks, trained in logic and science.

Every worldview, upon which we base the interpretation of life and perceive the value of each experience, is based solely on a faith either in God or in something or someone else. Not even an atheist can escape the fact that logic is the house of our thoughts and not its foundation. If they have no other god, they consider themselves that god and their faith is in themselves [Romans 1:21]. It was with an inspired wisdom that Peter in his second epistle began with *faith*, adding to it all the essentials of a godly life. Faith, therefore, in the life of a believer, must be encouraged and not debated, not challenged, not questioned.

3. *The one who eats [meat] should never treat with disdain the one who is a vegetarian. And whoever is vegetarian should not criticize the person who eats [anything including meat]. Because God accepts him [into fellowship].*
4. *Who are you who criticizes another person’s servant; by his own master he stands or falls; and he stands, because the Lord is able to keep him standing [holds him up]*⁸
5. *Furthermore, one esteems [distinguishes or decides] days [one more important than another] and to another all days [are the same].*

4. Thayer. Page 548.

5. Godet. Page 454.

6. Ibid.

7. See also, Romans 1:21.

8. Psalm 119:116 Uphold me according to Your word, that I may live; And do not let me be ashamed of my hope.

Each should be persuaded in his own mind [what is important for faith].

6. *Whoever thinks of a day [in a way that celebrates a religious event]; does it as unto the Lord; And whoever eats [certain foods] eats as unto the Lord [as an expression of his faith], for he is being thankful to God; and whoever eats [everything] eats [as] to God and is also thankful to God.*
7. *Furthermore, not one of you lives unto himself and no one dies alone [your death has meaning, too].*
8. *So, if [while] we are living, let us live for the Lord, so when we die, inevitably, we might indeed die for Him. Therefore we are the Lord's [property].⁹*
9. *For this reason, then, Christ died and lived, in order that He might have dominion over death [dying] and life [living].*
10. *And you, who criticizes [stands in judgment] over your brother, or you, too, who belittles your brother! [who are you!] Indeed, everyone will stand before the Bema of God!,*
11. *For it is written: "'I live,' says the Lord, 'every knee will bow before me and every tongue will profess [pay homage, give praise] to God.'"*
12. *For each of us will give account to God concerning [how we lived] !*

Verse 4: Servant - This word means "a domestic." Even though this word can mean simply a slave, it carries the nuance of a servant who is treated as one of the family.¹⁰ When Paul emphasizes that this servant "belongs" to someone's family, he is discouraging meddling. It is not simply a matter of debating Scripture but now has become personal to God, this weak brother's true Master.

Holds him up. Consider Isaiah 26:3 which affirms that they who lean on the Lord for such support will stay standing because God can be trusted. We lean; He holds us up. This speaks of our "inward relation to Christ."¹¹

Verse 5: Days -are Jewish feast days, which suggests that the Christian love-feasts¹² are one context in which these debates played out. How important are the Jewish celebrations, or should they be, to a new believer? The argument is *not* about the day of the week for worship, Saturday or Sunday, which used to be an important matter for us. I had an elder who

9. Ephesians 1:14 the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory.

10. Trench. *Synonyms*. Page 33

11. Godet. Page 455.

12. Jude 12.

argued in favor of having all services in the church building—none in homes.

Distinguishes - To one believer certain days are holy days; to another all days are holy. Paul's word means "to judge" which suggests that the religious significance—in the heart of some believers—is worth defending against anyone who belittles its importance. Many sermons are based on the calendar date but I tended to honor only Christmas and Easter. I resigned one church on Mother's day! [I know: that is going too far.]

Either way, celebrating the day is a personal conviction, an "owned" faith or belief which should be practiced, not debated. Pastors must represent a variety of beliefs here with great caring. When, in one church, I substituted grape juice for the communion wine, I did it gradually, each month a little more juice and a little less wine, until the wine was completely replace. One sweet elderly lady, for whom I remained a pastor [she told me] even after I left the church, was grateful that I never changed it. I never told her. Why would I?

Persuaded in his own mind - "So let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or sabbaths" [Colossians 2:16]. Being persuaded [not by another but by one's own conscience] is a state of conviction leaving no room for hesitation or doubt. This is "owned" faith as opposed to a faith or belief that is imposed upon one through debate or guilt. Did you know that there is no Biblical word for "the feeling of guilt." [There are 3 words for shame and, oh, a word for liability, but none of this is relevant here.] Paul talks about the conscience which speaks to a self-awareness.

Paul, himself, had to correct his own conscience lest it would be misled and mislead him. Paul almost defensively exploded, "'Conscience,' I say, not your own, but that of the other. For why is my liberty judged by another man's conscience? But if I partake with thanks, why am I evil spoken of for the food over which I give thanks?" [1 Corinthians 10-29-30].

Verse 6: A faith that is owned of one fully persuaded of its truth, now becomes a faithful servant of God. Yet, some Christians fail to see how this is possible if another's interpretation of some scripture seems skewed or biased or of a personal interpretation or just plain "wrong" and not in accordance with "sound" doctrine. Logic suggests that if the Spirit convicts and teaches how could anyone be spiritually blessed with a different doctrine! But we often fail to understand that

- a. We are at different places in our spiritual journey [Romans 14:1]. Sanctification is said to be a *process*.
- b. Some must reconcile not just with God but—in another sense—with a religious past, a religious interpretation of truth that now needs to be redefined or re-interpreted [Romans 12:2].
- c. The Spirit's work is not a set curriculum for all but more a counseling opportunity applying God's Word to each of our

situations as we go and grow. Because salvation is a faith walk with Christ, a relationship, the Spirit knows which Scriptures require immediate attention.¹³

- d. Our lives should be the expression of a grateful heart.

Thankfulness - When controversy and confusion has replaced thankfulness in our love-feasts, we must know something is wrong!

Verse 7-8: "I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me." [Galatians 2:20]. "He died for all, that those who live should live no longer for themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again." [2 Corinthians 5:15].

We are the Lord's - Here is also the bond that unites the believer to Christ. on our part *faith*; on His *covenant faithfulness*.

Paul must emphasize this truth. We are God's servants—not the church's, not the preacher's, not the person who led us to Christ. While pastoring one day I visit someone with a friend of the person on which we were calling. It was a pleasant time of fellowship and prayer, but somehow the person who led to Christ this person we visited heard about it and was distraught. We were informed (to my chagrin) that the person who leads a soul to Christ *alone* has the right to disciple them. As Pastor, I understood, I was exempt from this restriction, but not the person who joined me in the visit.

Peter invented the word, *busybody*, which, doubtless, had a personal significance for him. "Let none of you suffer as a ...a busybody in other people's matters." [1 Peter 4:15]. His word meant "one who takes the supervision of affairs pertaining to others and in no wise to himself, a meddler."¹⁴ The dictionary continues, "The writer seems to refer to those who, with holy but intemperate zeal, meddle with the affairs of the Gentiles—whether public or private, civil or sacred—in order to make them conform to the Christian standard."¹⁵ Weak believers "are the Lord's"! Hands off! This is not an easy lesson to learn, else Peter would not have had to invent a word for it.

Live or die ...we are the Lord's. "Relationship to him is the key to life on either side of the veil."¹⁶ Scholarship here sees in Paul's language not just this life but eternity. There will never be a moment when God will not

13. 2 Peter 1:20 reads "no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation" which scholarship interprets: "no prophecy should be expounded [explained] according to private opinion" [Kittel vol IV. Page 337.] Private means "belonging to one's self, alone, and no one else." All scripture is for all, but the Spirit knows how to interpret it. Obviously if only one application were possible, Romans 14 would serve no purpose.

14. Thayer. Page 29.

15. Ibid.

16. Gaebelein. vol X Page 146.

consider the weak believer “His own.” We are discouraged in instructing someone in matters the Spirit is guiding—and will never stop guiding. If God would give one new birth, what kind of “Father” would He be to leave them to sitters who may not have His heart.

Verse 9: As Christ has overcome death and is the author of eternal life, All things are, indeed, under His domain¹⁷ “that He might fill all things” [Ephesians 4:10].

Verse 10-11: Belittle - The King James Version reads, “set at nought.” The word means “to make of no account, to despise utterly¹⁸, to treat as worthless, which leads to contempt or seeing another as despicable and beneath consideration.¹⁹ Judging a brother or sister in Christ to be worthless is a way the “stronger” brother would view his weaker brother in Christ. Observing all these requirements: watch what you eat and where you go and whether or not this instrument at this time is proper or what is necessary for worship and on and on, is so much nonsense for the stronger that they know they, personally, do not have to follow.

I am a premillennial—I pastored before the children of the 1980’s grew up to change the dynamic of a church service. When I pastored, ties were worn; women wore dresses. In fact Sunday was dress-up day. The instrument of choice was an organ, even without a piano, but guitars and drums were unheard of. And we spent all day Sunday in church except to eat and rest.

One church secretary I worked with made a distinction between a worship service and a praise service. In the early 1990’s she consented to guitars in an evening praise service but not a Sunday morning worship service.

Is it any wonder that in a church where Gentiles were fellowshiping freely with former Jewish proselytes and other Jews converted to Christianity that Paul would need to address the issue of “How to worship” and that he would use talk about “service” instead of worship [Romans 12:1]? There are 6 references in these 4 chapters [12-15] in which Paul addresses potential schisms within the church by encouraging them:

- ◆ To “be kindly affectioned one to another” [Romans 12:10] and
- ◆ To be of the “same mind one toward another” [Romans 12:16] and
- ◆ To “edify one another” [Romans 14:19] and
- ◆ To “Be likeminded” [Romans 15:5] and
- ◆ To “receive one another, as Christ also received us to the glory of God” [Romans 15:7] and to

17. Ephesians 1:22 And He put all *things* under His feet, and gave Him *to be* head over all *things* to the church,

18. Thayer. Page 225.

19. treat with disdain . see verse 3.

- ◆ To “Admonish [encourage] one another” [Romans 15:14].

And if this doesn’t put a sharp point on it, let’s talk about the Judgment seat of Christ!

The Bema of God - [at the end of time] “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.” [2 Corinthians 5:10]. It is Christ’s Judgment Seat. It would be wise of believers to keep in mind that a brother or sister who still depends on religious legalism to support their faith, still belongs to Christ and God decides their end. Godet summarizes, “Judge not your brother, for, God will judge him. Judge yourself, for God will judge you.”²⁰

13. *Therefore, No longer, criticize each other, but decide this rather, not to say or do something that will offend your brother in Christ or cause him to stumble [spiritually in his Christian walk].*
14. *I know and am persuaded in the Lord Jesus that nothing is defiled [and not to be eat]; except this: whoever considers it to be defiled, to them it is unclean [and not to be eaten]..*
15. *But nonetheless, if over food your brother is hurting, you are no longer walking according to love [no longer doing what you are doing out of love]. Don’t destroy another brother [who doesn’t live like you]—for whom Christ died!*

But some Christians still argue that the advice of the stronger is valuable and the mature in Christ, and those free in their faith might teach the weak to swim in deeper water (so to speak). When will a weaker brother be stronger in faith unless they are encouraged to toss the security blanket that has kept them spiritual infants? They might appeals to Hebrews 5:12-14, “For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God; and you have come to need milk and not solid food. For everyone who partakes only of milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe. But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.”

Is it possible to educate the weak to see their religious roots, not as legacy to be valued but, as a bondage from which to be freed? Should we argue for a greater faith or a more independent faith that no longer requires a religious legalism to survive?

Verse 13: Instead of deciding to analyze and condemn the Christian whose faith adheres to form and ritual, why not decide to avoid an

20. Godet. Page 459.

argument with him that would discourage his faith! Consider these reasons for leaving the task of guidance to the Holy Spirit:

- ◆ We must not flaunt our liberty or use it to belittle the faith of a believer who still honors specific rituals. Yes, true worship is only in spirit but, as noted, even the strong in faith honor form and ritual.
- ◆ A strong man can lift a lighter weight, but a weak man cannot lift a heavier one. Those not dependent on a specific religious practice are still capable of indulging it without weakening faith. The stronger should accommodate the weaker.
- ◆ Verse 4: That is not our calling! All believers are God's concern and interest.
- ◆ Verse 8: The weaker saint, too, belongs to God! They are not our concern in this regard.
- ◆ Verse 12: We should focus on our own Christian walk because we will give an account of our lives, not theirs.
- ◆ Verse 13: Only the Spirit can convict or guide the weak without offense. The weaker is encouraged to emulate the stronger's faith by example only under the teaching of the Spirit.
- ◆ Verse 23: Not eating meat or not drinking wine are not sinful. Weakness in faith is not a sin. What is a sin is not acting on one's faith alone. So, if we discourage the weak away from his faith, what his conscience honors, we cause him to sin, stumble and fall.
- ◆ Verse 15: We are to love one another and attempting to shame the weak into a stronger faith is not love.

Verse 14-15: Paul's language is unassailable.

Know - Paul shares his perception on the matter of worship and ritual. He has seen this matter from the other side—not as the brother who can eat anything but, with empathy, from the weaker brother's point of view.

Persuaded - In Old Testament language this is a trust that God is faithful [Isaiah 26:3]. Paul's faith no longer needs the support of any particular form. But he does not here speak from experience, though, he could. He speaks by revelation, by what God has shown him: "nothing is unclean of itself!" [Matthew 15:11].²¹ Know ...persuaded, i.e. conviction and conscience are on the same page!²² "Cling to your faith in Christ, and keep your conscience clear. For some people have deliberately violated

21. Not what goes into the mouth defiles a man; but what comes out of the mouth, this defiles a man.

22. For me, conviction is part of the Spirit's ministry which leads to godly sorrow and repentance, while conscience [a self-awareness] may be trained by culture or circumstances or education and when offended leads to a feeling of guilt [culpa]. Paul's conscience was clear in this matter.

their consciences; as a result, their faith has been shipwrecked" [1 Timothy 1:19 NLT].

Nothing is defiled - No food is in itself unclean to eat. But has a pork roast in Paul's day become in today's world a freedom to utilize the latest technology for worship. Am I the weaker because I miss the organ and the altar? In today's worship service we bring in all kinds of instruments, spending elaborate sums to accessorize worship with orchestras, sound and video equipment, trained singers, removable cushioned seats that are rearrangeable, and a staff to go with it all to keep things moving on the clock. And where is the altar? Has the old ritual been replaced with a new one?

While Paul would, himself, refrain from eating anything that would offend the conscience of another [1 Corinthians 8:13], he encouraged his Corinthian brethren to "Eat whatever is sold in the meat market, asking no questions for conscience' sake; for *the earth is the LORD's, and all its fullness*. If any of those who do not believe invites you *to dinner*, and you desire to go, eat whatever is set before you, asking no question for conscience' sake." [1 Corinthians 10:25-27]. Have we expanded on this idea to modernize the worship service? Neo-pentecostalism comes to mind. As a movement it begun in the 1970's and claimed a "freedom" in Christ that threw off the constraint of outdated ceremony and form. This was their way of eating bacon if they so chose. But has Pentecostal worship now become a ritual in its own right?

Nothing is unclean -The stronger brother has found a freedom in following Christ that may have led him, too, into the tax collector's home or to converse with a Samaritan women when it was taboo. He has discovered that God could use him in the strangest of places and ways and that worship could be rich in a woodland glen or in someone's living room, or anywhere. He discovered God in a Presbyterian pulpit or a Baptist's baptismal tank. He found himself in prayer meetings and praise services with Catholic brethren and the Independent [denominationally speaking] without observing any difference. He could come upon a group of young adults, Generation 'Z'ers, they're called, gathered together in one place singing to the Lord their thankfulness in His Presence, praying to Him for their needs, and taking hug breaks to pray for one another—and he would call it heavenly! And where is the ritual and form there?!

Wherever he was, there was the cloud and pillar of fire, there was the glory of God. The glory was not following him; he was following it! But his life in Christ has been so filled with opportunity to witness, so blessed with service to the Lord, so enriched with joy and peace, that he might only attend the Sunday service—not for the ritual, but—for the fellowship. And will he find there like-minded who can rejoice with him? But, as Godet explained, there should be "...voluntary limits which the strong should be

able to impose on himself in the exercise of his liberty.”²³ This is the next verse.

Verse 15: Hurting - in pain. My wife found this interesting meme: A Church’s sign read: “We love hurting people.” There are in the Bible words for evil, injustice, vengeance, forms of abuse, in speech and action, which at their root signify the infliction of emotional or physical pain on another. I think it correct to say that at the heart of every evil is the inflicting of pain. Our word here, *hurting*, has been used with a broad brushstroke, translated *grief*, *sorrow*, and even *offense*. There are many words to denote outward expressions of grief and sadness: such as, mourning, crying, even “smiting the breast” in agonizing loneliness upon the death of a loved one. I will never forget Charlie, an elderly brother, who walked up to his beloved wife’s casket and collapsed in undefinable grief. Pain is real! “In Classical Greek [our word here] is the most comprehensive word”²⁴ for this.

With Paul, this seems absolute; he never wants to be the cause of another brother’s pain by arguing over form and food. “For this reason, if food causes my brother or sister to sin,” Paul vowed, “I will never eat meat again” [1 Corinthians 8:13 NET]. Wouldn’t be great if every believer ceased to prioritize their own opinions above another’s emotional pain? Instead we have something called “tough love,” a phrase not found in Scripture. What Scripture does endorse is pity or compassion [Psalm 72:13]. One word for compassion is used exclusively of our Lord’s love toward us and by us toward others. It is the seat of the tenderest affections in the Old Testament thought.²⁵

Perish - There is a specifically New Testament usage to this word here.²⁶ The Living Bible interpreted our word as *causing great spiritual damage*: “But be careful not to use your freedom to eat it, lest you cause some Christian brother to sin whose conscience is weaker than yours. You see, this is what may happen: Someone who thinks it is wrong to eat this food will see you eating at a temple restaurant, for you know there is no harm in it. Then he will become bold enough to do it too, although all the time he still feels it is wrong. So because you “know it is all right to do it,” you will be responsible for causing great spiritual damage to a brother with a tender conscience for whom Christ died. And it is a sin against Christ to sin against your brother by encouraging him to do something he thinks is wrong.” [1 Corinthians 8:9-12 Living Bible]²⁷

23. Godet. Page 461.

24. Thayer. Page 291.

25. see Thayer. Page 584. This same word in Classical Greek speaks to violent emotions. It shows you a marked difference between the philosopher and the prophet, the sinner and the saint.

26. See Kittel. vol I. Page 395.

27. Bengel: Ne pluris feceris tuum cibum, quam Christus vitam suam - Do not let what you eat become more valuable than the life Christ offers [through His death].

This is probably welcome news for anyone who theologically interprets Paul to be supporting the possibility of losing salvation;²⁸ but it is appallingly disheartening to anyone who believes that the believer is eternally secure. The corresponding Hebrew term means “to bring oneself to eternal destruction.”²⁹ [Jeremiah 23:1].³⁰

Our word also means “to be lost” like a sheep that wandered away. When “All we like sheep [went] astray” [Isaiah 53:6] we were lost and unable to find our way back to the fold—unable to save ourselves. This leads to death unless the Shepherd finds us and returns us. This Jesus did, at Calvary: “For the Son of man is come to save that which was **lost** [perishing]” [Matthew 18:11].

So what does all this mean for our verse? The Expositor’s Bible calls it “spiritual ruin.”³¹ Paul might be describing what *could* happen if God did not intervene, but He does intervene [verse 4]. “The Lord may counteract [such insensitive] action and save [the] injured brother from himself.”³²

16. *May your good [your desire to serve God in the food you chose to eat and how you celebrate and bless the Lord] not be blasphemed [spoken of with contempt, ridiculed, and mocked]!*
17. *Because, the Kingdom of God is not about food but rather faithfulness to [the Lord] and peace [fellowship and harmony amongst ourselves] and joy [celebrating our Lord] in [submission to] the Holy Spirit.*

Verse 16: Good - The context speaks of Christian liberty, freedom, from religious legalism to serve God, not in celebration and ceremony but, in daily living.

Spoken of - Blasphemed carries the idea of railing or persistently complaining about someone in an abusive and slanderous way. This is speech or words injurious to another’s good name. Here Paul is admonishing those brethren for whom certain foods or festivals are not at issue, that they should not be useful to Satan to discourage the faith of those brethren for whom these aspects of worship do matter.

I raised this issue to one class I taught in a small Bible school: Should the stronger Christian support the weaker by abstaining from such practices or behavior that would offend them? I expected them to say, “Yes,

28. In John 101:10 perish is equated with death and in John 3:16 with spiritual death.

29. See Kittel. vol I. Page 395..

30. “Woe to the shepherds [pastors] who **destroy** and scatter the sheep of My pasture!” says the LORD.” [scattered sheep are susceptible to dying. See Matthew 18:13-14 “...it is not the will of your Father which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should **perish**.”

31. Gaebelein. vol X. Page 148.

32. Ibid.

they should abstain.” But, to a student, they disagreed with Paul. Perhaps, because we discussed this issue in the vacuum of history, the students saw no relevance to their lives and felt like immature believers need to grow up spiritually. Perhaps, if we had posed a scenario that they could relate to, I might have been more pleased with their answer. Another class of students, who believed a Christian could never lose their salvation, used to enjoy ganging up on one lone student who believed you could. This was then. My prayer would be that now at last believers agree with Paul.

Verse 17: Scholarship calls this verse: “The 3 dispositions that triumph over taste and vanity.”³³ I call it: The 3 major characteristics that define Christian fellowship.

1. **Righteousness** - as covenant faithfulness, this is a term of relationship between God and us and among us [1 John 1:7].³⁴ It seems appropriate here to use words like *hunger* and *thirst* in speaking of righteousness [Matthew 5:6]. Righteousness in this context is a respect for the convictions of other believers. If we have this, we encourage
2. **Peace** - harmony and unity. Acts 2:1 uses the word “one accord” meaning one desire, one mind, one heart, a single focus [Christ-centric] “Then all of you can join together with one voice, giving praise and glory to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.” [Romans 15:6]. And peace is the soil in which we germinate
3. **Joy** - Joy is *opposed* to pain and hurt [2 Corinthians 2:3] and it is *opposed* to a heavy spirit, gloom, sadness, feeling dejected, ashamed, downcast or sorrowful [James 4:9]. Joyful Christians look forward to [enjoy] fellowship, being together around God’s Word or in prayer. It is obvious, that anyone marginalized or belittled by other Christians for their beliefs will feel less than welcome.

The joy we experience together is because we are at peace with one another, and that is because, it is our hunger to be faithful to the grace God has given us to live for Him and like Him especially toward one another. [The Allelous principle: Romans 12:16].

In the Holy Spirit - True fellowship is always characterized by or as a result of the Spirit among us and we in harmony or submission to Him. It matters not whether we are singing or eating or just talking with one another. What is undeniable is that there is an awareness of charity [Christian love] and a deep sense of togetherness [Acts 2:1-2; 4:32].

