

Notes

on

ROMANS

Windell Gann

Notes from e-Sword Bible Program

**The “note” file and “commentary” can be
downloaded at the e-Sword module page found at
<http://home.hiwaay.net.net/~wgann>**

Introduction	Page 01	
Chapter 1	Page 04	Chapter 09 Page 129
Chapter 2	Page 26	Chapter 10 Page 140
Chapter 3	Page 43	Chapter 11 Page 149
Chapter 4	Page 62	Chapter 12 Page 163
Chapter 5	Page 72	Chapter 13 Page 172
Chapter 6	Page 88	Chapter 14 Page 182
Chapter 7	Page 98	Chapter 15 Page 199
Chapter 8	Page 110	Chapter 16 Page 218

ROMANS

e-Sword Notes – Windell Gann

Introduction

AUTHOR and DATE

The book of Romans was written by the apostle Paul at Corinth during the three month stay in Greece which is mentioned in [Acts 20:3](#). This was in the winter of 57-58 AD. It was at the close of the third missionary journey and on the eve of Paul's departure to Jerusalem with the offering of money for the poor saints ([Romans 15:22-27](#)). Within a few days after writing this letter, Paul began that journey wherein it was testified to him in every city that he passed through that bonds and imprisonment awaited him in Jerusalem.

THE RECIPIENTS

Paul had long desired to visit Rome. He wanted to preach the Gospel at this seat of earthly power and government. We do not know who established the church in the imperial city of the Caesars but it would seem probable be that some of the "strangers of Rome" who were present at Pentecost ([Acts 2:10](#)) started the church there upon their return home. It is likely that the constant influx of strangers from all parts of the empire carried many converts to the capitol city.

Long before any apostle visited Italy, the church was established in Puteoli and in Rome ([Acts 28:14-15](#)). There were some Jews in the church of Rome, but the majority of the disciples were of Gentile origin ([Romans 1:5-7](#); [Romans 11:13-25](#); [Romans 14:1](#); [Romans 15:15-16](#)).

THE OCCASION

The occasion for Paul writing this letter was the departure of Phoebe from Corinth to Rome. As the New Testament was not complete and no apostle had ever visited Rome, doubtless many members of the church there had an imperfect comprehension of many great principles of Christian doctrine. It was needful that the relations of Jews and Gentile and of the law and the gospel be set forth with all clearness.

Paul, doubtless, also wanted to inform the people of his desire to visit Rome when the opportunity presented itself ([Romans 1:10-13](#); [Romans 15:24](#)). Paul wanted to answer any misrepresentations and slanders which may have been circulated there by his enemies. Legalistic Judaizers were probably attempting to deceive the people as they had recently done in Galatia and earlier in Antioch, and a clear exposition of justification by faith was needed by this church which was located in such a strategic position ([Romans 16:17-19](#)).

PURPOSE of the BOOK

This letter was written primarily to instruct the Christians in Rome, but also for the benefit of all the churches. The great theme of the book is set forth in [Romans 1:16](#) "the gospel is the power of God unto Salvation to every one that believeth, to the Jew first and also to the Greek."

This great truth is taught in the first eleven chapters of Romans. Paul shows that salvation is not by the works of the Law, but through the Gospel accepted by faith. He tells us that man does not merit salvation, but is saved by the grace of God on the basis of the sacrifice which Jesus made. The book of Romans is one of the most profound ever written. It has been called the gospel in miniature.

ROMANS in A NUTSHELL

Key Verses: [Romans 1:16-17](#)

The Person of the Gospel	Christ
The Power of the God	Gospel
The Purpose of the Gospel"	Unto Salvation"
The People to whom sent	To everyone
The Plan of Acceptance	To everyone that believeth

CONTRASTS in ROMANS

Gospel vs. Law	Salvation vs Condemnation
Power vs. Legal weakness	Everyone vs. Jewish exclusiveness
God vs. Human imperfection	Believers vs. Legal workers

A BIRDS-EYE View of ROMANS

Introduction and fundamental thesis -- 1:1 - 17

I. DOCTRINAL 1:17 - 11:21

- A. Necessity of the Gospel (Universal need of salvation) -- 1:18 - 3:30
 - 1. Condition of the unrighteous heathen world -- 1:19 - 32
 - 2. Condition of the self-righteous Jewish world -- 2:1-3:18
 - 3. The condition for all "For all have sinned." -- 3:9-20
- B. God's method of Rescue-- Justification by Faith (the Gospel) and not by the Law (of Moses) -- 3:21 - 5:21
 - 1. Righteousness obtained through faith in Christ -- 3:21-31
 - 2. The evidence of the Old Testament -- 4:1-25
 - 3. The results of justification by faith -- 5:1-11
 - 4. Adam and Christ-- and the results of their two acts -- 5:12-21
- C. Victory over Sin in the Disciples's life -- 6:1 - 8:39
 - 1. The Christian to have victory over sin because of his union with Christ in death and resurrection through baptism -- 6:1-23
 - 2. The Christian is not under the Law -- 7:1-6
 - 3. Victorious living does not come through the Law -- 7:7-25
 - 4. Victory through the law of the Spirit of Life -- 8:1-13
 - 5. The result of "life after the Spirit" -- 8:14-39
- D. The Vindication of God's choice-- Rejection of Israel -- Ch. 9 - 11
 - 1. Israel's Past -- God's mercy -- Ch. 9
 - 2. Israel's Present -- Ch. 10
 - 3. Israel's Future -- Ch. 11

II. PRACTICAL 12:1 - 15:13

- A. The Christian life in relation to self and God -- 12:1-2
- B. The Christian life in relation to brethren -- 12:3-16
- C. The Christian life in relation to others --(esp. persecutors) -- 12:17-21
- D. The Christian life in relation to earthly government -- 13:1-14
- E. The Christian life in relation to doubtful matters and weaker brethren -- 14:1 - 15:3
- F. Joy, peace and hope for all--both Jew and Gentile--in Christ -- 15:4-13

Conclusion and personal greetings

- A. Paul's desire for spiritual blessing for recipients-- 15:14-33
- B. Personal greetings and parting exhortations -- 16:1-27

SERMON OUTLINE

Not Ashamed Of The Gospel

Romans 1:16

Introduction:

1. One of the most familiar passages in Romans is [Romans 1:16](#) "*For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ for it the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.*"

I. As we look into the life of Paul after his conversion and his writings in the New Testament, and particularly the letter to the Romans, we see that there wasn't **ANY PART** of the gospel that he was ashamed of. For example:

A. He was not ashamed of the **FACTS** of the gospel.

1. [1 Corinthians 11:1](#); [Acts 13:28-30](#); [Acts 17:16](#); [Acts 26:23](#);
[1 Corinthians 15:1-4](#);
2. You and I need not be ashamed of the gospel today.

B. Paul was not ashamed to preach that there is but **ONE GOSPEL**.

1. [Ephesians 4:5](#) "one faith"; [Ephesians 4:4-6](#) "one body" [Romans 8:24](#). [Galatians 1:8-9](#) the curse of preaching any other.
2. [Acts 13:10](#) Paul was not ashamed to rebuke those who perverted it.
3. We should boldly preach and stand for the "one faith"

C. Paul was not ashamed of the **COMMANDS** of the gospel.

1. He preached the "whole" gospel, [Acts 20:27](#). He was not ashamed to preach that men must hear the word, [Romans 10:17](#); believe in Jesus, [Acts 16:31](#); repent of their sins, [Acts 17:30](#); confess their faith in Jesus, [Romans 10:9-10](#); and preach that baptism is essential for salvation, [Romans 6:5](#).
2. Don't be ashamed of the commands of the gospel.

II. In the next part of the verse Paul tells **WHY** he was not ashamed. "*FOR it is the power of God unto salvation.*"

The GOSPEL is God's POWER to save the souls of men.

A. It is God's **CONVINCING POWER**. [Romans 10:17](#); [2 Corinthians 5:7](#); [John 20:30-31](#). It brings men to faith.

B. It is God's **CONVICTING POWER**. [John 16:7-8](#); [Acts 2:37](#); It brings men to repentance.

C. It is God's **CONVERTING POWER**. [Psalms 19:7](#); [Romans 1:16](#) and [Romans 8:2](#); [James 1:25](#); [1 Thessalonians 2:13](#). It teaches men how to get into Christ, Gal. 3:27

D. It is God's **CONFIRMING POWER**. In [1 John 5:13](#) John said he wrote that they may know they had eternal life.

Conclusion:

Don't be ashamed, the Gospel is God's power unto salvation for all of us today.

Verse CommentsRomans 1:1Roman chapter 1 - Gentiles Under Sin

Paul . . Apostle, first called Saul (his Jewish name) later used his Greek/Roman name.

a servant . . *Doulos*, the common NT word for servant. **bondservant**.

called to be . . This was God's choice, not his (cf. [Acts 9:15](#); [Galatians 1:15](#); [Ephesians 3:7](#)).

apostle . . "one sent"; A person designated and sent to speak and act with special authority. Paul regularly introduces himself as an apostle in his letters (e.g., [1 Corinthians 1:1](#); [Ephesians 1:1](#); [1 Timothy 1:1](#)). Paul's use of the title "apostle" highlights that his authority was equal to that of the 12 apostles and that his commission was from Christ (compare [1 Corinthians 15:7-9](#); [Galatians 1:1](#)) - FSB

The term "apostle" in Palestinian Jewish circles of the first century meant "one sent as an official representative" (cf. [2 Chronicles 17:7-9](#)).

set apart for the gospel . . [separated] . . The Greek word used here, *aphorizō*, describes setting something or someone apart for a particular function or task. [Acts 26:17-18](#).

"Having been set apart" does not differentiate Paul from the other apostles but puts him in the same class with them. - Lenski

Gospel .. (Gk. *euangelion*) means "good news."

The word **faith** is used by Paul in the book of Romans to usually mean "the system of faith" or the **Gospel** versus the **Law of Moses**.

Romans 1:2

he .. God, of [Romans 1:1](#)

promised beforehand .. The gospel was no afterthought with God, but His eternal, purposeful plan (cf. [Genesis 3:15](#); Isaiah 53; [Psalms 118:1](#); [Mark 10:45](#); [Luke 22:22](#); [Acts 2:23](#); [Acts 3:18](#); [Acts 4:28](#); [Titus 1:2](#)). The early sermons in Acts (the *kerygma*) present Jesus as the fulfillment of OT promises and prophecies.

The gospel was a message that God had **promised**, not just prophesied, in the Old Testament Scriptures.

Promise means more than prophecy, because it commits the Almighty to make good his word, whereas a prophecy can be merely an advance announcement of something that will happen. The concept of promise permeates this letter ([Romans 4:13-25](#); [Romans 9:4](#); [Romans 15:8](#)). - EBCNT

prophets .. All the writers of the OT. The "Law and the Prophets" constitute all the OT ([Acts 24:14](#)). But the law—or the Pentateuch—was written by Moses, whom Scripture also calls a prophet ([Deuteronomy 18:15](#)).

in the holy scripture . . Israel's sacred writings. Paul's audience likely understood the Septuagint (the Greek translation of the OT) to be on par with the Hebrew version of the Scriptures. - FSB

The reference to "**the Holy Scriptures**" prepares the reader for rather copious use of the OT, beginning with [Romans 1:17](#). -

Romans 1:3

concerning his Son .. The central message of the Good News is a person, Jesus of Nazareth, virgin-born son of Mary. In the OT the nation, the king, and the Messiah were called “son” (cf. [2 Samuel 7:14](#); [Hosea 11:1](#); [Psalms 2:7](#); [Matthew 2:15](#)). - Utley

seed of David .. [Acts 2:29-30](#).

born of the seed of David .. This phrase emphasizes Jesus’ humanity and confirms His status as God’s appointed ruler.

This word emphasizes that He is an actual historical figure. Many well known ancient writers, including the Roman historian Tacitus (*Annals* 15.44), the familiar Jewish historian Josephus (*Antiquities*, 2.18.3), and Pliny the Younger (*Letters* 10.96, 97) verify Jesus’ historicity. - MSB

according to the flesh .. **Flesh-wards**, i.e. “on the side of His manhood.” - CBSC

according to the flesh .. The OT had prophesied that Messiah would be in the lineage of David ([2 Samuel 7:12-13](#); [Psalms 89:3-4](#), [Psalms 89:19](#), [Psalms 89:24](#); [Isaiah 11:1-5](#); [Jeremiah 23:5-6](#)). Both Mary, Jesus’ mother ([Luke 3:23](#), [Luke 3:31](#)), and Joseph, his legal father ([Matthew 1:6](#), [Matthew 1:16](#); [Luke 1:27](#)), were descendants of David. John makes believing that Christ has come in the flesh a crucial test of orthodoxy ([1 John 4:2-3](#)). Because He is fully human—as well as fully God—He can serve as man’s substitute ([John 1:29](#); [2 Corinthians 5:21](#)) and as a sympathetic High-Priest ([Hebrews 4:15-16](#)) - MSB

Romans 1:4

declared .. This is the only time Paul uses the Greek term *horizō*, meaning “to determine” or “to appoint.” In Acts, it is used to show that God appointed Christ as the judge of the world ([Acts 10:42](#); [Acts 17:31](#)).

The Gr. word, from which the English word “horizon” comes, means “to distinguish.” Just as the horizon serves as a clear demarcation line, dividing earth and sky, the resurrection of Jesus Christ clearly divides Him from the rest of humanity, providing irrefutable evidence that He is the Son of God (*see note on 10:9*). - MSB

Son of God ... This title, used nearly 30 times in the gospels, identifies Jesus Christ as the same in essence as God. *See notes on* [John 1:34](#), [John 1:49](#); [John 10:36](#); [John 11:27](#); [John 19:7](#). (cf. [Hebrews 1:5](#); [2 Samuel 7:14](#)). - MSB

Son of God with power .. *Power* attended and characterized Jesus Christ.

according .. A way of saying according to inspired prophecy.

spirit of holiness .. 1) Translations capitalizing the "Spirit" take it to be the Holy Spirit. 2) Others consider that it is speaking of Jesus' own spirit which He kept in holiness.

Spirit of holiness” is an expression that means “Holy Spirit.” - EBCNT

...the rare word ἁγιωσύνη (found only three times in the New Testament) - Lenski

by the resurrection from the dead .. His victory over death was the supreme demonstration and most conclusive evidence that He is God the Son (*see note on 10:9*; cf. [Acts 13:29-33](#); [1 Corinthians 15:14-17](#)).

Jesus .. The Aramaic name *Jesus* is the same as the Hebrew name *Joshua*. It was a compound of two Hebrew words “YHWH” and “salvation.” It can mean “YHWH saves,” “YHWH delivers” or “YHWH is salvation.” The thrust of the meaning can be seen in Matthew 1:21, 25.

Christ .. This was the Greek translation of the Hebrew term *messiah* which meant “an anointed one.” In the

OT several groups of leaders (prophets, priests, and kings) were anointed as a sign of God's choice and equipping. Jesus fulfilled all three of these anointed offices (cf. Hebrews 1:2–3)

Lord .. In Judaism the Covenant name for God, YHWH, became so holy that the rabbis substituted the title “Lord,” (*Adon*) when reading the Scriptures because they were afraid they might take God's name in vain (cf. Exodus 20:7; Deuteronomy 5:11) and thereby break one of the Ten Commandments. When NT authors called Jesus “Lord” (“Kurios”) in theological contexts, they were affirming His deity (cf. Acts 2:36; Romans 10:9–13; Philippians 2:6–11).

Romans 1:5

through whom .. Through Christ. God used Christ to demonstrate his grace toward all men, but here specifically speaking of God's grace toward Paul and the apostles.

we have received grace .. The unmerited favor which God shows guilty sinners.

we .. “We” includes, possibly, all the Apostles, as certainly in [1 Corinthians 15:1](#), [1 Corinthians 15:11](#), &c. (where note the change from plural to singular in vv. 1, 2, 3). Certainly it does not refer to any nominal *associate in the writing of the Epistle*, for none such appears. But most probably the author here uses the plural for the singular, as frequently in the course of the Epistle (see e.g. cch. 3 and 4). - CBSC

and apostleship .. Although the term “apostle” refers to the 12 in a unique way (*see note on Romans 1:1*), in a broader and less official sense it can describe anyone whom God has sent with the message of salvation (cf. [Acts 14:14](#); [Romans 16:7](#); [Hebrews 3:1](#)).

obedience to the faith .. Here at the beginning of the book Paul informs us that “**the faith**” is something to be *obeyed* among all the nations (Jew and Gentile.) [Hebrews 5:9](#); [Romans 10:16](#); [2 Thessalonians 1:8](#); [1 Peter 4:17](#);

And lest we forget what Paul is meaning by *faith*, he reminds us again at the end of the book, [Romans 16:26](#), so we shouldn't make any mistake about what he is talking about when he uses this word.

Erroneous doctrines are built on mis-defining Paul's usage of *faith* in this book. [[υπακοη](#) G5218 N-ASF obedience πιστεως of the faith G4102 N-GSF]

The desired response to the gospel message is “obedience that comes from faith” ([Romans 15:18](#); [Romans 16:26](#) on obedience and [Romans 1:16-17](#); [Romans 10:17](#)). - EBCNT

among all the Gentiles [nations] .. This is the universal gospel. God's promise of redemption in [Genesis 3:15](#) included all mankind. [Matthew 28:19-20](#); [Mark 16:15-16](#).

Romans 1:6

you also .. The Rome church to whom Paul writes were among “the called out”. They had heard the gospel and had responded in obedience. (cf. [Romans 6:3-4](#)).

the called of Jesus Christ .. Men are called out of the world and into God's kingdom by the gospel [2 Thessalonians 2:14](#).. Those to whom Paul writes had obeyed the faith [Romans 1:5](#). (cf. [Jude 1:3](#)).

Romans 1:7

To all who are in Rome .. The address of the recipients of the letter.

Rome .. The capital city of the Roman Empire. Paul wanted to visit Rome on his way to Spain ([Acts 19:21](#);

[Romans 15:24](#), [Romans 15:29](#)). He also wanted to impart some “spiritual gift” to the believers in Rome, for no apostles had been there ([Acts 8:14-15](#); [Acts 8:18-19](#); [Romans 1:11](#)).

Beloved of God, called to be saints .. The Greek term used here, *hagioi*, ([1 Corinthians 1:2](#)) refers to those who have responded obediently to the faith and are “called out” of the world and into God’s kingdom ([2 Corinthians 6:17](#); [Colossians 1:13](#); [2 Thessalonians 2:14](#).)

The Greek word *hagioi*, translated as “saints” or “holy ones,” refers to those who are set apart or belong to God. In the ot, “saints” refers to Israel, God’s chosen people (see [Psalms 16:3](#) and note). Here, Paul applies it to the Gentile believers in Rome, identifying them as among God’s chosen people. In the nt, all occurrences of *hagioi*, “saints,” appear in plural form. Paul addresses other believers as “saints” throughout his letters ([1 Corinthians 1:2](#); [2 Corinthians 1:1](#); [Ephesians 1:1](#); [Philippians 1:2](#)). Their status as “holy ones” results from their union with God, who is holy. - FSB

God our Father .. The word “our” indicates that Jews and Gentiles (non-Jewish people) are equal and united before God because of Christ. False teachers may have claimed that the Gentiles were not equal because they did not participate in circumcision ([Colossians 2:11](#); [Romans 3:1](#); [Galatians 6:12](#)), Sabbath observance ([Colossians 2:16](#); [Galatians 4:10-11](#); [Romans 14:6](#)), or dietary restrictions ([Galatians 2:12](#); [Romans 14:20](#))—distinctly Jewish practices. Such teachings would have brought division to the Church. - FSB

Grace ... peace .. Paul’s standard greeting ([1 Corinthians 1:3](#); [2 Corinthians 1:2](#); [Galatians 1:3](#); [Ephesians 1:2](#); [Philippians 1:2](#); [Colossians 1:2](#); [1 Thessalonians 1:1](#); [2 Thessalonians 1:2](#); [1 Timothy 1:2](#); [2 Timothy 1:2](#); [Titus 1:4](#); [Philemon 1:3](#)).

... the uniquely Christian term “grace” (*charis*). Paul may have been combining this Greek opening with the traditional Hebrew greeting *Shalom* or “peace.” (When a person’s life is in harmony with God.)

See note on [Romans 5:1](#) for sermon idea.

What We Have Thru Christ

1. Peace [Romans 1:7](#); [Romans 5:1](#)
2. Grace .. use this grace, [Romans 1:7](#); [Romans 5:2](#)
3. Hope .. [Romans 5:2](#) [Romans 5:4](#)
4. Joy .. [Romans 5:2](#) glory (rejoice) in tribulation, [Romans 5:3](#)
5. Love .. [Romans 5:5](#)

Romans 1:8

Paul's prayer

I give thanks .. Paul usually opened his letters with an expression of gratitude to God for his audience (e.g., [1 Corinthians 1:4](#); [Ephesians 1:16](#); [Philippians 1:3](#); [1 Thessalonians 1:3](#); compare [Galatians 1:6-10](#) and note). He believed their positive response to the gospel affirmed his calling as an “apostle to the Gentiles” ([Romans 11:13](#); [Galatians 2:8](#); [1 Timothy 2:7](#)). - FSB

through Jesus Christ .. As the Mediator. See Romans 8:34. The idea includes both His merit as opening the path of prayer, and His present agency in commending the supplicants. - CBSC

for you all .. This use of “all,” like [Romans 1:7](#), may reflect the jealousy and conflict between the believing Jewish leaders who fled Rome under Claudius (cf. [Acts 18:2](#)), and the resultant believing Gentile leaders who had replaced them for a few years. [Romans 9–11](#) possibly addresses this same issue. - Utley

for .. Πέρι is not ὑπέρ, “in behalf of” or “for” (our versions) but “in regard to you all,” i.e., as I now think of

you all. And he again (v. 7) adds “all” in order to indicate that he is not thinking only of those in Rome who are personally known to him. - Lenski

your faith is spoken of .. Lit. **is being proclaimed**, as a thing of public interest and notoriety. - CBSC

Romans 16:19 made allusion to the same truth.

all over the world .. This does not imply that their faith was extraordinary but rather that news of it had spread far and wide (Cranfield 1980:75), particularly in the places where Christianity had already been established. - CBC

throughout the whole world .. See Colossians 1:6 for same words. The phrase would be perfectly intelligible as meaning “through the Roman empire.” In Acts 11:28, Acts 17:6, Acts 19:27, Acts 24:5, the same phrase and sense appear, but with a different word in the Greek. - CBSC

Romans 1:9

For God is my witness .. A characteristic appeal of Paul. cf. 2 Corinthians 1:23, 2 Corinthians 11:31, 2 Corinthians 12:19; Galatians 1:20; Philippians 1:8; 1 Thessalonians 2:5, 1 Thessalonians 2:10. This is traceable in part, perhaps, to the incessant calumnies against his sincerity and veracity which grieved St Paul’s heart. - CBSC

This was his Jewish way of asserting his truthfulness. - Utley

my witness .. Paul emphasizes the truthfulness of his words by appealing to God as the witness to his prayers for the Roman believers.

serve .. In the Septuagint the word *latreuō* is used to describe Israel’s priestly service to Yahweh (Exodus 20:5; Deuteronomy 5:9). Paul uses this word because he considers the gospel ministry to be equal to Israel’s service to Yahweh. He also uses this term to describe the Gentiles’ service to God (Romans 12:1). Compare 2 Timothy 1:3. - FSB

In the NT, this Greek word for “**serve**” always refers to religious service, and is sometimes translated “worship.”

in my spirit .. This is a good example of the use of *pneuma* for the human spirit (cf. Romans 8:5, Romans 8:10, Romans 8:16; Romans 12:11) - Utley

with my spirit .. Lit. **in my spirit**. Much has been said on the risk of confounding “in” and the instrumental “with,” in such cases; and this risk must never be slighted. But in Heb. both ideas have the same sign, and the Hebraistic tinge of N. T. Greek makes it highly likely that in many instances there will be no practical distinction of “in” and “with.” We may well explain the present phrase, “I serve Him *with* my spirit as the instrument.” The spirit was *used* in every various way in the Master’s work. - CBSC

in the gospel of his Son .. “*Of His Son*.”—see for the same idea in fuller terms, 2 Corinthians 4:4, where lit. “The Gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.” The Eternal Son is Himself “the Gospel.” The Gospel is His, because He is not only the great Teacher but the essential Doctrine. - CBSC

without ceasing .. As a continual and diligent habit. The same word occurs 1 Thessalonians 5:17, in the same sense.

In a context like this, the word “unceasingly,” as well as “always” in v. 10a, does not refer to “unceasing petition, or the like, but to prayer offered at frequent and regular intervals.” - NICNT

in my prayers .. Paul frequently recorded the content of his requests (Ephesians 3:14-19; Philippians 1:9-11; Colossians 1:9-11; 2 Thessalonians 1:11, 12) and urged his readers to join him in prayer (Romans 15:30-32; 1 Thessalonians 5:17; Ephesians 6:18). - MSB

Romans 1:10

making request .. Connect this with the previous verse, and read **without ceasing I make mention of you, always in my prayers making request, if by any means**, &c. The special “request made known to God” was that the Apostle might, after long delays, be allowed to visit the Roman Christians. Cp. [Acts 19:21](#), where the phrase “I *must* see Rome” probably indicates a Divine purpose revealed. - CBSC

will of God .. God’s sovereign orchestration of Paul’s circumstances (cf. [Matthew 6:10](#); [Acts 21:11-14](#); [James 4:13-14](#)). - MSB

by the will of God I may succeed in coming to you .. This is paralleled in v. 13 and [Romans 15:32](#). Paul did not feel that his life and travel plans belonged to himself, but to God (cf. [Acts 18:21](#); [1 Corinthians 4:19](#); [1 Corinthians 16:7](#)). - Utley

Journey .. to come .. [Romans 15:24-29](#)

Romans 1:11

I may impart .. Paul could not impart the gifts long distant. Paul being an apostle could impart such gifts with the laying on of hands, see [Acts 8:18](#); [2 Timothy 1:6](#); [Acts 19:6](#).

And certainly it appears that these “gifts” were *as a rule* conveyed only by immediate apostolic ministry (and therefore only to Christians of the first age). See [Acts 8:14-17](#), [Acts 19:6](#) - CBSC

Spiritual gift .. see [1 Corinthians 12:6-11](#) ff. cf. [Romans 12:6](#)

to strengthen you .. The Greek word used here, *stērizō*, describes making someone more resolved in belief or attitude. - FSB

St Paul desires to “preach the Gospel” to the Roman believers; i.e. to do what in fact he does in this Epistle, “expound to them the way of Christ more perfectly,” “to the end they might be *established*,” by maturer and ampler knowledge of the eternal Truth. - CBSC

Romans 1:12

to be encouraged together .. In addition to providing spiritual gifts and strength to the Romans, Paul desired to benefit from his planned visit to Rome. This could refer to Paul’s hope for the Roman believers to encourage him personally or to provide support for his mission ([Romans 15:24](#), [Romans 15:28](#)). - FSB

There is no greater joy for a Christian than to see other Christians rooted and grounded in the faith, [Ephesians 4:14-16](#); [3 John 1:4](#). - Winters

Lit., “that is, that we might be mutually encouraged by each other’s faith, yours and mine.” - CBC

mutually encouraged .. Paul desires as an apostle to encourage the Christians in Rome, but it is also noteworthy that their faith serves to inspire and strengthen him as well.

The verb Paul uses could refer to mutual exhortation, but probably here refers to mutual “comfort” or “encouragement.”⁴¹ This mutual encouragement will be accomplished through faith—“both yours and mine.” This rather cumbersome expression suggests both commonality—Paul and the Romans share the same faith—and distinction—the faith they share brings with it different perspectives and gifts, which, when shared, bring mutual edification. Paul’s wish that his visit would bring spiritual encouragement to him as well as to the Roman Christians is no mere literary convention or “pious fraud” (as Erasmus called it) but is sincerely meant (and he returns to it in the letter closing; see [Romans 15:32](#)). - EBCNT

Romans 1:13

Now I would not have you ignorant .. A characteristic idiom Paul frequently used to introduce important statements. See [Romans 11:25](#); [1 Corinthians 10:1](#), [1 Corinthians 12:1](#); [2 Corinthians 1:8](#); [1 Thessalonians 4:13](#).

brethren .. This Greek word (*adelphoi*) describes people who are in a familial relationship. Paul and other NT writers use this word to indicate that Christians are so intimately tied to one another in Christ that they are family. The word refers to both male and female Christians. - NLTSB

was prevented until now .. Paul apparently wanted to complete his ministry in the eastern part of the Roman Empire before heading west (compare [Romans 15:22](#)). At times, Paul reports that his missionary efforts were hindered by Satan (see [1 Thessalonians 2:18](#) and note) or forbidden by the Holy Spirit ([Acts 16:6](#)). - FSB

Paul wrote this letter when he was in Corinth toward the end of his third missionary journey (see [Acts 20:2-4](#); cp. [Romans 16:21-23](#)). The need to plant and nourish churches in the eastern Mediterranean had occupied Paul up to this point. Before he could visit the Roman Christians, he first needed to return to Jerusalem to deliver a gift of money collected from the Gentile churches for the impoverished Jewish Christians ([Romans 15:23-29](#)). - NLTSB

In a parenthetical clause, Paul mentions that these plans have been hindered—probably by the demands on Paul of his ministry in the eastern Mediterranean (“from Jerusalem all the way around to Illyricum,” [Romans 15:19](#)) NICNT

fruit .. In this context Paul is probably referring to new converts ([Romans 16:5](#)) The first converts from Rome were most likely made in Jerusalem at Pentecost [Acts 2:8-11](#).

harvest .. Refers to the product of his apostolic labors (cf. [Philippians 1:22](#)) including here probably both an increase in the number of Christians through evangelization “among” the Romans, and a strengthening of the faith of the Roman Christians themselves ([Romans 1:11](#)).

other Gentiles .. This seems to imply that the church in Rome consisted primarily of non-Jews, or that most of Paul's converts were non-Jews.

Romans 1:14

I am a debtor .. He had an obligation to God (cf. [1 Corinthians 9:16-17](#)) to fulfill His divine mandate to minister to Gentiles ([Romans 1:5](#); [Acts 9:15](#)).

to Greeks and to barbarians .. Because of his appointment as an apostle ([Romans 1:1](#)), Paul felt a duty to preach the gospel to all people, regardless of ethnicity. The Greek text's reference to barbarians (sometimes translated as “non-Greeks”) likely refers to native tribes that had not assimilated into Graeco-Roman culture. - FSB

Greeks .. People of many different nationalities who had embraced the Gr. language, culture, and education. They were the sophisticated elite of Paul's day. Because of this prevalence of Greek culture, Paul sometimes used this word to describe all Gentiles (cf. [Romans 3:9](#)).

The word “**Greeks**” (*Hellenes*), had come, by St Paul's time, to include Romans. Every educated Roman was trained in Greek speech and literature. Some of the “Roman” Christians were no doubt true Hellenes. - CBSC

Barbarians .. designates those outside of Greek culture.

barbarians .. A derisive term coined by the Greeks for all who had not been trained in Gr. language and

culture. When someone spoke in another language, it sounded to the Greeks like “bar-bar-bar,” or unintelligible chatter. Although in the narrowest sense “barbarian” referred to the uncultured, uneducated masses, it was often used to describe all non-Greeks—the unwise of the world. Paul’s point is that God is no respecter of persons—the gospel must reach both the world’s elite and its outcasts (cf. [John 4:4-42](#); [James 2:1-9](#)). - MSB

the wise, and to the unwise .. Practically, **the cultured and the uneducated**. He contemplates *literary* hearers on one side, and on the other rude tribes, and peasantry and workmen, and women and children. - CBSC

Romans 1:15

so .. [thus] .. “Thus,” Paul adds, “is the willingness on my own part to proclaim the gospel also to you who are in Rome.” Οὕτω links into καθώς: “just as” the apostle is debtor to Greeks and barbarians, learned and unlearned among the rest of the nations, “just so” is his willingness to discharge this debt also in Rome. - Lenski

as much as in me is, &c. .. Lit. **that which relates to me is ready, &c.**; “*my side* is ready.” Perhaps the point of this periphrasis for “I” is the hope of an equal willingness on the side of the Romans to *hear* the message. - CBSC

I am ready .. How heartwarming is the apostle’s attitude toward his obligation! Instead of considering it a burden he must bear, a duty he must carry out, he is “eager” to fulfill it. While success in preaching demands the finest intellectual and formal preparation, it also requires great zeal.

the gospel .. For Paul “**the gospel**” is not just a call to faith but also a call to continue in a daily walk of faith ([Romans 6:4](#); [Romans 8:4](#); [2 Corinthians 5:17](#); [Galatians 5:6](#)).

to you that are at Rome also .. This was the *climax* of his apostolic courage. It was no light matter to St Paul, keenly sensitive as he was, to face the metropolitan world of life and power. See [Acts 28:15](#), where we can trace previous anxiety in the words “*he took courage*.” - CBSC

This statement also reflects Paul’s hope to help the Roman mature in the Christian faith.

Romans 1:16

not ashamed .. Paul may be alluding to Jesus’ words in [Mark 8:38](#) and [Luke 9:26](#). He is not ashamed of the content of the gospel or its resulting persecution (cf. [2 Timothy 1:12](#)).

In [1 Corinthians 1:23](#) the Jews were ashamed of the gospel because it affirmed a suffering Messiah and the Greeks because it affirmed the resurrection of the body. Verses 16–17 are the theme of the entire book.

I am not ashamed .. He had been imprisoned in Philippi ([Acts 16:23-24](#)), chased out of Thessalonica ([Acts 17:10](#)), smuggled out of Berea ([Acts 17:14](#)), laughed at in Athens ([Acts 17:32](#)), regarded as a fool in Corinth ([1 Corinthians 1:18](#), [1 Corinthians 1:23](#)), and stoned in Galatia ([Acts 14:19](#)), but Paul remained eager to preach the gospel in Rome—the seat of contemporary political power and pagan religion. Neither ridicule, criticism, nor physical persecution could curb his boldness. - MSB

power .. The Eng. word “dynamite” comes from this Greek. word. Only God’s power is able to overcome man’s sin and give him new life ([Romans 5:6](#); [Romans 8:3](#); [John 1:12](#); [1 Corinthians 1:18](#), [1 Corinthians 1:23-25](#); [1 Corinthians 2:1-4](#); [1 Corinthians 4:20](#); [1 Peter 1:23](#)).

power .. The Greek word used here, *dynamis*, often refers to miraculous works (e.g., [Matthew 7:22](#); [Matthew 11:20](#); [Mark 6:2](#)). Here, it refers to God’s ability to deliver His people from sin and future judgment (compare [Exodus 9:16](#); [Romans 8:2-3](#); [1 Corinthians 1:18](#); note on [2 Timothy 3:5](#)). God’s power also relates to the power of the Holy Spirit (see [Romans 1:4](#)). - FSB

The late evangelist Dwight L. Moody commented that the gospel is like a lion. All the preacher has to do is to open the door of the cage and get out of the way!

salvation .. The Greek word used here, *sōtēria*, refers to deliverance sin and the results of sin: death and alienation from God. and ultimately deliverance at the final judgment.

salvation .. Used 5 times in Romans (the verb form occurs 8 times), this key word basically means “deliverance” or “rescue.” The power of the gospel delivers people from lostness ([Matthew 18:11](#)), from the wrath of God ([Romans 5:9](#)).

everyone who believes .. Salvation is offered to all people on the same grounds. An important theme in Romans is including Gentiles as equal participants with Jews in God’s new covenant ([Romans 3:23-24](#), [Romans 3:29-30](#); [Romans 4:9-12](#), [Romans 4:16-17](#); [Romans 9:24-26](#), [Romans 9:30-31](#); [Romans 10:4](#), [Romans 10:11-13](#); [Romans 15:8-12](#)).

believes .. "Believes" is here a synecdoche (a figure of speech frequently used in the scriptures) where a part is put for the whole. Here it stands for the whole process of coming to God and trusting Him so explicitly that one obeys and follows Him fully.

Jew first and also to the Greek .. Paul uses references to both Jews and Greeks (or Gentiles) to encompass all of humanity. Although the gospel message applies to all people, Paul describes it as being directed first toward the Jew because God gave the Jews the covenants and promises to which the gospel refers ([Romans 9:4](#)). - FSB

Paul consistently emphasizes that the Good News is for *everyone*.

Jew first .. indicates the priority of the Jews in salvation history and God’s choice to use them to be a light to the rest of the world. The role of the Jews is a major issue in Romans, as seen especially in the discussion in chs. 9–11.

Greek .. is not limited here to people from Greece but refers to all Gentiles.

Romans 1:17

in it .. In the gospel.

righteousness of God .. The gospel reveals God's goodness ("right doing", kindness, mercy, etc) in providing man a means of deliverance from man's sin and man's restoration to God's favor.

Righteousness is an attribute of God that is manifested in His provision of salvation. As a result, those who believe are granted righteous status before God, who is himself righteous.

righteousness of God .. Some believe that since the same Greek root occurs some 30 times and usually translated "*justified*", "*justification*" or similarly, that here the reference is to God making man "*righteous*" or "*justified*" through the process of "faith". ([2 Corinthians 5:21](#), [Philippians 3:9](#);

the righteousness of God .. This phrase in context referred to (1) God’s character, and (2) how He gives that character to sinful mankind. The Jerusalem Bible translation has “this is what reveals the justice of God.” - Utley [Utley has exhausted comments at this point.]

From faith to faith ἐκ πίστεως εἰς πίστιν, (or, out of faithfulness into faithfulness.) Revelation from God's faithfulness for purpose of creating faithfulness on our part.

The NIV says that we are saved by faith, and adds "from first to last," teaching salvation by faith only. Which is true if faith is understood as "*the Gospel system*" and nor merely *mental confession*.

from faith to faith .. This phrase has two PREPOSITIONS, *ek* and *eis*, which denote a transition or

development. Paul uses this same structure in [2 Corinthians 2:16](#) and *apo* and *eis* in [2 Corinthians 3:18](#). Christianity is expected to become a lifestyle.

One thing is certain, “faith” in Christ is crucial (cf. [Hebrews 11:6](#); [Romans 5:1](#); [Philippians 3:9](#)). God’s offer of salvation is conditioned on a faith response (cf. [Hebrews 5:9](#); [2 Thessalonians 1:8-9](#)).

from faith to faith .. From God’s “faithfulness” (in providing a saving provision) to man’s “faithfulness” in accepting and living by God’s provision.

As it is written. The common introduction to OT quotations (cf. [Romans 1:17](#); [Romans 2:24](#); [Romans 3:4](#); [Romans 3:10](#); [Matthew 4:4](#), [Matthew 4:6-7](#), [Matthew 4:10](#)). The tense of the Gr. verb stresses continuity and permanence, and implies its divine authority. - MSB

"The just shall live by faith" .. Paul quotes [Habakkuk 2:4](#) to support his position that salvation before God is only by faith (again quoted in [Galatians 3:11](#); [Hebrews 10:38](#))

The just shall live by faith .. This was a quote from [Habakkuk 2:4](#), but not from the Masoretic Text or the Septuagint. In the OT “faith” had the expanded metaphorical meaning of “trustworthiness,” “faithfulness,” or “loyalty to.” Man’s salvation is based on God’s faithfulness, however, human faithfulness is an evidence that one has trusted in God’s provision.

Romans 1:18

For .. “The Gospel is the power of salvation” *for* the Judge has proclaimed the doom of human sin. (CBSC)

the wrath of God .. This refers to God’s personal anger against sin. God’s anger is not selfish or arbitrary but represents his holy and loving response to human wickedness. - ESVSB

wrath of God .. Refers to God’s righteous judgment upon evil. In this context, the evil in view is immorality and the suppression of the truth about God.

Strong and even vehement accessory language is sometimes used with the word *wrath*: see [Romans 2:8](#); [Revelation 16:19](#), [Revelation 19:15](#). On the subject generally, see especially [John 3:36](#); [Ephesians 2:3](#); [Revelation 6:16](#). - CBSC

God’s anger .. Verses 18–23 depict the pagan world of Paul’s day. Paul’s characterization of the pagan world is also found in Jewish literature (cf. *Wisdom of Solomon* 13:1ff. and *Letter of Aristeas*, 134–38) and even in Greek and Roman ethical writings. The same Bible that tells us of God’s love also reveals His anger (cf. [Romans 1:23-32](#); [Romans 2:5](#), [Romans 2:8](#); [Romans 3:5](#); [Romans 4:15](#); [Romans 5:9](#); [Romans 9:22](#); [Romans 12:19](#); [Romans 13:4-5](#)). - Utley

is revealed .. A present tense in the Greek. See on [Romans 1:17](#). This “revelation” is a *standing* one, for all places and all times, and ever repeated to individual consciences. - CBSC

is revealed .. More accurately, “*is constantly revealed*.” The word essentially means “to uncover, make visible, or make known.” God reveals His wrath in two ways: 1) indirectly, through the natural consequences of violating His universal moral law, and 2) directly through His personal intervention (the OT record—from the sentence passed on Adam and Eve to the worldwide flood, from the fire and brimstone that leveled Sodom to the Babylonian captivity—clearly displays this kind of intervention) - MSB

revealed from heaven .. A pregnant phrase. The wrath is “revealed” as *about to be inflicted from heaven*; by Him “who sitteth in heaven,” and who “shall descend from heaven” in “the day of wrath and righteous judgment.” - CBSC

This wrath of God is being revealed “from heaven.” This phrase as used in the Gospels means “from God.” - EBCNT

against .. Or, **upon**; i.e. “to descend upon.” - CBSC

God's wrath is two-fold: 1) against men who sin against God; 2) against men who sin against men.

all ungodliness .. Sins against God. This indicates a lack of reverence for, devotion to, and worship of the true God.

unrighteousness of men .. (sins against men) a lack of conformity in thought, word, and deed to the character and law of God - MSB

of men .. i.e. mankind; not a class, but the race. This is plain from the sequel, though the Gr. leaves it possible (grammatically) to render “*of those men who hold, &c.*” - CBSC

suppress .. (who hold) .. Lit. **who hold down**. The verb has several shades of meaning, and frequently = “to hold fast.” So e.g. [1 Corinthians 11:2](#); (E. V., “keep;”) [1 Thessalonians 5:21](#). But the context here decides for the meaning “hold down, hold back, suppress.” The verb occurs once again in this Epistle, [Romans 7:6](#), “wherein we were *held*,” i.e. “held down as captives.” - CBSC

men who suppress the truth .. Although the evidence from conscience ([Romans 1:19](#); [Romans 2:14](#)), creation ([Romans 1:20](#)), and God's Word is irrefutable, men choose to resist and oppose God's truth by holding fast to their sin (cf. [Psalms 14:1](#); [John 3:19-20](#)). - MSB

who suppress the truth .. This referred to human willful rejection, not ignorance (cf. [Romans 1:21](#), [Romans 1:32](#); [John 3:17-21](#)). This phrase can mean (1) they know the truth but reject it; (2) their lifestyle shows they reject the truth; or (3) their lives and/or words cause others not to know and receive the truth. - Utley

truth .. Elsewhere, the Greek word used here, *alētheia*, usually refers to the gospel ([Colossians 1:5](#); [1 Timothy 2:4](#)); here, however, it refers more generally to the truth about God ([Romans 1:25](#)). Those who suppress the truth deny what is made obvious about God through creation ([Romans 1:19-20](#)) and do not acknowledge God as sovereign Creator.

suppress the truth in unrighteousness . When people act sinfully, rebelling against God's just rule, they fail to embrace the truth and so suppress it. In this case, as Meyer says, they “do not let it develop itself into power and influence on their religious knowledge and moral condition.” - NICNT

Men hold the truth down “*in connection with unrighteousness*”; this the force of ἐν. The idea expressed by the preposition is that of sphere. .. Significantly Paul repeats the ἀδικία or unrighteousness in connection with this maltreatment of the truth. It constitutes both the evil motive and the evil purpose. Godlessness and irreligion culminate in unrighteousness, ... The moment truth is allowed the control, evil thoughts, words, and deeds would be cast out, and thus godliness would enter in. - Lenski

Romans 1:19

because .. The “*because*” points to the “holding down” just before: q. d., “they hold down the truth; and it *needs* holding down, as a living thing, if it is to be kept out of the way; because it is, as a fact, known to them.” - CBSC

that which is known about God .. All humans know something of God from creation (cf. [Romans 1:20](#); [Job 12:7-10](#) and [Psalms 19:1-6](#), [Psalms 19:12-14](#)). In theology this is called “natural revelation.” It is not complete, but it is the basis of God's holding responsible those who have never been exposed to God's “special revelation” in Scripture or, ultimately, in Jesus (cf. [Colossians 1:15](#); [Colossians 2:9](#)). - Utley

The word “*knowable*” has of late years become fashionable in philosophic language; and some

writers have boldly taught that God is “The Unknown and Unknowable.” This seems in direct contradiction of what Paul is here saying. (CBSC)

There are things we can “know” about God. We can see it from His creation.

is manifest in them .. God has sovereignly planted evidence of His existence in the very nature of man by reason and moral law ([Romans 1:20-21](#); [Romans 1:28](#), [Romans 1:32](#); [Romans 2:15](#)). - MSB

Natural Revelation ([Romans 1:19-21](#))

[Romans 1:19-20](#) These verses begin a discussion of “natural revelation.” Natural revelation describes what everyone knows about God because of what God has revealed concerning Himself in nature. What He has revealed about Himself in Scripture is “special revelation.” The creation bears testimony to its Maker, and every human being “hears” this witness (cf. [Psalms 19:1](#) ff).

Four things characterize this revelation. First, it is a clear testimony; everyone is aware of it (“it is evident [plain]”). Second, everyone can understand it. We can draw conclusions about the Creator from His creation. Third, it has gone out since the creation of the world in every generation. Fourth, it is a limited revelation in that it does not reveal everything about God (e.g., His love and grace) but only some things (i.e., His power and deity).

Natural revelation makes man responsible to respond to his Creator in worship and submission. However it does not give sufficient information for him to experience salvation. That is why everyone needs to hear the gospel. – Constable

Revelation 1:20

1:20 This verse mentions three aspects of God.

1. His invisible attributes (His character, cf. [Colossians 1:15](#); [1 Timothy 1:17](#); [Hebrews 11:27](#))
2. His eternal power (seen in physical creation)
3. His divine nature (seen in His acts and motives of creation)

invisible nature .. [attributes, qualities] .. This refers specifically to the two mentioned in this verse. [1] His power; 2) his divine nature (character)]

The invisible God is now seen in (1) physical creation; (2) Scripture; and (3) ultimately in Jesus. - Utley

God has provided in the world he created evidence of his “eternal power and divine nature” (v. 20). This “natural revelation” is available to all human beings, but because of sin, people turn away from this evidence of God’s existence. - NIVZSB

The visible things of God’s creation reveal to man’s mind the invisible things regarding him - Lenski

His eternal power .. The Creator, who made all that we see around us and constantly sustains it, must be a being of awesome power. - MSB

eternal .. The Gr. word here (*aïdios*) is only found besides in N. T. in Jude 6. By derivation and usage it is connected with the Greek equivalent for “ever” or “always.” - CBSC

Godhead .. [deity, divine nature] .. The Greek word used here, *theiotēs*, is found only here in the NT. It is used to summarize God’s divine attributes, especially those that can be observed through creation. Since God made such attributes discernable, people have no excuse for rejecting Him. - FSB

Godhead .. That is, His divine nature, particularly His faithfulness ([Genesis 8:21-22](#)), kindness, and graciousness (Acts 14:17). - MSB

are clearly seen .. The Greek verb give the emphatic "clearly", it distinctly states that they "are under observation,; "in view."

by the things that are made .. The creation delivers a clear, unmistakable message about God's person (cf. [Psalms 19:1-8](#); [Psalms 94:9](#); [Acts 14:15-17](#); [Acts 17:23-28](#)). - MSB

The entire natural world bears witness to God through its beauty, complexity, design, and usefulness. - EBCNT

they are without excuse .. God holds all men responsible for their refusal to acknowledge what He has shown them of Himself in His creation. - MSB

This is literally "no legal defense." This Greek term (*a plus apologeomai*) is used only here and in [Romans 2:1](#) in the NT.

No one should complain that God has left insufficient evidence of his existence and character; the fault is with those who reject the evidence. - EBCNT

All cause of ignorance of God's existence and nature is removed by what can be seen of His creation. (CBSC)

Romans 1:21

For although .. Since His creation revealed Him.

they knew God .. Man is conscious of God's existence, power, and divine nature through general revelation, [Romans 1:19-20](#). - MSB

they knew God .. Not in the sense of scriptural revelation, but knowing of Him as His creation reveals Him; His power and providing for mankind's livelihood.

they glorified Him not .. They laid aside Divine revelation.

they did not glorify Him .. Man's chief end is to glorify God ([Leviticus 10:3](#); [1 Chronicles 16:24-29](#); [Psalms 148:1](#); [Romans 15:5-6](#)), and Scripture constantly demands it ([Psalms 29:1-2](#); [1 Corinthians 10:31](#); [Revelation 4:11](#)). - MSB

did not honor him as God .. Knowledge of God typically includes recognition of His sovereignty, which results in worship ([Joshua 4:24](#); [1 Kings 8:43](#); [2 Kings 19:19](#); [Psalms 100:3](#)). Here, people fail to worship God or acknowledge Him as Creator despite their knowledge of Him. - FSB

nor were thankful .. They refused to acknowledge that every good thing they enjoyed came from God ([Matthew 5:45](#); [Acts 14:15-17](#); [1 Timothy 6:17](#); [James 1:17](#)) - MSB

We note that the first marks of decline are failure to praise and to thank Him. Conscious of guilt before the Eternal, man shrinks from *direct* worship and in mistaken reverence, he turns away to "the creature," (idolatry) and the result is inevitable; the God unworshipped rapidly becomes unknown. (CBSC)

vain imaginations .. [KJV] is rather **thinking**. the Greek is a word often rendered "*thoughts*," (as e.g. [Matthew 15:19](#).) In [Philippians 2:14](#) it is rendered "disputings;" in [1 Timothy 2:8](#), "doubting." The verb is used in e.g. [Luke 12:17](#), - CBSC

their thinking became futile .. Man's search for meaning and purpose will produce only vain, meaningless conclusions.

their foolish heart .. "*Foolish*," more strictly **unintelligent**; failing to see connexions and consequences. Same word as [Matthew 15:16](#). The "*heart*" may here mean merely the intellect, as perhaps in [Mark 2:6](#), [Mark 2:8](#). - CBSC

foolish hearts were darkened .. When man rejects the truth, the darkness of spiritual falsehood replaces it (cf. [John 3:19-20](#)). - MSB

The New Testament: A New Translation by Olaf M. Morlie has "rather they busied themselves with silly speculations about Him, and their stupid minds groped about in the dark."

From the Greek word "fool" we get the English "moron." The problem is in mankind's pride and confidence in their own knowledge (cf. [1 Corinthians 1:18-31](#); [Colossians 2:8-23](#)). - Utley

[Romans 1:21-23](#) Honoring God as God and giving Him thanks (v. 21) are our primary duties to God in view of who He is. Mythology and idolatry have resulted from man's need to identify some power greater than himself and his refusal to acknowledge God as that power. - Constable

Romans 1:22

Professing to be wise .. Paul does not mean that in their speculations no intellectual power was exerted, but that their moral attitude and the premisses of their reasoning were fatally wrong. (CBSC)

Man rationalizes his sin and proves his utter foolishness by devising and believing his own philosophies about God, the universe, and himself (cf. [Psalms 14:1](#); [Psalms 53:1](#)). - MSB

Claiming to be wise, they became fools .. A fool is not merely someone who is ignorant or lacks intelligence. The term has moral connotations that include a rejection of God ([Psalms 14:1](#); [Jeremiah 10:14](#)). By refusing to acknowledge God, people reveal their foolishness. - FSB

Even brilliant people who do not honor God miss the whole purpose of life and are therefore **fools** (cf. [Proverbs 1:7](#), [Proverbs 1:22](#); [Proverbs 10:1](#); [Proverbs 12:15](#); [Proverbs 14:7](#); [Proverbs 17:25](#); [Proverbs 20:3](#)). - ESVSB

Romans 1:23

Man allowing the creature part of himself to govern his life. Living by beastly desires.

glory .. In this context, the Greek term used here, *doxa*, indicates God's honor and majesty. - FSB

The Greek word *doxa*, often translated as "glory," refers to the splendor of God's manifested presence. This glory expresses the greatness of God, probably with reference to His attributes revealed in creation ([Romans 1:20](#)). Humans exchanged the glory of God for idols. They directed to idols what belongs to God: honor and thanksgiving ([Romans 1:21](#)). - FSB

glory of the incorruptible God .. Willfully ignorant, humans who were made in God's image (cf. [Genesis 1:26-27](#); [Genesis 5:1](#), [Genesis 5:3](#); [Genesis 9:6](#)) turned God into earthly images such as (1) animals (Egypt), (2) forces of nature (Persia), or (3) human forms (Greece/Rome)—idols! Even God's own people did this (cf. [Deuteronomy 4:15-24](#) and [Amos 5:25-26](#)). - Utley

into an image made like to .. Lit. **in the resemblance of the likeness of**; i.e. "*so as to appear in a form like man, bird, beast, snake, and insect.*" Deity, and its prerogatives, were so degraded as to be (in the idolater's act) transferred to idols. - CBSC

likeness of an image .. The Greek phrase used here refers to idolatry in general. Paul probably alludes to

[Psalms 106:20](#), which speaks of Israel's worship of the golden calf (see [Deuteronomy 4:16-18](#)). In the OT and the ancient world, civilizations made physical representations of their gods (e.g., [Genesis 31:19](#), [Genesis 31:34](#); [Numbers 33:52](#); [Deuteronomy 29:17](#)). - FSB

images .. Mythology and idolatry have resulted from man's need to identify some power greater than himself and his refusal to acknowledge God as that power. Men and women have elevated themselves to God's position (cf. [Daniel 2:38](#); [Daniel 3:1](#); [Daniel 5:23](#)). - Constable

In our day, humanism has replaced the worship of individual human leaders in most western countries. Man has descended to the worship of animals as well (cf. [Psalms 106:20](#)). This is perhaps more characteristic of third world countries. - Constable

"This tragic process of human 'god-making' continues apace in our own day, and Paul's words have as much relevance for people who have made money or sex or fame their gods as for those who carved idols out of wood and stone." (Constable)

man -- birds, four-footed animals and creeping things .. Note the allusions to the creation story in the threefold division of the animal kingdom. [Genesis 1:28](#).

In the OT idols sometimes took the form of animals, but an idol is anything that a human puts in place of God, and idols take an infinite variety of forms. - NIVZSB

images .. In addition to the images housed in great temples, Roman families commonly kept representations of individual "house gods" in their homes (examples found at Pompeii are particularly striking). Mediterranean and Near Eastern pagan religion worshiped idols in the form of beasts, or in the likeness of mixed beast/human deities such as the ancient gods of Egypt. Modern "idols" don't look like ancient ones; images served today are often mental rather than metal. But people still devote their lives to, and trust in, many things other than God. - ESVSB

Romans 1:24

Man allowing the creature part of himself to govern his life. Living by beastly desires.

Therefore .. [Wherefore, Because] .. Διό in this verse is followed by διὰ τοῦτο in v. 26, and by καθώς κτλ., in v. 28; thus three statements describe the divine punishment for the rejection of God. - Lenski

God also gave them up .. [abandoned] This is a judicial term in Gr., used for handing over a prisoner to his sentence. - MSB

The word *abandon* includes a sense of "handing over," suggesting that God actively consigns people to the consequences of their sin. - NLTB

God gave them over .. In response to humans' deciding to put idols in the place of the only God, God hands people over to the consequences of their sin. - NIVZSB

God also gave them up .. So [Psalms 81:11-12](#); [Acts 7:42](#). On the other hand man "gives himself over;" [Ephesians 4:19](#).

The most terrible, and just, penalty of sin is the hardening of the sinning heart. It is a "law;" ("their ultimate reason is God") the "law" of judicial hardening is His *personal* will, and takes place along with His *personal* displeasure. (CBSC)

God gave them over .. This was the worst possible judgment. It was God saying "let fallen humanity have their own way" (cf. [Psalms 81:12](#); [Hosea 4:17](#); [Acts 7:42](#)).

Verses 23–32 describe God's rejection (temporal wrath) of the pagan world and its religiosity (and ours)! Paganism was and is characterized by sexual perversion and exploitation! - Utley

uncleanness .. A general term often used of decaying matter, like the contents of a grave. It speaks here of sexual immorality ([2 Corinthians 12:21](#); cf. [Galatians 5:19-23](#); [Ephesians 5:3](#); [1 Thessalonians 4:7](#)), which begins in the heart and moves to the shame of the body. - MSB

immorality .. The Greek word used here, *akatharsia*, refers to illicit sexual activity ([2 Corinthians 12:21](#); [Galatians 5:19](#); [Ephesians 5:3](#)). - FSB

Akatharsia (**impurity**) was a general term for uncleanness and was often used of decaying matter, especially the contents of a grave, which were considered by Jews to be both physically and ceremonially unclean. As a moral term, it usually referred to or was closely associated with sexual immorality. - MNTC Ro

through the lusts .. Lit. **in the lusts**: a pregnant phrase; q. d. "He gave them up to *live in* vile desires." - CBSC

Lusts .. translates *epithumia*, which can refer to any desire but was most often used of carnal desire for that which was sinful or forbidden. - MNTC Ro

lust of their hearts .. [See Utley at this point for a study on the way "**heart**" is used in the Scriptures.] Here it seems to be used for the center of emotions, (cf. [Matthew 5:28](#); [Acts 2:26](#); [Acts 2:37](#); [Acts 7:54](#); [Acts 21:13](#); [Romans 1:24](#); [2 Corinthians 2:4](#); [2 Corinthians 7:3](#); [Ephesians 6:22](#); [Philippians 1:7](#))

to dishonour .. The dignity and sanctity of the body is a main and peculiar truth of Revelation. - CBSC

dishonor their bodies .. Joining their bodies in sinful ways for which God did not create them; fornication, adultery, homosexual conduct, etc.

between themselves .. Among themselves; or mutually. They did it by unlawful and impure connections with one another. - BN

Romans 1:25

who changed .. The Greek relative pronoun implies that this was the *cause* of the special turn taken by the judicial hardening: **seeing they had changed**, &c. - CBSC

Mankind's worship of that which he has made—idols (cf. [Isaiah 44:20](#); [Jeremiah 13:25](#); [Jeremiah 16:19](#)) instead of YHWH who created all things (cf. vv. 18–23);

the truth of God .. i.e. that which is true of Him alone, and revealed by Him; Omnipotence and Deity. Cp. ver. 18. - CBSC

truth of God .. Refers to the truth that God revealed through His creation (see note on [Romans 1:18](#)). - FSB

into a lie .. Into *idols*, or false gods. Idols are not unfrequently called *falsehood* and *lies*, because they are not true representations of God; [Jeremiah 13:25](#); [Isaiah 28:15](#); [Jeremiah 10:14](#); [Psalms 40:4](#). - BN

the lie .. A denial of God's existence and His right to be obeyed and glorified ([Romans 1:19-21](#); [Isaiah 44:20](#); [Jeremiah 13:25](#); cf. [John 8:44](#)). - MSB

into a lie .. Lit. **in falsehood**; they degraded it so that it was *lost in* falsehood; falsehood took its place. This "falsehood" is, of course, the grand error—Idolatry. - CBSC

the creature .. Created things, as the sun, moon, animals, &c. - BN

who is blessed for eternity .. A doxology meaning that God is worthy of limitless adoration and worship. It also is an example of the kind of honor and thanksgiving that people should give to Him (compare [Romans 1:21](#)). - FSB

Benedictus here, not *Beatus*. The glorious epithet indicates the Creature's right attitude toward the Creator; that of adoring praise and love. - CBSC

who is blessed forever. Amen .. Paul burst into a Jewish blessing, which is so characteristic of him (cf. [Romans 9:5](#); [2 Corinthians 11:31](#)). Paul often voices prayers as he writes (cf. [Romans 9:5](#); [Romans 11:36](#); [Romans 15:33](#); [Romans 16:27](#)). - Utley

forever .. This is literally the Greek idiomatic phrase, “unto the ages”

Romans 1:26

for this reason ..

God gave them up .. See note on this phrase in [Romans 1:24](#).

1:26–27 Not only homosexual acts but also such **passions** **ESV** or desires are said to be **dishonorable** before God. Just as idolatry is unnatural (contrary to what God intended when he made human beings), so too homosexuality is **contrary to nature** in that it does not represent what God intended when he made men and women with physical bodies that have a “natural” way of interacting with each other and “natural” desires for each other. Paul follows the OT and Jewish tradition in seeing all homosexual relationships as sinful. The creation account in Genesis 1–2 reveals the divine paradigm for human beings, indicating that God's will is for man and woman to be joined in marriage. - ESVSB

vile passions .. Identified in [Romans 1:26-27](#) as homosexuality, a sin roundly condemned in Scripture ([Genesis 19](#); [Leviticus 18:22](#); [1 Corinthians 6:9-11](#); cf. [Galatians 5:19-21](#); [Ephesians 5:3-5](#); [1 Timothy 1:9-10](#); [Jude 1:7](#)). - MSB

women .. Rather than the normal Greek term for women, this is a general word for female [[θηλειαι](#) women [G2338](#) [A-NPF](#)]. Paul mentions women first to show the extent of debauchery under the wrath of abandonment, because in most cultures women are the last to be affected by moral collapse. - MSB

their women did change .. Through sodomy, instead of natural intercourse.

contrary to nature .. Refers to homosexual activity, which does not reflect God's original created order (see [Genesis 1:27](#); [Genesis 2:18-25](#)). - FSB

1:26, 27 Homosexuality is one example of life apart from God's obvious will in creation. It was a sin and a major cultural problem (1) in the OT (cf. [Leviticus 18:22](#); [Leviticus 20:13](#); [Deuteronomy 23:18](#)); (2) in the Greco-Roman world (cf. [1 Corinthians 6:9](#); [1 Timothy 1:10](#)); and (3) in our day.

Homosexuality is probably listed as one example of the fallen life because of the entire context's orientation to [Genesis 1–3](#). Mankind was made in God's image (cf. [Genesis 1:26-27](#); [Genesis 5:1](#), [Genesis 5:3](#); [Genesis 9:6](#)). Mankind was made male and female (cf. [Genesis 1:27](#)). God's command was to be fruitful and multiply (cf. [Genesis 1:28](#); [Genesis 9:1](#), [Genesis 9:7](#)). Mankind's fall (cf. [Genesis 3](#)) disrupted God's plan and will. Homosexuality is an obvious violation! However it must be stated that this is not the only sin mentioned in the context (cf. [Romans 1:29-31](#)). All sins show mankind's separation from God and their deserved punishment. All sin, especially lifestyle sin, is abhorrent to God. - Utley [See Utley at this point for a special topic study.]

See next verse, [Romans 1:27](#), for scripture teaching on homosexuality.

Romans 1:27

It is noteworthy ... that the sin of **ver. 26** is touched more rapidly than that of **ver. 27**. It is also remarkable that in the Greek we have not “women” and “men,” but “females” and “males.”—Bengel's

remark on this passage is excellent: "Often, in exposing sin, we must call a spade a spade (*scapha debet scapha dici*). They often insist on an excessive delicacy who themselves are void of modesty." These words apply to many passages of Scripture besides this. - CBSC

Likewise . . In similar instance, i.e. not only using women in natural ways, but men using men unnaturally.

natural use of the woman . . The result was that he "exchanged" natural human functions for what is unnatural. In the Greek text the words translated "women" (*thelus*; v. 26) and "men" (*arsen*, v. 27) mean "females" and "males." Ironically the homosexuality described in these verses does not characterize females and males of other animal species, only human beings. - Constable

burned in their lust . . Not only homosexual acts but also such **passions** or desires are said to be **dishonorable** before God. ... homosexuality is **contrary to nature** in that it does not represent what God intended when he made men and women with physical bodies that have a "natural" way of interacting with each other and "natural" desires for each other. Paul follows the OT and Jewish tradition in seeing all homosexual relationships as sinful. - ESVSB

consumed (or "inflamed") gives a strong image of a powerful but destructive inward desire. - ESVSB

for one another . . The sin in view is not pederasty (homosexual conduct of men with boys) but **men** engaging in sin **with men**. There is no justification here for the view that Paul condemns only abusive homosexual relationships. - ESVSB

men with men .. Sodomy.

Homosexuality is one example of life apart from God's obvious will in creation. It was a sin and a major cultural problem (1) in the OT (cf. [Leviticus 18:22](#); [Leviticus 20:13](#); [Deuteronomy 23:18](#)); (2) in the Greco-Roman world (cf. [1 Corinthians 6:9](#); [1 Timothy 1:10](#)); and (3) in our day. - Utley

committing what is shameful . . *That which is unseemly*. That which is shameful, or disgraceful. - BN

receiving in themselves .. This could be referring to 1) natural ailments or diseases occurring from such acts, or 2) from God's wrath which they will suffer, but 3) perhaps to both.

receiving in themselves the penalty . . Here the law of sowing and reaping ([Galatians 6:7-8](#)) takes effect, as Paul refers to the self-destructive nature of this sin, of which AIDS is one frightening evidence. - MSB

AIDS, for example, is probably the consequence of man's rebellion against God rather than a special judgment from God. The "due penalty" is what man experiences as a result of God giving him over and letting him indulge his sinful desires (cf [Romans 6:23](#)).