33. Godet. Page 461.

34. But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.

18. *For whoever serves Christ in this way, pleases God and has approval with men [even society will approve].*
19. *Therefore, indeed, seek to live harmoniously and to support each other's faith!*
20. *For the sake of bread, don't destroy God's work! Every thing, yes, is clean but eating some things are wrong [evil] for the brother who stumbles in his faith walk [in doing so].*
21. *It is good not to eat meat [flesh] or drink wine or do anything in which your brother is offended or stumbles.*
22. *Live your own faith [walk] before God; happy is the man who does not criticize himself [does not live with a troubled conscience] in what he approves [is given to understand is okay in his faith walk].*
23. *And whoever is undecided [doubtful] about what they are eating is already condemned, because it is not faith! [You are living in another's condemnation not God's!]. Anything which is not from faith [living in another person's convictions] is sin [and cannot ever be acceptable to God].*

Verse 18: Approval - Caring about the weaker believers whose dependence on religious supports is evident has the consent of the Spirit as well as the body of believers as a whole [Acts 6:5; 15:28]. Some see this as a dynamic of our witness to the world. Calvin wrote, "'He [who served Christ in this matter] testified this to men, because they cannot but bear witness to the power which they see with their eyes.' But Paul is speaking here of a sincere judgment, to which no moroseness, no hatred, no superstition is admitted."³⁵ Godet concurred, "everyone, Christian or non-Christian, recognizes him to be a man really animated with power from above, the opposite of a fool or a boaster,"³⁶

Verses 19-20: Support is edification. The language reads: "Let us pursue peace and guard the edification of each other." The Hebrew idea behind "guarding" is "to keep" [we keep³⁷ commandments, we keep or tend³⁸ a flock of sheep]. We keep or tend³⁹ a garden. Perhaps our language borrowed the Hebrew idiom: to keep covenant.⁴⁰ The word also translates "to treasure, watch over and to protect. Do all this with a weaker brother's

35. Hunc probatum hominibus testaturum quia non possunt non reddere testimonium virtuti, quam oculis cernunt. Sed Paulus hic de sincera judicio loquitur, cui nulla est admista morositas, nullum odium, nulla superstitio. See Lange on Romans vol X. Page 422.

36. Godet. Page 462.

37. Zechariah 3:7

38. Genesis 30:31

39. Genesis 2:15.

40. Ezekiel 17:14

faith! At the very least, do nothing that would oppose God's interest in *guarding* his spiritual well-being and growth.

Verse 20 begins abruptly without a connecting word [like 'and' or 'but']. Paul is emotional! His language is hyperbolic "everything is pure or clean." Well, not really if it is poisonous, but he was referring to the Torah's restrictions. Now you can eat pork and rabbit and turtle soup.⁴¹ How is it evil for one but not another?

Destroy - Don't tear down what God is building up over something like "meat." *Destroy* means "to tear down" or demolish. In this context "to deny it success" or as we say in English "the work would be set back—maybe far back to where a young Christian no longer realizes the joy of their salvation and now needs serious prayer and Christian love to bring them up to that point where they first experienced such joy. The sad thing is that it was the lack of prayer and love that brought him here in the first place.

Evil - The evil is in the assault made on a weaker brother's conscience. Though, he is not under conviction by the Spirit not to eat something forbidden in Torah law, he is weak in that his conscience is weak. This is not to say he will always be this way, but allow the Spirit to guide him in this matter. His faith also is weak because he is not yet persuaded, as Paul, that all things are pure [Romans 14:14].

Verse 21: Good - the opposite of evil. Here is a summary of the matter, verses 13-20. Can something be evil and not sin? If evil is sin [and we maintain that it is because it disrupts our fellowship with God] then the opposite is not just good, but godly. Perhaps, we have done or said things not intended to discourage or challenge another's faith in the Lord—perhaps, we didn't intend to rob them of the joy in their salvation—but we did. We sinned and need to become more self-aware—more conscious—of how to relate to our brothers and sisters in Christ in ways that will tend toward meaningful fellowship and not meaningless debate.

Flesh - a word that references any meat. Exercising discretion in the love-feasts and fellowship gatherings was a principle Paul broadcast throughout the churches: "Wherefore, if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world stands, lest I make my brother to offend" [1 Corinthians 8:13].

Verse 21: Did we say Paul was emotional? Eliminating meat and wine from a Roman's diet should not be thought a small thing. There is an interesting difference in some copies of the text worth mentioning. The King James Version adds, "and is made weak." Some scholars think this was added from 1 Corinthians 8:11-13. Here is what Paul told the Corinthians [NASB95], "For through your knowledge he who is weak is ruined, the brother for whose sake Christ died. And so, by sinning against

41. Leviticus 11:29

the brethren and wounding their conscience when it is weak, you sin against Christ. Therefore, if food causes my brother to stumble, I will never eat meat again, so that I will not cause my brother to stumble."

Anything in which - words not to be overlooked because even Christians tend to restrict the list of loveless intentions to such a small list that what they do is no longer on it! Paul expanded it adding, as our pastor always says "and those kind of things"⁴²

Verses 22-23: are the summary of the entire chapter. These are worth memorizing! Now that we have studied this chapter. "Owning" your faith is a phrase I like using to describe these verses. As Paul did in Romans 14:14 we must not doubt our love for God and our faithfulness in serving him because of someone else's theology! Our faith must be able to single out the Spirit's voice [conviction] in that cacophony of well-meaning and over excited students of the Word who are opinionated to the harm of the weaker brother.

Happy - Are we happy believers? Are we following the Beatitudes [Matthew 5:3-12]. This is gratitude not pride! Happy believers are genuinely free [John 8:32].

Verse 23: Doubtful - Doubt is a painful thing for a *believer*. It is in a real sense contradictory. The joy of our salvation [Psalm 51:12] does not doubt our salvation.

Therefore let us pursue the things *which make* for peace and the things by which one may edify another. - Romans 14:19

Do you have faith? Have *it* to yourself before God. Happy *is* he who does not condemn himself in what he approves. ... for whatever *is* not from faith is sin. - Romans 14:22-23

42. See Ephesians 5:27 "and any such thing" is another example.

Romans 15:1-13

Paul exhorts, first, to mutual condescension as an end to be reached in our conduct as a single community, both Jew and Gentile as one redeemed race.

As there are times the Spirit pulls on our hearts to stay in prayer a bit longer for reasons made immediately evident to the faithful, Paul is not finished writing in Chapter 15 about the relationship between the strong and the weak in Christ that he spoke of last chapter. For his literary masterpiece, which continues through Romans 15:13, God inspired one more brushstroke, past chapter 14, these 13 verses, before Paul would say, Yes! That's it! This is my heart! This is all of it!

Paul's message of a grace that invites us to come to the Savior [Matthew 11:28] or seek God's mercy [Hebrews 11:6] is offered to all—all classes and all races and all nations and all peoples [Romans 4:17]. Whosoever may come [John 3:16].

This cannot be a salvation dependent on some condition or achievement or grade or religion or ethnicity—you get the point—because many who want salvation would, on that basis, not qualify for it. In parable, Jesus, disclosed God's heart in the matter: He does not care where you come from, how good or bad you have been or what language you speak or if you have to limp along to get there and need someone's help. According to the parable, God just doesn't want any empty seats at His banquet [Luke 14:23]. Our Lord is free of all prejudice or favoritism. This is a marked characteristic of grace.

The only requirement is to trust God [*faith*]. But for reasons hard to understand, there are many excuses why some will not come—excuses that sound rational. In summary, the excuses represent a life too busy with selfish interests to want God.

In another parable we are like field hands or migrant workers spending all day in the hot sun and getting no more for our efforts than the fellow who shows up an hour before quitting time. The sun is setting and the evening breeze affirms the end of the day [Matthew 20:10] and everyone has the same amount in their pay envelope! Not fair!

Grace is hard to wrap our brains around. That, in itself, is a chief reason we must accept God's mercy by faith alone. If you have been reading Romans as an historical essay, only, on the spiritual journeys of the believers in Rome, you are too close. They are but one tree in a forest of religious prejudice, of denominational distinctives, racial, cultural and class differences, as well as all the less recognized aspects of life that separate us

in cliques and that decide whether or not we would be welcome in this or that group. Step back to see the forest, to take a realistic look at the Church, at our fellow believers. Are we as diverse as heaven will be? Do we represent in microcosm what God's kingdom will be like? Probably not. And this is not sinful, unless, we prefer it that way!

The Weak and The Strong

Our churches are blessed—yes, blessed—with the spiritually weak: persons who do love God but somehow still think that there are conditions attached to their salvation. We have raised them to believe that unless they follow the teachings of our denomination or church, they will be eternally lost. We have informed them that their money is required by God's law if they want to be blessed and happy. One young woman, who eventually took a chance and visited our assembly, told me that she was led to believe that the building would collapse around us if she crossed that threshold. Another tearfully admitted she just couldn't come because her former pastor in another Christian denomination told her she would be lost eternally if she dared to visit us. Still another brother felt emotionally lost in a doctrine of *faith alone*. He had depended on the church for spiritual direction: what they taught as holiness and sin, which included special instructions to assure his faithfulness—not just to Christ but also—to the church!

How are these people a blessing? Not because of their faithfulness to denominational teaching but because of their faithfulness to their love of God. The ritual is not just empty form with these persons but a real dedication to the Lord. It is the Spirit's job to let them know it is Okay once in a while to fellowship with some believer of another "stripe." And when they do, they get a little taste of heaven worth the experience. When the "strong" try to bully them away from their commitment to the church, they are attempting to rip them free from the only expression of a love for God they have ever known. This Paul would never endorse.

The strong simply enjoy their salvation, effortlessly following Jesus without self-deprecation and without the fear that unless they keep a certain ritual, He might be offended. The weak seek assurances through effort, working at being good, as the religion of choice dictates. The strong simply enjoy following Jesus which is why the Beatitudes call them "Happy" [Matthew 5:3-12]. Sadly, the weak depend mostly on the religious structure that has been built around them. This is their security. The strong live dangerously [abandoning all to His will] knowing God will vindicate their faith in Him.

Who are these spiritual giants of the faith among us? They are not distinguished by age or how long they have been Christian [1 Timothy 4:12]. They are not identified by university degrees or even how successful life has been for them [1 Corinthians 1:27a]. And oddly enough, when it

comes to money, they seem to wear poverty amazingly well (some, as a badge of honor, according to their testimonies). They are crazy content even going without many of the niceties of this life [1 Timothy 6:8]. And if you can do that, you can go anywhere and do anything for our Lord—money is truly no object [Hebrews 13:5].

The strong saint needs no particular Bible translation read or song sung or religious routine followed ... those kind of things, if I understand Romans 14:5 correctly. They have it in their heads that if all this changes—even, on-a-dime—they'll follow whatever their Lord wants, no questions asked. I even think they're hoping for this! The weak find change difficult.

God has reserved a task for the strong which is perfect for their spiritual talents: "bear the infirmities of the weak" [Romans 15:1]. Here we begin our study, if we are among the weaker saints, not to achieve academic excellence but to see if we might by God's grace one day join the ranks of the strong, of so honorable an assembly [Hebrews 11].

1. *We, who are able, ought to carry [bear] the weak who are not able [infirmities of the weak] and not to please ourselves.*
2. *Let each of us please our neighbor toward building them up in [a] good [way].*
3. *As Christ did not please Himself but as it is written The verbal abuse of those who accuse you fell on me.*¹

Verses 1-3: What are the weak unable to do? They seem unable to rise above religious prejudice or understand that one can be spiritual without committing to the exact rituals and teaching they hold to. There is a real sense in which to those who can separate between true worship and form must

Bear - carry them! This word does not signify a heaviness as much as a service our Lord has called the strong to as His servants [Luke 14:27].² "The legend goes that around 1918, the orphanage's founder, Father Edward Flanagan, saw a boy, Reuben Granger, carrying another boy, Howard Loomis, who had polio and wore leg braces, up some stairs. Flanagan asked Granger if carrying Loomis was hard. The boy replied, 'He ain't heavy, Father, he's m' brother.'"³

Infirmities of the weak - the text reads, "the weaknesses of the disabled. A strong faith does not become frustrated or indifferent to the struggles of those weak in faith. Strong Christians must be a support (which is what this word, *carry* or *bear*, indicates).

1. Psalm 69:9 Passion for your house has consumed me, and the insults of those who insult you have fallen on me.

2. And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple.

3. Googled the phrase itself.

Verse 2: The strong in faith are asked to avoid endless theological debates and sharing of opinions and instead say what encourages the weaker in their Christian walk. This is

Pleasing—a word meaning to *accommodate* their weakness in a more peaceful, caring way, showing interest in them and not one's own comfort.

Good - for the good of the weak Christian.

Neighbor - "the other" or one's fellow-believer.

Verse 3: Christ - is the example. We are to follow in His steps [1 Peter 2:21]. "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ." [Galatians 6:2]. Paul referenced Psalm 69:9. The Savior paid the ultimate price for our salvation. We are again reminded of Philippians 2:5, "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:" He did not please Himself! Paul is again and again returning to his general definition for "sin" as selfishness. In the Spirit of the Savior, we are to be sensitive to the spiritual wellbeing of the weaker brother. This probably is a more general admonishment since everyone probably thinks themselves the stronger!

4. *For, what was written was written for our learning, that we might stay hopeful [of our salvation] holding on patiently through the [comfort] counsel of Scripture.*
5. *And God who gives patience and counsel give you the same thoughts⁴ toward one another according to Christ Jesus,*
6. *That with one accord [single interest] with one voice you continue glorifying God, who is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

Verses 4-6 We need God's help to follow Christ unflinchingly and this comes through the Scriptures and the encouragement our Lord provides.

The Scripture - the source of unwavering loyalty, stamina, and boldness in persecution or trial because it is the source of comfort and counsel.

God gives patience and comfort. . Perhaps, 2 other ideas or nuances attached to this word are encouragement (admonition, exhortation) and refreshment [1 Thessalonians 2:3].⁵ Perhaps, our word *consolation*⁶ best includes most of these ideas in one word. This is a source of spiritual encouragement that restores our resolve to hold on; it revives the hope or anticipation of all that awaits us after the challenge before us is complete.

According to Christ Jesus - "...having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind" [Philippians 2:2].

4. a common impulse - Godet. Page 469.

5. For our **exhortation** *did* not *come* from error or uncleanness, nor *was it* in deceit.

6. to comfort someone disappointed in a contest.

One Accord - This word “denotes the inner unity of a group of people engaged in an externally similar action.”⁷ This attitude characterized the 120 in the upper room [Acts 2:1] and, appropriately enough, it is used of the Jerusalem Council’s decision regarding the believers in Antioch [Acts 15:25]. It signifies that the early Christians set aside personal feelings and interests for that of Christ’s. This can only happen when the Holy Spirit brings God’s people together in common purpose as He did in these scriptures. The Acts of the Apostles has been correctly characterized as the Acts of the Spirit. The Theological dictionary of the New Testament reads, “Unanimity is an event; it constantly needs a new γίγνεσθαι [rebirth, Ephesians 5:18]⁸ This unifying worship is not the expression of a religious disposition of man; it is the response to God’s action.... [It] is thus a gift of God.”⁹ Godet adds, “All hearts are melted in one, all mouths become only one ... because one being [the Spirit’s] only appears henceforth to all as worthy of being glorified.”¹⁰ It is worth noting at the time of Jesus’ resurrection that He encouraged Mary Magdalene to let go of Him [release Him to go to the Father in both a physical and spiritual sense]. In this account Jesus called God both *His* Father and *hers* [John 20:17].¹¹ Godet called this “perfect intimacy.”¹² The church is only united in its adoration and praise of God as their redeemer. It is in this unity Paul could encourage them to accept each other.

- 7 *For this reason, accept one another, in the same way even Christ has received each of you unto the Glory of God.*
- 8 *For this reason I tell you Christ became a minister of the circumcision [the Jews] on behalf of the truth of God [His covenant faithfulness] to guarantee the promises [He made with] the patriarchs [Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob],*
- 9 *And the Gentiles [all the other nations of the world] on behalf of [to offer] mercies [plural in the OT] to glorify God, as it is written¹³ “For this cause I will publicly acknowledge you among the nations and celebrate your name in song.”*

7. Kittel. vol V. Page 185

8. [NLT] ...be filled [continuously, repeatedly] with the Spirit singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs among yourselves, and making music to the Lord in your hearts.

9. Kittel. vol V. Page 186

10. Godet. Page 469.

11. Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God.

12. Godet. Page 470.

13. Psalm 22:50-51 Therefore I will give thanks unto thee, O LORD, among the heathen, and I will sing praises unto thy name. *He is* the tower of salvation for his king: and show mercy to his anointed, unto David, and to his seed for evermore.

- 10 *And again he says,¹⁴ "Rejoice, nations, with His people."*
- 11 *And again.¹⁵ "Praise the Lord, All you nations and may all the people celebrate Him."*
- 12 *And again,¹⁶ "Isaiah said, 'The root of Jesse shall be and he who shall arise [be born] to rule the¹⁷ nations; in Him shall the nations put their hope.'"*
- 13 *And may the God of hope [in whom hope is invested] fill you with all joy and peace in the act of [response to your] believing [Hebrews 11:6] to the point you overflow with [confident in] hope [with great expectation] in [by] the Holy Spirit's ability [Zechariah 4:6].*

Paul needs to drive home the unassailable and undeniable truth that Salvation has come to all peoples through Christ. And he knows his Bible. Scripture after scripture he calls forth like a barrage of arrows striking at the very heart of dissension and pride within the church. Promise after promise from God now fulfilled in Christ! All hope rests in the Cross. All joy and peace rests in the Savior, who shall reign supreme over all the world. It is quite obvious that Paul is admonishing his Jewish brethren, who keep Torah law sacred in practice as well as memory, to accept into fellowship in the most global sense [the] others, who are not versed in the Mosaic Covenant—*others*, whose very joy, peace, and hope depend on knowing that their salvation has nothing to do with ceremony or ritual but *faith* in Christ alone.

The question as to whether the church at Rome was primarily of Jewish ethnicity or "Gentile" has never to my knowledge been settled nor is it important. What matters is the heterogeneous mix of nationalities within our church, within the fellowship of believers in our day. We come from a thousand directions, all languages, all nations, all cultures and God asks us to be accepting of one another in the warmest most caring sense. We are supposed to display a genuine Christian love that understands empathically what language barriers cannot hid, what cultural differences cannot defend against—our unity. Christian harmony must be a Spirit engendered peace, a unity on the level of the Father's and Son's [John 17:22] or compared to the body for its own members [1 Corinthians 12:12].

14. Deuteronomy 32:43 Rejoice, O ye nations, *with* his people: for he will avenge the blood of his servants, and will render vengeance to his adversaries, and will be merciful unto his land, *and* to his people

15. Psalm 117:1 O praise the LORD, all ye nations: praise him, all ye people.

16. Isaiah 11:10 And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek: and his rest shall be glorious.

17. Paul quotes the Septuagint: καὶ ἔσται ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ ἐκείνῃ ἡ ῥίζα τοῦ Ἰεσοῦ καὶ ὁ ἀνιστάμενος ἄρχων ἐθνῶν ἐπ' αὐτῷ ἔθνη ἐλπιούσιν καὶ ἔσται ἡ ἀνάπαυσις αὐτοῦ τιμὴ

The Spirit alone can bring this about [verse 13] and we must be submissive—filled—filled to overflowing, with joy, not grumbling and complaining, with an excitement of being counted in such a holy assembly. But first and only, filled with the Spirit [Ephesians 5:18] who makes all this possible.

We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves. - Romans 15:1

Romans 15:14-33

Paul concludes his letter to Rome with an apology for being so bold in what he admonished. But his apology was not for the message but for having to bring it. He closed on a note of praise to God.

Paul's comments turn very personal. For all who wish to know more about the man himself, here is a profile snippet.¹ We have here, not a theological treatise, nor a carefully written resume listing personal credentials and achievements, nor a letter carefully drafted to hid some less regrettable moments; nor is this his side of some ongoing controversy. Here, Paul unburdens his heart and exposes his soul to the light of our collective conscience. He is leaping by faith into the unknown—writing to a church he did not start and, therefore, does not know other than what news circulates among travelers. He is street wise—he knows people—and he knows about the Judaizers who spin his message of grace into something heretical. And they are in Rome, too. But most of all, he knows the leading of God's Spirit and God has not challenged his desire to see the Church in Rome—in like way the Spirit guided him at Troas [Acts 16:8-10].

In this part of his letter we read his heart, vulnerable, and open to misinterpretation. Paul apologizes for the liberty he takes in writing. He confesses his indebtedness to the grace of God by way of introduction and offers his love to the Gentile world which includes Rome and hopefully Spain, if God wills it. He looks forward to meeting them with such passion that he somehow knows this will be a time of refreshing from an exhaustive missionary tour. He cherishes their prayers.

To show that this deserves more than a devotional glance, consider Paul's use of our term *ministry*. He uses the official term spoken of the priests in offering burnt offerings and peace offerings to God [verse 16]. Is that how he sees his own calling?

And what was the *hinderance* that denied him a visit to Rome? [Verse 22]. Paul would never speak of God's will as a hinderance! In verse 23, Paul, not wanting to interfere in another's ministry, decided this would only be a visit on his way to Spain. His trip would not be a church planting work because the church already was established and he is not in the habit of building on another's ministry [verse 20]. But he wanted to come for the fellowship!

1. Paul's use of language here is challenging. We depend on some knowledge of the KJV as notes.

And I must admit: how unexpected to see the apostle to the Gentiles making a stop in Jerusalem to guarantee safe delivery of an offering for the poor there before honoring his heart 's desire to see Rome and Spain [verse 28].

The Story So Far

Imagine being a member of a church in a country far from the center of Christian activity and you receive a letter from a famous missionary—say, to Asia. You couldn't have been expecting this. He has been repeatedly touring Asia, planting churches, evangelizing, watch God do miracles. All of this affirms his calling by God. And *he* is coming to visit *you*!?

In his letter, after a brief introduction, wondering if you may have heard of him, he begins to share what he has heard about you, how dedicated you are to the Gospel, how faithful to God and how hungry for the Word to learn and live it. He mentioned that he has been working hard for the Lord through Asia and has been wanting for some time to visit you but was unable to get away. But now he needs a time of spiritual refreshment and renewal among the saints of God and he thought of *you*. He is coming to see you only for the fellowship. His ministry in Asia is complete—not because there is no more to do there, but he knows time is short and he wants to evangelize Spain.

He is coming to share his heart with you, his desire for all Gentiles, to know what a salvation by grace through faith means. He knows that you will keep him in your prayers and that thereby you will have a share in his burden for the nations [verse 30].

What does this tell you about *him*? What does this say about *you*?

There is so much here. And wouldn't it be exciting after studying his personal thoughts to invite Paul to a gathering to answer questions—just to get to know this man of God better! Let's begin.

14. *I also, myself, am absolutely convinced, my brethren concerning you, that you are filled with goodness, very knowledgeable, [and] able to admonish one another yourselves.*
15. *And I am emboldened to write you in part [here and there]² reminding you because of the grace given me from God*
16. *[Of] my appointment [as] a minister [servant] of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering [officiating over] the Gospel of God, that the offering [sacrificial gift for God] of the Gentiles [will be] well-received, sanctified by the Holy Spirit.*

2. Thayer. Page 401.

Verse 14: I, myself - This is from his own heart and in his own words. There is no editor at work, nor, as some surmise that this is the work of another to smooth over the roughness of Paul's reinterpretation of the Torah in terms of grace by faith. Paul does not accuse the leadership in the church at Rome of ignorance but considers them every bit his equal in knowledge and in a love for God.

Goodness - Paul says the saints at Rome are "full of goodness." This is an inner quality of goodness which Godet calls "spiritually mature."³ Professor Lightfoot calls this "energized kindness" [kindness in action: Ephesians 5:9;⁴ Galatians 5:22]. This is a word used first in the Septuagint.⁵ Paul, alone, uses it in the New Testament. When one studies this word, it is spoken in context with *righteousness* and *truth* and is the opposite of evil. Perhaps, kindness is only a small part because it speaks, as well, of gentleness as a divine attribute [2 Thessalonians 1:11].⁶ Paul believes the saints at Rome are well on their way maturing in Christ. He perceives them, from what he hears of them as—if I may say it this way—Christlike.