Michael Ukleja, "Homosexuality in the New Testament," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 140:560 (October-December 1983):350-58.

GAYS (Homosexuals, Sodomites) and Lesbians

It is difficult to see how Christians today, or anyone with knowledge of the Bible, can gloss over the fact that the Bible pictures sodomy as sinful.

Note these passages:

[Genesis 6:11](#) --Before the flood

[Genesis 13:13](#) -- Sodom exceedingly wicked

[Genesis 15:16](#) --Iniquity of the Amorites

Genesis 19:5 -- Lot and Sodom

Leviticus 18:22 -- Mosaic Law

Leviticus 20:13 -- Mosaic Law

[Leviticus 18:27-29](#) -- Defiles the nation

[Deuteronomy 8:5](#) -- God disciplines nations

Deuteronomy 23:17 -- Moses' Teaching

[Judges 19:22](#) -- In time of Judges

[1 Kings 14:24](#) -- Abomination of the Nations

1 Kings 15:12 -- Sodomites took away out of the land

1 Kings 21:26 -- Vileness of the Amorites

1 Kings 22:46 -- Sodomites taken out of the Land

[2 Kings 23:7](#) -- House of the Sodomites broken down

Isaiah 3:9 --Sins declared as Sodom

[Jeremiah 6:15](#) -- Abominations- not ashamed - didn't blush

Romans 1:26-28 -- New Testament Teaching

1 Corinthians 6:9 -- Will not Inherit the Kingdom of God

[1 Timothy 1:10](#) -- Whoremongers - Contrary to Sound Doctrine

2 Peter 2:6 -- Sodom and Gomorrah an Example

2 Peter 2:8 -- Lot Vexed by Lawless Deeds he Saw

2 Peter 2:10 -- Following a Corrupt Desire

Jude 1:7 -- Sodom and Gomorrah an Example

Revelation 22:15 -- Dogs (unclean, filthy, in the OT they were male prostitutes) Outside Heavenly City

Sodomy can be forgiven, Sinners can change: [1 Corinthians 6:9](#) ; [1 Corinthians 6:11](#) "Such were some of you..." [1 John 1:7](#) [1 Thessalonians 5:22-23](#)

Romans 1:28

Romans 1:28-31 This is one sentence in Greek. It characterized rebellious, fallen, independent mankind. Human sin is not confined to sexual sins, and Paul now lists a whole catalog of the evils common among human beings as a result of turning from God.

And even as .. In this and the following verses the developements of sin are followed into less monstrous but more pervading and not less guilty forms. - CBSC

to retain God in their knowledge .. Lit. **to have God in real (or full) knowledge.** There was an antecedent knowledge of God; partly by the universe, partly by the constitution of their nature, partly by primeval revelation. - CBSC

retain God . .[Recognize God, acknowledge God] .. They choose to not acknowledge God in their lives. This was the *first step* in their sin. It was not that God did not give them knowledge; nor even is it said that he arbitrarily abandoned them as the first step; but they forsook *him*, and as a consequence he gave them up to a reprobate mind.

God gave them over .. See note on [Romans 1:24](#), same phrase.

to a debased mind . .[reprobate] A mind set in immoral, carnal and unethical behavior. Paul describes such a mind as hostile to God, [Romans 8:7](#).

to a reprobate mind .. A mind destitute of judgment. "As they did not *approve*, ἐδοκιμασαν, or choose to retain God, &c. he gave them up to a mind *disapproved, rejected, reprobate*," ἁδοκιμον, and he means that the state of their minds was such that God could not *approve* it. It does not mean that they were *reprobate* by any arbitrary decree; but that *as a consequence* of their headstrong passions, their determination to *forget* him, he left them to a state of mind which he could not *approve*. (BN Ro)

In the Greek text there is a word play that highlights God's just retribution. As people disapproved of the idea of retaining God in their thinking, so God gave them over to a disapproved mind (v. 28). - Constable

debased .. This translates a Greek word that means "not passing the test." It was often used to describe useless, worthless metals, discarded because they contained too much impurity.

not fitting .. convenient .. i.e. becoming. So [Philemon 1:8](#), where the Greek word is nearly the same. - CBSC

... people chose not to “approve” of God, so he condemned them to an “unapproved” mind—that is, a “worthless” way of thinking that does not conform to God’s own purposes and values. The many forms of human sin, which Paul illustrates in vv. 28b–31, are rooted in sinful minds. Fundamental to the new life, therefore, is renewing those very minds ([Romans 12:2](#)). - NIVZSB

Romans 1:29

Romans 1:29-31 Paul lists vices that characterize those who reject God. Lists like this are common in Paul’s writing. Sometimes he gives them to instruct the righteous on how to live ([Romans 13:13](#); [Galatians 5:19-21](#); [Colossians 3:5](#)). Other times, as he does here, Paul uses these lists to describe the ungodly ([1 Corinthians 6:9-10](#); [1 Timothy 1:9-10](#)).

1:29–31 This list of sins follows a popular Hellenistic literary form called a *vice list*. While not exhaustive, it reminds readers of various forms that evil might take. - NLTBS

being filled with .. Humans are filled and characterized by what they dwell upon. The rabbis would say that in every human heart is a black (evil *yetzer*) dog and a white (good *yetzer*) dog. The one who is fed the most becomes the largest. - Utley

unrighteousness .. It is a general word describing the evil effects in human relations that man’s suppressing the knowledge of God produces.

Unrighteousness, ἀδικία. This is a word denoting *injustice*, or iniquity in general. The particular specifications of the iniquity follow. - BN

sexual immorality ..

[evil .. wickedness ..] .. is what is contrary to what is right or just. Wickedness (evil, NIV) is what is vile and sinister.

Wickedness. The word used here denotes *a desire of injuring others*; or, as we should express it, *malice*. BN

covetousness .. [greed] .. Greed is the drive to obtain more.

Covetousness. Avarice, or the desire of obtaining that which belongs to others.

Greed (πλεονεξία, *pleonexia* ... greed is the insatiable desire to accumulate more and more things in general, without regard for the rights and needs of others. [Colossians 3:5](#) says that this sin is idolatry, because acquisition of things becomes one’s god. - CPNIV

maliciousness .. Same word as [1 Peter 2:1](#), (where E. V. “malice,”) 16. The Gr. is a wider word than these English words. - CBSC

Depravity (κακία, *kakia*). Barclay says it is “the most general Greek word for badness.... It is the degeneracy out of which all sins grow and in which all sins flourish” - CPNIV

full of envy .. Lit. **brimful**; a word as strong as possible.

Envy (φθόνος, *phthonos*). It means not just wanting what another person has, but also resenting that person for having it. It is an attitude of ill-will and jealousy that leads to division and strife and even murder. - CPNIV

murder .. The taking of human life with premeditated malice.

strife .. “Insolent” focuses on activities, “arrogant” on thoughts, and “boastful” on words

...the word in the original meant also *contention, strife*, altercation, connected with anger and heated zeal; [Romans 13:13](#); [1 Corinthians 1:11](#); [1 Corinthians 3:3](#); [2 Corinthians 12:20](#); [Galatians 5:20](#); [Philippians 1:15](#); [1 Timothy 6:4](#); [Titus 3:9](#). This contention and strife would, of course, follow from malice and covetousness, &c. - BN

deceit .. (δόλος, *dolos*), guile, treachery, cunning, hypocrisy. This denotes *fraud, falsehood*.

evil mindedness .. [**malignity, malice**] .. Our “*ill-nature*” exactly.

Malignity. This word signifies here, not malignity in general, but that particular species of it which consists in misinterpreting the words or actions of others, or putting the worst construction on their conduct. - BN

Hendriksen says it indicates “the desire to harm people”.

whisperers .. [**gossips**] .. (ψιθυριστής, *psithuristēs*) Those who secretly, and in a sly manner, by hints and inuendoes, detract from others, or excite suspicion of them. - BN

... literally, “**whisperers**,” or those who whisper gossip into someone’s ear behind another’s back. They are talebearers, rumormongers, “whisperers-behind-doors” (Phillips) who spread their slanders secretly. - CP

Romans 1:30

backbiters .. [**slanderers, Rather, evil speakers**, without the special notion of speaking in the *absence* of the person attacked [vs gossips]. CBSC

Slanderers (κατάλαλος, *katalalos*), literally, those who speak against others. Phillips translates it “stabbers-in-the-back.” This is the same idea as the previous word, except the ... slander is open and public, not secret. - CPNIV

haters of God .. The Gr., by formation and classical usage, should rather mean **hateful to God**; men whose character is peculiarly abhorrent to Him. Similar words or phrases were familiar at Athens to denote *defiant* evil; and this would well suit the two words here following. - CBSC

insolent .. [**despiteful**] .. This word denotes those who abuse, or treat with unkindness or disdain, *those who are present*. BN

Insolent (ὕβριστής, *hybristēs*). The person guilty of this sin is one who has a very high and arrogant opinion of himself, coupled with a very low and contemptuous opinion of others. It is “a lofty sense of superiority out of which the insolent person treats all others as beneath him” (Morris, 97–98). It is the attitude of a bully that leads him to use and abuse others, and run roughshod over the weak. - CPNIV

arrogant .. [**haughty, proud**] ..

It is an inordinate self-esteem; an unreasonable conceit of one’s superiority in talents, beauty, wealth, accomplishments, &c. (*Webster*.)

Arrogant (ὕπερήφανος, *hyperēphanos*), proud, haughty. This is the opposite of humble. It refers to a person who in his own mind sees himself as being far above others and as having no need of God. - CPNIV

boastful .. Those who arrogate to themselves that which they do not possess, and glory on it. This is closely connected with *pride*. A man who has an inordinate self-conceit, will not be slow to proclaim his own merits to those around him. - BN

Boastful (ἀλαζών, *alazōn*). This refers to a person who brags about himself, often going beyond the truth in an effort to impress others. It is someone who vaunts “himself in the possession of skill ... or knowledge, or courage, or virtue, or riches, or whatever else it might be, which were not truly his” (Trench, *Synonyms*, 99). - CPNIV

inventors of evil .. [.. evil things] .. This doubtless refers to their seeking to find out new arts or plans to practise evil; new devices to gratify their lusts and passions; new forms of luxury, and vice, &c. So intent were they on practising evil, so resolved to gratify their passions, that the mind was excited to discover new modes of gratification. In cities of luxury and vice, this has always been done. - BN

disobedient to parents .. A symptom of deep moral and social disorder. Parental authority stands in the Decalogue among the great foundations of virtue and duty; and our Lord Himself is significantly said (Luke 2:51) to have been "subject" to Joseph and Mary. - CBSC

Romans 1:31

undiscerning .. [foolish; senseless; without understanding; unintelligent;] .. Inconsiderate, or fooliwh.

"without understanding" see note on [Romans 1:21](#), where "*foolish*" represents the same Greek word; an epithet full of deep meaning. - CBSC

Senseless (ajsuvneto", *asunetos*), foolish (see v. 21). This refers not to one who *lacks* intelligence, but to one who refuses to use his God-given mind in a common-sense, God-honoring way. "It refers to those who act stupidly" in reference to God and morality (Morris, 98), or those who cannot "put two and two together in the moral life" (Lanski, 122).
- CPNIV

Without understanding, covenant-breakers (*ἀσυνέτους ἀσυνθέτους*)

Another paronomasia: *asynetous*, *asynthetous*. This feature of style is largely due to the pleasure which all people, and especially Orientals, derive from the assonance of a sentence. - VWS

untrustworthy . [covenant breakers; faithless;] .. Perfidious; false to their contracts. - BN

Covenant breakers - won't keep their word. - Luscombe

Faithless (ajsuvnqeto", *asunthetos*), unreliable, disloyal, dishonest, untrustworthy, treacherous. This is a person who will not keep his word or meet his obligations, a covenant breaker. -

Faithless (ajsuvnqeto", *asunthetos*), unreliable, disloyal, dishonest, untrustworthy, treacherous. This is a person who will not keep his word or meet his obligations, a covenant breaker. - College Press NT

unloving .. [without natural affection; unfeeling;] .. This expression denotes the want of affectionate regard towards their children. The attachment of parents to children is one of the strongest in nature, and nothing can overcome it but the most confirmed and established wickedness. - BN

Heartless (a[storgo", *astorgos*). This is an unfortunate translation, a much too general term for a specific vice. A person who is *astorgos* is one who lacks *storgē*, which means "natural family affection, love for family members," especially the love that ties parents and children together. When it is absent the results are such things as abortion, infanticide, child abuse, fratricide, and matricide. - CPNT

unforgiving .. [implacable; heartless;] .. This word properly denotes those who will not be reconciled where there is a quarrel; or who pursue the offender with unyielding revenge. It denotes an unforgiving temper; - BN

implacable .. Lit. **truce-less**; an adjective used in the classics for inevitable *death* and internecine *war*. The word is perhaps to be omitted here; but evidence is far from decisive. - CBSC

unmerciful .. [ruthless;] .. Destitute of compassion.

Ruthless (ajnelehvmwn, *aneleēmōn*), merciless, pitiless, callous, unfeeling toward others. This is a person who simply does not care when others are in need or are suffering. Morris perceptively remarks, "It is significant that, in an epistle that will stress God's mercy throughout, the list of vices should be rounded off with 'merciless'. This is the very depth of evil" (99). - CP

Romans 1:32

they know .. The subject of this clause is the relative pronoun οἱτινες (*hoitines*), "the ones who," i.e., "These sinners I have just been naming are the very ones who know these things are contrary to God's law." - CPNIV

knowing .. Such are not ignorant, but blatant rebellious.

Who knowing. That the Gentiles had a *moral sense*, or were capable of knowing the will of God in this case, is clear from [Romans 2:14-15](#). - BN

knowing .. The Gr. is strong, **well knowing**. The witness of conscience is here intended, enforced by traditions of primeval truth and by the majesty of creation. - CBSC

... people also have an inbuilt moral sense that tells them that certain acts deserve God's judgment. - NIVZSB

know the righteous judgment of God .. The "righteous decree" of God refers specifically to the part about the penalty.... It is a righteous decree because those who sin are worthy of death; they deserve it. Also ... they know it as *God's* righteous ordinance. - CPNIV

know God's righteous decree .. His **ordinance**, His statute of retribution. ...but a voice not their own bears witness to the eternal difference of right and wrong, ..They are aware, however imperfectly, of a "statute" whereby impurity and cruelty are evil and condemnable. - CBSC

deserving of death .. The penalty for all sin; possibly refers to eternal separation from God ([Romans 6:23](#)). - FSB

also approve of those .. To feel with them and abet them. - ...what is worse than just committing these sins is *both* committing them *and* encouraging others to commit them as well.

The final step down in man's degradation is his promotion of wickedness (v. 32). It is bad to practice these things, but it is worse to encourage others to practice them. - Constable

To *encourage others* to sin is *worse* than sinning oneself ([James 3:1](#)) - NLTBSB

who practice them .. [πράσσω](#) prassō, 1) to exercise, practise, to be busy with, carry on, to undertake, to do. - Thayer

Romans 2:1

2:1–16 In this chapter, Paul shifts his focus from the guilt of the Gentiles to the guilt of the Jews. Paul now describes God's judgment on those who have the law (vv. 12–16). God will judge both Jews and Gentiles according to their works (v. 6).

Therefore .. Διὸ. The force of this word here has been the subject of much discussion. - BN

Therefore .. "Therefore" seems more logically to relate back to [Romans 1:18-19](#) than to [Romans 1:21-32](#). - Constable

you .. Singular in Greek. Paul uses an ancient literary style called the diatribe, in which writers use a fictional dialogue between themselves and the proponent of another viewpoint - NIVZSB

you .. The referent of “*you*” is somewhat ambiguous at this point. In [Romans 2:17](#), it becomes clear that Paul is referring specifically to Jews. - FSB

you .. *You* is singular in the Greek. Here, the *you* is a hypothetical complacent Jew, who feels superior to Gentiles and in no danger of judgment. - NLTBSB

inexcusable .. This is literally “no legal defense” ([Romans 1:20](#)). It was placed first in the Greek sentence to magnify its significance.- Utley

All people are without excuse because all, without exception, have sinned against God. - ESVSB

O man .. This address is *general* to *any* man who should do this. But it is plain, from the connection, that he means especially the Jews. - BN

“**O man**” (not translated in the NIV).

passes judgment .. The Greek word used here, *krinō*, refers to condemning someone. Those who judge inappropriately assume a role that belongs to God. Later, Paul will warn Gentile Christians not to pass judgment upon Jewish Christians who feel compelled to maintain certain dietary customs ([Romans 14:1-4](#)). - FSB

judge another .. The “*other*” refers to the Gentiles.

condemn yourself .. If someone has sufficient knowledge to judge others, he condemns himself, because he shows he has the knowledge to evaluate his own condition. - MSB

the same things .. Refers to the sins listed in [Romans 1:28-31](#). Paul criticizes self-righteous Jews because of their hypocrisy and self-deception. Ironically, when such people pass judgment on others, they also pass judgment upon themselves because they do the same things. - FSB

The problem is not just that the Jews were passing judgment as such, but they were doing so *hypocritically*. Even if there is some sense in which condemning someone else is legitimate (e.g., such as condemning his “*fruit*” [[Matthew 7:16](#)], or deeds, in the light of the Word of God), it is never right to do so when we are guilty of the very same sins. See [Matthew 7:1-5](#). - CPNIV

Romans 2:2

But we know .. “*we are sure*” This is spoken as by the Apostle, not as by the Jew. He solemnly repeats the thought that man knows that judgment is to come. - CBSC

The phrase “*we know that*” is used several times in Romans (cf. [Romans 2:2](#); [Romans 3:19](#); [Romans 7:14](#); [Romans 8:22](#), [Romans 8:28](#)). Paul assumes his hearers have some degree of knowledge, unlike the immoral pagans of chapter 1. - Utley

we .. This PRONOUN probably referred to fellow Jews although it could possibly refer to Christians.

In [Romans 2:2-4](#), Paul returns to his common technique of a question and answer format, called diatribe, which was a presentation of truth by means of a supposed objector. It was also used by Habakkuk, Malachi, and the rabbis as well as the Greek philosophers (such as Socrates and the Stoics). - Utley

the judgment of God .. The word for “judgment” is κρίμα (*krima*), which refers not to the act of judging as such but to the verdict of a judge in the context of a court of law. - CPNIV

Both the OT (e.g., [Jeremiah 7:1-29](#)) and NT (e.g., [Matthew 3:7-10](#)) condemn the tendency of Jews to think that their special relationship with God will shield them from judgment. - NIVZSB

according to truth .. The meaning is “right.” Whatever God does is by nature right (cf. [Romans 3:4](#); [Romans 9:14](#); [Psalms 9:4](#), [Psalms 9:8](#); [Psalms 96:13](#); [Psalms 145:17](#); [Isaiah 45:19](#)). - MSB

against those .. “*Those*” would be both Jews and Gentiles.

That is, against *every man*, no matter of what age or nation.

who practice such things .. The crimes enumerated in chap. 1. The apostle is not to be understood as affirming that each and every individual among the Jews was guilty of the specific crimes charged on the heathen, but that they were *as a people* inclined to the same things. - BN

Paul’s point is that Jews, like Gentiles, turn from God’s revelation to go their own way. - NLTSB

Romans 2:3

do you think .. The grammatical form of Paul’s rhetorical question expects a “no” answer. - Utley

The NIV changes the word order a bit. The verse actually begins as the NASB puts it.

And thinkest thou, &c .. This is an appeal to their common sense, to their deep and instinctive conviction of what was *right*. - BN

O man .. This matches the same idiom in [Romans 2:1](#). In [Romans 9:20](#) it refers to Jews

.The NIV translates the vocative, “*O man*,” as “*a mere man*,” as if Paul’s purpose were to compare the judging Jew’s fallible humanity with God’s omniscience and infallibility. This is probably not the point, though. The same vocative expression is used in [Romans 2:1](#); it is part of the diatribe style of writing. - CPNIV

you [thou] .. “*Thou*” is, of course, emphatic.

We must remember how often the Jews of that age clung to national privilege as if it were personal immunity. It was a saying, that to live in Palestine was “equal to the observance of all the commandments.”

“He that hath his permanent abode in Palestine,” so taught the Talmud, “is sure of the life to come.” (Edersheim’s *Sketches of Jewish Life*, p. 5.) - CBSC

pass judgment .. [NIV] .. is again *krinō*, as in v. 1, and means “condemn.” ... The repetition of these thoughts, already set forth in v. 1, is meant to help the Jews honestly see the naked truth about themselves: you *are* condemning the Gentiles, and you *are* doing the same things for which you condemn them. - CPNIV

that you will escape .. The Jews Paul addresses might feel that they will not experience God’s judgment because they have the law and are in a covenant with God. - FSB

Actually, the Jews had drawn a conclusion that was *not* based on truth or facts, for this is exactly what they thought: that they were going to escape God’s wrath and condemnation (*krima*). Ignoring their sins, they trusted in their special status as God’s chosen people to deliver them from wrath on the day of judgment. - CPNIV

Both the OT (e.g., [Jeremiah 7:1-29](#)) and NT (e.g., [Matthew 3:7-10](#)) condemn the tendency of Jews to think that their special relationship with God will shield them from judgment. - NIVZSB

Romans 2:4

despise .. Lit. “to think down on,” thus to underestimate someone’s or something’s value, and even to treat with contempt. - MSB

This word properly means to *contemn*, or to treat with neglect.

the riches .. A frequent word with St Paul, in reference to Divine goodness and glory. See [Romans 9:23](#), [Romans 10:12](#), [Romans 11:33](#); [Ephesians 1:7-8](#), [Ephesians 2:7](#), [Ephesians 3:8](#), [Ephesians 3:16](#); [Philippians 4:19](#); [Colossians 1:17](#), [Colossians 2:2](#). - CBSC

the riches of his goodness. This is a Hebrew mode of speaking, for “*his rich goodness*,” *i.e.* for his *abundant* or *great* goodness. *Riches* denote superfluity, or that which *abounds*, or which *exceeds* a man’s present wants; and hence the word in the New Testament is used to denote *abundance*; or that which is very great and valuable; see [Romans 9:23](#); [Romans 11:12](#), [Romans 11:33](#); [2 Corinthians 8:2](#); [Ephesians 1:7](#), [Ephesians 1:18](#); [Ephesians 3:8](#), [Ephesians 3:16](#); [Colossians 1:27](#); [Ephesians 2:4](#). The word is used here to qualify *each* of the words which follow it, his *rich* goodness, and forbearance, and long-suffering. - BN

kindness [goodness] .. The “**kindness**” or goodness of God, represented here by two related words, χρηστοτής (*chrēstotēs*) ([Romans 11:22](#)) and χρηστός (*chrēstos*). This kindness of God is expressed especially in his “**tolerance**” (ἀνοχή, *anochē*) and “**patience**” (μακροθυμία, *makrothumia*), concepts not significantly different in this context. The essence of God’s patience is delay and restraint in the execution of his wrath, the holding back of his righteous judgment. - CPNIV

goodness [kindness] .. Refers to the Jewish people’s experience of God’s goodness. Paul also refers to God’s kindness in [Romans 11:22](#); [Ephesians 2:7](#); and [Titus 3:4](#). The term is used in the Septuagint translation of several psalms including [Psalms 25:17](#) and [Psalms 145:7](#). - FSB

forbearance .. This word, which means “to hold back,” was sometimes used of a truce between warring parties. Rather than destroying every person the moment he or she sins, God graciously holds back His judgment (cf. [Romans 3:25](#)). - MSB

forbearance, and longsuffering [patience] .. Describes God’s patience in delaying judgment and punishment of people who sin and break the law. Paul cautions against the Jewish assumption that the experience of God’s goodness and mercy would exclude them from God’s righteous judgment. - FSB

They thought such blessings showed that they were right with God and had no need to trust in Christ, but Paul says the opposite is true: God’s blessings should have led them to repent of their sins. - ESVSB

longsuffering .. This word indicates the duration for which God demonstrates His goodness and forbearance—for long periods of time (cf. [2 Peter 2:5](#)). [cf [2 Peter 3:9](#)] Together these 3 words speak of God’s common grace—the way He demonstrates His grace to all mankind (cf. [Job 12:10](#); [Psalms 119:68](#); [Psalms 145:9](#)). - MSB

This word denotes his slowness to anger; or his suffering them to commit sins *long* without punishing them. - BN

not knowing .. Not *considering*. The word used here, ἀγνοῶν, means not merely *to be ignorant of*, but it denotes such a degree of inattention as to result in ignorance. Comp. [Hosea 2:8](#). In this sense it denotes a *voluntary*, and therefore a *criminal* ignorance. - BN

They not only refused to take God’s sternness and severity seriously; they also took for granted his kindness ([Romans 11:22](#)). - CPNIV

The purpose of such patience, of course, “is not to excuse sin but to stimulate repentance” (Moo, I:133). See [2 Peter 3:9](#). The Jews, however, continued to misinterpret it as God’s indifference toward their sin. What was in fact intended to lead them to repentance was taken as proof that they would not be punished for their sin. - CPNIV

repentance .. The Gr. of “*repentance*,” here as elsewhere in N. T., means far more than alarm or grief; rather, a change of thought and will. See especially [2 Corinthians 7:9-10](#); [2 Timothy 2:25](#). - CBSC

The term in Hebrew meant a change of actions, while in Greek it meant a change of mind. **Repentance** is a willingness to change from one's self-centered existence to a life informed and directed by God. - Utley

repentance .. The Greek word used here, *metanoia*, describes a change in mindset about sin and God. The purpose behind God's display of kindness, forbearance, and patience is not assurance, but repentance. - FSB

The act of turning from sin to Christ for forgiveness and salvation. [2 Corinthians 7:9-11](#). - MSB

Romans 2:5

2:5 This verse is directly related to v. 4; the paragraph break should come after v. 5 and not before it as in the NIV. - CPNIV

after [according to] .. in a way traceable to. The word "after" here (κατὰ) means *in respect to*.

hardness .. The Eng. word "sclerosis" (as in arteriosclerosis, a hardening of the arteries) comes from this Greek word. But here the danger is not physical, but spiritual hardness ([Ezekiel 36:26](#); [Matthew 19:8](#); [Mark 3:5](#); [Mark 6:52](#); [Mark 8:17](#); [John 12:40](#); [Hebrews 3:8](#), [Hebrews 3:15](#); [Hebrews 4:7](#)). - MSB

The Jews' sinfulness is described as "stubbornness," an attitude within Israel that had tried God's patience from the beginning ([Exodus 33:3-5](#); [Exodus 34:9](#); [Deuteronomy 9:13](#), [Deuteronomy 9:27](#); [Ezekiel 3:7](#)). - CPNIV

impenitent heart. A refusal to repent (cf. [Romans 2:4](#)).

A soft and repentant heart is needed to avert God's wrath on the **day of wrath**, the final judgment. Such repentance would express itself in trust in Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins. Paul disagrees with much of the Jewish teaching of his day, according to which the Jews were not **storing up wrath** but were in good standing with God through their covenant relationship. - ESVSB

treasurest up .. Possibly this word alludes to the "riches" of ver. 4; q. d., "the Divine store of loving-kindness is exchanged by the sinner for the Divine store of holy wrath". - CBSC

The word for "storing up" is θησαυρίζω (*thēsaurizō*), which means "to treasure, to heap up, to lay up treasure." Since we usually associate treasure and laying up treasure with something very valuable and desirable (see [Matthew 6:19-20](#)), it is a note of tragic irony that some choose to lay up the "treasure" of God's wrath. Perhaps by using this word Paul intends to highlight the foolishness of repudiating the *riches* of God's kindness (v. 4) and opting instead for the *treasure* of his wrath. - CPNIV

treasuring up ... wrath .. The idea of storing up wrath is an ironic twist on the usual metaphor of storing up blessings or treasures (compare [Genesis 41:49](#); [1 Timothy 6:19](#)). See note on [Romans 1:18](#). - FSB

for yourself .. Emphatic; more than merely "for thee." The wrath is pure retribution, the result of sin. The sinner is the cause of his own doom. - CBSC

against the day .. Lit. **in the day of wrath**; a pregnant phrase; "which will take effect in the day." On "wrath," see note on [Romans 1:18](#): "The day:"—i.e. the definite time of the Lord's Appearing, to raise the dead ([John 6:39-40](#), [John 6:44](#), [John 6:54](#), [John 11:24](#)); to judge the world ([John 12:48](#); [Acts 17:31](#)); and to receive the saints to final glory ([2 Timothy 4:8](#)). In one remarkable passage ([1 Corinthians 4:3](#)) the Greek of the word "judgment" (in E. V.) is lit. "day;" and a probable account of this use of the word is the inseparable connexion of thought, in the early church, between the *day* and the *judgment* of the Lord. - CBSC

in the day of wrath .. This was called “The Day of the Lord” in the OT (cf. Joel, Amos). This is the concept of Judgment Day, or for believers, Resurrection Day. Mankind will give an account to God for His gift of life (cf. [Matthew 25:31-46](#); [Revelation 20:11-15](#)).

Notice that it is the sinners themselves (“*you*” and “*yourself*”) that store up wrath. God simply, at some point, allows this stored wrath to become evident and run its full course. - Utley

“*The day of God’s wrath*” is the general eschatological day of judgment, not the intermediate judgment of a.d. 70, when Jerusalem and the temple were destroyed. This is seen in the fact that in this context the “day of wrath” involves the Gentiles as well as the Jews ([Romans 5:8-9](#), [Romans 5:12](#), [Romans 5:16](#)). [Revelation 6:17](#) describes it as “the great day of their wrath.” - CPNIV [However, [Revelation 6:17](#) does refer to the intermediate judgment of AD 70 upon Israel for rejecting Christ. - WG]

day of wrath .. An OT expression synonymous with the Day of Yahweh (e.g., [Isaiah 13:6-9](#); [Joel 2:1-11](#)). In the NT, it is also referred to as the Day of Christ ([1 Corinthians 1:8](#); [Philippians 1:6](#))—the second coming of Jesus. On this day of final judgment, God will pour out His wrath against the wicked and deliver His people from evil ([1 Thessalonians 5:2](#) and note). - FSB

revelation of the righteous judgment of God .. The “*wrath*” is as pure, just, and Divine as the mercy. Its “*revelation*” will be only the revelation of the absolute equity of “the Judge of all the earth.” This deep righteousness of the Divine anger is its most awful element. - CBSC

And revelation .. On the day when the righteous judgment of God will be *revealed*, or made known. Here we learn, **(1.)** That the punishment of the wicked will be *just*. It will not be a judgment of *caprice* or *tyranny*, but a *righteous* judgment, that is, such a judgment as it will be *right* to render, or as *ought* to be rendered, and therefore such as God *will* render, for he will do right; [2 Thessalonians 1:6](#). **(2.)** The punishment of the wicked is *future*. It is *not* exhausted in this life. It is *treasured* up for a future day, and that day is a day of wrath. How contrary to this text are the pretences of those who maintain that *all* punishment is executed in this life. **(3.)** How foolish as well as wicked is it to lay up *such* a treasure for the future; to have the *only* inheritance in the eternal world, an inheritance of *wrath* and *wo*! - BN

This “*day of wrath*” is also called a “*day of revelation*” (ἀποκάλυψις, *apokalypsis*). This word is often associated with the end times and Christ’s second coming ([Romans 8:19](#); [1 Corinthians 1:7](#); [2 Thessalonians 1:7](#); [1 Peter 1:7](#); [1 Peter 1:13](#); [1 Peter 4:13](#)). Many things will be revealed or totally uncovered on that day, but here Paul specifies that the thing to be revealed is God’s “righteous judgment.” - CPNIV

Romans 2:6

This is a quote from [Psalms 62:12](#). It is a universal principle that humans are responsible for their actions and will give an account to God (cf. [Job 34:11](#); [Proverbs 24:12](#); [Ecclesiastes 12:14](#); [Jeremiah 17:10](#); [Jeremiah 32:19](#); [Matthew 16:27](#); [Matthew 25:31-46](#); [Romans 2:6](#); [Romans 14:12](#); [1 Corinthians 3:8](#); [Galatians 6:7-10](#); [2 Timothy 4:14](#); [1 Peter 1:17](#); [Revelation 2:23](#); [Revelation 20:12](#); [Revelation 22:12](#)). - Utley

render to each one .. According to the promise, [Matthew 16:27](#); [Revelation 22:12](#). (Note that the very phrase used here of the Father, is used there of Himself by the Son). - CBSC

who will render .. That is, who will make *retribution* as a righteous Judge; or who will *give* to every man as he deserves. - BN

To every man .. To each one. This is a general principle, and it is clear that in this respect God would deal with the Jew as he does with the Gentile. - BN

according to his works [deeds] .. Paul emphasizes that God judges fairly and righteously ([Romans 2:2](#)). Similar statements are found throughout the OT (see [Psalms 62:12](#); [Job 34:11](#); [Proverbs 24:12](#); [Jeremiah 17:10](#)). Paul wants his fellow Jews to understand that they must not elevate their ethnicity over good works. -

FSB [Romans 14:12](#)

God's judgment is always on the basis of a man's deeds ([Isaiah 3:10-11](#); [Jeremiah 17:10](#); [John 5:28-29](#); [1 Corinthians 3:8](#); [2 Corinthians 5:10](#); [Galatians 6:7-9](#); cf. [Romans 14:12](#)). - MSB

The second principle of God's judgment is that it will deal with what every person really did (v. 6). It will not deal with what we intended or hoped or wanted to do (cf. [Psalms 62:12](#); [Matthew 16:27](#); et al.). - Constable

works [deeds] .. For some questionable reason the NIV has decided not to translate the word ἔργον (*ergon*; pl., *erga*) as "work" or "works" here or anywhere else in Romans 1-3 (see [Romans 2:7](#), [Romans 2:15](#); [Romans 3:20](#), [Romans 2:27-28](#)). "According to what he has done" should read "according to his works." - CPNIV

2:6-11 Paul uses a *chiasm* ("X" arrangement) to make his point:

- A God judges everyone the same (2:6)
- B Life is the reward for doing good (2:7)
- C Wrath is the penalty for evil (2:8)
- C' Wrath for doing evil (2:9)
- B' Life for doing good (2:10)
- A' God shows no favoritism (2:11) (NLTB; ESVB, NIVZB)

[Romans 2:7](#)

2:7-11 Paul emphasizes that God is a fair and just judge ([Romans 2:6](#)). Those who do good will receive glory, honor, and eternal life ([Romans 2:7](#); [Romans 2:10](#)). In contrast, those who do evil will receive wrath and affliction ([Romans 2:8-9](#)). This applies to both Jews and Gentiles (non-Jewish people), since God does not show partiality ([Romans 2:11](#)). - FSB

2:7-11 Summary of the principles: "Keep the commandments, and therefore escape the penalty; break the commandments, and therefore suffer the penalty." - CPNIV

eternal life .. "Eternal" expresses not only the duration of life, because even unbelievers will live forever ([2 Thessalonians 1:9](#); [Revelation 14:11](#)), but also the quality of life (i.e. with God). - MSB

Many Greeks believed that only the gods were immortal. For this reason, some Greeks were attracted to mystery cults, which promised union with a god and immortality through the completion of secret rituals. Paul affirmed the immortal nature of God alone ([Romans 1:23](#); [Romans 6:23](#)) - FSB

eternal life .. (1) "**Life**" in this context means more than bare existence. John 6:53; Ephesians 2:1. In this sense "life," must contain happiness and holiness, whether in the germ (as here), or in maturity (as hereafter). (2) "**Eternal**" *aionios*. The N. T. usage in this respect, see e.g. [2 Corinthians 4:17-18](#). the clear idea is its *duration unending in respect of the period referred to*.

It equals naturally with "**everlasting**" and is arbitrary equivalent for it, for both words have the same consistent elasticity of meaning.

Daniel in the OT uses the phrase also [Daniel 12:2](#) ([Titus 1:2](#); [Titus 3:7](#); [Galatians 6:8](#); [1 Timothy 1:16](#); [Romans 5:21](#); [Romans 6:22-23](#))

Other OT references to the resurrection of the faithful (cp [Daniel 12:13](#); [Job 19:26](#); [Psalms 17:15](#); [Isaiah 26:19](#); cp. [Ezekiel 37:11-13](#); see also [2 Samuel 12:23](#);

patient continuance .. "*Patience*" here, as often in N. T., practically means active patience, perseverance. (Cp. [Luke 8:15](#); [Hebrews 10:36](#), [Hebrews 12:1](#)). - CBSC

Patient continuance .. Who by *perseverance* in well doing, or in good work.

in doing good . [well doing; good work] .. “*Work*” is here, as often, used in the singular as a summary of the Christian’s whole course of obedience. - CBSC

It is very remarkable to find here ... the distinct mention of the blessed result of “*good work*.” - CBSC

“*Work*” is singular; the expression means “good conduct, good behavior, commandment keeping.” - CPNIV

Eternal life (salvation) is not earned but comes to us through God's mercy and love for us, [Titus 3:5](#). One must come to God in faith (trust) which is trusting God and obeying Him. [Hebrews 11:6](#); [Hebrews 5:9](#); (As the old song says, "Trust and Obey") One cannot separate a faith that saves from obedience to God's word.

seek .. As a traveller on his homeward road seeks for (aims at, moves toward) his home. Cp. [Hebrews 13:14](#). - CBSC

glory and honour and immortality .. The three words used here, denote the happiness of the heavenly world. - BN

glory .. The heavenly state, on its side of exaltation; the *dignity* of the vision and the likeness of God. See ch. 5:2 for its deep connexion with His presence: it is “the glory of God.” - CBSC

“*Glory*” refers to living in the light and reflection of God’s own glory, as the result of dwelling in the very personal presence of God ([Revelation 21:3](#); [Revelation 22:4-5](#)). - CPNIV

honor .. The Greek word used here, *timē*, may refer to approval from God. This honor stands in contrast to the wrath that unbelievers will experience on the Day of the Lord - FSB

immortality .. Lit. **incorruptibility**. Same word as [1 Corinthians 15:42](#), [1 Corinthians 15:50](#); [2 Timothy 1:10](#). - CBSC

“*Immortality*” is the state in which our bodies and spirits will never again be destroyed and see death. (CPNIV)

immortality .. Life without end or not subject to decay.

The notion of immortality was popular in Greek thought and literature (as reflected in the deuterocanonical work Wisdom of Solomon [Wisdom 8:13](#), [Wisdom 8:17](#) RSV). For Paul, immortality is an aspect of eternal life reserved for believers when God raises the dead to the resurrected life (see [1 Corinthians 15:42-54](#); [2 Timothy 1:10](#)).

Romans 2:8

self-seeking .. [**selfish ambitious; contentious; factious**] .. This word may have originally been used to describe a hireling or mercenary; someone who does what he does for money regardless of how his actions affect others. - MSB

To be selfish or self-seeking means to pursue our own desires and agendas rather than those God has planned for us. - CPNIV

contentious .. Lit. **out of partisanship**, or **factiousness**; The phrase implies connexion and attachment; as here, “those who belong to, can be classed under the character of, the factious.” The “faction” in question is that of the sinful soul against the humbling terms of the Divine peace and love. See [Romans 10:3](#) for a special example of this in the case of the Jews. - CBSC

The term originally meant “work for hire.”
Louw and Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon*, vol. 2, p. 104, list two usages of this term.

1. “selfish ambition,” using [Romans 2:8](#) noting “wanting to be better than someone else,” which fits this context
2. “hostility,” using [Philippians 1:17](#) noting “rivalry” as a translation option (see also [2 Corinthians 12:20](#); [Galatians 5:20](#); [Philippians 2:3](#); [James 3:14](#), [James 3:16](#)) - Utley

live for themselves .. translates a rare Greek word (*eritheia*) that seems to convey the idea of selfish ambition or strife. Using this word, Aristotle scolded the politicians of his day for seeking public office for selfish gain rather than from a desire to serve the people (Aristotle, *Politics* 5.3; see also [2 Corinthians 12:20](#); [Galatians 5:20](#); [Philippians 1:17](#); [Philippians 2:3](#); [James 3:14](#), [James 3:16](#)). - NLtSB

Further, those who are infatuated with themselves, and engrossed in self-centred goals, inevitably *reject the truth and follow evil* (8b). Indeed, they ‘suppress the truth by their wickedness’ ([Romans 1:18](#)). - MR (Stott)

do not obey the truth .. Truth is something to be obeyed. cf. [2 Thessalonians 1:8](#) see [Romans 1:5](#), *the faith* is something to be obeyed. cf. [Romans 16:26](#)

truth .. Probably refers to the gospel message or the truth about God (see [Romans 1:18](#) and note). - FSB

unrighteousness .. Refers to the sins that Paul listed in [Romans 1:28-31](#). [[2 Thessalonians 2:10](#); [2 Thessalonians 2:12](#); [John 8:32](#)]

obey unrighteousness .. Yielding the will to the impulse of sin; “having pleasure in unrighteousness” ([2 Thessalonians 2:12](#)). [Romans 6:6](#), [Romans 6:16](#), &c.; [Titus 3:3](#).

“*Unrighteousness*” here, as often, means sin in its largest sense. All wrong, civil, social, moral, personal, overt, secret, violates the *eternal rights*, even when it least seems to touch temporal and human interests. -CBSC

wrath and anger .. The use of these words together intensifies the idea of God’s punishment of the wicked. This punishment stands in contrast to the “eternal life” granted to those who obey God (v. 7). - FSB

The word translated “**wrath**” (ὀργή, *orgē*) refers more to God’s constant and controlled indignation toward sin, while the word for “**anger**” (θυμός, *thymos*) refers more to a passionate and destructive outburst of rage. Except for here (which is clearly eschatological in reference) this latter word is used for God’s wrath only in Revelation ([Revelation 14:10](#), [Revelation 14:19](#); [Revelation 15:1](#), [Revelation 15:7](#); [Revelation 16:1](#), [Revelation 16:19](#); [Revelation 19:15](#)). - CPNIV

Romans 2:9

Tribulation .. This word commonly denotes affliction, or the situation of being pressed down by a burden, as of trials, calamities, etc.; and hence, to be pressed down by punishment or pain inflicted for sins. - BN

And anguish .. [distress] .. στενοχωρία *stenochōria*. This noun is used in but three other places in the New Testament; [Romans 8:35](#); [2 Corinthians 6:4](#); [2 Corinthians 12:10](#). The verb is used in [2 Corinthians 4:8](#); [2 Corinthians 6:12](#). It means literally narrowness of place, lack of room, and then the anxiety and distress of mind which a man experiences who is pressed on every side by afflictions, and trials, and want, or by punishment, - BN

soul .. In Hebrew the word “**soul**” often denotes the man himself. But the apostles use of this word here meant perhaps to signify that the punishment should not be corporeal, but afflicting the soul. It should be a spiritual punishment, a punishment of mind.

Jew first .. And the apostle now shows that it was applicable to the Jew as well as the Greek, and to the Jew pre-eminently. It was applicable first, or in an eminent degree, to the Jew, because,

(1) He had been especially favored with light and knowledge on all these subjects.

(2) These principles were fully stated in his own Law, and were in strict accordance with all the teaching of the prophets; see the note at [Romans 2:6](#); also [Psalms 7:11](#); [Psalms 9:17](#); [Psalms 139:19](#); [Proverbs 14:32](#).

also ... Greek .. [Gentiles] .. That is, of all who were not Jews. On what principles God will inflict punishment on them, he states in [Romans 2:12-16](#). It is clear that this refers to the future punishment of the wicked, - BN

Romans 2:10

Romans 2:11

For .. The Greek [γάρ] particle is used here to confirm what is said before, particularly that this punishment should be experienced by the Jew as well as the Gentile. For God would deal with both on the principles of justice. - BN

partiality .. The word *prosōpolēmpsia* describes making unfair distinctions between people and treating some better than others. God does not show partiality (see [Deuteronomy 10:17](#); [Acts 10:34-35](#));

Romans 2:12

For as many as have sinned without law .. Refers to the Gentiles. They are not sinless merely because they do not know the requirements of God's law.

...its main purpose is to teach the awful truth that *even without the revealed law* there is yet real sin and real doom. CBSC

Have sinned .. is literally in the Greek **sinned**; an aorist, not a perfect... But the aorist, if taken strictly, would here point to the time when earthly life is closed, and judgment is come; to the sinner's actions as looked back upon from that point. - CBSC

The verb here is actually a past tense (aorist), "all who sinned or who have sinned." It is past tense from the perspective of Judgment Day, when one's past life will be considered - CPNIV

law .. Refers to the law of Moses—the commandments that God gave to Moses at Mount Sinai ([Exodus 20–22](#)). Paul refers to this law throughout [Romans 2:12-16](#). - FSB

There is no definite article ("the" law) in the original, but this is irrelevant. The presence or absence of the article is unrelated to whether "law" means the Law of Moses or the law in a more general sense. This can and must be determined by context alone; - CPNIV

... in Romans Paul uses "the law" to refer to several different things (1) Roman Law; (2) Mosaic Law; or (3) the concept of human societal mores in general. Context, not the ARTICLE, must reveal which one. This context emphasized that all humans have some knowledge of God's natural revelation of Himself in their hearts (cf. [Romans 2:15](#)). - Utley

sinned without law .. One *can* sin without law; we know by nature that certain things are wrong, cf. [Romans 2:14-15](#).

perish .. The Greek word used here, ἀπόλλυμι *apollymi*, refers to suffering the wrath of God and therefore experiencing eternal separation from God. Paul contrasts those who "perish," despite not having the law, with those who experience "eternal life" (v. 7). - FSB

The Gr. word, which some have held to imply *annihilation of being*, by no means does so. Its true import is rather ruin and loss in regard of condition. The Latin *perditio* exactly renders the idea. - CBSC

See also [John 3:15-16](#); [John 10:28](#); [1 Corinthians 1:18](#); [2 Corinthians 4:3](#); [2 Thessalonians 2:10](#); [2 Peter 3:9](#); and (active voice) [Matthew 10:28](#). This word does not have the connotation of annihilation in this context, contrary to the assumption of many. - CPNIV

Shall also perish .. ἀπολοῦνται. The Greek word used here occurs frequently in the New Testament. It means to *destroy*, to *lose*, or to *corrupt*, and is applied to *life*, ([Matthew 10:39](#)); to a *reward* of labour, ([Matthew 10:42](#)); to *wisdom* ([1 Corinthians 1:19](#)); to *bottles*, ([Matthew 9:17](#)). It is also used to denote future punishment, or the destruction of soul and body in hell, ([Matthew 10:28](#); [Matthew 18:14](#); [John 3:15](#)), where it is *opposed to eternal life*, and therefore denotes *eternal death*; [Romans 14:15](#); [John 17:12](#). In this sense the word is evidently used in this verse. - BN

as many as have sinned under the law .. Refers to Jews who know the requirements of the law and orient their lives around it.

judged by the law .. The Jews and many Gentiles who had access to God's moral law will be accountable for their greater knowledge (cf. [Matthew 11:20-23](#); [Hebrews 6:4-6](#); [Hebrews 10:26-31](#)). - MSB

Two things in this verse are quite clear. First, "law" means the Law of Moses, given to the Jews by special revelation. Second, those who are "apart from the law" are the Gentiles, and those "under the law" are the Jews. - CPNIV

Romans 2.13

For not the hearers .. The same sentiment is implied in [James 1:22](#); [Matthew 7:21](#), [Matthew 7:24](#); [Luke 6:47](#). The apostle here doubtless designed to meet an objection of the Jews; to wit, that they had the Law, that they manifested great deference for it, that they heard it read with attention. BN

are just .. Are justified before God, or are personally holy. Or, in other words, simply hearing the Law is not meeting all its requirements, and making people holy.

but the doers of the law .. They who comply entirely with its demands and give continued obedience. This was the plain demand, not only of common sense, but of the Jewish Law itself; [Deuteronomy 4:1](#); [Leviticus 18:5](#); compare [Romans 10:9](#). James made the same point ([James 1:22-25](#)).

will be justified .. This expression is evidently synonymous with that in [Leviticus 18:5](#), where it is said that "he shall live in them."

justified (dikaiōthēsontai) .. Future passive indicative of *dikaioō*, to declare righteous, to set right. "Shall be declared righteous." Like [James 1:22-25](#).

Romans 2:14

For when .. The word "when" ὅταν *hotan* does not imply that the thing shall certainly take place, but is one form of introducing a supposition; or of stating the connection of one thing with another, [Matthew 5:11](#); [Matthew 6:2](#), [Matthew 6:5-6](#), [Matthew 6:16](#); [Matthew 10:19](#). It is, however, true that the main things contained in this verse, and the next, actually occurred, that the Gentiles did many things which the Law of God required. - BN

Gentiles .. - All who were not Jews.

which have not the law .. Who have not a revelation, or the written word of God. In the Greek the article is omitted, "who have not law," that is, any revealed law.

do by nature .. NASB "instinctively" The expression means clearly by the light of conscience and reason.

contained in the law .. The things which the Law requires.

are a law to themselves .. Although God did not give the law to the Gentiles, some of them do what God requires in the law. This suggests that people have a natural moral sense or conscience. - FSB

Their moral reasoning was correct only insofar as it coincided with revelation. Paul's point here is that they had violated their own sense of right. They were therefore justly condemned as sinners -- violators of their own moral reasoning (nature, instinct). But the Jews had the advantage of revelation and they had not lived up to that either.

Romans 2:15

work of the law .. While they didn't have the revelation of law they had its moral right and wrong in their "heart" or conscience. Revelation goes further than "natural reasoning" by shedding light on new duties and doctrines.

written in their hearts .. The revealed Law of God for the Jews was written on tables of stone, and then recorded in the books of the Old Testament. The Gentiles had only obtained their knowledge of God's requirements through natural revelation and their conscience.

Paul borrows the language of [Jeremiah 31:33](#) to assert that Gentiles have a sense of right and wrong. Although they do not possess knowledge of God's will in the law, the Gentiles have a natural sense of morality that functions as an internal "law." At the same time, Paul insists that the human conscience is weak and prone to corruption (see [1 Corinthians 8:7](#), [1 Corinthians 8:10](#); [1 Corinthians 10:29](#); [1 Timothy 4:2](#); [Titus 1:15](#)). - FSB

their conscience .. This word properly means the judgment of the mind respecting right and wrong; or the judgment which the mind passes on the morality or immorality of its own actions, when it instantly approves or condemns them.

conscience .. Lit. "with knowledge." That instinctive sense of right and wrong that produces guilt when violated. - MSB

This innate sense of "rightness" written on the heart seems to stem from the fact that mankind is made in the image of God. [Ephesians 4:23-24](#); [Colossians 3:9-10](#). - WG

bearing witness .. Their own conscience furnished testimony to whether their conduct provided pain or pleasure with their moral reasoning of right and wrong.

between themselves [among] .. The perceptions of their own conduct and their perception of the conduction of others in their society.

accusing .. If the actions were evil.

excusing .. [defending] That is, justifying themselves if their actions were good.

Romans 2:16

in the day .. This verse is connected with Romans 2.12 and implies that the Gentile world as well as the Jews will be arraigned at the bar of judgment before God. At that time God will judge all in righteousness, the Jew by the Law which he had, and the pagan by the Law which he had.

when God shall judge .. God is often represented as the Judge of mankind; [Deuteronomy 32:36](#); [Psalms 50:4](#); [1 Samuel 2:10](#); [Ecclesiastes 3:17](#); [Romans 3:6](#); [Hebrews 13:4](#). But this does not militate against the fact that he will do it by Jesus Christ. God has appointed his Son to administer judgment [Acts 17:31](#).

the secrets of men .. See [Luke 8:17](#); [Ecclesiastes 12:14](#), "For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing," etc., [Matthew 10:26](#); [1 Corinthians 4:5](#). The expression denotes the hidden desires, lusts, passions, and motives of people; the thoughts of the heart, as well as the outward actions of the life.

of men .. The passage teaches that all people, whether Jew or Gentile, infidel or Christian, will stand before God in judgment at the last day.

by Jesus Christ - The fact that Jesus Christ is appointed to judge the world is abundantly taught in the Bible, [Acts 17:31](#); [2 Timothy 4:1](#); [1 Peter 4:5](#); [John 5:22](#), [John 5:27](#); [1 Thessalonians 4:16-18](#); [Matthew 25:31-46](#).

my gospel .. Not his own personal message, [or one unique to him] but the divinely-revealed message of Jesus Christ (*see note on 1:1*), which is "good news" in light of the bad news of judgment. - MSB

according to my gospel .. According to the gospel which Paul preached. Compare [Acts 17:31](#); [2 Timothy 4:8](#). Paul preached there was a coming day of judgment.

This does not mean that the gospel which he preached would be the rule by which God would judge all mankind, for he had just said that the pagan world would be judged by a different rule, [Romans 2:12](#). But no man (except Christ, [Hebrews 4:15](#)) has lived perfectly without sin, [Romans 3:23](#).

Salvation in the Christian dispensation can only come through Jesus Christ, [Acts 4:12](#). Forgiveness of our sins can only come through the blood of Christ our Savior, [Ephesians 1:7](#).

[Romans 2:17](#)

Indeed [Behold; But; lo] .. ἰδὲ [Ei δὲ] Paul now calls attention to his important subject.

you .. Here Paul clarifies the "you" to whom he has been speaking are "Jews."

you are called .. Implying the name was of high honor.

a Jew .. The Hebrews were known as the children of Israel until the time of Rehoboam and the divided kingdom. The name "Jews" was evidently given to denote those of the tribe of Judah which was more prominent than the tribe of Benjamin and from which tribe came the southern kings. By NT time the name became applied to all Israelites.

Paul calls himself a "Jew" in [Acts 21:39](#) but "an Israelite" in [Romans 11:1](#) and "a Hebrew" in [Philippians 3:5](#).

rest in the law .. The word "rest" is used in the sense of trusting to, or leaning upon.

the law .. The Law here means the entire Mosaic economy, all that which was given through Moses and the Prophets, the whole of the Old Testament.

make your boast [glory; brag] in God .. Felt himself elevated above all others because God has chosen them to reveal His Word and had declared Himself to be their God, , [Deuteronomy 4:7](#); [Psalms 147:19-20](#); but this was not a ground for boasting, but for gratitude.

The phrase seems to be borrowed from [Isaiah 45:25](#). [[Galatians 6:13](#)]

[Romans 2:18](#)

know His will .. They knew and boasted in their knowledge of God obtain from the Scriptures.

approve .. The word may mean to *distinguish* or to *approve*. It is usually used of the process of testing or

trying metals by fire. The general sense is to try or distinguish anything by its nature or quality, [Luke 12:56](#).

Thus one view is that the clause means, “You know how to discern what differs *from* God’s will, you know how to tell right from wrong.” This is the basis for the NEB’s “You are aware of moral distinctions.” Another view is that it means, “You know how to discern the superior elements *within* God’s will, the things that matter, the essentials” (Cranfield, I:166; [Philippians 1:10](#), NIV). - CPNIVRo

excellent .. [τὰ διαφέροντα](#) = the things that are better, the better courses of conduct; cf. the same wording in [Philippians 1:10](#), and for the verb [1 Corinthians 15:41](#); [Galatians 4:1](#).

being instructed [being taught] .. [κατηχούμενος](#) (orally instructed, as the word literally means,) = being taught—all teaching at this time being oral; cf. [Luke 1:4](#); [Galatians 6:6](#).

Romans 2:19

confident ..

Notice the parallel phrases related to their confidence (cf. [Matthew 15:14](#); [Matthew 23:16](#); [Matthew 23:24](#); [Luke 6:39](#)).

1. a guide to the blind, [Romans 2:19](#) [[Matthew 15:14](#)]
2. a light to those in darkness, [Romans 2:19](#)
3. a corrector of the foolish, [Romans 2:20](#)
4. a teacher of the immature, [Romans 2:20](#)
5. having in the law the embodiment of knowledge and of the truth, [Romans 2:20](#). - Utley

the blind ... babes .. Because they possessed the law, the Jews were confident that they were spiritually superior teachers: guides to blind pagans (cf. [Matthew 23:24-28](#)), light (cf. [Isaiah 42:6](#)), wise in God’s ways, and able to teach babes (probably a reference to Gentile proselytes to Judaism). - MSB

a guide to the blind .. (*hodēgon tuphlōn*) from *hodos*, way, and *hēgeomai*, to lead, one who leads the way. *Tuphlōn* is objective genitive plural. The Jews were meant by God to be guides for the Gentiles, for salvation is of the Jews ([John 4:22](#)).

a light (*phōs*) .. “A light for those in darkness” (*tōn en skotei*, objective genitive again). But this intention of God about the Jews had resulted in conceited arrogance on their part. - RWP

Romans 2:20

instructor [corrector] .. (*paideutēs*). Old word (from *paideuō*) for instructor, in Plato, and probably so here, though corrector or chastiser in [Hebrews 12:9](#) (the only N.T. instances).

foolish .. *Aphronōn* is a hard word for Gentiles, but it is the Jewish standpoint that Paul gives. Use in the sense of being void of understanding.

teacher .. The Jewish leaders asserted this prerogative to themselves, of being qualified to be guides and teachers of others. [Matthew 15:14](#); [Matthew 23:2](#), [Matthew 23:16](#), [Matthew 23:24](#).

babes .. (*nēpiōn*). Novitiates or proselytes to Judaism just as in [Galatians 4:1](#). Paul used it of those not of legal age. - RWP

the form .. (*tēn morphōsin*). Rare word, (here and [2 Timothy 3:5](#)). Pallis regards it as a Stoical term for education. Lightfoot considers the *morphōsis* as “the rough-sketch, the pencilling of the *morphē*,” the outline or framework, and in [2 Timothy 3:5](#) “the outline without the substance.” This is Paul’s picture of the Jew as he sees himself drawn with consummate skill and subtle irony.

of knowledge and truth .. (the Gr. has the definite article “the” with both nouns: “the knowledge and the truth”).

truth of the law .. [in the law] .. The Law of Moses.

Romans 2:21

2:21, 23 A series of questions designed to contrast most Jews’ practice with what they knew and taught (cf [Psalms 50:16-20](#); [Matthew 23:3-4](#); [James 3:1](#)). - MSB

There are five rhetorical questions in [Romans 2:21-24](#).

do you not teach yourself .. A central point of Paul’s critique is that Jews, who possess the law, fail to faithfully heed its commands—thereby undermining the law’s purpose. - FSB

who preach .. Lit. **proclaimest**: e.g. in synagogue-discourses. - CBSC

do you steal? .. [Exodus 20:15](#);

George Ladd in *A Theology of the New Testament*, says “Paul must be referring to robbing God of the honor due him, spiritual adultery, and profaning the devotion due God alone by exalting themselves as judge and lord over their fellow creatures.” p. 505. (Utlej)

The Jews' Gentile neighbors saw their inconsistency and despised Yahweh because of it ([Romans 2:24](#)). - Constable

Romans 2:22

Do you commit adultery? .. This was a crime very common among the Jewish leaders, and apparently well known; see the [Matthew 12:39](#) note; [John 8:1-11](#) notes. The Jewish Talmud accuses some of the most celebrated of their Rabbies, by name, of this vice. (Grotius.) Josephus also gives the same account of the nation. - (BN)

Undoubtedly Paul did not mean that every single Jew practiced these sins, but these sins represented the contradiction between claim and conduct that marked Judaism.

abhor idols .. [Exodus 20:4](#);

do you rob temples .. May refer to fraudulently skimming funds from money given to the temple or withholding part of their temple tax or offerings (cf. [Malachi 3:8-10](#)). More likely, however, it refers to the common practice—in direct violation of God’s command ([Deuteronomy 7:25](#))—of looting pagan temples and selling the idols and vessels for personal profit (cf. [Acts 19:37](#)) under the pretext of religion. - MSB

The half shekel was used to pay the temple tax, and not paying it may have been considered “robbing” the temple ([Romans 2:22](#)). - NIVZSB

commit sacrilege .. Lit. **plunder sacred things**, or **plunder from sacred places**. The Gr. word is the same as that translated “robbers of churches,” [Acts 19:37](#). The idea of plunder is not necessary in the word, however; other forms of sacrilege may be included. Thus the reference may be to such profanations as that of the traders in the Temple ([John 2:14](#), &c.), and the appeal will be, “Thou, who art so jealous for God against

idolaters, dost thou worship self and mammon in His presence?" - CBSC

do you use items stolen from pagan temples? .. (literally *do you steal from temples?*): OT law prohibited Jews from having anything to do with pagan idols (see Deuteronomy 7:26), but first-century Jews did not strictly follow this law. Sometimes they stole idols and used or sold the precious metals. - NLTSB

rob temples .. Robbing temples was a common crime in the ancient world because temples housed expensive articles that could be sold for profit. Since the law taught that temples were idolatrous and Jews should not be in them or treasuring things from them (see Deuteronomy 7:25–26), the Jewish plundering of pagan temples would involve not just stealing but self-defilement as well. - ESVSB

do you rob temples? It is uncertain historically to what this referred but it was somehow related to idolatry. - Utley

do you rob temples .. Several views have been suggested, and it is difficult to be dogmatic about any one of them.

- 1) referring to literal theft of idols from temple - [Acts 19:37](#) and selling them, [Deuteronomy 7:25](#)
- 2) referring to robbing the temple of God - by misappropriation of tithes brought to the temple for the service of God and used instead for personal purposes.
- 3) A third view takes the word to mean “commit sacrilege” against the true God in some general, unspecified sense, without any literal temple theft being involved . (CPNIV)

Romans 2:23

dishonor God [disgrace] .. The crimes of Jews made their Lord’s “name to be blasphemed among the Gentiles” [Romans 2:24](#); [Isaiah 52:5](#); as, alas, the name of Christ is, for exactly similar reasons, often blasphemed among the heathen now.

One's practice may do far more to disgrace his faith than his profession does to honor it.

through breaking the law .. Paul concludes that Jews do the very thing that the ungodly do: dishonor God (see [Romans 1:21](#)). Just "having" the law doesn't exempt Jews from judgment.

Romans 2:24

blasphemed .. The quote is from the Septuagint of [Isaiah 52:5](#); [Ezekiel 36:20](#) ff. In [Ezekiel 36:20-23](#) the special reference is to the evil example of the dispersed Jews of the captivity.

as it is written .. The common introduction to OT quotations (cf. [Romans 1:17](#); [Romans 2:24](#); [Romans 3:4](#); [Romans 3:10](#); [Matthew 4:4](#), [Matthew 4:6-7](#), [Matthew 4:10](#)). The tense of the Gr. verb stresses continuity and permanence, and implies its divine authority. - MSB

Romans 2:25

circumcision .. The Jews were inclined to believe that they would be spared at the last judgment by virtue of their circumcision.

Circumcision was required of all Jewish males for entrance into the covenant ([Genesis 17:9-14](#); [Leviticus 12:3](#)), and hence it was likely viewed as a form of covenant protection. - ESVSB
[John 7:22](#); [Acts 7:8](#).

profitable if you keep the law .. Circumcision would be of **value** (Gk. *ōpheleō*) for salvation if the circumcised would **obey the law** perfectly, but loses its value for those who disobey the rest of the

law.

Paul takes up the issue of circumcision again in [Romans 4:9-16](#); [Galatians 2:3-5](#); [Galatians 5:2-12](#); [Galatians 6:12-15](#). -

uncircumcision .. Paul argues, however, that those who violate the law are counted before God as uncircumcised. In other words, they are outside the covenant and therefore destined for judgment.
= ESVSB

Romans 2:26

an uncircumcised man .. A gentile, heathen.

keeps .. the law .. Paul's reference is not to the *ceremonial* law, but to the *moral* law given by God through Moses and the prophets.

his uncircumcision be counted .. Will he not be accepted by God as if he were a Jew? The apostle teaches the doctrine that acceptance with God does not depend on a man's external privileges, but on the state of the heart and life.

counted as circumcision .. God will regard the believing Gentile as favorably as a circumcised, believing Jew. - MSB

Paul might be speaking of Gentile Christians who are God's people because they obey God's law, - NLTSB

The only possible biblical example of this would be Cornelius of [Acts 10](#). Yet he does not quite fit this verse because he was a God-fearer and worshiped at the local synagogue. - Uteley

Romans 2:27

physically uncircumcised .. **[by nature]** .. A Gentile. One without Jewish heritage and privileges. The natural state of man before he is admitted to any of the peculiar rites of the Jewish religion.

fulfills the law .. The fact that no one is above sin ([Romans 1:18-32](#); [Romans 3:9-11](#)) does not affect Paul's point.

judge you .. cf. [Romans 2:1](#); A return to the main subject of "judging".

judge .. criticize and condemn. Perhaps the phrase arises from the solemn words of the Saviour Himself, [Matthew 12:41-42](#). A stronger Gr. verb is used in that passage, however. - CBSC

And those (uncircumcised) Gentiles who keep the law will stand at the judgment and **condemn** (either literally or by the testimony of their good deeds) the Jews who had the covenantal advantages of the law (**the written code**) and circumcision. - ESVSB

written code .. the Law of Moses, written down.

the written code .. Or "*letter*" (Greek *gramma*). Refers to the law of Moses, exemplified by the Ten Commandments, "written" in letters on the stone tablets that Moses received from God ([Romans 7:6](#); [Exodus 31:18](#); cf. especially [2 Corinthians 3:3](#)). - NIVZSB

The word *letter* properly means the mark or character from which syllables and words are formed.