Verse 15 sounds like 2 Peter 1:12 "Wherefore I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, though ye know them, and be established in the present truth." Paul takes liberty to write them because of his calling being credentialed by God's miraculous Presence in his ministry [verse 19]. Godet interprets Paul saying, "I feel authorized to write you."⁷ [And perhaps, this explains why here he views his ministry in an *official* capacity whereas elsewhere he simply calls himself God's servant.] But he speaks only of his own ministry, not that of others in which God is also actively doing miraculous things throughout Palestine and elsewhere.

Verse 16: is an unusual description of his ministry. Paul here sees his calling as an official embassy from God to the Gentiles.

Minister - This word means: One who performs a priestly function. Paul sees his ministry as a calling with its opportunities and limitations. Today, we might refer to this as his *office* but not by title but by *calling*.

Ministering - Literally means priestly work or function—busy with sacred things, which for Paul, was preaching the Gospel. This should be true of us all: "But you are a chosen generation, a **royal priesthood**, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light" [1 Peter 2:9].

Offering - Those who find Christ through Paul's ministry *are* his gift to God. What a beautiful thought. "For I am jealous for you with godly

3. Godet. Page 476.

4. (For the fruit of the Spirit *is* in all goodness and righteousness and truth;)

5. The Old Testament Greek translation

6. Wherefore also we pray always for you, that our God would count you worthy of *this* calling, and fulfill all the good pleasure of **his goodness**, and the work of faith with power:

7. Godet. Page 479.

jealousy. For I have betrothed you to one husband, that I may present *you* as a chaste virgin to Christ” [2 Corinthians 11:2].⁸

Well-received, sanctified by the Holy Spirit. Paul saved no one; the Spirit worked through the instrument of his life. Paul’s entire teaching and ministry underscores a life submitted to the Spirit of God. Paul did not have a theology as much as he had a life Spirit led and Spirit filled.

17. *I have therefore [this] boast [occasion to glory] in Christ Jesus, [in] the things done for [that concern]⁹ God [through me].*
18. *I am careful in what I say [about] these [things] which Christ did not accomplish through me [either] by word [what I say] or deed. [what I do] toward the Gentiles’ obedience [to the faith],*
19. *In powerful signs and wonders, in the power of the Spirit of God; consequently I fulfilled [fully preached- spread everywhere by preaching] the Gospel of Christ from Jerusalem and the surrounding region up to Illyricum,¹⁰*
20. *And likewise I strived [was greatly honored; it was my ambition] to preach the Gospel wherever Christ’s name was unknown [Christ was not named], that I might not [lest I should] build upon another’s foundation,*
21. *But, just as, it is written,¹¹ “Those, to whom it was not reported concerning Him, shall see; and those who did not hear, shall understand.*

Verse 17-18: Paul is not a braggart. His boast is only in Christ and what He has done for God through Paul. Anything else he dare not mention. How unlike those who boast of a personal achievement or success and who only, almost as an afterthought, give God some credit for calling on them to do it! Some verbalize their praise of God only because it is expected of them. But there is no hidden hypocrisy in Paul. If Jesus used him—and only through the instrument of his life— Paul thought it worth mentioning since the saints at Rome have not yet made his acquaintance. Paul’s boast is no real boast but a humble testimony of what God has wrought in his life!

8. Colossians 1:28 Him we preach, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus.

9. Hebrews 2:17 The phrase: in things *pertaining* to God

10. near the Danube river in Germany.

11. Isaiah 52:15 [in the Septuagint not the Hebrew] “They, to whom no report was brought concerning Him, shall see; and they who have not heard, shall consider.” [οἷς οὐκ ἀνγγέλην περὶ αὐτοῦ ὄψονται καὶ οἱ οὐκ ἀκηκόασιν συνήσουσιν]. The Hebrew is not different but here is an example of New Testament writers preferring the Septuagint because it is in Greek, the language in which they are writing. כִּי אֲשֶׁר לֹא-סִפֵּר לָהֶם רָאוּ וְאֲשֶׁר לֹא-שָׁמְעוּ הִתְבַּהֲלוּ:

Obedience - This word means to *listen*. We may not appreciate the miracle of a listening ear and an obedient heart, but, for sure, missionaries must. They accept the call of God to share the Gospel message with a culture that lives in spiritual darkness and has no concept of God's grace. They share the story of a God who came to die even though we didn't ask Him to or knew He would—and He died for us! They try to use words, phrases, and expressions that might explain what in every way is mysterious. And, then, comes the day that, as Gladys Aylward, missionary to China, was reported to have said in the Movie, *Inn of the Sixth Happiness*, "They have been listening!"

Verse 19: Fulfilled - Not that every soul was made aware of the Gospel but Paul had "lighted the torch in the great centers, such as Thessalonica, Corinth, and Ephesus. That done, he reckoned on the churches ... continuing the evangelization of the provinces."¹²

Verse 20: Strive - The term does not mean "to strive to preach" but more at "to be honored or esteem it a matter of honor to preach." Paul does not avoid Rome because he did not found it. He didn't found the churches at Colossi or Laodicea [Colossians 2:1] but he did minister there and write to them. He felt a debt to minister to *all* Gentiles [Romans 1:14].

- 22. *To explain: I was hindered many times from coming your way;*
- 23. *But now no longer having a place [a ministry] in these regions, but having a longing to come to you these many years,*
- 24. *Whenever I go to Spain; I anticipate, then, going through [Rome] to see you and you sending [me on my way] there if I might first abundantly [in part] enjoy your company [companionship].*

Verse 22-23: Paul is saying that he was unable to get away, being busy, sharing the Gospel as far as Illyricum near the Danube river! [Verse 19]. Paul made 3 missionary tours in Asia and Greece. But he has finished what in his heart he knows was what God asked of him and now he has the Lord's consent to visit Rome. He is excited [verse 32].

I once thought, if God calls you to a mission field, there you will be for your entire ministry. I thought it was only state-side where pastors leave one church for another. But it is possible, I have come to realize, that each of us plays a smaller part in the total work of God and God believes in commissioning a Joshua when Moses' ministry is complete.

Verse 24: Enjoy your company - "satisfy the need to see you"¹³ The word "enjoy" means hope, or anticipation of what God might allow. The King James Version, then, reads, "if first, I be somewhat filled with your

12. Godet. Page 481.

13. Ibid. Page 482.

company.” Most translations read “after I have enjoyed your company for a while.” But this is weak, because the language is similar to Acts 14:17 which speaks of filling the heart with gladness. Paul wanted, as Godet points out, to “saturate himself with them.”¹⁴

In part or “to some degree.”¹⁵ If I may, I would see this to mean: *for your part*. Paul does not plan to visit Rome as an evangelist or even as a teacher of the Word. The part *they* play, in his visit is for *fellowship*.

Note: Paul could have gone directly to Spain by sea but, No! He wants to visit the church at Rome! He will go through Rome but his destination is Spain because there is a field yet not harvested. He must tell them about his trip first to Jerusalem because this could delay him further, and beside, all this is in God’s hands. Why go to Rome at all? I like to think, for spiritual uplifting. To “plug in” and “recharge,” for the sheer encouragement and boost it gives to his faith. Even Paul might need this!

25. *But now, I go to Jerusalem ministering to the saints,*
26. *For the Macedonians and those in Achaea [in the Peloponnesus] deemed it a good idea to collect an offering for the poor saints who are in Jerusalem.*
27. *For they deemed in good and deemed it something they owed; for if they Gentiles benefitted by their spiritual blessings, they [in turn] owe [ought to] minister to their physical [natural] needs.*
28. *This therefore, having completed and sealed [secured] this fruit [of their labor of love] I shall leave for Spain.¹⁶*
29. *And I know that coming to [visit] you [after] I will come with an abundance [fulness] of blessing in Christ.*

Verses 25-27: Ministering - The present tense shows that even the *journey* is part of the ministry. God reimburses for mileage, too. Time spent in serving our Lord includes time spent in preparation and travel and not just the time spent in actual ministry.

This is deacon’s ministry but never below an apostle to serve in this capacity. We used to refer to a “jurisdictional strike” as work someone refused to do; they argued, “That’s not my job!” There is no place in true ministry for such an attitude.

14. Ibid. Acts 14:17 speaks of “filling our hearts with food and gladness” The heart is filled with the food of gladness

15. Thayer. Page 401.

16. Thayer calls this a “somewhat unusual expression” and translates, “when I shall have given authoritative assurance that this money was collected for their use.” [Thayer. Page 609].

The poor - the indigent. The word used speaks of abject poverty, mendicancy, a beggar, who lives not by his own labour or industry, but on other men's alms.¹⁷ The churches in Asia and Galatia participated in providing here for the believers in the Jerusalem Church whose income had been impacted by their new commitment to Christ. History is replete with examples of economic persecution against Christians.¹⁸ An offering had been already collected in Antioch [Acts 11:29]. Requests for financial help were made to Paul and Barnabas [Galatians 2:10]. Paul also spoke of the churches in Greece participating. [1 Corinthians 16:1]. The NIV correctly interprets Hebrews 13:16, "And do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased."

Jerusalem - The Jerusalem Church is where the church was born and held a special place in the hearts of all believers everywhere. Paul by innuendo is inviting the church at Rome to join in this worthy cause. [This is not to say that the poor believers elsewhere do not deserve equal attention and care.]

Owed - debtors. It may be, we are informed, that the leaders in Jerusalem and Paul may have a different view of the offering collected. For Paul, this was a spontaneous gesture of brotherly love [2 Corinthians 9:7]. "If it is giving, give generously" [Romans 12:8 NLT]. But the church leaders may have viewed this offering as a form of tribute [tax] as the least they could do for the Church that sent out such a missionary endeavor. But we are concerned here with Paul's thoughts.

Verse 28-29: Sealed - The money officially delivered and in total.

Fruit - The fruit of Christian labor, either that of the Jerusalem Church or the churches that gave the offering. It is not the money that is the fruit but the giving.

Fulness of blessing - We can discern here Paul's elation, his excitement, after the poor in the Jerusalem congregation are fed and cared for to be visiting Rome for the first time. His heart is overflowing with a sense of how merciful God has been to His people. There is a spiritual element to his praise because the saints in Jerusalem are not Gentiles but *Jews*. [Romans 11:12].¹⁹ Not only does Paul, the apostle sent to the Gentiles, do a deacon's work, but to the *Jews* ... And that gladly!

17. Trench, *Synonyms*. Page 228.

18. James 2:5-7 Harken, my beloved brethren, hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him? But ye have despised the poor. Do not rich men oppress you, and draw you before the judgment seats? Do not they blaspheme that worthy name by the which ye are called?

19. Psalm 16:11 Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence *is* fulness of joy; at thy right hand *there are* pleasures for evermore.

30. *I would encourage you, brethren, by our Lord Jesus Christ and by the love of the Spirit to continue to share in my struggles in prayer [meeting with God] for me [on my behalf],*
31. *That I might be delivered from the unbelieving Jews and my ministry [this offering] in [for] Jerusalem unto the saints might be well received,*
32. *That I might come to you joyful by the will of God refreshed among you.*
33. *And the God of Peace be with you all, amen.*

Verse 30: Struggles - What struggles are Paul talking about? The Jewish believers argued with Paul²⁰ over Torah law. This was a struggle for Paul to deal with. Godet interprets Paul admitting they wanted “to strive with me before God.”²¹ He sees the trials to boldly maintain a vibrant witness before all forms of opposition as the challenge of every believer at Rome—not just his battle [Ephesians 6:12]. He admonishes them to make prayer part of their armor. Frankly, it would be impossible to contend and win without prayer!

Verse 31: The unbelieving Jews played a role in this contest. On Paul’s side were the prayers of the saints at Rome. These are specific requests, though the word for prayer means simply to meet with God —here, on behalf of Paul. Paul is praying for 2 things: (1) that the Jews will not hinder his journey. They had forced him out of the city on an earlier date [Acts 9:29-30]. But the second request seemed unusual: that he might be well-received by the saints. There was a faction within the Jerusalem Church that frankly didn’t like his teaching on God’s grace through faith [Acts 15:5].

Verse 32: That I might deliver the collection with joy and then, God willing, I might find a respite, some peace and quiet, from all the opposition. Here is the reason, in part, for his visit to Rome: to be restored and find as respite from Jewish controversy. For this to be absolutely true, the offering has to fulfill its purpose for the poor, first.

Paul prays for this peace, for a harmony among the saints in Rome, that was absent in so many churches. He tires of saints not accepting saints, of argument and debate, with several interpretations of the Prophets and the

20. Acts 21:20-22 And when they heard *it*, they glorified the Lord, and said unto him, You see, brother, how many thousands of Jews there are which believe; and they are all zealous of the law: And they are informed of you, that thou teaches all the Jews which are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, saying that they ought not to circumcise *their* children, neither to walk after the customs. What is it therefore? the multitude must needs come together: for they will hear that you are come.

21. Godet. Page 486.

writings, with discussions about the Law. He prays for rest and a Christian greeting. These will restore his joy.²²

Verse 33: Paul longs to find the eye of the storm, the place of peace in the midst of a churning controversy that would deny the Gentiles—and those at Rome—the joy of a salvation freely given. When will Christians put up their swords!

Peace of God - is the One body, One God, One Lord, One Spirit message of a common faith in Christ that should unite us and bring a harmony that then brings to light the joy of our salvation [Romans 14:17].

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

22. 2 Timothy 1:4 Greatly desiring to see thee... that I may be filled with joy; See also Philemon 7.

Romans 16:1-16

Greeting, a Warning, and a Doxology.

Dangerous times are envisioned on the Church's horizon and Paul must warn them, but first, underline the importance they have been to him. Here are the names of a couple Jewish believers, 5 or 6 Latins [Italians] from Rome, and 15 or more Greeks. 3 Christian communities are recognized. And a couple groups more personal in nature. What is so outstanding is they are thriving in Rome, itself, at the center of a coming persecution, and without even a visit from an apostle ...yet. Godet called this "a spectacle of a beehive swarming on all sides with activity and labor in the midst of the vast field of the capital of the world."¹ We might wonder at the progress in evangelism made by travelers, artisans, merchants, and—yes—women, slaves, and freedmen residing in Rome." It is a testimony to the marvelous grace of God!

There are various distinguishing epithets given by Paul. Godet in closing called these "titles ...as it were ... the rough draft of the *new name* which those persons shall bear in glory ... No longer a dry nomenclature."²

Note: Let your eye glance at the footnotes once in a while. It may inform you.

As a result of this investigation, we seem to have established a fair presumption, that among the salutations in the Epistle to the Romans some members at least of the imperial household are included."³ Paul wrote to the Philippians while in prison, "All the saints salute you, chiefly they that are of Caesar's household." [Philippians 4:22]. It might make some more sense for those who still struggle to understand Paul's reason for submitting to the Emperor [Romans 13:1]. Paul had a ministry among Nero's patronage as well as freed slaves from their households [verse 10].

1. *I commend to you our sister, Phoebe; she is a deacon in the church in Kenchrae.*⁴

1. Godet. Page 494.

2. Ibid.

3. Lightfoot on Philippians. Page 177.

4. a port of Corinth, the emporium of its trade with Asia [Acts 18:18].

2. *That you might receive her in the Lord as worthy among the saints and use her where ever you need her to help out because she has also been a patroness⁵ [helpful to me] too, in many ways.*

Verse 1-2: Phoebe was a deacon [This is a masculine form because the feminine form of the word came into vogue in the 2nd century].⁶ As a patroness, she cared for others. "Their duties," Lange wrote, "were to take care of the sick, poor, and strangers in the female portion of the Church."⁷ Phoebe's ministry was her calling—so the use of words here strongly suggest. But the question usually asked is to what place in the church did that calling eventually elevate her? Would she be a "pastor" in modern church government or, as the language reads, a "deaconess"? This question would probably be of no interest to Paul, since the Church was, organizationally, in its infancy. But there is something to be said in verse 3 about women in ministry that has surfaced in translation thanks to the bias of the copyists that have leaked out.

Patroness - a "specially honorable designation"⁸ designating the service of a superior to someone of lesser status. This term suggests she discharged official duties, but more likely, this was, for her, a calling and not something she did occasionally. Phoebe ministered as well to Paul, perhaps, suggesting he was at one point in need of a nurse or serious nourishment to rebuild stamina.

Saints. Worthy of being counted among those most dedicated to the work and separated unto the Lord.

3. *Greet Priscilla and Aquila my fellow laborers in Christ Jesus,*
4. *Who, for my benefit, put their necks under⁹ [stuck their necks out], I am not alone thanking them, but all the Gentile congregations,*

Verse 3: Priscilla and Aquila - Here, as in 2 Timothy 4:19, the older manuscripts place *Priscilla first* [Paul knew her as Preiskan]. Aquilla's name followed hers. Textual Critics confirm that in Acts 18:26 in, what is called,

5. She was given responsibility over others as a guardian, caring for the affairs of others and aiding them with her own personal resources. [Thayer. Page 549.]

6. Godet. Page 488.

7. Lange. *Romans*, vol X. Page 446

8. Ibid.

9. ready to incur the most intimate peril to life. [Thayer. Page 630.]

"The Western Tradition,"¹⁰ the order is *switched*.¹¹ "To reduce the prominence of Priscilla."¹²

The point being drawn here is the bias, perhaps, prejudice, against women that has existed in even countries where the Gospel has flourished. This has muddied the waters for the theologian who simply wants to have God's instruction in the matter. Was Phoebe's ministry limited to helping women or working with the poor in terms of their material needs? Was the house church credited to Aquila really established and maintained by Priscilla. And who did the teaching or preaching or were these shared ministries. From all observations, taking into consideration copyist's cultural leanings, it is easy to conclude that, indeed, Preiskan [to use her Pauline name, which appears a bit endearing] was very active in leadership.

Preiska and Aquila were from Pontus in Western Turkey and were tent-makers by occupation in Rome until emperor Claudius expelled the Jews from the capital. Arriving in Corinth, they met Paul, who probably, at this time, led them to Christ [Acts 18:1-3]. Two years later and in Ephesus they met Apollos in the synagogue and realizing his message to be fundamentally sound but in terms of the deeper truths of the Spirit, amateurish, they took him aside to educate him "more perfectly" [Acts 18:24-26].

But who actually did the "expounding"? Was it a shared endeavor with both Priscilla and Aquila or should we assume that her name first in the earlier readings suggests she dominated the discussions? "Probably she was superior to her husband," Godet concluded, "either in ability or Christian activity."¹³

The larger question raised in Christian circles has remained: what ministries are available for women and which ones are not? It appears that none of this was important to Paul except on a cultural level [1 Corinthians 14:34; 1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:6]. How far do we stretch this to accommodate our own theological interests? I think it correct to add that in Paul no such bias was evident, but again, he felt that a war with culture on this issue was a waste of a silver bullet. Our sole focus should always and only be "The Gospel" [1 Corinthians 2:2]. Church politics from the birth of the Church was for the apostles an unwelcome distraction [Acts 6:2-3].

10. Codex Bezae Cantabrigiensis, designated by siglum D^{ea} or 05 dating from the 5th century reads "and of Greeks and prominent men and women many believed." Which Metzger says, according to [P. H.] Menoud, "the antifeminist tendency of the writer of D seems to be more or less general in the last decades of the first century." [Metzger. Page 454]. See also Accessed 6/16/23 *The Western Tradition* https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Western_text-type

11. Metzger. Page 466. In Acts 18:2, 26 and 1 Corinthians 16:19 Aquila's name appears first in the Received Text. See the KJV

12. Ibid. Page 466.

13. Godet. Page 490.

5. *And [greet] the church in their home. Greet Epaenetus, my beloved, who was the first [convert] in [unto] Christ from Asia.*

Verse 5: Church - "The churches of Asia salute you. Aquila and Priscilla salute you much in the Lord, with [according to]¹⁴ the church that is in their house" [1 Corinthians 16:19].

First ... in Christ - . Was Epenetus Paul's first convert in Asia. Paul wrote to the Corinthians, "the house of Stephanas [was] the firstfruits of Achaea [1 Corinthians 16:15]. In fact Paul baptized Stephanas [1 Corinthians 1:16]. Godet argues that Prisca and Aquila probably led Epenetus to Christ and Paul, Stephanas' entire household.

In - here is the word **unto**, language which depicts salvation as the act of offering a gift of another soul to Christ [Romans 15:16].

6. *Greet Mariam,¹⁵ who labored exhaustively for us.*

Verse 6: Mariam is someone we know nothing about. But what is noteworthy here is that the top 3 commendations are given to women, not because they were women which must put to rest any thought that Paul would ever marginalize the contributions of these saints. In our terms: Paul was no misogynist. Paul asked also for a special greeting from him be extended to Persis and the 2 sisters: Triphanus and Truphosus, as well [verse 12].

Among the apostles - Was Adronicus called an apostle in the same way Barnabas was, through association with Paul? [Acts 14:14]. After all, this is a short list of fellow laborers who have worked exhaustively beside Paul in the kingdom. It can't be easy to divide up titles and make one an apostle but not another when their ministries overlap in evangelism and prayer. More than one wore the epithet, "My beloved."

7. *Greet Andronicus and Junias [his wife], my kinsmen and fellow-prisoner, [both] who are thought highly of among the apostles; they came to Christ before I did.*
8. *Greet Ampliatus [Amplias]¹⁶ my beloved in the Lord.*

14. The Greek uses a word meaning "according to" Godet points out in his commentary on First Corinthians that "" there are other houses at Ephesus where the questions who dwelt in other quarters of the city met together." [Page 469]. This was equally true of the churches in Corinth and Rome.

15. A common name.

16. a common name, which occurs several times in connection with the imperial household. [Lightfoot on *Philippians*. Page 174.]

9. *Greet Urbanus,¹⁷ our fellow-laborer in Christ and Stachys¹⁸ my beloved.*
10. *Greet Apelles,¹⁹ approved servant of Christ. Greet those with [in the household of] Aristobolus.²⁰*
11. *Greet Herodiana²¹ my kinsman. Greet those with [of the household of] Narcissus,²² who are believers.*
12. *Greet Triphanus and Truphosus²³ laborers in the Lord [Lord's work]. Greet Beloved Persis [a sister in Christ] who has labored exhaustively in the Lord [Lord's work].*
13. *Greet Rufus²⁴ the elect [distinguished] in the Lord and his mother and mine [my adopted mother].*

Verse 13: God's Word would be diminished without this verse. It is memorable for how it relates to all of us, Here Paul speaks not of his fellow laborer or kinsman. Here is a sister in Christ he knew as his adopted *mother*. Tradition knows Rufus' dad as Simon of Cyrene who carried the Savior's cross. And this sister is Simon's wife. Perhaps, in ways not spelled out in detail, here or elsewhere, this family held a special place in our apostle's heart and life. It was during Paul's youth, while he was studying at Jerusalem, that he lived with this family, with Rufus and Alexander, his brother, and their parents [Mark 15:21]. The impact of the life of this saintly woman, upon her sons and our apostle, should not be underestimated There is a story here which should be preached of unfeigned faith [2 Timothy 1:5] and it would be shortsighted of us to not know that their reward in Glory must be just as great [Matthew 10:41].

17. A common name designated a member of the imperial household. Both Urbanus and Amplias were listed together on an inscription [115 AD] of freedmen. [Ibid.]

18. A comparatively rare name, he is mentioned in connection with the court of Claudia [Ibid.].

19. Also of the imperial household [ibid.]. One person by this name stood high in the favor of the emperor Caius.

20. Aristobolus was a grandson of Herod the Great and brother of Agrippa and Herod, who are mentioned in the Gospels. Aristobolus lived a private life. Emperor Claudius speaks of him as entertaining, dutiful, and friendly. Those belonging to Aristobolus most likely included his slaves [servants] Aristobolus' household was largely Jewish. [Ibid. Page 175.]