It is also used in the sense of *writing* of any kind ([Luke 16:6-7](#); [Acts 28:21](#); [Galatians 6:11](#)), particularly the writings of Moses, denoting, by way of eminence, *the letter*, or *the writing*; [Romans 7:6](#); [2 Timothy 3:15](#). - BN

transgressor of the law .. A Gentile's humble obedience to the law should serve as a stern rebuke to a Jew who, in spite of his great advantages, lives in disobedience. - MSB

Romans 2:28

Vs 28 and 29 together. see note [Romans 2:29](#)

Romans 2:29

a Jew is one inwardly .. Who is the **real Israel today**?

[Romans 2:28-29](#); [Romans 4:12-14](#); [Romans 9:4-8](#); [Galatians 6:16](#); [Galatians 3:27-29](#); [Revelation 2:9](#); [Revelation 3:9](#); [1 Corinthians 10:18](#)

God's *Israel* today is not that nation in Palestine called by that name, but His people who live by faith in Him and His Son Jesus Christ.

And circumcision is that of the heart .. That is, that circumcision which is acceptable to God. and t is attended with holiness of heart; with the cutting off of sins; and with a pure life. [Jeremiah 4:4](#); [Deuteronomy 30:6](#).

Whose praise .. Whose object is not to secure the praise of human beings.

But of God .. The praise of God can be bestowed only on those who conform in heart and in spirit, and not externally only, to his requirements. [1 Samuel 16:7](#).

Romans 3:1

What advantage .. Paul asked four rhetorical questions in this section ([Romans 3:1-8](#)), questions that could have been in the mind of a Jewish objector. (cf. [Romans 3:9](#); [Romans 4:1](#); [Romans 6:1](#); [Romans 6:15](#); [Romans 7:7](#); [Romans 8:31](#); [Romans 9:14](#); [Romans 9:19](#); [Romans 9:30](#); [Romans 11:7](#)).

What advantage .. A Jew would naturally ask, if the view which the apostle had given were correct, what special benefit could the Jew derive from his religion? The objection would arise particularly from the position advanced [Romans 2:25-26](#), that if a pagan should do the things required by the Law, he would be treated as "if" he had been circumcised. Hence, the question, "what profit is there of circumcision?" - BN

what is the profit of circumcision? .. Paul answers the question in the next verse.

Romans 3:2

First of all .. Paul uses "first" in [Romans 1:8](#), but without a second item being mentioned. He does the same here.

One might expect Paul to answer that no advantage or "value" results from being Jews. Instead, he claims that the Jews have great advantages, consisting chiefly in possessing **the oracles of God**, which refers to the OT Scriptures - ESVSB

Ordinarily the word "first" (*πρῶτον*, *prōton*) indicates the first of a series of events or the first item in a longer list, leading us to expect other items to follow. However, Paul does not list them at this point. He waits instead until [Romans 9:4-5](#). (CPNIV)

See [Romans 9:4-5](#) for a longer list of Jewish privileges. - NIVZSB

chiefly .. Lit. **first**. Perhaps this is the first step in an enumeration which is not carried on. Cp. 1:8. But the rendering “*chiefly*” is quite possible and natural. - cbcs

chiefly .. That is, this is the *principal* advantage, and one including all others. The *main* benefit of being a Jew is, to possess the sacred Scriptures and their instructions. - BN

unto them were committed .. Lit. **they were trusted with**; for their own benefit in the first place, and then as the “keepers of Holy Writ” for the world—for enquirers and proselytes under the Old Covenant, and for the universal Church under the New. - CBSC

unto them were committed .. Or were intrusted, were *confided*. The word translated “were committed,” is that which is commonly employed to express *faith* or *confidence*, and it implied *confidence* in them on the part of God in intrusting his oracles to them; a confidence which was not misplaced, for no people ever guarded a sacred trust or deposit with more fidelity, than the Jews did the sacred Scriptures. - BN

to them were committed the oracles of God .. Having God’s revelation is an awesome responsibility as well as a tremendous privilege (cf. [Luke 12:48](#)). They were stewards of God’s gift (AORIST PASSIVE, cf. [1 Thessalonians 2:4](#)). - Utley

oracles [the very words of God] .. The Greek term is λόγιον, (*logion*), used here in the plural with the definite article. (See also [Acts 7:38](#); [Romans 3:2](#); [Hebrews 5:12](#); [1 Peter 4:11](#).)

In classical Greek this term was used for divine utterances, or oracles supposedly spoken by the gods through their inspired messengers. This is surely the sense in which Paul is using it here to represent the inspired utterances of the true God. ... It is basically equivalent to *ho logos tou theou*, “the word of God,” and occurs in this sense often in the LXX - CPNIV

oracles of God .. Refers to the OT Scriptures, specifically the words spoken by the prophets. It especially refers to promises and covenants ([2 Samuel 7:14-15](#); [Romans 9:4-5](#)). Jews had knowledge of God’s purposes for humanity through their Scriptures. In this sense, they were bearers of God’s promises. - FSB

the oracles .. the utterances. Same word as [Acts 7:38](#); [Romans 3:2](#); [Hebrews 5:12](#); [1 Peter 4:11](#). The Gr. word is occasionally used in the LXX. for ordinary human utterances; e.g. [Psalms 19:14](#) (LXX. 18:14) “the words of my mouth.”

The context of the passages of N. T. just quoted leaves no doubt that it refers here to the utterances of God through the prophets of the Old Covenant; in short, to the O. T. Scriptures. The Apostle’s testimony to the unique dignity of the Scripture Revelation could not be stronger. And so when he elsewhere contrasts “letter” and “spirit,” his meaning, whatever it is, is not to diminish the Divine authority of the written “oracles.” - CBSC

The word *logion* (**oracles**) is used in the **Septuagint** for the word from God (cf. [Numbers 24:4](#); [Numbers 24:16](#); [Deuteronomy 33:9](#); [LXX-R, ESV Psa. 118:67]; [Isaiah 5:24](#); [Isaiah 28:13](#)). It is consistently used in this same sense in the NT (cf. [Acts 7:38](#); [Romans 3:2](#); [Hebrews 5:12](#); [1 Peter 4:11](#)). - Utley

oracles .. This Gr. word is *logion*, a diminutive form of the common NT word *logos*, which is normally translated “word.” These are important sayings or messages, especially supernatural ones. Here Paul uses the word to encompass the entire OT—the Jews received the very words of the true God (Deuteronomy 4:1, 2; 6:1, 2; cf. Mark 12:24; Luke 16:29; John 5:39). The Jews had a great advantage in having the OT, because it contained the truth about salvation (2 Timothy 3:15) and about the gospel in its basic form (Galatians 3:8). When Paul said “preach the Word” (2 Timothy 4:2), he meant the “oracles of God” (1 Peter 4:11) recorded in Scripture. - MSB

Romans 3:3

For what if .. τί γάρ; [Philippians 1:18](#) only. Introduces an objection. The passage is closely condensed.

some .. τινές. The expression does not denote whether many or few; it only avoids assertion of universality of unbelief (cf. [Romans 11:17](#); [1 Corinthians 10:7](#)), PC

For what if some did not believe? [have faith] .. to disbelieve. This is the common N.T. meaning ([Luke 24:11](#), [Luke 24:41](#); [Acts 28:24](#); [Romans 4:20](#)). Some of them “disbelieved,” these “depositories and guardians of revelation” (Denney). But the word also means to be unfaithful to one’s trust - RWP

Can the infidelity of some be any hinderance of God’s performing his promise to others, to his chosen ones? The interrogation is a negation, q.d. It cannot be, as the following words show: see [2 Timothy 2:13](#). - Poole

the faithfulness of God .. God has been faithful ([2 Timothy 2:13](#)) whether the Jews (some of them) were simply disbelievers or untrue to their trust.

cancel (nullify) the **faithfulness of God**? ‘Because they have broken faith on their part, shall God break faith also on His?’ - Alford

faithfulness of God .. Despite the failure of God’s people to maintain the obligations associated with God’s covenants with them, God was committed to being faithful to His promises. - FSB

of none effect .. Prevent God from fulfilling his promises. Would the unfaithfulness of some Jews make null God’s covenant promises?

Even if some Jews do **not believe** the Word of God, God will be faithful to what He has promised ([Psalms 89:30-37](#)). - NNIBC

[Most Jews did not believe in their Messiah who had been promised by God when He came. Some did have faith (and were the true Jews in terms of [Romans 2:29](#), but most did not.] CPNT

Even though the Jews were **unfaithful** and refused to trust and obey God, would He become unfaithful to them and nullify his covenant promises of sending the Messiah? [Genesis 26:4](#); [2 Samuel 7:16](#); ([Romans 3:4](#) "Of course not!").

Romans 3:4

God forbid [Certainly not; Not at all;] .. Literally, "Let it not be," that is, "Away with such a thought"--a favorite expression of Paul. The sense is, “let not this by any means be supposed.” God will not forsake His promises to bless the nation.

let God be true .. *i.e.* "let his truth be established;" Let God continue to be faithful. God would remain "true" (true to His word, reliable, trustworthy) to bless Israel as He had promised ([Romans 3:4](#)). God would even be faithful if everyone else proved unfaithful.

every man a liar .. Though every man be found false. [Psalms 62:9](#), [Psalms 116:11](#).

As it is written .. The common introduction to OT quotations (cf. [Romans 1:17](#); [Romans 2:24](#); [Romans 3:4](#); [Romans 3:10](#); [Matthew 4:4](#), [Matthew 4:6-7](#), [Matthew 4:10](#)). The tense of the Greek verb stresses continuity and permanence, and implies its divine authority. - MSB

That you may be justified in your words .. [Psalms 51:4-6](#). Septuagint. The sense is --that we are to vindicate the righteousness of God, at whatever expense to ourselves.

See the NIV quote where the "you" is "God."

Romans 3:5

But if our unrighteousness .. - If our sin. The particular sin which had been specified [Romans 3:3](#) was “unbelief” on the part of Jews. But the apostle here gives the objection a general form.

The righteousness of God .. His just and holy character.

What shall we say? .. What follows? or, what is the inference?

vengeance .. [wrath] .. The idea of vengeance is not necessarily in the original [ὀργήν](#) orgēn. It is commonly rendered “wrath.”

Is God unjust who inflicts wrath? [vengeance;] .. Does it not follow that if God is honored by sin, that it would be wrong for him to inflict punishment?”

If God's glory results from our sin; if the effect of all was to show that His character was pure; how could He punish that sin from which His own glory resulted?

(I speak as a man) .. As it would appear to human reasoning. (cf. [Romans 6:19](#); [1 Corinthians 9:8](#); [Galatians 3:15](#)).

Paul often used human logic in his theological arguments (cf. [Romans 6:19](#); [1 Corinthians 9:8](#); [Galatians 3:15](#)). Here it functions as a way of rejecting the assertions of the supposed objector. - Uteley

Romans 3:6

Certainly not .. Note [Romans 3:4](#)

For then .. “Since, if that were true, how ...” If it be admitted that it would be unjust for God to inflict punishment. how ...

How shall God .. How will it be right or consistent for him to judge the world.

Judge .. - To “judge” implies the possibility and the correctness of “condemning” the guilty; for if it were not right to condemn them, judgment would be a farce.

If God does not punish unrighteousness, then He is not just and there will be no Day of Judgment. The flaw in logic is evident: God's justice demands that He **judge** unrighteousness. - Uteley

Romans 3:7

For if, &c. .. This is an objection similar to the former. It is indeed but another form of the same. - BN

But the objector persists: **Someone might argue, “If my falsehood enhances God’s truthfulness and so increases his glory, why am I still condemned as a sinner?”** This is basically a restatement of the objection in [Romans 3:5](#), as if the debater just refuses to give up on this point. - CPNIV

the truth of God. .. His truth or faithfulness in adhering to his threatenings. God threatened to punish the guilty. By their guilt he will take *occasion* to show his own truth; - BN

Hath more abounded .. Has been more striking, or more manifest. His *truth* will be shown by the fulfillment of all his promises to his people, and of all his predictions. But it will also be shown by fulfilling his threatenings on the guilty. It will, therefore, *more abound* by their condemnation; that is, their condemnation will furnish new and striking *instances* of his truth. Every lost sinner will be, therefore, an eternal monument of the truth of God. - BN

through my lie .. By means of my lie, or as one of the results of my falsehood. The word *lie* here means falsehood, deceitfulness, *unfaithfulness*. If by the unfaithfulness of the Jewish people to the covenant, occasion should be given to God to glorify himself, how could they be condemned for it? - BN

why am I yet, &c. .. the word "I" is strongly emphatic; - CBSC

unto his glory .. To his praise, or so as to show his character in such a way as to excite the praise and admiration of his intelligent creation. - BN

why yet am I, &c. .. How *can* that act be regarded as evil, which tends to promote the glory of God?

The objection was to being called a "sinner" if it brought glory to God!

The argument is still the same as before: "How can it be fair for a man to be blamed for his falsehood, when it has actually redounded to God's glory?" (Cranfield, I:185). Morris' comment is to the point: "We sinners display incredible ingenuity when we try to justify ourselves" (161). - CPNIV

Romans 3:8

Why not say .. Some take this as a continuation of the point made in verse 7. the "and" (καί, *kai*), which begins the verse, but untranslated by the NIV.

as we be slanderously reported .. lit. "as we are *blasphemed*". CBSC

The "slandorous report" in question is illustrated by [Romans 3:31](#), and [Romans 6:1](#), [Romans 6:15](#). It was a distortion of the doctrine of free grace. - CBSC

slanderously reported .. The apostle's gospel message of salvation by grace through faith, without the Law, had been perverted by his opponents who argued it provided not only a license to sin, but outright encouragement to do so ([Romans 5:20](#); [Romans 6:1-2](#)).

some affirm that we say .. Likely refers to a distortion of Paul's gospel that misunderstands his devaluation of the law as a license to sin. He declares that whoever acts in such a way is worthy of condemnation. - FSB

Let us do evil .. Paul's opponents claimed Paul preached: "since sin is to promote the glory of God, let us commit as much as possible."

let us do evil that good may result .. Paul's claim that a person is justified by faith [the gospel] without the law, sounds to some as if he is opening the door to unrestrained behavior.

damnation [condemnation; judgment] .. In the Greek strictly **judgment**. So [1 Corinthians 11:29](#) margin. The Greek word is inclusive. In [Romans 11:33](#), in plural, it signifies the Divine counsels or decisions;

Their condemnation is deserved .. Of whom is Paul speaking? Perhaps those (the "some") who are slandering him, but more likely those who are pressing the absurd objection voiced in [Romans 3:5](#) and [Romans 3:7](#). - CPNIV

Romans 3:9

An important summary to Paul's argument. Paul emphasizes that both Jews and non-Jewish people (Gentiles) are under sin (vv. 10–18).

Are we better? .. "We" probably refers to the Christians in Rome who will receive this letter. - MSB

we better .. Paul refers to himself and his fellow Jews ([Romans 3:1](#)). He acknowledges that they did have an advantage in having the law and God's covenants (vv. 1; [Romans 9:4-5](#)). But this advantage does not exempt them from God's judgment.- FSB

No, in no wise .. That is, the Jews have no preference or advantage over the Gentiles in regard to the subject of justification before God. They have failed to keep the law; they are sinners; and if they are justified, it must be in the same way as the rest of the world. - CPNIV

we have previously charged .. In [Romans 1:18–2:29](#), Paul argues that sin is universal. Therefore, both Jews and Gentiles are guilty before God, who shows no partiality (see [Romans 2:11](#) and note). - FSB

Greeks .. "Greeks" here refers to the entire Gentile world in contrast to the Jews.

under sin .. Describes being subject to the control and power of sin. Paul refers to such people as “slaves to sin” ([Romans 6:16-17](#)). - FSB

under the power of sin .. Throughout Romans, Paul refers to sin in the singular to make the point that the many sins people commit stem from a single, basic fact: they are helpless slaves to sin's power. ([Romans 3:24](#); [Romans 6:1-23](#)).

under sin .. The grammar of the Gr. suggests *motion* under; q. d., “*fallen* under sin,” - CBSC

[Romans 3:10](#)

Romans 3:10-18 are quotes from the OT.

As it is written .. The common introduction to OT quotations (cf. [Romans 1:17](#); [Romans 2:24](#); [Romans 3:4](#); [Romans 3:10](#); [Matthew 4:4](#), [Matthew 4:6-7](#), [Matthew 4:10](#)). The tense of the Gr. verb stresses continuity and permanence, and implies its divine authority. - MSB

There is no one righteous .. Paul quotes [Psalms 14:1-3](#) to support his argument that sin is common to both Jews and Greeks ([Romans 3:10-12](#)).

The originals are found, verbally or in substance, in [Psalms 5:9](#), [Psalms 10:7](#), [Psalms 14:1-3](#), [Psalms 36:1](#), [Psalms 140:3](#); [Proverbs 1:16](#); [Isaiah 59:7](#). The quote here is verbatim from the **Alexandrine MS.** of the **LXX.** of [Psalms 14:3 \(LXX. 13:3\)](#). There is little doubt that this was the version known to Paul or the scribe.

[Romans 3:11](#)

See [Romans 3:10](#) for documentation of the quote.

3:10–18 The five quotations in these verses, drawn from various parts of the OT, all address human sinfulness. Paul follows the practice of rabbis who gathered together OT texts on similar themes in a practice called *pearl-stringing*. - NLTBS

It is possible, though by no means certain, that early Christians gathered together this series of references before Paul's ministry began. It echoes a Jewish practice called “pearlstringing,” citing OT texts on a particular theme. - NIVZSB

As it is written .. The apostle is reasoning with Jews; and he proceeds to show from their own Scriptures, that what he had affirmed was true. - CPNIV [cf [Romans 3:4](#) and note]

3:10–12 This quotation from [Psalms 14:1-3](#); [Psalms 53:1-3](#) (Greek version).

none ... understands .. Man is unable to comprehend the truth of God or grasp His standard of righteousness (see [Psalms 14:2](#); [Psalms 53:3](#); cf. [1 Corinthians 2:14](#)). - MSB [it echoes [Ecclesiastes 7:20](#)]

none ... seeks .. See [Psalms 14:2](#). Man's natural tendency is to seek his own interests (cf. [Philippians 2:21](#)), but his only hope is for God to seek him ([Luke 19:10](#)).

Romans 3:12

Paul quotes [Psalms 14:1-3](#).

turned aside .. See [Psalms 14:3](#). This word basically means “to lean in the wrong direction.” It was used to describe a soldier's running the wrong way, or deserting. All men are inclined to leave God's way and pursue their own (cf. [Isaiah 53:6](#)). - MSB

They are together .. They have *at the same time*; or *they have equally* become unprofitable. They are *as one*; they are joined, or *united* in this declension. The expression denotes *union*, or *similarity*. - BN

Romans 3:13

3:13–14 Paul here refers to sins of speech, mentioning a different organ of speech in each of the four lines - NLTB

Their throat, &c .. This expression is taken from [Psalms 5:9](#), literally from the Septuagint. The design of the psalm is to reprove those who were false, traitorous, slanderous, &c. ([Psalms 5:6](#)). - BN

open tomb .. See [Psalms 5:9](#). Tombs were sealed not only to show respect for the deceased, but to hide the sight and stench of the body's decay. As an unsealed tomb allows those who pass to see and smell what is inside, the unregenerate man's open throat—that is, the foul words that come from it—reveal the decay of his heart (cf. [Proverbs 10:31-32](#); [Proverbs 15:2](#); [Proverbs 15:28](#); [Jeremiah 17:9](#); [Matthew 12:34-35](#); [Matthew 15:18](#); [James 3:1-12](#)). - MSB

The sinner's throat (*λάρυγξ*, *larynx*) is like this grave. When he opens it to speak, all sorts of ugly, rotten, obscene words pour forth. (See Ephesians 4:29.) This follows Jesus' specific teaching in Matthew 12:34: “Out of the overflow of the heart the mouth speaks” (see Matthew 12:35; 15:18–20). Nothing reveals the state of the heart more consistently than how a person talks. A rotten heart produces rotten speech. - CPNIV

With their tongues they have practiced deceit .. Paul quotes [Psalms 5:9](#) to illustrate the potentially harmful effects of words. The Greek verb used here, *dolioō*, means “to flatter with intention to do evil.” - FSB

That is, their speech is filled with smooth, oily talk, “the deceptive flatteries of those who intend evil” (Moo, I:206). In Scripture the tongue is commonly linked with speech and especially with lying and evil talk (see [Proverbs 6:17](#); [Proverbs 12:19](#); [Micah 6:12](#); [James 1:26](#); [James 3:1-12](#)). - CPNIV

poison of asps is under their lips .. Paul quotes [Psalms 140:3](#) from the Septuagint (LXX). Robertson says this refers to the Egyptian cobra, “The poison of the asp lies in a bag under the lips” (345)

the venom of asps points to the poisonous effect of one's speech.

. . . the words of the slanderer are deadly, pestiferous, quickly destroying the reputation and happiness of man. They are as subtle, as insinuating, and as deadly to the reputation, as the poison of the adder is to the body. Wicked men in the Bible are often compared to serpents; [Matthew 23:33](#); [Genesis 49:17](#). - BN

Is under their lips .. The poison of the serpent is contained in a small bag which is concealed at the root of the tooth. When the tooth is struck into the flesh, the poison is pressed out, through a small hole in the tooth, into the wound. - BN

Romans 3:14

Whose mouth .. [Psalms 10:7](#). The apostle has not quoted this literally, but has given the sense. David in the psalm is describing his bitter enemies. - BN

full of cursing .. Paul quotes [Psalms 10:7](#).

It refers to wanting the worst for someone and publicly expressing that desire in caustic, derisive language. **bitterness**. The open, public expression of emotional hostility against one's enemy (cf. [Psalms 64:3-4](#)). - MSB

Cursing .. Reproachful and opprobrious language, such as Shimei used in relation to David; [2 Samuel 16:5](#), [2 Samuel 16:7-8](#). - BN

Bitterness .. In the psalm, *deceits*. The word *bitterness* is used to denote severity, harshness, cruelty; reproachful and malicious words. - BN

Their mouths are full of cursing and bitterness .. (From [Psalms 10:7](#).) To curse someone is to verbally call for harm to befall him. It usually springs from a heart that is full of bitterness or hostility or anger toward that person. The sinner's heart is "full of" such bitter curses, i.e., it is not just an exception but is typical of his lifestyle in general.

Some have suggested that v. 13 refers to evil speech directed against mankind, while this verse refers to evil speech directed against God. There is no real basis for such limitations, though. The "cursing" mentioned here is likely directed toward both, though the context of [Psalms 10:7](#) particularly refers to harm done to others. - CPNIV

Romans 3:15

Their feet are swift to shed blood .. (From [Isaiah 59:7-8](#).) This and the next two citations stress sinners' evil deeds, even to the point of shedding blood in violent assault and murder.\

Being "swift" to shed blood suggests that such evil is carried out with eagerness and perverse delight.

...the two following verses, is abridged or condensed from [Isaiah 59:7-8](#). The expressions occur in the midst of a description of the character of the nation in the time of the prophet. The apostle has selected a few expressions out of many, rather making a reference to the entire passage, than a formal quotation. - BN

Romans 3:16

Destruction .. That is, they *cause* the destruction or the ruin of the reputation, happiness, and peace of others.

Misery .. Calamity, ruin.

In their ways .. Wherever they go. The tendency of their conduct is to destroy the virtue, happiness, and

peace of all with whom they come in contact. This is a striking description not only of the wicked *then*, but of all times.

ruin and misery mark their ways .. Sinners leave in their wake devastation, **ruin**, and **misery**. Instead of knowing peace (see note on [Romans 1:7](#)) they have sown disorder and confusion into the world. - ESVSB

This highlights the depravity of the sinner's heart by describing the wreckage he leaves in his wake. He pursues his selfish desires and purposes with no concern for others and without caring how he may be harming them. The picture is that of a village devastated by a killer hurricane that has passed through. "Ruin" describes the shattered wreckage itself; "misery" refers to the pain and suffering experienced by those over whom the sinner has run roughshod. - BN

Romans 3:17

way of peace .. Not the lack of an inner sense of peace, but man's tendency toward strife and conflict, whether between individuals or nations (cf. [Jeremiah 6:14](#)). - MSB

the way of peace they have not known .. People who have sinned cannot live at peace with others; they only know destruction and violence. In ch. 14, Paul lists the practical outworking of peace and unity. - FSB

(From [Isaiah 59:8](#).) "Peace" here is not primarily a state of inner peace, or peace with God. In line with the previous citations, it seems to be talking about peace and harmony among men, or human beings getting along with each other. Living in peace is something sinners do not know how to do, says Paul. Their way is "discord and strife" (Lard, 110). - CPNIV

Romans 3:18

There is no fear of God before their eyes .. (From [Psalms 36:1](#).) The "fear of God" in the sense of reverence and awe toward the Creator should be the most fundamental attitude of the human heart. The "fear of God" in the sense of terror and dread before the Lawgiver and Judge should be the most immediate effect of sin upon the sinner's heart. But this citation says the sinner is characteristically devoid of both. - CPNIV

no fear of God .. A quotation of [Psalms 36:1](#). When people sin, they show disrespect for God, at times even putting Him entirely out of their minds. Thus, knowledge of God does not direct their actions or thoughts. - FSB

Man's true spiritual condition is nowhere more clearly seen than in the absence of a proper submission to and reverence for God. Biblical fear for God consists of: **1**) awe of His greatness and glory, and **2**) dread of the results of violating that holy nature (see note on [Proverbs 1:7](#); cf. [Proverbs 9:10](#); [Proverbs 16:6](#); [Acts 5:1-11](#); [1 Corinthians 11:30](#)). - MSB

This concluding quotation from [Psalms 36:1](#) neatly ties up the whole series ([Romans 3:10-18](#)) by referring to the same Greek words that introduced the first quotation (*ouk estin*, "they have no" and "no one is"). - NLTB

This citation from [Psalms 36:1](#) identifies the root cause of sin as the failure to fear and honor God. Any society that commonly assumes that God will not discipline sin in this life or judge it in the next will have **no fear of God** and will therefore give itself increasingly to evil. - ESVSB

There is no fear of God .. [Psalms 36:1](#). The word *fear* here denotes *reverence, awe, veneration*.

There is no such regard or reverence for the character, authority, and honour of God as to restrain them from crime. - BN

Barnes gives good observation about the OT quotes as used by Paul.

Before their eyes .. probably means the eyes of the heart (see [Ephesians 1:18](#)), or the spiritual consciousness... So to say that there is no fear of God before his eyes is a figurative way of saying that the fear of God has no part in directing his life, that God is left out of his reckoning, that he is a practical, whether or not he is a theoretical, atheist” (I:195). CPNIV

... it does not mean that all individuals are *equally* guilty of all the vices here named (the same as for the Gentiles in [Romans 1:18-32](#)). Nor does it provide support for the Calvinist doctrine of *total depravity*... This passage demonstrates the reality of depraved behavior and depraved hearts, to be sure, but there is nothing here to suggest that even the worst of sinners cannot be convicted by the gospel and respond to it in repentant faith ([Romans 1:17](#); [Romans 10:17](#)). CPNIV

Romans 3:19

we know .. does not specify a particular group; it is simply a way of introducing an item of common knowledge, a generally-accepted principle. It is equivalent to “everybody knows.” In this context it means “Everyone who is spiritually informed knows.” - CPNIV

whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law.... This verse and the next are crucial, since they draw the conclusion toward which the whole first section has been pointing. Also, a right understanding of this first half of v. 19 is crucial for a proper understanding of the two verses as a whole. CPNIV

under the law .. The phrase is actually ἐν νόμῳ, (*en nomō*, see [Romans 2:12](#)), which means “in the law, within the law, within the sphere of the law” (see Moo, I:200). A similar phrase is ὑπο νόμον, (*hypo nomon*), literally “under the law” ([Romans 6:14-15](#); [1 Corinthians 9:20](#); [Galatians 3:23](#); [Galatians 4:4-5](#), [Galatians 4:21](#); [Galatians 5:18](#)). Only the context of each passage can determine if *nomos* means the OT law specifically or God’s law more generally. - CPNIV

law .. The law of Moses.

“law” here is God’s law in any form (in the heart, in the OT, in the NT). Thus “those who are under the law” are indeed both Jews and Gentiles, or all people in general. - CPNIV

under the law .. Every unredeemed human being. Jews received the written law through Moses ([Romans 3:2](#)), and Gentiles have the works of the law written on their hearts ([Romans 2:15](#)), so that both groups are accountable to God. - MSB

mouth stopped [silenced] .. The word for “silenced” evokes a courtroom scene in which the accused defendant is unable to respond to the charges brought against him (Cranfield I:196–197)

every mouth .. means every individual, whether Jew or Gentile. Paul has already shown that the Gentiles (those with general revelation only) are “without excuse” ([Romans 1:20](#)), and that the Jews (those with special revelation also) are also “without excuse” ([Romans 2:1](#)). This is the sense in which every mouth is silenced.

all the world .. Jew and Gentile alike. The *whole world* is found guilty.

Paul’s logic is that if the Jews, who are God’s special covenant people, cannot keep the law, then it follows that Gentiles, who are taught much of the law by their consciences, will not avoid God’s condemnation either.- ESVSB

every mouth ... stopped ... guilty .. There is no defense against the guilty verdict God pronounces on the

entire human race. - MSB

that every mouth may be stopped .. This is perhaps, a proverbial expression, Job 5:15; Psalms 107:42. It denotes that they would be thoroughly convinced; that the argument would be so conclusive as that they would have nothing to reply; that all objections would be silenced. - BN

guilty before God [held accountable] .. “Held accountable” translates ὑπόδικος, (*hypodikos*), used only here in the NT. “Accountable” is really too weak a translation, since it does not necessarily imply guilt. We are all accountable for our deeds, whether we actually do anything wrong or not.

But *hypodikos* refers to someone who *has* done something wrong and has been brought before the court to answer for it. The picture, says Cranfield, is “of men standing at God’s bar, their guilt proven beyond all possibility of doubt, awaiting God’s sentence of condemnation” (I:197). - CPNIV

guilty before God .. ὑπόδικος τῷ Θεῷ. Margin, *subject to the judgment of God*. This word, rendered *guilty*, is not elsewhere used in the New Testament, nor is it found in the Septuagint.

The phrase is taken from courts of justice. It is applied to a man who has not vindicated or defended himself; against whom therefore the charge or the indictment is found true; and who is in consequence subject to punishment.

The idea is that of subjection to *punishment*; but *always* because the man personally *deserves* it, and because being unable to vindicate himself, he *ought* to be punished. It is never used to denote simply an obligation to punishment, but with reference to the fact that the punishment is personally *deserved*.

The *argument* of the apostle here shows, (1.) That in order to guilt, there must be a *law*, either that of nature or by revelation (chap. 1, 2, 3); and, (2.) That in order to *guilt*, there must be a violation of that law which may be charged on them as individuals, and for which they are to be held personally responsible. – BN

Romans 3:20

Romans 3:20

Therefore .. To sum up the argument began at [Romans 1:18](#), and continued with [Romans 2:1](#).

The word “**therefore**” (διότι, *dioiti*) refers back to the whole section, 1:18–3:19. “**Therefore**,” given what has been established in this section as a whole ...

law .. Its strict and proper meaning is, a *rule* of conduct prescribed by superior authority. - BN

There is no article before either “works” or “law” in either verse. ([Romans 3:20](#); [Romans 3:28](#))

The word “law” should not be capitalized here, as if it means the Mosaic Law. As in the previous verse it means God’s law in general, in all its forms. “Works of law” is also used in [Romans 3:28](#), another key verse in Romans. This expression refers to *all* responses to whatever commandments of God’s law apply to any given person.

Efforts to limit this phrase to the works required by the Law of Moses only, or to OT commandments only (as in Dunn, I:154–9), are seriously misguided and are a grave hindrance to a right understanding of Paul’s main point in Romans and of grace in general. (CPNIV)

by the deeds of the law .. i.e. by following that “prescribed by the law”, what law one is under (Jew or Gentile) justification with God is not to be found.

Since following one’s law (the Jews the OT; the Gentiles the law of conscience) will not be done without sin, it (law) can’t bring justification with God. ([Romans 2:13](#), [Romans 3:23](#);)

no flesh will be justified .. Perhaps an allusion to [Psalms 143:2](#).

there shall no flesh .. No man; no human being, either among the Jews or the Gentiles. It is a strong expression, denoting the absolute universality of his conclusion; - BN

None shall be esteemed as having *kept* the law, and as being entitled to the rewards of obedience; -

BN

Paul's point is that *no one* will be declared right with God on the basis of his obedience to God's commands. This would require absolute perfection, which no one has achieved or will achieve. -CPNIV

declared righteous .. is from δικαιόω (*dikaioō*), which is the word usually translated "justified" (see [Romans 2:13](#); [Romans 3:4](#)).

It is a courtroom term and refers to the judge's decision to drop the charges, and his declaration that the accused person may go free without suffering any penalty.

justified .. This is a legal term. Without blame or guilt before the court. Be regarded and treated as righteous.

in his sight .. Before him. God sits as a Judge to determine the characters of men, and he shall not adjudge any to have kept the law. - BN

for by the law .. Again "law" is without the article, thus "law" in general.

knowledge of sin .. A law defines what is illegal (sin); informs, makes know, one what is *sinful*, but can't save because no one is without sin. (see [Romans 7:7](#)).

Romans 3:21
Romans 3:21

But now .. Not a reference to time, but a change in the flow of the apostle's argument. Having shown the impossibility of gaining righteousness by human effort, he turns to explain the righteousness that God Himself has provided. - MSB

righteousness of God .. There is no definite ARTICLE with "righteousness." This does not refer to God's character, but God's way of imparting forgiveness and acceptance to sinful people.

This very phrase was used in the theological theme of [Romans 1:16-17](#). This clearly revealed mechanism is faith in the crucified Jesus Christ (cf. [Romans 3:22](#); [Romans 3:24-26](#)). - Utley

righteousness of [from] God .. Right standing before God. A system to put a person in a right relationship with God is about to be introduced.

This righteousness is unique: **1)** God is its source ([Isaiah 45:8](#)); **2)** it fulfills both the penalty and precept of God's law. Christ's death as a substitute pays the penalty exacted on those who failed to keep God's law, and His perfect obedience to every requirement of God's law fulfills God's demand for comprehensive righteousness ([2 Corinthians 5:21](#); [1 Peter 2:24](#); cf. [Hebrews 9:28](#)); and **3)** because God's righteousness is eternal ([Psalms 119:142](#); [Isaiah 51:8](#); [Daniel 9:24](#)), the one who receives it from Him enjoys it forever. - MSB

righteousness from God .. it does not mean God's own personal righteousness ... It is rather the gift of **righteousness** that God gives to sinners, on the basis of which he accepts them as righteous. Specifically, it is Christ's satisfaction of the law's requirement that sinners be punished, which he accomplished in our place, as our substitute. - CPNIV

"**Righteousness**" and "**justification**" have the same Greek root (*dikai-*). "Righteousness" is δικαιοσύνη (*dikaïosunē*), and "justification" is δικαίωσις (*dikaïōsis*). "To justify" means to count righteous or declare righteous (see [Romans 2:13](#), and [Romans 3:24](#) below). To say that the righteousness of God has been made known is to say that the means by which God justifies sinners has been manifested. - CPNIV

apart from .. is χωρίς (*chōris*), a preposition indicating distinct separation from something. "Law" is the law system or the law of God in general, not specifically the Law of Moses. Thus the phrase means "without relation to the law system, without any connection to law." See [Romans 3:28](#). - CPNIV

without [apart from] the law .. “Apart from the code of precepts.” - CBSC

Under law, salvation is based on perfect human righteousness. Herein lies the impotence of the law system; - CPNIV

It is often hard to be certain whether Paul is referring to the Mosaic Law (NASB) or law in general (NRSV, TEV, NJB, NIV) in these opening chapters. - Utley

has been made known [manifest] .. The new covenant spoken of by [Jeremiah 31:31](#). A new system for being declared "righteous" that was promised in the Law and the Prophets (the Old Testament).

manifest .. cf [Romans 1:17](#). The verb here can be translated, “has been and continues to be clearly revealed.” It is a PERFECT PASSIVE INDICATIVE - Utley

the Law and the Prophets .. A reference to the entirety of the Old Testament holy scriptures. [Matthew 5:17](#); [Matthew 11:13](#); [Matthew 22:40](#); [Acts 13:15](#); [Acts 28:23](#).

in the Law .. [Leviticus 18:5](#); [Deuteronomy 30:12-14](#), in [Romans 10:5-11](#); comp. [Exodus 34:6-7](#).

in the Prophets .. [Habakkuk 2:4](#); ([Romans 1:17](#)); [Isaiah 28:16](#); [Isaiah 49:23](#); [Psalms 32](#); [Isaiah 53:11](#); [Daniel 9:24](#), etc. - BN

testify [being witnessed] .. A "righteousness" spoken of, revealed that was coming, in the O.T. It was not a new doctrine; it was found in the Old Testament.

Romans 3:22

[Romans 3:22](#)

even the righteousness of God .. To be consistent, one must accept the same interpretation of "righteousness of God" as in [Romans 3:21](#), which see.

Justification, or "being made right with God" which God provides through faith in Jesus Christ. - Howard Winters, *Commentary on Romans*, p. 43.

Even the righteousness of God .. - The apostle, having stated that the design of the gospel was to reveal a new plan of becoming justified (righteous) in the sight of God, proceeds here more fully to explain it.

faith in Jesus Christ .. Faith is not the meritorious cause of salvation, but it is the instrument or means by which we become justified. - BN

Faith (and "believe") in such a context, means trusting and accepting Jesus as Lord and to which one gives his obedience. [Hebrews 5:9](#); [Matthew 7:21](#); - WG (*faith* = πίστις; *them that believe* = πιστεύοντες)

by [through] faith of Jesus Christ .. - That is, by faith in Jesus Christ. Thus, the expression, [Mark 11:22](#), “Have the faith of God” (margin), means, have faith in God. So [Acts 3:16](#), the “faith of his name” “(Greek),” means, faith in his name. So [Galatians 2:20](#), the “faith of the Son of God” means, faith in the Son of God. - BN

through faith in Jesus Christ .. Some would translate this as "*through the faithfulness of Jesus Christ*" and understand it as through the Lord's faithfulness to accept the Father's will and sacrifice Himself on the cross.

to all and on all .. Evidently this expression is designed to be emphatic.

"to all" may denote that this plan of justification has come.

"on all" indicates it is for Jews and Gentiles, that is, all mankind.

for there is no difference .. - There is no distinction in regard to the way in which all men must be justified. All must be saved, if saved at all, in the same mode, whether Jews or Gentiles, bond or free, rich or poor,

learned or ignorant.

for there is no difference .. God shows no partiality between the Jews and Gentiles. There is no difference in the way each becomes justified before God.

Barns suggests that if there is a difference “*unto all*” εἰς πᾶς *eis pas*, may denote that this plan of justification has come unto all men, to Jews and Gentiles; that is, that it has been provided for them, and offered to them without distinction.

The second phrase, “*upon all*” ἐπὶ πάντας *epi pantas*., may be designed to guard against the supposition that all therefore would be benefited by it, or be saved by the mere fact that the announcement had come to all. - BN

There is no difference .. goes better with [Romans 3:23](#) and along with that verse forms a parenthesis that sums up a main conclusion of [1:18–3:20](#). The NIV does not translate the particle γάρ (*gar*), meaning “for” or “because.”

This little word introduces the *reason* why the righteousness of God is available to everyone on the same terms, namely, because “there is no difference” in their starting point or their status before God: all have sinned. – CPIV

Romans 3:23

Romans 3:23

An important verse!

for .. This verse also begins with γάρ (*gar*), “for,” explaining why there is no difference among human beings as to the manner of their salvation. *None* can be saved by law through works; *all* must be saved by grace through faith—because all have sinned, and grace through faith is the only possible way for sinners to be saved. Once a person has sinned even once, he has forfeited all possibility of salvation by law-righteousness ([James 2:10](#)). - CPNIV

for all have sinned .. This was the point which he has fully established in the discussion in chapters 1 and 2.

have come short .. - Greek, “Are deficient in regard to;” are lacking, etc. Here it means, that they had failed to obtain, or were destitute of.

...the present tense suggests the falling short is a present condition - CPNIV

the glory of God .. The praise or approbation of God. They had sought to be justified, or approved, by God; but all had failed. Their works of law had not secured his approbation; and they were therefore under condemnation.

The word “glory” (δόξα *doxa*) is often used in the sense of praise, or approbation, [John 5:41](#), [John 5:44](#); [John 7:18](#); [John 8:50](#), [John 8:54](#); [John 12:43](#).

the glory of God .. Means the reflected glory of God ...the “glory of God” is “his image or glory in which all were made but which all fail to live up to” (Stott, 109). - CPNIV
([Genesis 1:26](#)) (cf. [1 Corinthians 11:7](#); [Colossians 3:10](#); [Ephesians 4:24](#); [James 3:9](#))

Romans 3:24

Romans 3:24

justified .. Justification is a legal or judicial term; it has to do with one’s relation to the law (see [Romans 2:13](#)). It is best understood as the declaration made by a judge once his final decision as to guilt or innocence has been made. When he justifies a defendant, the judge declares that he is in a right standing with the law. Some say it is equivalent to the judge declaring the defendant “not guilty”; I prefer to say it means that the judge declares “No penalty for you!” (Jack Coytrell) -

CPNIV

justified by grace .. Cf. [Titus 2:11](#) and [Matthew 7:13-14](#). God's free grace makes it possible, man must accept God's grace by confession and obedience, [Romans 10:10](#); [2 Corinthians 9:13](#); [Hebrews 5:8-9](#).

freely .. [δωρεάν](#) *dōrean*. This word stands opposed to what is purchased, or which is obtained by labor, or which is a matter of claim. It is a free, undeserved gift, not merited.

It does not mean that it has been obtained, however, without any price, for the Lord Jesus has purchased it with his own blood, [1 Corinthians 6:20](#); [1 Corinthians 7:23](#); [2 Peter 2:1](#); [Acts 20:28](#); We have no offering to bring, and no claim. To us, therefore, it is entirely a matter of gift, nothing earned, but **free**.

by his grace .. - By his favor; by his mere undeserved mercy;

through the redemption .. - [διὰ τῆς ἀπολυτρόσεως](#) *dia tēs apolutrōseōs*. The word used here occurs 10 times in the New Testament, [Luke 21:28](#); [Romans 3:24](#); [Romans 8:23](#); [1 Corinthians 1:30](#); [Ephesians 1:7](#), [Ephesians 1:14](#); [Ephesians 4:30](#); [Colossians 1:14](#); [Hebrews 9:15](#); [Hebrews 11:35](#).

Its root ([λύτρον](#) *lutron*) properly denotes the price which is paid for a prisoner of war; the ransom, or stipulated purchase-money, which being paid, the captive is set free.

that is in Christ Jesus .. The redemption which is procured, paid, by Him.

Romans 3:25

Romans 3:25

whom God hath set forth .. ([προέθετο](#) *proetheto*). The word properly means, “to place in public view;” to exhibit in a conspicuous situation, as goods are exhibited or exposed for sale, or as premiums or rewards of victory were exhibited to public view in the games of the Greeks.

It means that God has publicly exhibited Jesus Christ as a propitiatory sacrifice for the sins of people.

This public exhibition was made by his being offered on the cross, in the face of angels and of people. It was not concealed; it was done openly.

a propitiation .. (*hilastērion*). The only other N.T. example of this word is in [Hebrews 9:5](#) where we have the “cherubim overshadowing [concealing, covering, hiding] the mercy seat” (*to hilastērion*). It refers to the act of getting rid of sin which has come between God and man.

Septuagint usage. These words mostly represent the Hebrew verb *kaphar* to cover or conceal, and its derivatives.

*** Paul presents a very graphic picture to the Jewish mind of the blood of atonement being sprinkled upon the mercy seat for reconciliation by the high priest. In this picture Paul presents Jesus' blood as the sacrifice that covers our sins before God.

sacrifice of atonement.... The word translated “sacrifice of atonement” is [ἱλαστήριον](#) (*hilastērion*), which is also used in [Hebrews 9:5](#). This term and its equivalent, [ἱλασμός](#) (*hilasmos*) ([1 John 2:2](#); [1 John 4:10](#)) stand for one of the most important concepts in the Bible.

..it is used often in the LXX and in [Hebrews 9:5](#) to refer to the lid of the ark of the covenant, i.e., the “mercy-seat,” many find that meaning figuratively here in [Romans 3:25](#). Just as the mercy-seat was the place where the atoning blood of sin-offerings was sprinkled in OT times, so also is Jesus in a sense the place where the final atonement has been made for all times. - CPNIV

Paul more likely intends it to mean the atoning sacrifice itself, in the sense of a *propitiation*.

The key element in the concept of propitiation is the averting of wrath. To say that Jesus is a propitiation means that he offered himself as a sacrifice that turns God's wrath away from deserving sinners by accepting that wrath upon himself in our place. Thus he is a “wrath-removing sacrifice” (Hendriksen, I:132), a “wrath-averting sacrifice” (Moo, I:237). - CPNIV

through faith, by [in] his blood .. (*dia pisteōs en tōi autou haimati*). So probably, connecting *en toi haimati* (in his blood) with *proetheto*. - RWP

We are justified (made right with God) by our faith in the blood of Christ as the atoning price giving (sacrificed) for our sins.

through faith .. "Our faith", God's grace is shed on us for "our faith" in Jesus' blood as atoning sacrifice made for sin.

[*He did this*] **to demonstrate [declare] his justice ..** εἰς νδείξις *eis endeixis*. For "the purpose" of showing, or exhibiting; to present it to man.

The meaning is that God's scheme of redemption was publicly manifested to the people demonstrating his plan for justification.

his justice [righteousness] . Some interpreters understand this as referring to an attribute of God (see [Romans 1:17](#)), but the whole context may be indicating this is not speaking of an attribute of God, but of his "plan" for justifying sinners. He has adopted a plan by which people may become justified by faith in Jesus Christ, and not by deeds of law, which they couldn't keep in the first place. - BN

justice [righteousness] .. it means God's own righteous character, his inner integrity that requires him to be completely true to himself in all ways. - CPNIV

in His forbearance .. Through his patience, his long-suffering. That is, he did not come forth in judgment when the sin was committed; he spared us, though deserving of punishment; and now he comes forth completely to pardon those sins concerning which he has so long and so graciously exercised forbearance. - BN

God not remitting but only forbearing to punish them, or passing them by, until an adequate atonement for them should be made. -JFB

God had passed over the sins .. "Passing over." The word used here *πάρεσιν* paresin occurs nowhere else in the New Testament, nor in the Septuagint. It means "passing by," as not noticing, and hence, forgiving. A similar idea occurs in [2 Samuel 24:10](#), and [Micah 7:18](#). - BN

previously committed [committed beforehand; former sins] .. That have been committed; or that have existed before. This has been commonly understood to refer to past generations, as affirming that sins under all dispensations of the world are to be forgiven in this manner, through the sacrifice of Christ. [But Barns doesn't believe that to be the meaning] - BN

Human sin, past, present, and future, is dealt with by Christ's sacrifice. ... This was a past act of God's grace looking forward to Christ's work (cf. [Acts 17:30](#); [Romans 4:15](#); [Romans 5:13](#)) - Utley

Romans 3:26

[Romans 3:26](#)

to demonstrate at the present time .. The time now since the Saviour has come, now is the time when he manifests (declares or demonstrates) His righteousness.

at the present time .. The word translated "time" means usually **occasion**, "special time," "due time." Same word as [Romans 5:6](#). Such a sense is natural here. The "declaration" of God's righteousness in pardon was made not only "at this time," as distinct from a previous age (that of the O. T.), but "at this *due* time," the crisis fixed by the Divine purpose. - CBSC

His righteousness .. God's justice, His integrity and character as a moral sovereign is demonstrated by all His actions.

that He might be just .. God is consistent in maintaining the essential purity of his nature, his righteousness.

"Sin" demanded death, and in the wisdom and integrity of God He allowed Christ to take the place of sinners and die in their stead without compromising His justice.

Succinctly summarizes the two key themes in the paragraph: Christ's sacrificial death enables God to (1) justify sinful people (2) while he remains just. - NIVZSB

and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus .. Greek, "Even justifying him that believeth, etc."- BN

him which believeth .. Lit. **him who is out of, or from, faith.** This Gr. idiom may mean "one who belongs to the *class of faith*," i.e. of the faithful, the believing. Nearly the same Gr. occurs [Hebrews 10:39](#). - CBSC

him which believeth in Jesus .. - Greek, "Him who is of the faith of Jesus;" in contradistinction from him who is of the works of the Law; that is, who depends on his own works for salvation. - BN

The "faith" system is the way by which God now ("this present time") justifies a person, and not a "law" system.

Romans 3:27

Romans 3:27

Where is boasting .. Because salvation is by *grace*, not earned by adhering without fault to some set of statutes.

boasting .. Lit. **the boasting**; i.e. probably "the boasting of the Jew in his pride of privilege." - CBSC

boasting .. The Greek word used here, *kauchēsis*, refers to pride toward human accomplishment.

Some Jews boasted of their possession of the law and covenantal status as God's chosen people, but people are prone to boasting. Paul rejects such pride. If all have sinned ([Romans 3:23](#)), no one has any basis to boast—especially in relation to the law. Faith excludes boasting because people are saved not by their works, but by the work of Jesus on the cross and by God's raising Him from the dead. - FSB

then .. The word "then" (οὐν, *oun*) introduces a conclusion drawn from [Romans 3:24-26](#), namely, that the grace system excludes boasting. Those under law, whether Jews or Gentiles, are given to boasting since both the ground and means of justification in that system are human works ([Romans 1:30](#); [Romans 2:17](#), [Romans 2:23](#)). But the way of grace is not consistent with boasting since the total package of salvation from beginning to end was conceived in the mind of God and made possible only through the work of Jesus, and is offered to sinners in the form of a free gift. (See [Ephesians 2:8-10](#).) - CPNIV

It is excluded .. This term (*ek* [out] plus *kleiō* [shut]) is used only here and in [Galatians 4:17](#). It literally means "to lock out." - Utley

"**Excluded**" is aorist tense: "it has been excluded" once for all. - CPNIV

By what law? - [NIV "On what principle? On that of observing the law? No, but on that of faith."'] ..

By what law? .. Excluded by what principle?

of works? .. Of doing the deeds of a law system?

If salvation was by perfectly obeying/keeping all the deeds of a law system without one failure, then there might be room for boasting. But since no one keeps a law-system perfectly, there is no room for boasting.

Nay, but by the law of faith .. God's New Covenant of [Jeremiah 31:31-34](#) is not based on performance, but on trust/faith/belief (*pistis*) in His gracious character and promises. Both the Old and New Covenants were meant to change fallen mankind into God's character (righteous). The Old by an external law; the New by a new heart (cf. [Ezekiel 36:26-27](#)). - Utley

law of faith .. By referring to a "law of faith" Paul refers to the grace system, in which one is justified by faith.

Romans 3:28

Romans 3:28

Therefore .. γὰρ; *For.* A summary of [Romans 3:21-26](#).

we conclude .. We reason or maintain. It is the same word that is translated “reckon, count, impute” throughout ch. 4.

we .. The plural “we” probably refers to Paul and his Christian readers, and thus by implication to all believers:

a man .. refers to *any* man or *any* person, i.e. anybody who is actually justified.

Jew and Gentile are justified by the same method. The Gentiles were without the law of Moses, thus the Jew can now also be saved without the law of Moses. vs. [Romans 3:28-30](#)

justified by faith .. Martin Luther added the word "*solo*" ("*only*") to his German translation which does not appear in the Greek text.

justified by faith .. Meaning we are justified by the system of gracious-faith, and not by any system of works, or deeds, which would merit salvation.

Faith” is a kind of shorthand for the grace system as a whole, and “works of law” (like “works” in v. 27) is shorthand for the law system as a whole. - CPNIV

apart from deeds of the law .. Salvation is not by keeping deeds of a law-system (whether it be the Law of Moses, or the law of conscience/nature) because such a law cannot be kept without sin.

Romans 3:29

Romans 3:29

Is He not also the God of the Gentiles? .. There is only one true God (cf. [1 Corinthians 8:5-6](#)).

This verse, like [Romans 3:9](#), may reflect tension in the Roman church between believing Jewish leadership, who may have left Rome following edict of Claudius, and the resulting believing Gentile leadership, who replaced them. Chapters 9–11 may also address this same tension. - Utley

3:29–30 .. Since **God** is the Lord of all, whether **Jews** or **Gentiles**, there can only be one way of justification—by **faith**. - ESVSB

3:29-30 .. If *there is only one God*, then he is equally the God of both Jews and Gentiles. All people must be able to come to God on the same terms, through *faith*. • *whether they are Jews or Gentiles*: Literally *whether they are circumcised or uncircumcised*. - NLTB

This asserts that salvation [justification] for all mankind is the same way, through the faith-system of Jesus Christ, [Acts 4:12](#).

Romans 3:30

Romans 3:30

(see note on [Romans 3:29](#) also).

one God who will justify .. Paul argues there is one God of both Jew and Gentile, and God will justify (make them right with Himself) both on the same basis.

the circumcised .. Jews.

the uncircumcised .. Gentiles.

by faith .. through faith .. ἐκ πίστεως . . . διὰ τῆς πίστεως.

by faith ... through faith .. There is no difference in the meaning of these expressions. Both denote that now the faith-system is the way for justification, or acceptance with God for all man-kind, [Acts 4:12](#).

It is hardly possible that a distinction is to be insisted on here, as the point of the passage is *similarity, equality, oneness*, in regard of justification. The fulness of thought and language delights, as it were, to dwell on justifying faith in one case as *God's reason* why pardon is applied to the believer, in the other as *the believer's way* of accepting the pardon. The whole passage proves that Jewish and Gentile faith is one and the same in kind and effect. - CBSC

There is an obvious parallelism between these two clauses. The PREPOSITIONS *ek* and *dia* are used here synonymously. No distinction is intended. - Utley

Though two different prepositions are used for “by (ἐκ, *ek*) faith” and “through (διὰ, *dia*) faith,” no significant difference in meaning is intended (Lard, 125; Cranfield, I:222; Dunn, I:189; Moo, I:255). - CPNIV

Romans 3:31

Romans 3:31

Do we then .. This verse stands very much by itself, a sort of brief paragraph. A serious objection (on the part of the Jew) is anticipated and strongly negated; but the discussion of it is postponed. It springs out of what has gone before, but is not connected closely with the next passage. - CBSC

do we nullify the law .. Paul's hypothetical conversation partner raises a concern about justification apart from the law. Paul's point is that the Jew should not consider the Law of Moses as the means to a right relationship (justification) with God.

make void .. *annul, cancel*. Same word as [Romans 3:3](#). - CBSC

we establish the law .. Salvation by grace through faith does not denigrate the law, but underscores its true importance: **1)** by providing a payment for the penalty of death, which the law required for failing to keep it; **2)** by fulfilling the law's original purpose, which is to serve as a tutor to show mankind's utter inability to obey God's righteous demands and to drive people to Christ (Galatians 3:24); and **3)** by giving believers the capacity to obey it ([Romans 8:3-4](#)). - MSB

we establish the law .. It has been much doubted what exact reference the word bears here. But the previous context seems to fix it to the moral law, and primarily as embodied in the O. T. - CBSC

There is uncertainty as to what Paul meant by “the Law”: **(1)** a system of righteous works of Judaism; **(2)** a stage for Gentile believers to pass through to salvation in Christ (Judaizers in Galatians); or **(3)** a standard by which all humans fall short (cf. [Romans 1:18–3:20](#); [Romans 7:7-25](#); [Galatians 3:1-29](#)). - Utley

we establish the law .. 1) We fulfill the purpose of the law, to set man right with God; or 2) We show the purpose of the law in preparing man for the faith-system promised through Abraham. 3) We show how the sacrifice of Christ is the fulfillment of God's plan for atonement.

When Paul says, "we uphold the law," he also affirms the abiding moral norms of the law and thus anticipates the charge of antinomianism, to which he responds more fully in chs. 6 and 7. - ESVSB

we establish [uphold] the law .. We show it's true function as the inspired revelation of God.

We are not under law as a way of *salvation* ([Romans 6:14](#)), but we are always under law as a way of *life*.
– CPNIV

Romans 4:1

[Romans 4:1](#)

What then shall we say .. How does Abraham fit into this picture regarding this matter of justification?

Abraham our father .. The Jews valued themselves much on the fact that he was their father; (see [Matthew 3:9](#)) Compare [John 8:33-37](#), [John 8:53](#).

has found .. Has obtained. What advantage has he derived from it?

according to the flesh .. The question is whether it modified the verb "*found, discovered*" or the noun "*forefather*."

If the question is whether Abraham was justified by his works ("flesh") then Paul's answer is he did not! Even Abraham was justified by faith.

The word order seems to modify "*forefather*" and is referring to the Jews as physical descends of Abraham. Later Paul maintains that Abraham was the spiritual ancestor of all believers, whether Jew or Gentile ([Romans 4:11-12](#); [Romans 4:16](#)).

Romans 4:2

[Romans 4:2](#)

For if Abraham .. If Abraham was justified on the ground of his own merits, he would have reason to boast, ... and take the praise to himself; see [Romans 4:4](#).

but not before God .. In the sight of God. "*But not before God*" is a denial of the whole hypothesis that Abraham was justified by works.

Abraham had no ground of boasting on account of works. To show this, the apostle appeals at once to the Scriptures, to show that Abraham could not boast that he was justified by his works.

Romans 4:3

[Romans 4:3](#)

For what saith the Scripture? .. The inspired account of Abraham's justification is found in [Genesis 15:6](#). This account was final, and was to settle the question. cf [Galatians 3:6](#); [James 2:23](#).

Abraham believed God .. In the Hebrew, "*Abraham believed Yahweh*."

Abraham believe God that his posterity should be like the stars of heaven in number. This promise was made to him when he had no child. [Romans 4:16-21](#).

And it .. The word "it" here evidently refers to his faith.

Abraham had unwavering assurance that God would keep his promise.

was accounted .. - ἐλογίσθη *elogisthē*. The same word in [Romans 4:22](#), is rendered "it was imputed." The word occurs frequently in the Scriptures.

for righteousness .. εἰς δικαιοσύνην; In order to justification; or to regard and treat him in connection with this as a righteous man; as one who was admitted to the favor and friendship of God.

[Romans 4:5](#) and [Romans 4:9](#) specifically say that Abraham's *faith* was credited as righteousness.

Strictly speaking, it is not faith itself that is credited to a sinner's account, but the atoning blood of Jesus Christ that satisfies the law's requirement for penalty in our place (see above, [Romans 1:17](#); [Romans 3:21-26](#)). (CPNIV)

Romans 4:4

[Romans 4:4](#)

Now to him who works .. This passage is not to be understood as affirming that any actually have worked out their salvation by their own merits; but it expresses a general truth in regard to works.

the wages [reward; pay] .. The pay, or wages. The word is commonly applied to the pay of soldiers, day-laborers, etc.; [Matthew 20:8](#); [Luke 10:7](#); [1 Timothy 5:18](#); [James 5:4](#). It has a similar meaning here.

reckoned [credited, counted] .. Greek, Imputed. The same word which, in [Romans 4:3](#), is rendered "counted," and in [Romans 4:22](#), imputed. It is used here in its strict and proper sense, to reckon that as which is due to him.

as grace .. An unearned gift.

but as debt .. As due; as a claim; as a fair compensation according to the contract.

Romans 4:5

[Romans 4:5](#)

But to him who does not work .. Who does not rely on his conformity to the Law for his justification; who does not depend on his works;

"The man who does not work" is best understood as "the man who does not look upon his works as a means of laying hold of justification," or "the man who does not trust his works or depend upon them for his standing before God" (see MacArthur, I:239; Moo, I:267). - CPNIV

but believes [trusts] .. See note on [Romans 3:26](#).

on him who justifies the ungodly .. On God. The immediate context has reference to Abraham, whose faith was in the promise of God.

justifies the ungodly [wicked] .. The word for **wicked** (ἄσεβῆ, *asebēs*) and its cognates (see [Romans 1:18](#)) are strong terms describing a state of ungodliness and lawlessness. The ungodly (wicked) deserve no favor, yet God resolves to forgive them and treat them as his friends.

his faith is credited as righteousness .. (cf. [Romans 4:3](#)). Abraham was the latter kind of person as the Scripture stated. He was justified not because he worked for it but because he trusted God.

Romans 4:6

[Romans 4:6](#)

just as David also describes .. "Says the same thing" is the NIV's translation of the conjunctive phrase kaqavper kai (*kathaper kai*), "just as also." This links the two OT quotes ([Genesis 15:6](#) and [Psalms 32:1-2](#)) closely together in meaning.

the blessedness of the man .. Why is this man blessed? Notice the content in [Romans 4:7-8](#), the man's sins are forgiven, covered.

God imputes righteousness apart from works .. Blessed is the man God treats as righteous and extended God's favor. [Psalms 32:1-11](#).

And the whole scope and design of the psalm is to show the blessedness of the man who is forgiven, and whose sins are not charged on him, but who is freed from the punishment due to his sins. Being thus pardoned, he is treated as a righteous man. - BN

Romans 4:7

Romans 4:7

Blessed .. Happy are they; they are highly favored. “happy, fortunate, content” It is “the highest term which a Greek could use to describe a state of felicity” (Sanday and Headlam, 102). [Matthew 5:3](#).

whose sins [lawless deeds] are covered .. - Are concealed; or hidden from the view. On which God will no more look, and which he will no more remember. “By these words,” says Calvin (in loco), “we are taught that justification with Paul is nothing else but pardon of sin.” The word “*cover*” here has no reference to the atonement, but is expressive of hiding, or concealing that is, of forgiving sin. - BN

Three expressions:

- 1) "transgressions are forgiven"
- 2) "sins are covered"
- 3) "sin not imputed" (never counted against us)

Two different words are used for sin.

1) One ([Romans 4:7](#) a) is ἀνομία (*anomia*), from *nomos* (“law”) with a negating alpha, thus “lawlessness, transgression of the law” (see [Romans 6:19](#); [1 John 3:4](#)).

2) The other term (vv. 7b-8) is the common ἁμαρτία (*hamartia*, used 48 times in Romans), which refers to missing the mark or falling short of the standard (see [Romans 3:23](#)). The connotations are similar if not the same. (CPNIV)

forgiven .. In secular Greek it meant (among other things) “to release someone from an obligation, from a debt, or from punishment; to pardon; to leave behind.” Thus when used in the religious sense of forgiveness, ἀφείησαν (*aphiēmi*) means “to release from the debt of punishment owed to God because of sin.” - CPNIV

Romans 4:8

Romans 4:8

See note on [Romans 4:7](#)

Romans 4:9

Romans 4:9

Does this blessedness .. The forgiveness of which David speaks, this state of being justified by God and of being regarded as his friend.

only for the circumcised, or also for the uncircumcised? .. Only for the Jews, or for Gentiles also?

The way the question is worded in the Greek suggests the answer, that **this blessedness is for the uncircumcised** (Gentiles) as well as **for the circumcised** (Jews). But in response Paul turned again to the example of Abraham. He repeated the authoritative scriptural declaration that Abraham was declared righteous on the basis of his **faith**. Then [\[Romans 4:10\]](#) Paul asked whether **Abraham’s** justification occurred **before or after he was circumcised**. - BKC

For we say .. [We have been saying] .. We all admit, it is a conceded point. Again citing [Genesis 15:6](#) to establish the Psalms passage.

that faith was accounted to Abraham .. the implicit object of his faith (the righteousness of God in Christ) was credited to his account and counted as his own. - CPNIV

Abraham's faith credited with him with his God's favor which was accomplished in Christ's sacrifice at Calvary.

for righteousness .. Being made right with God.

Romans 4:10

Romans 4:10

How ... accounted? ... circumcised or uncircumcised? .. Before or after he was circumcised? This was the very point of the inquiry. For if he was justified by faith after he was circumcised, the Jew might pretend that it was in virtue of his circumcision;

Not while circumcised, but while uncircumcised .. This was the record in the case; [Genesis 15:6](#); Compare [Genesis 17:10](#).

Abraham's age when he was declared righteous ([Genesis 15:6](#)) is not stated. But later when Hagar bore him Ishmael, he was 86 ([Genesis 16:16](#)). After that, God instructed Abraham to perform the rite of circumcision on all his male descendants as a sign of God's covenant with him; this was done when Abraham was 99 ([Genesis 17:24](#)). Therefore the circumcision of Abraham followed his justification by faith by more than 13 years. – BKC

Romans 4:11

Romans 4:11

And he received the sign .. A sign is that by which any thing is shown, or represented. And circumcision thus showed that there was a covenant between Abraham and God; [Genesis 17:1-10](#). It became the public mark or token of the relation which he sustained to God. - BN

a seal .. See the note at [John 3:33](#). A seal is that mark of wax or other substance, which is attached to an instrument of writing, as a deed, etc., to confirm, ratify it, or to make it binding.

Sometimes instruments were sealed, or made authentic by stamping on them some word, letter, or device, which had been engraved on silver, or on precious stones. The seal or stamp was often worn as an ornament on the finger; [Esther 8:8](#); [Genesis 41:42](#); [Genesis 38:18](#); [Exodus 28:11](#), [Exodus 28:36](#); [Exodus 29:6](#) To affix the seal, whether of wax, or otherwise, was to confirm contract or an engagement. In allusion to this, circumcision is called a seal of the covenant which God had made with Abraham. That is, he appointed this as a public attestation to the fact that he had previously approved of Abraham, and had made important promises to him. - BN

which he had, yet being circumcised .. He believed [Genesis 15:5](#); was accepted, or justified; was admitted to the favor of God, and favored with clear and remarkable promises [Genesis 15:18-21](#); [Genesis 17:1-9](#), before he was circumcised. Circumcision, therefore, could have contributed neither to his justification, nor to the promises made to him by God.

that he might be the father .. All this was done that Abraham might be held up as an example, or a model, of the very doctrine which the apostle was defending.

The word "father" here is used evidently in a spiritual sense, as denoting that he was the ancestor of all true believers; that he was their model, and example.

They are regarded as his children because they are possessed of his spirit; are justified in the same way, and are imitators of his example; see the note at [Matthew 1:1](#). In this sense the expression occurs in [Luke 19:9](#); [John 8:33](#); [Galatians 3:7](#), [Galatians 3:29](#).

though they be not circumcised .. This was stated in opposition to the opinion of the Jews that all ought to be circumcised.

As the apostle had shown that Abraham enjoyed the favor of God previous to his being circumcised, that is, without circumcision; so it followed that others might on the same principle also. This instance settles the point; and there is nothing which a Jew can reply to this.

that righteousness might be imputed to them also .. That is, in the same way, by faith without works: that they might be accepted, and treated as righteous.

Romans 4:12

Romans 4:12

and the father of circumcision .. The father, that is, the ancestor, exemplar, or model of those who are circumcised, and who possess the same faith that he did.

not of the circumcision only .. Who are not merely circumcised, but who possess his spirit and his faith. Mere circumcision would not avail; but circumcision connected with faith like his, showed that they were especially his descendants; see the note at [Romans 2:25](#).

who walk in the steps of the faith ... our father Abraham ... - Who imitate his example; who imbibe his spirit; who have his faith.

while still uncircumcised .. Before he was circumcised. Compare [Genesis 15:6](#), with [Genesis 17](#).

Who is the **real Israel today?**

[Romans 2:28-29](#); [Romans 4:12-14](#); [Romans 9:4-8](#); [Galatians 6:16](#); [Galatians 3:27-29](#); [Revelation 2:9](#); [Revelation 3:9](#); [1 Corinthians 10:18](#)

God's *Israel* today is not that nation in Palestine called by that name, but His people who live by faith in Him and His Son Jesus Christ.

Romans 4:13

Romans 4:13

For .. The NIV fails to translate the connecting particle *gar*, “for,” which connects this section with the previous one.

For the promise .. To show that the faith of Abraham, on which his justification depended, was not by the Law, the apostle proceeds to show that the promise concerning which his faith was so remarkably evinced was before the Law was given.

that he should be heir of the world .. An heir is one who succeeds, or is to succeed to an estate. In this passage, the world, or the entire earth, is regarded as the estate to which reference is made, and the promise is that the posterity of Abraham should succeed to that, or should possess it as their inheritance.

The precise expression used here, “heir of the world,” is not found in the promises made to Abraham. Those promises were that God would make of him a great nation [Genesis 12:2](#); that in him all the families of the earth should be blessed [Genesis 12:3](#); that his posterity should be as the stars for multitude [Genesis 15:5](#); and that he should be a father of many nations [Genesis 17:5](#). As this latter promise is one to which the apostle particularly refers (see [Romans 4:17](#)), it is probable that he had this in his eye. - BN

or to his seed .. To his posterity, or descendants.

The “offspring” (*spevrma*, *sperma*, “seed”) of Abraham here refers to all believers, as [Romans 4:16](#) shows. In [Galatians 3:16](#) Paul says that technically the *one* seed and heir of Abraham is Jesus Christ, but all who put their trust in Christ are joined to him and thereby become Abraham's seed and heirs as well ([Galatians 3:26-29](#)).

not ... through the law - By the observance of the Law; or made in consequence of observing the Law; or

depending on the condition that he should observe the Law. The covenant was made before the law of circumcision was given; and long before the Law of Moses (compare [Galatians 3:16-18](#)), and was independent of both.

Not through law” stands first in the verse for emphasis, and the connecting adversative ἀλλὰ (*alla*, “but”) expresses a very strong contrast.

but through .. In consequence of or in connection with the strong confidence which he showed in the promises of God, [Genesis 15:6](#).

the righteousness of faith .. Abraham's family is still growing today; and any individual can have a share of their abundant inheritance “through the righteousness that comes by faith,” *not* by works of law.

Romans 4:14

[Romans 4:14](#)

For if they which are of the law .. Who seek for justification and acceptance by the Law.

faith is made void .. Faith would have no place in the scheme; and consequently the strong commendations bestowed on the faith of Abraham, would be bestowed without any just cause.

and the promise ... A promise looks to the future.

of no effect [worthless] .. If the inheritance comes “by law,” i.e., by works, then faith would have no valid role in the process.

The verb is *κατήργηται* (*kenoō*), “to empty.” Faith would be emptied of its value; it would be irrelevant and ineffective (see [1 Corinthians 15:14](#)).

Romans 4:15

[Romans 4:15](#)

because law brings [works] wrath .. The more immediate problem is the fact that all are sinners ([Romans 3:23](#)), and under law sinners have forfeited the promise and are “heirs” only of wrath (see [Romans 6:23](#)). When sinners remain under law, the only outcome is wrath. CPNIV

The word “**wrath**” here is to be taken in the sense of punishment. [Romans 2:8](#).

for where there is no law .. Law is a rule of conduct. If no such rule is given and known, there can be no crime.

and where there is no law there is no transgression .. because there would be no standard by which any particular act could be judged right or wrong. But since there is law, there is also such a thing as sin. And since there is sin, the *penalties* of the law (i.e., wrath) must be applied. – CPNIV

Romans 4:16

[Romans 4:16](#)

Therefore .. In view of the course of reasoning which has been pursued. We have come to this conclusion.

it is of faith .. Justification is by faith; or the plan which God has devised of saving people is by faith, [Romans 3:26](#). [see note on [Romans 3:28](#)]

that it might be by grace .. As a matter of mere undeserved mercy. If people were justified by law, it would be by their own merits; now it is of mere unmerited favor.

to the end .. For the purpose, or design.

the promise .. [Romans 4:13](#). The promise made to Abraham.

might be sure .. Might be firm, or established. On any other ground, it could not be established. But now it may be secured to all the posterity of Abraham.

to all the seed .. [Romans 4:13](#). Abraham's descendants, physically and spiritually.

not only to those who are of the law .. Not to that part of his descendants alone who were Jews, or who had the Law.

but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham, .. To all who should possess the same faith as Abraham.

the father of us all .. Of all who believe, whether they be Jews or Gentiles.

Note the pillars of truth upon which Paul has built "Justification by Faith".

- 1) One can't be justified by **works** - [Romans 4:2-3](#)
- 2) One can't be justified by **circumcision** - [Romans 4:8-10](#)
- 3) One can't be justified by **Law** - [Romans 4:13-15](#)
- 4) BUT we are justified by **Faith** - [Romans 4:16](#); [Romans 4:23-24](#)
(Therefore, justified is only by faith; only by the system of faith)

Romans 4:17

[Romans 4:17](#)

As it is written .. [Genesis 17:5](#).

I have made thee .. The word used here in the Hebrew [Genesis 17:5](#) means literally, to give, to grant; and also, to set, or constitute.

This is also the meaning of the Greek word used both by the Septuagint and the apostle. The quotation is taken literally from the Septuagint.

The argument of the apostle is founded in part on the fact that the past tense is used - I have made thee - and that God spoke of a thing as already done, which he had promised or purposed to do. The sense is, he had, in his mind or purpose, constituted him the father of many nations; and so certain was the fulfillment of the divine purposes, that he spoke of it as already accomplished.

a father of many nations .. The apostle evidently understands this promise as referring, not to his natural descendants only, but to the great multitude who should believe as he did.

in the presence of Him whom he believed--God, [before him] .. In his view, or sight; that is, God regarded him as such a father.

whom he believed .. Whose promise he believed; or in whom he trusted.

who give life to the dead .. [Ephesians 2:1](#), [Ephesians 2:5](#). This expresses the power of God to give life. But why it is used here has been a subject of debate. I regard it as having reference to the strong natural improbability of the fulfillment of the prophecy when it was given, arising from the age of Abraham and Sarah, [Romans 4:19](#). - BN

It is one of God's prerogatives to give life to the dead ([νεκρους](#) nekrous), to raise up those who are in their graves; and a power similar to that was manifested in fulfilling the promise to Abraham. The giving of this promise, and its fulfillment, were such as strongly to remind us that God has power to give life to the dead. [[Hebrews 11:19](#)]

and calls those things .. Those things which God foretells and promises are so certain that he may speak of them as already in existence.

God, instead of simply promising that he would make him the father of many nations, speaks of it as already done, "I have made thee," etc. In his own mind, or purpose, it was so certain that it would take place, that God might speak of it as already done. [BN]

Romans 4:18

Romans 4:18

who against hope .. Who against all apparent or usual ground of hope. He refers here to the prospect of a posterity; see [Romans 4:19-21](#).

At this time Abraham was between 75 and 86 years old ([Genesis 12:4](#); [Genesis 16:16](#)), and was already very conscious of the fact that he was still childless ([Genesis 15:2-3](#)). But God reassured him, and Abraham believed ([Genesis 15:6](#)). At least thirteen years later, when he was 99 and Sarah was around 90 ([Genesis 17:1](#), [Genesis 17:17](#)), God again promised that he would be "the father of many nations" ([Genesis 17:4](#));

believed in hope .. Believed in what was promised to excite his hope. Hope here is put for the object of his hope - what was promised.

the father of many nations .. [Genesis 17:4](#); [Genesis 15:5](#); [Romans 4:16](#);

according to what was spoken .. [Genesis 15:5](#).

So shall thy seed be .. That is, as the stars in heaven for multitude. Thy posterity shall be very numerous.

Romans 4:19

Romans 4:19

And being not weak in faith .. That is, having strong faith.

He considered not .. He did not regard the fact that his body was now dead, as any obstacle to the fulfillment of the promise. He did not suffer that fact to influence him, or to produce any doubt about the fulfillment. Faith looks to the strength of God, not to second causes, or to difficulties that may appear formidable to man.

Now dead .. Aged; dead as to the purpose under consideration; compare [Hebrews 11:12](#), "As good as dead." That is, he was now at an age when it was highly improbable that he would have any children; compare [Genesis 17:17](#).

Deadness ... [Hebrews 11:11](#), "When she was past age;" compare [Genesis 18:11](#).

Romans 4:20

Romans 4:20

He did not waver .. He was not moved, or agitated; he steadily and firmly believed the promise. He did not waver to the point of unbelief.

The word "waver" ([διακρίνω](#) , *diakrino*) means "to decide, contend, be divided within oneself, be at odds with oneself, stagger, waver, doubt."

but was strengthened in faith .. "But where true faith is present, the wonder itself generates an even stronger faith." - Jack Cottrell.

That Abraham "was strengthened in his faith" does not mean that he was strengthened in his body *by* his faith (contra Sanday and Headlam, 115). It simply means he was strengthened with reference to his faith; his faith itself was strengthened. - CPNIV

giving glory to God .. Giving honor to God by the firmness with which he believed his promises.

Romans 4:21

[Romans 4:21](#)

And being fully persuaded .. Thoroughly or entirely convinced; [Luke 1:1](#); [Romans 14:5](#); [2 Timothy 4:5](#), [2 Timothy 4:17](#).

He was able .. Compare [Genesis 18:14](#). This was not the only time in which Abraham had this confidence in God's ability or power. His faith was equally implicit and strong when he was commanded to sacrifice his promised son; [Hebrews 11:19](#).

Everything rested on whether or not God *could* keep his promises; Abraham believed that he could. He believed in the promises because he believed in the power, the “wonder-working power” of God, the power that is able to raise the dead and create from nothing ([Romans 4:17](#)).

Romans 4:22

[Romans 4:22](#)

And therefore .. His faith was so implicit, and so unwavering, that it was a demonstration that he was the firm friend of God. He was tried, and he had such confidence in God that he showed that he was supremely attached to him, and would obey and serve him.

Paul's argument is too perfect! There are no loop holes. This is a great proof of inspiration, this is beyond human logic. - SW

was accounted .. - [ἐλογίσθη](#) *elogisthē*. The same word in [Romans 4:3](#), is rendered “it was imputed.” The word occurs frequently in the Scriptures.

for righteousness .. [εἰς δικαιοσύνην](#); In order to justification; or to regard and treat him in connection with this as a righteous man; as one who was admitted to the favor and friendship of God.

[Romans 4:5](#) and [Romans 4:9](#) specifically say that Abraham's *faith* was credited as righteousness.

Strictly speaking, it is not faith itself that is credited to a sinner's account, but the atoning blood of Jesus Christ that satisfies the law's requirement for penalty in our place (see above, [Romans 1:17](#); [Romans 3:21-26](#)). (CPNIV)

Romans 4:23

[Romans 4:23](#)

Now it was not written .. The record of this extraordinary faith was not made on Abraham's account only; but it was made to show the way in which men may be regarded and treated as righteous by God.

God had Abraham's faith recorded in Scripture not to immortalize Abraham but to be a model for others.

Paul's point is that if Abraham was so regarded and treated, then, on the same principle, all others may be. God has but one mode of justifying people.

not for him alone .. This suggests that while it is appropriate for such a great man to be honored, this information is written for us, to help us see how faith is the basis for justification.

It is fitting that he should live on in the memories of his children, both physical and spiritual, and that his life of faith should be held up as an example worthy of praise.

Imputed .. Reckoned; accounted.

Romans 4:24

Romans 4:24

but also for us .. This sets the pattern for those today to whom God will credit righteousness, (NIV) i.e., whom God will justify.

who believe in Him .. The act of faith is here called believing “upon” (ἐπὶ, *epi*), which is not just bare intellectual assent to facts but also a surrender of the will and a commitment of the self to the *person* who is the object of faith, in this case God the Father.

who raised up .. Abraham's faith was a model because he believed in a God who can raise the dead. We follow Abraham's example when we have faith, when we believe that God raised Jesus from the dead and will grant us eternal life also. Belief in Jesus' resurrection and ours is central to the gospel (1 Corinthians 15:4).

It is clear that justifying faith must include faith in the resurrection of Jesus from the dead (Romans 10:9), in addition to faith in the atoning power of his death (Romans 3:25).

The reference to crediting righteousness (i.e., justifying) has a future ring to it. Paul says literally that believers are “about to be” credited as righteous. Some see this as pointing ahead to the final judgment (Morris, 214; Schlatter, 117), where God will once and for all declare us righteous through the blood of Christ. Another possibility is that “about to be” points to what was in the future from the perspective of Abraham himself. In any case there is no reason to take this as implying that believers are not yet justified. Paul in other places makes it clear that our justification is a past event (4:7; 5:1; 1 Corinthians 6:11; Titus 3:7) and a present reality (3:24; 5:9). Indeed, the very example of Abraham confirms this: “it was credited” is past tense (4:3, 9-10, 22).

Romans 4:25

Romans 4:25

who was delivered .. To death; compare Acts 2:23.

The words “to death” are not in the Greek text, but this is no doubt the meaning. The term for “delivered over” is παραπτώματα (*paradidōmi*), the same word used for God's act of delivering rebellious sinners over to the consequences of their sins in Romans 1:24, Romans 1:26, Romans 1:28.

Here the reference is to the One who was delivered over to the cross in their place, and ours. The One who so delivered him is the Father (Acts 2:23; Romans 8:32; see Romans 3:25).

for our offences .. διὰ, *dia*; *Because, on account of* our crimes. He was delivered up to death in order to make expiation for our sins.

and was raised again .. From the dead.

for our justification .. διὰ, *In order that (to bring about)* we may be justified.

The word for **justification** is the noun δικαίωσιν (*dikaiōsis*), used only here and in Romans 5:18. Usually the verb δικαιοῶ (*dikaioō*, “to justify”) is used. Either way the concept is equivalent both to the expression “crediting of righteousness” (used throughout the chapter) and to the terminology of forgiveness (Romans 4:7-8).

The most difficult problem of interpretation in this verse comes from the double use of the preposition “for” (διὰ, *dia*). The concept is causal: “on account of, because of” (see NASB).

The problem is whether the object of each of these two uses of *dia* is the cause or the effect of the action it modifies.

(1) If it is the cause, the phrase is said to be retrospective, or looking to the past. This seems to be the most natural way to understand the first clause: he was delivered up as the result of our sins. Our sins are the cause, and his death is the effect.

(2) But if the object of *dia* is the effect, the phrase is said to be prospective, or looking to the

future. This seems most natural for the second clause: he was raised up in order to bring about our justification. His resurrection is the cause; our justification is the effect. – CPNIV

Romans 5:1

Romans 5:1

Therefore .. *ooov* oun Since we are thus justified, or as a consequence of being justified, we have peace. “*Therefore*” introduces the practical conclusion to be drawn from the presentation of grace in 3:21-4:25.

Note Paul's use of “*grace and peace*” ([Romans 1:5-6](#), and all his epistle introductions) for this is who he is! *Faith, grace, peace, hope*, is an outflow of all that Paul has gone through! - SW

justified by faith .. [Romans 3:24](#); [Romans 4:5](#).

“*Since we have been justified through faith*” sums up the main point of that passage and states the heart of grace. The verb is aorist (past) tense, indicating that justification is an event that has already occurred in the experience of Paul's Christian readers.

we .. That is, all who are justified. The apostle is evidently speaking of true Christians.

peace .. *Peace* here is not a subjective feeling of peace. Rather, this peace is the state of being at peace instead of at war. The hostility between God and the believer has ceased. The believer has been reconciled to God. - NNIBC

The only way is **peace** is *faith, grace, hope!* Paul has been through all that. - SW

peace with God .. religion is often represented as peace with God; see [Acts 10:36](#); [Romans 8:6](#); [Romans 10:15](#); [Romans 14:17](#); [Galatians 5:22](#); see also [Isaiah 32:17](#).

1) The sinner is represented as the enemy of God, [Romans 8:7](#); [Ephesians 2:16](#); [James 4:4](#); [John 15:18](#), [John 15:24](#); [John 17:14](#); [Romans 1:30](#). [Isaiah 59:2](#)

(2) The Gospel is God's plan for reconciliation. He is ready to forgive sin.

through our Lord Jesus Christ .. By means of the atonement of the Lord Jesus. It is his mediation that has procured it.

[Follow the links from #1 to see Paul's pictures of salvation, or what the cross has done for us.

[# 1 Paul's picture from the Law Courts of Rome

Romans 5.1 cf. Jesus' death, [Romans 4:25](#) we are not treated as criminals, but as if we had done nothing wrong. [Acts 13:34](#) Illustration from Abe Lincoln; Illustration Prodigal son, Luke 15.

Next: picture of **Reconciliation**, [2 Corinthians 5:18-20](#)]

What We Have Thru Christ

1. Peace .. [Romans 1:7](#); [Romans 5:1](#)
2. Grace .. use this grace, [Romans 1:7](#); [Romans 5:2](#)
3. Hope .. [Romans 5:2](#) [Romans 5:4](#)
4. Joy .. [Romans 5:2](#) glory (rejoice) in tribulation, [Romans 5:3](#)
5. Love .. [Romans 5:5](#)

Romans 5:2

Romans 5:2

we have .. Lit. "we have had", The time-reference is to a past reception resulting in present possession. - CBSC

Paul continues by speaking of Jesus as the one through we have this access. The work of

Jesus is always the ground or basis which makes salvation possible.

we have access .. [[John 14:6](#)] It means, “by whom we have the privilege of obtaining the favor of God which we enjoy when we are justified.”

The word rendered “**access**” occurs but in two other places in the New Testament, [Ephesians 2:18](#); [Ephesians 3:12](#). By Jesus Christ the way is opened for us to obtain the favor of God.

The word rendered “access” (GK 4643) can mean either “approach” or “introduction”; the latter meaning seems the more appropriate here. We must think of the Father in his exaltation and glory as the one being approached, with the Lord Jesus introducing us as those who belong to him and so to the Father (see also [Ephesians 2:17-18](#); [Ephesians 3:12](#) ff.). - EBNT

by faith .. By means of faith, [Romans 1:17](#). Our trusting commitment [faith] is the means by which we personally receive grace from God.

into this grace .. This acceptance, [Ephesians 1:6](#). Into this favor of reconciliation with God.

This term **grace** (*charis*) meant God’s undeserved, no-strings-attached, unmerited love (cf. [Ephesians 2:4-9](#)). It is clearly seen in Christ’s death on behalf of sinful mankind (cf. [Romans 5:8](#)). - Utley

in which we stand .. We stand in this grace since we are justified. Literally “we stand and continue to stand.”

Indicates not only a past event, but also a present reality made possible by the work of Christ on the cross. - FSB

Note Paul's use of "*grace and peace*" ([Romans 1:5-6](#), and in all his epistle introductions) for this is who he is! **Faith, grace, peace, hope**, is an outflow of all that Paul has gone through! - SW

and rejoice .. "glory," "boast," "triumph"--"rejoice" is not strong enough. - JFB

in hope of the glory of God .. The glory that God will bestow on us.

Unlike the Eng. word “hope,” the NT word contains no uncertainty; it speaks of something that is certain, but not yet realized. - MSB

The word “glory” usually means splendor, magnificence, honor; and the apostle here refers to that honor and dignity which will be conferred on the redeemed when they are raised up to the full honors of redemption; - BN

Romans 5:3

[Romans 5:3](#)

And not only so .. We not only rejoice in times of prosperity, and of health. Paul proceeds to show that this plan is not less adapted to produce support in trials.

but we glory .. - The word used here is the same that is in [Romans 5:2](#), translated, “we rejoice” *καυχόμεθα* *kauchōmetha*. It should have been so rendered here. The meaning is, that we rejoice not only in hope; not only in the direct results of justification, in the immediate effect which religion itself produces; but we carry our joy and triumph even into the midst of trials.

In accordance with this, our Saviour directed his followers to rejoice in persecutions, [Matthew 5:11-12](#). Compare [James 1:2](#), [James 1:12](#).

tribulations .. [afflictions] .. Refers to suffering on account of persecution (e.g., [1 Thessalonians 1:6](#); [2 Thessalonians 1:4](#)). Some believers may have worried that such afflictions were a sign of God’s wrath; however, Paul challenges them to view suffering as a way to build character. - FSB

A word used for pressure, like that of a press squeezing the fluid from olives or grapes. Here they are not the normal pressures of living (cf. [Romans 8:35](#)), but the inevitable troubles that come to followers of Christ because of their relationship with Him ([Matthew 5:10-12](#); [John 15:20](#); [2 Corinthians 4:17](#); [1 Thessalonians 3:3](#); [2 Timothy 3:12](#); [1 Peter 4:19](#)). - MSB

produces .. [works, brings] .. Produces the effect of;

κατεργάζομαι, katergazomai (*kat-er-gad'-zom-ahee*) From G2596 and G2038; to *work fully*, that is, *accomplish*; by implication to *finish, fashion*: - cause, do (deed), perform, work (out). - Strongs

Patience [steadfastness, perseverance] .. this word refers to endurance, the ability to remain under tremendous weight and pressure without succumbing ([Romans 15:5](#); [Colossians 1:22-23](#); [2 Thessalonians 1:4](#); [Revelation 14:12](#)). - MSB

“A calm temper, which suffers evils without murmuring or discontent” (Webster).

Romans 5:4

[Romans 5:4](#)

character [proven character, experience] .. The quality of being tested and approved.

Experience .. approval; NIV "character" G1382 δοκιμή dokimē **Thayer Definition:** 1) proving, trial; 2) approved, tried character.

This is δοκιμή (*dokimē*), which belongs to a word group that refers to the process of testing or trying or proving something, and also to the state of having been tested or proved and thus of being approved.

hope .. Having withstood afflictions with strength from God has proved God's faithfulness and will surely hope the more confidently. Faith that has been "proved" has the sense of assurance of the promises of God.

Romans 5:5

[Romans 5:5](#)

Now hope does not disappoint [make ashamed] .. This hope will not deceive.

But the apostle says that the Christian hope is such that it will be fulfilled; it will not disappoint; what we hope for we shall certainly obtain; see [Philippians 1:20](#). The expression used here is probably taken from [Psalms 22:4-5](#);

Hope: Are you going to heaven? Hope does not make us say, "well, maybe, I don't know." Once understood "justification by faith", hope is assurance. - SW

love of God .. God's love for us; NASB "God's love"; "Jesus loves me" Most understand this as God's love for us.

The genitive phrase, "*the love of God*" grammatically can refer to (1) our love for God or (2) God's love for us (cf. [John 3:16](#); [2 Corinthians 5:14](#)). Number two is the only contextual option. - Utley

Barnes takes this as "Love toward God. There is produced an abundant, an overflowing love to God."

has been poured into our hearts .. This word [ἐκκέχυται ekkechutai] is properly applied to water, or to any other liquid that is poured out, or diffused. It is used also to denote imparting, or communicating freely or abundantly, and is thus expressive of the influence of the Holy Spirit poured down, or abundantly

imparted to people; [Acts 10:45](#). - BN

...literally, "God's love has been and continues to be poured out." This verb was often used of the Holy Spirit (cf. [Acts 2:17-18](#); [Acts 2:33](#); [Acts 10:45](#) and [Titus 3:6](#)), which may reflect [Joel 2:28-29](#) ([Isaiah 32:15](#)). - Utley

into our hearts .. This refers to the soul or spirit, as distinct from the body. Paul is talking about how God's love becomes present within our inner life and in a sense present to our consciousness.

The main question now is, *how* does the Holy Spirit pour God's love into our hearts? We must pay close attention to the wording.

First, as the divine author of Scripture, the Holy Spirit does pour out the *knowledge* of God's love into our hearts through the biblical testimony to the atoning sacrifice of Christ, which is the greatest possible demonstration of God's love ([John 3:16](#); [John 15:13](#); [Romans 5:8](#); [1 John 4:8-10](#)). The fact that God loves us is objectively revealed in the very events of redemption...

Second, God's love is poured out into our hearts in the form of the blessings we receive from Him.

by [through] the Holy Spirit .. How? "by the hearing of faith" [Galatians 3:2](#)

The Holy Spirit's work is to assure us of God's love for us.

The reality of God's love gives the assurance, even the guarantee, of His promises and of a glorious hope.

This ministry of the Holy Spirit is related to His presence in believers as the seal of God ([Ephesians 4:30](#)) and as the earnest or down payment of their inheritance in glory ([2 Corinthians 1:21-22](#); [Ephesians 1:13-14](#)). Later Paul wrote that the Holy Spirit Himself has been poured out in believers ([Titus 3:6](#)). Each believer has the Spirit of Christ ([Romans 8:9](#)) in the sense that He is indwelt by the Holy Spirit (cf. [1 John 3:24](#); [1 John 4:13](#)). - Barnes

which has been given to us .. Most translations understand that it is the Holy Spirit himself that has been given to us. The Holy Spirit is thus represented as dwelling in the hearts of believers; [1 Corinthians 6:19](#); [1 Corinthians 3:16](#); [2 Corinthians 6:16](#).

The effect of the Holy Spirit within one fills their minds with peace, and love, and joy. [Galatians 5:22](#).

Romans 5:6

Romans 5:6

[Romans 5:6-11](#) one of the greatest passages to study with someone lost. Yes, tell about Jesus and his death, but this passage is powerful! - SW

For when [while] .. Paul presents a new argument to show that our hope will not disappoint us.

we were still weak [without strength] .. The word used here *ἀσθενῶν* (*asthenōn*) is usually applied to those who are sick and feeble, deprived of strength by disease; [Matthew 25:38](#); [Luke 10:9](#); [Acts 4:9](#); [Acts 5:15](#). But it is also used in a moral sense, to denote inability or feebleness with regard to any undertaking or duty.

in due time .. at the set time; at the proper time; [Ephesians 1:10](#); [Galatians 4:4](#);

This could refer historically to

1. the Roman peace (and roads) allowing free travel
2. the universal Greek language allowing cross cultural communication
3. the demise of the Greek and Roman gods producing an expectant, spiritually hungry world (cf. [Mark 1:15](#); [Galatians 4:4](#); [Ephesians 1:10](#); [Titus 1:3](#))
4. the Jewish dispersion into all the major cities of the for providing a ready audience for the Gospel

Theologically the incarnation was a planned, divine event (cf. [Luke 22:22](#); [Acts 2:23](#); [Acts 3:18](#); [Acts](#)

[4:28; Ephesians 1:11](#)).

Christ died .. On the cross.

for .. *υπερ*, *on the behalf of*.

Harris ("Prepositions," 1196) explains that the word originally meant "over" or "above." Thus the meaning "*on behalf of*" seems "to have arisen from the image of one person standing or bending *over* another in order to protect or shield him, or of a shield lifted *over* the head which suffers the blow instead of the person." It is easy to see how it would also come to mean "in the place of."

for the ungodly .. Sinners in general. Those in opposition to God and all for which he stands. Those who were totally undeserving of his loving forgiveness. Those who stood rightly due all his wrath.

Romans 5:7

[Romans 5:7](#)

For scarcely .. The design of this verse is to illustrate the great love of God compared to what a man may be willing to do.

scarcely .. rarely; It is an event which cannot be expected to occur often. There would scarcely be found an instance in which this would happen.

"It is an unusual occurrence (an event which is all that we can hope for from the highest human benevolence and the purest friendship) that one would be willing to die for a good man.

righteous man .. A just man; a man distinguished simply for integrity of conduct, respected, but who is not a personal friend of one willing to die for him.

If "**righteousness**" is neuter (in the genitive they have the same form) it may be that Paul is saying it is difficult to find anyone who will die for a just cause. It seems better to take both *righteous* and *good* as masculine since the comparison is with Christ dying for *people* rather than a *cause*.

will one die .. Would one be willing to die, that is, in his place, or in his stead. A man would scarcely lay down his own life to save that of a righteous man.

yet perhaps .. Perhaps, implying that this was something that one might do.

good man .. Good in man's sight. Not just any man of integrity, but one who is personally known to be good, a benefactor, and is a close friend.

The apostle may be intending to refer to a case of tender friendship, where one would be willing to expose life for a kind, tender, faithful friend.

δικαίον—ἀγαθοῦ. [*δικαίον* is without the article, while *ἀγαθοῦ* has the article.] Both masc. The idea is that the appeal of a righteous character hardly stirs the emotion; the good man with more that touches the heart may inspire such an act. - CBSC GK

dare .. venture. Have the courage.

Our Saviour says that it is the highest expression of love among people. "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends;" [John 15:13](#).

Romans 5:8

[Romans 5:8](#)

But God commendeth .. God has exhibited or showed his love in this unusual and remarkable manner.

commendeth [demonstrates, shows] .. To teach by showing, to prove.

his love .. His kind feeling; his beneficence; his willingness to submit to sacrifice to do good to others.

yet sinners [still sinners] .. Still sinners.

while we were still sinners .. And of course his enemies. In this, his love surpasses all that has ever been manifested among people.

Christ died for us .. In our stead; to save us from death. He took our place; and by dying himself on the cross, saved us from dying eternally in hell.

for us .. ὑπὲρ on the behalf of.

Romans 5:9

[Romans 5:9](#)

Much more then [Since, therefore;] ..

justified .. being set right. Pardoned; accepted as his friends.

by his blood .. By his death; Note, [Romans 3:25](#). The fact that we are purchased by his blood, renders us sacred in the eye of God; and bestows a value on us proportionate to the worth of the price of our redemption;

wrath .. retribution, punishment. From hell; from the punishment due to sin; Note, [Romans 2:8](#).

Romans 5:10

[Romans 5:10](#)

For if .. The idea in this verse is simply a repetition and enlargement of that in [Romans 5:9](#).

when we were enemies .. - The work was undertaken while we were enemies. From being enemies we were changed to friends by that action.

we were reconciled .. (Note, [Matthew 5:24](#).) We are brought to a state of friendship and reunion. We became his friends, laid aside our opposition.

Jesus Christ's death reconciled us to God (cf. [2 Corinthians 5:18](#); [Colossians 1:21-22](#)). The Scriptures always speak of man as reconciled to God. They never speak of God as reconciled to man.

If you are not reconciled with God you are still in your sin. [Romans 4:5](#); [Isaiah 59:2](#) To be reconciled is to have one's sins forgiven. - SW

[Romans 5:6-10](#) Before reconciliation this is [us](#).

- 1) still weak - v.6
- 2) ungodly - v.6
- 3) sinners - v.8
- 4) enemies - v.10

If this doesn't move you to want to be reconciled to God, what will? When Paul has gone through all he has, this is powerful!

How can we rejoice ([Romans 5:11](#)) Paul? In case you missed it - [Romans 5:6-11](#) !!! - SW

through the death of his Son ..

much more .. It is much more to be expected; there are still stronger and more striking considerations to show it.

be saved by his life .. By his resurrection; by his victory over Satan and death. Jesus himself said; [John 14:19](#), "Because I live, ye shall live also."

“Through his life” refers to Christ's risen and glorified life as he exists at the right hand of the Father in his ongoing intercessory ministry (Mounce, 138). cf. [Romans 4:25](#); [Romans 8:34](#).

Romans 5:11

[Romans 5:11](#)

And not only so .. The apostle states another effect of justification.

Not only is this so [NIV] .. “*This*” refers to “shall be saved” in [Romans 5:9-10](#), namely, our future salvation. Paul is reminding us that our salvation is not just future; it has already begun.

we also rejoice in God .. In [Romans 5:2](#), he had said that we rejoice in tribulations, and in hope of the glory of God. But he here adds that we rejoice in God himself; in his existence; his attributes; his justice, holiness, mercy, truth, love.

through our Lord Jesus Christ .. By the mediation of our Lord Jesus, who has revealed the true character of God, and by whom we have been reconciled to him.

Paul has exalted Jesus Christ throughout this passage as the one who has made grace and assurance possible.

now received the reconciliation .. See note on [Romans 5:10](#) re “*reconciliation*.”

[KJV] **atonement** - Margin, or **reconciliation**. This is the only instance in which the KJV translators have used the word “*atonement*” in the New Testament. The word frequently occurs in the Old, [Exodus 29:33](#), [Exodus 29:36-37](#); [Exodus 30:10](#), [Exodus 30:15-16](#), etc.

Romans 5:12

[Romans 5:12](#)

5:12–21 Paul sets out to show how one man's death can provide salvation for many. To prove his point, he uses Adam to establish the principle that it is possible for one man's actions to inexorably affect many other people. - MSB

The passage [Romans 5:12-21](#) is the backbone for teaching “*original sin*” since Augustine, 5th century. Such doctrine maintains that vs 12-21 is limited to physical death only.

Paul's main point is not about Adam, but **Jesus**, and what all is accomplished in his death. Paul's subject is *still* “Justification by Faith.”

Therefore .. Paul is concluding that justification is by the system of grace-faith only and give one last great proof.

just as through one man .. The “one man” is of course Adam, who along with Eve was responsible of introducing sin into the world ([Genesis 3:1-7](#)).

Paul assumes that his readers know the tragic story of the fall of Adam and Eve.

sin entered the world, .. The word for “sin” is *ἁμαρτία* (*hamartia*), which in this case refers not to a specific act but to the principle of disobeying God's command.

“The world” (as in [John 3:16](#)) is the world of mankind, the sphere of human beings; sin had already entered the world of angels through the sin of Satan ([1 John 3:8](#)). - CPNIV

The significance that Paul ascribes to this act, and the parallel that he draws between Adam's sin and Christ's act of obedience on the cross, makes clear that Paul views Adam and his sin in the Garden of Eden as historical fact. - NLTB

and death through sin, .. *Death* = separation. Physical death is the separation of the spirit from the body, [James 2:26](#) ; and spiritual death is the separation of the spirit from God, [Isaiah 59:2](#).

death Refers to the loss of immortality, which includes physical and spiritual death ([Genesis 3:22-24](#))... his sin introduced mortality. This mortality, in Paul's view, spread to the entire human race (see [1 Corinthians 15:21-22](#)). According to Paul, death will be the final enemy defeated by God ([1 Corinthians 15:26](#)). - FSB

Death in these verses most likely denotes both physical death and spiritual death together (Paul often connects the two). - ESVSB

Death .. Does death in vs. 12 means "*spiritual death*"? (we know that physical death didn't end with Moses, see [Romans 5:14](#); [However Paul's point is simply that there was a "law" then that existed before the "Law of Moses" for men were separated from God by their sins even before Moses' Law. [1 John 3:8](#)]

While Adam's sin separated him from God ([Genesis 3:8-10](#); [Isaiah 59:2](#)) the very *day* he sinned ([Genesis 2:15-16](#)) and resulted in spiritual separation (spiritual death), it was Adam's exclusion from the Garden and his access to the "tree of life" that brought him and all mankind physical death ([Genesis 3:22-23](#)), a consequence of his sin.

death .. The parallel between this verse and [Romans 5:18](#) suggests that "death" refers mainly to spiritual death, or "condemnation"—although physical death, at least in its painful side, may be included as well. - NIVZSB

Death here may be taken in its full latitude, for temporal, spiritual, and eternal death. - Poole [[1 Corinthians 15:22](#)]

By "**death**" in [Genesis 2:17](#); [Genesis 3:19](#) physical death is meant, but in [Romans 5:17](#), [Romans 5:21](#) eternal death is Paul's idea and that lurks constantly behind physical death with Paul. - RWP

Death has 3 distinct manifestations: **1)** spiritual death or separation from God (cf. [Ephesians 1:1-2](#); [Ephesians 4:18](#)); **2)** physical death ([Hebrews 9:27](#)); and **3)** eternal death (also called the second death), which includes not only eternal separation from God, but eternal torment in the lake of fire ([Revelation 20:11-15](#)). - MSB

death by sin .. In the case of Man. Scripture nowhere says that death in *animals* is due to human sin. - CBSC

and thus death [separation, wg] spread to all men, because all sinned -- Again asserting Paul's message from chapters 1 & 2 that all have sinned ([Romans 3:10-12](#); [Romans 3:23](#)), and thus all men have become separated from God. [Isaiah 59:2](#).

The word translated **men** is the Greek word *anthrōpos*, which in the plural can mean either "people" of both sexes or "men," depending on the context. It is translated "men" here (and in [Romans 5:18](#)) to show the connection with "man" (*anthrōpos*, singular), referring to Christ. - ESVSB

Little children and infants die physically not because they are sinners, but because we are without access to "the tree of life" from which mankind was cut off because of Adam's sin. [Genesis 3:22-24](#). [[Ezekiel 18:20](#)]

That infants and children are born "in sin" has been taught since the Reformation by Anabaptist writers and widely accepted within the Wesleyan tradition. However, there is no doctrine of "original sin" taught in 5:12-21. No child is actually conceived and born cursed with the "guilt" of Adam's sin. The only consequence of Adam's sin anyone suffers is that we will die physically, and will again have access to the "tree of life" in heaven. ([Ezekiel 18:20-21](#); [Revelation 2:7](#); [Revelation 22:14](#)).

[Those holding to "original sin" would argue that since infants die, this is proof they are "sinners."
See Barnes response in [Romans 5:14](#).]

for that all sinned .. the aorist. St Paul refers to the First Sin, to the guilt of the *Representative* of the race. A close parallel, in contrast, is [2 Corinthians 5:15](#), where lit. "since One died for all, therefore they all died;" i.e. ideally, in their Divine *Representative*. See too [1 Corinthians 15:21](#), where our *death* in Adam is spoken of just as our *sin* in Adam here. - CBSC

Here we should have expected the apostle to finish his sentence, in some such way as this: "Even so, by one man righteousness has entered into the world, and life by righteousness." But, instead of this, we have a digression, extending to five verses, to illustrate the important statement of [Romans 5:12](#); and it is only at [Romans 5:18](#) that the comparison is resumed and finished. - JFB

Note The dash "—" at the end of [Romans 5:12](#) in the NIV is to show a break in Paul's thought. In vs. 13-14 "He turns aside from his main argument to deal with a related matter." - NIVZSB

The Two Adams Contrasted [-Luscombe]

[Romans 5:12-21](#)

<u>First Adam</u>	<u>Second Adam</u>
Sin entered - 12	Salvation - 15
Death to all men - 12	Free gift - 15
Many died - 15	Grace for many - 15
Condemnation - 16	Justification - 16
Judgment - 18	Life - 18
Disobedience - 19	Obedience - 19
Law - 20	Grace - 20
Sin - death - 21	Righteousness - eternal life - 21
IS ADAM (MAN)	IS CHRIST

Romans 5:13

[Romans 5:13](#)

Vs. 13 is Paul's way of saying that there was *some* law therefore before the Law of Moses. (That law is what Paul speaks of in [Romans 2:14](#); and [Romans 2:12](#); a law of "instinct" (NASB), and/or man's own conscience.

sin indeed was in the world before the law was given .. Paul's point is that since sin is the transgression of law ([1 John 3:4](#)), mankind must have been under some law before the "Law of Moses" since all were separated from God by their sins.

That "*sin was in the world*" before Moses' Law was given is indisputable ([Genesis 6:5](#), [Genesis 6:11](#); [Genesis 8:21](#); [Genesis 18:20](#); [Exodus 9:27](#)). It is also indisputable that "sin is not taken into account when there is no law," as Paul had already said in [Romans 4:15](#).

Note the ESVSB here: "Since people still died, this shows that they were guilty— as a consequence of Adam's sin but possibly also as a consequence of having transgressed the universal moral law in their consciences before the written Mosaic law was given."

but sin is not counted [imputed; reckoned] where there is no law .. Before the Law of Moses there was the law that Paul speaks on in chapter 1&2, [Romans 4:15](#); What law mankind had was both oral law handed down by each generation, along with instinctive moral law, and occasional special revelation (e.g., [Genesis 4:9](#); [Genesis 6:13](#); [Genesis 7:1](#); [Genesis 9:1-7](#))

"There must therefore have been a law during that period, because sin was then imputed"; as is now to be shown. - JFB

Paul is assuming that his readers will remember what he has already said very plainly in [Romans 1:18-32](#) and [Romans 2:14-15](#), and will draw their own conclusions as to the invalidity of the argument. - CPNIV

law ... law .. Both these words in the Greek. are without the article... we must interpret the first of the Mosaic Law, and the second of Law in some other sense; - CBSC

Romans 5:14

[Romans 5:14](#)

Adam .. Adam is both the name of the original man, Adam, and a Hebrew word that means "human." - NLTSB

Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses .. Evidence that there was some kind of law that mankind was under even before the law of Moses. {see note in [Romans 5:13](#).}

even over those who had not sinned according to the likeness of the transgress of Adam .. Adam has explicit revelation from God and Adam transgressed it. Other mankind didn't have the same kind of special revelation from God, but had their own instinctive ([Romans 2:14](#) NASB) moral revelation, and they transgress that. ([Romans 1:18-32](#) and [Romans 2:14-15](#))

similitude of Adam's transgression .. Adam's transgress was against special revelation, a direct command. Others violated, transgressed, their own conscience of moral law and did evil. [Genesis 6:5](#)

Adam's transgression .. Adam's sin was a violation of a direct positive law. Other's sins were a violation of *moral* law. *Thus* a law existed before Sinai; because men died (spiritually). [Adam's death did bring physical and spiritual death to mankind, and both are rectified in Jesus Christ. Paul later also makes this plain, but here he dwells on the spiritual side of death.]

The "*likeness of Adam's transgression*" upon us today, is that like Adam we today transgress God's special revelation given to us in the N.T.

death reigned ... even over those who had not sinned .. Is this Paul's way of affirming that death came, even to "innocent" children, infants, etc. who had not sinned like Adam did. All of Adam's descendants died, whether they had "sinned" or not, like Adam did.

those who had not sinned .. Those holding to "original sin" would argue that since infants die, this is proof they are "sinners." Alford Barnes' response is:

- (1) The apostle makes no mention of infants. He does not in the remotest form allude to them by name, or give any intimation that he had reference to them.
- (a) That this was an inference which the apostle does not draw, and for which he is not responsible. It is not affirmed by him.

who is a type [pattern; figure] of Him who was to come .. Paul is going to make a contrast between what Adam did and what Christ did. Adam introduced "spiritual death" (or separation); (and physical death as well) while Christ brought reconciliation between mankind and God. [See note below on [Romans 5:16-17](#) to see that Christ's action accomplished "much more".]

The word "pattern" is τύπος (*typos*) or "type." Moo (I:346) explains that this word originally meant "the impression made by striking something," and that it came to mean "a form, pattern, or example."

In the NT it refers to those OT persons, institutions, or events that are seen to have a divinely intended function of prefiguring the the age inaugurated by Christ.

who is the figure .. - τύπος *tupos*. "Type." This word occurs sixteen times in the New Testament, [John 20:25](#) (twice); [Acts 7:43-44](#); [Acts 23:25](#); [Romans 5:14](#); [Romans 6:17](#); [1 Corinthians 10:6](#), [1 Corinthians](#)

[10:11](#); [Philippians 3:17](#); [1 Thessalonians 1:7](#); [2 Thessalonians 3:9](#); [1 Timothy 4:12](#); [Titus 2:7](#); [Hebrews 8:5](#); [1 Peter 5:3](#). It properly means,

- (1) Any impression, note, or mark, which is made by percussion, or in any way, [John 20:25](#), "the print (type) of the nails."
- (2) An effigy or image which is made or formed by any rule; a model, pattern. [Acts 7:43](#), "ye took up the tabernacle of Moloch and the star of your god Remphan, figures (types) which ye had made." [Acts 7:44](#), "that he should make it (the tabernacle) according to the fashion (type) which he had seen," [Hebrews 8:5](#).
- (3) A brief argument, or summary, [Acts 23:25](#).
- (4) A rule of doctrine, or a law or form of doctrine, [Romans 6:17](#).
- (5) An example or model to be imitated; an example of what we ought to be, [Philippians 3:17](#); [1 Thessalonians 1:7](#); [2 Thessalonians 3:9](#); [1 Timothy 4:12](#); [Titus 2:7](#); [1 Peter 5:3](#); or an example which is to be avoided, an example to warn us, [1 Corinthians 10:6](#), [1 Corinthians 10:11](#).

who was to come .. The expression "he who was to come" is often used to denote the Messiah. As applied to him, it means that there was in some respects a similarity between the results of the conduct of Adam and the effects of the work of Christ. - BN

Note: The dash "—" at the end of this verse in the NIV is to show Paul's break in thought (vs. 13-14): "He turns aside from his main argument to deal with a related matter." - NIVZSB.

Alternate Interpretation - "death" = physical death; [Jack Cottrell, CPNIV]

Nevertheless death reigned .. Paul seems to making a play on this word "death" and his audience now sees he turns to the meaning of physical death.

death reigned from the time of Adam to the time of Moses . . This is clearly a reference to physical death, which is personified as a tyrant having everyone under its power in the period in question (and in all other times as well; see [Romans 5:17](#)). To depict death as a reigning monarch emphasizes its universal scope, its oppressive domination, and its inescapable certainty. - CPNIV

even over those who did not sin by breaking a command, as did Adam .. This is the key point of the whole argument in vv. 13-14; this is what proves the fact that Adam's sin brought death upon us all: death reigned, *even* over this group.

even over them [those] .. Over all the generations from Adam to Moses. Evidence all those generation had a "law" even before the "Law of Moses."

even .. The word "even" (*kai*) is important, because it focuses the argument on a group that is more narrow than the general population of the earth (contra Godet, 212; Moo, I:345-346). This group is described as "*those who did not sin by breaking a command.*" [This would be innocent children and infants, etc.] - CPNIV

who is a type [figure; pattern; of Him who was to come .. The "one" who was to come of course refers to Christ, who was yet to come from Adam's perspective.

Romans 5:15

Romans 5:15

But .. Introducing the contrast between what Adam and Christ did.

the free gift .. God's gracious scheme for man's escape of spiritual (and physical) death [1 Corinthians 15:21-22](#).

The "free gift" of God's grace is reconciliation with God.

is not like the offense [trespass; transgression, stumbling] .. Paul indicates a contrast and the "transgression" the "free gift" [grace] will be much greater in its impact.

(Our word "offence" comes from the Latin for the same, and is so used here by the KJV).

For if by one's man's offense [the] many died .. By Adam's introduction of "transgression" into the world, many died; in fact all died (spiritually) for all sinned and there was no one to bring reconciliation until Christ.

The remedy for Adam's offense is "much more" than for just his, but for all men's transgressions.

[Here in Paul's argument, infants are not under discussion, for they have not transgressed law, [1 John 3:4](#); therefore they have not become separated from God, [Isaiah 59:2](#); there is no guilt of sin from their father, [Ezekiel 18:20](#).]

many .. Greek, οἱ πολλοὶ "the many." Evidently meaning all; the whole race; Jews and Gentiles. That it means all here is proved in [Romans 5:18](#).

much more the grace of God .. The phrase "*much more*" is to indicate the greater accomplish of God's grace than just to reconcile Adam, but is sufficient bring reconciliation to many.

... the overflowing "much more" of Christ's cross means that the saved state into which it brings us is a state far better than what was lost in Adam. It includes "a better body than Adam ever had, a better life than he ever lived, a better world than he ever lived in, a world where Satan, and sin, and death can never come" (Lard, 178). - CPNIV

Paul shows later in [Romans 5:21](#) that it not only reconciles man to God, but to also restore "eternal life" ([Romans 5:21](#)) where physical death had been a consequence of Adam's sin.

the grace of God .. The favor or kindness of God. We have reason to expect that "*the grace of God*" is so wonderful and abundant we can't fathom the excellence of it. [Philippians 4:7](#); [Romans 11:33](#);

and the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abound to many. .. The gift of God's grace abounds to all through the one man Jesus Christ. [John 14:6](#); [Acts 4:12](#)

God has love and *grace* for every man and desires to see everyone saved ([2 Peter 3:9](#)) but *universal salvation* is not taught in the Holy Scriptures, but salvation is conditional upon man committing himself to the the Lord's way ([Matthew 7:21](#); [Romans 10:9](#); [Hebrews 5:9](#))

The "*grace of Christ*" is the loving favour to man shewn by Him in His work. The "*gift*" which was given "*in*" (i.e. practically "through," or "by,") that grace is the eternal life of the justified. -CBSC

abounded to many .. Lit. **did abound unto the many**. The reference is to the historic fact of His Work. "*The many*"... as the persons here in question. These here, (as e.g. vv. 13–19 explain,) are the justified.... "*Abounded:*" the idea is of Divine *liberality* in mercy, - CBSC

Romans 5:16

[Romans 5:16](#)

And the gift is not like that which came through the one who sinned. .. Another contrast between Adam's actions and Christ's action. Adam's was a matter of "transgression" bringing *condemnation* to himself, but Christ's grace brings *justification* to many covering their transgressions.

"The one man's sin" is better translated "the one who sinned" (NASB).

the gift .. God's grace ("justification" "righteousness" [Romans 5:17](#)) . The benefits resulting from the work of Christ.

not like ... the one who sinned .. That is, Adam. ..

The judgment .. One contrast here is between “one sin” and “many trespasses.” The judgment unto condemnation results from the single sin of one man; but *the gift* unto justification applies not only to this one sin but to many personal sins as well (and thus is quantitatively superior).

The sentence [judgment] .. The declared penalty. The word expresses properly the sentence which is passed by a judge. Here it means the sentence which God passed, as a judge, on Adam for the one offence, involving himself and his posterity in ruin, [Genesis 2:17](#); [Genesis 3:17-19](#).

from one offense ..

resulted in [unto] condemnation .. Producing condemnation, or involving in condemnation. The effect of the sin of Adam was to result in "death" for all mankind.

but the free gift .. The unmerited favor, demonstrated in the work of Christ.

is [came; following; followed; from; which came from] of many offenses .. Christ's work was done in relation to many sins. Adam's effect came from one offence; Christ's work (of producing righteousness) has respect to to many crimes. Grace therefore abounds.

Romans 5:17

[Romans 5:17](#)

For if .. This verse contains the same idea as before presented, but in a varied form. It is condensing the whole subject, and presenting it in a single view.

by the one man's offense .. Or, "by one offence". Margin. Reference is to Adam's sin.

death reigned .. Spiritual and physical death started with Adam's sin and continued to rule (reign) because all it. [Romans 5:12](#); Spiritual death continued to reign because all have sinned, because of each one's own sin.

death reigned. Adam's sin brought universal death—exactly opposite the result he expected and Satan had promised: “You will be like God” ([Genesis 3:5](#)). - MSB

through the one .. By the means of one man.

much more .. We have much more reason to expect ...

those who receive abundance of grace .. The abundant favor; the mercy that shall counterbalance and surpass the evils introduced by the sin of Adam. That favor shall be more than sufficient to counterbalance all those evils.

and the gift of righteousness .. This stands opposed to the evils introduced by Adam. As the effect of his sin was to produce condemnation, so here the gift of righteousness refers to the opposite, to pardon, to justification, to acceptance with God.

gift of righteousness .. Salvation, reigns thru Christ in the covering of offence (sins) [Romans 5:18](#).

will reign in life .. "In life" stands opposed to the death that reigned as the consequence of the sin of Adam. It denotes complete freedom from condemnation; from temporal death; from sickness, pain, and sin. It is the usual expression to denote the complete bliss of the saints in glory; Note, [John 3:36](#).

The word “*reign*” is often applied to the condition of saints in heaven, [2 Timothy 2:12](#), “If we suffer, we shall also reign with him;” [Revelation 5:10](#); [Revelation 20:6](#); [Revelation 22:5](#). It means that they shall be exalted to a glorious state of happiness in heaven; that they shall be triumphant over all their enemies; shall gain an ultimate victory; and shall partake with the Captain of their salvation in the splendors of his dominion above, [Revelation 3:21](#); [Luke 22:30](#).

through the One, Jesus Christ .. As the consequence (effect, results) of Christ's work.

The apostle here does not state the mode or manner in which this was done; nor does he say that it was perfectly parallel in the mode with the effects of the sin of Adam.

He is comparing the results or consequences of the sin of the one and of the work of the other. There is a similarity in the consequences. The way in which the work of Christ had contributed to this he had stated in [Romans 3:24](#), [Romans 3:28](#).

made righteous .. This expression probably refers to one's legal status before God and not an actual change in character, since Paul is contrasting justification and condemnation throughout this passage - MSB

Romans 5:18

Romans 5:18

Therefore, .. Wherefore ([Ἀρα οὖν ara oun](#)). This is properly a summing up, a recapitulation of what had been stated in the previous verses.

The apostle resumes the statement or proposition made in [Romans 5:12](#), and after the intermediate explanation in the parenthesis [Romans 5:13-17](#), in this verse and the following, sums up the whole subject. The explanation, therefore, of the previous verses is designed to convey the real meaning of [Romans 5:18-19](#).

as through one man's offense [trespass; transgression] .. Through Adam's sin.

[See NASB; NCV]

as by one offence .. The Greek is elliptical here. We may supply "the result was," in each part of the verse; - CBSC

judgment came .. This is not in the Greek, but it is evidently implied, and is stated in [Romans 5:16](#). The meaning is, that all have been brought under the reign of death by one man.

judgment came to all men, .. The whole race. This explains what is meant by "the many" in [Romans 5:15](#).

resulting in condemnation, .. [Romans 5:16](#).

even so .. Likewise. Similarly. In the manner explained in the previous verses. With the same certainty, and to the same extent.

The apostle does not explain the mode in which it was done, but simply states the fact.

even so through one Man's righteous act .. This stands opposed to the one offence of Adam, and must mean, therefore, the holiness, obedience, purity of Christ (the Redeemer). The sin of one man involved people in ruin; the obedience unto death of the other [Philippians 2:8](#) restored them to the favor of God.

Not a reference to a single event, but generally to Christ's obedience (cf. [Romans 5:19](#); [Luke 2:49](#); [John 4:34](#); [John 5:30](#); [John 6:38](#)), culminating in the greatest demonstration of that obedience, death on a cross ([Philippians 2:8](#)). - MSB

the free gift came to all men, .. What Christ did had a bearing upon all people. As the tendency of the one was to involve the race in condemnation [death, separation from God], so the tendency of the other was to restore them to acceptance with God [and *eternal life*, see [Romans 5:21](#)].

gift of righteousness .. Salvation, [Romans 5:17](#), reigns thru Christ in the covering of offence (sins).

condemnation .. death, separation (spiritual and/or physical) death.

resulting in justification of life .. God's grace provides justification through Christ's death. Vs. 18 however does not teach universal salvation. [However, as in Adam *all* died, so in Christ *all* will be resurrected [John 5:28-29](#); [1 Corinthians 15:22](#); Some to eternal life with God, and some to eternal damnation with the Devil [Matthew 25:41](#); [Revelation 20:12](#); [Revelation 20:14-15](#).]

Romans 5:19

Romans 5:19

Vs.19 What was lost in Adam's transgression is restored in Christ's obedience.

For as by one man's disobedience .. [This verse is an explanation of the previous verse.] By means of the sin of Adam. Some consequence came from what Adam did.

many were made sinners .. Is this saying:

- 1) Adam's sin paved the way for others (all) to become sinners (transgressors of God's will).
- 2) Adam's action defined what sin to be; a transgression of God's will.
- 3) Adam's guilt of sin to be imputed guilt to all his descendants.
 [This is rejected on several grounds;
 a) nothing is said of "imputing" guilt.
 b) it would contradict the definition of transgression, [1 John 3:4](#);
 c) it would contradict [Ezekiel 18:20](#).]

many were made sinners .. Potential sinners. Sin was made a fact. Because of Adam's sin all mankind die physically and live in a world where there is always the temptation to sin, and all men succumb [Romans 3:23](#). Man doesn't inherit any guilt of sin either from Adam or from his parents [Ezekiel 18:20](#); but becomes a sinner (to be separated from God [Isaiah 59:2](#)) by his own disobedience [Ephesians 2:2](#); [Hebrews 2:2](#); [2 Thessalonians 1:8](#); [1 Peter 4:17](#).

[Note: The ESVSB here follows the Wesleyan doctrine ("original sin") by saying: "Thus, when Adam as mankind's representative sinned, God *regarded* the whole human race as guilty sinners, thereby imputing Adam's guilt to everyone. In other words, God regarded Adam's guilt as belonging to the whole human race, while also *declaring* that Adam's guilt does in fact belong to all."] - WG

So also by one Man's obedience .. By Christ's obedience, [Hebrews 5:8-9](#); [John 5:30](#); [John 8:28](#). Of Christ. This stands opposed to the disobedience of Adam, and evidently includes the entire work of the Redeemer which has a bearing on the salvation of people; [Philippians 2:8](#), "He ...became obedient unto death."

the obedience of the one .. Christ, who pleases the Father in all things. He was without sin. [Hebrews 4:15](#); [Hebrews 5:9](#)

many be made righteous .. By their obedience to the faith, [Romans 1:5](#); [Romans 16:26](#). Man's sin separates, alienates, him from God. Christ paid the ransom (price to redeem man from sin; only through (or because) of what He did can man be reconciled to God and be counted righteous.

made righteous .. Not transformed into people who act righteously, but considered to be righteous in the judicial sense. - NIVZSB

made righteous .. [See the sermon on [Ezekiel 18:1](#) on "God's Fair Judgment"]

Romans 5:20

Romans 5:20

Moreover .. But; now;

What is said in this verse and the following, seems designed to meet the Jew, who might pretend that the Law of Moses was intended to meet the evils of sin introduced by Adam, and therefore that the scheme defended by the apostle was unnecessary. - BN\

the law .. Lit. **Law**; The Mosaic laws and institutions. The word seems to be used here to denote all the laws which were given in the Old Testament.

entered .. This word usually means to enter secretly or surreptitiously. But it appears to be used here simply in the sense that the Law came in, or was given.

The law entered [came; was added] .. Sin is defined in the law; the sinfulness of sin is revealed.

Law came in, to increase the trespass; .. [RSV] The Mosaic law resulted in more sin, (like that offence which had been introduced by Adam) . Compare [Romans 5:15](#).

The introduction of the Mosaic Law, instead of diminishing the sins of people, only increases them.

[The presence of Mosaic law] caused man's sin to increase (cf. [Romans 7:8-11](#)). Thus it made men more aware of their own sinfulness and inability to keep God's perfect standard ([Romans 7:7](#); [Galatians 3:21-22](#)), and it served as a tutor to drive them to Christ (Galatians 3:24). - MSB

that sin .. The word "that" *ὅτι* *hina* in this place does not mean that it was the design of giving the Law that sin might abound or be increased, but that the increase of sin was in fact the effect or result.

that the offense might abound .. The Law defined sin more clearly and precisely and added more transgressions.

so that the trespass might increase .. One of the reasons that God gave the Mosaic law was to reveal the extent of human sin and the need for new measures to deal with that sin. By multiplying commandments, the law provides many more opportunities for disobeying God (see [Romans 3:20](#); [Romans 4:15](#); [Romans 7:7-12](#); [Galatians 3:19](#)). - NIVZSB

the offence .. Man's offences, regarded as a single whole. - CBSC

might abound .. Sin, transgressions, offenses, increased. ("Be multiplied" -JFB)

1) Greek "to fill up";

2) Greek "to overflow"; thus grace goes beyond measure and surpasses sin's effect.

But where sin abounded [increased], .. Alike in all dispensations - before the Law, and under the Law. In all conditions of the human family before the gospel, it was the characteristic that sin was prevalent. - BN

grace .. Favor; mercy.

grace abounded much more [all the more; more exceedingly; in greater abundance]; ..

Superabounded. The word is used no where else in the New Testament, except in [2 Corinthians 7:4](#).

It means that the pardoning mercy of the gospel greatly triumphed over sin, even over the sins of the Jews, though those sins were greatly aggravated by the light which they enjoyed under the advantages of divine revelation.

Romans 5:21

Romans 5:21

so that, as sin reigned in death, .. [Romans 5:14](#);

unto death .. Producing or causing death.

That is, eternal spiritual death. God's grace bring "eternal life." Death in this section of Paul's writing is primarily about *spiritual death*.

even so [also] .. In like manner also. The provisions of redemption are in themselves ample to meet all the ruins of the results of Adam's sin (transgression; offense].

might grace reign .. Might mercy be triumphant; see [John 1:17](#), "Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ."

even so grace might reign through righteousness ..

through righteousness .. Through, or by means of, God's plan of justification; see note [Romans 1:17](#).

through righteousness .. i.e. “through the gift of righteousness,” ([Romans 5:17](#)) Justification. Grace provides the Method of the justification of the ungodly; - CBSC

to [unto] eternal life .. See note at [Romans 2:7](#). This stands opposed to “death” in the former part of the verse, and shows that there the apostle had reference to eternal death. The result of God’s plan of justification shall be to produce eternal life. - BN

through Jesus Christ our Lord. ..

Summary of Romans ch. 5

Four Aspects of Justification

1. Justification from the fall - [Romans 5:1](#)
2. Justification results in glory to God - [Romans 5:2-5](#)
3. Justification has its grounds in the sacrifice and vicarious death of Christ - [Romans 5:6-11](#)
4. Justification is deliverance from the death sin brings - [Romans 5:12-21](#)

Romans 6:1

Romans 6:1

What shall we say then? .. *τί οὖν ἐροῦμεν*; What inference then shall we draw, *i.e.*, from the relations of sin and grace expounded in [Romans 5:20](#) f.? Are we to continue in sin (*cf.* [Romans 11:22](#) f.) that grace may abound? Lightfoot suggests “*the sin*” and “*the grace*” just referred to. The question was one sure to be asked by some one; Paul recognises it as a natural question in view of his doctrine, and asks it himself. But he answers it with an indignant negative. - Esp-GR

What shall we say then? (*ti oun eroumen*). “A debater’s phrase” (Morison). Yes, and an echo of the rabbinical method of question and answer - RWP

Shall we continue in sin? .. (*ἐπιμένωμεν τῇ ἁμαρτίᾳ*, *epimenōmen tēi hamartiāi*). Present active deliberative subjunctive of *epimenō*, old verb *to tarry* as in Ephesus ([1 Corinthians 16:8](#)) with locative case. The practice of sin as a habit (present tense) is here raised. - RWP

that grace may abound? .. Since sin in a way makes grace more abundant ([Romans 5:20-21](#)) why not **continue [tarry] in sin?** This is certainly a possible conclusion, though a wrong one, from the teaching about grace in ch. 5. Apparently Paul had been accused of teaching this false doctrine, called antinomianism. To silence his accusers, Paul shows in this chapter that a believer who continues in sin would be denying his or her own identity in Christ. - NNIBC

Questions for us:

1. Have we put to death the old man?
2. Have we buried that old man?
3. Am I living a new life? for the Lord?

Romans 6:2

Romans 6:2

Certainly not! [God forbid; By no means! Absolutely not] .. Lit. “may it never be!” By no means. (Note, [Romans 3:4](#).) The expression is a strong denial of what is implied in the objection in [Romans 6:1](#). The expression is the strongest Greek idiom for repudiating a statement, and it contains a sense of outrage that anyone would ever think the statement was true.

may it never be .. This is a rare optative form which was a grammatical mood or mode used of a wish or prayer. It was Paul’s stylistic way (*i.e.*, Hebraic idiom) of answering a hypothetical objector. It

expressed Paul's shock and horror at unbelieving mankind's misunderstanding and abuse of grace (cf. [Romans 3:4](#); [Romans 3:6](#)). - Utley

Paul's opponents argued that his gospel must be mistaken since, in their view, it led people to **continue in sin**. - ESVSB

we who died to sin .. This is an aorist active indicative, meaning "we have died." The singular "sin" is used so often throughout this chapter.

we ... died to sin. Not a reference to the believer's ongoing daily struggle with sin, but to a one-time event completed in the past. Because we are "in Christ" ([Romans 6:11](#); [Romans 8:1](#)), and He died in our place ([Romans 5:6-8](#)), we are counted dead with Him. - MSB

we, that are dead .. More lit. and fully, **we, as those who died to sin**. The reference is again to a single past act; - CBSC

we have died to sin .. As Paul makes clear in [Romans 6:3-10](#), our new relationship to sin is possible because of our vital connection with the death of Jesus. Just as dying means entrance into an entirely new state of being, our relationship with sin is now different because of Christ's death. - NLTB

In "**died to sin**" the verb is a simple aorist (past) tense, indicating a specific past event in our personal history. Speaking as Christians, at some point in the past we actually *died* to sin. Prior to that point we were dead *in* sins ([Ephesians 2:1](#)), but at that point we died *to* sin. Here "sin" is singular and does not refer to the ongoing death of specific sins that is part of our spiritual growth ([Romans 8:13](#)). Rather it refers to sin as a controlling power and as an enslaving tyrant. - CPNIV

We "**died**" to walking the road of sin; and now profess to walk the road of "Christ" and live in Him. - WG

live any longer therein .. "*Live*" is emphatic, in contrast to "*dead*." - CBSC

still live in it. . This metaphor was used to stress either our lifestyle faith (cf. Ephesians 4:1; 5:2, 15) or lifestyle sin (cf. 4). - Utley

Live any longer therein .. How shall we, who have become sensible of the evil of sin, and who have renounced it by solemn profession, continue to practise it? It is therefore abhorrent to the very nature of the Christian profession. - BN

Romans 6:3

Romans 6:3

Do you not know .. what happened to you in your baptism?