21. A name we can expect to find among the freedmen of the Herodian family. [Ibid.]

22. A powerful freedman, whose wealth was proverbial and his influence with Claudia unbounded. Although he was put to death by Agrippina during Nero's reign. his "household" remained under his name and could be whom Paul is referencing. [Ibid.]

23. sisters or near relatives. Perhaps members of the imperial household. [Ibid. Page 176.]

24. The son of Simon of Cyrene [Mark 15:21] who bore the cross for the Savior. [Ibid.]

14. *Greet Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermas,²⁵ Patrobas,²⁶ Hermes,²⁷ and the brethren which are with them.*
15. *Greet Philologus, and Julia [husband and wife or brother and sister],²⁸ Nereus, and his sister, and Olympas, and all the saints which are with them. ¶*

Verse 14-15: Paul gives now a list of names followed by a general greeting for “all the saints with them.” These were “directors,”²⁹ leaders within “the different flocks of the church of Rome.”³⁰

16. *Greet one another with an holy kiss. The churches of Christ greet you.*

Verse 16: The general mode of greeting among Christians is with a holy kiss as an expression of agape love [1 Peter 5:14]. The word used here ought to be distinguished in some way from its synonym: “To kiss repeated with tenderness [Matthew 26:49; Acts 20:37] The kiss here, in verse 16, expresses friendship and fellowship [our communion in Christ] and was probably men with men and women with women.”³¹

**Salute Rufus chosen in the Lord, and his mother and mine. - Romans
16:13**

25. a very common contraction of many names, eg. Hermagoras, Hereros, Hermodorus. [Ibid.]

26. an abbreviated form of Patrobas, a wealthy and powerful freedman of Nero. Paul may have referred to a member of his household. [Ibid.].

27. a very common name for a slave.

28. members of the imperial household. [Ibid.]

29. Godet. Page 493.

30. Ibid.

31. Ibid. Page 494.

Romans 16:17-24

It is Paul's custom to close with interests and concerns of a more personal nature. These, too, share his heart.

Remembering the divisions in other churches as a result of the Judaizers coming from Jerusalem, following him to Antioch, Syria, Galatia, and even Corinth, Paul anticipated their showing up in Rome as well. His concern was well founded. One can almost follow the word *peace* to tell the story of dissension [2 Corinthians 13:11; Galatians 6:15-17; Ephesians 4:3; Philippians 2:2; 4:9; Colossians 3:15].

There are critics who think this portion of Romans was actually written to Ephesus and inadvertently included in the Roman scroll. But it is more reasonable to initially include it as an essential part of this letter. In Ephesus, Paul had spent years [Acts 20:31] teaching and equipping them against false doctrine. The church at Rome, however, was a congregation of hungry believers unprepared for the opposition on the horizon of their young faith. It makes sense to warn them, not in a frightening sense, nor as a reprimand, but in terms of a gentle encouragement or admonition.

We do a grave injustice to the Gospel truth when we lead souls to Christ without discipling them, without explaining the errors in alternative worldviews and socially accepted lifestyles that oppose the truth, weaken faith, and make temptation a more powerful foe. We also hurt young believers when churches impose legalistic restrictions and requirements on them, as if to sell them on the message of Scripture while contending, not for the common faith but, for an uncommon or distinct doctrine.

17 *I admonish you, brethren, to mark [watch out for] those who cause the division and offense contrary to the doctrine which you are learning and [that you] turn away from them.*

Verse 17: The Division and Offense -ecclesiastical divisions and moral disorders, the teaching which was opposed to the Gospel message of salvation through grace by faith, is the legalism which had not yet found a footing in Rome.

Mark - Watch for them. They are not there yet. The burden of legalism is not just a Jewish thing but any church can add unnecessary requirements for salvation and sanctification to simple faith. The Beatitudes are

conversely a study in freedom to follow Christ on whom alone we are dependent. Christ is our support and provider [Philippians 4:19].

Dietrich Bonhoeffer says it well, "When we are called to follow Christ, we are summoned to an exclusive attachment to his person. The grace of his call bursts all the bonds of legalism. It is a gracious call, a gracious commandment. It transcends the difference between the law and the gospel. Christ calls, the disciple follows, that is grace and commandment in one."¹ "I will walk at liberty, for I seek Thy commandments," David professed (Psalm 119:45).

Legalism assumes that we are capable of managing our own lives; faith leaves this to God and the guidance of the Spirit.

18 *Indeed, such persons do not serve our Lord Jesus Christ but their own appetites, and through smooth talking and saying nice things entice away the hearts of the [simple minded, gullible] trusting [ones].*

Verse 18: Simple-minded - Hebrews 7:26² speaks of the absence of all evil [all harm]. This describes someone who is not, as we say, "street-wise." Conscious of truth in his own heart, he believes truth in the hearts of all: a noble quality."³ As Paul explained, "Brethren, be not children in understanding: howbeit in malice be ye children, but in understanding be men." [1 Corinthians 14:20]. Or Solomon taught, "O ye simple, understand wisdom: and, ye fools, be ye of an understanding heart." [Proverbs 8:5]⁴ Plutarch also spoke of the simple as inexperienced, unfamiliar with what evil can do, who see beauty in it. He uses a word meaning to "beautify the face" and "give a fair appearance."⁵

19 *Because your obedience has reached [the ears] of all men; That is why I am glad, but I wish you were wise in the good and simple [pure without any] evil. [Pure truth unalloyed].*

Verse 19: Simple - This is not the idea *simple* in verse 18. This word speaks of purity, unmixed or not alloyed with sin, not compromised with ideas that do not support the Gospel or the Truth. *Simply* holy! Not a simpleton but quite the opposite, *pure* from all evil! Paul also so encouraged other

1. Bonhoeffer. Page 54.

2. He is the kind of high priest we need because he is holy and **blameless**, unstained by sin.

3. Trench, *Synonyms*. Page 207.

4. Proverbs 1:4 To give [prudence] to the simple, to the young man knowledge and discretion.

5. See Trench, *Synonyms*. Page 207.

churches: “That ye may be blameless and **harmless** [ESV: **innocent**], the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world” [Philippians 2:15]. Or as Jesus said it, “Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and **harmless** as doves” [Matthew 10:16].

Paul says he desires the believers at Rome to be innocent of all evil, blameless. The context suggests Paul is asking them to avoid scandals and don’t allow their faith to be persuaded by another’s conscience. Watch out for false counsel!

20 *And the God of peace shall quickly⁶ trample Satan under your feet.
The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you.*

Verse 20: Paul reminded all elsewhere of “false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. [2 Corinthians 11:13-14].

God of peace - Not peace with God or Salvation but the peace of unity that comes when we are all submissive to the Spirit. This speaks of harmony—one accord—within the church.

Trample - bruise. The word means to shatter, crush, destroy. Not just bruise but break into pieces, shiver or splinter into small fragments or as a vessel into chards [Revelation 2:27]. This is total destruction. In Luke 4:18 it is a heart broken which Jesus heals.⁷ He can put any Humpty-Dumpty back together again. But Satan’s kingdom along with Satan [Genesis 3:15] will be destroyed.

Your feet - Your feet are God’s instrument for Satan’s destruction. We play a critical role in God’s victory. “And they overcame him ... by the word of their testimony” [Revelation 12:11]. It is thus we trample Satan to death!

Quickly - Godet interprets Paul saying that the victory will be quickly won once it is begun. The Church has long time now covered behind cultural walls allowing Satan freedom to work his evil. Satan’s “reign” ends when the Church with a serious commitment to their testimony promotes the pure Gospel *unmixed* with cultural niceties that contradict that Gospel [Ephesians 6:11,13].

The context suggests a victory over disunity: “Wherefore I beseech you that ye would confirm *your* love toward him. ... Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices” [2 Corinthians 2:8,11].

6. The idea of *soon* or *immediately*, *straightway*, is another word.

7. See also Matthew 12:20 which references Isaiah 42:3. The LXX reads κάλαμον [reed] τεθλασμένον [bruise] οὐ [not] συντρίψει [crush to pieces] but Matthew reads κάλαμον [reed] συντετριμμένον [severely crushed] οὐ κατεάξει [broken in pieces] .

- 21 *Timothy my fellow worker with Luke and Jason and Sosipater,⁸ my countrymen, greet you.*
- 22 *I, Tertius, who writes this letter, greets you in the Lord.*
- 23 *Gaius with whom I am lodging and the entire church [all the churches of Christ] greet you. Erastus, the city's treasurer, and the brother, Quartus, greet you.*

Verse 21-23: These verses are similar to a postscript in our letters with one important difference: these are not after thoughts. Paul is singling out these names because, for one, they are joining him in greeting Rome. Godet calls this “a communication of an entirely private character.”⁹

Timothy was with Paul at Corinth when the letter was composed [Acts 20:4].

Sosipater of Berea represented the churches of Macedonia regarding the collection for Jerusalem [Acts 20:4].

Jason hosted Paul at Thessalonica [Acts 18:1-7]. He was at Corinth [Acts 20:3] on his way to Palestine with the offering.

Lucius was not Luke but probably Lucius of Cyrene who was a teacher in the church at Antioch. He arrived in Corinth in that capacity. These all were Paul's countrymen.

Tertius was probably like Paul's amanuensis but here Tertius is free to affix his own signature to so important a letter as this. Credit to whom credit is due. Godet calls this “the politeness of the heart.”¹⁰

Gaius is Paul's host. Paul spoke of him in 1 Corinthians 14:23; for it was at his house that church services were held in Corinth.

Erastus and **Quartus** also attend the Corinthian assembly [2 Timothy 4:20]. Of Quartus nothing is known.

- 24 *The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with all of you. Amen.*¹¹

Verse 24: This is Paul's prayer recorded in a few places [2 Thessalonians 3:5, 18]. It is easy to see that it was copied from verse 20. This might be an interpolation.¹²

8. Sopater in Acts 20:4

9. Godet. Page 500.

10. Ibid. Page 501.

11. This verse is found in the Received Text but is considered copied from verse 20..

12. the addition of spurious material to the text by a scribe, often for harmonization (q.v.). Other additions probably were glosses (q.v.) that were moved to the text, or paraphrases such as are found in the Western text. [accessed 6/18/23 Textual Critical

**Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them.
- Romans 16:17**

Romans 16:25-27

The Doxology

We can hear Paul praying in his closing remark, his valediction to the Church at Rome. To dissect or analyze these few words would be to break in on a very private moment in his thoughts and feelings with the saints in Rome. If we must, for the sake of exegesis, let us do it respectfully. The final “Amen” is ours.

- 25 *Now to Him [God] who is able to establish you according to my Gospel even the proclamation of Jesus Christ according to the revealed mystery kept concealed [kept silent] for the eternal times.”¹*
- 26 *But now made manifest [published, divulged] specifically through prophetic writings according to the commandment of the [eternal] God of the ages for the obedience [hearing] of faith made known among all nations,*

Verse 25: Now - in closing let me say...

Him [God] is able! We must leave the establishing of the work to God. We must leave the seed we planted to God’s green thumb to grow it and give it deep roots [1 Corinthians 3:6-7; Colossians 2:19].

Establish - Although Paul isn’t using the analogy of a plant, a plant will survive if its roots go deep and are healthy. They have been fed “my Gospel.”

My Gospel - an expression found only here and in Romans 2:16 and 2 Timothy 2:8, which is the revealed mystery God gave him about a salvation by faith, through grace to the Gentiles, also.

Proclamation of Jesus Christ - He is the content, the object, of our preaching.²

Concealed - A study of the 3 words for “silence” suggest this is the right word here. There is a silence of the heart, an inner peacefulness that manifests itself outwardly in a calm, absence of heated debate [1 Peter 3:4]. There is a silence that knows when one has talked too much [Mark 4:39]

1. Godet. Page 502.

2. An objective Genitive in Biblical grammar. See, for example, Mark 11:22 “the faith of [in] God” or Matthew 12:31 “blaspheme of [blaspheming] the Holy Spirit.”

NLT]. Here, God had a reason for waiting until after Calvary to explain about a salvation by faith through grace. His silence was intentional. Now it can be experienced and experience is required to really “know.”

Eternal Times is eternity past. The word *times* means segments of time. Eternity speaks of eons - from the Creation to the Savior’s coming incarnate, “which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began” [Titus 1:2].

Verse 26: The obedience [hearing] of faith - Dietrich Bonhoeffer correctly points out that “...faith only becomes faith in the act of obedience.”³ Or as James said it “Faith without works [of obedience] is dead [James 2:26]. Only he who believes is obedient, and only he who is obedient believes. Faith without obedience is a dead faith and obedience without faith is legalism.

Which came first? They came together. In the language of Scripture they are both the same—one—word. Here, Paul used the word *to hear*. As in English, *listening is following* [Romans 10:17].

Commandment - is a word indicating a fixed, not temporary, instruction, with attached duties [Titus 1:3]. This refers to the “Great Commission” [Matthew 28:19] which fueled Paul’s zeal.

Made known - Can we see this revealed mystery in terms of four causes?⁴ For example Paul’s explanation to the Corinthians believers regarding the Charismata: “But now, brethren, if I come to you speaking with tongues, what shall I profit you unless I speak to you either by revelation, by knowledge, by prophesying, or by teaching?” [1 Corinthians 14:6].⁵

Verse 26: *But now made manifest [published, divulged] specifically through prophetic writings according to the commandment of the [eternal] God of the ages for the obedience of faith made known among all nations,*

1. What is it? The **Commandment of the everlasting God**. “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen”[Matthew 28”19-20].
2. What was it made of? Through **Prophetic writings** - The Gospel is in the Old concealed, in the New revealed: “But now the righteousness of

3. Bonhoeffer. Page 64.

4. An Aristotelian idea. Aquinas adopts Aristotle's doctrine of the Four Causes and couches much of his theology and philosophy in its terms. The Four Causes are (1) material cause, (2) formal cause, (3) efficient cause, and (4) final cause.

5. 1. Who made it? **Revelation** is from **God**

2. What was it made of? **Knowledge** -Divine **Truth**

3. What was it made into? **Prophecy** as an **admonition**.

4. What was it made for? As a **Teaching**

God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets" [Romans 3:21].

3. What was it made into? **The Obedience of Faith**. -All God's Word is to be lived: "the just shall live by his faith" [Habakkuk 2:4].
4. What was it made for? **All Nations** - the Gospel transcends culture: Whoever may come: "through his name whoever believes in him shall receive remission of sins." [Acts 10:43].

27 To the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory for all ages.

To God the only one wise that could provide for our eternal salvation, which is through Jesus Christ, the New Covenant, most glorious, unchanging, and, forever.

Amen!

But now [the Gospel] is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith. - Romans 16:26

Appendices

Some subjects need further discussion and study which are placed here for the student who likes to walk into the weeds [as they say]. This material is more in note or outline form.

613 Injunctions

Several great Jewish scholars have compiled a complete listing of these mitzvahs.¹ Although they all agree on the vast majority of the commandments, they do disagree concerning a number of them. The arguments are for scholastic purposes only, for they do not disagree over any actual commandment whether it is mandatory or forbidden—they only disagree whether certain commandments are independent commandments, or perhaps they are part of another commandment and are not counted on their own.

The following list follows the opinion of Maimonides, as he lists them in his magnum opus, the Mishneh [Commentary of the] Torah. It must be noted that many of these commandments (such as all the commandments associated with sacrifices) are not practicable as long as there is no Temple in Jerusalem.

The Full List of the Mitzvot [Commandments]

1. To know there is a G-d—Exodus 20:2
2. Not to entertain thoughts of other gods besides Him—Exodus 20:3
3. To know that He is one—Deuteronomy 6:4
4. To love Him—Deuteronomy 6:5
5. To fear Him—Deuteronomy 10:20
6. To sanctify His Name—Leviticus 22:32
7. Not to profane His Name—Leviticus 22:32
8. Not to destroy objects associated with His Name—Deuteronomy 12:4
9. To listen to the prophet speaking in His Name—Deuteronomy 18:15
10. Not to test the prophet unduly—Deuteronomy 6:16
11. To emulate His ways—Deuteronomy 28:9
12. To cleave to those who know Him—Deuteronomy 10:20
13. To love other Jews—Leviticus 19:18
14. To love converts—Deuteronomy 10:19

1. Accessed 6/6/23 Torah Injunctions https://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/756399/jewish/The-613-Commandments-Mitzvot.htm

15. Not to hate fellow Jews—Leviticus 19:17
16. To reprove wrongdoers—Leviticus 19:17
17. Not to embarrass others—Leviticus 19:17
18. Not to oppress the weak—Exodus 22:21
19. Not to gossip about others—Leviticus 19:16
20. Not to take revenge—Leviticus 19:18
21. Not to bear a grudge—Leviticus 19:18
22. To learn Torah and teach it—Deuteronomy 6:7
23. To honor those who teach and know Torah—Leviticus 19:32
24. Not to inquire into idolatry—Leviticus 19:4
25. Not to follow the whims of your heart or what your eyes see—Numbers 15:39
26. Not to blaspheme—Exodus 22:27
27. Not to worship idols in the manner they are worshiped—Exodus 20:5
28. Not to bow down to idols—Exodus 20:5
29. Not to make an idol for yourself—Exodus 20:4
30. Not to make an idol for others—Leviticus 19:4
31. Not to make human forms even for decorative purposes—Exodus 20:20
32. Not to turn a city to idolatry—Exodus 23:13
33. To burn a city that has turned to idol worship—Deuteronomy 13:17
34. Not to rebuild it as a city—Deuteronomy 13:17
35. Not to derive benefit from it—Deuteronomy 13:18
36. Not to proselytize an individual to idol worship—Deuteronomy 13:12
37. Not to love the missionary—Deuteronomy 13:9
38. Not to cease hating the missionary—Deuteronomy 13:9
39. Not to save the missionary—Deuteronomy 13:9
40. Not to say anything in his defense—Deuteronomy 13:9
41. Not to refrain from incriminating him—Deuteronomy 13:9
42. Not to prophesy in the name of idolatry—Deuteronomy 18:20
43. Not to listen to a false prophet—Deuteronomy 13:4
44. Not to prophesy falsely in the name of G-d—Deuteronomy 18:20
45. Not to be afraid of killing the false prophet—Deuteronomy 18:22
46. Not to swear in the name of an idol—Exodus 23:13
47. Not to perform Ov (medium)—Leviticus 19:31

48. Not to perform Yidoni (magical seer)--Leviticus 19:31
49. Not to pass your children through the fire to Molech [The Moabite god]—Leviticus 18:21
50. Not to erect a column in a public place of worship—Deuteronomy 16:22
51. Not to bow down on smooth stone—Leviticus 26:1
52. Not to plant a tree in the Temple courtyard—Deuteronomy 16:21
53. To destroy idols and their accessories—Deuteronomy 12:2
54. Not to derive benefit from idols and their accessories—Deuteronomy 7:26
55. Not to derive benefit from ornaments of idols—Deuteronomy 7:25
56. Not to make a covenant with idolaters—Deuteronomy 7:2
57. Not to show favor to them—Deuteronomy 7:2
58. Not to let them dwell in our land—Exodus 23:33
59. Not to imitate them in customs and clothing—Leviticus 20:23
60. Not to be superstitious—Leviticus 19:26
61. Not to go into a trance to foresee events, etc.--Deuteronomy 18:10
62. Not to engage in astrology—Leviticus 19:26
63. Not to mutter incantations—Deuteronomy 18:11
64. Not to attempt to engage the dead in conversation—Deuteronomy 18:11
65. Not to consult the Ov—Deuteronomy 18:11
66. Not to consult the Yidoni [magical seer]—Deuteronomy 18:11
67. Not to perform acts of magic—Deuteronomy 18:10
68. Men must not shave the hair off the sides of their head—Leviticus 19:27
69. Men must not shave their beards with a razor—Leviticus 19:27
70. Men must not wear women's clothing—Deuteronomy 22:5
71. Women must not wear men's clothing—Deuteronomy 22:5
72. Not to tattoo the skin—Leviticus 19:28
73. Not to tear the skin in mourning—Deuteronomy 14:1
74. Not to make a bald spot in mourning—Deuteronomy 14:1
75. To repent and confess wrongdoings—Numbers 5:7
76. To say the Shema twice daily—Deuteronomy 6:7
77. To serve the Almighty with prayer daily—Exodus 23:25
78. The Kohanim must bless the Jewish nation daily—Numbers 6:23
79. To wear Tefillin on the head—Deuteronomy 6:8
80. To bind tefillin on the arm—Deuteronomy 6:8

81. To put a Mezuzah on each door post—Deuteronomy 6:9
82. To write a Sefer Torah—Deuteronomy 31:19
83. The king must have a separate Sefer Torah for himself—Deuteronomy 17:18
84. To have Tzitzit [fringes] on four-cornered garments—Numbers 15:38
85. To bless the Almighty after eating—Deuteronomy 8:10
86. To circumcise all males on the eighth day after their birth—Leviticus 12:3
87. To rest on the seventh day—Exodus 23:12
88. Not to do prohibited labor on the seventh day—Exodus 20:10
89. The court must not inflict punishment on Shabbat—Exodus 35:3
90. Not to walk more than 2000 cubits outside the city boundary on Shabbat—Exodus 16:29
91. To sanctify the day with Kiddush and Havdalah [major holidays]—Exodus 20:8
92. To rest from prohibited labor on Yom Kippur—Leviticus 23:32
93. Not to do prohibited labor on Yom Kippur—Leviticus 23:31
94. To afflict yourself on Yom Kippur—Leviticus 16:29
95. Not to eat or drink on Yom Kippur—Leviticus 23:29
96. To rest on the first day of Passover—Leviticus 23:8
97. Not to do prohibited labor on the first day of Passover—Leviticus 23:8
98. To rest on the seventh day of Passover—Leviticus 23:8
99. Not to do prohibited labor on the seventh day of Passover—Leviticus 23:8
100. To rest on Shavuot—Leviticus 23:21
101. Not to do prohibited labor on Shavuot—Leviticus 23:21
102. To rest on Rosh Hashanah—Leviticus 23:24
103. Not to do prohibited labor on Rosh Hashanah—Leviticus 23:25
104. To rest on Sukkot—Leviticus 23:35
105. Not to do prohibited labor on Sukkoth—Leviticus 23:35
106. To rest on Shemini Atzeret [a time of bonding between God and the Jewish people.]—Leviticus 23:36
107. Not to do prohibited labor on Shemini Atzeret—Leviticus 23:36
108. Not to eat Chametz [made with leaven] on the afternoon of the 14th day of Nissan—Deuteronomy 16:3
109. To destroy all Chametz on 14th day of Nissan—Exodus 12:15

110. Not to eat Chametz all seven days of Passover—Exodus 13:3
111. Not to eat mixtures containing Chametz all seven days of Passover—Exodus 12:20
112. Chametz should not be seen in your domain seven days—Exodus 13:7
113. Chametz should not be found in your domain seven days—Exodus 12:19
114. To eat Matzah on the first night of Passover—Exodus 12:18
115. To relate the Exodus from Egypt on that night—Exodus 13:8
116. To hear the Shofar on the first day of Tishrei (Rosh Hashanah)--Numbers 29:1
117. To dwell in a Sukkah for the seven days of Sukkot—Leviticus 23:42
118. To take up a Lulav and Etrog all seven days of Sukkot—Leviticus 23:40
119. Each man must give a half shekel annually—Exodus 30:13
120. Courts must calculate to determine when a new month begins—Exodus 12:2
121. To afflict and cry out before G-d in times of catastrophe—Numbers 10:9
122. To marry a wife by the means prescribed in the Torah (kiddushin)--Deuteronomy 24:1
123. Not to have relations with women not thus married—Deuteronomy 23:18
124. Not to withhold food, clothing, and sexual relations from your wife—Exodus 21:10
125. To have children with one's wife—Genesis 1:28
126. To issue a divorce by means of a Get document—Deuteronomy 24:1
127. A man must not remarry his wife after she has married someone else—Deuteronomy 24:4
128. To do Yibum (marry childless brother's widow)--Deuteronomy 25:5
129. To do Chalitzah (freeing a widow from yibum)--Deuteronomy 25:9
130. The widow must not remarry until the ties with her brother-in-law are removed—Deuteronomy 25:5
131. The court must fine one who seduces a maiden—Exodus 22:15-16
132. The rapist must marry the maiden (if she chooses)--Deuteronomy 22:29
133. He is not allowed to divorce her—Deuteronomy 22:29