Without a doubt all of Paul's Christian readers would have remembered the time and event of their immersion, since this was a part of the basic presentation of the gospel and of becoming a Christian. However, they may not have understood the deeper spiritual significance of this act; this is what Paul now explains. - CPNIV

as many [all] of us .. All who were baptized and professed to be Christians. As this renunciation of sin had been thus made by all who have been baptized into Christ, so this objection could not have reference to us Christians in any manner. (BN)

were baptized .. Baptism denotes dedication to the service to him in whose name we are baptized. One of its design is to show we renounce sin (repentance [Acts 2:38](#); [Luke 13:3](#);) ... in the NT there is no such thing as an unbaptized Christian. - CPNIV

baptism .. Baptism in the early church showed the new believer's public profession of faith and commitment to Christ as Lord and one's readiness to live (obey) Christ in his manner of life. The earliest

baptismal formula, to be repeated by the candidate, was "I believe Jesus is Lord" (cf. [Romans 10:9-13](#)). This public declaration was a formal act that showed one's repentance and readiness to be baptized ([Acts 2:38](#); [Acts 8:37](#)). In one's conversion to Christ it was not optional. Jesus commanded it (cf. [Matthew 28:19-20](#)), and exemplified it, (cf. [Matthew 3:13](#); [Mark 1:9](#); [Luke 3:21](#)) and it became part of the Apostolic sermons and practices as seen in the book of Acts.

EXAMPLES OF CONVERSION:

1. Pentecost- [Acts 2:22](#) & [Acts 2:36-47](#)
2. Samaria- [Acts 8:4-13](#)
3. Ethiopian eunuch- [Acts 8:26-39](#)
4. Paul (Saul)- [Acts 9:1-20](#) & [Acts 22:6-16](#)
5. Cornelius- [Acts 10:1-48](#) & [Acts 11:1-18](#)
6. Lydia- [Acts 16:13-15](#)
7. Philippian jailer- [Acts 16:23-34](#)
8. Corinthians- [Acts 18:8](#)

into .. *εἰς eis*. This is the word which is used in [Matthew 28:19](#), "*Teach all nations, baptizing them into [εἰς eis] the name of the Father, and of the son, and of the Holy Spirit.*"

It means one enters into a new relationship, a union with another.

To be baptized **into** Christ means to be baptized for the purpose of entering into a specific relationship with him, or into a living union with him. As Moo says (I:377), the preposition "**into**" (*eis*) has the connotation of movement from one space to another, as well as the connotation of purpose. Thus as Moo puts it, "baptized into Christ" means "baptized with a view to being united with Christ." See [Galatians 3:27](#). - CPNIV

were baptized into His death .. Baptism is symbolically the burial of the old man of sin [[Romans 6:6](#); [Colossians 3:9](#);] and in the likeness of Jesus' death where he shed His blood, his blood cleanses us of sin [[1 John 1:7](#); [Revelation 1:5](#)] and we receive forgiveness [[Ephesians 1:7](#); [Colossians 1:14](#); [Acts 2:38](#)] to be raised from death to a new life in the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit [[Romans 6:5](#);

Baptism is a "form" of the doctrine of the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ ([1 Corinthians 15:1-4](#); [Romans 6:17](#)) which we are to obey in being delivered for sin.

The argument is that a burial implies death. Baptism is a burial, therefore its subject has died. As Christ died for our sin, we die to living the way of sin; as the Crucified Christ was buried, we who have died to living the sinful way of life are buried with him. As death and burial separate one from the natural life, so death to sin and burial into Christ should completely sever our relation to living a life serving sin. - PNT

Romans 6:4

Romans 6:4

buried ..

This verse seems to answer the little boy's question, "Why do you baptize someone by leaning them backward in the water? Wouldn't it be easier to let them squat and bend forward?" The answer seems to rest with the fact that we **bury** people on their back with their face looking upward. We don't bury people face down. Apparently this has become the traditional method of performing a baptizing.

into death .. *εἰς eis*. Unto death; 1) that is, with a solemn purpose to be dead to sin and to the world. 2) most understand this as referring to the death of Christ, a burial representing the death of Christ which brings us into a fellowship or sharing of the benefits of his death.

that like as .. In a similar manner.

as Christ was raised from the death .. As Christ was raised from death, those baptized with Christ are raised from the watery-grave, which is also a resurrection to a new life. [The old man of sin has been put to death and buried! [Romans 6:6](#).]

by the glory of the Father .. Perhaps this means, amidst the glory, the majesty and wonders evinced by the Father when he raised him up; [Matthew 28:2-3](#). Or possibly the word "glory" is used here to denote simply his power, as the resurrection was a signal and glorious display of his omnipotence. - BN

even so we also .. As Jesus arose from the grave to a new life, so should we. Those baptized are raised to a new life in union with Christ, a life of holiness.

to walk .. An idiom expressing a new way to live, a life-style.

newness of life .. NIV "we may live a new life." [2 Corinthians 5:17](#)

The cross is not just a message about "forgiveness" but a message of a new way of life now to be lived. This was the message of the Apostles in [Acts 5:20](#) (see the NIV); Becoming a Christian means changing (repentance) to live now a life of holiness and godliness [Romans 6:16](#); [Romans 6:19](#).

----- **New Creatures - 2 Corinthians 5:17**

Old way crucified .. [Romans 6:4](#) (Put to death by repentance)

Romans 6

New Freedom .. [Romans 6:6-7](#); [Romans 6:18](#)

New Fellowship .. [Romans 6:11](#); [1 John 1:7](#)

New Fruitfulness .. [Romans 6:21-22](#); [Romans 6:19](#)

New Future .. [Romans 6:23](#); [Romans 6:14](#); [Romans 6:4](#)

Romans 6:5

Romans 6:5

For if .. Paul assumed his readers were baptized believers.

we have been .. The tense indicates an action completed in the past with continuing or lingering results.

This perfect active indicative could be translated, "have been and continue to be joined together" or "have been and/or continue to be planted together with."

For if we have been planted [united] together ..

The word used here [σύμφυτος](#) *sumphutos*, [planted] does not occur elsewhere in the New Testament. It properly means sown or planted at the same time; what sprouts or springs up together; and is applied to plants and trees that are planted at the same time, and that sprout and grow together. Thus, the name would be given to a field of grain that was sown at the same time, and where the grain sprung up and grew simultaneously. Hence, it means intimately connected, or joined together. And here it denotes that Christians and the Saviour have been united intimately in regard to death; - BN

[Σύμφυτοι](#) is not *planted*, which would be formed from [φυτεύω](#) *to plant*, while this word is compounded with [σύν](#) *together*, and [φύω](#) *to grow*. [Γεγόναμεν](#) is *have become*, denoting *process*, instead of the simple [εἶναι](#) *to be*. Hence Rev., *have become united*, *have grown together*; an *intimate* and *progressive* union; *coalescence*. Note the mixture of metaphors, *walking* and *growing*. - VWS

In this chapter, as is characteristic of all of Paul's writing, he uses many *sun* (*with*) compounds (e.g., three in [Ephesians 2:5-6](#)).

1. *sun* + *thaptō* = co-buried, [Romans 6:4](#); [Colossians 2:12](#); also note [Romans 6:8](#)
2. *sun* + *phuō* = co-planted, [Romans 6:5](#)
3. *sun* + *stauroō* = co-crucified, [Romans 6:6](#); [Galatians 2:20](#)
4. *sun* + *zaō* = co-exist, [Romans 6:8](#); [2 Timothy 2:11](#) (also has co-died and co-reign) - Utley

in the likeness of His death .. This affirms that the baptism in Romans 6.4 was into a relationship with Christ's death. Baptism then, is a death, burial, and resurrection in the likeness (imitation) of Christ's death, burial and resurrection.

[certainly] we shall also be .. Showing again a likeness or similarity in our resurrection from baptismal's grave and the Lord's resurrection

in the likeness of his resurrection .. While it is true that in the resurrection at the last day there will be a likeness to the Lord, [1 John 3:2](#), this is speaking to the new life of holiness that one is to live after putting the old man of sin to death, and burying him. [Romans 6:11-12](#); [Romans 6:22](#)

Romans 6:6

Romans 6:6

Thought: Have we really crucified the carnal mind (the worldly way of living)?

knowing this .. All Christians are suppose to know this. In baptismal commitment the old man is put to death, crucified with Christ, that we should be free from the servitude of sin.

our old man .. This expression occurs also in [Ephesians 4:22](#) and [Colossians 3:9](#). Paul uses the expression to indicate our past sinful life and passions for evil are put to death in conversion to Christ and we are now free from sinful guilt.

was [is] crucified .. In Paul's illustration *our old man* (life before baptism) is put to death, as if on the cross with Christ, and that old way of living is in our past, done away with.

crucified .. The pains of crucifixion were perhaps the most torturing of any that the human frame could bear. Death in this manner was most lingering and distressing. And the apostle here by the expression "is crucified" doubtless refers to the painful and protracted struggle which everyone goes through when his evil propensities are subdued; - BN

with him .. The word "with" [σύν](#) *sun* here is joined to the verb "is crucified" and means "is crucified as he was" and as if in a union with Christ when he was crucified.

that the body of sin [sinful body] .. This expression means the same as "our old man".

Some say using the term "body" is a Hebraism to emphasize the propensities of the body to lust, and do evil. Paul, however, is using the expression the same as "our old man" and is a personification of sin as if it had a living form and had been put to death on a cross.

be done away with [destroyed] .. NET "no longer dominate us"; NCV "have no power over us". Continuing the illustration of "crucifixion" it means "be put to death". In conversion to Christ Paul is saying the sinful way of life should be a dead thing, and it becomes a thing of the past by what Christ himself did on the cross.

that we should no longer serve [be slaves of] sin .. [δουλεύειν](#) *douleuein*; The sense is that we were slaves [serving] sin ([Romans 6:17](#)) but putting to death (crucifying) the old way of sinful living has freed (liberated) us from it.

sin .. Sin is here personified as a master that had dominion over us, but, having died (and being buried in baptism) we are now free.

Romans 6:7

Romans 6:7

For he who has died .. When a slave dies, he has gained his freedom from his master.

freed from sin .. Sin is personified as the master in charge of the *old man*, who lived a sinful way of sin and evil.

is freed .. Greek, (*dedikaiōtai*). Perfect passive indicative of *dikaioō*, stands justified, set free from. The word here is used clearly in the legal sense of setting one at liberty from servitude.

Literally, *is justified*; i.e., *acquitted, absolved*; just as the dead person sins no more, being released from sin as from a legal claim. “As a man that is dead is acquitted and released from bondage among men, so a man that has died to sin is acquitted from the guilt of sin and released from its bondage” (Alford). - VWS

Romans 6:8

Romans 6:8

Romans 6:8-11: This passage continues to illustrate of what the apostle had said before, [Romans 6:5-7](#). The argument is, that as Christ was once dead but now lives with God, and will no more die, so we, being dead to sin, but living unto God, should not obey (follow) sin, but should live only to please God.

Now if we died with Christ .. Paul is assuming the Roman Christians has repented of sin and been baptized into Christ (cf. [Romans 6:3-4](#)).

we believe .. All Christians.

that we shall also live with Him .. While it is true that in the future state we will live with Christ, Paul is here indicating that after our resurrection in baptism we are to live a life of holiness, as Christ lived.

with Him .. After baptism our life is in a new relationship with Christ.

See [Romans 6:5](#) for how characteristic it is in all of Paul's writing to use *sun* (*with*) in compound format (e.g., three in [Ephesians 2:5-6](#)).

Romans 6:9

Romans 6:9

Knowing .. Paul assumes this as an undoubted article of belief among all Christians.

Christ, having been raised from the dead .. This is the basic belief among Christians, the fact that literally Jesus Christ was victorious over the hades world, conquered death, and was resurrected to life again. [Acts 2:24](#); [Acts 2:31-32](#). This was the heart of all apostolic preaching the the book of Acts, and the basic belief in all the epistles and the book of Revelation.

dies no more .. After Christ's resurrection, he didn't die again, but ascended back to the Father in heaven, [Mark 16:19](#).

Death no longer has dominion over Him .. Death, or Hades, had now power, no lordship, over Christ. Christ's resurrection demonstrated he was the one in control over death's realm, which Satan perhaps thought was his. [1 Corinthians 15:26](#);

When God raised Jesus from the dead, He transformed His earthly body into a glorified human body that is no longer susceptible to death and decay. In this state, Christ represents the immortal life that awaits those who have faith in Him. – FSB

Romans 6:10

Romans 6:10

For in that he died .. For in respect to the design of his death.

He died unto sin .. His death had respect to sin. The design of his death was to destroy sin; to make an atonement for it, and thus to put it away.

Once for all .. ἐφάπαξ *ephapax*. Once only; once for all. This is an adverb denying a repetition (Schleusner), and implies that it will not be done again; compare [Hebrews 7:27](#); [Hebrews 9:12](#); [Hebrews 10:10](#).

For the life he lives .. The design of his living. He lived to promote the glory of God.

he lives to God .. His aim was always to promote the glory of God. Since Christians are united to Christ they are bound to imitate him and live to advance the glory of God.

Romans 6:11

[Romans 6:11](#)

Likewise .. In like manner.

consider[reckon] yourselves .. As Christ did, consider ourselves to do likewise.

to be dead to sin .. Dead, therefore sin having no influence or activity in your life.

but alive to God .. Alive to promote God's glory and following His holiness.

in Christ Jesus .. Because of the Christian's connection, and union, with Christ, he should do as Christ did, live a righteous and holy life, honoring God and living to God's glory. (A life of sin, does not do that!)

Romans 6:12

[Romans 6:12](#)

Therefore .. A conclusion or summary of his (Paul's) train of reasoning. The result of all this is that sin is not be the way of life for the Christian.

do not let sin reign .. Sin is not to have dominion or rule in the life of one following Christ.

in your mortal body .. In you. Perhaps the apostles uses the word "mortal" here to remind them of the tendency of the flesh to sin and give itself over to evil passions and desires (compare [Romans 7:5](#), [Romans 7:23](#); [Romans 8:3](#), [Romans 8:6](#)).

that you should obey it .. Sin is not to be our "master" to be obeyed and ourselves made its slaves.

in its lusts .. The lusts, desires, passions of the "mortal body" are not to be the "masters" of those whose lives are dedicated to giving God glory.

Romans 6:13

[Romans 6:13](#)

Do not yield your members to sin .. Do not use, devote, or employ, the "members" of your body to be used in sin. The word "members" here refers to the members of the body (the hands, feet, tongue, eyes, etc).

It is a specification of what in [Romans 6:12](#) is included under the general term "body;" see [Romans 7:5](#), [Romans 7:23](#); [1 Corinthians 6:15](#); [1 Corinthians 12:12](#), [1 Corinthians 12:18](#), [1 Corinthians 12:20](#).

as instruments .. The word "instruments" ὅπλα *hopla*, properly signifies "arms;" or implements of war;

of unrighteousness to sin .. The follower of Christ is not to engage any of his "members" (hands, tongue, etc) as though they were under the direction of sinful passions and evil desires to accomplish purposes of iniquity. The Christians should not make the members of his body the slaves of sin reigning

within him.

to [unto] sin .. In the service of sin; to work iniquity.

but present [yield] yourselves to God .. Give or devote yourselves to God and His plan for you.

as alive from the dead [as men who have been brought from death to life] .. Remembers you have been resurrected (in baptism into a union with Christ) and so are now alive to live to God's glory.

and your members as instruments of righteousness to God .. So your life in glorifying God means using all your members as tools or weapons to live righteous lives in glory of God.

Christians should devote every member of the body to God and to his service. Their tongue should be consecrated to his praise, and to the office of truth, and kindness, and benevolence; their hands should be employed in useful labor for him and his cause; their feet should be swift in his service, and should not go in the paths of iniquity; their eyes should contemplate his works to excite thanksgiving and praise; their ears should not be employed to listen to words of deceit, or songs of dangerous and licentious tendency, or to persuasion that would lead astray, but should be open to catch the voice of God as he utters his will... BN

Romans 6:14

Romans 6:14

For sin .. The inclination to sin.

shall not have dominion (be master) over you .. Shall not reign, [Romans 5:12](#); [Romans 6:6](#); The way or life of sin is not to be the master of Christians.

for [since; because] you are not under law .. Christians are not attempting to be justified by law (the Law of Moses) or any such set of rules and/or regulations.

but under grace .. Under God's scheme and overflow of mercy. The way in which grace removes and destroys sin is stated in the following verses.

Romans 6:15

Romans 6:15

What then? shall we sin ... The apostle proceeds to notice an objection which might be suggested. "If Christians are not under the law, which forbids all sin, but are under grace, which pardons sin, will it not follow that they will feel themselves released from obligation to be holy? Will they not commit sin freely, since the system of grace is one which contemplates pardon, and which will lead them to believe that they may be forgiven to any extent?" - BN

Certainly not! . . God forbid. [Romans 3:4](#).

Romans 6:16

Romans 6:16

Do you not know .. The apostles answers the objection of [Romans 6:15](#) by a reference to the known laws of servitude or slavery, [Romans 6:16-20](#).

that if you give yourselves to anyone as slaves .. The apostle here refers to voluntary servitude; but where this existed, the power of the master over the time and services of the servant was absolute.

Yield yourself .. If you yield to the lust temptations of the body, then you are his servant! And sin reigns!

you are slaves to the one of whom you obey .. Even as voluntary servants we are putting ourselves under the control and destiny of whom we follow and obey. [John 8:34](#).

either of sin, which leads to death .. Serving sin, or leading the life of sin, leads to death, eternal separation from God. [Isaiah 59:2](#); [Romans 6:23](#);

or of obedience, which leads to righteousness? .. The same rule exists in regard to holiness, or righteousness. Obedience to God, is an ellipsis that is understood in this last phrase. Obedience to God is what leads to a life of holiness or righteousness, and the gift of eternal life, [Romans 6:23](#).

Romans 6:17

Romans 6:17

But thanks be to God .. From the conversion of the Roman Christians Paul finds a ground of gratitude to God.

that you were the slaves of sin .. This expression states that before their conversion to Christ they were in bondage to sin, completely its slaves.

but you became obedient from the heart .. Their conversion was not merely in external form, but a sincere genuine turning to the Lord and to the way of life he directs his followers.

to that form of teaching [doctrine] .. The word *form* is τύπον, a type. The gospel they had receive centered in the teaching about the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ [1 Corinthians 15:1-4](#). The type, or *form* of that was their own death, burial and resurrection in baptism, [Romans 6:3-4](#).

obeyed .. that form of doctrine .. Paul preached the doctrine of Christ's death, burial, and resurrection [1 Corinthians 15:1-4](#). The *form* of that doctrine that the Corinthians had obeyed [Acts 18:8](#) was their baptism which Paul teaches here in [Romans 6:3-5](#) is how the candidate imitates the *death, burial, and resurrection* of Christ in obeying the Gospel. - WG

In the Greek "*form*" is a word for a mold such as a craftsman would use to cast molten metal. - MSB

to which you committed [entrusted; delivered] .. The Roman Christians had obeyed the teaching in which they had been instructed, to which they committed themselves.

Romans 6:18

Romans 6:18

and having been set free from sin, .. Having followed the *form* of death, burial, and resurrection of Christ they became dead to the sinful way of life ([Romans 6:11](#)), set free (in the legal term or sense) from the "master" Sin. [John 8:32](#).

you became the slaves [servants] of righteousness. .. They now took a new "master" which directed them to a life of "right-doing" or holiness.

Romans 6:19

Romans 6:19

I speak in human terms .. Paul says, "I am using this illustration from common life in order to be clearly understood."

because of the weakness of your flesh .. Lit. but seems an idiom for the meaning used in the New Century version, **because this is hard for you to understand**. Because you are not use to these spiritual truths, Paul says, I use these human analogies.

Paul's use of the master/slave analogy was an accommodation to their humanness and their difficulty in grasping divine truth.- MSB

He apologizes, so to speak, for using the peculiarly earthly image of the slave-market to enforce a truth of the most exalted spiritual dignity;- CBSC

NIV "you are weak in your natural selves."

Weakness, infirmity, feebleness, as opposed to vigor and strength.

For just as you presented your members as slaves in impurity and to lawlessness .. [NASB]

This seems to be a repeat of [Romans 6:13](#) in extended language.

Just as they had used "members" (parts of the body, hands, feet, tongue, etc.) for impurity and wickedness of life (apparently given to degraded passions as were common among idolatrous practices and heathens), they are now to use all their "members" to the service of righteousness leading to a holy way of life. Perhaps similar to Paul's statement to the Ephesians, [Ephesians 4:28](#). ([1 Thessalonians 4:11-12](#). [1 Timothy 6:18](#); [2 Thessalonians 3:7-10](#);))

so now present your members *as* slaves *of* righteousness for holiness .. They were to now let their surrender to holiness be as sincere and zealous as their previous service to iniquity and evil.

Romans 6:20

Romans 6:20

For when .. Referring to the time they had given themselves to serving sin and living a wicked way of life.

you were free in regard to righteousness .. In their former state devoted entirely to sin they had no time or inclination to live holy and righteous lives.

Paul seems to be implying that now they ought to be entirely *free* of living a sinful life.

While "serving" sin they didn't find themselves in servitude to God, thus "free" (in the legal sense of his illustration) in regard to righteousness.

Romans 6:21

Romans 6:21

What fruit did you have .. What reward or advantage was there in indulging in sinful living.

things of which you are now ashamed .. They had turned their lives around and now were ashamed of their former practices. [Ephesians 5:12](#). cf. Romans 1; [2 Corinthians 4:2](#); [Philippians 3:19](#).

For the end .. The results of those things lead to death.

Romans 6:22

Romans 6:22

But now having been set free from sin .. This the Roman Christians had done by putting to death the old man enslaved to the master "Sin", [Romans 6:6-7](#);

In putting to death the old man, a new man was resurrected (raised from the water grave of baptism) to a new life free from sin, becoming now servants to God, with the new future of life everlasting.

having become slaves of God .. They had accepted a new Master into their lives, "God". This meant a new life of servitude to Him, obeying Him.

you fruit ... and the end .. The results of this new life is a life of holiness and a life leading to *everlasting [eternal] life*.

everlasting life .. See note at [Romans 2:7](#).

Romans 6:23

[Romans 6:23](#)

For .. The "for" refers to the last statement. - CBSC.

For the wages of sin .. The word "wages" [ὀψώνια](#) *opsōnia* properly refers to the pay of a soldier. That with which he would buy the things he would eat, etc. [Luke 3:14](#); [1 Corinthians 9:7](#); [2 Corinthians 11:8](#).

"Wages" implies something one has earned and what one deserves.

is death .. Eternal separation from God and everlasting punishment. Here it stands opposed to eternal life. [Ezekiel 18:4](#).

Wages normally maintain life, but these wages result in death.- Constable

But the gift of God .. In contrast to "wages" earned, or given in payment and something due, *eternal life* is a "gift," something not earned but gratuitously conferred.

is eternal life .. See note at [Romans 2:7](#); Romans 6.22. In opposition to death. Eternal life speaks not only to its duration, but to its supreme quality.

in Christ Jesus our Lord .. Eternal life is to be found only in Christ, [Acts 4:12](#); and it embraces a relationship with Him that is superior to life here

Romans 7:1

[Romans 7:1](#)

Or do you know know .. This is an appeal to their own observation respecting the relation between husband and wife. The illustration [Romans 7:2-3](#) is designed simply to show that as when a man dies, and the connection between him and his wife is dissolved, his Law ceases to be binding on her, so also a separation has taken place between Christians and the Law [of Moses], in which they have become dead to it, and they are not now to attempt to draw their life and peace from it, but from that new source with which they are connected by the gospel, [Romans 7:4](#). - BN

brethren .. Paul seems to be speaking especially to Jewish Christians in Rome.

(for I speak to them who know the law) .. Probably the apostle refers here more particularly to the Jewish members of the Roman church, who were qualified particularly to understand the nature of the Law, and to appreciate the argument.

The Law to which he appeals is sufficiently general to make the illustration intelligible to all people.

that the law .. The immediate reference here is probably to the Mosaic Law. But what is here affirmed is equally true of all laws.

has dominion .. Rule, control, or lordship. The Law is here personified, and represented as setting up a lordship over a man, and exacting obedience.

over a man .. Over the man who is under its control.

as long as he lives? .. The sense is, that death releases a man from the laws by which he was bound in life. It is a general principle, relating to the laws of the land, the law of a parent, the law of a contract, etc.

The Greek here may mean either "as he lives," or "as it [the law] lives". But the current translation has evidently expressed the sense.

Romans 7:2

Romans 7:2

For the woman .. This verse is a specific illustration of the general principle in [Romans 7:1](#), that death dissolves the connection and relationship which make the marriage law binding in life.

is bound by the law .. See the same sentiment in [1 Corinthians 7:39](#).

to her husband .. She is united to him; and is under his authority as the head of the household. To him is particularly committed the headship of the family, and the wife is subject to him in the Lord, [Ephesians 5:23](#), [Ephesians 5:33](#).

She is released [loosed; free; discharged] .. The connection is dissolved. With the husband's death she is free from his headship or authority over her.

from the law [concerning] of her husband [marriage] .. The law, rule, or principle, that had her in a connection to her husband no longer is valid, for he is dead. *Death* dissolved that connection or relationship.

DIVORCE .. [Matthew 19:8-9](#) & [Matthew 5:31-32](#); [1 Corinthians 7:10-11](#), [Luke 16:18](#), [Romans 7:1-3](#), [Mark 6:16-18](#), [Ezra 10:1-3](#).

Romans 7:3

Romans 7:3

So then if .. An observation made from his point in v. 2. Cf. [Matthew 5:32](#).

while her husband lives, she marries another man ..

she shall be called - She will be. The word "called" here [χρηματίζει](#) *chrēmatisēi* is often used to denote being called by an oracle or by divine revelation. But it is here employed in the simple sense of being authoritatively and solemnly declared to be, or so regarded.

an adulteress .. One (here feminine) in an unlawful sexual relationship.

This comment is related to the Jewish argument between the rabbinical schools of Shammai and Hillel over [Deuteronomy 24:1-4](#); particularly "some indecency." The Hillel school was the liberal group that would allow divorce for any reason. The Shammai school was the conservative group that would allow divorce only for adultery or some other sexual impropriety (cf. [Matthew 5:32](#); [Matthew 19:9](#)). - Utley

but if her husband dies ... Restating and applying the principle given in [Romans 7:2](#).

she is free from the law .. The law of marriage, by which she was before bound to her husband.

so that she is no adulteress .. Nor will any consider her such; she is clear from any such imputation.

though she be married to another man .. Hence second marriages are lawful.

The point Paul is making to these Jewish Christians at Rome is: "As a woman whose husband has died is free to marry another, so also are believers, since they have died to the law, free to belong to Christ."
[Note: Mounce, p. 160.]

Romans 7:4

Romans 7:4

Therefore .. [Likewise; Wherefore, In the same way] .. In Paul's conclusion he is now ready to make his application.

my brethren .. He is addressing Roman Christians, especially those with a Jewish background.

you also have become dead to the law .. As in [Romans 7:6](#), the law (the Law of Moses) can have no more power over them than a law can have over dead persons.

They are pictured as having died to sin and the law, [Romans 6:2-4](#), therefore any connection to the law is dissolved.

Christ abolished the Law's dominion over us, [Ephesians 2:15](#); [Colossians 1:22](#); [Colossians 2:14](#); [1 Peter 2:24](#). Thus being released from that Law the Jewish Christians were free to enter a new union with him who died for them.

became dead (were slain) .. The apostle here departs from his usual word "died," using the more expressive phrase "were slain," to make it clear that he meant their being "crucified with Christ" (as expressed in [Romans 6:3-6](#), and [Galatians 2:20](#)). - JFB

[Instead of νεκρῶν Paul here uses ἐθανατώθητε. (to be put to death by the intervention of others. See WordStudy) - WG]

through the body of Christ .. The Christian putting to death the old man and being buried into a new relationship with Christ is dead the Law which now had no more dominion over him.

It was the slain death of Christ on the cross that accomplished the great feat of fulfilling man's obligation to the Law and freeing him from it.

that you may be married to another .. This completes the illustration of [Romans 7:2-3](#). As the woman is freed from the law of her husband by his death, when married again she comes under the authority of her new husband, so we who are made free from the Law and are free to belong to Christ and submit to him.

The union of Christ and his people are frequently illustrated by the most tender of all earthly connections, that of a husband and wife, [Ephesians 5:23-30](#); [Revelation 21:9](#).

-- to Him who was raised from the dead .. See the force of this explained, [Romans 6:8](#).

that we should bear fruit to God .. That we should live a holy life. This is the point and scope of all this illustration. The new connection is such as will make us holy.

It is also implied that the tendency of the Law was only to bring forth fruit unto death [Romans 7:5](#), and that the tendency of the gospel is to make man holy and pure; compare [Galatians 5:22-23](#).

Romans 7:5

Romans 7:5

For when .. The illustration in [Romans 7:5-6](#) seem designed to show that the Law aroused sinful passions which led to spiritual death instead of providing life.

we were in the flesh .. Unconverted; being controlled by fleshly (earthly, natural) passions. When we were living under the Law before conversion to Christ.

the sinful passions which were aroused by the law .. *τα παθήματα* *ta pathēmata*, means simply the passions, the evil affections, corrupt desires of earthly minded men. The expression is a Hebraism meaning *sinful passions*, and refers to the wicked propensities and inclinations of an unspiritual man.

The design of this illustration is to show the effect of the Law upon men, [Romans 7:5-12](#). While the holy Law did not cause sinful passions, it identified sin, and by forbidding indulgence it

inflamed sin.

were at work in our members .. In our body, that is, in us. Those sinful propensities made use of our members as instruments, to secure gratification; Note, [Romans 6:12-13](#); compare [Romans 6:23](#).

to bear fruit to death .. [NIV we bore fruit for death] The results were that the indulgence of those passions would be fatal, and led to death. See [Romans 6:21](#).

Romans 7:6

Romans 7:6

But now .. Under the gospel. This verse states the consequences of the gospel, in distinction from the effects of the Law.

we have been [are] .. A contrast of the two ways; what had been, and what now is.

delivered from the law .. Delivered from the law by matter of death.

The Law of Moses is not applicable to the Christians in this new dispensation of grace. [Galatians 3:24-25](#); [Ephesians 2:15](#) The Christian lives under the new covenant of the Gospel. [Hebrews 12:24](#); [Hebrews 10:9-10](#);

having died to what we were held by, .. Paul says that in conversion Christians died to the Law that they had once held them, as if in bondage, [Romans 7:1](#).

Note: There is a variation here in the manuscripts. Some read it if the Law was dead; others, as in the text here, as if we were dead. The majority is in favor of this latter reading. cf. [Romans 7:4](#)

so that we should serve in newness of the Spirit .. That we may now serve God in a new spirit, or in a new and spiritual manner.

This is a form of expression implying,

(1) That their service under the gospel was to be of a new kind, differing from that under the former dispensation.

(2) That it was to be of a spiritual nature, as distinguished from that practiced by the Jews; compare [2 Corinthians 3:6](#); Note, [Romans 2:28-29](#). - BN

The worship required under the gospel is described as that of the spirit and the heart, rather than that of form and ceremony; [John 4:23](#), [Philippians 3:3](#).

and not in the oldness of the letter .. The use of "oldness" indicates that the form of worship under the old dispensation had now passed away.

A reference to the Law of Moses and by extension perhaps the entire Old Testament scriptures.

It was a service consisting in external forms and ceremonies; in the offering of sacrifices and of incense, according to the literal requirements of the Law rather than the sincere offering of the heart; [2 Corinthians 3:6](#), "The letter killeth; the spirit giveth life;" [John 6:63](#); [Hebrews 10:1-4](#); [Hebrews 9:9-10](#). - BN

NIV "the old way of the written code" may cause some to think that a "written code" (even the N.T. scriptures) are all bad and have no authority and we only have to serve God in a "new way of the Spirit" (NIV) and be a "spiritual" people, not tied to any written code.

Romans 7:7

Romans 7:7

What shall we say then? .. Paul deals with objections that might be raised.

The Jew would ask, "Are we then to suppose that the holy Law of God is not only insufficient to sanctify us, but that it is the mere occasion of increased sin?"

To this objection the apostle replies with great wisdom, by showing that the evil was not in the Law, but in man; that though these effects often followed, yet that the Law itself was good and pure. - BN

Is the law sin? .. Is it sinful? Is it evil? For if, as it is said in [Romans 7:5](#), the sinful passions were "by the law," it might naturally be asked whether the Law itself was not an evil thing?

Certainly not! [God forbid; by no means;] .. cf. [Romans 3:4](#)

Nay [Yet; On the contrary; But; Indeed;] .. The word translated "nay" is the conjunction *ἀλλὰ* *alla*, and the context must indicate how the author is using it.

I would not have known sin except through the law .. (Yet, if it had not been for the law, I should not have known sins. - RSV) The Law defined sin. Certain actions are now clarified to be sinful, and not to be practiced.

For I would not have known covetousness unless the law had said .. The desire might have existed, but he would not have known it to be sinful.

Man without law might have the strong feelings of desire; He might covet what others possessed; He might take property, or be disobedient to parents; but he would not know it to be evil.

You shall not covet .. The tenth commandment, [Exodus 20:17](#). This is the beginning of the command, and all the rest is implied. The apostle knew that it would be understood without repeating the whole.

[Romans 7:7](#) through [Romans 8:3](#)

Paul's use of the "I" in this section. Various interpretations:

- 1) Paul speaking for Adam about Adam's sin - and moral law.
- 2) Paul speaking of mankind in general and the Mosaical law in general.
- 3) Paul speaking of himself personally, before conversion, under the Law.
- 4) Paul using himself to picture a general man under the Mosaical Law.
(Not necessarily personal, i.e., Paul's observation about the human nature and the principles of the Law.)
- 5) Paul speaking of himself personally now as a Christian.

Refutations/strengths of the previous positions.

#1 No - Adam not under the M.L which seems to be the law referred to.

#2 --

#3 --

#4 --

#5 No - This would seem inconsistent with other passages about Paul's holiness and good conscience, [Acts 23:1](#), etc.

Romans 7:8

[Romans 7:8](#)

But sin .. Paul illustrates the effect of the Law on the mind, and in this verse he depicts its influence in exciting to evil desires and purposes.

taking opportunity [occasion;] .. The word "occasion" *ἀφορμήν* *aphormēn* properly denotes any preparation for accomplishing anything; then any opportunity, occasion, etc. of doing it.

The word *opportunity* is a military term for a position seized in enemy territory that becomes a base of operations (see [Romans 7:11](#)). - NLTSB

Sin uses the specific requirements of the law as a base of operation from which to launch its evil work. - MSB

Thus, the fruit presented to Eve was the exciting cause of sin; the wedge of gold to Achan excited his covetousness. Had not these objects been presented, the evil principles of the heart might have slumbered, and never have been called forth. - BN

by the commandment .. By all law appointed to restrain and control the mind.

produced in me all manner of devil desire .. Produced or worked in me. The word used here means often to operate in a powerful and efficacious manner. (Doddridge.)

all manner of desire [KJV "concupiscence"; ESV "coveteousness"; NASB "coveting";] .. Greek, "*all desire*." Every species of unlawful desire. It was not confined to one single desire, but extended to everything which the Law declared to be wrong.

The word is the same which in [Romans 7:7](#) is rendered "lust" "covet".

[See BN for extended discussion of several points how "Law" excited sin.]

For apart from the law sin was [is; ESV lies;] dead. .. That is, before Law was give, or where it did not exist, sin was dormant. "Sin" didn't exist, or was inactive, unexcited. People's passions would exist; but without law they would not be known to be evil. [Romans 4:15](#).

There is no verb in this phrase; one must be supplied. If one supplies a present tense, it implies that this is a universal principle. If one supplies an aorist tense, it would seem to referred specifically to Paul's life. [Utley]

Romans 7:9

[Romans 7:9](#)

For I .. The "I" is emphatic. Is the apostles here referring to his own past experience? Or is he speaking the sentiment of all who are unconverted, and who are depending on their own righteousness?

was alive once .. When he with confidence thought himself righteous, and doing-right.

Paul describes a figurative existence in which a person is unaware of sin and undisturbed by condemnation from the law. This might refer to Paul's own experience before becoming a Christian - FSB

Subjectively he was "alive;" unconscious of resistance to God, and alienation from Him, and condemnation. - CBSC

without the law .. Was Paul ever really without the Law of Moses? Or is he referring to a time before he came of age and the Law applied to him in its spiritual meaning and with understanding.

but when the commandment came .. When, Paul or the generic person he is speaking of, intelligently understood the Law and its application to his heart and conscience. It is not referring to the time before Sinai where the Law was given.

sin revived .. Lived again. This means that it was before dormant [Romans 7:8](#), but was now quickened into new life. The word is usually applied to a renewal of life, [Romans 14:19](#); [Luke 15:24](#), [Luke 15:32](#), but here it means substantially the same as the expression in [Romans 7:8](#),

and I died .. That is, I was by it involved in additional guilt and misery. It stands opposed to "I was alive," and must mean the opposite of that; and evidently denotes that the effect of the commandment was to bring him under what he calls death, (compare [Romans 5:12](#), [Romans 5:14-15](#);) that is, sin reigned, and raged, and

produced its withering and condemning effects; it led to aggravated guilt and misery. - BN

The essential idea here is, that the Law did not answer the purpose which the Jew would claim for it, to sanctify the soul and to give comfort, but that all its influence on the heart was to produce aggravated, unpardoned guilt and woe. - BN

He realized his deadness, spiritually; that all his religious credentials and accomplishments were rubbish ([Philippians 3:7-8](#)). – MSB

Romans 7:10

Romans 7:10

And the commandment .. The Law to which he had referred before.

which was to bring life .. Which was intended to produce life, or happiness. Life here stands opposed to death, and means felicity, peace, eternal bliss.

I found to bring death. .. Its effect upon me was to produce aggravated guilt and condemnation, [Romans 7:9](#).

Romans 7:11

Romans 7:11

For sin .. This verse is a repetition, with a little variation of the sentiment in [Romans 7:8](#).

Deceived me .. The word used here properly means to lead or seduce from the right way; and then to deceive, solicit to sin, cause to err from the way of virtue, [Romans 16:18](#); [1 Corinthians 3:18](#); [2 Corinthians 11:3](#),

and by it killed me. .. By the Law, [Romans 7:8](#); "I died" meaning the same as in [Romans 7:8](#).

Romans 7:12

Romans 7:12

Therefore [Wherefore; so then;] .. The conclusion to which we come is, that the Law is not to be blamed, though these are its effects under existing circumstances.

the law is holy .. Is good, not sin; pure in its nature. Romans 7.7.

And the commandment .. The word "commandment" is here synonymous with the Law.

holy .. pure, and good.

and just .. Righteous, fair.

and good. .. In itself good; and in its own nature tending to produce happiness. The sin and condemnation of the guilty is not the fault of the Law. If obeyed, it would produce happiness everywhere.

See a most beautiful description of the law of God in [Psalms 19:7-11](#).

Romans 7:13

Romans 7:13

We see a shift from the past tense, "I was" to the present tense, "I am".

Has then what is good become death to me? .. This is another objection which the apostle proceeds to answer. The objection is this, "Can it be possible that what is admitted to be good and pure, should be

changed into evil? Can what tends to life, be made death to a man?" In answer to this, the apostle repeats that the fault was not in the Law, but was in himself, and in his sinful propensities. - BN

Certainly not! .. Sin is the cause of spiritual death, not the good law!

But sin, that it might appear sin, .. Again sin is personified as in Romans 7.8.

was producing death in me .. Sin was no longer dormant but he was made to see how deep and evil it was.

so that sin through the commandment might become exceedingly sinful. .. The commandment (or Law) exposed sin as rebellion against God. "Utterly sinful" (Uteley)

exceedingly sinful .. In the original this is a very strong expression, and is one of those used by Paul to express strong emphasis, or intensity *καθ' ὑπερβολήν* *kath hyperbolēn* by hyperboles. In an excessive degree; to the utmost possible extent, [1 Corinthians 12:31](#); [2 Corinthians 1:8](#); [2 Corinthians 4:7](#); [2 Corinthians 12:7](#); [Galatians 1:13](#).

An awareness of the true nature of sin and its deadly character, brings the sinner to see his need of salvation—the very purpose God intended the law to serve ([Galatians 3:19-22](#)). (MSB)

Romans 7:14

Romans 7:14

The remainder of this chapter has been the subject of no small degree of controversy. The question has been whether it describes the state of Paul before his conversion, or afterward.

The Importance of Genre in Romans 7:14-15

Many commentators have thought that [Romans 7:14-25](#) describes Paul's struggle with sin at the time he was writing the passage, because he uses present-tense verbs. But diatribe style, which Paul uses in much of Romans, was graphic in its images, and Paul in the context has been describing his past life under law ([Romans 7:7-13](#)). Thus it is more likely that Paul contrasts the spiritual worthlessness of religious introspection and self-centeredness (count the "I's" and "me's") in Romans 7 with the life of the Spirit by grace in Romans 6 and 8.

Keener, C. S. (1993). The IVP Bible background commentary: New Testament ([Romans 7:14-25](#)). Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

For we know .. We admit. It is a conceded, well understood point.

that the law is spiritual .. That was not sensual, corrupt, earthly, carnal; but was pure and spiritual. The effect it had on man was not the fault of the Law, but of the man, who was sold under sin.

but I am .. The present tense shows that he is describing himself as he was at the time of writing. This is the natural and obvious construction, and if this be not the meaning, it is impossible to account for his having changed the past tense [Romans 7:7](#) to the present. - BN

but I am carnal .. Fleshly; sensual; opposed to spiritual. This word is used because in the Scriptures the flesh is spoken of as the source of sensual passions and propensities, [Galatians 5:19-21](#).

sold under sin. .. A man living to his carnal side is doomed by sin and its ultimate fate.

The expression used here, "sold under sin," is "borrowed from the practice of selling captives taken in war, as slaves." (Stuart.) The emphasis is not "sold" or the act of selling, but on the one who now had control and master-ship. The verses which follow this are an explanation of the sense, and of the manner in which he was "sold under sin."

This expression is used to affirm Paul is not speaking about believers, because (the argument goes) it cannot be affirmed that a Christian is sold under sin.

Romans 7:15

Romans 7:15

For what I am doing, I do not understand. .. [RSV "I do not understand my own actions."]

For what I am doing .. That is, the evil which I do, the sin of which I am conscious, and which troubles me.

I do no allow [understand] .. I do not approve; I do not wish it; the prevailing bent of my inclinations and purposes is against it

For what I will to do, that I do not practice; .. I do not practice that of which I approve, which is the desired course of action.

but what I hate, that I do. .. I find myself doing the course of action of which I do not approve. Under the influence of carnal desires I find myself hating what I do.

Romans 7:16

Romans 7:16

If then, I do .. In struggling with evil one finds himself agreeing the law that evil is sinful.

The very struggle with evil shows that it is not loved, or approved, but that the Law which condemns it is really loved. - BN

...the perfectly righteous law is not responsible for his sin. - MSB

Paul is not absolving himself of personal responsibility but emphasizing the power of sin. - ESBSB

This inward state of our hearts [desire to obey] demonstrates that we really do accept the fact that God's law is good in every way ([Romans 7:12-13](#))

Morris suggests that καλός ("good") here means "morally beautiful" (292).

Romans 7:17

Romans 7:17

But now, it is no longer I who do it .. This is evidently figurative language, for it is really the man that sins when evil is committed.

...the apostle makes a distinction between sin and what he intends by the pronoun "I". - BN

but sin that dwells in me .. Figuratively speaking. See [Ephesians 3:17](#) for notes on the Jewish metaphor of *indwelling*.

Dwelling in me as its home. This is a strong expression, denoting that sin had taken up its habitation in the mind, and abode there.

This expression stands in contrast with another that occurs, where it is said that "the Spirit of God dwells" in the Christian, [Romans 8:9](#); [1 Corinthians 3:16](#). - BN

Many have misconstrued Paul's comments as abdicating personal responsibility for his sin by embracing a form of Greek dualism (which would later spawn Gnosticism;...). Dualism taught that the body is evil and the spirit is good, so its adherents sinned with impunity by claiming they were not responsible; their sin was entirely the product of their physical bodies, while their spirits remained untouched and unsullied. But the apostle has already acknowledged personal guilt for his sin ([Romans 7:14](#); cf. [1 John 1:10](#)). - MSB

Romans 7:18

Romans 7:18

For I know .. This is to illustrate what he has just said that sin dwells in him.

that in me (that is, in my flesh) .. In the carnal body, which has lusts and passions of its own.

[Even small innocent children will sometimes be jealous and/or resort to hitting, biting, etc.]

nothing good dwells; .. The passions to do evil within us overwhelms (surpasses) any desire to do good. "Nothing" here is a hyperbole. [Sometimes even children will be see sharing and loving, even after a brief spat between two.]

for to will is present with me, . . To purpose or intend to do good.

The expression may also imply that it was near to him *παράκειται* *parakeitai*, that is, it was constantly before him; it was now his habitual inclination and purpose of mind. - BN

but how to perform what is good I do not find [do it] .. I find strong obstacles so that I fail of doing it. Such obstacles arise from the long indulgence in sin, and carnal passions toward evil.

Romans 7:19

Romans 7:19

For I do not do the good I want .. This is substantially a repetition of what is said in [Romans 7:15](#).

The repetition shows how full the mind of the apostle was of the subject; It is not uncommon for Paul to express his intense interest in a subject, and repeat various aspects. [BN]

but the evil I do not want is what I do .. cf [Romans 7:15](#). See also [Galatians 5:17](#).

19, 20.] These verses almost repeat vv. 15, 17; - CBSC

7:19–20 These verses restate the idea of verses 15 and 17 respectively. Paul evidently repeated the ideas to heighten our appreciation for the sense of frustration that he felt. – Constable

Romans 7:20

Romans 7:20

See [Ephesians 3:17](#) note on "Indwelling"

Now if I do .. This verse is also a repetition of what was said in [Romans 7:16-17](#).

Romans 7:21

Romans 7:21

So I find it to be a law that when I want to do right .. There have been various opinions about the meaning of the word "law" in this place. It is evident that it is used here in a sense somewhat unusual.

The term "law" here seems to be used in the sense of a pattern or routine occurrence that one learns from experience. [Ex. the "law of gravity."]

evil lies close at hand .. When wanting to do good or what is right a conflicting alternative rears its head. The path to doing evil is always near at hand.

We would say that the temptations of the Satan are trying to overwhelm our desire to do good.

Romans 7:22

Romans 7:22

For I delight .. The word used here [Συνήδομαι](#) *Sunēdomai*, occurs no where else in the New Testament. It properly means to rejoice with anyone; and expresses not only approbation of the understanding, as the expression, "I consent unto the law," in [Romans 7:16](#), but more than that it denotes sensible pleasure in the heart.

It indicates not only intellectual assent, but emotion, an emotion of pleasure in the contemplation of the Law.

in the law of God .. The word "law" here is used in a large sense, to denote all the communications which God has given mankind.

according to the inward man [in my inmost self] .. The mind, and the spirit of man. [Romans 7:23](#)

The expression "*the inward man*" is used sometimes to denote the rational part of man as opposed to the sensual; sometimes the mind as opposed to the body (compare [2 Corinthians 4:16](#); [1 Peter 3:4](#)). It is thus used by the Greek classic writers. Here it is used evidently in opposition to a carnal side of man. [BN]

Romans 7:23

Romans 7:23

But I see in my members .. fleshly or carnal body.

Note, [Romans 6:13](#); compare [1 Corinthians 6:15](#); [Colossians 3:5](#). The body is composed of many members; and as the flesh is regarded as the source of sin [Romans 7:18](#), the law of sin is said to be in the members, that is, in the body itself.

another law .. principle, or seemingly a rule, learned from experience. Note, [Romans 7:21](#)

at war with the law of my mind .. Fighting against, or resisting the inner man. The mind under the influence of the Gospel is to control our lives. see [Romans 7:25](#) also.

making me captive to the law of sin .. Making me a prison, or a captive. This is the completion of the figure respecting the warfare.

which dwells in my members .. A captive taken in war was at the disposal of the victor. So the apostle represents himself as engaged in a warfare; and as being overcome, and made an unwilling captive to the evil inclinations of the carnal side of his nature.

Romans 7:24

Romans 7:24

O wretched man that I am! .. The feeling implied by this lamentation is the result of this painful conflict within between the desire to do right and the passions, emotions, desires, of the body pulling in the other direction.

It is often an agonizing struggle between good and evil; a struggle which annoys the peace, and renders life wretched.

"Wretched", is *talaipōros*, originally "wretched through the exhaustion of hard labor" (Vincent).

Who shall deliver me .. Who shall rescue me; the condition of a mind in deep distress, and conscious of its own weakness, and looking for aid.

from this body of death .. The answer of course is Christ! Who in the resurrection will give us an immortal body that never dies! NCV "this body that brings me death."

There is the illustration that the Romans executed criminals according to their crime. (ex: Nero put Christians to a burning stake for committing the crime of arson, or so they were accused.) And that a man

who drowned his enemy was tied to his dead body and he was cast into the river to be pulled down and drowned by the dead body of his victim.)

Romans 7:25

[Romans 7:25](#)

I thank God .. for the deliverance from slavery to sin, as I myself was incompetent to do so.

through Jesus Christ our Lord! .. The rescue is traced back to the mercy and grace of the Lord Jesus Christ.

What conscience could not do, what the Law could not do, what unaided human strength could not do, has been accomplished by the plan of the gospel; and deliverance can be expected there, and there alone.

This is the point to which all his reasoning had been headed; and so having shown that the Law was insufficient to effect this deliverance, he now expresses his thankfulness for what the gospel can do.

The superiority of the gospel to the Law in overcoming all the evils under which man labors, is thus triumphantly established; compare [1 Corinthians 15:57](#).

So then .. We have come to the conclusion of the whole inquiry.

With the mind .. The inner man. The mind (heart) under the influence of the Gospel is to control our lives.

I myself serve the law of God .. Do honor to it as a just and holy law [Romans 7:12](#), [Romans 7:16](#), and am inclined to obey it, [Romans 7:22](#), [Romans 7:24](#).

but with the flesh the law of sin. .. Realizing that inclinations of the carnal nature leads to sin; Giving in to the lusts and passions of our carnal being is the law of sin.

But in this world sin can find its remedy in the mercy of the Lord that leads one to repentance and to forgiveness.

[Christ] gave people an alternative to the ineffective law, empowered people to overcome sin (as He did), and provided them with a relationship with God that sin previously prevented. - FSB

* See note at the end about the NIV "*sinful nature*."

Alternative View: The expression "*I myself*" stands in contrast with "*Jesus Christ*". Christ give the deliverance from slavery to sin; But "*I myself*" had tried under the Law of Moses to serve God, but the flesh was slave to sin. And this last verse, a summary of the struggle under the Law, prepares the reader for the grand deliverance that Paul expounds in the next chapter. [Constable]

So then with the mind I myself .. I myself, that is, by myself and without Christ. In that state of mind delights in the law of God ([Romans 7:22](#)), but the flesh is devoted to the service of sin. Hence the struggle, the captivity, the bondage, the cry for deliverance. Hence the failure of the law to deliver, and the need of Christ. - PNT

* "**the sinful nature**" [NIV] is literally "the flesh" (σάρξ, sarx). I believe that faithful exegesis leads us to reject the prevalent understanding of *sarx* as "sinful nature" (contra the NIV), and see it as referring to the unredeemed physical body. Thus, what the NIV calls "the desires of the sinful nature" here are the same as the lusts or "evil desires" of the "mortal body" in [Romans 6:12](#) (see JC, 1:401–402). - CPNIV [underline is WG]

Romans 8:1

Romans 8:1

There is therefore .. The "*therefore*" points to the argument of chapter 7 which shows that in Christ we are delivered from sin and from the curse of the law.

now .. The Grace Age under Christ. cf. [Romans 3:21](#); *Now* is a key word of contrast in the book of Romans. The apostle had there shown in chapter 7 that the Law could not effect deliverance from sin, but that such deliverance was to be traced to the gospel alone; [Romans 7:23-25](#)

no condemnation to those in Christ Jesus .. Those who are in the relationship with Christ as describe in [Romans 6:3-5](#), they have died with Him, been buried and raised with Christ. cf. [Galatians 3:26-27](#).

Having in Christ satisfied the Law they cannot be under condemnation from the Law. This blessed condiditon depends on a vital union with Christ. (Compare [John 3:18](#); [John 5:24](#); [Romans 5:18-19](#)).

[There is textual argument that the following part of this verse was missing from many MSS.]

who do not walk .. "Baptized into Christ," we must walk in him, **not after the flesh, but after the Spirit**. Compare [John 15:1-7](#), and [Ephesians 4:17](#); [Ephesians 5:8](#); [Galatians 5:16](#);

"*Walk*" is a frequent metaphor to describe the way one is to live, or conduct one's self.

according to the flesh . .Who do not live to gratify the corrupt desires and passions of the flesh; What it is to walk after the flesh may be seen in [Galatians 5:19-21](#).

but according to the Spirit .. The translators capitalized "Spirit", but the reference may be to man's own mind controlled by the Gospel.

1) If the reference is the the Holy Spirit, then we are to walk in the path He has laid out for us (in the Scriptures), a walk in holiness and purity of life. What walking in the Spirit produces may be seen in [Galatians 5:22-23](#).

2) If one understands "spirit" as not to be captilized, it refers to the life the spiritual man is to walk, as a man controlled by the gospel of Christ.

Romans 8:2

Romans 8:2

For the law of the Spirit of life .. The word "law" here means that "rule, command, or influence" which "the Spirit of life" produces. A law often means anything by which we are ruled or governed;

of the Spirit of life .. Most understand this as a reference to the Holy Spirit.

In Christ Jesus .. where freedom is found. In the union relationship with Christ Jesus.

has made me free from the law of sin and death. .. The gospel has made us from from the guilt of sin and its punishment, death, by the deliverance effected by Jesus Christ on the cross.

[God "universal" law is that sin deserves and reaps "death". [Genesis 2:17](#); [Genesis 3:4](#); [Romans 6:23](#); [Ezekiel 18:20](#).]

Romans 8:3

Romans 8:3

The law .. This reference to "law" seems to be to the Law of Moses, which called for perfection which man couldn't attain.

in that .. Because.

it was weak .. Ineffective, in sense that it did not accomplish its purpose, and make men live in a holy relationship with God.

The law is weak to us, because we are weak to it: the sun cannot give light to a blind eye, not from any impotency in itself, but merely from the incapacity of the subject it shines upon. - Poole

through the flesh .. The fault was not in the Law, which was good [Romans 7:12](#), but it was owing to the strength of the natural passions and the sinfulness of the carnal side of man, see [Romans 7:7-11](#).

God *did* by sending His own Son .. God accomplished, (condemning sin in the flesh) that, by sending his Son, which the Law could not do.

The word *did*, or *accomplished*, it is necessary to understand here, in order to complete the sense.

[Was the second member of the Godhead a "son" before becoming incarnate? Or in becoming incarnate he took that role, and became a "son" in exhibiting all the spiritual qualities of the "father"? see note at [Acts 4:36](#); [Philippians 2:5-8](#);

in the likeness of sinful flesh, .. Jesus took up a carnal body, and became subject to all the passions and inclinations of such a carnal, fleshly body, yet He did not sin. [Hebrews 4:15](#). In this way he is able to sympathize, understand mankind, and extend grace and forgiveness.

in the likeness of sinful flesh .. This poses a problem for those believing in Total Depravity! Jesus had the very flesh we have but was sinless. Here we see Jesus' humanity. The flesh is the avenue of sin, but Jesus never surrendered to these temptations. [Romans 6:6](#).

on account of sin: .. The expression evidently means, by an Offering for sin, or that he was given as a Sacrifice on account of sin. His *sending* ([εμψυας](#) * G3992) by the Father was in respect of sin.

condemned sin .. This is what the cross does. Sin is condemned, (1) By the spotless life of Christ. In the flesh he was without sin. (2) By his death for sin our past sins are forgiven. (3) By our vital union with his death and life we rise to walk in a new life, with a new spirit, and hence, not under the power of the flesh. See [Romans 6:4](#). - PNT

The meaning is, that God severely punished sin, and inflicted the curse and penalty of it, that was due to us, in and upon the person of his own Son; God laid on him the iniquities of us all, and he bore them in his body upon a tree: see [Galatians 3:13](#) [1 Peter 2:24](#). - Poole

He condemned sin in the flesh, .. The word "condemn" may be used in the sense of overcoming, or subduing; [John 16:33](#); [1 John 5:4](#);

[2 Peter 2:6](#), "And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes, condemned them with an overthrow." In this sense the sacrifice of Christ has no; only condemned sin as being evil, but has weakened its power and destroyed its influence, and will finally annihilate its existence in all who are saved by that death.

Sin is, as it were, brought into court, and the cause given against it. It loses all its rights and claims over its victim. - Ellicott

In the flesh. .. In that same sphere, the flesh, in which sin had hitherto had the mastery, it now stood condemned and worsted; it was unable to exercise its old sway any longer. - Ellicott

Romans 8:4

Romans 8:4

that the righteous requirement of the law .. God's law that requires our "righteousness" can now be met. This is done by "forgiveness" by Jesus paying the penalty for our sin.

The moral law finds its basis in the character of God and is presented in outline form in the Ten Commandments; its most condensed form is in Jesus' commands to love God and to love one's neighbor as one's self. - MSB

might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh .. By living lives not seeking to fulfil the passions and lusts of the carnal man we can be declared "righteous" or "justified" from sin because of the

sacrifice of Christ for sin. He paid the penalty, fulfilled sin's demand, and we can be declared "righteous."

walk .. Is a frequent metaphor which refers to a lifestyle, the way of living and thinking that characterize a person's life (cf. [Luke 1:6](#); [Ephesians 4:17](#); [1 John 1:7](#)).

walk not after the flesh .. to be dominated by it. [Romans 8:1](#). [Galatians 5:19-21](#).

after the Spirit . The way of living that is dominated by a spiritual mind. The definition and results is given in [Romans 8:6](#); [Galatians 5:22-23](#);

Romans 8:5

Romans 8:5

according to the flesh .. Who live following and giving in to the carnal side of man's fleshly lusts and passions.

set their minds on things of the flesh .. They devoted themselves to the gratification of their carnal desires and wants.

the Spirit .. Man's own spiritual side, used in contrast to the carnal mind. Man's spirit (inner man) is to be dominated by the teaching and guidance given us by God's Holy Spirit, and live the way the Holy Spirit through the inspired writers teach us to live a life of godliness pleasing God.

The question here is whether the word "Spirit" is to be capitalized and refer to the "Holy Spirit" or whether it refers to man's spirit.

[The first occurrence of the word "*spirit*" seem to refer to man's spirit and his spiritual way of life, while the second occurrence refers to the Holy Spirit. -WG]

Paul again shows his Roman readers that living a life of sin is foreign to the Christian way of life, cf. [Romans 6:1](#).

Romans 8:6

Romans 8:6

carnally minded is death .. Minding, or following, the inclinations of the flesh leads one to condemnation and death, the penalty for transgression. Eternal death is eternal punishment and separation from God.

spiritually minded is life and peace .. To be spiritually minded is to seek those attitudes and views which the Holy Spirit produces, and to follow his leading. [Galatians 5:22-23](#).

Life is opposed to *death*. And *peace* to at peace with both one's self and with God. [John 14:27](#); [John 16:33](#); [Romans 14:17](#);

Romans 8:7

Romans 8:7

carnally minded .. [mind set on the flesh] .. This describes one who is oriented toward gratifying himself. This is Paul's way of speaking of those given over to sin and fulfilling the lusts and pleasures of the flesh. [Galatians 5:19-20](#).

is enmity [hostile] against God .. The expression is as strong as possible. Such a man is personally hostile toward God and God's claims on him.

Even the good deeds unbelievers perform are not truly a fulfillment of God's law, because they are produced by the flesh, for selfish reasons, and from a heart that is in rebellion. - MSB

not subject [submit] to the law of God .. What pleases God is our submission to Him [Hebrews 11:6](#); [Hebrews 5:9](#);

nor indeed can be .. The mind set on the flesh cannot be pleasing to God, and does not submit to Him. As long as such are slaves to sin and the flesh they cannot serve God.

Romans 8:8

Romans 8:8

in the flesh cannot please God .. To live in the flesh means to live dominated by the desires of the flesh (of this world), to be carnally minded.

the flesh .. Paul is saying the Jewish system of ritual keeping according to the Law of Moses cannot please God, for He wants us to live spiritual lives.

This seems to indicate that Paul's readers were not now in that Jewish system of law and are now encouraged to live the *spiritual life* found in the Gospel.

cannot please God .. A life dominated by carnal living cannot please God, for God wants us to live holy pure lives. [1 Peter 1:15](#).

Romans 8:9

Romans 8:9

not in the flesh .. Paul is not speaking literally, but about living a life dominated by fulfilling carnal desires. Being Christians his readers were people who had committed themselves to a new way of living in following Christ, [Romans 6:3-5](#); [Romans 6:6](#).

the flesh .. Paul is saying the Jewish system of ritual keeping according to the Law of Moses cannot please God, for He wants us to live spiritually.

This seems to refer to the fact that Paul's readers were not now in that Jewish system of law, but are now to live the *spiritual life* found in the Gospel.

but in the Spirit .. The Roman Christians had committed themselves to live holy and pure lives, to be "spiritually minded" and not dedicated to following the carnal or worldly way of life.

if indeed .. If it is true.

the Spirit of God dwells in you .. see notes on [Ephesians 3:17](#) for how metaphorically the Spirit dwells in the believers.

The Holy Spirit is often represented as dwelling in the hearts of Christians (compare [1 Corinthians 2:16](#); [1 Corinthians 6:19](#); [2 Corinthians 6:16](#); [Ephesians 2:21-22](#); [Galatians 4:6](#)); and the meaning is not that there is a personal or physical indwelling of the Holy Spirit, but that he influences, directs, and guides Christians, producing meekness, love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, etc. [Galatians 5:22-23](#). The expression, to dwell in one, denotes intimacy of connection, and means that those things which are the fruits of the Spirit are produced in the heart. - BN [Also see the note at [Romans 8:10](#).]

Spirit of God dwells in you .. Paul could not be referring to the miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit ([Acts 8:18](#); [2 Timothy 1:6](#).) because Paul nor any other apostle had not yet been to them in Rome to convey any such gifts to them [Romans 1:11](#).

if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ .. Is this a reference to the Holy Spirit as a person dwelling literally in a person, or is it a metaphor for one who is taking on the attitude and mind of Christ? [Philippians 2:5](#). I understand it to be the latter. WG

none of His .. Neither is Paul saying that if one doesn't have spiritual gifts he is doesn't belong to God, for the same reason as given above.

What he is saying is that if one does not follow Christ in imitating and absorbing Christ's life style, how can he say it belongs to Christ? [2 Corinthians 13:5](#).

Romans 8:10

Romans 8:10

See **Ephesians 3:17** note on "Indwelling"

And if Christ is in you ..

This is evidently a figurative expression, where the word "Christ" is used to denote his spirit, his principles; that is, he influences the man. Literally, he cannot be in a Christian; but the close connection between him and Christians, and the fact that they are entirely under his influence, is expressed by this strong figurative language. It is language which is not infrequently used; compare [Galatians 2:20](#); [Colossians 1:27](#). - BN

[See Barnes' Notes at this point for a fuller explanation of the phraseology used to illustrate the union and intimate association of Christ and his disciples.

Example: "Christ is said to be "in them," and they are represented as "in him." He "abides in them, and they in him." They "dwelt" in each other; [John 14:20](#); [John 15:4](#); [1 John 3:24](#); [1 John 4:12](#)." - BN

the body is dead .. [Romans 6:3-4](#). They had "died" with Christ and now had a "new" life.

because of sin .. It was by because of sin, and for our sin's forgiveness, that Christ died, and we are represented as dying with Him.

but the Spirit is life .. We are now living a spiritual life with reference to holiness and purity. While the old man of sin died and was buried, the new spiritual man took on a new life, a new way of living.

It is best to translate the word "spirit" as the person's spirit, not the Holy Spirit. - MSB

Here the context seems to give the sense of the *human* spirit; that which now "liveth unto God" in the regenerate man; the soul, in the highest sense of that word. - CBSC

because of righteousness .. With reference to righteousness we now live a new life in Christ. The old body of sin is dead.

The word is frequently used in this epistle to denote God's plan of justification, through *righteousness* ([δὴ δικαιοσύνην](#) *dia dikaiosunēn*). (See the note on "righteousness" at [Romans 1:17](#).)

Romans 8:11

Romans 8:11

But if the Spirit of him .. The Holy Spirit. [Romans 8:9](#); [Colossians 3:16](#)

who raised Jesus from the dead .. The argument here seems to be founded, first, on the power of God; and, secondly, on the connection between Christ and his people; compare [John 14:19](#), "Because I live, ye shall live also."

dwells in you .. See the previous two verses and note at **Ephesians 3:17** on "Indwelling"

He who raised Christ from the dead .. Both God and the Holy Spirit are said to have had a part in the resurrection of Christ. [Acts 2:24](#); [Colossians 2:12](#); [Romans 8:11](#);

will also give life to your mortal bodies .. In the context this is not referring to the resurrection of the saint's bodies at Christ's second coming, but to figuratively a new life where a renewed spirit lives to give glory and honor to God. Even the mortal body, now freed from slavery to sin, lives to glorify God.

The sense is, that under the gospel, by the influence of the Spirit, the entire man will be made alive in the service of God. - BN

[Some commentaries take this to refer to the bodily resurrection at the last day. [1 Corinthians 15:42-](#)

[44.](#)]

through his Spirit which dwells in you .. Because the Spirit has restored life to our souls, and through His influence and indwelling the new man is alive in Christ.

Romans 8:12

Romans 8:12

Therefore, brethren ..

we are debtors .. We owe it as a matter of solemn obligation.

Because we have died to sin and have a new master.

not to the flesh .. To the corrupt propensities and passions. We are not bound to indulge them because the end of such indulgence is death and ruin;

to live according to the flesh .. This life is selfish sinful behavior and lives only to gratify the passions and lusts of the flesh.

Romans 8:13

Romans 8:13

For if you live ... If you live to indulge your carnal propensities, you will sink to eternal death; [Romans 7:23](#).

through the Spirit .. By the aid of the Spirit; by cherishing and cultivating his influences.

put to death .. [mortify] .. Do put to death; do destroy. Sin is mortified when its power is destroyed, and it ceases to be active.

the deeds of the body .. The corrupt inclinations and passions; called deeds of the body, because they are supposed to have their origin in the fleshly appetites.

you shall live .. You shall be happy and saved. Either your sins must die, or you must.

See [James 5:19](#) note on APOSTASY

Romans 8:14

Romans 8:14

For as many as are led by the Spirit .. To be led through inspired scripture. (Metonymy of cause. The Holy Spirit is put for the Word which He led inspired men to write.)

To follow the guidance, teaching, and life style that is found in the holy scripture and put to death the leading of the carnal selfish self. [Galatians 5:18](#).

these are the sons of God .. by being born again ([John 3:3](#); [1 Peter 1:23](#); [Romans 6:3-5](#);) we are thus to follow purity and holiness and be like our "Father."

sons of .. The Jewish mind often spoke metaphorically of a "characteristic" dwelling in a person, and sometimes calling him the "*son of ...*" that characteristic. Thus, of Barnabas as "*son of consolation*" [Acts 4:36](#), and James and John as "*sons of thunder*" [Mark 3:17](#); and the term "son of perdition" in [2 Thessalonians 2:3](#).

See ISBE "Son; Sons" (3)

(3) The word "son" is used with a following genitive of quality to indicate some characteristic of the person or persons described.

sons of God .. To be adopted into His family and are his children with all the rights and privileges there to.

Romans 8:15

Romans 8:15

did not receive the spirit of bondage .. The spirit that binds you as a slave under constant fear and alarm. (The way they were bound to the Law.)

again to fear .. They do not need to be afraid of their new Master and what He has in store for them. Their previous bondage to sin was one of fear. [1 John 4:18](#).

but you received the Spirit of adoption .. The feeling of affection, love, and confidence that belongs to children adopted by new parents.

Adoption is the taking and treating a stranger as one's own child. It is applied to Christians because God treats them as his children; he receives them into this relation, though they were by nature strangers and enemies.

Adoption was common in the ancient world. But it was a serious step. Adults were also adopted. Adopted ones were to receive the inheritance. A drama was re-enacted before the highest court of the land. When a father sold his son entirely and without question to another to become his son. A person had to repudiate his gods and his family and accept the god of his new family.

All past debts and contracts were cancelled and wiped out. All claims against the adopted son had to first be settled. A complete new life -- new beginning -- looked on as a blood relative, and shared the same position as other children, they were blood kin.

Illustration: Emperor Claudius adopted Nero. Nero wanted to marry Octavia, Claudius' daughter, but could not because now in the eyes of Roman people and law he was her brother. He had the Roman senate to pass a special law to enable him to marry her.

The Roman emperor Julius Caesar adopted Octavian as his heir; Octavian, using the name Augustus, later ruled the Roman empire. - NLTSB

(God predestined that those He saved through Christ would be adopted as sons. [Ephesians 1:4-5](#); [Galatians 4:5-7](#).)

by whom we cry out, "Abba, Father." .. This being so we can express our feeling toward God as a "father" and address him in the language of affection and endearing confidence.

Abba .. This word is Aramaic (אבא [abba](#); Greek = Αββα), and means "father." It was the common everyday language used in the home in Palestine, and the most intimate. Paul then give the meaning in Greek (πατήρ).

...it connotes tenderness, dependence, and a relationship free of fear or anxiety (cf. [Mark 14:36](#)). - MSB

Romans 8:16

Romans 8:16

The Spirit Himself .. The Holy Spirit.

bears witness with out spirit .. In ancient time for an adoption to be legally binding there had to be witnesses. Jewish law required two agreeing witnesses.

The Holy Spirit gives His testimony and evidence that those saved are adopted as "sons" of God.

The question is how does the Holy Spirit do this?

Interpretations:

1) The Holy Spirit bears witness with the apostles inspiration ([Mark 16:20](#); [Acts 5:32](#); [Hebrews 2:3-4](#).) that the way to become children of God is by adoption [Romans 8:15-17](#).

2) The Holy Spirit bears witness with our spirit that we are God's children when we walk the way the Holy Spirit has directed by inspired scripture. That is, the Holy Spirit teaches us that when we are

born again we are now children of God and should now "walk" as "sons" of God.

with our spirit .. Our inner spirit, our mind. Our own knowledge and understanding.

The Spirit of God is one witness to the fact. Our spirit is a corroborative witness. How do each bear witness? (1) Witness is usually borne in words, but not always. God's Spirit bears witness in words (see [Hebrews 10:15](#)). The Holy Spirit shows us how we must become God's children, and how to continue the Christian life. (2) It bears testimony in our lives by its fruits. Do we bear the fruit of the Spirit? (See [Galatians 5:22-23](#)). (3) Does our own spirit testify that we "mind the things of the Spirit?" Does our consciousness recognize its fruits, inward as well as outward? If the testimony of our spirit is that what God's Spirit witnesseth of the sons of God is true of us, then they concur in the testimony that we are the children of God. - BN

that we are children of God .. This pertains to the adoption; and it means that the Holy Spirit furnishes evidence to our minds that we are adopted into the family of God.

When there is an agreement that what the Holy Spirit reveals in the inspired scriptures about how we become a child of God and what that means, and out spirit within us acknowledges or knows that we have complied with and followed the Holy Spirit's lead, there is then this two-fold testimony that we are indeed a child of God.

This effect is not infrequently attributed to the Holy Spirit, [2 Corinthians 1:22](#); [1 John 5:10-11](#); [1 Corinthians 2:12](#).

Romans 8:17

[Romans 8:17](#)

and if children .. If adopted into this family.

then heirs .. We will be treated as sons, who inherit an estate and enjoy the favors of a father. [Galatians 4:7](#);

heirs of God .. Specified who the Father is in the adoption. [1 Corinthians 2:9](#); [Revelation 21:7](#);

and joint heirs with Christ .. With Christ the eminent "Son" and the "firstborn" we will enjoy the honors and glory of heaven with Him. [Romans 8:29](#); [Philippians 2:8-9](#); [Hebrews 2:9-11](#).

Under the Jewish law the older brother had a double portion, but Christ admits all to a joint share of the great inheritance. (cf [Hebrews 1:2](#))

Joint-heirs .. (*sunklēronomoi Christou*) Paul is fond of compounds of *sun*, three in this verse (*sunklēronomoi*, *sunpaschōmen*, *sundoxasthōmen*).

if indeed .. If this condition exists. We shall not be treated as co-heirs with him unless there is the evidence we are united with him.

we suffer with Him .. If we suffer in his cause; bear afflictions as he did; are persecuted and tried for the same thing; and thus show that we are united to him. [Philippians 3:10](#).

It does not mean that we suffer to the same extent that he did, but we are to be faithful until death. [Revelation 2:10](#).

that we may also be glorified together .. [1 Peter 4:13](#); [John 14:19](#); [2 Timothy 2:11-12](#);

Romans 8:18

[Romans 8:18](#)

[This verse commences a new subject continued to [Romans 8:25](#).]

For I consider .. I judge; I think, I conclude.

The word is borrowed either from arithmeticians, who by casting their accounts do find the true and total sum; or from logicians, who by considering the premises do draw the conclusion. - Poole
[Connect this word with **worthy** for the full picture.]

the sufferings .. Trials, afflictions, persecutions, that disciples might be called to endure.

of this present time .. Probably the apostle had particular reference to the various calamities then endured. But the expression is equally applicable to afflictions of all times and in all places.

are not worthy .. Are nothing in comparison; the one is far more than an equivalent in compensation for the other.

Not worthy to be compared: the word properly signifieth that part of the balance which goeth down: q.d. If the sufferings of this life be weighed with the glory to come, they will be light in comparison. These words, *to be compared*, are supplied in our translation to make up the sense. - Poole

áxios; fem. *axía*, neut. *áxion*, adj. from *ágō* ([G71](#)), to weigh. An estimate or value. Some believe it refers to a set of scales where the weights bring or draw down (*ágousi*) the beam to a horizontal level when the weights are equal on each side. - Wordstudy

[The weight of "suffering" and the "glory" are not in balance; the "glory" far exceeds the "suffering" in its weight. - WG]

to be compared .. This phrase is supplied by the translator to complete the thought expressed in the Greek.

with the glory which shall be revealed in us .. Happiness and honor will be disclosed to us and which we shall partake in heaven.

in us .. Unto us *εἰς ἡμᾶς* *eis hēmas*.

Romans 8:19

Romans 8:19

For the earnest expectation .. [RSV, ESV **eager longing**; NASB **anxious longing**; NCV **waiting with excitement**; NIV **eager expectation**] .. *ἀποκαράδοκία* *apokaradokia*. This word occurs only here and in [Philippians 1:20](#), "According to my earnest expectation and my hope," etc. It properly denotes a state of earnest desire to see any object when the head is thrust forward; an intense anxiety; an ardent wish; and is thus well employed to denote the intense interest with which a Christian looks to his future inheritance. - BN

Earnest expectation—A single word in the Greek, and a very striking one. It means, literally, a straining forward with outstretched head, just as we might imagine the crowds outside a race-course straining over the ropes to catch a sight of the runners; an eager, intent expectation. The same word is used once again in the New Testament ([Philippians 1:20](#)). - Ellicott

of the creation .. *τῆς κτίσεως* *tēs ktiseōs* (cf "creation" in [Romans 8:19-22](#).)

[Perhaps there is not a passage in the New Testament that has been deemed more difficult of interpretation than this [Romans 8:19-23](#); and after all the labors bestowed on it by critics, still there is no explanation proposed which is perfectly satisfactory, - BN]

"Creature" is rendered *creation* in the Revision, and this rendering is approved by all the best critics. Chrysostom says "Paul personifies the world, just as the prophets do when they make the floods to clap their hands." The whole world is represented earnestly looking forward to that day of future glory when the sons of God will have reached their high estate and be revealed as his children. It is a fine, poetic figure, a grand conception. - PNT

The creature: this word is four times used in this and the three following verses, only in [Romans 8:22](#) it

is rendered *creation*; that is the subject of which all that followeth is predicated. One main question therefore is this: Of what creature the apostle here speaks? Divers answers are or may be given; I will fix upon two only.

1. By *the creature*, or *the creation*, { and, [Romans 8:22](#), *the whole creation*, or every creature } is meant all mankind, both Jews and Gentiles, and especially the latter: see [Mark 16:15](#); there Christ gives it in commission to *preach the gospel to every creature*; it is the same word. And in [1 Peter 2:13](#), they are commanded to *submit themselves to every ordinance of man*: in the original it is, to every human creature, the same word which is in the text before us: he means the Gentile or heathen magistrates in authority over them. In the Scripture the Gentiles are sometimes called *the world*, [Romans 11:12,15](#), and sometimes *the creature*, or *the creation*.
2. By *the creature* is meant the whole world with all the creatures therein, or the whole frame and body of the creation. - Poole

creation .. Barnes (after giving a number of various views) believes it to refer to the Christian (the renewed man with a renewed heart), as the new creation, regarded individually. [Such a view also seems "to suit the connection, and to make sense in the argument" will all the following verses. -WG]

creation .. This seems to me to simply be a reference to those mentioned in the previous verse [[ἡμᾶς](#)] "us" [Romans 8:18](#), [and "we" in v. 23] and a further explanation of the glory which shall be revealed in this, that is, the redemption of their corruptible bodies. - WG [v. 22 The "whole creation" may here be a personification of God's entire creation.]

It seems that most modern critics take this as "The physical **creation** is personified as a person with an outstretched neck searching the horizon. **Creation** was negatively affected when Adam and Eve rebelled (cf. [Genesis 3:17-19](#)). All creation will ultimately be redeemed (except for rebellious angels, unbelieving humans, and their prepared place of isolation" - Utley [Such a view seems to believe that "heaven" will be here on a re-newed earth. - WG]

eagerly waits .. Expects; is not in a state of possession, but is looking for it with interest.

for the revealing .. The [ἀποκάλυψις](#) (*apokálypsis*) "disclosure, unveiling, uncovering". The manifestation. The full development of the benefits of the sons of God; the time when they shall be acknowledged, and received into the full privileges of sons.

The revealing of the sons of God will occur when Christ returns for His own. They will share His glory ([Romans 8:18](#); [Colossians 1:27](#); [Colossians 3:4](#); [Hebrews 2:10](#)), and will be transformed ([Romans 8:23](#)). All of nature (inanimate and animate) is personified as waiting eagerly for that time. - BKC

of the sons of God .. The real children of God, [John 8](#) not sons of flesh but sons of faith.

Romans 8:20

[Romans 8:20](#)

the creation was subjected .. Understanding that here the "creation" is speaking of "*us*" (v.18) as "aspiring to the full privileges of adoption, that the present state is not one of choice" [BN]

subjected .. The word "subject to" means placed in such a state; subjected to it by the appointment of another, as a soldier has his rank and place assigned him in an army.

to futility [vanity; frustration;] ..

A description of our present physical bodies "as frail and dying; as exposed to trials, temptations, and cares; as in the midst of conflicts" (Barnes)

not willingly .. Not as a matter of choice.

but because of Him who subjected it .. Perhaps a reference even back to God's action of driving Adam out of the garden and away from the tree of life and thereby bringing "aging" and "death" to all mankind.

[Genesis 3:22-24](#).

in hope .. Hope has a reference to the future, and the Christian sighs for deliverance from our corruptible, mortal bodies, and expects it.

Romans 8:21

[Romans 8:21](#)

because the creation .. The "us" of vs. 18, will have their fleshly bodies redeemed at the resurrection. cf [1 Corinthians 15:50-52](#), and the revelation of what they shall be like, [1 John 3:2-3](#).

Some understand this like the NCV "**everything God made**" and see it as a redemption of all creation, and the aging world to be made over into a "new heaven and earth." [Hebrews 1:10-12](#); [2 Peter 3:10](#); [Revelation 21:1](#). [I prefer the former understanding - WG.]

delivered from the bondage of corruption .. Corruption, decay, and death; [1 Corinthians 15:22](#); [Hebrews 9:27](#); [[Acts 2:31](#)]

into the glorious liberty .. Freedom from the mortal body where there is temptation and suffering.

This mortal body is one "is one that leads to sin, and temptation, and conflict and anxiety. It is a condition often which destroys the peace, mars the happiness, dims the hope, enfeebles the faith, and weakens the love of Christians, and this is called the bondage of corruption. It is also one in which temporal death has dominion, and in the bondage of which, believers as well as unbelievers shall be held. Yet from all this bondage the children of God shall be delivered." (Barnes).

liberty .. Freedom from the bondage under which the Christian groans. It will be freedom from sin; from corruption; from evil desires; from calamity; from death.

of the children of God .. It is a blessing that only the children of God (those adopted, [Romans 8:15](#)) will enjoy.

Romans 8:22

[Romans 8:22](#)

For we know .. The sentiment of this verse is designed as an illustration of what had just been said.

the whole creation .. We may see Paul here simply being sure that his readers understand he was including the Gentiles (who were now also adopted into God's family) were included in the "**us**" of which Paul is speaking. (v. 18) Still keeping this in the context of "us" of [Romans 8:18](#).

Some understand that Paul in referencing "**the whole creation**" is personifying everything God has created.

It refers, as I suppose, to the whole animate creation; to all living beings; to the state of all created things here, as in a condition of pain and disorder, and groaning and death. Everything which we see; every creature which lives, is thus subjected to a state of servitude, pain, vanity, and death. - BN

The cosmic Fall, however, resulted in a *bondage* to decay. This means that death and decay overran their intended boundaries and engulfed what was never meant to die and dissolve—especially the bodies of human beings ([Genesis 3:19 b](#); [1 Corinthians 15:42](#)). It also means that the entire universe is undergoing an inexorable process of cosmic decay, which is sometimes called the law of entropy. - CPNIV

Groans .. The Greek is "groans together." [συστενάζω](#) (*sustenazō*, *soos-ten-ad'-zo*) to *moan jointly*, that is, (figuratively) *experience a common calamity*: - groan together. - Strong

The first verb means to sigh or groan or even complain because of undesirable circumstances

from which one longs to be free. - CPNIV

labors .. (travails) Extreme pains of childbirth.

Two parallel verbs describe this idea: “to groan with” and “to suffer agony with.” The prefix “with” (σύν, *syn*), attached to both verbs, signifies that all parts of the creation are jointly participating in the pain - CPNIV

groans and labors with birth pangs together .. Waiting for deliverance. Waiting for a new life, in a new sphere.

until now .. With Jesus' resurrection our own is now assured.

until now .. If the "creation" is personified this probably refers from the time of Genesis 3 until Pentecost.

Romans 8:23

Romans 8:23

And not only that .. [NASB this; ESV, RSV creation; KJV they;] .. While Christians are groaning with birth pangs (probably a reference to the sufferings and persecutions they faced) they were to add to their lives (Romans 8:23) the fruits of the Spirit, Galatians 5:22-23, 2 Peter 1:5-8.

If the reference is to the personified creation in general, then “but we ourselves also” would be referencing Christians.

who have the firstfruits of the Spirit .. The "firstfruits" were holy and belonged to the Lord. Romans 11:16, Romans 16:5; 1 Corinthians 15:20. Christians maturing in Christ are to be led the Spirit, and produce fruit as evidence of holiness and belonging to the Lord, Galatians 5:22-23; Romans 8:14; Galatians 5:18.

While we "groan" for deliverance we add the fruits of the Spirit to our lives.

In the OT, “**firstfruits**” describes the first and best part of a crop that is to be offered to God (e.g., Exodus 23:19; Leviticus 2:12). Similarly, God gives the Spirit to believers as the down payment on the many other blessings that he promises to bestow on his heirs, his adopted children (v. Romans 8:17; see 2 Corinthians 1:22; 2 Corinthians 5:5; Ephesians 1:14). - NIVZSB

groan inwardly .. Here the expression denotes strong internal desire for deliverance from our carnal, mortal bodies.

John recorded the Lord as groaning also (John 11:33, John 11:38)

as we wait for the adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies .. The time when our bodies will be changed into new celestial bodies seems to be what this paragraph v. 19 - 23 is all about, 1 Corinthians 15:40-45.

While Christians are adopted when they are converted Romans 8:15, it is when Christ comes again that they see the fullness of adoption with all the blessings and privileges of it.

Romans 8:24

Romans 8:24

For in this hope we were save .. The persuasive motive in salvation is the hope of eternal life, a life with a body that will never die. Titus 1:2; Titus 3:7.

but hope that is seen is not hope .. Hope is future desire. For the Christian it is also an expectation.

for why does one still hope for what he sees? .. Something desired which is already fulfilled is no longer an "expectation" but a reality. Our eternal life with a new body is still only a "desired expectation" for we have not yet attained that reality in this life.

Romans 8:25

Romans 8:25

But if we hope for what we do not see .. Eternal life, a redeemed body ([Romans 8:23](#)) is not a reality yet.

The emphasis here is double: 1) the fact that we do *hope* for something; 2) it is currently out of sight.

with perseverance .. Patient endurance. With a strong desire for eternal life the Christian may bear trials and afflictions, persevering to receive that great reward. [Galatians 6:9](#); [2 Thessalonians 3:13](#); [Hebrews 6:12](#).

Romans 8:26

Romans 8:26

Likewise .. Probably a reference back to [Romans 8:11](#); and [Romans 8:16](#); and to the work of the Spirit.

The Spirit also helps in our weakness .. The word pictures someone else with greater strength stepping in and helping with the burden that lies too heavily upon our own shoulders.

For we do not know for what we should pray .. Our sight is limited to the present and cannot see the future which may not enable us to pray for the right thing.

Example: In [Acts 12:5](#) when the church prayed for Peter, they apparently did not pray for his deliverance from prison since they are surprised [Acts 12:13-16](#) but probably since James had been beheaded [Acts 12:1-3](#) they prayed that Peter would be faithful and not recant and deny Jesus as he had done when Jesus was arrested.

One way the Spirit helps us, is by teaching us to pray. Paul in his many letters gives examples, instructions, and requests which help us in forming our prayers and petitions, etc.

makes intercession .. The Greek compound word occurs only here (*huperentugchanei*). Like an advocate in a court of justice. "It is a picturesque word of rescue by one who "happens on" (*entugchanei*) one who is in trouble and "in his behalf" (*huper*) pleads" his case. - Robertson.

There is a twofold intercession, one of Christ, of which we read, [Romans 8:34](#); the other of the Spirit, of which this place speaks. See [Ephesians 6:18](#) [Jude 1:20](#).

for us with groanings which cannot be uttered .. see [Romans 8:23](#), it is our groaning, not the Holy Spirit's.

This may be with inward sighs and groans which cannot be expressed by words. A man may cry to God and never utter a word. See [Exodus 14:15](#); [1 Samuel 1:13](#).

This communication is described as "**groans**" because it conveys to the Father not only our thoughts but also the deep feelings associated with them. - CPNIV

... the **Spirit himself intercedes** for them in and through their unspeakable groans (cf. [Romans 8:23](#)). - ESVSB

See [1 John 2:1](#) for word study on **Advocate, Comforter, Paraclete**

Romans 8:27

Romans 8:27

Now He who searches the hearts .. To know the heart is one of God's attributes, (cf. [1 Samuel 16:7](#); [1 Kings 8:39](#); [1 Chronicles 28:9](#); [2 Chronicles 6:30](#); [Psalms 7:9](#); [Psalms 44:21](#); [Proverbs 15:11](#); [Proverbs 20:27](#); [Proverbs 21:2](#); [Jeremiah 11:20](#); [Jeremiah 17:9-10](#); [Jeremiah 20:12](#); [Luke 16:15](#); [Acts 1:24](#); [Acts 15:8](#)).

The term "*searching*" is speaking of God after the manner of men who may search for something. God *knows* the hearts of all men.

knows what is the mind of the Spirit .. 1) If "Spirit" here is the Holy Spirit, it simply means that God know and agrees with what He is communicating in his intercession for the saints. 2) If the "spirit" here refers to man's spirit the meaning is that God "**searches**" and therefore knows what is in man's "heart" or in his "**mind**" and understands our "groans" ([Romans 8:26](#)).

Most understand #1 to be the understanding here.

because the Spirit intercedes for the saints .. The Holy Spirit knows our anxious feelings and stands ready to help.

The question here may be: 1) Is the Holy Spirit interceding to God on man's behalf, or 2) is He interceding to man on God's behalf?

The first impression is #1, that He carries the prayers with their feeling, emotions, and intensity to God the Father.

However if #2 is the meaning, the Holy Spirit intercedes to man teaching him (via inspired men and scripture - [John 14:16](#), [John 14:26](#); [John 15:26](#); [John 16:7](#);) how the saints are to pray "**according to the will of God.**"

because .. CBSC = "is better to render **that**. "The Father knows the mind of the Spirit; He knows **that** He intercedes in harmony with His Own will and purpose, and for His Own children." - CBSC

because He makes intercession .. In the Greek there is no "**He**" but we understand the reference is to the Holy Spirit from verse [Romans 8:26](#) which states the He makes intercession.

according to the will of God .. The H.S. does His intercession in harmony with God's purpose or will.

according to the will of God ..

[1 John 5:14-15](#). Praying according to the will of God, respects;

1. The matter of our prayers.
2. The manner of our praying.
3. The end thereof, [James 4:3](#). - Poole

A more literal translation would be:

And he that searches the hearts knows the mind of the spirit that according to God he makes intercession on behalf of the saints.

Romans 8:28

Romans 8:28

And we know .. Introducing another source of consolation and support.

that to them that love God .. To obedient believers. See [John 14:15](#); [John 14:23](#). [Most translations change the order of the Greek here.]

all things .. The "all things" should be taken in the context of the things he is currently speaking on in this context.

"**All things**" would include:

- 1) v.27, the Spirit's intercession for the saints
- 2) v.26, the Spirit helping in our weakness
- 3) v.25, persevering in hope
- 4) v.23, the redemption of our bodies
- 5) v.21, the glorious liberty of the children of God
- 6) our adoption as children of God'

And etc.

Are the "**all things**" that work together to be understood as 1) the afflictions, trials, persecution, and calamities which we endure. OR, 2) the to what God has done for us, as: the incarnation; the cross, the resurrection, the plans for the church?

"all things work together for good." -- This verse is grossly taken out of context and made to apply to any and every thing that may happen to a Christian. Some things that we don't understand may happen for our good, but that's not the significance of this passage.

work together for good .. Paul does not say "all these things are good" that happen to a Christian.

Many religious people often take a true statement or a verse out of its contextual meaning and make an axiom out of it and a different application. Such as [Romans 8:28](#); [Romans 10:13](#); [James 4:17](#), etc.

according to his purpose .. God in his providence sends us the things we most need that will make us better people.

to them who are called .. Christians are often represented as the "called" of God. [Romans 1:6-7](#); [1 Corinthians 1:2](#); [1 Corinthians 1:24](#); [Revelation 17:14](#). It is evidently used in this sense here.

Called out from the world, called to be a people different, called to submit to God and obey His voice.

"To those who love God, to those who are called" are two expressions describing the class class.

The next two verses show that those who would be called was determined from the time God promised a Deliverer for sinning mankind. He would save (justify) those who loved Him and imitated the same character as His Son in their holiness.

Romans 8:29

Romans 8:29

For those whom He foreknew .. [προέγνω](#) *proegnō* means to "know beforehand". God decided something about some people "beforehand."

he also predestined .. It is about a "class" of people, and not certain individuals indiscriminately that God made a predetermined decision.

predestinate .. God pre-decided that those saved would be those **conforming** to the image of Christ. [Ephesians 1:4](#), [2 Thessalonians 2:13-14](#) God chose "the means" of our salvation, and what kind of character the saved must possess, before the foundation of the world. God predetermined **how** men would be saved, (through Christ) not who **individually** would be saved.

[Read carefully all those passages about **predestination** and you'll note that it is the **how**, the **method**, the **who** would do the saving, and not that one individual is selected indiscriminately to be saved and another rejected.]

predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son .. God determined that those who would be "brothers" and adopted into his family would be those "conformed to the image of His Son", that is, they would be holy, and without blame [Ephesians 1:4](#).

the firstborn among many brothers .. Christ would be among those saved as the firstborn among brothers. The Lord spoke of his disciples as "brothers" and such are addressed in the epistles as "brethren." [Matthew 12:49-50](#); [Matthew 23:8](#); [Luke 8:21](#); [Luke 22:32](#); [Romans 12:1](#); etc.

The "firstborn" was one who had preeminence among his brothers.

Romans 8:30

Romans 8:30

Moreover .. Paul is going to say that one point implied the other.

whom He predestined .. Those who bore a likeness to Christ in their character.

Predestinate .. That those saved must be conforming to the image of Christ. [Ephesians 1:4-5](#), [2 Thessalonians 2:13-14](#) God chose "the means" of our salvation, and what kind of character the saved

must possess, before the foundation of the world. God predetermined what type of men would be saved, not who individually would be saved.

[Read carefully all those passages about predestination and you'll note that it is the how, the method, the who would do the saving, and not that one individual is selected indiscriminately to be saved and another rejected. God calls all men by the Gospel [Mark 16:15](#), [2 Thessalonians 2:14](#); [Revelation 22:17](#), those who obey and conform to the image of His Son will be saved.]

these He also called .. Those that are termed "the called out" are those bearing the character of godliness and holiness of Christ. The very Greek word for the "church" is ἐκκλησία "the called out ones".

God calls His people to come out from the world and be like Christ in character, in purity and holiness.

these He also justified .. God proposed that in Christ's sacrifice men would find forgiveness, reconciliation, and be justified. God's plan for saving men from their sins was made long before Christ was born into this world; [1 Peter 1:20](#); [Revelation 13:8](#); See the note on *justification* at [Romans 3:24](#).

justified ... He also glorified .. This probably refers to heaven. God will "glorify" those who conform to the image of His Son. He predestined this plan.

Romans 8:31

[Romans 8:31](#)

What then shall we say .. What conclusion shall we draw in the face of God's plans and provisions for us, as we have just seen?

If God be for us .. Since God is on outside, and is our friend, as he has shown himself to be by adopting us [Romans 8:15](#), by granting to us his Spirit [Romans 8:16-17](#), [Romans 8:26-27](#), and by his gracious purpose to save us, [Romans 8:29-30](#)), who could stand against us!

Remind us of what Gamaliel said in the Sanhedrin meeting, [Acts 5:38-39](#).

who can be against us? .. The implication is that clearly no one can stand against us successfully. Neither Satan nor any earthly foe can stand against God's people when all is said and done.

The rest of this chapter is considered a hymn of triumph over this assurance of salvation.

Romans 8:32

[Romans 8:32](#)

The rest of this chapter is considered a hymn of triumph over this assurance of salvation.

He who did not spare His own Son, .. God did not retain or keep His own Son from suffering and death.

delivered Him up .. Gave him into the hands of men, and to a cruel death; Note, [Acts 2:23](#).

for us all .. Christ's death makes atonement for all who will accept Him as Lord, turning to God in faith and obedience.

also freely give us all things .. If he gave his Son to die for us, it is impossible that he should refuse us anything that will help or bless us. He has nothing he values more than his Son.

The argument is from the greater to the less. He that has given the greater gift will not withhold the less.

Romans 8:33

Romans 8:33

Who shall bring a charge against God's elect? .. This expression is taken from courts of law, and means, who shall accuse, or condemn, or so charge with crime before the tribunal of God as to cause their condemnation?

God's elect .. This is the first place in this Epistle where believers are styled "the elect." God's chosen people.

It is God who justifies .. It is God, the Supreme Judge, who has pardoned them, and admitted them to his favor; and pronounced them just in his sight; This seems to be taken from [Isaiah 50:8-9](#). Note [Romans 1:17](#); [Romans 3:24](#).

Romans 8:34

Romans 8:34

Who is he who condemns? .. Who is more powerful than God that they could muster a condemnation of God's people? No one.

It is Christ who died .. Christ, was the sin offering for atonement! No greater or more precious offering could be made.

Or as it may be rendered, "Shall Christ who has died, condemn them?" The argument here is, that as Christ died to save them, and not to destroy them, he will not condemn them.

and furthermore is also risen .. He conquered death, and was victorious over him who had dominion there.

"He rose for their justification" (Note, [Romans 4:25](#)); and as this was the object which he had in view, it follows that he will not condemn them.

who is even at the right hand of God .. Invested with power, and dignity, and authority in heaven. [Mark 16:19](#).

This is a third consideration to show that Christ will not condemn us, and that our salvation is secure.

This is an anthropomorphic metaphor. This metaphor speaks of the place of power, authority and preeminence. Some think Paul was quoting an early Christian hymn [Romans 8:34](#) (cf. [Philippians 2:6](#) ff.; [1 Timothy 3:16](#)).

who also makes intercession for us .. Who pleads our cause; who presents our interests before the mercy-seat in heaven. For this purpose he ascended to heaven; [Hebrews 7:25](#). Note [Romans 8:26](#)

This is the fourth consideration which the apostle urges for the security of our salvation drawn from the work of Christ.

This verse lists several reasons why there is "no condemnation" (cf. [Romans 8:1](#)).

1. He died
2. He was raised
3. He is at God's right hand
4. He intercedes for believers - (Utley)

Romans 8:35

Romans 8:35

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? .. The Greek expression like the English is ambiguous and may mean either our love for Christ or His love for us.

1) If one considers it is speaking of our love for Christ it should be understood in the sense: "Who shall cause us to cease loving the Savior?" Our love for the Lord is so strong it will surmount and survive all opposition and trials.

2) However, the object of the passage seem to be to assure us that once God made His decision to not spare His own Son His love us became so fixed that nothing could refute his plan to provide salvation. It seems clear from the closing two verses of the chapter that it is speaking of God's love for us.

Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? .. Depending on which direction we understand the love going:

1) We should let nothing like this mentioned here cause us to grow weary and give up our love and devotion to Almighty God.

2) All that the saints must endure should not cause them to doubt or question God's love for them.

Shall tribulation, &c. .. He makes an enumeration of particular evils, of seven in number; and he begins with the lesser, and rises to the greater; placing them in order, not casually, but by choice. - Poole

tribulation .. Signified anything that presses down upon up.

distress .. Signified the pressure being caught in a strait.

persecution .. The word properly signifies a driving from place to place; banishment is implied therein, if not chiefly intended: see [Matthew 10:23](#).

peril .. Any danger or hazard of life, in any kind whatsoever, see [2 Corinthians 11:26](#).

sword .. This is put figuratively for death itself, especially violent death.

Romans 8:36

[Romans 8:36](#)

As it is written .. [Psalms 44:22](#). The condition of saints in the time of the psalmist was similar to that of Christians in the time of Paul.

For your sake .. In thy cause; or for righteousness' sake [Matthew 5:10](#) [Matthew 10:18](#); [Matthew 10:39](#); [1 Peter 3:14](#).

we are killed .. We are subject to, or exposed to death. We endure sufferings equivalent to dying; compare [1 Corinthians 4:9](#). [1 Corinthians 15:31](#) [2 Corinthians 1:10](#); [2 Corinthians 4:11](#).

all day long .. Continually, constantly. There is no intermission to our danger, and to our exposure to death. [Psalms 38:6](#); [Psalms 38:12](#); [Psalms 71:24](#); [Psalms 73:14](#); [Proverbs 23:17](#); [Romans 10:21](#).

we are accounted .. We are reckoned, regarded, or dealt with as if we are designed for destruction. [Psalms 44:11-12](#);

as sheep for the slaughter .. Our enemies judge that we ought to die, and deem us the appropriate subjects of slaughter, with as little concern or remorse as the lives of sheep are taken.

The argument seems to be this: The saints of old have endured all manner of sufferings, and yet remained faithful to God, they did not doubt God's love for them.

Here let me insert a tragical story of the Christians of Calabria, that suffered persecution, A.D. 1560. They were all shut up in one house together, as in a sheepfold: an executioner comes in, and among them takes one, and blindfolds him with a muffler about his eyes, and so leadeth him forth to a larger place, where he commandeth him to kneel down; which being done, he cutteth his throat, and so leaveth him half dead; and taking his butcher's knife and muffler, all of gore blood, he cometh again to the rest, and so leading them one after another, he despatcheth them, to the number of eighty-eight, no otherwise than a butcher doth his sheep. *Fox's Acts and Monuments*. - Poole

Romans 8:37

Romans 8:37

Yet in all these things .. In spite of all these tragedy mentioned in vs. 35-36 ([Romans 8:35-36](#)) none of them can lead us away from Christ.

we are more than conquerors .. We are the victors, not they!vThe word used here is a strong, emphatic expression, such as the apostle Paul often employs (compare [2 Corinthians 4:17](#)), and which is used with great force and appropriateness here.

The meaning seems to be this: The devil aims, in all the sufferings of God's children, to draw them off from Christ, to make them murmur, despair, &c.; but in this he is defeated and disappointed, for God inspires his children with such a generous and noble spirit, that sufferings abate not their zeal and patience, but rather increase them. - Poole

more than conquerors .. Illustration. It reminds us of the football rivalry between Rogersville and Lexington. If one won by just the score of 7 to 6, that is too close for much bragging, but if the score was 76-0, then they are "more than conquerors."

we are more than conquerors - (ὑπερνικῶμεν *hypernikōmen*). Late and rare compound. Here only in N.T. (pres. tense, "keep on being conquerors to a greater degree" or "keep on winning a glorious victory")
Williams' NT "we keep on gloriously conquering".

through Him who loved us .. Again notice the assertion that this passage is about the Lord's love for us. [1 Corinthians 15:57](#); [2 Corinthians 2:14](#); [2 Timothy 4:17](#).

Romans 8:38

Romans 8:38

For I am persuaded .. Convinced, (perfect tense, "I stand convinced"; cf. [Romans 15:14](#)) The expression here implies unwavering certainty.

Paul's list of 10 items begins with death, where the list of 7 items in [Romans 8:35](#) ended.

that neither death nor life .. In either (1) **death** or (2) **life** [[2 Corinthians 5:8-9](#)] Christians are in God's presence.

neither death .. Neither the fear of death, nor all the pains and tortures of the dying scene, even in the most painful trials of persecution.

nor life .. Nor the hope of life; the love of life; probably the offer of life made to us by our persecutors, on condition of renouncing our Christian faith.

nor angels .. Good angels would not try to alienate God from his children. (So Paul may have in mind evil angels.)

nor principalities .. (ἀρχαὶ *archai*). This word usually refers to magistrates and civil rulers. But it is also applied to evil angels who have some kind of dominion or rule. [Ephesians 6:12](#); [Colossians 2:15](#); [1 Corinthians 15:24](#).

principalities and powers .. Some understand these to reference persecuting princes and potentates.

nor powers .. This word δυνάμεις *dunameis* is often applied to magistrates; but it is also applied to evil spirits that have some kind dominion, or area of power or control; [1 Corinthians 15:24](#). The ancient Rabbis also give the name powers to evil angels. (Schleusner.)

The Jews Rabbis divided the angels of heaven into various ranks and orders, traces of which custom we find often in the Scriptures. And there is also reason to suppose that they made such a division with reference to evil angels, regarding Satan as their leader, and other evil spirits, divided into various ranks, as subordinate to him; see [Matthew 25:41](#); [Ephesians 6:12](#); [Colossians 2:15](#).

Paul is making it clear that no order of evil angels, or spiritual entities, however powerful, artful, or numerous, would be able to alienate God from the love he has for his adopted children.

nor things present .. Present situations or circumstances whether good or bad.

not things to come .. There is nothing in the future, no unknown possibilities which could turn God away from loving his children.

Romans 8:39

Romans 8:39

no height nor depth .. Paul is being exhaustive; nothing in heaven or hell, nor any inhabitant of either can separate God's care, concern, and love for us.

These terms were used for the apogee and perigee of stars, that were believed to be gods who controlled human's lives (astrology). Later they became technical terms in the heresy called Gnosticism for the *eons* or angelic levels between the holy god and the lesser god who formed sinful matter. - Utley

nor any other [creature] created thing .. This takes in the whole compass of created beings in heaven, earth, and sea; and most strongly expresses that there is nothing in the whole universe which can separate us from the love of God.

shall be able to separate us from the love of God .. From [Romans 8:37](#) we see that Paul's reference is to God's love for us.

which is in Christ Jesus our Lord .. God's love is expressed to us in what Christ Jesus did for us. Love is summed up in Calvary.

Vs. 39 It is a false doctrine that says we can never be separated from God, [[Isaiah 59:2](#)] BUT it is true that nothing can separated **God's love** from us!! [John 3:16](#).

Vs. 38-39 is teaching is that there is NO Power that is stronger than God; NO Power that can repudiate or invalidate God's plan to save us through Christ Jesus!

What a climactic way to affirm the certainty of believers' salvation! - BKC

Romans 9:1

Romans 9:1

Romans 9 = Israel's Past (mercy shown)

Romans 10 = Israel's Present

Romans 11 = Israel's Future

I am telling the truth in Christ .. I affirm what I am about to say. Paul frequently made this kind of statement (cf. [2 Corinthians 11:10](#); [Galatians 1:20](#); [1 Timothy 2:7](#)) or a similar one about God as his witness (cf. [Romans 1:9](#); [2 Corinthians 1:23](#); [2 Corinthians 11:31](#); [Philippians 1:8](#); [1 Thessalonians 2:5](#); [1 Thessalonians 2:10](#)).

in Christ .. Most interpreters regard this as a form of an oath, as equivalent to calling Christ to witness. The word translated "in" *ἐν* *en* is used in the form of an oath in [Matthew 5:34-36](#); [Revelation 10:6](#); [Ephesians 4:17](#).

I am not lying .. Paul makes a positive affirmation, then a negative one.

my conscience [testifies with me] also bearing me witness .. Paul affirms that his conscience knows the truthfulness of what he is about to say and is a witness to his integrity.

in the Holy Spirit .. Paul may here be appealing to the inspiration of the Spirit. Others say he is speaking of the Holy Spirit as one who knows what he is claiming and is a witness to the its truth.

He may be simply stating that his mind and heart is influenced by the leading and guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Romans 9:2

Romans 9:2

great sorrow .. A heavy heart, intense grief.

continual grief .. Unceasing anguish. The word "continual" here must be understood in a popular sense, and not that he was literally all the time pressed down with this sorrow. But whenever he thought on this subject it gave him great grief; as we would say it was a painful subject to him.

Not so much that his countrymen are estranged from him, as that they were without the blessing of Christ.

in my heart .. Upon his mind. This affirmation is made so solemn because the Jews charged Paul with having forsaken his race.

Romans 9:3

Romans 9:3

For I could wish .. Slight division on how this should be translation, while the majority translate it this way, others suggest "*I was wishing, had it be possible,*" or "*I did wish*" .

Some suggest that implication "*I could have prayed if it had been possible*" - CambridgeGreek

The object of the apostle seems to state his present attachment to his countrymen and willingness to suffer for them.

myself were accursed from Christ .. This passage has been much controverted. What does the word rendered "accursed" (*anathema*) properly mean?

"The proper grammatical construction of the word used here is not I did wish, but I could desire; that is, if the thing were possible." -BN

It historically meant something that was devoted to God's use (as in the temple service) which was taken out of service by men and misused (desecrated) and now was not be used in such service to God.

Some may conclude therefore that Paul is saying his special mission to the Gentiles could be set aside if his countrymen, the Jews, would accept Christ. And not that Paul is saying he is willing to be lost eternally if the Jews could be saved.

Some understand Paul as saying "the apostle evidently means to say that he would be willing to suffer the bitterest evils, to forego all pleasure, to endure any privation and toil, nay, to offer his life, so that he might be wholly devoted to sufferings, as an offering, if he might be the means of benefiting and saving the nation... This does not mean that Paul would be willing to be damned forever."

from Christ .. ἀπὸ τοῦ Χριστοῦ, *apo*, **G575**, Usually suggest away from. [A few suggested to translate it "by".]

for my brethren .. Paul often referred to his fellow Jews as brethren to show his connection with them.

my countrymen [kinsmen] according to the flesh .. His countrymen, all of whom he regarded as his

kinsmen, or relations, as descended from the same ancestors.

according to the flesh .. By birth. As distinguished from Paul's Christian brethren which included Gentiles. They were of the same blood and parentage, though not now of the same religious belief.

Romans 9:4

Romans 9:4

who are Israelites .. Who is the **real Israel today?**

[Romans 2:28-29](#); [Romans 4:12-14](#); [Romans 9:4-8](#); [Galatians 6:16](#); [Galatians 3:27-29](#); [Revelation 2:9](#); [Revelation 3:9](#); [1 Corinthians 10:18](#); (See [Romans 11:1](#); [2 Corinthians 11:22](#); [Philippians 3:5](#); [Hebrews 11:1](#))

God's *Israel* today is not that nation in Palestine called by that name, but His people who live by faith in Him and His Son Jesus Christ.

He now enumerates some of the glories of the Jewish race. Six high privileges of the chosen people are named in [Romans 9:4-5](#). They were adopted as the chosen people [Deuteronomy 7:6](#).

to whom belongs [pertains] the adoption .. Galatians 4.1-3; "Israel" is the one adopted by God, He is their Father!

as sons .. Sonship. "Israel" are the *sons* of God. ([Exodus 4:22](#); [Deuteronomy 14:1-2](#); [Deuteronomy 32:6](#); [Isaiah 1:2](#); [Jeremiah 31:9](#); [Hosea 11:1](#); [Malachi 1:6](#)).

the glory .. To Israel belongs the "glory." Perhaps a reference to the Divine Presence of the Lord which rested on the ark in the wilderness and continued to be seen in the temple, and only disappeared when the temple was demolished in A.D. 70. This is what the Jews called the "Shekinah."

(Comp. [Exodus 16:10](#); [Exodus 24:16](#); [Exodus 40:34-35](#); [1 Samuel 4:22](#); [1 Kings 8:10-11](#); [Psalms 63:2](#); [Ezekiel 1:28](#); [Hebrews 9:5](#).)

the covenants .. The covenants of promised made to Abraham and the patriarchs and the covenant at Sinai.

the giving of the law .. The Law given at Mount Sinai, and the inclusion of all Old Testament scriptures.

the service of God .. The regulated temple worship.

and the promises .. (see [Hebrews 7:6](#); [Galatians 3:16](#), [Galatians 3:21](#); [Acts 26:6-7](#)).

Especially the Messianic promises which were embedded in the covenants mentioned above. [Acts 2:39](#); [Ephesians 2:12](#); [Romans 1:3](#);

The Jews, as such, had such wonderful advantages in the way God had blessed and treated them.

Israel .. The nation called "Israel" today is not the spiritual Israel, or the children of God. Many political decision seem to be made on the belief that the nation of Israel today is still somehow favored by God, while the book of Romans discount that view.

Romans 9:5

Romans 9:5

of whom are the fathers .. The patriarchs were the fathers to whom God gave the promises before Israel was a nation. The Jews highly valued themselves in this, [Matthew 3:9](#).

and from whom according to the flesh, Christ came .. As far as his human nature was concerned, the long-expected Messiah (Christ, the "Anointed One") came from Israel, and was the hope of the world. He was not exclusively theirs since He is the sovereign eternally blessed God ([John 1:1](#)).

Christ came .. He had already come, and it was their high honor that he was one of their nation.

who is over all .. [ESV who is God over all] .. Here Paul called Jesus "God" (cf. [Philippians 2:10-11](#); [Titus 2:13](#); [2 Peter 1:2](#)).

This is an appellation that belongs only to the true God. It implies supreme divinity; and is full proof that the Messiah is divine.

the eternally blessed God .. [RSV who is over all the blessed forever; NIV forever praised!; NASB God blessed forever.] .. This doxology is applied to the Lord Jesus and proves that he is divine.

Note the various translations of this phrase.

Paul does not use *Theos* for Jesus often, but he does use it (cf. [Acts 20:28](#); [2 Thessalonians 1:12](#); [Titus 2:13](#); [Philippians 2:6](#)). All the early church Fathers interpreted this text as referring to Jesus. - Utey

Romans 9:6

Romans 9:6

But it is not that the word of God has taken no effect .. God's promise had not failed just because Israel as a nation did not recognize and rejoice in the Christ's coming. Many of them had responded to the Messiah's presence.

the word of God .. In this context this phrase refers to the OT covenantal promises. God's promises are sure (cf. [Numbers 23:19](#); [Joshua 21:45](#); [Joshua 23:14](#); [2 Kings 10:10](#); [Isaiah 40:8](#); [Isaiah 55:11](#); [Isaiah 59:21](#)).

For they are not all Israel .. Why not? Because they are not willing to confess Christ, [Romans 10:9-12](#).

Israel, who are of Israel .. The real Israel is not that physical nation of Jews. cf. note at [Romans 9:4](#)

Not all the descendants of Jacob have the true spirit of Israelites, or are Jews in the scriptural sense of the term; see note [Romans 2:28-29](#). - BN

Romans 9:7

Romans 9:7

nor are they all children of Abraham .. Many of the physical seed of Abraham were adopted into the true family of God. Many of the descendants of Abraham were rejected.

because they are his offspring .. Abraham had other children beside the "children of promise" through Sarah. There were his descendants through Hagar ([Genesis 25:12](#)), through Keturah ([Genesis 25:1-4](#)), and his concubines ([Genesis 25:6](#))

It has been said that Abraham is the most honored man on earth. Because the Jews, Christians, and Moslems all honor him.

but "Through Isaac ..." .. This was the promise, [Genesis 21:12](#). The "Israelite" descendants were through Isaac, the child of promise.

Romans 9:8

Romans 9:8

not the children of the flesh .. As proof of Paul's statement he reminds them of other fleshly descendants of Abraham. See note on [Romans 9:7](#).

the children of the promise .. Paul is preparing to argue his point about who are the "real" children of the promise (see the argument developing in [Romans 9:24](#); [Romans 9:26-27](#); [Romans 9:30](#); and especially [Romans 9:33](#))

Israel .. Israel today is not Israel, or the children of God. Many political decision seem to be made on

the belief that the nation of Israel today is still somehow favored by God, while the book of Romans discount that view. see note on [Romans 9:4](#).

Romans 9:9

[Romans 9:9](#)

the promise .. The promise made to Abraham.

About this time .. [Genesis 18:10](#), [Genesis 18:14](#).

Romans 9:10

[Romans 9:10](#)

And not only so .. This shows the principle of God making a distinction among the natural descendants of Abraham.

The first argument is that the true seed are children of the promise, a spiritual seed rather than of the flesh. The second argument, now begun, is that God has the right to reject what nation he will, including the Jews, and to choose other races if he will. This is shown by facts from history. He did exercise the right of choice when he chose Jacob as the chosen nation, instead of Esau. The facts are recited to show this. - PNT

but when Rebecca .. The wife of Isaac; see [Genesis 25:21](#), [Genesis 25:23](#).

had conceived children .. The children, yet unborn, were both Isaac's seed according to the flesh; hence, according to the flesh, of the promised seed, and both equally without works, **neither having done good nor evil** ([Romans 9:11](#)) - PNT

Romans 9:11

[Romans 9:11](#)

not yet born .. God's choice of Jacob by God was done before either had done **good or evil**. God's choice was not made because of the **works** of either, but on the basis of God sovereignty.

[One of the basic passages for predestination of Christians today.] Various talents and abilities are given according to God, and not according to their works. Some may be born leaders, and some born academics; some with extrovert personalities and others with different personalities. Such decisions are by the unconditional choice of God and "not of works, but of Him who calls." - WG

It might be thought that there was a natural reason for preferring the child of Sarah, as being Abraham's true and first wife, both to the child of Hagar, Sarah's maid, and to the children of Keturah, his second wife. But there could be no such reason in the case of Rebecca, Isaac's only wife; for the choice of her son Jacob was the choice of one of two sons by the same mother and of the younger in preference to the elder, and before either of them was born, and consequently before either had done good or evil to be a ground of preference: and all to show that the sole ground of distinction lay in the unconditional choice of God--"not of works, but of Him that calleth." - JFB

the purpose of God .. Of his own will he chose Jacob, yet unborn, to become the head of the chosen race, rather than Esau. Note that this election was not to eternal salvation, but to become the head of a people. As Moses, Samuel, and John the Baptist were raised up for a great work of God, so was Jacob. - PNT

Romans 9:12

[Romans 9:12](#)

it was said to her .. It was said to Rebecca by God, [Genesis 25:23](#).

the older .. Which was Esau .By the law of primogeniture among the Hebrews, he would have been entitled

to special honors and privileges. But it was said that in his case this custom should be reversed, and that he should take the rank of the younger.

shall serve .. Shall be subject to; shall not have the authority and priority, but should be inferior to.

The passage in Genesis [Genesis 25:23](#) shows that this had reference particularly to the posterity of Esau, and not to him as an individual.

The sense is, that the descendants of Esau, who were Edomites, should be inferior to, and subject to the descendants of Jacob. Jacob was to have the priority; the promised land; the promises; and the honor of being regarded as the chosen of God.

If one should ask, Why did God choose Israel among all the nations of the world, or Why did he not give me "leadership" or give me a mind for "academics", etc. the only reply to such inquiries is "Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Your sight." [Matthew 11:26](#).

Romans 9:13

Romans 9:13

As it is written .. [Malachi 1:2-3](#). The language of Malachi in its context shows that this is spoken of the two nations, Israel and Edom.

This was not true of Esau as a person, but true of his descendants. It is not about individuals, but that God blessed one nation more than another.

There is not the slightest hint of electing some *persons* to eternal salvation and others to damnation.

Esau .. The Edomites were descendants of Esau, [Malachi 1:4](#).

have I hated .. This does not mean any positive hatred; but that he had preferred Jacob, and had withheld from Esau those privileges and blessings which he had conferred on the descendants of Jacob.

This is explained in [Malachi 1:3](#), "And I hated Esau, and laid his mountains and heritage waste for the dragons of the wilderness;" compare [Jeremiah 49:17-18](#); [Ezekiel 35:6](#).

It was common among the Hebrews to use the terms "love" and "hatred" in this comparative sense, where the former implied strong positive attachment, and the latter, not positive hatred, but merely a less love, or the withholding of the expressions of affection; compare [Genesis 29:30-31](#); [Proverbs 13:24](#). See [Luke 14:26](#); [John 12:25](#).

Romans 9:14

Romans 9:14

What shall we say .. What conclusion shall we draw?

Is there unrighteous with God? .. Does God do injustice or wrong in blessing nations indiscriminately? God is sovereign, and He can do exactly as He wishes, and whatever He does is just and right. [Romans 9:15](#).

Certainly not! .. Paul's answer.

Romans 9:15

Romans 9:15

For He says to Moses .. [Exodus 33:19](#). Paul is showing that this principle of God's sovereignty was always taught in the Scriptures.

I will have compassion .. Paul is giving evidence that God can bring the Gentiles into His plans if He wishes to!

God has a right to pardon whom He pleased, and to save people on His own terms and according to His sovereign will and pleasure.

Romans 9:16

Romans 9:16

So then it is not of him who will .. Man is not the one who will made the decisions of blessings and salvation, etc.

Isaac *willed* to bestow the blessing on Esau but God had chosen Jacob to become the founder of the Israelites.

not of him who runs .. A man running a race doesn't declare himself the winner and the crown just because he runs!

Man doesn't choose his own method of salvation, but must accept and obey God's way.

Jeremiah 10:23; Isaiah 55:8-9; Hebrews 5:9;

but of God who shows mercy .. God makes the decisions and the terms. Exodus 33:19.

See note "**What Does God Want From Us?**" at Hebrews 11:6.

Romans 9:17

Romans 9:17

the Scripture says .. Exodus 9:16;

unto Pharaoh .. The haughty and oppressive king of Egypt; thus showing that the most mighty and wicked monarchs are at his control; compare Isaiah 10:5-7.

for this very purpose .. This passage is designed to illustrate the doctrine that God shows mercy according to his sovereign pleasure. God meant to accomplish some great purpose by his existence and conduct.

raised you up .. God had allowed Pharaoh to come to this position of leadership just suited to develop his character.

show my power .. By means of Pharaoh's decisions (whatever they be) God's power would be seen in His deliverance of Israel.

my name .. The name of Yahweh, as the only true God.

throughout all the earth .. Or throughout all the land of Egypt, note Luke 2.1.

The nations in Canaan must have heard of Israel's deliverance from Egypt and remember it for years, see Joshua 2:9-11.

Romans 9:18

Romans 9:18

Therefore has mercy .. This a conclusion stated the apostle the result all the argument.

God has shown that has mercy according his own sense right, not according any human code.

whom wills hardens .. It does not mean exert a positive influence, but leave a sinner his own course, and place him circumstances where the character will more and more developed; see the note John 12:40.

"What must not forgotten, and what appears distinctly, from the whole narrative Exodus, that Pharaoh's hardening was first *his own act*. Five times is said him that himself hardened, made heavy his heart (Exodus 7:13; Exodus 7:22; Exodus 8:15; Exodus 8:32; Exodus 9:7), before the time when is last said that God hardened him (Exodus 9:12), and even after that is said that hardened himself (Exodus 9:34).

Thus at first closed his own heart God's appeals; grew harder stubborn resistance under God's judgments, until last God, a punishment for his obstinate rejection right, gave him over his mad folly and took away his judgment."--*Godet*.

At first Pharaoh hardened his own heart; God's judgments only made harder, and then God "gave him over." God only made harder, his judgments and leaving him his folly, one who had already hardened his own heart.

Romans 9:19

Romans 9:19

You will say to me .. The apostle here refers to an objection that might be made to his argument.

Why does He still find fault? .. Why does he blame people, since their conduct is in accordance with his purpose, and since he bestows mercy according to his sovereign will? This objection has been made by sinners in all ages.

It assumes, what cannot be proved, that a plan or purpose of God must destroy the freedom of man.

who has resisted His will? .. That is, who has "successfully opposed" his will, or frustrated his plan?

resist .. The word translated "resist" is commonly used to denote the resistance offered by soldiers or armed men.

Romans 9:20

Romans 9:20

But indeed, O man .. Paul is reminding any who would argue with him on this point, that we are just "humans".

who are you to reply against God? .. Man is nothing, God is deity! Shall men charge God with injustice? We have no right to strive with our Maker. He has the right to declare his own conditions upon which he will have mercy.

But indeed, O man, who are you to reply against God? .. To this objection the apostle replies in two ways;

first, by asserting the sovereignty of God, and affirming that he had a right to do it [Romans 9:20-21](#); and

secondly, by showing that he did it according to the principles of justice and mercy, or that it was involved of necessity in his dispensing justice and mercy to mankind; [Romans 9:22-24](#).

Will the thing formed .. God is the *Creator*, we are the *created*!

Romans 9:21

Romans 9:21

the potter .. Paul gives another illustration from the Old Testament, [Isaiah 64:8](#). A potter worked with clay to make earthen vessels.

power .. This word denotes here not merely "physical power," but authority, right; see [Matthew 7:29](#), translated "authority;" [Matthew 21:23](#); [2 Thessalonians 3:9](#); [Mark 2:10](#); [Luke 5:24](#), "The Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, etc."

the same lump .. A mass of material of the same consistency and well mixed. ([Romans 11:16](#); [1 Corinthians 5:6](#)) From the same lump of clay comes vessels for various use.

vessel .. A cup, lamp, jar, or other earthen utensil.

one vessel of honor .. One vessel may be shaped and fitted for honorable use, or designed for a more useful and refined purpose. A vessel used for special occasions and probably viewed or used by guests.

unto dishonor .. An everyday common vessel for meaner service.

The lump here denote the people of the world. The potter illustrates God's right to create from this mass as it seems good in his sight. God may create one nation that will be honored and receive of his glory, while another does not receive the glory of the other.

People have no right to complain if God bestows his blessings where and when he chooses. Paul is still illustrating it was God's right to choose Israel over other nations of the world. ([Romans 9:7-13](#)).

Romans 9:22

[Romans 9:22](#)

What if God .. This is the second point in the answer to the objection in [Romans 9:19](#).

The answer has respect to the "two classes" of people which actually exist on the earth - the righteous and the wicked.

And the question is, whether "in regard to these two classes does God do wrong?" If he does not, then the doctrine of the apostle is established, and the objection is not valid. It is assumed here that the world is divided into two classes - saints and sinners. The apostle considers the case of sinners in [Romans 9:22](#).

wanting [desiring; willing; choosing] .. Being disposed, having an inclination to do a thing proposed.

wrath .. *τιν ὀργήν* *tēn orgēn*. This word occurs thirty-five times in the New Testament. Passionate anger, indignation, vengeance, wrath.

When used of men, it comes to mean an earnest desire of revenge, or inflicting suffering. [Ephesians 4:31](#); [Colossians 3:8](#); [1 Timothy 2:8](#).

With God it means a showing of his displeasure for transgression, and punishment for sin. Here it is evidently used to denote God showing "severe displeasure against sin."

to make his power known .. This language is the same as what was used in relation to Pharaoh; [Romans 9:17](#); [Exodus 9:16](#).

God wants to make it know that He hates sin!

endured with much longsuffering .. God is patience with those doing wrong. God's patience is spoken of often in the scriptures; [2 Peter 3:9](#); [Revelation 2:3](#); [1 Corinthians 13:7](#); [Luke 18:7](#); as He was in the days of Noah [1 Peter 3:20](#); (see [Genesis 6:3](#), where God seems to give man 120 years before the flood to repent or suffer his wrath.)

the vessels of wrath prepared for destruction .. Men who choose to do evil and prepared themselves to suffer God's wrath. [James 5:5](#).

Living and basking in sin one is fattening himself for the day of slaughter. See note at [James 5:5](#).

Romans 9:23

[Romans 9:23](#)

and that He might make known .. That he might manifest or display.

the riches of his glory .. God will show his mercy ("*the riches of his glory*") on those who are his. ([Romans 8:1](#); [Romans 8:17](#); those adopted into his family, [Romans 9:8](#).)

vessels of mercy .. Those on whom God will show "the riches of his glory," the saints.

which He had prepared beforehand for glory .. God had ordained that those conforming to the image of His Son would be saved, [1 Thessalonians 5:9](#); [2 Timothy 1:9](#);

See also [Ephesians 1:4-5](#), [Ephesians 1:11](#); [Romans 8:28-30](#); [Acts 13:48](#); [John 1:13](#).

unto glory .. To happiness; and especially to the happiness of heaven [Hebrews 2:10](#); [Romans 5:2](#), [2](#)

[Corinthians 4:17](#), [2 Thessalonians 2:14](#); [2 Timothy 2:10](#); [1 Peter 5:4](#).

Heaven is a "prepared" place for a "prepared" people. [John 14:2-4](#); [Matthew 25:34](#); [Amos 4:12](#); [2 Timothy 2:21](#);

Romans 9:24

Romans 9:24

even to us .. "Us" refers to *us* Christians, both Jews and Gentiles.

To prove that the Gentiles might be called as well as the Jews, was a leading design of the Epistle.

whom He called .. God has called his people to come from the world and be devoted to Him. [2 Corinthians 6:17](#); [Revelation 18:4](#); [Romans 1:6-7](#); [Romans 8:30](#); [1 Corinthians 1:24](#), etc.

not of the Jews only .. The first call was to the Jews. [Romans 1:16](#); [Romans 2:9-10](#).

also of the Gentiles? .. Paul shows that the gospel invitations is to everyone, as Jesus commanded, [Matthew 28:19-20](#); [Mark 16:15-16](#).

Romans 9:25

Romans 9:25

As He says .. Paul proceeds now to confirm by quotations from the writings of the Jews themselves that God planned to call both Jews and Gentiles. So, how could there be any objection?

Hosea .. [Ὡσηέ, **Osee**] This is the Greek form of writing the Hebrew word **Hosea**. It means in the book of Hosea, as "in David" means in the book of David, or by David, [Hebrews 4:7](#). The passage quoted is found in [Hosea 2:23](#).

Romans 9:26

Romans 9:26

Quote from [Hosea 1:10](#).

You are not my people .. Gentiles. The covenant at Sinai was made with Israel only, [Deuteronomy 5:3](#);

they shall be called sons of the living God .. [Hosea 1:10](#); [Romans 9:8](#);
([Romans 8:1](#); [Romans 8:17](#); those adopted into his family, [Romans 9:8](#).)

Romans 9:27

Romans 9:27

Isaiah .. Ἠσαίας, Esaias - The Greek way of writing the word "Isaiah."

Cries .. [Isaiah 10:22-23](#). Exclaims, or speaks aloud or openly: compare [John 1:15](#).

Concerning Israel .. Concerning "the Jews." Isaiah had reference primarily to the Jews of his own time; to that wicked generation that God was about to punish, by sending them captive into other lands.

As the sand of the sea .. This expression is used to denote an indefinite or an innumerable multitude. It often occurs in the sacred writings. [Genesis 22:17](#); ([Judges 7:12](#); [1 Samuel 13:5](#); [2 Samuel 17:11](#), etc.)

A remnant shall be saved .. Meaning a remnant only.