134. The slanderer must remain married to the wife he slandered—Deuteronomy 22:19
135. He must not divorce her—Deuteronomy 22:19
136. To fulfill the laws of the woman suspected of adultery (Sotah)—Numbers 5:30
137. Not to put oil on her meal offering—Numbers 5:15
138. Not to put frankincense on her Meal Offering—Numbers 5:15
139. Not to have sexual relations with your mother—Leviticus 18:7
140. Not to have sexual relations with your father's wife—Leviticus 18:8
141. Not to have sexual relations with your sister—Leviticus 18:9
142. Not to have sexual relations with your father's wife's daughter (from your father)—Leviticus 18:11
143. Not to have sexual relations with your son's daughter—Leviticus 18:10
144. Not to have sexual relations with your daughter—Leviticus 18:10
145. Not to have sexual relations with your daughter's daughter—Leviticus 18:10
146. Not to marry a woman and her daughter—Leviticus 18:17
147. Not to marry a woman and her son's daughter—Leviticus 18:17
148. Not to marry a woman and her daughter's daughter—Leviticus 18:17
149. Not to have sexual relations with your father's sister—Leviticus 18:12
150. Not to have sexual relations with your mother's sister—Leviticus 18:13
151. Not to have sexual relations with your father's brother's wife—Leviticus 18:14
152. Not to have sexual relations with your son's wife—Leviticus 18:15
153. Not to have sexual relations with your brother's wife—Leviticus 18:16
154. Not to have sexual relations with your wife's sister—Leviticus 18:18
155. A man must not have sexual relations with a beast—Leviticus 18:23
156. A woman must not have sexual relations with a beast—Leviticus 18:23
157. Not to have homosexual sexual relations—Leviticus 18:22
158. Not to have homosexual sexual relations with your father—Leviticus 18:7

159. Not to have homosexual sexual relations with your father's brother—Leviticus 18:14
160. Not to have sexual relations with a married woman—Leviticus 18:20
161. Not to have sexual relations with a menstrually impure woman—Leviticus 18:19
162. Not to marry non-Jews—Deuteronomy 7:3
163. Not to let Moabite and Ammonite males marry into the Jewish people—Deuteronomy 23:4
164. Don't keep a third generation Egyptian convert from marrying into the Jewish people—Deuteronomy 23:8-9
165. Not to refrain from marrying a third generation Edomite convert—Deuteronomy 23:8-9
166. Not to let a Mamzer ("bastard") marry into the Jewish people—Deuteronomy 23:3
167. Not to let a eunuch marry into the Jewish people—Deuteronomy 23:2
168. Not to castrate any male (including animals)--Leviticus 22:24
169. The High Priest must not marry a widow—Leviticus 21:14
170. The High Priest must not have sexual relations with a widow even outside of marriage—Leviticus 21:14
171. The High Priest must marry a virgin maiden—Leviticus 21:13
172. A Kohen must not marry a divorcee—Leviticus 21:7
173. A Kohen must not marry a zonah (a woman who had forbidden relations)--Leviticus 21:7
174. A Kohen must not marry a chalalah (party to or product of 169-172)--Leviticus 21:7
175. Not to make pleasurable (sexual) contact with any forbidden woman—Leviticus 18:6
176. To examine the signs of animals to distinguish between Kosher and non-kosher—Leviticus 11:2
177. To examine the signs of fowl to distinguish between kosher and non-kosher—Deuteronomy 14:11
178. To examine the signs of fish to distinguish between kosher and non-kosher—Leviticus 11:9
179. To examine the signs of locusts to distinguish between kosher and non-kosher—Leviticus 11:21
180. Not to eat non-kosher animals—Leviticus 11:4

181. Not to eat non-kosher fowl—Leviticus 11:13
182. Not to eat non-kosher fish—Leviticus 11:11
183. Not to eat non-kosher flying insects—Deuteronomy 14:19
184. Not to eat non-kosher creatures that crawl on land—Leviticus 11:41
185. Not to eat non-kosher maggots—Leviticus 11:44
186. Not to eat worms found in fruit once they have left the fruit—Leviticus 11:42
187. Not to eat creatures that live in water other than fish—Leviticus 11:43
188. Not to eat the meat of an animal that died without ritual slaughter—Deuteronomy 14:21
189. Not to benefit from a beast condemned to be stoned—Exodus 21:28
190. Not to eat meat of an animal that was mortally wounded—Exodus 22:30
191. Not to eat a limb torn off a living creature—Deuteronomy 12:23
192. Not to eat blood—Leviticus 3:17
193. Not to eat certain fats of kosher animals—Leviticus 3:17
194. Not to eat the sinew of the thigh—Genesis. 32:33
195. Not to eat meat and milk cooked together—Exodus 23:19
196. Not to cook meat and milk together—Exodus 34:26
197. Not to eat bread from new grain before the Omer—Leviticus 23:14
198. Not to eat parched grains from new grain before the Omer—Leviticus 23:14
199. Not to eat ripened grains from new grain before the Omer—Leviticus 23:14
200. Not to eat fruit of a tree during its first three years—Leviticus 19:23
201. Not to eat diverse seeds planted in a vineyard—Deuteronomy 22:9
202. Not to eat untithed fruits—Leviticus 22:15
203. Not to drink wine poured in service to idols—Deuteronomy 32:38
204. To ritually slaughter an animal before eating it—Deuteronomy 12:21
205. Not to slaughter an animal and its offspring on the same day—Leviticus 22:28
206. To cover the blood (of a slaughtered beast or fowl) with earth—Leviticus 17:13
207. Not to take the mother bird from her children—Deuteronomy 22:6
208. To release the mother bird before taking the children—Deuteronomy 22:7

209. Not to swear falsely in G- d's Name—Leviticus 19:12
210. Not to take G- d's Name in vain—Exodus 20:7
211. Not to deny possession of something entrusted to you—Leviticus 19:11
212. Not to swear falsely in denial of a monetary claim—Leviticus 19:11
213. To swear in G- d's Name to confirm the truth when deemed necessary by court—Deuteronomy 10:20
214. To fulfill what was uttered and to do what was avowed—Deuteronomy 23:24
215. Not to break oaths or vows—Numbers 30:3
216. For oaths and vows annulled, there are the laws of annulling vows explicit in the Torah—Numbers 30:3
217. The Nazir must let his hair grow—Numbers 6:5
218. He must not cut his hair—Numbers 6:5
219. He must not drink wine, wine mixtures, or wine vinegar—Numbers 6:3
220. He must not eat fresh grapes—Numbers 6:3
221. He must not eat raisins—Numbers 6:3
222. He must not eat grape seeds—Numbers 6:4
223. He must not eat grape skins—Numbers 6:4
224. He must not be under the same roof as a corpse—Numbers 6:6
225. He must not come into contact with the dead—Numbers 6:7
226. He must shave after bringing sacrifices upon completion of his Nazirite period—Numbers 6:18
227. To estimate the value of people (when someone pledges a person's worth) as determined by the Torah—Leviticus 27:2
228. To estimate the value of consecrated animals—Leviticus 27:12-13
229. To estimate the value of consecrated houses—Leviticus 27:14
230. To estimate the value of consecrated fields—Leviticus 27:16
231. Carry out the laws of interdicting possessions (cherem)—Leviticus 27:28
232. Not to sell the cherem—Leviticus 27:28
233. Not to redeem the cherem—Leviticus 27:28
234. Not to plant diverse seeds together—Leviticus 19:19
235. Not to plant grains or greens in a vineyard—Deuteronomy 22:9
236. Not to crossbreed animals—Leviticus 19:19
237. Not to work different animals together—Deuteronomy 22:10

238. Not to wear Shatnez, a cloth woven of wool and linen—Deuteronomy 22:11
239. To leave a corner of the field uncut for the poor—Leviticus 19:10
240. Not to reap that corner—Leviticus 19:9
241. To leave gleanings for The poor—Leviticus 19:9
242. Not to gather the gleanings—Leviticus 19:9
243. To leave the gleanings of a vineyard—Leviticus 19:10
244. Not to gather the gleanings of a vineyard—Leviticus 19:10
245. To leave the unformed clusters of grapes for the poor—Leviticus 19:10
246. Not to pick the unformed clusters of grapes—Leviticus 19:10
247. To leave the forgotten sheaves in the field for the poor—Deuteronomy 24:19
248. Not to retrieve them—Deuteronomy 24:19
249. To separate the tithe for the poor—Deuteronomy 14:28
250. To give charity—Deuteronomy 15:11
251. Not to withhold charity from the poor—Deuteronomy 15:7
252. To set aside Terumah Gedolah (tithe for the Kohen)--Deuteronomy 18:4
253. The Levite must set aside a tenth of his tithe for the Kohen—Numbers 18:26
254. Not to improperly preface one tithe to the next, but separate them in their proper order—Exodus 22:28
255. A non-Kohen must not eat Terumah—Leviticus 22:10
256. A hired worker or a Jewish bondsman of a Kohen must not eat Terumah—Leviticus 22:10
257. An uncircumcised Kohen must not eat Terumah—Exodus 12:48
258. An impure Kohen must not eat Terumah—Leviticus 22:4
259. A chalalah [see Mitzvah 174] must not eat Terumah—Leviticus 22:12
260. To set aside Ma'aser (tithe) each planting year and give it to a Levite—Numbers 18:24
261. To set aside the Second Tithe (which is to be eaten in Jerusalem)--Deuteronomy 14:22
262. Not to spend its redemption money on anything but food, drink, or ointment—Deuteronomy 26:14
263. Not to eat the Second Tithe while impure—Deuteronomy 26:14

264. A mourner on the first day after death must not eat the Second Tithe —Deuteronomy 26:14
265. Not to eat Second Tithe grains outside Jerusalem—Deuteronomy 12:17
266. Not to eat Second Tithe wine products outside Jerusalem—Deuteronomy 12:17
267. Not to eat Second Tithe oil outside Jerusalem—Deuteronomy 12:17
268. The fourth year crops must be totally for holy purposes like the Second Tithe—Leviticus 19:24
269. To read the confession of tithes every fourth and seventh year—Deuteronomy 26:13
270. To set aside the first fruits and bring them to the Temple—Exodus 23:19
271. The Kohanim must not eat the first fruits outside Jerusalem—Deuteronomy 12:17
272. To read the Torah Portion pertaining to their presentation—Deuteronomy 26:5
273. To set aside a portion of dough for a Kohen—Numbers 15:20
274. To give the shoulder, two cheeks, and stomach of slaughtered animals to a Kohen—Deuteronomy 18:3
275. To give the first shearing of sheep to a Kohen—Deuteronomy 18:4
276. To redeem the firstborn sons and give the money to a Kohen—Numbers 18:15
277. To redeem the firstborn donkey by giving a lamb to a Kohen—Exodus 13:13
278. To break the neck of the donkey if the owner does not intend to redeem it—Exodus 13:13
279. To rest the land during the seventh year by not doing any work which enhances growth—Exodus 34:21
280. Not to work the land during the seventh year—Leviticus 25:4
281. Not to work with trees to produce fruit during that year—Leviticus 25:4
282. Not to reap crops that grow wild that year in the normal manner—Leviticus 25:5
283. Not to gather grapes which grow wild that year in the normal way —Leviticus 25:5
284. To leave free all produce which grew in that year—Exodus 23:11
285. To release all loans during the seventh year—Deuteronomy 15:3
286. Not to pressure or claim from the borrower—Deuteronomy 15:2

287. Not to refrain from lending immediately before the release of the loans for fear of monetary loss—Deuteronomy 15:9
288. The Sanhedrin must count seven groups of seven years—Leviticus 25:8
289. The Sanhedrin must sanctify the fiftieth (Jubilee) year—Leviticus 25:10
290. To blow the Shofar on the tenth of Tishrei (Yom Kippur of the Jubilee year) to free the slaves—Leviticus 25:9
291. Not to work the soil during the fiftieth year—Leviticus 25:11
292. Not to reap in the normal manner that which grows wild in the fiftieth year—Leviticus 25:11
293. Not to pick grapes which grew wild in the normal manner in the fiftieth year—Leviticus 25:11
294. Carry out the laws of sold family properties—Leviticus 25:24
295. Not to sell the land in Israel indefinitely—Leviticus 25:23
296. Carry out the laws of houses in walled cities—Leviticus 25:29
297. The Tribe of Levi must not be given a portion of the land in Israel, rather they are given cities to dwell in—Deuteronomy 18:2
298. The Levites must not take a share in the spoils of war—Deuteronomy 18:1
299. To give the Levites cities to inhabit and their surrounding fields—Numbers 35:2
300. Not to sell the fields but they shall remain the Levites' before and after the Jubilee year—Leviticus 25:34
301. To build a Sanctuary (Holy Temple)--Exodus 25:8
302. Not to build the altar with stones hewn by metal—Exodus 20:22
303. Not to climb steps to the altar—Exodus 20:23
304. To show reverence for the Temple—Leviticus 19:30
305. To guard the Temple area—Numbers 18:3
306. Not to leave the Temple unguarded—Numbers 18:5
307. To prepare the anointing oil—Exodus 30:31
308. Not to reproduce the anointing oil (for personal use)--Exodus 30:32
309. Not to anoint with anointing oil (a non-Kohen or non-king)--Exodus 30:32
310. Not to reproduce the incense formula (for personal use)--Exodus 30:37
311. Not to burn anything on the Golden Altar besides incense—Exodus 30:9

312. The Levites must transport the ark on their shoulders—Numbers 7:9
313. Not to remove the staves from the ark—Exodus 25:15
314. The Levites must work in the Temple—Numbers 18:23
315. No Levite must do another's work of either a Kohen or a Levite—Numbers 18:3
316. To dedicate the Kohen for service—Leviticus 21:8
317. The Kohen work shifts must be equal during holidays—Deuteronomy 18:6-8
318. The Kohanim must wear their priestly garments during service—Exodus 28:2
319. Not to tear the priestly garments—Exodus 28:32
320. The High Priest's breastplate must not be loosened from the Efod (priestly apron)—Exodus 28:28
321. A Kohen must not enter the Temple intoxicated—Leviticus 10:9
322. A Kohen must not enter the Temple with long hair—Leviticus 10:6
323. A Kohen must not enter the Temple with torn clothes—Leviticus 10:6
324. A Kohen must not enter the sanctuary of the Temple indiscriminately—Leviticus 16:2
325. A Kohen must not leave the Temple during service—Leviticus 10:7
326. To send the impure from the Temple—Numbers 5:2
327. Impure people must not enter the Temple—Numbers 5:3
328. [Certain] impure people must not enter [even] the Temple Mount area—Deuteronomy 23:11
329. Impure Kohanim must not do service in the temple—Leviticus 22:2
330. An impure Kohen, following immersion, must wait until after sundown before returning to service—Leviticus 21:6
331. A Kohen must wash his hands and feet before service—Exodus 30:19
332. A Kohen with a physical blemish must not enter the sanctuary or approach the altar—Leviticus 21:23
333. A Kohen with a physical blemish must not serve—Leviticus 21:17
334. A Kohen with a temporary blemish must not serve—Leviticus 21:18
335. One who is not a Kohen must not serve—Numbers 18:4
336. To offer only unblemished animals—Leviticus 22:21
337. Not to dedicate a blemished animal for the altar—Leviticus 22:20

338. Not to slaughter it—Leviticus 22:22
339. Not to sprinkle its blood—Leviticus 22:24
340. Not to burn its fat—Leviticus 22:22
341. Not to offer a temporarily blemished animal—Deuteronomy 17:1
342. Not to sacrifice blemished animals even if offered by non-Jews—Leviticus 22:25
343. Not to inflict wounds upon dedicated animals—Leviticus 22:21
344. To redeem dedicated animals which have become disqualified—Deuteronomy 12:15
345. To offer only animals which are at least eight days old—Leviticus 22:27
346. Not to offer animals bought with the wages of a harlot or the animal exchanged for a dog—Deuteronomy 23:19
347. Not to burn honey or yeast on the altar—Leviticus 2:11
348. To salt all sacrifices—Leviticus 2:13
349. Not to omit the salt from sacrifices—Leviticus 2:13
350. Carry out the procedure of the burnt offering as prescribed in the Torah—Leviticus 1:3
351. Not to eat its meat—Deuteronomy 12:17
352. Carry out the procedure of the sin offering—Leviticus 6:18
353. Not to eat the meat of the inner sin offering—Leviticus 6:23
354. Not to decapitate a fowl brought as a sin offering—Leviticus 5:8
355. Carry out the procedure of the guilt offering—Leviticus 7:1
356. The Kohanim must eat the sacrificial meat in the Temple—Exodus 29:33
357. The Kohanim must not eat the meat outside the Temple courtyard—Deuteronomy 12:17
358. A non-Kohen must not eat [certain] sacrificial meats—Exodus 29:33
359. To follow the procedure of the peace offering—Leviticus 7:11
360. Not to eat the meat of minor sacrifices before sprinkling the blood—Deuteronomy 12:17
361. To bring meal offerings as prescribed in the Torah—Leviticus 2:1
362. Not to put oil on the meal offerings of wrongdoers—Leviticus 5:11
363. Not to put frankincense on the meal offerings of wrongdoers—Leviticus 5:11
364. The meal offering of a Priest should not be eaten—Leviticus 6:16
365. Not to bake a meal offering as leavened bread—Leviticus 6:10

366. The Kohanim must eat the remains of the meal offerings—Leviticus 6:9
367. To bring all avowed and freewill offerings to the Temple on the first subsequent festival—Deuteronomy 12:5-6
368. Not to withhold payment incurred by any vow—Deuteronomy 23:22
369. To offer all sacrifices in the Temple—Deuteronomy 12:11
370. To bring all sacrifices from outside Israel to the Temple—Deuteronomy 12:26
371. Not to slaughter sacrifices outside the courtyard—Leviticus 17:4
372. Not to offer any sacrifices outside the courtyard—Deuteronomy 12:13
373. To offer two lambs every day—Numbers 28:3
374. To light a fire on the altar every day—Leviticus 6:5
375. Not to extinguish this fire—Leviticus 6:5
376. To remove the ashes from the altar every day—Leviticus 6:3
377. To burn incense every day—Exodus 30:7
378. To light the Menorah every day—Exodus 27:21
379. The High Priest must bring a meal offering every day—Leviticus 6:13
380. To bring two additional lambs as burnt offerings on Shabbat—Numbers 28:9
381. To make the show bread—Exodus 25:30
382. To bring additional offerings on the New Month (Rosh Chodesh)—Numbers 28:11
383. To bring additional offerings on Passover—Numbers 28:19
384. To offer the wave offering from the meal of the new wheat (on the 2nd day of Passover)—Leviticus 23:10
385. Each man must count the Omer — seven weeks from the day the new wheat offering was brought—Leviticus 23:15
386. To bring additional offerings on Shavuot—Numbers 28:26
387. To bring two loaves to accompany the above sacrifice—Leviticus 23:18
388. To bring additional offerings on Rosh Hashanah—Numbers 29:2
389. To bring additional offerings on Yom Kippur—Numbers 29:8
390. To bring additional offerings on Sukkot—Numbers 29:13
391. To bring additional offerings on Shmini Atzeret—Numbers 29:35

392. Not to eat sacrifices which have become unfit or blemished—Deuteronomy 14:3
393. Not to eat from sacrifices offered with improper intentions—Leviticus 7:18
394. Not to leave sacrifices past the time allowed for eating them—Leviticus 22:30
395. Not to eat from that which was left over—Leviticus 19:8
396. Not to eat from sacrifices which became impure—Leviticus 7:19
397. An impure person must not eat from sacrifices—Leviticus 7:20
398. To burn the leftover sacrifices—Leviticus 7:17
399. To burn all impure sacrifices—Leviticus 7:19
400. To follow the procedure of Yom Kippur in the sequence prescribed in the Torah—Leviticus 16:3
401. One who profaned holy property must repay what he profaned plus a fifth and bring a sacrifice—Leviticus 5:16
402. Not to work consecrated animals—Deuteronomy 15:19
403. Not to shear the fleece of consecrated animals—Deuteronomy 15:19
404. To slaughter the Paschal sacrifice at the specified time—Exodus 12:6
405. Not to slaughter it while in possession of leaven—Exodus 23:18
406. Not to leave the fat overnight—Exodus 23:18
407. To slaughter the second Paschal Lamb—Numbers 9:11
408. To eat the Paschal Lamb with Matzah and Maror on the night of the 15th of Nissan—Exodus 12:8
409. To eat the second Paschal Lamb on the night of the 15th of Iyar—Numbers 9:11
410. Not to eat the Paschal meat raw or boiled—Exodus 12:9
411. Not to take the Paschal meat from the confines of its group—Exodus 12:46
412. An apostate must not eat from it—Exodus 12:43
413. A permanent or temporary [non-Jewish] hired worker must not eat from it—Exodus 12:45
414. An uncircumcised male must not eat from it—Exodus 12:48
415. Not to break any bones from the Paschal offering—Exodus 12:46
416. Not to break any bones from the second Paschal offering—Numbers 9:12
417. Not to leave any meat from the Paschal offering over until morning—Exodus 12:10

418. Not to leave the second Paschal meat over until morning—Numbers 9:12
419. Not to leave the meat of the holiday offering of the 14th until the 16th—Deuteronomy 16:4
420. To be seen at the Temple on Passover, Shavuot, and Sukkot—Deuteronomy 16:16
421. To celebrate on these three Festivals (by bringing a offering)--Exodus 23:14
422. To rejoice on these three Festivals—Deuteronomy 16:14
423. Not to appear at the Temple without offerings—Deuteronomy 16:16
424. Not to refrain from rejoicing with, and giving gifts to, the Levites—Deuteronomy 12:19
425. To assemble all the people on the Sukkot following the seventh year [the king publicly reads portions of the Torah]--Deuteronomy 31:12
426. To set aside the firstborn animals [to be eaten by the Kohanim, and sacrificed unless they are blemished]--Exodus 13:12
427. The Kohanim must not eat unblemished firstborn animals outside Jerusalem—Deuteronomy 12:17
428. Not to redeem the firstborn—Numbers 18:17
429. Separate the tithe from animals [to be eaten by the Kohanim, and sacrificed unless they are blemished]--Leviticus 27:32
430. Not to redeem the tithe—Leviticus 27:33
431. Every person must bring a sin offering for his transgression—Leviticus 4:27
432. Bring an asham talui offering when uncertain of guilt—Leviticus 5:17-18
433. Bring an asham vadai offering [for certain sins] when guilt is ascertained—Leviticus 5:25
434. Bring an oleh v'yored offering (if the person is wealthy, an animal; if poor, a bird or meal offering) [for certain sins]--Leviticus 5:7-11
435. The Sanhedrin must bring an offering when it rules in error—Leviticus 4:13
436. A woman who had a running issue must bring an offering after she goes to the Mikvah—Leviticus 15:28-29
437. A woman who gave birth must bring an offering after she goes to the Mikvah—Leviticus 12:6