In comparison to the number of Israelites before captivity, only a few returned to the land afterwards.

Romans 9:28

Romans 9:28

He will finish the work .. This is taken from the Septuagint translation of [Isaiah 10:23](#).

Cut it short .. This word here means to “execute it speedily, without delay, quickly,” The destruction shall not be delayed.

In righteousness .. So as to manifest his own justice. The work, though apparently severe, yet shall be a just expression of God’s abhorrence of the sins of the people.

Romans 9:29

Romans 9:29

And as Isaiah said .. [Isaiah 1:9](#)

before .. The apostle had just cited one prediction from the tenth chapter of Isaiah. He now says that Isaiah had affirmed the same thing in a previous part of his prophecy.

Lord of Sabaoth .. Lord of Host, Lord of all Power, All Powerful. [James 5:4](#); Greek "Lord Sabaoth," which means "Lord of the [heavenly] armies," sometimes translated more generally as "Lord Almighty."

In Isaiah, the Lord of Hosts. The word “**Sabaoth**” is the Hebrew word rendered “hosts” (armies). It properly denotes armies or military hosts organized for war. Hence, it denotes the “hosts of heaven,” and means:

- (1) “The angels” who are represented as marshalled or arranged into military orders; [Ephesians 1:21](#); [Ephesians 3:10](#); [Ephesians 6:12](#); [Colossians 1:16](#); [Colossians 2:15](#); [Jude 1:6](#); [1 Kings 22:19](#), ” [Psalms 103:21](#); [Psalms 148:2](#).
- (2) The stars; [Jeremiah 33:22](#), [Isaiah 40:26](#); [Deuteronomy 4:19](#),

Romans 9:30

Romans 9:30

What shall we say then? .. What conclusion shall we draw from the previous train of remarks? To what results have we come by the passages adduced from the Old Testament? This question is asked preparatory to his summing up the argument;

That Gentiles .. People to whom the Law of Moses had not been given.

who did not pursue righteousness .. Not having the Law, they did not follow its rituals and ceremonial regulations.

have attained to righteousness .. They did follow the moral code and understanding of right and wrong, good and evil, that God wanted and expected.

even the righteousness of faith .. Justification by faith in Christ; see the note at [Romans 1:17](#).

Romans 9:31

Romans 9:31

but Israel .. The Jews, as a whole.

law of righteousness .. Fleshly Israel was seeking righteousness by the Law of Moses, but had not attained the law of justice and righteousness in their daily lives.

Obedience to the rituals were not a substitute for godly living. [Philippians 3:4-9](#);

Romans 9:32

Why [wherefore, why not] .. Why were they not justified before God?

did not pursue it thought faith .. They depended on their own righteousness, and not on the mercy of God to be obtained by faith.

but by works of the law .. They thought that keeping the rituals would merit salvation.

they stumbled .. They failed to attain the righteousness they sought and they rejected Christ. [1 Corinthians 1:23](#) The Jews could not accept a crucified Christ, or Savior, or Deliver. It did not fit their preconceived idea.

But Salvation is by faith, not by works of the Law.

stumbling stone .. Christ. [1 Corinthians 1:23](#); [Isaiah 8:14](#); [Romans 9:32](#); [Romans 9:33](#); [1 Peter 2:8](#);

Romans 9:33

Romans 9:33

As it is written .. A quotation from [Isaiah 28:16](#); [Isaiah 8:14](#). The quotation here is made up of both these passages, and contains the substance of both; compare also [Psalms 118:22](#); [1 Peter 2:6](#).

The background to Isaiah's message was the Assyrian invasion.

Behold I lay in Zion .. Mount Zion was the hill in Jerusalem on which the temple and the palace of David were built. [1 Chronicles 11:5-8](#). The whole city was often called by that name; [Psalms 48:12](#); [Psalms 69:35](#); [Psalms 87:2](#).

stumbling stone and Rock of offense .. [Isaiah 8:14](#). (Paul in combining these verses followed a rabbinical technique.) He applies the title and pronouns to Jesus. [1 Peter 2:4-10](#).

whoever believes on him will not be put to shame [be disappointed] .. [Isaiah 28:16](#) ([Romans 10:13](#)) The "stone/rock" is Jesus, He is 1) the object of our faith; 2) and "faith" (trust) is the proper response to Him.

Romans 10:1

Romans 10:1

Romans 9 = Israel's Past

Romans 10 = Israel's Present

Romans 11 = Israel's Future

Brethren .. An expression of tenderness and affection, denoting his deep interest in their welfare. This expression seems intended particularly for the Jews, his ancient friends, fellow-worshippers, and kinsmen, but who had embraced the Christian faith.

my heart's desire .. The word "desire" *εὐδοκία* *eudokia* means benevolence, and the expression, "my heart's desire," means my earnest and sincere wish.

prayer to God .. He not only cherished this feeling but he expressed in a desire to God. He had no desire that his kinsmen should be destroyed; no pleasure in the appalling doctrine which he had been defending. He still wished their welfare; and could still pray for them that they might return to God.

for Israel .. For Paul's Jewish nation.

that they might be saved .. This refers to salvation from their sin of unbelief; and the consequences of sin

in hell.

It does not refer to the temporal calamities which involve Jerusalem's destruction (A.D. 70) that was coming upon them, but to preservation from the eternal anger of God. [Romans 11:26](#); [1 Timothy 2:4](#).

Romans 10:2

Romans 10:2

For I bear them record .. witness, ESV. To bear record means to be a witness; to give evidence. Paul was well qualified to do this. He had been a Jew of the strictest order [Acts 26:5](#); [Philippians 3:5](#), and knew well the extraordinary exertions which they put forth to obey the commands of the Law.

a zeal for God .. [John 2:17](#); [Psalms 69:9](#); [Acts 21:20](#), [Acts 22:3](#). Zeal for God here means passionate ardor in the things pertaining to God, or in the things of religion.

not according to knowledge .. Not founded on truth. Knowledge without zeal usually becomes cold, abstract, calculating, and formal; Misplaced zeal that becomes enthusiastic often becomes persecuting.

Romans 10:3

Romans 10:3

For they being ignorant .. Theirs was willful ignorance and not voluntarily, and therefore criminal. The apostle affirms that they could have known the plan of God; for he says [Romans 10:18-21](#) that they had full opportunity of knowing.

God's righteousness .. Not the personal holiness of God, "but of God's plan of justifying people, and declaring them righteous by faith in his Son," See note at [Romans 1:17](#).

God's definition of what is righteous; what God demands of one to be counted righteous. Here God's plan stands opposed to their efforts to make themselves righteous by their own works of the Law.

seeking to establish their own righteousness .. Endeavoring to validate their own self-righteousness as a ground of justification. This stands opposed to the justification by grace and forgiveness through Jesus' sacrifice according to God's plan.

Romans 10:4

Romans 10:4

For Christ .. This expression implies faith in Christ.

is the end of the law .. The word translated "end" means (1) *termination*, (2) *fulfillment*, (3) *aim or purpose*, - PC

It means what completes a thing, or renders it perfect; also the boundary, or termination of anything, as the end of life, the result of a prophecy, etc.; [John 13:1](#); [Luke 22:37](#).

It also means the completion of the design which is had in view; the principal purpose for which it was undertaken; [1 Timothy 1:5](#); [1 Peter 1:9](#), [Romans 14:9](#), "To this end Christ both died," etc. For this design or purpose. This is doubtless its meaning here.

end .. 1) goal (*telos*) to which law points ([Romans 3:21](#)) OR

2) Christ marks an end of legalism. NEB.

τέλος νόμου = an end of law, as an instrument of righteousness. - CBSC

for righteousness .. The meaning is that the whole law pointed to Christ, and his righteousness. They were its object. Yet the Jews clung to the law, and refused to believe upon Christ, in whom the law met its fulfillment. - PNT

To every one that believeth . . As long as the Jews remained in unbelief, they were cut off from righteousness (justification). He who believes submits to God's plan of righteousness that is found in Christ. [Romans 1:17](#).

Romans 10:5

Romans 10:5

For Moses writes .. This is found in [Leviticus 18:5](#).

about the righteousness which is of the law .. [the man who practices ...] The righteousness which a perfect obedience to the Law of God would produce. That consisted in perfectly doing all that the Law required.

The man that does those things .. But Paul has elsewhere shown that no one can keep the law perfectly. That righteousness, then, requires a perfect obedience, a sinless life. What Jew could say that he had never sinned?

live by them .. Law-righteousness meant keeping the Law perfectly.

Romans 10:6

Romans 10:6

Vs. 6 Many consider this an early church hymn or chant.

[Deuteronomy 30:11-14](#), [Deuteronomy 30:12](#), [Deuteronomy 9:4](#)

[Moses, near the end of his life, having given God's commandments to the Israelites exhorts them to obedience. To do this, he assures them that his commands are reasonable, plain, intelligible, and accessible.] - BN

But the righteousness of faith .. Apparently Paul meant this as in contrast with Moses' "righteousness of the law". Righteousness, or justification, that comes by faith (trust) in Christ speaks this way ...

do not say in your heart .. The expression to say in the heart is the same as to think. Do not think, or suppose, that the doctrine is so difficult to be understood, that one must ascend to heaven in order to understand it.

Who will ascend into heaven? .. This expression was used among the Jews to denote any difficult undertaking. To say that it was high as heaven, or that it was necessary to ascend to heaven to understand it, was to express the highest difficulty. See [Job 11:7](#),

(that is, to bring Christ down) .. Paul is saying, poetically, that it was God's plan for the Christ to be incarnate; for God to come down in the flesh ([John 1:14](#)) to save men, and asking, "Who would every have thought of this plan, but God!" It is so far above man's reasoning to have every considered something like this! [Job 11:7](#).

Christ has come down from heaven and revealed God's plan of righteousness by faith!

We believe in a *living* Savior, *presently* with us in Spirit.

Romans 10:7

Romans 10:7

v. 6-7 *Χριστὸν καταγαγεῖν ... ἐκ νεκρῶν ἀναγαγεῖν*. The reference is to the Incarnation and Resurrection. These are the fundamental acts of GOD by which His righteousness is revealed, and made possible for man. - Cambridge Greek

Or "Who will descend into the abyss? .. [the deep] .. These words are also a part of the address of Moses, [Deuteronomy 30:13](#). But it is not literally quoted.

The words as used by Moses refer to what is remote, and therefore difficult to be obtained.

Paul uses the word "deep," *ἄβυσσος* *abusson* - "the abyss." This word is applied to anything the

depth or bottom of which is not known. It is applied to the ocean (in the Septuagint), [Job 41:31](#), [Genesis 7:11](#); [Genesis 8:2](#); to a broad place [Job 36:16](#); and to the abyss before the world was formed, [Genesis 1:2](#).

In the New Testament it is not applied to the ocean, unless in the passage [Luke 8:31](#) (see the note on that place), but to the abode of departed spirits; and particularly to the dark, deep, and bottomless pit, where the wicked are to dwell forever. [Revelation 9:1-2](#), "Greek, "The pit of the abyss."

[Revelation 11:7](#); [Revelation 17:8](#); [Revelation 20:1](#), [Revelation 20:3](#). In these places the word means the deep, awful regions of the nether world.

descend into the abyss? .. In context the word stands opposed to heaven, and to descend there to bring one up.

that is, to bring Christ up from the dead .. Jesus did descend into the hades world of departed spirits ([Acts 2:27](#)) and did come back from that place ([Acts 2:24](#); [Acts 2:30-32](#)).

"ascend. . .descend" .. Humans do not have to go seeking Christ; God has sent Him publicly for all. Human searching is not necessary. – Utley

Romans 10:8

Romans 10:8

But what it does it say .. --continuing the quotation from [Deuteronomy 30:14](#). What is to be done according to God's word?

The word is near you .. --easily accessible. The truth is not difficult to be understood and embraced. What is near us may be easily reached.

in your mouth .. --when you confess Him. From the Septuagint, [Deuteronomy 30:14](#). The meaning is, that the doctrine was already so familiar, and so well understood, that it was actually in their mouth, that is, their language, their common conversation.

The facts were so well known by the preaching of the apostles, that they might be said to be "in every man's mouth." - BN

and in your heart .. --when you believe on Him. It seems to mean that his truth was in their mind, and a subject of meditation and reflection.

that is, the word of faith, which we preach .. --that is, the word which men were to believe and obey for salvation (compare [1 Timothy 4:6](#)).

the word of faith .. The gospel preached by the apostles. The "word of faith" is the message of justification by the system of "faith" as opposed to the Law.

Romans 10:9

Romans 10:9

that if you confess .. Confessing the Lord Jesus is the righteousness of faith (v.6 [Romans 10:6](#)) described.

confess .. The word here rendered "confess" [ὁμολογέω](#) *homologeō* is often rendered "profess"; [Matthew 7:23](#), [Titus 1:16](#); [Titus 3:14](#); [Romans 1:22](#); [1 Timothy 2:10](#); [1 Timothy 6:12-13](#), [1 Timothy 6:21](#); [Hebrews 3:1](#), etc. It properly means to "say the same thing"; to "speak what agrees with something which others speak or maintain."

Lord Jesus .. That is, "Jesus to be Lord" [Acts 2:36](#); [Acts 10:36](#); [1 Corinthians 12:3](#); [2 Corinthians 4:5](#); [Philippians 2:11](#); [Colossians 2:6](#); ([1 John 4:15](#));

The use of "Lord" related to the rabbinical substitution of YHWH with *Adon* when reading Scripture.

- Utley [Hence it means confessing the deity of Jesus Christ.]

with you mouth .. That in spite of all persecution and danger you own up to your faith (trust) in Jesus as your Savior, the sacrifice for your sins, your mediator before the Father.

To openly confess Christ in those days of persecution was a trial of faith of the severest kind.

and believe in your heart .. A genuine faith that is not pretending, but a belief that brings the whole man into loving trust and obedience to Christ. Such a faith is referred to in [Romans 1:5](#), where the "obedience of faith" is described. (See the note there and also [Romans 16:26](#))

that God has raised Him from the dead, .. This article is put for all the rest, the incarnation, the sinless life, the sacrificial death, the resurrection and ascension back into heaven to be seated on the right hand of God making intercession for the saints. [Romans 4:25](#)

In a skeptical world this was then and now the heart of gospel preaching. (Proclaimed in every sermon recorded in Acts.)

you will be saved .. Forgiven of sins, and stand justified before God, and an inheritor of heaven.

Romans 10:10

Romans 10:10

For with the heart .. Such a sincere faith that influences one's whole life in all manner and conduct of life.

one believes unto righteousness .. Believes, ([Romans 1:5](#); [Romans 16:26](#), trusts and obeys) so that justification is obtained. ([Romans 4:5](#); [Romans 9:30](#))

with the mouth confession is made .. Public acknowledgement. From both the New Testament scriptures and early church history believers made a public statement of their faith before baptism. [Matthew 10:32](#); [Matthew 25:34-46](#); [Luke 12:8](#). (See [Acts 8:37](#), present in most early MSS, absent in others; [Acts 2:36](#); [Acts 10:36](#); [1 Corinthians 12:3](#); [2 Corinthians 4:5](#); [Philippians 2:11](#); [Colossians 2:6](#); [1 John 4:15](#);))

confession .. There is a difference between the confession made at John's baptism [Mark 1:5](#) and Christian baptism. At John's baptism they confessed their sins. But now to be a Christian one is to confess his faith in a *resurrected* Savior! [Acts 9:20](#); [Matthew 16:16](#); [John 6:68-69](#), [John 11:27](#), [John 20:31](#); [1 John 4:15](#), [1 John 5:5](#)

See note "[What Does God Want From Us?](#)" at [Hebrews 11:6](#).

unto salvation .. εἰς σωτηρίαν. Paul is talking about how a sinner initially receives the gift of God's righteousness, which is the same as entering into the state of salvation. - CPNIV

Paul says the sinner believes "unto (*eis*) righteousness" and confesses "unto (*eis*) salvation." *Eis* expresses purpose (and therefore result). I.e., the sinner believes for the purpose of receiving the gift of righteousness, and that is indeed the result of his faith. The sinner likewise confesses for the purpose of receiving the gift of salvation, and that is indeed the result of his confession. – CPNIV

Romans 10:11

Romans 10:11

For the scripture says .. [Isaiah 28:16](#); [Romans 9:33](#); A prophecy concerning the Savior indicated a plan of salvation for those trusting in the Christ (the Messiah).

Here, as in [Romans 9:33](#), the quotation is from the Septuagint, which renders those words of the original, "shall not make haste" (that is, fly for escape, as from conscious danger), "shall not be put to shame," which comes to the same thing. - JFB

Whosoever .. [Everyone] .. Paul emphasizes the universal offer of salvation. **Whoever** in vv. [Romans](#)

[10:11](#), [Romans 10:13](#) means "all." Verse [Romans 10:12](#) explains that this includes **Jew and Greek** (Gentile).- NNIBC

believes .. Trusts, put their faith in "him", i.e. the Messiah, the Christ.

Romans 10:12

[Romans 10:12](#)

For there is no difference .. In the previous verse Paul had quoted a passage from [Isaiah 28:16](#), which says that "everyone" (Greek, *πᾶς* pas) that believeth shall not be ashamed; that is, everyone of every nation and kindred.

This implies that it was not to be confined to the Jews. This thought he now further illustrates and confirms by expressly declaring that there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek.

This doctrine it was one main design of the Epistle to establish, and it is fully proved in the course of the argument in Romans 1-4. See particularly [Romans 3:26-30](#).

When the apostle says there is no difference between them, he means in regard to the subject under discussion. In many respects there might be a difference; but not in the way of justification before God. There all had sinned; all had failed of obeying the Law; and all must be justified in the same way, by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Jew .. The Israelite nation which professed to following the Law of Moses

and Greek .. Literally, those who dwelt in Greece, or those who spoke the Greek language. However it came to denote all who were not Jews; that is, the same as the Gentiles.

Paul's point is that there is no difference among people about the terms of salvation; they are the same to all.

for the same Lord over all .. This is the reason why there is no difference now between Jew and Greek.

The title **Lord** is referring to Christ Jesus who was called **Lord** in [Romans 10:9](#).

is rich unto all .. The Lord is bountiful to all so that the Jews nor Gentile need to be envious of the other. The Lord has an inexhaustible store of grace and mercy, [Ephesians 1:3](#); [Romans 11:12](#); [Romans 11:33](#); [Ephesians 1:7](#); [Ephesians 1:18](#); [Ephesians 2:7](#); [Ephesians 3:8](#); [Ephesians 3:16](#); [Philippians 4:19](#); [Colossians 1:27](#); [Colossians 2:2](#).

who call upon him .. See [Romans 10:13](#) for the way men may "call" upon the Lord.

Romans 10:13

[Romans 10:13](#)

[Romans 10:11](#) **For the Scripture says ..** [Joel 2:32](#); [Acts 2:21](#)

whosoever .. This verse proclaims the universality of the Gospel. The Gospel is for all [Matthew 28:19-20](#); [Mark 16:15-16](#).

calls .. "Call" here is not teaching salvation by prayer alone. To "call" here means to look to the Lord for where salvation is to be found, and not in any philosophy or religion of man. **Call** is now explained in the following three verses.

It is an erroneous doctrine to interpret "call" to mean that "prayer alone" is all that needed for salvation. The case of Cornelius in [Acts 10:1-6](#) alone refutes this false doctrine, [Acts 11:14](#). See [Hebrews 11:6](#) for what the Lord wants from us today.

calls on the name of the Lord .. [Genesis 4:26](#); [Genesis 21:33](#). This is more than saying "Lord, Lord", etc. [Matthew 7:21-23](#). The language implies coming to the Lord and obeying his appointed way. Compare [Acts 22:16](#); [Acts 2:21](#); [Genesis 12:8](#). ([Hebrews 5:9](#))

be saved .. [Acts 4:12](#).

[Romans 10:14](#)
Romans 10:14

[Romans 10:14-21](#) Jews are Without Excuse in Their Unbelief.

a) They could never say the gospel was never preached to them.

How shall they call on Him .. Paul here proceeds to show the importance of preaching and particularly going to those where the gospel has not been heard.

call on him .. [Genesis 4:26](#); [Genesis 21:33](#), See the significance of "*call*" in [Romans 10:13](#).

whom they have not believe .. Men must come to faith in Jesus as the Christ. [Romans 1:16](#); [Hebrews 11:6](#).

of whom they have not heard .. Paul will proceed to say that faith comes from hearing the word of God [Romans 10:17](#).

preacher .. In the context probably the reference is to an inspired man of God who will reveal God's message to them.

People must be exposed to the Word of God in some fashion in order to come to know about Christ and come to Him in faith. Today this can be done by various kinds of media. Paul is using the written media of this epistle to help also in this way.

Romans 10:15
Romans 10:15

how shall they preach unless they are sent .. The Lord commission his apostles and them that heard them to go into all the world with the gospel message. [Matthew 28:19-20](#); [Mark 16:15-16](#); [Luke 24:46-47](#); [John 17:17-18](#); [John 20:31](#); [John 21:24](#); [2 Timothy 2:2](#)

An example of a church sending out missionaries is found in [Acts 13:1-4](#).

Peter and John were missionaries of the Jerusalem church in [Acts 8:14](#).

Barnabas was sent out also by the Jerusalem church [Acts 11:22](#).

be sent .. [Isaiah 52:7](#); [Jeremiah 1:7](#); [Jeremiah 7:25](#).

be sent .. These preachers were sent by the Holy Spirit, as Philip was in [Acts 8:29](#) Heaven still sends men to preach the word. [2 Timothy 4:2](#). ([2 Timothy 2:2](#))

beautiful feet .. A metaphor saying how good it is to see those coming with good news.

those who preach .. Literally, "that evangelize peace". That proclaim the good news of peace; or bring the glad message of peace.

good tiding .. Good news, the Gospel. Particularly here the message seems to be "peace" with God. The Gospel is the message about how man can be reconciled with God. Good news! Peace! (Cf. [Luke 2:10](#); [Luke 2:14](#);))

Romans 10:16
Romans 10:16

obeyed the gospel .. A good scriptural term for describing the process of one repenting and turning to the Lord in obedience. [Hebrews 5:9](#); cf. [2 Thessalonians 1:8](#) "obey not the gospel", [1 Peter 4:17](#); [Romans 1:5](#); [Romans 16:26](#);

Obedience comes from *believing*, and believing comes from *hearing* the Word of God ([Romans](#)

[10:17](#)). Compare [1 Thessalonians 2:13](#); [Hebrews 4:2](#) (Rev.); and *hearing of faith*, i.e., *message of faith*, [Galatians 3:2](#). (See [Acts 18:8](#) for the process of *obeying*.)

[Another good scriptural description of the process of becoming a Christian is given in [Colossians 2:6](#) "As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord .. ."]

Isaiah says .. [Isaiah 53:1](#)

Who has believed our report? .. While the gospel was first for the Jews, not all believed. ([John 3:32](#)) So then the gospel was preached to the Gentiles. [Romans 10:12](#).

But they did not all hearken .. (*ou pantas hupēkousan*). They heard, but did not heed. - RWP

report .. (*akoēi*). Literally, "hearing" ([Matthew 14:1](#); [Mark 13:7](#)). - RWP

Romans 10:17

Romans 10:17

faith comes by hearing .. The desired response of preaching is **faith**.

When it is said that faith cometh by hearing, it does not mean that all who hear actually believe, but that faith does not exist unless there is a message, or report, to be heard and believed.

The context of **v. 17** is the oral preaching about Christ (see RSV)

Obedience comes from *believing*, and believing comes from *hearing* the Word of God ([Romans 10:17](#)). Compare [1 Thessalonians 2:13](#); [Hebrews 4:2](#) (Rev.); and *hearing of faith*, i.e., *message of faith*, [Galatians 3:2](#). (See [Acts 18:8](#) for the process of *obeying*.)

hearing by the word of God .. KJ (Majority Text) *haramtos theou* is found many times elsewhere. (*diarrematos Christou*, **through the word of Christ**, in some texts is only found here and is not conclusive.) see RSV, NIV, etc.

And the report, or the message (*ἡ ἀκοή* *hē akoē*), is by the Word of God; that is, the message is sent by the command of God. It is his word, sent by his direction,

word of God .. The word from God, originating with God. cf parallel expression [Luke 3:2](#); [John 3:34](#); [Ephesians 6:17](#); [Hebrews 6:5](#); [Hebrews 11:3](#).

For authority of what one is to preach, see [1 Peter 4:11](#).

See [James 2:24](#) note "Being Saved" Justified by Grace.

Romans 10:18

Romans 10:18

have they not all heard? .. Who is *they*? Apparently both Jews and Gentiles. [Romans 10:19](#) indicates Paul is speaking of Israel also as hearing.

The main design seems to be to show that the same scheme of salvation is extended to both Jews and Gentiles.

Yes, indeed .. In the original, a single word, *μενοῦνγε* *menounge*, compounded of *μέν* *men* and *οὖν* *oun* and *γέ* *ge*. An intense expression, denoting strong affirmation.

Their sound went .. These words are taken in substance from [Psalms 19:4](#). The psalmist employs them to show that the works of God, the heavens and the earth, proclaim his existence everywhere. By using them here, the apostle does not affirm that David had reference to the gospel in them, but he uses them to express his own meaning.

Romans 10:19

Romans 10:19

did Israel not know? .. Some one may try to object by saying Israel did not understand. This question is an emphatic way of affirming that they did know.

First Moses .. Moses, lawgiver and prophet had given warning that Israel would reject God's word.

[Deuteronomy 32:21](#); [Deuteronomy 18:15](#) [Deuteronomy 28:15](#); see Deuteronomy 28 for what would happen when did.

I will provoke you to jealousy .. [Deuteronomy 32:21](#). A quote to show that God would turn to the Gentiles.

In these verses, God spoke to His covenant people about the inclusion of the Gentiles. This shocking inclusion of the Gentiles was meant to stimulate (through jealousy) the Jews to faith (cf. [Romans 11:11](#); [Romans 11:14](#)).

that are not a nation .. Those whom the Jews regarded as unworthy of a government, laws, or regular organization, and just barbarians. Evidently the Jews regarded all ancient nations in this light.

In context of [Deuteronomy 32:21](#) the declaration refers to the idolatrous and wicked conduct of the Jews. God says that they had provoked him, or excited his indignation, by worshipping what was not God, that is, by idols; and he, in turn, would excite their envy and indignation by showing favors to those who were not regarded as a people; that is, to the Gentiles.

Romans 10:20

Romans 10:20

But Isaiah is very bold .. Expresses this doctrine openly, boldly, without any reservation. The word [ἀποτολμάω](#) *apotelmaō* means to dare, to be venturesome, to be bold. The quote is from Isaiah 65:1-2.

Both Moses and Isaiah wrote about God's turning to the Gentiles, whom the Jews thought had no understanding, *asynetō*, "senseless". (cf. [Romans 1:21](#), [Romans 1:31](#).)

I was found of them that did not seek me .. Compare this with [Romans 9:30](#), and see the note there.

those who did not ask for me .. Gentiles to whom the Law had not been directed. cf. [Ephesians 2:1-2](#).

[Romans 10:21](#)

Romans 10.21

to Israel he says .. The preceding quotation established the doctrine that the Gentiles were to be called. But there was still an important part of his argument remaining - that the Jews were to be rejected. This he proceeds to establish; and he here, in the language of Isaiah [Isaiah 65:2](#), says that while the Gentiles would be obedient, the character of the Jews was, that they were a disobedient and rebellious people.

All day long .. It presents the figure of a parent, with hands extended, appealing to a wayward child. That child was the Jewish nation.

It was cast off because it refused to listen to appeals. See [Matthew 23:37](#). The apostle is far from ascribing the rejection of Israel to a divine decree, but he assigns the cause to Israel itself. Just so the Savior says in the passage ([Matthew 23:37](#)) "How often would I have gathered, etc., . . . **but ye would not.**" The divine wish was that Israel should be saved, but Israel stubbornly refused. cf. [2 Peter 3:9](#); [1 Timothy 2:4](#);

to a disobedient and contrary people .. The prophet Isaiah hath but one word, *rebellious*, and the apostle renders it by these two words, **disobedient** and **contrary** [gainsaying] they were disobedient in heart, and gainsaying with their tongues,.

[**gain-saying**] Speaking against; resisting, opposing. This is not in the Hebrew, but the substance of it was implied in Isaiah's word *rebellious*. The prophet Isaiah proceeds to specify in what this rebellion consisted, and to show that this was their character; [Isaiah 65:2-7](#).

Romans 11:1

Romans 11:1

Romans 9 = Israel's Past (mercy shown)

Romans 10 = Israel's Present

Romans 11 = Israel's Future

I say then .. This expression is to be regarded as conveying the sense of an objection. Paul has showed from Scripture that God has rejected the Jews and turned to the Gentiles.

has God cast away his people .. Paul points out that God has not cast away all Jews, for he himself is an Israelite. As in former times of Israelite apostasy, God has reserved a remnant [Romans 11:2-5](#);

an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham .. The apostle mentions this to show that he was a Jew in every respect; that he had a title to all the privileges of a Jew.

Paul emphasizes his own Jewish lineage as proof that at least some within ethnic Israel will be saved (compare [Romans 9:27](#)). - FSB

of the tribe of Benjamin .. Paul's Jewish name is "Saul" and undoubtedly he was named after the first king of Israel, and who was from the tribe of Benjamin.

Paul emphasizes his own Jewish lineage as proof that at least some within ethnic Israel will be saved (compare [Romans 9:27](#)).

Romans 11:2

Romans 11:2

God has not cast away His people .. A denial that God has cast away all his people. Here "his people" means the nation of Israel. Paul's point is that God has a remnant who believe in Christ.

whom He foreknew .. The word "foreknew" implies a purpose or plan for His people. See note at [Romans 8:29](#).

The meaning of the passage is simply, God has not cast off those whom he had before purposed or designed to be his people. Some (frequently called "the remnant") remained faithful to God.

The **remnant** in Elijah's day was proof that God had not cast off His people, and the remnant in Paul's day was continuing proof of His faithfulness. - NNIBC

Or do you not know what the Scripture says .. The passage here quoted is found in [1 Kings 19:10-18](#).

Of Elijah .. Greek, "Elijah" ἐν Ἡλῖα *en Hēlia*. This does not mean that it was said about Elijah, or concerning him; but the reference is to the usual manner of quoting the Scriptures among the Jews. (see [1 Kings 17-2 Kgs 2](#)).

The division into chapters and verses was unknown to them. The Old Testament was divided into portions designated by subjects.

Thus, [Luke 20:37](#); [Mark 12:26](#), "At the bush," means the passage which contains the account of the burning bush; Here it means, in that passage or portion of Scripture which gives an account of Elijah.

Elijah, how he pleads with God against Israel .. [appeals, makes intercession] .. The word *pleads* (ἐντυγχάνει *entungchanei*) means to come to the aid of anyone; to transact the business of anyone; especially to discharge the function of an advocate, or to plead one's cause in a court of justice.

In this sense it is applied to Christ in his function of making intercession for us in heaven; [Hebrews 7:25](#); [Isaiah 53:12](#).

against Israel .. In the English language, the word is constantly used in a good sense, to plead for one; never, to plead against one; but the Greek word may imply either.

Romans 11:3

Romans 11:3

Lord, they have killed .. This is taken from [1 Kings 19:10](#); [1 Kings 19:14](#). The quote is not literally made, but the sense is preserved.

The fact was true that they had killed the prophets, etc.; [1 Kings 18:4](#), [1 Kings 18:13](#); but the inference which Elijah seems to have drawn from it, that there were no pious people left in the nation, was not well founded.

Elijah, a fugitive for his life, in his appeal to God assumes that all Israel had fallen into the idol worship of Ahab and Jezebel. But there were true worshipers left, although the nation seemed to have fallen away. In what seemed a general apostasy, there were seven thousand left. So, argues the apostle, there are faithful ones left now in Israel. - PNT

torn down your altars .. These were not the altars of the high places, for they are commended that cast them down; nor the altars in the temple at Jerusalem, for they were out of the reach of the ten tribes, against whom Elias complains: but such altars (say some) as the godly of the ten tribes did build to serve God with, when they were not permitted to go up to Jerusalem; in which case the building of private altars (as some learned Jews have affirmed) was allowed. - Poole

altars .. We may understand these to be such altars as Elijah himself, by the special commandment of God, had erected.

Altars, by the Law of Moses, were required to be made of earth or unhewn stones; [Exodus 20:24-25](#). Hence, the KJV expression to *dig them down* means completely to demolish or destroy them. [See RWP on [Romans 11:3](#)]

I alone am left .. Elijah thought that he was the only prophet which was left alive.

We are told that when Jezebel cut off the prophets of the Lord, Obadiah took a hundred of them and hid them in a cave; [1 Kings 18:4](#). But it is not improbable that they had been discovered and put to death by Ahab. The account which Obadiah gave Elijah when he met him [1 Kings 18:13](#) seems to favor such a supposition.

they seek my life .. It is true that Ahab and Jezebel were seeking to kill him. They were seeking to do this because Elijah had been victorious in the contest with Baal's prophets and had slain them [1 Kings 19:1-2](#).

Romans 11:4

Romans 11:4

But what is God's answer [reply] to him? .. *ὁ χρηματισμός* *ho chrēmatismos*. This word is used nowhere else in the New Testament. It means an oracle, or a divine response. It does not indicate the manner in which it was done.

The implication is that God's answer came from his complaint to God. Such an answer would be full of comfort, and silence every complaint. The way in which this answer was in fact given, was not in a storm, or an earthquake, but in a still, small voice; [1 Kings 19:11-12](#).

I have kept for Myself seven thousand .. Amidst the general corruption and idolatry there was a faithful remnant. This shows that God had a part in their preservation.

Paul quotes [1 Kings 19:18](#), God's reply to Elijah indicating the presence of a faithful remnant. - FSB

seven thousand men .. Seven is often used in the Scriptures to denote an indefinite or round number. It is probably used so here to indicate that there was a considerable number remaining. This doesn't mean that the faithful were all males, but the term *men* is used in the generic sense as *mankind*.

who have not bowed the knee to Baal .. To bow or bend the knee is an expression denoting worship; [Philippians 2:10](#); [Ephesians 3:14](#); [Isaiah 45:23](#).

Baal .. The Canaanite storm-god.

Baal .. Paul uses the feminine for “Baal” and not the LXX masculine. Baal is masculine, but the Jews called this abominable idol *bosheth*, “shame” (a word of feminine gender), and in [1 Kings 18:25](#) the LXX translate, “the prophets of the Shame.” Although this word was written “Baal,” it was pronounced “Shame.” (Lenski)

Romans 11:5

Romans 11:5

Even so then .. Paul is going to draw a lesson from the story just used of Elijah.

at this present time .. The time when the Apostle wrote.

remnant .. Refers to a small number of people who remain faithful to God despite the unfaithfulness of others around them. In Romans, the remnant is composed of Jews who have put their faith in Christ. The existence of this remnant is proof that God has not rejected all of Israel.- FSB

a remnant .. Although the nation had rejected Jesus, thousands of individual Jews had come to faith in Him (cf. [Acts 2:41](#); [Acts 4:4](#); [Acts 6:1](#)).

according to the election of grace .. They were faithful to God's gracious calling through the gospel and not by the Law.

The apostle here does not specify the number, but there can be no doubt that a multitude of Jews had been saved by becoming Christians, though compared with the nation - the multitude who rejected the Messiah it was but a remnant.

election of grace .. Paul's statement that the remnant has come into existence “according to a choice of grace” is often interpreted as an affirmation of Calvinist unconditional election. However, the meaning is that the remnant faithful to God are those who like Paul, have heard, believed, and obeyed the gracious calling of God ([Romans 10:9-11](#); [Romans 10:16](#)).

Romans 11:6

Romans 11:6

And if by grace .. The gospel is the message of God's grace. Salvation by "unmerited favor" God has shown to mankind.

then it is no longer of works .. If salvation is now by "unmerited favor" it is based on a justification by works, or something earned.

works .. A reference to the Law of Moses in this context, and in most contexts.

otherwise grace ... If people are justified by their works, it could not be a matter of favor, but was a debt.

But if it is of works ... The idea of being saved by merit contradicts the very idea of grace.

If a man owes me a debt, and pays it, it cannot be said to be done by favor, or by grace. I have a claim on him for it, and there is no favor in his paying his just dues.

This last phrase is not included in many Greek manuscripts [P⁴⁶, à*, A, C, D, G, or P] but in two different forms of the phrase in others [à^c and B] but does appear in the Majority Text.

Romans 11:7

Romans 11:7

What then? .. What is the proper conclusion from this argument?

Israel has not obtained what it seeks .. That is, the Jews as a people have failed to obtain the favor of God by their own merit. They sought salvation by their own works of the Law.

but the elect have obtained it .. God chose to give salvation as a gift to everyone that believed, to the Jew first and to the Greek [Romans 1:16-17](#).

and the rest were blinded .. The greater part of the Jews remained in unbelief and had rejected the Messiah.

were blinded [hardened] .. The word [ἐπωρώθησαν](#) *epōrōthēsan*, means they were hardened. [from [πῶρος](#) *pōros* (a kind of *stone*); to *petrify*.]

It comes from a word which signifies properly to become hard, as the joints sometimes do when they become callous or stiff. It was used to describe the hard substance in the eye, a cataract; and then to mean to be blinded, literally and figuratively.

When applied to the mind, it means what is “hard, obdurate, insensible, stupid.” Thus, it is applied to the Jews, and means that they were blind and obstinate; see [Mark 6:52](#), “Their heart was hardened;” [Mark 8:17](#); [John 12:40](#); [2 Corinthians 3:14](#). [5x in N.T.]

Romans 11:8

Romans 11:8

As it is written . . The first line was quoted from [Isaiah 29:10](#) and the last lines are adapted from [Deuteronomy 29:4](#). The same sentiment is found also substantially in [Isaiah 6:9-10](#).

God has given .. Expressions like this are common in the Scriptures when God allowed something to happen.

God gave them a spirit of slumber [stupor, dull mind] .. The word “slumber” here is a literal translation of the Hebrew. The Greek word, however [κατανύξεως](#) *katanuxeōs*. It means that parts of the body become numb and is made insensible. Hence, it here means simply insensibility.

eyes that they should not see .. [Isaiah 6:10](#); [Deuteronomy 29:4](#). Though Israel had all the proper faculties for understanding and receiving the gospel, yet they rejected it. They were insensible to its claims and its truths.

ears that they should not hear .. [When we sleep, our eyes are insensible to surrounding objects, and the ear to sounds. Though in themselves the organs may be perfect, yet to the mind it is as though they were not; and we have eyes which then do not see, and ears which do not hear.]

It is a metaphor for indicating the Jews closed their minds to the truth and rejected Jesus as the Christ.

to this very day .. The characteristic of the Jews that existed in the time of Isaiah. existed also in the time of Paul.

Romans 11:9

Romans 11:9

And David says .. This quotation is made nearly verbatim from [Psalms 69:22-23](#), LXX. This Psalm is repeatedly quoted as having reference to the events recorded in the New Testament.

The quotation is not made, however, either literally from the Hebrew or from the Septuagint, but the sense only is retained.

The Hebrew is, "Let their table before them be for a snare, and for those at peace, let it be for a gin." The Septuagint is, "Let their table before them be for a snare, and for a stumbling-block, and for an offence." The ancient Targum is, "Let their table which they had prepared before me be for a snare, and their sacrifices be for an offence."

Let their table become a snare and a trap .. Something that was expected to be a pleasure and support proves to be a means of punishment and righteous retribution.

a snare .. A snare is that by which birds or wild beasts were captured. They are decoyed into it, or walk or fly carelessly into it, and it is sprung suddenly on them.

a trap .. This means anything by which wild beasts are taken in hunting. The word "*snare*" more properly refers to birds.

a stumbling-block .. Anything over which one stumbles or falls. Hence, anything which occasions us to sin, or to ruin ourselves.

and a recompense [retribution] to them .. Something paid back. It means here that something intended for their comfort and enjoyment (*their table*), instead of promoting their permanent welfare, became the occasion of their ruin and destruction.

Romans 11:10

Romans 11:10

Let their eyes be darkened .. This is taken literally from the psalm ([Psalms 69:23](#)), and was evidently the main part of the passage which the apostle had in mind.

This was fulfilled in the insensibility and blindness of the Jews. And the apostle shows them that it was long ago predicted, or invoked, as a punishment on them for giving the Messiah vinegar to drink; [Psalms 69:21](#), [Psalms 69:23](#).

and bend their backs forever .. The NCV renders it "*and their backs be forever weak from troubles.*" The Hebrew of [Psalms 69:23](#) seems to speak of a man tottering or shaking when he's carrying a heavy burden.

It was because of their rejection of God's Son that God rejected them nationally which led to the temple's destruction in A.D. 70 [Matthew 24:16-22](#); [Matthew 24:34](#); [Mark 12:9](#); [Matthew 23:34-39](#);

Romans 11:11

Romans 11:11

I say then, have they stumbled that they should fall? .. This might be another objection which Paul proceeds to answer.

The meaning is, is it the design of God that Israel should totally and irrecoverably be cast off?

The expression to **stumble** is introduced because he had just mentioned a stumbling-stone. To stumble doesn't necessarily mean one falls all the way to the ground. It was still possible for Israel to come to faith in Jesus and be saved.

Certainly not! .. By no means, [Romans 11:1](#).

But through their fall, .. The word "fall" means the breaking up of their establishment as a nation.

Their rejection of the Messiah; the destruction of their city and temple; the ceasing of their ceremonial rites; and the rejection and dispersion of their nation by the Romans, all enter into the meaning of the word "fall" here, and were all the occasion of introducing salvation to the Gentiles.

to provoke them to jealousy .. According to the prediction of Moses; [Deuteronomy 32:21](#); see [Romans](#)

10:19.

God intends to use His offer of salvation to the despised Gentiles to draw the nation back to Him (Romans 11:25-27). - MSB

salvation has come to the Gentiles .. It does not mean that all the Gentiles were to be saved, but that the way was open; they might have access to God, and obtain his favor through the Messiah.

Something the OT had long prophesied (cf. Genesis 12:3; Isaiah 49:6; Matthew 8:11-12; Matthew 21:43; Matthew 22:1-14; Acts 13:46-47; Acts 28:25-28).

[See BN for extended points on how Israel's rejection of the Messiah opened the way for Gentile evangelism.]

Romans 11:12

Romans 11:12

Now if their fall [transgression, mistake, trespass] .. If their rejection of Christ and being cast off has accomplish so much ...

is riches for the world .. Here "riches" means numberless good blessings. The "riches" of the gospel of mercy, cf. Ephesians 1:7; Ephesians 1:18; Ephesians 2:7; Ephesians 3:8; Ephesians 3:16;

The rich truths of salvation (Genesis 12:3; Isaiah 49:6; cf. 2 Corinthians 8:9).

riches for the Gentiles .. Their failure meant the conferring of important blessings on the Gentiles.

how much more their fullness! .. If their rejection brought the spreading of the true knowledge of God how much more good could be accomplished by the energy and zeal of the Jewish nation if they accept God's Son!

The word "*fulness*" *πλήρωμα* *plērōma*, means what fills up, or completes anything. Thus, it is applied to what fills a vessel or cup; also to the piece of cloth which is put in to fill up the rent in a garment.

Romans 11:13

Romans 11:13

For I speak to you Gentiles .. What I am saying respecting the Jews, I say with reference to you who are Gentiles, to show you how you have been admitted to the privileges of becoming the people of God.

inasmuch as I am an apostle to the Gentiles .. As Paul also was appointed to preach to them, he had a right to speak to them with authority.

Paul was the apostle of the Gentiles, not because other apostles did not preach to Gentiles, for they all did, nor because Paul did not himself preach occasionally among the Jews; but because he was especially called to carry the gospel to the Gentiles, and that this was his original commission Acts 9:15; see Galatians 1:16; Ephesians 3:8; Galatians 2:7-8.

I magnify my ministry .. I honor *δοξάζω* *doxazō* my ministry.

Paul esteemed it of great importance that the barrier between Gentiles and the Jews was broken down, and that the gospel must be preached to all people, A minister may not magnify himself, but he may magnify the importance of evangelism. Ephesians 3:8..

Romans 11:14

Romans 11:14

if by any means .. If even by stating unpleasant truths and the threat of my nations' destruction, I may gain their attention and convert them.

I may provoke to jealousy [arouse to envy] .. To awaken, to get their attention and provoke them to deep feelings, [Romans 10:19](#).

Paul hoped to do this by calling their attention to the ancient prophecies; and by raising their fears about their own danger in rejecting God's Son.

my flesh .. My countrymen, my kinsmen, my own nation.

and save some of them .. The apostle desired Israel to turn to the Lord; it grieved him to see their rejection of the Messiah (see [Romans 9:2-3](#); [Romans 10:1-2](#).)

Romans 11:15

[Romans 11:15](#)

For if their being cast away .. If their rejection as the special people of God - their exclusion from their national privileges on account of their unbelief. It is the same as "their fall" [Romans 11:12](#).

is the reconciling of the world .. By Israel's unbelief, the way had opened to preach the gospel to the Gentiles so that the Gentile world could now be reconciled (brought to friendship and peace) to God through Jesus Christ [Acts 13:46](#).

God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself, [2 Corinthians 5:18](#); [Romans 5:11](#);

The word "reconciliation" [καταλλαγή](#) *katallagē* denotes commonly a pacification of contending parties; a removing the occasion of difference, so as again to be united; [1 Corinthians 7:11](#).

what will their acceptance be but life from the dead? .. The same idea as expressed in [Romans 11:12](#) by "their fullness." If there was good that came from them being cast away, what more good can be accomplished from them accepting Christ!

but life from the dead? .. Paul uses a bold striking figure of speech to illustrate the great change should Israel accept Christ and be reconciled themselves to God once again!

Not bodily resurrection, but the passing from spiritual death to spiritual life ([John 5:24](#)). This phrase also describes the future spiritual rebirth of Israel (cf. [Romans 11:25-27](#); [Zechariah 12:10](#); [Zechariah 13:1](#)). - MSB

Romans 11:16

[Romans 11:16](#)

For if the firstfruit is holy .. The word "**first-fruit**" [ἀπαρχή](#) *aparchē* used here denotes the first part of fruit or grain which was separated from the mass and presented as an offering to God.

The Jews were required to present such a portion of their harvest to God, as an expression of gratitude and of their sense of dependence; [Numbers 15:19-21](#)

firstfruit .. The first portion of the harvest, which was to be given to the Lord ([Exodus 23:19](#); [Exodus 34:26](#); [Leviticus 2:12](#); [Leviticus 23:10](#); [Numbers 15:19-21](#); [Numbers 18:12-13](#); [Deuteronomy 18:4](#)). - MSB

is holy .. Set apart, or consecrated to God.

the lump .. The expression here, however, has reference to the small portion of dough or kneaded meal that was offered to God; and then the mass or lump [φύραμα](#) *phurama*, was left for the use of him who made the offering; [Numbers 15:20](#).

is also holy .. It is then lawful for the owner to partake of it. The offering of a part has consecrated the whole.

Because the firstfruit offering represented the entire portion, the entire piece of dough could be said to be holy, set apart to God (cf. [Exodus 31:15](#); [Leviticus 27:14](#), [Leviticus 27:30](#), [Leviticus 27:32](#); [Joshua 6:19](#)). - MSB

and if the root is holy .. This figure expresses the same thing as is denoted in the first part of the verse. The root of a tree is the source of nutritious juices necessary for its growth, and gives its character to the tree.

so are the branches .. A root bears a similar relation to the branches of a tree that the first-fruit does to the mass of bread. Perhaps there is allusion here to [Jeremiah 11:16](#),

root .. The patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. See [Romans 4:13](#). **branches ..** The patriarchs' descendants: the nation of Israel. - MSB

Romans 11:17

Romans 11:17

And if some of the branches ... The illustration here is taken from the practice of cutting off useless branches, or those which bear no fruit, and grafting in a better branch instead.

"If some of the natural descendants of Abraham, the holy root, are cast off because they are unfruitful, that is, because of unbelief and sin."

and you .. The "you" here refers to the Gentiles whom Paul was now addressing specifically.

being a wild olive shoot .. One not cultivated whose fruit was imperfect and useless.

The cultivated olive tree is "of the a moderate height, its trunk knotty, its bark smooth and ash-colored, its wood is solid and yellowish, the leaves are oblong, and almost like those of the willow, of a green color, etc. The wild olive is smaller in all its parts." (Calmet.)

The meaning here is, that the Gentiles had been like the wild olive, unfruitful in holiness; that they had been uncultivated by true religion, and consequently had grown up in the sinfulness of human nature. The Jews had been like a cultivated olive, long under the training and care of God.

were grafted in among them .. The process of grafting consists of inserting a young shoot into a different tree. The grafted branch receives nourishment and strength from the root of a good tree.

In this way a tree which bears no fruit, or whose branches are decaying, may be recovered, and become valuable.

The branches - the Jews in the time of the apostle - had become decayed and unfruitful, and broken off. The Gentiles had been grafted into this stock, and had restored the decayed vigor of the ancient people of God;

and with them became a partaker of the root .. The ingrafted limb would derive nourishment from the root as much as though it were a natural branch of the tree.

The Gentiles now receive the benefit of Abraham's faith and of the promises made to him and to his seed. [Galatians 3:29](#).

and fatness of the olive tree .. The word "fatness" here means "fertility, fruitfulness" - the rich sap of the olive tree which produces good fruit; (see [Judges 9:9](#)).

the olive tree .. The place of divine blessing; God's covenant of salvation made with Abraham ([Genesis 12:1-3](#); [Genesis 15:1-21](#); [Genesis 17:1-27](#)). - MSB

Olives were an important crop in the ancient world. Although trees often lived for hundreds of years, individual branches eventually stopped producing olives. When that happened, branches from younger trees were grafted in to restore productivity. Paul's point is that the old, unproductive branches (Israel) were broken off and branches from a wild olive tree (Gentiles) were grafted in. - MSB

Romans 11:18

Romans 11:18

do not boast [be arrogant] against [over] the branches .. There is a tendency for people to triumph over one that has fallen. There is a danger of pride and boasting on the part of the Gentiles.

But if you do boast .. If you think of boasting, there is something to remember.

remember ... the root supports you .. The branches do not provide the nourishment, the root does.

The Christian church must remember its roots are in Judaism. The tree, even with the new branch, is never regarded as a different tree. Therefore the "church of Christ" is still the "Israel" of God today.

(cf. [Galatians 3:6-9](#), [Galatians 3:13-14](#))

Romans 11:19

Romans 11:19

You will say then .. Again, the "you" is reference to the Gentile member.

"Branches were broken off ..." The Jews were rejected in order that the gospel might be preached to the Gentiles. ([Romans 11:11-12](#).)

Romans 11:20

Romans 11:20

Well said [Granted; That is true] .. True.

Because of unbelief they were broken off .. The Jews as a nation were rejected because they rejected God's Son, Jesus Christ.

and you stand by faith .. Paul, speaking to Gentiles, says it was because of their faith, their acceptance of Jesus as the Son of God, that they continued in God's blessings.

Do not be haughty [be conceited; be proud], .. Do not be elated in your privileges so as to produce a conceited spirit.

but fear [stand in awe]. .. Do not be haughty or high-minded against the Jew, but *stand in awe* that God provided a plan to accept you.

Romans 11:21

Romans 11:21

Vs 21 A warning. Doesn't this verse (one of many) answer the question, Can a Christian fall from grace?

For if God ... God rejected the Jews for their actions against Christ; and Gentile Christians will be rejected also if they turn against Christ.

If Israel (the "natural branches") was not spared despite being God's covenant nation, why should Gentiles, strangers to God's covenants ([Ephesians 2:11-12](#); see note on [Romans 9:4](#)), expect to be spared if they sin against the truth of the gospel? – MSB

Romans 11:22

Romans 11:22

Therefore, consider .. Seriously contemplate the dealings of God.

the goodness .. The kindness and mercy of God.

All of God's attributes work in harmony; there is no conflict between His goodness and love, and His justice and wrath. Those who accept His gracious offer of salvation experience His goodness ([Romans 2:4](#)); those who reject it experience His severity ([Romans 2:5](#)). - MSB

the severity [sternness] .. The word pictures the "cutting off" (*ἀποτομίαν* *apotomian* from *ἀποτέμνω* *apotemnō*, to cut off;) and is commonly applied to the act of the gardener or vine-dresser in trimming trees or vines, and cutting off the decayed or useless branches.

Here it refers to the act of God in cutting off or rejecting the Jews as useless branches; and conveys no idea of injustice, cruelty, or harshness. It was a just act, and consistent with all the perfections of God.

on those who fell, severity .. On the Jews, who had been rejected because of their unbelief.

but toward you, goodness .. Toward the Gentile world, benevolence. The word "goodness" here signifies the kindness of God in bestowing favors on the Gentiles in accepting them when they accept Christ.

Otherwise you also will be cut off. .. The word "you" refers to the Gentile believers and should they become disobedient and unbelieving then they too will be rejected.

cut off .. From the same Gr. root word translated "severity" earlier in the verse. God will deal swiftly and severely with those who reject Him. – MSB

Romans 11:23

Romans 11:23

And they also, .. The unbelieving Jews.

if they do not continue [persist] in unbelief .. Their unbelief in Christ was the cause of their rejection.

will be grafted in .. The Jews who become believers will be restored to God's mercy and favor.

for God is able ... God is forgiving, merciful, and will accept those who turn to him in repentance and obedient faith. See [Acts 2:37-38](#); [2 Peter 3:9](#);

Romans 11:24

Romans 11:24

For if you .. "You" who are Gentiles.

were cut out of the olive tree ...wild by nature .. The illustration is that the Gentiles were like a branch cut out of a wild, uncultivated olive tree.

and were grafted contrary to nature ... Contrary to natural growth, grafted into a different tree in nature.

into a cultivated olive tree, .. When the branch of a wild olive tree is grafted into a cultivated olive tree is successful and it will produce fruit.

how much more ... It is easier and more natural for a cultivated olive tree to accept the graft branch of a cultivated olive tree.

The meaning of the verse may be expressed this way: "If God had mercy on the Gentiles, who were outcasts from his favor because of their ungodliness; shall he not rather show mercy on those who were so long his people, if they love and accept the Messiah who was born among them."

Romans 11:25

Romans 11:25

For I do not desire, brethren, .. Paul wanted them to understand this matter.

that you should be ignorant of this mystery .. The word “*mystery*” means properly something that is “concealed, hidden, or unknown.” And it especially refers, in the New Testament, to the truth or doctrine which God had not before communicated.

The “*mystery*,” now revealed, was that both Gentiles and Jews were to be reconciled to God the same way, through the Gospel. See [Ephesians 3:4-6](#); ([Ephesians 3:9](#); [Ephesians 2:14](#); [Colossians 1:27](#); [Colossians 4:3](#)).

lest you should be wise in your own estimation [opinion] .. Paul didn't want them to speculate why God had rejected the Jews so he was communicating it to them.

that blindness [a hardening] .. [Romans 11:7](#);

in part .. Not totally, or entirely. A remnant of Israel had accepted Christ.

The nation's blindness does not extend to every individual Jew. Through all of history God has always preserved a believing remnant. (see note at [Romans 11:5](#))

had happened to Israel .. To the Jewish nation.

until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in .. The word “*fulness*” in relation to the Jews is used in [Romans 11:12](#). It meant that a great number of Gentiles would be converted to the Gospel before Israel's rejection was complete in A.D. 70. See [Colossians 1:23](#); [Matthew 24:14](#). The destruction of Jerusalem would help open the eyes of Jews and the world. [Luke 21:24](#).

full number of the Gentiles . . Likely alludes to predictions that one day all nations will worship Yahweh (e.g., [Isaiah 2:2-4](#); [Zechariah 14:16-17](#); [Matthew 28:19-20](#)). - FSB

... in the light of [Romans 11:13-14](#), it implies that the fullness of the Gentiles has something to do with the salvation of “all Israel.” As said earlier, the “mystery” thus is how salvation of Jews and Gentiles is interrelated. It is important for the Gentile Christians to see this - CPNIVC

until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in .. I do not see this as referring to the “full number” of Gentiles, but rather to the fullness of salvation as it was proclaimed to and accepted by the Gentiles, beginning in Acts 10. (See on v. 12 above.) The *NT* nowhere else uses *plērōma* in a numerical sense, but does use it for the fullness of salvation. - Jack Cottrell, CPNIVC

Romans 11:26

Romans 11:26

And so .. Paul comes to a summary of his point about how the Jews and Gentiles will be saved the same way, by the gospel of grace, [Romans 11:5-6](#).

And so .. Adverb, “*thusly*”, *in this way, on this fashion*, that is, they must be saved by the Gospel also. “in this manner” Lenski. “So” *houtos* as in verse 5, [Romans 11:5](#); [Romans 11:26](#); [Romans 11:31](#). The **ESV** correctly translates this adverb.

so -- G3779 houto Thayer Definition: *in this manner, thus, so*. Part of Speech: adverb.

And so .. By Jews and Gentiles being grafted into the same root, **all Israel**, Jew and Gentile, will be saved.

all Israel will be saved .. All Israel that is saved will be saved in this way, that is, by the gospel of Christ. The same gospel that saves the Gentiles.

In v. 25 we have a reference to physical Israel, but in this verse (v.26) we have a different usage of the term “Israel” which is shown by the phrase “all Israel.”

all Israel .. This ... could refer to Israel as symbolic of God's elect—all who are now part of God's people (both Jews and Gentiles) - FSB

The phrase *all Israel* could refer to the total of all believers, both Jewish and Gentile; with this meaning, *and so* would describe the way that God works to bring salvation to all his people. - NLTSB

This [Israel] refers in some sense to spiritual Israel, the Church. Paul used this concept in [Galatians 6:16](#) - Utley

God saves all his elect people, both Jews and Gentiles, as they respond in faith to God's grace throughout history. "Israel" would then refer to the church (see [Galatians 6:16](#) and note for this possibility). - NIVZSB

Paul answers who the real Israel is in [Romans 2:28-29](#); [Romans 4:12-14](#); [Romans 9:4-8](#); [Galatians 3:27-29](#); Israel, is the spiritual descendants of Abraham, both Jews and Gentiles.

Considering [Romans 9:6](#) "Israel" is all of God's people today. So, "*all Israel*" in v. 26 is both Jews and Gentiles. In [Romans 11:14](#), Paul wants "some saved" but in v. 26 "all Israel" we see the fulfillment of Paul's illustration where the natural olive branch (Jews) being grafted back in with the wild branch (the Gentiles) and all receiving their nourishment from the true root, being now "all Israel." In this manner "all Israel" (both Jews and Gentiles), the church, will be saved. (Note from A.B. class.)

all Israel shall be saved .. To use this verse to teach that all Jews will be saved is to miss the context. Paul's message is that now in the covenant of grace all Jews (Israel) who will be saved will be saved on the same condition as everyone else, by their faith and obedience to the Gospel of Christ.

as it is written .. [Isaiah 59:20](#). The quotation is not literally made, but the sense of the passage is preserved. The Hebrew is, "There shall come to Zion a Redeemer, and for those who turn from ungodliness in Jacob." There can be no doubt that Isaiah refers here to the times of the gospel.

out of Zion .. Refers to Jerusalem, and here to Judaism by extension. A prophecy of Christ coming to bring back "Jacob" to the Lord.

The mechanism of salvation will be faith in Jesus the Messiah. – Utley

Romans 11:27

[Romans 11:27](#)

For this is my covenant ... This expression is found immediately following the other in [Isaiah 59:21](#). But the apostle connects with it a part of another promise taken from [Jeremiah 31:33-34](#); and expresses its closing substance, with the words "*when I shall take away their sins.*"

This promise points to the Messiah who will initiate the New Covenant which began with this resurrection and ratification on Pentecost and with His sacrifice on the cross secured the forgiveness of sins, [Hebrews 8:8-12](#); [Hebrews 10:16-17](#);

This is way for Israel to be saved, [Acts 2:37-38](#);

Romans 11:28

[Romans 11:28](#)

Concerning [as regards] the gospel they are enemies .. The Jews not only rejected and opposed the gospel themselves, they opposed it being preached to the Gentile. [Acts 13:45](#); [Acts 18:6](#).

for your sake .. The rejection of the gospel by the Jews opened the door for the Gentiles, [Acts 13:46](#).

but concerning the election .. God's calling and choice of Abraham and his descends, [Genesis 12:1-3](#);

they are beloved for the sake of the fathers .. God cared for Abraham's descents, Israel, and loved them and wanted them saved. [2 Peter 3:9](#); [1 Timothy 2:4](#); [Ezekiel 33:11](#). God had send the Savior of the world through Abraham's seed. [Acts 13:23](#); [Galatians 3:16](#);

Romans 11:29

Romans 11:29

For the gifts .. The favors or benefits which God bestows on men. The word [χάρισμα](#) charisma properly denotes any benefit which is conferred on another as a mere matter of favor, and not of reward; see [Romans 5:15-16](#); [Romans 6:23](#).

and the calling of God .. The word "calling" [κλήσις](#) *klēsis* here denotes that act of God by which he extends an invitation to people to come and partake of his favors. Under the Christian covenant God's calling is through the gospel, [2 Thessalonians 2:14](#).

are irrevocable .. [KJV, **Without repentance**] unrevocable. It means that God will not change his mind. The Gospel age is the last dispensation for man to have an opportunity for eternal life, there will not be another opportunity. [Acts 4:12](#).

God does not repent, or change, in his purposes of bestowing his gifts on man. What he promises he will fulfil; what he purposes to do, he will not change from or repent of. As he made promises to the fathers, he will not repent of them, and will not depart from them; they shall all be fulfilled. [Ezekiel 24:14](#); [1 Samuel 15:29](#); [Psalms 89:35-36](#); [Titus 1:2](#); [Hebrews 6:18](#); [James 1:17](#).

Romans 11:30

Romans 11:30

Conclusion:

For as you .. "You" = Gentiles

were once [at one time] disobedient to God .. The time Paul is speaking of was before the gospel was preached to the them. This refers to the former idolatrous and sinful state of the pagan world; compare [Ephesians 2:2](#); [Acts 14:16](#).

yet have now obtained mercy .. The Gentile Christians had now been pardoned and admitted to the favor of God.

through [as a result of] their disobedience .. Paul's mission to the Gentiles predicated the rejection of the Gospel by the Jews. [Acts 13:45-46](#); [Acts 18:6](#).

Romans 11:31

Romans 11:31

even so these .. The Jews

these also now been disobedient .. The Jews who had not responded in faith and obedience to the Gospel of God. [Acts 13:45-46](#); [Acts 18:6](#).

that through the mercy shown you .. Through the grace and favor of God opening the gospel to receive Gentiles.

they also may obtain mercy. .. It was Paul wish that the response of Gentiles to the gospel would stir up

and provoke the Jews to accept it also. [Romans 10:19](#); [Romans 11:11](#); [Romans 11:14](#).

There were believing Jews among the nation of Israelites and they were spoken of as the "remnant." [Romans 9:27](#); [Romans 11:5](#); ([Acts 2:41](#); [Acts 4:4](#); [Acts 5:14](#);)

Romans 11:32

Romans 11:32

For God has committed [consigned; concluded; bound] **them all to disobedience, ..** The "all" ... is not intended to refer to every individual as such, but to all in the sense of both *groups*, i.e., both Gentiles and Jews. To say God has bound all over to disobedience reflects Paul's emphasis in [Romans 3:9](#), that "*Jews and Gentiles alike are all under sin*" - CPNIV

Paul assures the Jews that there was no salvation under the system the Jews were trying to maintain (after the new covenant age had begun), and that the only way for all Jews now to find mercy was in the gospel, and this was for all.

The word translated here "concluded" *sunekleise*, is rendered in the margin "shut them all up together." It is properly used in reference to those who are shut up in prison, or to those in a city who are shut up by a besieging army; (See RSVA [1 Maccabees 5:5](#); [1 Maccabees 6:18](#); [1 Maccabees 11:65](#); [1 Maccabees 15:25](#)); [Joshua 6:1](#); [Isaiah 45:1](#). It is used in the New Testament of fish taken in a net; [Luke 5:6](#), "*They enclosed a great multitude of fishes*;" and [Galatians 3:22](#), "*But the Scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise, etc.*" - BN

that He might have mercy on all .. God has provided a way for all the Jews to obtain God's favor, and that is in their obedience to the gospel.

The reference to God's "*mercy on them all*" does not teach universal salvation, but refers to the fact that he has poured out his mercy on Jews and Gentiles alike ([Romans 10:12](#)).

Romans 11:33

Romans 11:33

Paul breaks into a doxology at this point. This doxology corresponds to the one at the end of chapter 8

Oh, the depth ... The apostle has three subjects of admiration. Translations using the word "both" introduced here, confines it to two.

The apostle wishes to express his admiration of the riches and the wisdom, and the knowledge of God.

The word "**depth**" is applied in the Scriptures to anything vast and incomprehensible. As the abyss or the ocean is unfathomable, so the word comes to denote what words cannot express, or what we cannot comprehend; [Psalms 36:6](#); [1 Corinthians 2:10](#); [Revelation 2:24](#),

The word "**riches**" denotes the abundant blessings and mercies which had been conferred on people by the gospel. [Romans 11:12](#).

Wisdom is the choice of the best means God used to accomplish the best end. The end or design which God had in view was to bestow mercy on all; i. e., to save people by grace, and not by their own merit; [Romans 11:32](#).

And knowledge, that is, God's foreknowledge and omniscience.