438. A man who had a running issue must bring an offering after he goes to the Mikvah—Leviticus 15:13-14
439. A metzora ("leprous" person — see According to the Torah is Leprosy a hygienic problem or is it something spiritual and miraculous?) must bring an offering after going to the Mikvah—Leviticus 14:10
440. Not to substitute another beast for one set apart for sacrifice—Leviticus 27:10
441. The new animal, in addition to the substituted one, retains consecration—Leviticus 27:10
442. Not to change consecrated animals from one type of offering to another—Leviticus 27:26
443. Carry out the laws of impurity of the dead—Numbers 19:14
444. Carry out the procedure of the Red Heifer—Numbers 19:9
445. Carry out the laws of the sprinkling water [of the Red Heifer]--Numbers 19:21
446. Rule the laws of human tzara'at (Leprosy, see Mitzvah 439) as prescribed in the Torah—Leviticus 13:12
447. The metzora (leper) must not remove his signs of impurity—Deuteronomy 24:8
448. The metzora must not shave signs of impurity in his hair—Leviticus 13:33
449. The metzora must publicize his condition by tearing his garments, allowing his hair to grow and covering his mustache—Leviticus 13:45
450. Carry out the prescribed rules for purifying the metzora—Leviticus 14:2
451. The metzora must shave off all his hair prior to purification—Leviticus 14:9
452. Carry out the laws of "leprous" clothing—Leviticus 13:47
453. Carry out the laws of leprous houses—Leviticus 14:35
454. Observe the laws of menstrual impurity—Leviticus 15:19
455. Observe the laws of impurity caused by childbirth—Leviticus 12:2
456. Observe the laws of impurity caused by a woman's running issue—Leviticus 15:25
457. Observe the laws of impurity caused by a man's running issue (irregular ejaculation of infected semen)--Leviticus 15:3
458. Observe the laws of impurity caused by a dead beast—Leviticus 11:39

459. Observe the laws of impurity caused by the eight shratzim (rodents, amphibious creatures, and lizards) [specified in the Torah]--Leviticus 11:29
460. Observe the laws of impurity of a seminal emission (regular ejaculation, with normal semen)--Leviticus 15:16
461. Observe the laws of impurity concerning liquid and solid foods—Leviticus 11:34
462. Every impure person must immerse himself in a Mikvah to become pure—Leviticus 15:16
463. The court must judge the damages incurred by a goring beast—Exodus 21:28
464. The court must judge the damages incurred by an animal eating—Exodus 22:4
465. The court must judge the damages incurred by a pit—Exodus 21:33
466. The court must judge the damages incurred by fire—Exodus 22:5
467. Not to steal money stealthily—Leviticus 19:11
468. The court must implement punitive measures against the thief—Exodus 21:37
469. Each individual must ensure that his scales and weights are accurate—Leviticus 19:36
470. Not to commit injustice with scales and weights—Leviticus 19:35
471. Not to possess inaccurate scales and weights even if they are not for use—Deuteronomy 25:13
472. Not to move a boundary marker to steal someone's property—Deuteronomy 19:14
473. Not to kidnap—Exodus 20:13
474. Not to rob—Leviticus 19:13
475. Not to withhold wages or fail to repay a debt—Leviticus 19:13
476. Not to covet and scheme to acquire another's possession—Exodus 20:14
477. Not to desire another's possession—Deuteronomy 5:18
478. Return the robbed object or its value—Leviticus 5:23
479. Not to ignore a lost object—Deuteronomy 22:3
480. Return the lost object—Deuteronomy 22:1
481. The court must implement laws against the one who assaults another or damages another's property—Exodus 21:18
482. Not to murder—Exodus 20:13
483. Not to accept monetary restitution to atone for the murderer—Numbers 35:31

484. The court must send the accidental murderer to a city of refuge—Numbers 35:25
485. Not to accept monetary restitution instead of being sent to a city of refuge—Numbers 35:32
486. Not to kill the murderer before he stands trial—Numbers 35:12
487. Save someone being pursued even by taking the life of the pursuer—Deuteronomy 25:12
488. Not to pity the pursuer—Numbers 35:12
489. Not to stand idly by if someone's life is in danger—Leviticus 19:16
490. Designate cities of refuge and prepare routes of access—Deuteronomy 19:3
491. Break the neck of a calf by a stream following an unsolved murder—Deuteronomy 21:4
492. To neither work nor plant that river valley—Deuteronomy 21:4
493. Not to allow pitfalls and obstacles to remain on your property—Deuteronomy 22:8
494. Make a guard rail around flat roofs—Deuteronomy 22:8
495. Not to put a stumbling block before a blind man (nor give harmful advice)—Leviticus 19:14
496. Help another remove the load from a beast which can no longer carry it—Exodus 23:5
497. Help others load their beast—Deuteronomy 22:4
498. Not to leave others distraught with their burdens (but to help either load or unload)—Deuteronomy 22:4
499. Buy and sell according to Torah law—Leviticus 25:14
500. Not to overcharge or underpay for an article—Leviticus 25:14
501. Not to insult or harm anybody with words—Leviticus 25:17
502. Not to cheat a sincere convert monetarily—Exodus 22:20
503. Not to insult or harm a sincere convert with words—Exodus 22:20
504. Purchase a Hebrew slave in accordance with the prescribed laws—Exodus 21:2
505. Not to sell him as a slave is sold—Leviticus 25:42
506. Not to work him oppressively—Leviticus 25:43
507. Not to allow a non-Jew to work him oppressively—Leviticus 25:53
508. Not to have him do menial slave labor—Leviticus 25:39
509. Give him gifts when he goes free—Deuteronomy 15:14
510. Not to send him away empty-handed—Deuteronomy 15:13
511. Redeem Jewish maidservants—Exodus 21:8

512. Betroth the Jewish maidservant—Exodus 21:8
513. The master must not sell his maidservant—Exodus 21:8
514. Canaanite slaves must work forever unless the owner amputates one of their limbs—Leviticus 25:46
515. Not to extradite a slave who fled to (Biblical) Israel—Deuteronomy 23:16
516. Not to wrong a slave who has come to Israel for refuge—Deuteronomy 23:17
517. The courts must carry out the laws of a hired worker and hired guard—Exodus 22:9
518. Pay wages on the day they were earned—Deuteronomy 24:15
519. Not to delay payment of wages past the agreed time—Leviticus 19:13
520. The hired worker may eat from the unharvested crops where he works—Deuteronomy 23:25
521. The worker must not eat while on hired time—Deuteronomy 23:26
522. The worker must not take more than he can eat—Deuteronomy 23:25
523. Not to muzzle an ox while plowing—Deuteronomy 25:4
524. The courts must carry out the laws of a borrower—Exodus 22:13
525. The courts must carry out the laws of an unpaid guard—Exodus 22:6
526. Lend to the poor and destitute—Exodus 22:24
527. Not to press them for payment if you know they don't have it—Exodus 22:24
528. Press the idolater for payment—Deuteronomy 15:3
529. The creditor must not forcibly take collateral—Deuteronomy 24:10
530. Return the collateral to the debtor when needed—Deuteronomy 24:13
531. Not to delay its return when needed—Deuteronomy 24:12
532. Not to demand collateral from a widow—Deuteronomy 24:17
533. Not to demand as collateral utensils needed for preparing food—Deuteronomy 24:6
534. Not to lend with interest—Leviticus 25:37
535. Not to borrow with interest—Deuteronomy 23:20
536. Not to intermediate in an interest loan, guarantee, witness, or write the promissory note—Exodus 22:24
537. Lend to and borrow from idolaters with interest—Deuteronomy 23:21

538. The courts must carry out the laws of the plaintiff, admitter, or denier—Exodus 22:8
539. Carry out the laws of the order of inheritance—Numbers 27:8
540. Appoint judges—Deuteronomy 16:18
541. Not to appoint judges who are not familiar with judicial procedure—Deuteronomy 1:17
542. Decide by majority in case of disagreement—Exodus 23:2
543. [In capital cases] the court must not execute through a majority of one; at least a majority of two is required—Exodus 23:2
544. A judge who presented an acquittal plea must not present an argument for conviction in capital cases—Exodus 23:2
545. The courts must carry out the death penalty of stoning—Deuteronomy 22:24
546. The courts must carry out the death penalty of burning—Leviticus 20:14
547. The courts must carry out the death penalty of the sword—Exodus 21:20
548. The courts must carry out the death penalty of strangulation—Leviticus 20:10
549. The courts must hang those stoned for blasphemy or idolatry—Deuteronomy 21:22
550. Bury the executed [as well as all deceased] on the day they are killed—Deuteronomy 21:23
551. Not to delay burial overnight—Deuteronomy 21:23
552. The court must not let the sorcerer live—Exodus 22:17
553. The court must give lashes to the wrongdoer—Deuteronomy 25:2
554. The court must not exceed the prescribed number of lashes—Deuteronomy 25:3
555. The court must not kill anybody on circumstantial evidence—Exodus 23:7
556. The court must not punish anybody who was forced to do a crime—Deuteronomy 22:26
557. A judge must not pity the murderer or assaulter at the trial—Deuteronomy 19:13
558. A judge must not have mercy on the poor man at the trial—Leviticus 19:15
559. A judge must not respect the great man at the trial—Leviticus 19:15
560. A judge must not decide unjustly the case of the habitual transgressor—Exodus 23:6

561. A judge must not pervert justice—Leviticus 19:15
562. A judge must not pervert a case involving a convert or orphan—Deuteronomy 24:17
563. Judge righteously—Leviticus 19:15
564. The judge must not fear a violent man in judgment—Deuteronomy 1:17
565. Judges must not accept bribes—Exodus 23:8
566. Judges must not accept testimony unless both parties are present—Exodus 23:1
567. Not to curse judges—Exodus 22:27
568. Not to curse the head of state or leader of the Sanhedrin—Exodus 22:27
569. Not to curse any upstanding Jew—Leviticus 19:14
570. Anybody who knows evidence must testify in court—Leviticus 5:1
571. Carefully interrogate the witness—Deuteronomy 13:15
572. A witness must not serve as a judge in capital crimes—Numbers 35:30
573. Not to accept testimony from a lone witness—Deuteronomy 19:15
574. Transgressors must not testify—Exodus 23:1
575. Relatives of the litigants must not testify—Deuteronomy 24:16
576. Not to testify falsely—Exodus 20:13
577. Punish the false witnesses with the same punishment they were seeking for the defendant—Deuteronomy 19:19
578. Act according to the ruling of the Sanhedrin—Deuteronomy 17:11
579. Not to deviate from the word of the Sanhedrin—Deuteronomy 17:11
580. Not to add to the Torah commandments or their oral explanations—Deuteronomy 13:1
581. Not to diminish from the Torah any commandments, in whole or in part—Deuteronomy 13:1
582. Not to curse your father or mother—Exodus 21:17
583. Not to strike your father or mother—Exodus 21:15
584. Respect your father and mother—Exodus 20:12
585. Fear your father and mother—Leviticus 19:3
586. Not to be a rebellious son—Deuteronomy 21:20
587. Mourn for relatives—Leviticus 10:19
588. The High Priest must not defile himself through contact with a relative—Leviticus 21:11

589. The High Priest must not enter under the same roof as a corpse—Leviticus 21:11
590. A Kohen must not defile himself for anyone except relatives—Leviticus 21:1
591. Appoint a king from Israel—Deuteronomy 17:15
592. Not to appoint a convert—Deuteronomy 17:15
593. The king must not have too many wives—Deuteronomy 17:17
594. The king must not have too many horses—Deuteronomy 17:16
595. The king must not have too much silver and gold—Deuteronomy 17:17
596. Destroy the seven Canaanite nations—Deuteronomy 20:17
597. Not to let any of them remain alive—Deuteronomy 20:16
598. Wipe out the descendants of Amalek—Deuteronomy 25:19
599. Remember what Amalek did to the Jewish people—Deuteronomy 25:17
600. Not to forget Amalek's atrocities and ambush on our journey from Egypt in the desert—Deuteronomy 25:19
601. Not to dwell permanently in Egypt—Deuteronomy 17:16
602. Offer peace terms to the inhabitants of a city while holding siege, and treat them according to the Torah if they accept the terms—Deuteronomy 20:10
603. Not to offer peace to Ammon and Moab while besieging them—Deuteronomy 23:7
604. Not to destroy fruit trees even during the siege—Deuteronomy 20:19
605. Prepare latrines outside the army camps—Deuteronomy 23:13
606. Prepare a shovel for each soldier to dig with—Deuteronomy 23:14
607. Appoint a priest to speak with the soldiers during the war—Deuteronomy 20:2
608. He who has taken a wife, built a new home, or planted a vineyard is given a year to rejoice with his possessions—Deuteronomy 24:5
609. Not to demand from the above any involvement, communal or military—Deuteronomy 24:5
610. Not to panic and retreat during battle—Deuteronomy 20:3
611. Keep the laws of the captive woman—Deuteronomy 21:11
612. Not to sell her into slavery—Deuteronomy 21:14
613. Not to retain her for servitude after having relations with her—Deuteronomy 21:14

Adam's Sin

Peter wrote, "...as our dear brother Paul also wrote you with the wisdom that God gave him. He writes the same way in all his letters ... some things that are hard to understand..." [2 Peter 3:15-16].

"[Adam] laid human life open to the power of sin..." says Francis Godet,¹ whom we quote liberally, "the principle of revolt whereby the human will [what a person decides and does] rises against the divine in all its different forms² and manifestations."

In effect, Adam broke covenant; he violated an agreement between God and him that defined their relationship and that level of intimacy that comes with it. When Adam disobeyed, he broke trust; he proved himself unfaithful.³ Adam "pierced the dike through which the eruption took place." Godet further wrote.

To sound more reasonable, Early Church Fathers⁴ used the term "liable." We were not *guilty* of what Adam did, but we share in the *liability*. "It is in proportion as each individual voluntarily resigned himself to it that he becomes personally responsible for it."⁵ Scholarship explained, "in Adam" death came upon all, moral corruption, as a consequence of which all are sinners.

Sin

It is also our definition of what "sin" is that bears examination. The most basic understanding of sin is from the Old Testament, to which we appeal for explanations since it was Adam who originally "sinned." He

1. Godet. Page 204ff.

2. The pictorial power of the Hebrew language is seldom exhibited more clearly than in connection with the various aspects of evil. Every word is a piece of philosophy; nay, it is a revelation. The observer of human affairs is painfully struck by the wearisomeness of life, and by the amount of toil and travail which the children of men have to undergo to obtain a bare existence; he sees the hollowness, vanity, and unreality of much that seems bright and charming at first; ...The Hebrew Bible meets us with a full acknowledgement of these manifold aspects of human suffering, and blends wrong doing and suffering to a remarkable degree, setting forth sin in its relation to God, to society, and to a man's own self. [Girdlestone, Robert B. *Synonyms of the Old Testament*. Page 76].

3. revolt, rebellion - מַרְדָּ (marad)

4. see my work "The Cross."

5. Godet. Page 204ff.

was unfaithful or he broke covenant with God. The dynamic here should be obvious since a relationship between God and man was broken⁶ when trust between them was broken, as would be the case with any natural relation between two persons. When trust is broken, trustworthiness is destroyed. We can use this analogy because Adam was made in God's image, which gave to him a sense of the divine mind and heart. Paul later appealed to the same idea between Christ and the Church [Ephesians 5:32]. In our relation to Christ, think bride and groom. We are the bride. Trust in a marriage relation is woven in. In the words of the marriage contract, "til death." And it is necessarily as monogamous as it is sacred. Faithful until death is the *sine qua non* of marriage sanctity. This is true also with God [Exodus 20:3].

Adam represented humanity in principle; Adam's unfaithfulness, disobedience, was not an isolated event⁷ but an unleashing of all forms of evil which has become humanity's legacy. The extend to which Adam's disobedience introduced evil into the world, through his knowledge and experience, became quickly culturally inestimable. He was one generation away from the first murder. Humanity now devolves along this path.

Sin as the simple or single act of Adam's disobedience should not interest us here, rather, what his disobedience unleashed: a knowledge of evil. And what is evil? It is a "malignant misery"⁸ Evil⁹ spreads. It is like a root winding about and through everything in its path. In nature, not even a rock is immune to a root's advance. Evil has a cultural network that, to use the modern term, evolves. Adam's disobedience became Cain's homicide. Not without reason the Lord explained, "I the LORD thy God *am* a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth *generation* of them that hate me." [Exodus 20:5].

Adam's sin was not an isolated act as if he had bit into a "Granny Smith."¹⁰ It was more like Pandoras' Box being opened.¹¹ But it was worse

6. To transgress, to revolt, rebel, against God. פָּשַׁע Isaiah 1:28 "The destruction of transgressors and of sinners *shall be* together, And those who forsake the LORD shall be consumed."

7. "Postlapsarian" [occurring or existing after the Fall of Man] is the word used to describe life after Eden.

8. BDB. Page 948.

9. On רע "The Hebrew Bible meets us with a full acknowledgement of these manifold aspects of human suffering, and blends wrong doing and suffering to a remarkable degree, setting forth sin in its relation to God, to society, and to a man's own self." Robert Girdlestone. Page 76

10. A specie of Apple.

11. To punish humanity, the other gods created the first woman, the beautiful Pandora. As a gift, Zeus gave her a box, which she was told never to open. However, as soon as he

than this! Adam and Eve wanted to be “like God” [Genesis 3:5]. That was the temptation—not the sweet crunch of a refreshing bite of a ripe apple. He “changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man” in his imagination. [Romans 1:23].

What Was God’s Plan?

Should we ask whether or not God made Adam capable of disobedience? It is a reasonable question. What it lies in our power to do,” Aristotle reasoned, “it lies in our power not to do.” God knew Adam would disobey but was it part of a Divine plan, the details of which were already worked out in eternity? [1 Peter 1:19-20].¹²

God knows all things, but did He release the serpent knowing Adam’s power to resist his wife’s charms, which now included a passionate interest in something forbidden, was weakened? Adam was susceptible, vulnerable, to such advances.

The real issue with God was Adam’s faithfulness not to an instruction but to the relationship he had with God. The real issue was a matter of trust—as it always is with any relationship. “You shall have no other gods before me!” [Exodus 20:3] God warned Israel. God was as jealous as a husband who learns his wife has been unfaithful—or a woman whose husband has been romancing another woman. But this act of unfaithfulness, though committed by the first man, was now the spiritual inheritance of all mankind.

Dr. Lange held to the idea that sin was not imputed without cause. We are more than liable for Adam’s guilt. We carry our own! Sin was not imputed gratuitously. Paul taught, “*all* have sinned.” Here in Romans 5:12. All die because all have sinned. “The legal act of imputation is not arbitrary and unconditional,” Lange argued, “but rests on a moral ground and an objective reality.”¹³

was out of sight she took off the lid, and out swarmed all the troubles of the world, never to be recaptured

12. the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot. He indeed was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you

13. Lange. vol X. Page 177.

Romans 5:19

Are we made righteous or declared (imputed) righteous? Can the word¹⁴ used here for “made” or “imputed” have differing meanings with Adam and Christ? Both can have the same meaning if we consider that in both cases God’s covenant was active. Adam, according to covenant agreement, disobeyed and was therefore considered in rebellion, whereas, Christ sinlessly obeyed going to the Cross and ratifying, in a sense, the New Covenant which provided for our reconciliation with God. Christ opened the way for us to once again pursue a faithful covenant relationship with the Father.

Is “made” sinners or righteous just an expression for unsaved and saved? Paul’s use of this word, which means generally “to appoint” suggests an official edict or proclamation—and it should since it is God making it. All mankind is regarded sinful based on Adam’s sin as believers are regarded righteous based on Christ’s death and resurrection [atonement]. However, in both cases, these are not mere pronouncements but the actual resulting condition of each soul. In calling those who believe righteous, we are saying this comes about “by faith” and therefore underscores the grace of God in salvation. In Galatians 3:22 Paul states the case beyond the possibility of mistake, clearly: “But the Scripture has confined all under sin, that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe.”

The Law

Israel understood The Torah or Mosaic Covenant to be a covenant of works (conditioned on obedience). But let’s look deeper.

1. Torah could be seen as **statutes** or prescribed and obligatory decrees. The covenant consisted of these.¹⁵
2. The Torah was **Law**, a legal document, comprised of specific instructions governing social order and morality. Some of these comprised rituals that typified Christ’s coming death [Hebrews

14. καθίστημι - not “made” in the sense God made them sinners; but in the sense God declared, treated them now as sinners or righteous in accordance with Covenant directive and provision.

15. Psalm 50:16 CSB But God says to the wicked: “What right do you have to recite my statutes and to take my covenant on your lips?”

10:1].¹⁶ These comprised the law code of the Mosaic Covenant [Exodus 24:12].¹⁷

3. God's **judgments** or judicial decisions are based on this Law¹⁸ executed in accord with the laws in the Old Covenant. God never shows favoritism in such matters [Romans 2:11].
4. Other words are used to describe the content of the Old Covenant:
 - **Precepts**¹⁹ or charges given for appointed times and direction. Referenced 21 times in Psalm 119, David equates these to a way of life, living righteously [Psalm 119:40]. David called these God's guidance—through his enemies plans and efforts to destroy him—his portion of God's mercy which he cherished [Psalm 119:56-58].
 - They became his **testimony** of God's salvation [Psalm 119:59].
 - Are not all these summed up in learning God's **Ways** [Psalm 25:4].

I am lead to conclude that all these terms collectively profile God's holiness, His character and attributes and His covenant was intended for Israel to learn Him, His ways, and not a legislated list of do's and don'ts. There is freedom here in following the Lord [Proverbs 28:26]. God's judgments were a comfort to David [Psalm 119:52]. He set God's statues to music [Psalm 119:54] and meditated [hummed] the tunes incessantly [Psalm 119:15, 27, 48]. He boasted of God's exploits to the kings of other nations [Psalm 119:56].

Romans 5:12 "*on this basis*"²⁰ " Adam sinned and now, if without Christ, we do!

- ◆ Pantheism does not recognize One God and therefore does not recognize His covenants. Without a covenant, there can be no sin, since sin is breaking covenant, rebelling and being unfaithful.

16. "For the law, having a shadow of the good things to come, *and* not the very image of the things, can never with these same sacrifices, which they offer continually year by year, make those who approach perfect."

17. "Then the LORD said to Moses, "Come up to Me on the mountain and be there; and I will give you tablets of stone, and the law and commandments which I have written, that you may teach them."

18. Deuteronomy 1:17 'You shall not show partiality in judgment; you shall hear the small as well as the great; you shall not be afraid in any man's presence, for the judgment *is* God's. The case that is too hard for you, bring to me, and I will hear it."

19. Psalm 119:4 "You have commanded *us* to keep Your precepts diligently."

20. ἐφ' ᾧ

There is, therefore, in pantheism no radical antagonism between good and evil, and no room for redemption.

- ◆ Pelagius (Unitarianism and Rationalism) denied original sin. Adam's sin in his view had no consequence that affected his descendants or mankind. For him, every child is born innocent and perfect, but fallible and only their sins (temporal sin) are to be judged. This does not explain the universal dominion of sin.
- ◆ A Pre-Adamic Fall before birth is a mere hypothesis inconsistent with the plain sense of Romans 5:12.
- ◆ Augustine of Hippo (400 AD) taught that Adam's sin "vitiating the generic human nature" and transmitted this corruption to his descendants, a "crooked and perverse generation" [Philippians 2:15]. Adam's transgression resulted in a sinful nature which propagated or breed sinful natures in his offspring.
 - Catholic tradition saw Adam's sin as privation in subsequent generations rather than a corruption for sinning. Christ died to forgive original sin only. Temporal or individual sins require penance.
 - Protestants like Augustine see Adam's sin as hereditary and guilt in all its severity. Christ died for all sin—past, present and future committed by all mankind. But this provision needs to be accepted by faith—believed—for salvation. [Romans 10:9-10].
- ◆ The federal (forensic) theory of a vicarious representation of mankind by Adam, in virtue of a covenant [of works] made to him.
 - Imputation of Adam's transgression is made to rest on both moral and legal grounds.
 - By virtue of Adam's headship, his sin and guilt are immediately imputed to all mankind.
- ◆ The New School Calvinists reject imputation altogether. Our sinfulness is infallibly certain though not necessary as a result of Adam's sin. It differs from Pelagius' view in that though we are free naturally, we are depraved morally.
- ◆ The Semi-Pelagian View adopted by Wesleyan Methodists and Reformed Churches. The primal apostasy of Adam [Adam's disobedience] had disastrous effects upon all mankind but not as imputed sin and guilt exposing his descendants to punishment. We are not punishable for original sin. The "evil" Adam bequeathed to all was more like an infirmity or misfortune for which God provided a remedy in Christ. Original sin is here a moral defect or disease.

Paul's use of words meaning "sin" are revealing of a covenant with Adam.²¹

- ◆ A disregard for or breaking God's Law. [Romans 4:15 "where there is no *law* there is no transgression."]
- ◆ As a result of "The Fall" to deviate off the path of Truth. [Romans 4:25 "delivered for our *offenses*".]
- ◆ As the starting point of (why we) sin. [Romans 3:23 "All have sinned and *come short* of the Glory of God"].
- ◆ As disobedience. Paying God no heed, refusing to hear or regard His will. [Romans 5:19 By one man's *disobedience* many were made sinners."].

Imputed Sin

- ◆ Antecedent (immediate) Imputation. We are guilty in Adam. Our sinfulness is natural and punishable. All are born into it [Psalm 51:5]. Hereditary guilt precedes hereditary sin. We are guilty of punishment even before our first sin.
- ◆ Consequent (mediate) Imputation. Hereditary sin precedes hereditary guilt. Adam's sin is imputed to us only because it is ours! Calvin (Baptists) on Romans 5:17 maintain that we are condemned for the sin of Adam not by imputation alone [as if we were guilty of his sin] but we bear its punishment because we are guilty in so far as our nature ... is held bound with the guilt of iniquity..."²²

21. Some theological interpretations of Romans 5 do not leave room for a Covenant of works between God and Adam, although the words indicating "sin" in Paul's writing strongly recommend it.

22. Lange. vol X. Page 192.

A Woman's Smile

A fun poem to say that I understand Adam's plight.

When God made Eve, the Master plan was to have her be as a help for man
So His genius in one master stroke formed her thus. When she awoke
She found her Adam sitting there in breathless wonder with but a stare
Upon his face; her sinless guile threw him a kiss and broke a smile.

Perhaps, he dreamt the siren's lure So true of all men everywhere.
The loudest praise, the fondest prose was God's creation while Adam
dosed!
The finishing touch to His masterpiece! Will breathless sighing never cease!
Discovered in her gentle style, displaying a coquettish smile.

Be not deceived: That fateful day when serpents had too much to say
When summer fruit bedecked the tree where Adam had no right to be—
Forbidden pleasures he should resist but did his lovely Eve insist?
She took a bite and thought the while she'd shared it ...only, with a smile!

No wealth, no jewels, no luxuries, not Eden's treasured discoveries,
No opulence, no bed of ease is long able to assuage or please.
What tempts a man? It's not in things, not palaces of the richest kings.
For nothing else is worth the while. It's only in a woman's smile.

Biblical Covenants

Church doctrine is based in part on an interpretation of the covenants God made through Biblical history. But why did God make covenants with *one* that extended to *many*: Adam to all mankind, Abraham to his seed or David to his kingdom. The Mosaic Covenant to Israel was in effect until Christ died, when He ratified a “New” covenant in His blood that now extends to *all who believe*.

And how about circumcision? We know it was tied specifically to Abraham’s descendants and no other duty. Abraham had to only believe God to be justified. The question is: has circumcision been replaced by water baptism? If so, what does this mean? And what about *our* descendants, our children? Does our faith in Christ somehow extend to them as Abraham’s had to his seed? These are the questions that suggested infant baptism for some Christian faiths. How might we, for example, interpret Paul and Silas to the Philippian jailor [Acts 16:31] “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you **and your household**”?

What gets a bit more convoluted—and I apologize for this word but I have no other as relevant—is a discussion of “a Covenant of Grace” which seems to have been on God’s heart from eternity past: “Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you **from the foundation of the world**” [Matthew 25:34]. Though the Old Testament concept of “grace” meant “favor” this does not mean God didn’t have the New Testament concept on His mind and heart all along. So, was the Covenant of Faith with Abraham really a *Covenant of Grace*? One gets the distinct impression that many Old Testament [Old Covenant] scriptures have a certain New Covenant nuance or sense to them.

Psalms 51:1 comes to mind: “Have mercy upon me, O God, According to Your lovingkindness; According to the multitude of Your tender mercies, **Blot out** my transgressions.” Verse 2: “cleanse me .” Verse 10: “**Create in me a clean heart.**” Verse 12: “Restore to me the **joy of Your** salvation” And we could continue, but the point is that we read these with reference to Calvary! And if David could mean all this [1 Kings 11:4] he would have too eventually experience the true power of the resurrection, the newness of life Paul spoke of [Romans 6:4].

Thanks to Jesus’ death and resurrection, we will see David, too, in Glory! We will see Abraham there, too, along with a host of Old Covenant saints. But we underscore that foundational truth for all Christian faith,

“Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.” [Acts 4:12], God forbid we would suggest any other way to God: “Jesus said to him, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.” [John 14:6].

SUMMARY CHART

	Presbyterian View	Particular Baptist View
Abrahamic Covenant	The covenant of grace with both physical and spiritual elements made to Abraham and his seed, and by which Abraham was saved.	The covenant of circumcision made with Abraham promising his physical offspring the land of Canaan. Furthermore, by promising that the Messiah would come from him to bless all nations, the new covenant was revealed by which Abraham and his spiritual offspring are saved.
Mosaic Covenant	The covenant of grace prior to Christ, which was differently administered using various typical ordinances.	A covenant of works distinct from, subservient to, and typical of the covenant of grace.
Old Covenant Israel	The church underage.	Abraham's carnal offspring in earthly covenant with God. A type of the church. The elect remnant within Israel were part of the church by virtue of the new covenant.
New Covenant	The administration of the covenant of grace under Christ.	The covenant of grace by which is given salvation by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone; different in substance from the old covenant.
New Covenant Church	The invisible church consists of all the regenerate, while the visible church is composed of both regenerate and unregenerate persons, just as the old covenant was. The visible church includes all those who profess true religion together with their children.	The invisible/visible distinction refers not to two different groups, but to two different perspectives of one group: God's perspective and man's. The visible church consists of only those whom believers have reason to believe are part of the invisible church (the new covenant). Thus the visible church consists of those who profess saving faith.

Carnality

What can be said definitively about “carnality” is that it is a morally inappropriate use of our humanity whether the body in terms of its members: eyes, tongue, legs, hands, ejusdem generis or the passions and thoughts: “And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ” [1 Thessalonians 5:23]. As Jesus also taught: “Jesus said to him, ‘You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind’”¹ [Matthew 22:37].

Where a conflict of interest surfaces is in realizing that our humanity is a divine creation which does not support an extreme stoic view of religious devotion” “Don’t drink only water. You ought to drink a little wine for the sake of your stomach “ [1 Timothy 5:23].²

Two words are used in the New Testament for “carnality:” sarkinos³ and sarkikos⁴ both coming from sarx [Romans 7:18] or the word “flesh” Sarkinos speaks to those natural human proclivities or behavioral expressions that are immoderate and often addictive but which by their very nature show disinterest in God and His desires toward His creation.⁵

Sarkikos means characterized by “the flesh” speaking of the behavior solely. Believers may be sarkikos but cannot be sarkinos since they are “new creations in Christ.” [2 Corinthians 5:17; Galatians 6:5].

In Greek literature, sarkinos is “real” as opposed to what is imagined or what symbolizes a real body. The hunger of the flesh has been called “the admonition of nature” since the flesh is considered the seat of all emotions in Greek thought. This explains Ezekiel 36:26 referencing God’s New Covenant in Christ, “I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give

1. Deuteronomy 6:5 You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength.

2. See also: Hebrews 13:4 Marriage is honorable among all, and the bed undefiled; but fornicators and adulterers God will judge.

3. σάρκινος

4. σάρκικός

5. 1 Corinthians 10:31 Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.

you a heart of flesh.” The seat of our emotions and thoughts are part of the flesh because they are part of the body.⁶

Paul

With Paul, flesh corresponds to the body and as such he used this word to refer to our earthly life, as in Galatians 2:20: “I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the **flesh** I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.”

Paul then adopted an Old Testament use of the word to refer to what is earthly contrasted with what is spiritual or heavenly [Romans 9:3]. “According to the flesh, Christ came.” “*Flesh and blood* denotes the whole man with all his functions.”⁷ The nuance of sin is completely absent in the word in such usage. What is sinful, per se, is not the flesh but confidence in it! [Philippians 3:3, 8].⁸ The flesh here speaks of temporary accomplishments done in this life. 2 Corinthians 10:2-3 “walk according to the flesh” refers only to this life lived. Paul uses the words “according to” to emphasize that this life is not what life should be exclusively about. We have a spiritual work to accomplish by God’s grace and for His glory. “who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.” [Romans 8:1].

When is the Flesh Sinful? Carnal?

Paul’s idea of carnality is living this life [in the flesh] but not in the Spirit—following after Christ or walking in the Spirit, that “the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit” [Romans 8:4]. A life outside of Christ is described by Paul in terms of its works [Galatians 5:19-21]: Sexual sins, eating and drinking, hate and strife. He called these “fleshly desires” in Galatians 5:24; Ephesians 2:3].

Paul also spoke of the desires of the heart outside Christ [Romans 1:24] describing all people without Christ.. “[Flesh] is for Paul everything human and earthly, which includes legal righteousness.”⁹

6. The dichotomous theological view sees man as 2 parts: body and soul-spirit; the trichotomous view sees three: body, soul and also spirit as separate from the soul.

7. Kittel. vol. VI. Page 129.

8. For we are the circumcision, who worship God in the Spirit, rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh,...Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ

9. Kittel. vol. VI. Page 133.

So carnality is not just the obvious display of vice and violence that all persons recognize even without law. Carnality includes all of man's efforts at finding and pleasing God outside of Christ! "The pre-Christian man, even with the best will in the world, falls into acts which are contrary to God."¹⁰

When Paul observed the division and contention on display in Galatia and in Corinth, he affirmed with clear emphasis that this behavior is not Christian.¹¹

Personal Reflection

"The flesh ... becomes bad only when man builds his life on it."¹²

The flesh is the body and speaks of its needs. But *need* can cross an emotional line into *want*. I need food to live but if I live to eat it becomes a want. Some explain this in terms of moderation. (This word, however, is found only in Hebrews 5:2 and does not address this matter.) Sexual attraction is a physiological *need* but when it objectifies another it becomes a *want*. Needs are met by another in relationship; pornography, therefore, deals exclusively in *want*. Need fulfillment is a significant part of life. Getting what one *wants* to pleasure one's self, if this involves another, is stolen affection. Sexual *need* is hormonal but *want* is purely animalistic. Help to satisfy need is *given*. Seeking gratification for what is *wanted* is *taken* and can be abusive. Needs are not selfish but are God given instruments of passion and desire to bring together two people otherwise left alone. Need can be "met" or satisfied. *Want* is purely *selfish*. Need is a natural condition while *want* as an overstated demand approaches addiction and is never satisfied. I need others in my life speaks to healthy relationships, whereas, wanting other people is simply the desire to use them for personal interests that do not otherwise involve them. God meets needs when we pray for His intervention, but gratifying wants is carnality. "So then, brothers and sisters, we are not obligated to the flesh to live according to the flesh because if you live according to the flesh, you are going to die..... For all those led by God's Spirit are God's sons" [Romans 8:12-14 CSB].

See also the section on "Monogamy" in the Appendix on "Redefining Society."

10. Ibid. Page 134.

11. sarkikos contrasted with pneumatikos

12. Kittel. vol. VI. Page 135.

Covenant Theology

The Epistle to the Romans is Paul's Covenant Theology written from both a Jewish and the non-Jewish, both a religious and non-religious, perspective. Too many cooks spoil the broth and, I fear, this is the history of the interpretation of Paul's spiritual masterpiece where words have been invented¹ and redefined.² Scholars disagree as to whom, Jew or Gentile, the Roman church, or Romans, in general, Paul is speaking, on occasion.

"Covenant theology is a study of the different covenants God has made with man since the beginning of the world.," Pascal Denault informs. "The connection between God and the creature of his making, as revealed in the Holy Scriptures, has always been defined in terms of covenants, having different goals and terms. Since biblical history occurs entirely within these covenants, it is imperative to understand their nature and their role in order to correctly interpret the Scriptures."³

Four covenants are generally referenced which form the theological foundation of Christian soteriology: with Adam, with Abraham, with Moses, and the New Covenant through Christ. The debate continues as to whether these all represent one Covenant of *Grace* or is there another way of viewing them. Adam's Covenant was straight forward: sin, you die! Moses (Sinaitic) Covenant is probably a covenant of works since, as Paul explained, "Moses writes about the righteousness that is from the law: The one who does these things will live by them" [Romans 10:5 CSB]. Abraham's Covenant was enacted based on "faith" [Romans 4:2-3]. But questions remained about his "posterity" and whether their was a "spiritual" blessing promised to them as well.

In addition, from an interpretation of God's covenant comes the varied importance of water baptism: paedobaptism [infant water baptism] and credobaptism [water baptism of those who are able to make a conscious profession of faith in Christ]. Water Baptism doctrinally has a great impact on hermeneutics in general. What part does Baptism play in salvation and is it typified in circumcision? The connection was implied between the token or sign of covenant faithfulness with Abraham by

1. The word "atonement" by Wycliff.

2. ἱλαστήριον == propitiation is not appeasement nor the place of atonement. but the means of...

3. Pascal Denault. Location 550.

circumcision and the New Testament practice of Water Baptism and whether this baptism follows the term's etymology, emersion, or the Sinaitic practice of ceremonial cleansing by sprinkling [Numbers 8:7; 19:21].

Water baptism, itself, was instituted by Christ making it a well accepted Christian practice which Jesus instructed us to make part of the Kingdom message [Mark 16:15-16]. But its importance, Jesus never clarified. Left to the theologian to decide opened this up to multiple interpretations (but in all honesty this was unavoidable: sprinkling or immersion?). Most references to water baptism speak of the person being baptized. But Acts 22:16 has Ananias encouraging Paul [Saul] to *submit* to baptism.⁴ The issue is whether or not the candidate for baptism must make a conscious confession of faith publicly acknowledging a personal desire to be baptized (which might discredit infant baptism). In most uses of the word, the form is ambiguous and can mean either "be baptized" and "submit to baptism."

When these ideas are all hashed out Christianity found itself, doctrinally, somewhere along a continuum from infant baptism that forgives original sin to a sola fide, from a grace that saves in the Old Covenant to a grace promised through that Covenant, from a covenant that is conditional (of works) to one that is unconditional (of grace), from a covenant in which works are antecedent (obedience a condition) to one that they are consequential (the outworking of faith), from Arminianism to Calvinism, from transgressible to in-transgressible, from Adam's sin which was not forgivable to Christ who forgave all everything.

The scriptural importance and meaning of these covenants, then, with Abraham, with Moses, and the New Covenant through Christ, and how they relate vis-a-vis to each other, forms the heart of Christian doctrine as regards membership in the body of Christ [ecclesiology], and its many benefits, blessings, including eternal life [soteriology].

Gramma Knows Best

My uncle purchased a larger cage for his parakeet. The cage required some assembly with inserted glass panels as well as the many items, roosts and toys, his parakeet needed to enjoy in its new home. My uncle then needed to fill the various cups for seed and water, which we

4. This verb uses what A. T. Robertson calls a causative middle voice which he translates "get yourself baptized." [A. T. Robertson, Page 808]. Since, in New Testament Greek both middle and passive forms use the same spelling, In Acts 18:8 Luke recorded, "many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized [which could mean submitted themselves to baptism]."

forgot about until now. These were secured inside the cage and we didn't know how to get at them to fill them. We didn't recall any instruction for this, so we set our mind to solving the unsolvable—how to feed the parakeet. Frustrated and concluding we might have to disassemble the cage, start over again (filling the cups first) my uncle went to work and I to school, leaving the problem to grandma. When we returned, we discovered the bird's cups filled and grandma—of all things—apologetic for doing it. She knew she couldn't take the glass panels off the cage and whatever else might be required to get at the cups; so, as she, rather sheepishly, confessed, she simply reached through the cage door and lifted each one out, filled it, and then put it back the same way—all without removing any part of the cage itself. Uncle and I were mildly embarrassed, admitting grandma was right. It should have been obvious but somewhere along our academic training, genius seemed to require a more complicated approach to life. I am reminded of Festus' warning to Paul and a discussion over the Cross, "You study too many books, Paul; I don't think you are in your right mind" (Acts 26:24).

Is there no simpler, more foundational and reasonable, explanation that honors God's Word but also unifies His Church around one doctrine, one tradition [1 Corinthians 11:2; 2 Thessalonians 2:15; 3:6]. This is why we put forward in this work a simpler look at God as a Covenant God, His righteousness as Covenant faithfulness [Romans 3:25] in which faithfulness and faith are inseparable [Habakkuk 2:4] while faith is another word for both "trust in God" [John 14:1] and "doctrine, adherence to His Word" [Ephesians 4:5]. These simplistic ideas added to those teachings recognized as common to all "faiths" provide the play area in which our theological building blocks can be enjoyed.

The Curse

Galatians 3:13 reads the same in 15 English translations: "Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us," Only in the New Living Translation do we read, "But Christ has rescued us from the curse pronounced by the law. When he was hung [hanged?] on the cross, he took upon himself the curse for our wrongdoing." Who is the 'us'? Whose "curse" did the Savior bear?

Lightfoot says, "The expression [redeemed from the curse] is to be explained partly by the Hebrew idiom ... but still more by the religious conception which it involves."¹ This idea is prominent in Leviticus 16:5-10 with the type of the "scapegoat" [a goat sent into the wilderness after the Jewish chief priest had symbolically laid the sins of the people upon it]. Verse 10 reads, "the goat on which the lot fell to be the scapegoat shall be presented alive before the LORD, to make atonement upon it."

Paul clarified, according to scholarship, that he and "the Jewish race" were "redeemed" or "ransomed" by Christ taking "the curse," which Lightfoot interprets was, "pronounced" by the Law, Torah. This tells Lightfoot that the 'us' is Israel! Paul's use of the term "curse," which comes from Deuteronomy 21:23 ["he that is hanged is accursed of God"] specifically and solely concerned Israel's status before God and made no reference to the Church or to Gentiles [Deuteronomy 27:15-26 lists a dozen curses for Torah breakers, in particular].

So Lightfoot clarifies [Galatians 3:14] "The Law, the great barrier, that excluded the Gentiles, is done away in Christ." Israel broke the Law and inherited the curse; the Law was simply blocking the Gentile's way to Salvation. To continue Galatians 3:14, " ... the Gentiles [now that Israel's curse is removed] are put on a level with ... Jews and, so united, [We, now, can]... receive the promise in the gift of the Spirit through ... faith."²

So says Ephesians 2:14-16. Reading from the Amplified, "For He is ... our bond of unity and harmony. He has made us both [Jew and Gentile] one [body], and has ... destroyed... the hostile dividing ... us, By abolishing in His.. flesh the enmity [caused by] the Law with its decrees and ordinances ...that He from the two might create in Himself one ...out of

1. Lightfoot. The Epistle to the Galatians. Page 139.

2. Wright. Page 140.

the two, ... making peace ... to reconcile to God both [Jew and Gentile...] in a single body by means of His cross."

Wright comments, "The curse which has come upon Israel has thus caused the promises made through Israel to get stuck! And it is this curse, with this result, from which, according to Galatians, the Messiah has redeemed 'us'."³

Wright continues, "The point about the" curse", and the Messiah bearing it on behalf of others, is not that there is a general, abstract curse hanging over the whole human race."⁴ It "hung" only over Israel! The curse had to be [the Amplified Bible says] "abolished." Wright called it "stuck" [like a log-sham?] which had to be removed to free the way for our, Gentile, salvation.

Among the reasons for Jesus' death, then, is removing Israel's, not Adam's, curse. But Paul never meant to even imply here that our salvation was not equally a rescue from sin. Paul, on occasion, liked to use different wording sometimes that mapped out a different path to repentance and reconciliation between Jew and Gentile because of the different starting points between them. Accordingly, Paul told us [Romans 3:30 NIV] "...there is only one God, who will justify the circumcised [the Jew] *by* faith and the uncircumcised [the Gentile] *through* that same faith [2 Peter 1:1 NASB95]."

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid. Page 139.

Dead to Sin

Romans 6:2 “dead to sin”? How can we interpret this?

What it is *not*:

- ♦ Paul’s language is *not* mere metaphor, the poetic rhetoric found in a romance novel as if God’s love for us and ours for Him is a future promise, a heavenly scene yet to be realized instead of a current relationship. “Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.” [1 John 3:2].
- ♦ Paul’s language is *not* more idealistic than reality since believers still do sin. “If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us” “And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous” [1 John 1:8; 2:1]. ...declared righteous but not made so yet.?
- ♦ Paul is *not* talking about “will,” a promise made to God, an emotional decision to renounce evil: “self-control” [Galatians 5:23].
- ♦ Paul was not talking about the “death of sin.” Or full and immediate sanctification not as a process but instantly as part of salvation itself. “but as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct...” [1 Peter 1:15].

What it is:

“We conclude ... that death to sin is not an absolute cessation of sin at any moment whatever, but an absolute breaking of the will with it, with its instinct and aspirations, and that simply under the control of faith in Christ’s death *for* sin.”¹

Verse 11: “Dead indeed unto sin.” Christian debate the exact meaning of these words because they are not theology, about God alone, but about believers in relation with Him. Believers sometimes sin—a subject Paul might address in chapter 7 (according to some) and chapter 8,

1. Godet. Page 238.

in terms of living a victorious Christian life. Here, however, Paul addresses the possibility of living such a life, based solely on what Christ did on Calvary. When we sin, it is no longer sin's fault as master; it must represent our misguided obedience to a former master!

Believers also debate the meaning of "sin" which shouldn't be necessary. Sin is anything that disrupts our relationship with God, which displeases our Lord, which is clear disobedience to His Word and voice. Different Christian denominations may add to or edit this definition in a personal interest—through guilt—of assured fidelity to their numbers.

Godet interprets Paul to mean, "The believer does not get disentangled from sin gradually. He breaks with it in Christ once for all."²

Salvation is more than status in Christ; it is more than a declaration of right standing with God. Salvation is a fundamental change—what we called a transformation—in a believer's way of viewing life [Romans 12:2]. Paul tried to explain this to the Christians at Rome by calling it a crucifixion of the person we used to be [Romans 6:6], and a resurrection of the person we are now [Romans 6:8] as believers.

Romans 8:29 "conformed to the image of His Son" The Greek use of this word teaches us that this is not speaking of an outward change, like wearing the newest fashion. By definition, the term "fashion" would speak of a temporary change. Our word "conformed" is an inward and permanent change.

We are being made Christlike which, to me, is another way of saying, "For He made Him who knew no sin *to be* sin for us, that we might become the righteousness [faithful to the New Covenant] of God in Him." [2 Corinthians 5:21].

2. Ibid. Page 249.

Declared Righteous

The action word (verb) is written in a causative form meaning to *make* right or righteous. If this be true, Jesus' death and resurrection turned us from sinners into righteous persons, but the things we still do wrong have argued against this simplistic interpretation (Romans 7:15).¹ "This meaning," Joseph Thayer commented, "is extremely rare, if not altogether doubtful."² When David confessed, "Surely in vain have I *kept my heart pure*" (Psalm 73:13) did he really mean to say "I purified my own heart"! I think not!

He actually said, "I have shown my heart upright." But that suggests the idea that this form means to *show* or *exhibit* righteous—rather than to make righteous. Ezekiel said, "your sisters *appear* righteous" (Ezekiel 16:51) while comparing Israel's unfaithfulness to Judah's. Does Paul mean to say "Jesus appears ... from God ... to become our righteousness." He only seemed to save us! This isn't correct, either.

Scholars, then, suggested the causative form might mean to *evince* or *prove* righteous. Jesus used this idea once: "Wisdom," He said, "*is proved right* by all her children." (Luke 7:35) Paul used the word righteous once in this way also. He proclaimed Jesus "*justified* in the Spirit" (I Timothy 3:16). Jesus was *proven just* in dying for the souls of mankind. We have been all around this truth until now because this is the "mystery of Godliness." We knew all along with an unreserved conviction that this had to be true: Jesus had to die on the Cross for our salvation and in so doing, He was proven right as our penal substitute.

"In the writings of Paul," however, Joseph Thayer points out that, *righteousness* for Paul has a "peculiar meaning."³ The idea "to prove righteous" doesn't fit I Corinthians 1:30. Do we mean to interpret "Jesus became the *proof*! of our righteousness"?

Scholars had one more meaning to look at: *to declare* righteous. This idea is not without grammatical example.⁴ For Paul, the hope of salvation was not dependent on keeping the Mosaic law, which proved impossible,

1. I refer you to the "Tale of Two Trees" in the Introduction

2. Thayer. 150

3. Ibid. 149

4. the verb, to be worthy, also means to declare or judge worthy. 2 Thessalonians 1:11 best reads (ASV) "count you worthy of your calling,"

nor living in harmony with nature,⁵ or according to some social order (A Greek cultural idea). Paul revisited the Old Testament concept of God "imputing" righteousness, declaring us justified by a faith in Christ's expiatory death on the cross. "The righteousness of God is through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe." (Romans 3:22) This idea is not Paul's alone but it reaches back into the writings of Moses, "Abram believed the LORD, and he credited it to him as righteousness." (Genesis 15:6) and the Psalms, "It was credited to him as righteousness throughout all generations to come." (Psalm 106:31) This is a point of seminal import: "Paul thus makes the most frequent use of this whole word-group.... Of all the New Testament writers ...he establishes the closest connection with the Old Testament."⁶

Righteousness, you remember, is an attribute of God. "Your righteousness reaches the heights, God, you who have done great things; God, who is like you?" (Psalm 71:19) His righteousness, redeems and saves. In the truest sense of a redemption, God declared us free from sin, and through Christ's resurrection provision was made as an empowering grace to walk in newness of life. We could say, we now belong to Him, "as those who are alive from the dead, offer yourselves to God ... having been set free from sin, you became enslaved to righteousness. just as you offered ... yourselves as slaves to impurity, and ... lawlessness, so now offer them as slaves to righteousness... you have been set free from sin and have become enslaved to God" (Romans 6:13, 18-19, 22) Said more succinctly: "Righteousness ... is not a matter of ... conforming to a given set of ... legal standards, but of behavior which is in keeping with the two-way relationship between God and man."⁷

5. The word for sinning or committing wrong-doing based on living in harmony with nature is found only in the Old Testament. cp. the chapter on Theories of Atonement, The Moral Influence Theory.

6. Brown. vol III. 363

7. Ibid. 355

Divine Justice

François Turretini (17 October 1623 – 28 September 1687; also known as Francis Turretin) was a Genevan-Italian Reformed scholastic theologian who looked at divine justice from the underside of the tapestry: **five reasons** for maintaining why we can say that Jesus' substitutionary or sacrificial death in our stead was *not unjust*.

In Turretin's words: There was no injustice made:

1. **Not to Christ**, for he voluntarily took the punishment upon himself, and had the right to decide concerning his own life and death, and also power to raise himself from the dead. Jesus had power over his own life, so that he may rightfully determine respecting it. "No one takes it from me, but I lay it down on my own. I have the right to lay it down, and I have the right to take it up again. I have received this command from my Father." (John 10:18)
2. **Not to God's justice and holiness** the judge, for he willed and commanded it.
Jesus voluntarily took the burden on himself. "I have come to do your will." (Hebrews 10:9) For the Surety (substitution) satisfied this by suffering the punishment which demanded it.
3. **Not to the Torah law**, for its honor has been maintained by the perfect fulfillment of all its demands. Through the righteousness of the Mediator; and by our legal and mystical union, he becomes one with us, and we with him. He said to them, "This is what I told you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms." [Luke 44:24]. Because Jesus was incarnate, sin was punished in the same nature in which it was guilty. "Now since the children have flesh and blood in common, Jesus also shared in these, so that through his death he might destroy the one holding the power of death — that is, the devil." [Hebrews 2:14]
4. **Not to the universe** [reasonableness], by depriving an innocent person of life, for Christ, freed from death, lives forevermore. If Jesus could be held by death, then he could free no one from its dominion, but He rose from the dead [1 Corinthians 15:17]. "Jesus Christ ... was appointed to be the powerful Son of God according

to the Spirit of holiness by the resurrection of the dead.” [Romans 1:3-4]

5. **Not to the Saints** of God. for they are converted and made holy by Christ to live forever.

Jesus did not die for His own sins because He was sinless. Being polluted by no sin, he might not have to offer sacrifice for himself, but for us only. “For this is the kind of high priest we need: holy, innocent, undefiled, separated from sinners, and exalted above the heavens.” [Hebrews 7:26]

Eternally Secure

The following is an article from my blog. It has been edited for here.

Can a believer lose their salvation? Can they go back into sin to where they are no longer a Christian, disowned by God? I pondered this question recently coming to the conclusion that such an idea is highly improbable because of three scriptural truths.

1. We are born again—not simply good people, now [2 Corinthians 5:17; Galatians 6:15].
2. We are being conformed to the image of Christ [Romans 8:29] It's happening now! [2 Corinthians 3:18] And our minds are being transformed as well [Romans 12:2]. Our salvation is not a static, but a dynamic, aspect of who we are in Christ. And
3. This conformation along with His word written on our hearts is in accordance with the covenant promise of Jeremiah 31:33ff. It seems that the divine effort in all of this along with God's promised grace [and love, Romans 8:28] make it highly unlikely that we could ever go back to being the person we were before salvation [Romans 8:35].

If this be possible, my warning to all would be: don't go there!

On the other hand Hebrews 6:4-6 is a warning to the Jewish Christian who still cherishes the Torah and desires to practice its rituals, which can no longer bring them into God's favor or forgiveness [Hebrews 10:1ff]. In fact, shock of shocks, that was never God's purpose with Torah Law! [Galatians 3:24-25]. (I wonder how many people see a Sunday morning ritual as a guarantee for salvation even as they live the rest of time unaware of God's interest in them.) In that regard, I am, also, reminded of the 10 virgins [Matthew 25:1ff], five of which lost out because their oil "ran out." It is possible to stretch this parable beyond its intended emphasis—to be always alert in prayer?

Of interest also, perhaps, is Romans 14:15, 20, "Do not destroy with your food the one for whom Christ died. Do not destroy the work of God for the sake of food." Perhaps, this person is under conviction but then pushes away because of religious infighting. This is part of the epistle to the Romans which should become part of this current work.

Peter

Peter [2 Peter 2:20] chimed in "if, after they have escaped the defilements of the world by the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and are overcome, the last state has become worse for them than the first." The question might be asked, Is backsliding the same as being backslidden?

There is a bit to unwrap here because I don't think we can isolate these scriptures from the Biblical message of New Covenant grace in which it is written. There are 2 words for "if" ('if ever' & 'if in the case that'; this second is used here. compare: Hebrews 6:9 NIV) as well as 2 words meaning to "go back" ("backslide" means to some believers "to return completely" into sin. Used here in 2 Peter 2:22 of dogs and pigs; the other is used in 2 Peter 2:21 NIV "to turn back").

The wonderful thing about this word "to return" is that it is Old Testament lingo for repentance [Acts 26:20]: returning to the Lord! Peter's use of it here is somewhat exceptional! [Way to go, Pete!]

The verb tense is also important (the perfect in 2 Peter 2:20 ESV suggests a state or condition, "after having escaped ... if they are again entangled, they are -in a state of—worse off than before"¹).

There's a little more here! "After having known [experienced. what?] "the way of righteousness" [God's covenant faithfulness] they turn away from—let's go with: "they turn their backs on"—the holy commandments delivered to them verbally [taught them]." As Jewish as this sounds, Christianity has commandeered the word "commandments" [1 Timothy 6:14]. They are now what Christ taught [John 15:10].

Then I read in a commentary, "the Holy Scripture teaches that relapsing from the state of grace is possible." Another seemed to disagree: "This verse underlines the seriousness of apostasy" and added 2 Peter 2:22 references 2 animals that Jews did not think "clean" and the meaning is "they revert to their true nature" which means, if these animals signify apostasy, they were never saved in the first place.

Have fun interpreting Peter!

1. Some Greek manuscripts used the first word "to return" (backslidden: back to where they were) in 2 Peter 2:21 KJV. But the Committee that decides these things when the Greek text was compiled preferred the word "to turn back:" 2 Peter 2:21 NIV (backsliding, in a sense, facing the wrong way, "turning their back to God" says the NIV) ...I smile at the twists and squirms we endure.

Free Will or Predestined-That is the Question!

Are we predestined or do we have free will? The question is pointless because again, we are lining up scripture against itself because we fail to see the context: the New Covenant grace. Both sides are part of relationship [Philippians 2:12-13].

"Predestined" is Greek for planning ahead of time, and God has done a ton of planning [Hebrews 4:3; 9:26; 1 Peter 1:20; Revelation 13:8; 17:18]. Neither predestination nor free will alone determine or define relationship.

A Covenant with God is Relational

We have to consider the entire Bible for context. And that context is the covenant relationship we have with God. For that relationship to be real we need the freedom to participate in it *willingly*. God's grace is God's participation—and grace is a powerful love! "Who we are" in Christ or "what we do" as Christians—alone—does not define that relationship. *Both* are indicators of the reality of our salvation: faith and works: a faith that is faithful, a faith in action. (Thank you, Brother James, for saying it! James 2:24).

[For that matter, "Who God is" and "What God does" in our lives are inseparable aspects of His relationship with us - Hebrews 11:6].

The God-Man Debate

Jesus' divinity and His humanity are both vital aspects of His being, and both play irreplaceable roles in His death and our salvation. But this was, oddly, not an easy conclusion for sensible minds that thought that somehow logic could be used to explain Calvary. Logic is insufficient for the task. That means faith remains our only resource for accepting the unmatched provisions of our Savior's continuing ministry to us. Here is offered some of the "reasoning" that is theologically "weak" at best, heretical at worse, that we are encouraged to set aside for the fuller understanding that Paul in his gospel offers us.

- ◆ **Arius** believed that Jesus had to be created as the Son of God. He couldn't just 'be' God.
- ◆ **Nestorius** never recognized Mary as the 'Mother of God.'
- ◆ **Apollinaris** believed the Jesus was God's mind in a human body. Jesus had one nature not two.
- ◆ **Eutyches** maintained that Christ had a human nature but it was unlike the rest of humanity.
- ◆ **Serapion** believed that Jesus' body was an illusion. (Docetism meaning 'to seem to be')
- ◆ **Sabellius** couldn't buy into the idea of a trinity. He believed that God was not three persons in one but three characteristics in one.
- ◆ **Marion** didn't believe that the God of the Old Testament was equal with Jesus. Marion was a docetist.
- ◆ The **Ebionites** were Jewish Christians who believed that the laws of Moses were still applicable in Christ.
- ◆ The **Patripassians**¹ and **Theopaschism**² [God suffered] claimed that Christ's divine nature suffered as well as His human nature during the Passion.³

1. Monarchianism is a set of beliefs that emphasize God as being one person, in direct contrast to Trinitarianism which defines God as three persons coexisting con-substantially as one in being.

2. a 6th-century heretical doctrine maintaining that Christ had only one nature, the divine, and that this nature suffered at the Crucifixion

3. This becomes a question of *passibility* or capable of feeling suffering.

Redefining Society

Romans 1:18-32: Society is being altered at its roots and Christians should be concerned about this for a couple reasons.

Reason One: Moral

Society is defined by its moral code which is culturally reflected in what is acceptable and good [words I borrow from Romans 12:2]. We are watching this code being rewritten.

1. Relationships have gone casual; sex is an acceptable activity among adults and no longer the cornerstone of a romantic intimacy between 2 becoming 1 [Ephesians 5:31]. As a result...
2. More and more young adults are considering themselves binary. This is saying that relationships are no longer definable—anything goes in a spirit of experimentation. We are losing our identity as a society and culture because society is built on morally well-defined relationships! As a result...
3. It is no surprise that we are being told that humans are not monogamous. This is a lie! This is only a rationale for justifying social change. Marriage is no longer understood to be a life commitment between a man and a woman.
4. As a consequence of the changes 1-3 there are fewer children being born. The news adds, "social issues are at play" pointing to the cost of raising them, but depressions and wars never stopped us before. In fact post WW2 produced a generation of "boomers." As a result...
5. This should tell us something about the changing narrative. Connect the dots! The LGBTQIA+ community in America amounts to a little over 7% of our society, yet society is being altered not to accept them only [that we might understand. Christ died for all] but to elevate them to a place of social prominence. We are redefining society by their lifestyles!

It all started with telling God to get lost [Romans 1:21] and it ends with a culture that no longer recognizes Truth. [Isaiah 5:20; Romans 1:32]. Christians should be concerned enough to counter this assault on the intelligence of our children and young adults. In parochial and church

schools in the appropriate classes, these issues should be raised and the Biblical message supported!

Reason Two: Relational

Why be concerned? Paul in Ephesians 5:30-32 wrote that the monogamous relationship within the nuclear family was a type of our relationship with Christ. Underline this!

For we are members of *His* body. "For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh." This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church.

Society is losing sight of this truth which is tampering with our theological understanding of our relationship with Christ. If we think this untrue, we are more than deceived, we are blinded by the false arguments and probably a bit lax in our Bible reading. We are the bride of Christ which speaks to a very special "oneness" being formed in us with our Lord. A life long love relation between a man and a woman was suppose to typify this eternal relationship.

Give this subject some thought ... on your knees before God.

Monogamy

Those who claim that monogamy is not natural for human beings are simply recognizing the proclivity toward procreation that characterizes the human species, the animalism that the body represents. But, vital to human relations, the soul still exercises an oversight over the body's impulses because we are more than physical beings, we are social ones, as well. [We might add: we are spiritual ones also, made in God's Image.]

The body as a body must necessarily be absolutely selfish, carnal, and it must interpret copulation as the single most important thing for self-preservation. It is in this regard we speak of objectifying another person, seeing them solely in a physical sense [body to body].

But the soul, that makes humans social beings, sees relationships. It is, therefore, because we have a soul, that sexually we are monogamous: only one for only one. Monogamy is a social term—not a physical one. Monogamy is a relational term because it is part of a social contract, a social conversation, one person has with another. To say we are not monogamous requires that we do not believe in the soul—an idea no Christian could maintain.

Can we argue, by social definition, that one man can be in a monogamous relation with more than one woman? After all, we can have

more than one sibling or more than one parent and in a social relationship with each. But we may argue that the sexual relation is different in that it is both social and physical. Language recognizes the difference in its terms for love: affection and eroticism. If we believe we have a soul, we consent to this difference as reasonable or a validly recognized distinction. It is the soul of man that now argues against multiple sexual partners or promiscuity of any sort through the emotion of jealousy which is the soul's claim on its partner for itself.

Social Contracts and Covenants

It is the soul that recognizes social contracts—including the marriage contract. It is the soul that goes into covenant with God. Some argue that it is by the spirit not the soul that we have a relationship with God but this is a distinction without a difference. Are we dichotomous [body and soul] or trichotomous. [body, soul, and spirit] beings is a question debated in freshman seminary classes which soon lose interest because both terms speak to relationships. We like to define our relationship with God as spiritual and with each other as social—that is all.

But society is seeking to evolve past all this, to imagine life without a soul, without a moral contract, to make relations more fluid that can be easily divorced and reestablished in a faultless social environment. Society is seeking to keep relations casual and more animalistic, that is, seeking pleasure rather than partnership—the physical over the social.

Redefining society this way will destroy the very fabric social relations are made of which is a way of saying we have gone from social beings to every man for himself. No society can survive this scenario. The dissolution of the monogamous relationship, and consequently the nuclear family, is a world without a definable social order and a world that cannot appreciate God's design and desire upon the soul. But, then again, speaking of the soul, those who support social change of this kind, are saying man does not have one, anyway.

Water Baptism

Credobaptists (Adult Baptism Only)

By promising the Messiah would come from him [Abraham] to bless all nations, the New Covenant was revealed by which Abraham and his *spiritual* offspring are saved”¹ [Italics added]. If Abraham is now the *spiritual* father of believers [Verse 11], has the church replaced the nation of Israel in Biblical prophecy [dispensationalism]?

The Children: Since God’s covenant with Abraham had a dual meaning. His posterity would inherit the land through Isaac but his spiritual descendants by faith would inherit the Kingdom of heaven [Galatians 4:22-31]. God has no grandchildren. All must come by way of the Cross of Christ [John 14:6]. The Credobaptists would have only baptized *believers* who through repentance participated in and accepted the work of Christ on the Cross.

Paedobaptism (Infant Baptism)

The covenant to Abraham with both physical and spiritual elements made to him and his seed was a Covenant of Grace but administered differently through the seal or token of circumcision whereas the New Covenant of Grace was sealed by the Spirit and Water Baptism as its token [Matthew 28:19]. Thus, there are two assemblies: the visible and natural descendants of Abraham and the invisible or spiritual offspring.

If the Covenant with Abraham was a Covenant of Grace through faith as was the New Covenant in Christ, Israel is still active on biblical prophecy and Abraham’s covenant with them is still ratified through faith. “The designation of circumcision as a seal of the righteousness of faith, is important for the doctrine of the sacraments.”² “The invisible church consists of all the regenerate, while the visible church is composed of both regenerate and unregenerate persons , just as the Old Covenant was.”³

1. Denault. Kindle Location 2371

2. Lange. vol X. Page 155.

3. Denault. Kindle Location 2371

The Children: “The visible church includes all those who profess true religion *together with their children*”⁴ [Italics added]. Paedobaptism [infant baptism] relies on the parallel with circumcision in God’s promise through Abraham to his descendants [Acts 16:31]. “if, then, the Covenant of Grace revealed to Abraham included both his physical and spiritual posterity, would not it have been the same under the New Covenant?”⁵ Christian parents guarantee the salvation of their infant children. [If they are baptized as infants or die before accountability, they will be saved.]

God’s blessing upon Abraham’s Posterity

Summary “The paedobaptists would not have baptized children without believing that they took part in a Covenant of Grace. The paedobaptists believed that Christians and their posterity were in the covenant because they saw two different levels to the Covenant of Grace through Abraham (internal and external), each of these levels having its own entryway: one natural and the other spiritual. The CredoBaptists believed that only the regenerated elect were in the covenant because they only saw one level to the Covenant of Grace into which one entered through faith alone.”⁶

A Sign or A Means of Grace?

Was water baptism: a sign or an effective means of grace? It has been argued that Paul taught that water baptism meant more than only a sign of one’s conversion to the faith. In the discussion of conversion Paul references water baptism suggesting it was more meaningful than an “outward sign” or witness of salvation. Paul taught, “For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ” [Galatians 3:27]. To the Roman believers, he asked, “...do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death?” [Romans 6:3]. “We must always remember,” Lange argues, “...that in the first missionary age of the Church the baptism of adults implied, as a rule, genuine conversion.”⁷

The Corinthians, however, were divided along doctrinal grounds, claiming different leaders based on who baptized them. This led Paul to lament, “I thank God that I baptized none of you except Crispus and

4. Ibid.

5. Ibid. Location 1856ff

6. Ibid. Location 1856ff.

7. Lange. vol X. Page 201.

Gaius,” [1 Corinthians 1:14]. It seems that water baptism like any ritual could be abused leading other scholars to disconnect the act from conversion itself. In this way water baptism becomes testimonial rather than effectual.

The scripture does not clarify this point, I believe, because it is not the point Paul or the other apostles wanted to make. Water baptism is a momentary act but the apostle’s Gospel is covenantal in content. Like the argument as to whether or not salvation could be lost (see the Section on Eternally Secure) the significance of water baptism must itself represent the covenant relationship between Christ and the participant.

Lange further explains, “The phrase [baptized into Christ - Romans 6:3] into ‘participation of,’ into union with’ Christ... means strictly to immerse into Christ— that is, into the fellowship of Christ.”⁸ The language is relational throughout, not positional.

8. Ibid.

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About the Author

I was known in Western Pennsylvania for my knowledge of Koine Greek and Classical Hebrew, having taught in Western PA Bible Institute in Butler, The Lighthouse Ministry in Washington, and Faith Seminary in Bethel Park, PA in the 1970's. I was also privileged to teach at the Charismatic Conference in 1979 at Duquesne University. I graduated from a four year ministerial program at Northeast Bible College, which is now Valley Forge University, and later returned to complete a course of study for a B.S. in Bible. In 1982, I received a Master of Bible Theology from the International Bible Institute & Seminary, Florida.

I have written over 20 books, *and counting*. It is my hope that someday a member of my progeny will read any part of it and discover something meaningful about their legacy.

1. Can You See God In This Picture? A Letter to My Sons Making Sense of 25 Years as a Pastor;
2. A Monologue of Life: A Search for Love and Meaning;
3. Grandma's Eyes: A Grandfather's Perspective on Love;
4. Challenged: Living Our Faith in a Post Modern Age;
5. The Dream: A Retired Pastor Reflects on The Perfect Ministry;
6. Jots & Tittles: Discovering Truth from the Language of Scripture;
7. I Forgive You: A Personal Journey into Forgiveness;
8. Poems and Other Things: a Collection of Personal Poems and Thoughts;
9. I Remember: An Introspective Look Back at My Childhood;
10. Following Jesus: A Study in the Beatitudes;
11. Talking to God: How I Found Peace;
12. The Day After Time: A Biblical Study of Eternity;
13. The Gospel Story: When God Walked Among Us;
14. Understanding God: A Study in Grace;
15. The Cross: Provisions of Grace;
16. Jesus: God's Gift of Himself (a student manual of "The Cross");
17. Broken Bones: A Study in Psalm 51;
18. Inheriting the Kingdom of Light: A Study of Heaven;

19. The Henotic Relationship: A Biblical Study in Marriage Oneness;
20. Christian Riches: Practicing Our Faith Cautiously Within an Awareness of God's Peaceful Vigilance;
21. A Heavenly Citizenship: Living in the World but not of It.;
22. The Suffering Servant: Isaiah's Astonishing Prophecy

I am retired from the pastorate, and living with my wife of 55 plus years in Massachusetts.