How unsearchable .. The word "unsearchable" means what cannot be fully understood.

His judgments .. This word usually means his arrangement, his plan, or proceeding.

It sometimes refers to laws; at other times to the decision or determination of God; at others to his

justice.

In the context it probably refers to God's arrangements for conferring the gospel on both Jews and Gentiles.

His ways .. The word rendered “ways” properly denotes a path, or road on which one travels. Hence, it comes also to denote the course or manner of life in which one moves; or his principles.

past finding out .. Literally, which cannot be tracked or traced out. The footsteps cannot be followed. As if his path were in the sea [Psalms 77:19](#), and the waves closed immediately, leaving no track.

Romans 11:34

[Romans 11:34](#)

For who hath known? ... This verse is a quotation, with a slight change, from [Isaiah 40:13](#).

It is designed to express the infinite wisdom and knowledge of God, by affirming that no being could teach him, or counsel him. Earthly monarchs have counsellors of state, whom they may consult in times of perplexity or danger. But God has no such council. He sits alone; nor does he call in any or all of his creatures to advise him.

Romans 11:35

[Romans 11:35](#)

Or who has first given ... The sentiment is found substantially in [Job 41:11](#). Who has conferred favors on God so as to put God under obligation to him?

that God should repay him? .. Repay him as a matter of debt. God's kindness and mercy to us is without any obligations to us on God's part! It is simply God's nature and out of His own kindness that He bestow mercy on us.

Romans 11:36

[Romans 11:36](#)

For from him .. [εξ αὐτοῦ](#) *ex autou*; compare [1 Corinthians 1:30](#); [1 Corinthians 8:6](#). This expression doubtless means that he is the original source and fountain of all blessings. He is the Creator of all.

So far from having a claim on God, the apostle here affirms that all things have come from him. Nothing has been produced by chance; all has been formed by God;

and through him .. [δι' αὐτοῦ](#) *di autou*. That is, by his immediate operating agency. The former expression, “of him,” affirmed that he was the original source of all things; this declares that all are **by him**, or **through him**, as their immediate cause. It is not merely by his plan or purpose; it is by his agency, by the direct exertion of his power in their creation and bestowment.

to him .. [εἰς αὐτὸν](#) *eis autos*. This expression denotes the final cause, the reason or end for which all things were formed. It is to promote his honor and glory. It is to manifest his praise, to give evidence of the glorious attributes of God; his exceeding greatness, and goodness, and grandeur of his character.

to whom be glory forever .. The praise and honor, ever onward to eternity.

This ascription of praise is the appropriate close of the argumentative part of the Epistle.

Amen .. [ἀμήν](#). The word at the end of prayers and praises marks the assent of the speaker or writer to the utterance. In this doxology (which may have been well known and well used by the churches) it expresses Paul's own assent to it.

Romans 12:1

[Romans 12:1](#)

Ch. 12 The effect that the gospel should have in the lives of those who accept it.

Ch. 12 "The Little Bible"

III. PRACTICAL

The Christian Life in Relationship To:

A. God - v.1-2

B. Brethren - v.3-16

C. Others - v. 17-21

beseech .. Plead

therefore .. On the basis of what God has done for us. "In view of God's mercy".

you .. Every Christian is a priest, to offer sacrifice. [1 Peter 2:5](#); [1 Peter 2:9](#); [Hebrews 13:15](#); [Revelation 1:6](#).

brethren .. Fellow Christians

by the mercies of God .. The word "by" *dia* denotes here the reason why they should do it, or the ground of appeal.

that you present .. Yield ([Romans 6:13-19](#)) Same Greek word. The word used here commonly denotes the action of bringing and presenting an animal or other sacrifice before an altar. It implies that the action was a free and voluntary offering.

a living sacrifice .. In contrast to OT sacrifices. The Jew offered his victim, slew it, and presented it dead. It could not be presented again.

holy .. Pure and without blemish.

acceptable to God .. One that was living and holy.

reasonable [spiritual] service .. The word rendered "service" *λατρείαν* *latreian* properly denotes worship, or the homage rendered to God.

Our worship of God includes presenting ourselves as a living sacrifice, holy and pure.

Romans 12:2

Romans 12:2

And do not be conformed .. The word rendered "*conformed*" properly means to put on the form, fashion, or appearance of something. Here it may refer to anything pertaining to the habit, manner, dress, style of living, etc., of others.

this world .. "this age". Here it refers to the people or generation who live for self and not for God.

Here it means that Christians should not conform to the maxims, habits, feelings, etc., of a wicked, luxurious, and idolatrous age, but should be conformed solely to the precepts and laws of the gospel;

but be transformed .. *metamorphosis* ([Matthew 17:2](#); [Mark 9:2](#); [2 Corinthians 3:18](#)) The direction is, "put on another form, change the form of the world for that of Christianity."

This word would properly refer to the external appearance, but by the apostle immediately says "renewing of the mind," he shows he intended the change to deal with the whole man.

renewing of your mind .. Change of inner purpose and disposition. Not just the outward circumstances, or appearance.

The word translated "mind" properly denotes intellect, as distinguished from the will and affections.

prove .. The word used here *δοκιμάζω* *dokimazō* is commonly applied to metals, to the operation of testing, or trying them by the severity of fire, etc.

that good, acceptable and perfect will of God .. God's will for our conduct; his demands of us in our lives and worship.

perfect .. Free from defect, stain, or injury.

acceptable .. That which will be pleasing to God. or which he will approve.

Romans 12:3

Romans 12:3

Verse 3-8 Gifts of Grace

For I say .. The word “for” shows that the apostle is about to introduce some additional considerations to enforce what he had just said.

through the grace given unto me .. Through God's favor in bestowing on me, Paul, the apostolic office. By the authority that is conferred on me to declare the will of God as an apostle; see the note at [Romans 1:5](#); see also [Galatians 1:6](#), [Galatians 1:15](#); [Galatians 2:9](#); [Ephesians 3:8](#); [1 Timothy 1:14](#).

to everyone who is among you .. Not one exemption.

not to think more highly .. Not to over-estimate himself, or to think more of himself than he ought to. This is a caution against pride; and an exhortation not to judge of ourselves by our talents, wealth, or function.

There had been problems at Corinth.

but to think soberly .. Literally, “to think so as to act soberly or wisely.”

Those who over-estimate themselves are proud, haughty, foolish in their deportment. Those who think of themselves as they ought, are modest, sober, prudent.

as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith .. As God has measured to each one, or apportioned to each one.

Supernatural spiritual gifts are probably under consideration, see [Romans 12:6](#); There had been jealousy at Corinth and envying other's gifts. cf. 1 Corinthians 12, and 1 Corinthians 14. esp. [1 Corinthians 12:25](#); [1 Corinthians 14:12](#);

Romans 12:4

Romans 12:4

For as .. These words introduce an illustration or proof of what he had just before said.

we have many members .. Limbs, or parts; feet, hands, eyes, ears, etc.; [1 Corinthians 12:14-15](#).

in one body .. United in one body and making one person.

do have have the same function .. The same use or design; are not designated to do the same task, or for the same purpose

One is to see, another to hear, a third to walk with, etc.; [1 Corinthians 12:14-23](#).

Romans 12:5

Romans 12:5

So .. In like manner.

we being many .. We Christians are individuals.

are one body .. Are united together, constituting one society, or one people, mutually dependent, and having the same great interests at heart, [Ephesians 4:1-4](#)

in Christ .. We are joined to Christ, or connected with him as the head, [Ephesians 1:22-23](#).

and individually members of one another. .. Compare [1 Corinthians 12:25-26](#). That is, we are so united as to be mutually dependent; each one is of service to the other.

No one should consider himself as unimportant. No one should despise or lightly esteem another.

Romans 12:6

Romans 12:6

Having then gifts .. Supernatural gifts that were given by the laying on of apostles hands. See [Romans 1:11](#). Paul being an apostle could impart such gifts, see [Acts 8:18](#); [2 Timothy 1:6](#).

[Some may argue that Paul is speaking here of natural endowments given by God and not the supernatural spiritual gifts since he has not yet been there to confer these on the disciples there in Rome. But some were from Rome at Pentecost, [Acts 2:10](#)].

differing according to the grace that is give us .. Just as natural endowments differ from person to person, the spiritual gifts were distributed by God differently as well according to God's favor.

[If] prophecy .. The apostle now proceeds to specify the different classes of gifts which Christians may have, and exhorts them to use them accordingly.

prophecy .. Teaching. The spiritual gift would involve teaching by revelation from the Holy Spirit.

in proportion to our faith .. This word *proportion*, *ἀναλογία* *analogian*, is no where else used in the New Testament. The word properly applies to mathematics (Scheusner), and means the ratio or proportion which results from comparison of one number or magnitude with another.

The word "*faith*" here means whatever special endowment that is given one by God.

Romans 12:7

Romans 12:7

ministry [service] .. *diakonian*, Perhaps ministering as a preacher, or an elder or deacon. [Ephesians 4:11-12](#).

This word is also used to mean service of any kind,, [Luke 10:40](#).

teaching .. One gifted to teach but not through inspiration like a prophet.

(Timothy was a preacher/teacher and had been given a gift by Paul, , but Timothy apparently didn't have the gift of "prophecy" for he was told to study and reading, [2 Timothy 2:15](#); [1 Timothy 4:13](#), as preachers/teachers today must.)

Romans 12:8

Romans 12:8

exhorts [encourages] .. Gives encouragement.

gives [contributes, imparts] .. Perhaps some were given wealth to use for the Lord. They are encouraged to give liberally.

liberality [generosity; simplicity;] .. Singleness of heart, without partially or ostentation. It was deemed an important matter among the early Christians to impart liberally of their substance to support the poor, and provide for the needy: [Acts 2:44-47](#); [Acts 4:34-37](#); [Acts 5:1-11](#); [Galatians 2:10](#); [Romans 15:26](#); [2 Corinthians 8:8](#); [2 Corinthians 9:2](#); [2 Corinthians 9:12](#).

The word "liberally" *ἀπλοτής* *haplotēs* [[G572](#)] is used in a similar sense to denote singleness,

generosity, honesty of aim, purity, integrity, without any mixture of a base, selfish, or sinister end.

he who leads .. He is to lead with diligence. This word properly designates one who is set over others, or who presides or rules, or one who attends with diligence and care to a thing.

In [1 Thessalonians 5:12](#), it is used in relation to ministers in general: [1 Timothy 3:4-5](#), [1 Timothy 3:12](#), it is applied to the head of a family, or one who diligently and faithfully performs the duty of a father: [1 Timothy 5:17](#), it is applied to “elders” in the church.

with diligence .. It means here that they should be attentive to their duties, and engage with zeal to what was committed to them.

he who does acts of mercy (RSV) .. one devoted to works of mercy. Some think that this refers to those who had the care of the sick and infirm, the aged and the needy.

Some think it may refer to deacons who had the duty of distributing alms.

with cheerfulness .. The direction to those distributing alms or other acts of mercy and kindness should do so with pleasantness, joy, and a happy attitude. [2 Corinthians 9:7](#).

Romans 12:9

Romans 12:9

love .. (ἀγάπη, agapē), noble, high level of love.

without hypocrisy [dissimulation] .. unfeigned action, hypocrisy. Let love be sincere and unfeigned, genuine.

abhor [hate] .. To hate, to turn away from, to avoid.

that which is evil .. The word “evil” here has reference to malice, or unkindness, rather than to evil in general.

The word “evil” is frequently used in this limited sense to denote some particular or special evil; [Matthew 5:37](#), [Matthew 5:39](#), etc.; compare [Psalms 34:14](#); [2 Timothy 2:19](#); [Psalms 97:10](#); [1 Thessalonians 5:22](#).

cling [cleave; hold fast] .. The word “cleave” pictures the act of gluing, or uniting firmly by glue. It is then used to denote a very firm adherence to an object; to be firmly united to it.

The Christian should be firmly attached to what is good, and not separated from it. Apparently here it pertains especially to benevolence, showing kindness and good will to all men.

Romans 12:10

Romans 12:10

Vs. 10 .. [Ephesians 4:32](#) Nine admonitions follow which have nine datives, all are placed forward; in the tenth we have an accusative. It is well to note that these nine datives plus the one accusative are *alike*, all are datives of relation and the last is an accusative of relation: “as regards,” nine times, and to conclude: “as for.” - Lenski

Be kindly affectionate [devoted; love] .. The word used here (φίλοστοργοι *kindly affectioned* [G5387](#)) only occurs here and has special reference to *family* affection. It properly denotes tender affection as between parents and children, and between siblings.

This was a compound Greek term (*phileo* + *storge*) combining “brotherly love” with “family love” and is used only here in the NT. Christians are a family. - Utley

to one another .. *ἀλλήλους*, one to another [G240](#)

with brotherly love .. Love to the brethren. ([Romans 12:10](#); [1 Thessalonians 4:9](#); [Hebrews 13:1](#); [1 Peter 1:22](#); [2 Peter 1:7](#).)

In English we lose the *paronomasia* [pun, humorous play on words that sound alike] *φιλαδελφία*—*φιλόστοργοι*.

in honor .. In showing honor, put others first. Lit. *in point of the honour*; the honour due from each to all. Be happy to help honor another, not jealously seeking honor for self. [Philippians 2:3](#); [1 Peter 2:17](#), [1 Peter 5:5](#).

giving preference to one another .. To show genuine appreciation and admiration for fellow believers by putting them first ([Philippians 2:3](#)). - MSB

The Lord Jesus himself models this attitude ([Philippians 2:3-7](#)).

Romans 12:11

Romans 12:11

not lagging [no slothful; not lazy; not lacking] .. “Never be lacking” is literally “not slow, not slothful, not lagging behind (*NASB*), not hesitant, not lazy, not complacent.” The word for “lacking” describes “a person showing hesitation ... through weariness, sloth, fear, bashfulness, or reserve” (Dunn, 2:741). It describes a loafer or a sluggard who is slow to get started, or who puts off fulfilling his Christian duties. See [Proverbs 6:6-11](#); [Proverbs 21:25](#); [Proverbs 22:13](#); [Proverbs 26:13-16](#) - CPNIV

in diligence [zeal] .. The word for “zeal” (*σπουδή*, *spoudē*) Its verb form has the sense of “to apply oneself diligently to, to devote oneself to” a task. *Spoudē* itself means “fervor, zeal, eagerness, ardor, passion, enthusiasm.” - CPNIV

Whatever is worth doing in the Christian life is valuable enough to be done with enthusiasm and care ([John 9:4](#); [Galatians 6:10](#); [Hebrews 6:10-11](#): cf. [Ecclesiastes 9:10](#); [2 Thessalonians 3:13](#)). Sloth and indifference not only prevent good, but allow evil to prosper ([Proverbs 18:9](#); [Ephesians 5:15-16](#)). - MSB

be fervent [zealous; enthusiastic] .. Lit. glowing, boiling. This word is usually applied to water, or to metals so *heated* as to bubble, or boil. It hence is used to denote *ardour*, *intensity*, or as we express it, a *glow*,—meaning intense zeal, [Acts 18:25](#).

in spirit .. That is, the human spirit. In your mind or heart.

serving the Lord .. (Where is the punctuation?) In all our pursuits of life we are servants of the Lord.

(Or *but serve the Lord with a zealous spirit*; ...): As Christians, we are to be passionate about our faith and eager to fulfill our ministry to others within the church. - NLTSB

...the Greek idea is that of working as a slave whose entire work is directed by his master's will. - Lenski

Romans 12:12

Romans 12:12

rejoicing in hope .. Better, *In respect of the hope, rejoicing*. Cp. [Romans 5:2](#); - SBSC

By rejoicing in *confident hope*, we can *be patient in trouble*. - NLTSB

“As to hope—rejoicing; as to affliction—patiently enduring; as to prayer—steadfastly persisting.”

...Christian hope is not just a fond wish, but is an earnest and confident expectation of the full salvation awaiting us at the *eschaton*. - CPNIV

patient in tribulation .. Perseverance. enduring in affliction This can refer to any kind of hardship;

however, Paul might have persecution in mind (Romans 12:14). - FSB

Afflictions include the various sufferings to which all men are susceptible because of the fallenness of this present world; they also include the opposition and persecution Christians can expect just because we are Christians ([John 16:23](#); [Acts 14:22](#); [Revelation 7:14](#)). - CPNIV

“Be patient” is ὑπομένω (*hypomenō*). Cranfield says this translation is too weak; he suggests “hold out steadfastly”

continuing steadfastly [**instant; devoted to; constant; persevering;**] .. steadfastly. It means “to continue steadfastly in, to persevere in, to persist in” prayer. “The idea is constant diligence, effort that never lets up, confident waiting for results.

in prayer .. Lit. “*in prayer continuing constantly*”. Cf. [Acts 2:42](#); [1 Thessalonians 5:17](#); [1 Timothy 2:8](#).

The three commands are related: focusing on the certain hope for glory that we have in Christ enables us to handle affliction with patience, and prayer taps into this distinctly counter cultural mindset ([1 Thessalonians 5:16-18](#)).

At the heart of this triplet is the reference to hope, namely our confident Christian expectation of the Lord’s return and the glory to follow (cf. [Romans 5:2](#); [Romans 8:24](#) f.). It is to us the source of abiding joy. But it also calls for patience, as meanwhile we endure tribulation and persevere in prayer. – Scott

Romans 12:13

Romans 12:13

distributing .. sharing. The word used here denotes having things in “common” κοινωvovντες [Romans 12:13](#); [Romans 15:27](#); [Galatians 6:6](#); [Philippians 4:15](#); [1 Timothy 5:22](#); [Hebrews 2:14](#); [1 Peter 4:13](#); [2 John 1:11](#).

to the needs of the saints .. the lack, destitution, necessity, of the saints.

The Christian is indeed to love all mankind, and to do them good as far as may be in his power, [Matthew 5:43-44](#); [Titus 3:8](#); [1 Timothy 6:18](#); [Hebrews 13:16](#). But he is to show particular interest in the welfare of his brethren, and to see that the poor members of the church are provided for.

given to hospitality .. This expression means that they should readily and cheerfully entertain strangers. [Hebrews 13:2](#); [1 Peter 4:9](#); [1 Timothy 3:2](#); [Titus 3:2](#); [Matthew 10:40](#); [Matthew 10:42](#); [Genesis 18:1-8](#); [Genesis 19:1-2](#); [Job 31:16-17](#); [Luke 10:7](#); [Luke 11:5](#); [2 John 1:10](#);

Before the 20th century in Palestine there were no inns or taverns in the region."It was customary, indeed, to erect places for lodging and shelter at suitable distances, or by the side of springs or watering places, for travelers to lodge in. But they are built at the public expense, and are unfurnished. Each traveler carries his own bed and clothes and cooking utensils, and such places are merely designed as a shelter for caravans." - BN

“The primitive Christians,” says Calmet, “considered one principal part of their duty to consist in showing hospitality ... Believers scarcely ever traveled without letters of communion, which testified the purity of their faith, and procured for them a favorable reception wherever the name of Jesus Christ was known;” (Calmet, Dict.).

Romans 12:14

Romans 12:14

Bless those .. see the note at [Matthew 5:44](#); compare [Luke 6:28](#).

persecute .. διώκω *diikō*; To prosecute, persecute, pursue with repeated acts of enmity. To do harm, here because of one's religion.

bless and do not curse .. The word “bless” here means to “speak well of” or “speak well to:” - not to curse again or to slander, but to speak of those things which we can commend in an enemy; or, if there is nothing that we can commend, to say nothing about him.

The word “bless,” spoken of God, means to regard with favor or to confer benefits, as when God is said to bless his people. When we speak of our “blessing God,” it means to praise Him or give thanks to Him. When we speak of blessing people, it “unites” the two meanings, and signifies to confer favor, to thank, or to speak well of.

Romans 12:15

Romans 12:15

Rejoice .. χαίρω, *chairō*, A primary verb; to be full of “cheer”, that is, calmly *happy* or well off; impersonal especially as a salutation (on meeting or parting), *be well*: - farewell, be glad, God speed, greeting, hail, joy (-fully), rejoice. - Strongs

This command grows out of the truth stated in [Romans 12:4-5](#), that the church is one; that it has one interest; and therefore that there should be common sympathy in its joys and sorrows.

weep .. (G2799) to sob, wail aloud. (whereas G1145 is to weep silently.)

Romans 12:16

Romans 12:16

same mind .. Phrase used by the Greeks to mean like disposition, and goals, the likeness found in a family. [Philippians 2:2](#); [2 Corinthians 13:11](#); [1 Peter 3:8](#).

“Enter into each other’s circumstances, in order to see how you would yourself feel.” - Chrysostom.

mind not high things .. Don't be haughty. [[Jeremiah 45:5](#); [Luke 12:15](#)]

The connection shows that the apostle had in view those things which pertained to worldly offices and honors; wealth, and state, and grandeur. They were not to seek them for themselves; nor were they to court the society or the honors of the people in an elevated rank in life.

condescend [associate with the humble] .. συναπαγομενοι *sunapagomenoi*. Literally, “being led away by, or being conducted by. Denotes a yielding, being guided and led in thoughts feelings, and plans of others, here meaning with those who are humble.

Do not be wise .. Cf [Isaiah 5:21](#); [Romans 11:25](#). The meaning is, do not trust in the conceit of your own superior skill and understanding, and refuse to hearken to the counsel of others.

in you own opinion .. Greek, “Among yourselves.” This means that they should not be elated with pride above their brethren; or be headstrong and self-confident.

Romans 12:17

Romans 12:17

Repay [pay back; Recompense] .. Render, give, or return. See [Matthew 5:39](#).
Lit. "To no man evil for evil pay back."

provide [respect; consider; be careful] .. The word rendered “provide” means properly to “think” or “meditate beforehand.” Arrange before.

This direction would make it a matter of “principle” and fixed purpose to do what is right.

good things [honest; what is right] .. Literally, things “beautiful,” or “comely.” The context requires us to understand it respecting “conduct,” and especially our conduct toward those who injure us.

in the sight of all men .. What others would approve; so that which no man can blame; and, therefore, such will not discredit one's religion. This expression is taken from [Proverbs 3:4](#).

Romans 12:18

Romans 12:18

If it be possible .. If it can be done. This expression implies that it may not always be possible. Still, it should be one's desire; and diligent effort should be made.

as far as it depends on you ... We are to do our utmost to preserve peace and to appease the anger and malice of others. We must not originate a quarrel.

“you” being emphatic here. – CBSC

Romans 12:19

Romans 12:19

Beloved .. This expression of tenderness was especially appropriate in an exhortation to be peaceful people. It reminds one of the affection and friendship that should exist among brethren.

Dearly beloved .. Words here conveying a singularly beautiful appeal. The believers are entreated by the voice of love to walk in love. - CBSC

do not avenge yourselves .. To “avenge” is to take satisfaction for an injury by inflicting punishment on the offender.

The idea that begins in [Romans 12:17](#) actually carry over into Romans 13. To render justice for injuries done to society, and thus satisfaction, will be the job of the magistrate, [Romans 13:4](#).

give place unto [God's] wrath .. 1) Leave place for God's wrath; 2) the wrath of an enemy; 3) our own wrath. Probably #1 see NIV.

for it is written .. The quote is from [Deuteronomy 32:35](#)

Vengeance is mine ... To take satisfaction and render justice for sins done in this world is God's place.

The apostle here is addressing private individual Christians. And the command is to avoid a spirit of revenge. But this command is not to be so understood that we may not seek for “justice” in a proper way before civil tribunals. If our character is assaulted, if we are robbed and plundered, if we are oppressed contrary to the law of the land, this passage does not require us to submit to such oppression and injury without seeking our rights in an orderly and civil manner.

The magistrate is appointed for the praise of those who do well, and to punish evil-doers, [1 Peter 2:14](#). Remember our Lord Jesus did not surrender his rights [John 18:23](#); and Paul demanded that he should be treated according to the rights and privileges of a Roman citizen; [Acts 16:37](#). The command here “not to avenge ourselves” means, that we are not to take it out of the hands of God and the law, and to inflict it ourselves.

Romans 12:20

Romans 12:20

v.19 "*for it is written*" .. See [Proverbs 25:21-22](#)

If your enemy is hungry ... This verse is taken almost literally from [Proverbs 25:21-22](#). Hunger and thirst here are put for want in general. If thine enemy is needy in any way, do him good, and supply his needs. [Matthew 5:44](#).

for in so doing ... It does not mean that we are to do this “for the sake” of heaping coals of fire on him, but that this will be the result.

you will heap burning coals ... Coals of fire here are symbolic of pain and agony. It seems that the apostle is saying that the "effect" of doing good to an enemy will result in him suffering distress from shame, remorse of conscience, a conviction of the evil of his conduct, and an understanding of God's displeasure that may lead to repentance.

The way to promote "peace" is to do good even to our enemies.

Most interpreters think Paul is teaching that the Christian is to do good to people so that they will feel ashamed and repent, and that sense is possible. But in the OT “*burning coals*” always represent punishment ([2 Samuel 22:13](#); [Psalms 11:6](#); [Psalms 18:8](#), [Psalms 12:1-13](#); [Psalms 140:10](#)), so another interpretation is that Paul is repeating the thought of [Romans 12:19](#) – ESVSB

Romans 12:21

Romans 12:21

Do not be overcome by evil .. Be not “vanquished” or “subdued” by injury received from others.

overcome .. **G3528** νικάω *nikaō*., to *subdue* (literally or figuratively): - conquer, overcome, prevail, get the victory. - Strongs

but overcome evil with good .. That is, subdue or vanquish evil by doing good to others. Show them the loveliness of a better spirit; the power of kindness and benevolence; the value of an amiable, Christian deportment. So doing, you may disarm them of their rage, and be the means of bringing them to better minds.

Overcoming *evil with good* ... may sometimes also include the “good” ([Romans 13:4](#)) of the civil government stopping evil through the use of superior force (military or police), as Paul explains in [Romans 13:3-4](#). - ESVSB

Romans 13:1

Romans 13:1

Vs. 1 One of the passages that gave rise to the doctrine "The Divine Right of Kings."

every soul .. Every person. The Hebraism suggests prominently the idea of individuality. - ICCNT

be subject .. Or “be submissive.” To submit means to recognize one’s place under someone else in a hierarchy that God himself established ([1 Corinthians 14:32](#), [1 Corinthians 14:34](#); [Ephesians 5:21](#); [Colossians 3:18](#); [Titus 2:5](#), [Titus 2:9](#); [Titus 3:1](#); [1 Peter 3:1](#), [1 Peter 3:5](#)). - NIVZSB

This Greek word was used of a soldier’s absolute obedience to his superior officer. - MSB

The passage does not touch on the question of forms of government. “The powers that be” is a phrase which, on the whole, accepts authority de facto, irrespective of its theory, or of its circumstances of origin. - CBSC [See this resource.]

higher Powers .. Civil Governments; [1 Peter 2:13-14](#); [Titus 3:1](#); [1 Timothy 2:1-2](#) ([Acts 5:29](#))

Jesus asserted this also in [John 19:11](#), in a reply to Pontus Pilate.

[Job 34:17](#) Can anyone govern who hates what is right? and powerful? [Job 34:18](#) God is the one who says to kings, 'You are worthless,' or to important people, 'You are evil.' [Job 34:19](#) He is not nicer to princes than other people, nor kinder to rich people than poor people, because he made them all with his own hands. --NCV

[Job 34:29](#) But if God keeps quiet, who can blame him? If he hides his face, who can see him? God still rules over both nations and persons alike. [Job 34:30](#) He keeps the wicked from ruling and from trapping others. -NCV

[2 Samuel 23:3](#); [Exodus 22:28](#);

Christians may not agree on politics or parties but we can agree on the Christians' altitude toward government.

For .. The apostle gives a “reason” why Christians should be subject.

no authority except from God .. God often claims and asserts that “He” sets up one, and puts down another; [Psalms 75:7](#); [Daniel 2:21](#); [Daniel 4:17](#), [Daniel 4:25](#), [Daniel 4:34-35](#).

authority .. The Greek word used here, *exousia*, refers not to an abstract concept, but to the authority exercised by government officials. The OT consistently views God as the ultimate authority over human government ([Daniel 4:17](#)). - FSB

are ordained of God .. This word “ordained” denotes the “ordering” or “arrangement” which subsists in a “military” company, or army.

This does not mean that he “originates” or causes the evil dispositions of rulers, but that he “directs” and “controls” their appointment. By this, we are not to infer: (1) That he approves their conduct; nor, (2) That what they do is always right.

[In the USA could it be said that God "ordained" the "presidency" but not necessarily the man filing that office?? Or does it also allow the "man" to come to power for His own reason or purpose.]

The Bible seems to imply that there are angelic authorities behind human governments ([Daniel 10](#) and the LXX of [Deuteronomy 32:8](#) “When the Most High divided the nations, when He separated the sons of Adam, he set the bounds of the nations according to the number of the angels of God.”) - Utley

placed there by God: .. Scripture consistently teaches that God is actively involved in raising up and casting down human governments and leaders ([1 Samuel 2:6-10](#); [1 Samuel 12:8](#); [Proverbs 8:15-16](#); [Isaiah 41:2-4](#); [Isaiah 45:1-7](#); [Jeremiah 21:7](#), [Jeremiah 21:10](#); [Jeremiah 27:5-6](#); [Daniel 2:21](#), [Daniel 2:37-38](#); [Daniel 4:17](#)). God instituted governing authorities, so rebelling against them is rebelling against God, who will respond with judgment ([13:2](#)). - NLT SB

The Christian's Duty to His Nation

[1 Timothy 2:1-2](#) Pray for the king, and all in authority.

[Romans 13:1](#) ff. vs. 1-7 Be in subjection to government.

[Acts 4:19](#) More important to listen to God

[Acts 5:29](#) We ought to obey God rather than men.

[Mark 12:17](#) To render to Caesar (pay our taxes)

[Matthew 22:21](#) -- Render to Caesar His Due

[Luke 20:25](#)

[Romans 13:1](#) Remember that governments are appointed by God

[John 19:11](#) God grants governments their power

[Romans 13:2](#) Not to be a rebel to overthrow
[Romans 13:3](#) Governments must support good
[Romans 13:4](#) Governments are God's servants
 They are God's ministers of vengeance
[Romans 14:5](#) We are to be in subjection for two reasons.
[Romans 13:6](#) We are to pay our taxes
[Romans 13:7](#) Render them their due, respect and honor

The Nation's Responsibility

[Romans 13:3](#) Support good, punish the evil
[Romans 13:4](#) Execute justice upon the evil

What God Says About Nations

[Proverbs 14:34](#) Nations obliged to do right.
[2 Chronicles 7:14](#) Nations to turn from wicked ways
 Romans 13:2
[Romans 13:2](#)

one who resists authority .. Paul indicates that since God establishes governing authorities, resisting that authority is the same as rejecting the authority of God.

judgment [condemnation] .. In this context, Paul probably is referring to punishment from government authorities. The Greek word used here, *krima*, also can indicate final judgment from God (compare [Romans 2:2-3](#); [Romans 3:8](#); [Romans 5:16](#)).

Romans 13:3
[Romans 13:3](#)

See quotes in note on vs 1 about rulers who do not do right. [Job 34:17-19](#), [Job 34:29-30](#).

rulers .. (lit. the rulers, rulers as a class,) are, as a fact, an agency on the side of right and order; it

a terror .. Even the most wicked, godless governments act as a deterrent to crime.

Civil authority, even in its most distorted forms, never systematically favours wrong as wrong and punishes right as right. Even when a Nero or a Decius persecuted the Church of Christ, the theory of persecution (apart from personal rancour) was the preservation of order; and meantime, in the innumerable details of the common life of the Roman world, the authority of a Nero or a Decius was a necessity and a providential blessing. - CBSC

Do what is good ... have praise .. Peaceful, law-abiding citizens need not fear the authorities. Few governments will harm those who obey their laws. In fact, governments usually commend such people. - MSB

Paul presents a positive picture of the governing authorities, describing them in terms of what God has appointed them to do. - NLT SB

Without civil government there would be anarchy, a horrible alternative in which evil runs rampant. - ESV SB

Romans 13:4
[Romans 13:4](#)

God's minister .. Here Paul applies *diakonos* [the English word “deacon”] to the government’s authority, which is ordained by God to serve His good purposes.

for good .. By helping restrain evil and protecting life and property. Paul took advantage of his

government's role in promoting what is good when he exercised his rights as a Roman citizen to obtain justice ([Acts 16:37](#); [Acts 22:25](#), [Acts 22:29](#); [Acts 25:11](#)). - MSB

sword .. This symbolizes the government's right to inflict punishment on wrongdoers—especially capital punishment ([Genesis 9:6](#); cf. [Matthew 26:52](#); [Acts 25:11](#)). - MSB

to execute wrath .. Not God's wrath, but the punishment inflicted by the civil authorities.

The Bible and Capital Punishment

Old Testament

[Genesis 9:5-6](#); [Leviticus 24:17](#); [Leviticus 24:21](#); [Numbers 35:17-18](#); [Numbers 35:31](#)

Crimes with Capital Punishment

Murder - [Numbers 35:17-18](#)

Rape - [Deuteronomy 22:25](#)

Kidnapping - [Exodus 21:16](#)

Human sacrifice - [Leviticus 20:2-5](#)

Bestiality - [Exodus 22:19](#)

Treason - [1 Kings 2:25](#)

And perhaps others

New Testament

[John 19:9-11](#) [Luke 22:35-36](#); [Luke 22:38](#); [Matthew 26:52](#); [Acts 25:11](#); [Romans 13:1-5](#); [Revelation 13:10](#);

Purpose -

Revenge and Justice - [Romans 12:19](#)

A Deterrent - [Deuteronomy 13:10-11](#); [Deuteronomy 21:21](#);

Execution not to be delayed - [Ezra 7:26](#); [Ecclesiastes 8:11](#)

Purpose for Obeying Civil Magistrates

1. Fear - "for wrath's sake" [Romans 13:2-4](#)

2. Conscience's sake - [Romans 13:5-7](#)

3. For Love's sake - [Romans 13:8-10](#)

4. For Jesus' sake - [Romans 13:11-14](#)

Other Considerations

[Deuteronomy 17:6](#)

[Deuteronomy 24:16](#)

Romans 13:5

[Romans 13:5](#)

be in subjection .. The same verb as in [Romans 13:1](#), emphasizing respect of established authority.

to be in subjection .. There are two reasons stated (1) to escape punishment, either God's or the governing civil authorities and (2) for the believers' conscience. - Utley

for conscience' sake .. The word **conscience** (Greek *suneidesis*) refers to the painful knowledge of wrongdoing. Christians know about their duty to submit to governing authorities, and their failure to do so would bring the pain of a guilty conscience. – NLTSB

Romans 13:6

[Romans 13:6](#)

because of this .. Because of "the conscience" that they are God's ordained human government and He demands submission to it ([Romans 13:1-5](#)).

taxes .. The Greek word referred specifically to taxes paid by individuals, particularly those living in a

conquered nation to their foreign rulers—which makes the tax even more onerous. That tax was usually a combined income and property tax.

In this context, however, Paul uses the term in the broadest possible sense to speak of all kinds of taxes. Jesus explicitly taught that taxes are to be paid—even to the pagan Roman government ([Matthew 22:17-21](#)). He also set an example by willingly paying the temple tax ([Matthew 17:24-27](#)). - MSB

It is also possible that Paul has an eye on the Roman Christians since secular historians mention a “tax revolt” in Rome at about the time Paul writes Romans. - NIVZSB

God's ministers .. servants of God The Greek word used here, leitourgos, portrays public officials as God’s servants, because their authority ultimately comes from Him. Compare [Romans 13:4](#).

Christians must not refuse to *pay taxes* simply because they think some of the money is used unjustly, for the Roman Empire surely did not use all of its money for godly purposes! So, too, believers are to *honor* their leaders, even if they are not fully admirable. - ESVSB

attending [devoting, giving their time] .. persevering in, “devoting themselves to.” Same word as e.g. [Romans 12:12](#), (“continuing instant.”) The word points to government as the life-work of the governor; a thing not of pride or privilege so much as of incessant duty. - CBSC

upon this very thing .. Better, *with a view to this very thing*; i.e., probably, “with a view to the service of God.”

The governor may not consciously “serve God” in his office; but in his office he does a work which is “the ordinance of God,” and must be recognized as such by Christian subjects.—To refer the words “this very thing” to taxes, or tax-gathering, is to limit what is evidently a solemn summary clause, and greatly to lessen its intended weight. – CBSC

Romans 13:7

Romans 13:7

Render therefore .. *Pay to everyone what is owed* This series of commands represents the duties of a good citizen. Paul had warned believers not to rebel against government officials ([Romans 13:2](#)). Now, he urges them to do what is good.

Render ... to all their due .. “Render” translates a Greek word signifying the payment of something owed—not a voluntary contribution—and is reinforced by the word “due.” The apostle reiterates that paying taxes is mandatory. MSB

to all .. To all persons in authority over you. The precept is, of course, of universal application, but plainly bears this special reference here: see the next words. - CBSC

tribute .. -tax on person and property.

customs .. Tolls or taxes on goods.

fear ... honor .. God demands that we show sincere respect and an attitude of genuine high esteem for all public officials. - MSB

...believers are to honor their leaders, even if they are not fully admirable.

The Christian's Duty to His Nation

[1 Timothy 2:1-2](#) Pray for the king, and all in authority.

[Romans 13:1](#) ff. vs. 1-7 Be in subjection to government.

[Acts 4:19](#) More important to listen to God

[Acts 5:29](#) We ought to obey God rather than men.

[Mark 12:17](#) To render to Caesar (pay our taxes)

[Matthew 22:21](#) -- Render to Caesar His Due

[Luke 20:25](#)

[Romans 13:1](#) Remember that governments are appointed by God

[John 19:11](#) God grants governments their power

[Romans 13:2](#) Not to be a rebel to overthrow

[Romans 13:3](#) Governments must support good

[Romans 13:4](#) Governments are God's servants

They are God's ministers of vengeance

[Romans 14:5](#) We are to be in subjection for two reasons.

[Romans 13:6](#) We are to pay our taxes

[Romans 13:7](#) Render them their due, respect and honor

The Nation's Responsibility

[Romans 13:3](#) Support good, punish the evil

[Romans 13:4](#) Execute justice upon the evil

What God Says About Nations

[Proverbs 14:34](#) Nations obliged to do right.

[2 Chronicles 7:14](#) Nations to turn from wicked ways

Romans 13:8

[Romans 13:8](#)

The idea of **obligation** is the hinge that connects [Romans 13:1-7](#) and [Romans 13:8-10](#).

Owe no one anything .. Not a prohibition against borrowing money, which Scripture permits and regulates (cf. [Exodus 22:25](#); [Leviticus 25:35-37](#); [Deuteronomy 15:7-9](#); [Nehemiah 5:7](#); [Psalms 15:5](#); [Psalms 37:21](#), [Psalms 37:26](#); [Ezekiel 22:12](#); [Matthew 5:42](#); Luke 6:34). Paul's point is that all our financial obligations must be paid when they are due. [See notes on [Deuteronomy 23:19-20](#); [Deuteronomy 24:10-13](#).]

Owe no one .. *Let no debt remain outstanding.* Not “never incur a debt” but “make sure that you pay debts you incur on time.”

continuing debt .. There is one debt Christians will never discharge: the debt to love. As often in the NT, the focus is on the obligation Christians have toward “one another” (fellow believers; cf. [Galatians 6:10](#)). But believers are also called to love all people ([Romans 12:9-21](#)).

love one another .. Believers are commanded to love not only other Christians ([John 13:34-35](#); [1 Corinthians 14:1](#); [Philippians 1:9](#); [Colossians 3:14](#); [1 Thessalonians 4:9](#); [1 Timothy 2:15](#); [Hebrews 6:10](#); [1 Peter 1:22](#); [1 Peter 4:8](#); [1 John 2:10](#); [1 John 3:23](#); [1 John 4:7](#); [1 John 4:21](#)), but also non-Christians ([Matthew 5:44](#); [Luke 6:27](#), [Luke 6:35](#); cf. [Luke 6:28](#), [Luke 6:34](#); [Romans 12:14](#), [Romans 12:20](#); [Galatians 6:10](#); [1 Thessalonians 5:15](#)). - MSB

fulfilled the law .. See note on [Romans 13:10](#).

It is obvious also that by “*the Law*” here he means only that part of the Divine Law which affects “the neighbour.” The “first and great commandment” (see [Matthew 22:37-38](#).) is not here in view. – CBSC

Romans 13:9

[Romans 13:9](#)

To demonstrate that love fulfills the law, Paul cites 4 of the Ten Commandments dealing with human relations and ties them in with an overarching OT command. - MSB

They are listed in the order of the **LXX** in [Deuteronomy 5:17-21](#)

For the commandments .. Paul lists several of the Ten Commandments which regulates one's conduct with

his neighbor. (see [Exodus 20:13-17](#); [Deuteronomy 5:17-21](#); compare [Luke 18:19-21](#)).

shall not commit adultery .. See [Exodus 20:14](#); [Deuteronomy 5:18](#).

shall not commit murder .. See [Exodus 20:13](#); [Deuteronomy 5:17](#).

shall not steal .. See [Exodus 20:15](#); [Deuteronomy 5:19](#).

shall not covet .. See [Exodus 20:17](#); [Deuteronomy 5:21](#).

other commandment .. Refers either to the Ten Commandments or to the commandments of the law in general.

You shall love your neighbor .. A quotation from [Leviticus 19:18](#). This command encompasses all of God's laws concerning human relationships ([Matthew 22:39](#)); if we truly love our neighbor (anyone with whom we have contact, cf. [Luke 10:25-37](#)), we will only do what is in his best interest ([Romans 13:10](#)). - MSB

The main point, though, is not self-love, however pure, but a love that embodies an equally deep concern for the well-being of others. - CPNIV

Romans 13:10

[Romans 13:10](#)

Love does no wrong .. The kind of love God speaks of avoids the acts which the Law forbids.

"Love does no harm" is simply the converse of "Love seeks the neighbor's well-being." - CPNIV

to a neighbor .. Those we come in contact with.

love is the fulfillment of the law .. If we treat others with the same care that we have for ourselves, we will not violate any of God's laws regarding interpersonal relationships ([Matthew 7:12](#); [James 2:8](#)). - MSB

Romans 13:11

[Romans 13:11](#)

Vs.11 Cf. [Matthew 24:13](#) "The end" - Emphasis on being closer to the Lord's judgment now than ever before! As His servants we want to be found faithful.

And do this ..

knowing the time ..

time.. The Gk word views time not in terms of chronology, but as a period, era, or age (cf. [Romans 3:26](#); [Matthew 16:3](#); [Mark 1:15](#); [Luke 21:8](#); [Acts 1:7](#); [Acts 3:19](#); [Revelation 1:3](#)). - MSB

now it is high time .. NASB "that it is already the hour"

The "previous" time had been a period of ignorance and darkness, when oppression, and falsehood, and sin abounded. This, the time of the "gospel," when God had "made known" to people his will that they should be pure.- BN

hour has come for you to wake from sleep (ESV) ..

"The hour has come" [NIV] (literally, "the hour is now," or "it is already the hour") emphasizes the urgency of the situation. - CPNIV

Awake ..

- 1) Wake up!
- 2) Get up! - v. 12 "day is at hand"

- 3) Clean up! - v.12 "cast off" "put on"
 4) Grow up! - v.12 "walk"
 v.14 We grow on the basis of the food we eat!

awake out of sleep .. Become aware of God and sensitive to His concern for our salvation. ([1 Thessalonians 5:6-7](#))

(Other uses of this metaphor, [Matthew 24:42](#); [Matthew 25:13](#); [Revelation 3:3](#); [Revelation 16:15](#)).

This is a beautiful figure. The dawn of day, the approaching light of the morning, is the time to arouse from slumber. In the darkness of night, people sleep. So says the apostle. The world has been sunk in the "night" of paganism and sin. At that time it was to be expected that they would sleep the sleep of spiritual death. But now the morning light of the gospel dawns. - BN

sleep .. Spiritual apathy and lethargy, i.e. unresponsiveness to the things of God. - MSB

Sleep here is a metaphor for a life of moral carelessness and laxity. - ESVSB

Looking at verse 12, the "sleep" was that time before the Lord's coming into the world and bringing life and mortality to light, [John 1:4](#); [John 8:12](#); [2 Timothy 1:10](#).

for .. With γὰρ he explains what he means by saying that it is time to be aroused from sleep.

salvation .. **G4991**, σωτηρία, *sōtēria* (so-tay-ree'-ah) rescue or safety (physically or morally): - deliver, health, salvation, save, saving. (Total KJV occurrences: 45) - Strong's

Safety, deliverance, preservation from danger or destruction.- WordStudy

Some ... suppose it refers to deliverance from "persecutions." ... It probably, however, has its usual meaning here, denoting that deliverance from sin and danger which awaits Christians in heaven; - BN

our salvation is nearer ..

What was near was the Lord's return in judgment upon Israel and Jerusalem and deliverance from Jewish persecution. Roman persecution continued however. Nearer also, every day, is the Lord's return in glory.

The Bible frequently uses the return of Jesus Christ to motivate believers to holy living ([2 Corinthians 5:10](#); [Titus 2:11-13](#); [Hebrews 10:24-25](#); [James 5:7-8](#); [1 Peter 4:7-11](#); [2 Peter 3:11-14](#)). - MSB

See the note "*Some Various Comings of Christ*" at [Matthew 24:3](#).

when we first believed .. The disciples *first believed* in Christ even before his atoning death on the cross, but now, after his sacrifice, our salvation (deliverance) is nearer.

Our final salvation is nearer to us now than when we began to believe. Fitzmyer (682) thinks this refers to Christians collectively, i.e., to the beginning of the Christian era when people first began to believe in Jesus. Others rightly take it as a reference to individual Christians, and to the time when we as individuals "first confessed our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and were baptized" (Hendriksen, 2:441). - CPNIV

Romans 13:12

Romans 13:12

night .. Satan's dominion, (cf. [1 Thessalonians 5:4-5](#)).

The word "night," in the New Testament, is used to denote "night" literally ([Matthew 1:1](#) etc.); the starry heavens [Revelation 1:1](#) and then it denotes a state of "ignorance" and "crime," and is synonymous with the word "darkness," as such deeds are committed commonly in the night; [1 Thessalonians 1:1](#). - BN

night is far spent .. Literally, "is cut off." It is becoming "short;" it is hastening to a close.

The Greek verb is aorist, and the time-reference is to that time before the Lord's coming when brought light to the darkness, [John 1:4-5](#); [John 1:9](#). [John 3:19](#); [John 8:12](#); [2 Timothy 1:10](#).

day at hand .. The "day-time" has dawned upon us! It is time to live in the *day-light* that Christ brought. To live in light of his forgiveness and mercy, and to walk in the way he walked. [John 3:19](#);

Therefore .. In consequence of Christ's coming, let us

cast off .. The figure here casting off, or laying aside, a *night-robe*, which is to be put off as the sleeper rises for the day. (CBSC)

works [deeds] of darkness .. Refers metaphorically to behavior that is characteristic of evil (compare [1 Thessalonians 5:7](#)). - FSB [John 3:19](#);

Some of the "deeds" of darkness are expressed in the next verse, [Romans 13:13](#).

darkness .. (Same phrase as [Ephesians 5:11](#))—Here we have the idea of *moral* darkness; not the darkness of trial or pain; Cp. [John 3:19](#); [Acts 26:18](#); [2 Corinthians 6:14](#); [Ephesians 5:11](#); [1 Thessalonians 5:4-5](#); [1 Peter 2:9](#); [1 John 1:6](#).

No doubt the word suggests also the "*powers of the darkness*," the personal spiritual "*rulers of the darkness*," who tempt the soul and intensify its tendencies to evil. Cp. [Luke 22:53](#); [Ephesians 6:12](#); [Colossians 1:13](#). (CBSC)

works of darkness .. Paul exhorts believers to repent of and forsake their sins ([2 Peter 3:14](#); [1 John 2:28](#); cf. [Ephesians 4:22](#); [Colossians 3:8-10](#); [Hebrews 12:1](#), [Hebrews 12:14](#); [James 1:21](#); [1 Peter 2:1](#); [1 Peter 4:1-3](#)).

put on .. Get dressed for the day. And not merely clothed, but "armed" for the the day. This takes the place of the *night-robe*. Like a soldier getting dressed for the day, or for battle.

armor [weapons] of light .. Compare [Ephesians 6:13-17](#).

The earliest use of the metaphor by Paul is [1 Thessalonians 5:8](#); another close parallel. See also [2 Corinthians 6:7](#), [2 Corinthians 10:4](#); Peter uses the metaphor also in [1 Peter 4:1](#).

Romans 13:13

Romans 13:13

Let us walk .. This speaks of one's behavior. This was a Hebrew idiom for lifestyle. Paul uses it over 33 times.

"Behave" is the word περιπατέω (*peripateo*), which literally means "to walk around" but is often used figuratively for daily conduct (e.g., [Romans 6:4](#); [Romans 8:4](#); [Romans 14:15](#)). - CPNIV

properly [honestly; decently; becomingly; in a right way].. with the true decorum of a life of obedience to the will of God. - CBSC

as in the day .. "*as men walk by day*." The apostle exhorts Christians to live as if all their conduct were seen, and they had nothing which they wished to conceal.

The Christian is thus bidden to think of himself as in the daylight; with light on him and around him. This is probably here the "*light*" of [1 John 1:7](#); the light of the knowledge of the Holy One, and of His felt presence. (See [Psalms 139:12](#).) Such "light" is the dawning of that Day in which "we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is;" and this accords with the imagery of [Romans 13:12](#). - CBSC

The following list of sins in this verse are made up of three pairs of two terms. The terms have some semantic overlap. It is possible they are meant to be synonyms. - Utley

revelry [carousing] .. Wild parties, sexual orgies, brawls, riots (cf. [Galatians 5:21](#); [1 Peter 4:3](#)). - MSB

This referred to sexual immorality which was linked in pagan religious rituals to drunkenness. In the list of the sins of the flesh in [Galatians 5:21](#), these terms are also listed side by side. - Utley

The first works of darkness are "orgies and drunkenness," or drunken revelry. The former term (κῶμος, *komos*) was originally used for "a festal procession in honor of Dionysus*, then a joyous meal or banquet" (AG, 462), but came to have the negative connotation of excessive, uninhibited revelry,

carousing, wild partying, or boisterous brawls and riots. - CPNIV

* [The Greek god of wine, merry-making, and insanity. The son of Zeus and Semele. Also known as Bacchus or Bromius.]

drunkenness .. The Greek (as in [Galatians 5:21](#); and [1 Peter 4:3](#)) is plural; **drinking-bouts**.

Some try to argue Paul is arguing against "extreme" drinking. But is he arguing against extreme "lewdness and lust", or is just one case of it immoral? See [1 Peter 4:3-4](#) where Christians were no longer to engage in activities they had engaged in before their conversion.

lewdness .. chambering; Again plural: indulgences of lustful pleasure.

...the word κοίτη (*koitē*), which literally means "bed," but was used as a euphemism for sexual intercourse, either in a good sense ([Hebrews 13:4](#)) or bad (as here). As used here in the plural it refers to sexual promiscuity, sexual excesses, and harlotries. - CPNIV

lust .. wantonness; Again plural: the varieties of lascivious sin are suggested.

The ... word (ἀσέλγεια, *aselgeia*) refers to sensual excesses of all kinds, but especially sexual excess, lewdness, licentiousness, or "uninhibited and unabashed lasciviousness" (MacArthur, 2:267). See [Mark 7:22](#); [2 Corinthians 12:21](#); [Galatians 5:19](#); [Ephesians 4:19](#); [1 Peter 4:3](#); [2 Peter 2:18](#). The two terms taken together, both in the plural, refer to a lifestyle of unrestrained sexual promiscuity. - CPNIV

Such warnings as these, addressed to the justified and believing, not to a mass of merely conventional Christians, are indications of the immense force of moral corruption in the heathen world out of which the Christians had lately come, and which everywhere surrounded them. - CBSC

The new Gentile believers may have been continuing some of their immoral pagan worship practices.

The practices he urged us to avoid here were common in Corinth where Paul wrote this epistle. He observed them constantly. Intemperance often leads to sexual sin that frequently results in contention and quarreling. - Constable

strife .. "Dissension" is ἐρις (*eris*), the same word translated "strife" in [Romans 1:29](#). It refers to a quarrelsome disposition, a spirit of contention and bickering. MacArthur describes it well: "It reflects a spirit of antagonistic competitiveness that fights to have its own way, regardless of cost to itself or of harm to others" (2:267). CPNIV

strife and jealousy .. Vices that inhibit unity among believers. Paul lists these among the deeds of the flesh in [Galatians 5:19-21](#).

envy .. *Zēlos* can mean "zeal" in a good or neutral sense ([Romans 10:2](#)), but is usually used in the negative sense of envy or jealousy, or "the various forms of venomous and hateful feelings leading to discord" (MP, 521). When used together (as they are here and in [1 Corinthians 3:3](#); [2 Corinthians 12:20](#); [Galatians 5:20](#)), these two words refer to "**envious rivalry**" (Dunn, 2:792) or "party quarrels" (Godet, 451), or "a determination to have one's own way, a self-willed readiness to quarrel" (Morris, 473). - CPNIV

These last two terms may relate to the tension between believing Jews and Gentiles in the Roman church. The new Gentile believers may have been acting arrogantly against the returning believing Jewish leaders who had left briefly because of the edict of Claudius which banned all Jewish gatherings and rituals in Rome. [Utley]

Romans 13:14

[Romans 13:14](#)

But .. To contrast the action of the previous verse.

put on the Lord Jesus Christ .. Clothe yourselves; A metaphor of putting on apparel indicates that

believers must appropriate Jesus' virtues and imitate His love (compare [Galatians 3:27](#); [Colossians 3:9-10](#)). - FSB

Those in Christ are to be transformed into His image and likeness (cf. [2 Corinthians 3:18](#); [Galatians 4:19](#); [1 John 3:2-3](#); [Romans 8:29](#)).

“Putting on Christ” is here equivalent to being transformed by the renewing of our minds ([Romans 12:2](#)). It is the same as putting on “the new man [self],” which is the process of the recreation of the image of God within us ([Ephesians 4:24](#); [Colossians 3:10](#)). - [CPNIV]

make no provision .. This word has the basic meaning of planning ahead or forethought. Most sinful behavior results from wrong ideas and lustful desires we allow to linger in our minds (cf. [James 1:14](#)).- MSB

for the flesh .. Refers to man's physical being and the part of man to be morally tempted by physical passions.

Lenski is on the right track when he says it is “the body we all have, through which so much sin tries to invade us” (809) *

to fulfill its lusts .. With a view toward evil desires.

The metaphor relates to the Christian who now wears the royal clothing of Jesus and who accepts new lifestyle choices and a life that leads away from the direction of fleshly sins.

“**Desires**” (*NIV, ESV*) (ἐπιθυμία, *epithymia*) here means sinful desires or “**lusts**” (*NASB*), as in [Romans 1:24](#) and [Romans 6:12](#).

* “*The sinful nature*” [*NIV*] is literally “the flesh” (σάρξ, *sarx*). As explained earlier (*JC*, 1:373–377), I believe that faithful exegesis leads us to reject the prevalent understanding of *sarx* as “sinful nature” (contra the *NIV*), and see it as referring to the unredeemed physical body. Thus, what the *NIV* calls “*the desires of the sinful nature*” here are the same as the lusts or “evil desires” of the “*mortal body*” in [Romans 6:12](#) (see *JC*, 1:401–402). - CPNIV [underline is WG]

Romans 14:1

Romans 14:1

Theme of ch. 14 & 15

Reconciliation of Jewish Christians and Gentile Christians

In this passage Paul addresses the tension between two groups within the Christian community ... Paul's message urges the Roman Christians to withhold judgment of their fellow believers, which was a threat to unity.

Now .. Paul often moves from one subject to another by means of a transition; but he often simply turns from one subject to the next without a bridge of thought. That is the case here. **Now** (transitional δέ) - Lenski

Receive [accept; welcome] .. The present tense Greek word refers to personal and willing acceptance of another.

Same word and tense as [Romans 15:7](#).

The exhortation here is directed to the strong, for they are tempted to enter into quarrels with those who have a weaker faith. - ESVSB

weak .. One not convinced of their liberty in Christ. - (NIVZSB)

one who is weak in the faith .. Likely refers to Christians who remained committed to observing certain parts of the law, such as food laws and the Sabbath ([Romans 14:2-3](#)).

The immediate context probably refers to Jewish Christians, though other practices concerning food and observing certain days ([Romans 14:6](#)) were issues for non-Jewish people as well (see [Galatians](#)

[4:1-11](#)). The law of Moses designated certain animals as ritually unclean, and it therefore prohibited Jews from eating them (see [Leviticus 11:1-47](#)). - FSB

The strong Jewish believers understood their freedom in Christ and realized the ceremonial requirements of the Mosaic law were no longer binding. The mature Gentiles understood that idols are not gods and, therefore, that they could eat meat that had been offered to them. But in both cases the weaker brothers' consciences were troubled, and they were even tempted to violate their consciences (a bad thing to train oneself to do), become more legalistic under the feelings of guilt, or even to sin. Knowing that the mature Jews and Gentiles would be able to understand these struggles, Paul addresses most of his comments to them. - MSB

Being **weak in faith** means having scruples against doing certain things that Christian liberty would allow. In Rome, most of the **weak in faith** were Jewish Christians whose consciences did not give them liberty from certain requirements of Jewish law. - NLTB

weak in the faith .. This characterizes those believers who are unable to let go of the religious ceremonies and rituals of their past.

The weak Jewish believer had difficulty abandoning the rites and prohibitions of the Old Covenant; he felt compelled to adhere to dietary laws, observe the Sabbath, and offer sacrifices in the temple.

The weak Gentile believer had been steeped in pagan idolatry and its rituals; he felt that any contact with anything remotely related to his past, including eating meat that had been offered to a pagan deity and then sold in the marketplace, tainted him with sin.

Both had very sensitive consciences in these areas, and were not yet mature enough to be free of those convictions. Cf. [1 Corinthians 8:1-13](#). - MSB

This [**weak in faith**] refers to a legalistic mindset. The over-scrupulous Christian brother is described in this chapter in three ways (1) prohibitions of food (cf. [Romans 14:2](#), [Romans 14:6](#), [Romans 14:21](#)); (2) emphasis on special days (cf. [Romans 14:5-6](#)); and (3) prohibition of wine (cf. [Romans 14:17](#), [Romans 14:21](#)). This same type of person was mentioned in [Romans 15:1](#) and [1 Corinthians 8:9-13](#); [Romans 9:22](#). Be careful not to categorize yourself too quickly as a strong or weak Christian. Often believers are weak in one area and strong in another.

Paul's attitude toward these matters is very different in [Galatians 4:9-10](#) and [Colossians 2:16-23](#). These texts reflect the attitudes and teachings of false teachers. In Romans these are sincere believers who have over-scrupulous consciences. - Utley

the faith .. In *his* faith. Is the faith here to be understood at *subjective*, or *objective* as the gospel, the will of God in Christ. Probably *subjective*.

not to disputes [quarrel; judgment] ..

Better translated, "*for the purpose of passing judgment on his opinions (or scruples)*." The mature believer should not sit in judgment on the sincere but underdeveloped thoughts that govern the weak believer's conduct.

Lit. **not to criticisms of (his) scruples**. "*receive him, do not criticize him; let him come with a welcome*, —The noun rendered "*criticisms*" (or its cognate verb) is used (e.g. [1 Corinthians 12:10](#); [Hebrews 5:14](#);) for *detection of differences*. (CBSC)

over doubtful things [over opinions;] ..

In Romans 14 and 1 Corinthians 8 Paul argues for mutual toleration. It is unmistakable, from all the passages in question, with which Paul sided. Paul clearly decides against the *principle* of the "weak brethren;" though he treats it as an error which might lawfully and usefully be met by toleration. (CBSC)

The last word in the verse is *διαλογισμός* (*dialogismos*), which basically means "a thought, an opinion," and can mean "a doubt, a dispute." The best translation in this context is simply "opinions," which is after all the subject of the whole section. The NASB says it best: "but not for the purpose of passing judgment on his opinions." - CPNIV

Romans 14:2

Romans 14:2

believes he may eat all things .. The strong believer, whose mature faith allows him to exercise his freedom in Christ by eating the inexpensive meat sold at the pagan meat markets—inexpensive because a worshiper had first offered it as a sacrifice to a pagan deity (see [1 Corinthians 8:1-13](#)). - MSB

has faith which leads him to see that sorts of food are no longer a matter of religious scruple.- CBSC

who is weak .. i.e. in his faith. cf. ver. 1.

This brother's reasons were immaterial to Paul. The point is that for some reason this Christian believed that he would please God more by not eating meat than by eating it. He was wrong. God has not forbidden Christians to eat any food (1 Timothy 4:3-4). - Constable

only vegetables .. The strict diet weak Jewish and Gentile believers ate to avoid eating meat that was unclean or may have been sacrificed to idols. - MSB

eateth herbs .. This is given as an extreme case. Anxious scrupulosity would adopt vegetarianism as the simplest solution of the questions raised by the Mosaic precepts, complicated by the possible "defilement" of animal-food by idol-sacrifices. - CBSC

These Jewish Christians were following the lead of Daniel and his friends, who refused to eat the rich food and wine that the king of Babylon offered them ([Daniel 1:3-16](#)). Other Jewish sources reveal that pious Jews often restricted their diets in pagan cultures because they could never be sure that meat had been slaughtered according to Jewish requirements. - NLTSB

The diet referred to in this verse is for religious purposes, not health. This food problem arose from two possible sources (1) Jewish food laws (cf. Leviticus 11) or (2) meat sacrificed to pagan idols (cf. 1 Corinthians 8-10). Jesus clearly taught that food is not what defiles a man (cf. [Matthew 15:10-20](#); [Mark 7:14-23](#)). This truth is illustrated by Peter's vision concerning Cornelius in Acts 10. - Utley

Romans 14:3

Romans 14:3

contempt [despise; look down on] .. "Contempt" is literally "to make light of," "set at naught," or "count as worthless" (cf. [Romans 14:10](#); [Luke 18:9](#); [1 Corinthians 6:4](#); [1 Corinthians 16:11](#); [2 Corinthians 10:10](#); [Galatians 4:14](#); [1 Thessalonians 5:20](#)). Believers must guard against a condescending self-righteousness. The strong in faith must not condemn the weak in faith. - Utley

despise ... judge .. "**Despise**" indicates a contempt for someone as worthless, who deserves only disdain and abhorrence. "**Judge**" is equally strong and means "to condemn." Paul uses them synonymously: The strong hold the weak in contempt as legalistic and self-righteous; the weak judge the strong to be irresponsible ... - MSB

look down on ... condemn ..The "strong," those who prided themselves on their enlightened freedom in Christ, looked with disdain on those they considered to be "weak."

The weak, in turn—certain that they were following the true route to piety—condemned the strong for their laxness. These attitudes, over different issues, are mirrored throughout the history of the Christian church. - NLTSB

judge .. The Greek verb used here, *krinō*, means "to pronounce judgment for wrongdoing." The person who judges assumes the role of God (compare [Romans 2:3](#)). Paul points out that such judgment is inappropriate because God has accepted all people who believe. -FSB

The Apostle's point is that within the Christian community both strong and weak should be allowed to follow their consciences on this matter without being hassled by the other side. It is, after all, a

matter of opinion. - CPNIV

God has received him .. Lit. **God did receive him**; i.e. at the crisis of his conversion; on the sole revealed condition of his accepting and confessing Christ as his Saviour and Lord. Same verb as that in ver. 1 ([Romans 14:1](#))

This clause may probably refer to *both* the two preceding clauses; but its main reference (see next verse) is to the fact that the “*strong*” Christian, in spite of his apparent laxity, had been welcomed by God. - CBSC

received Him [accepted him; welcomed him;] .. Same as in ver. 1. [Romans 14:1](#).

God has accepted them .. Both the weak and the strong are genuine believers, welcomed by God into his family. Therefore, they have no right to treat each other as if they do not belong ([Romans 14:4](#); see also [Romans 15:7](#)). - NLTSB

for God has accepted him .. It is possible that “*him*” here refers only to the one who eats meat (and thus by implication to any strong Christian), as some argue (Murray, 2:176; Cranfield, 2:702; Moo, 839). In my judgment, though, “*him*” refers to both the strong and the weak. In 15:7 Paul exhorts both groups to “accept one another,” using the same verb. ... Thus the strong should not despise the weak, for God has accepted him. Neither should the weak condemn the strong, for God has accepted him. - CPNIV (Jack Cottrell)

Romans 14:4

[Romans 14:4](#)

See [1 Corinthians 4:5](#)

Who are you .. This is emphatic in Greek, referring to the weak brother and sister. - Utley

judge .. “Judge” is *krino*, the same Greek word translated “condemn” in v. 3... Since in v. 3 “judging” (“condemning”) is the act of the weak toward the strong, some think the question in v. 4a is directed only toward the weak (Cranfield, 2:702). But in v. 13 the same word (*krino*) is applied to both sides, and it is better to apply it to both here in v. 4a. - CPNIV [Underline-WG]

Who are you to judge .. The verb “*judge*” connects this with the “judgment” passed by the “eater of herbs” upon the Christianity of his “stronger” brother.—The word “judge” here (as in [Matthew 7:1](#)) - CBSC

servant [slave] .. Paul uses an analogy to indicate that believers answer to God.- FSB

the servant .. This is the term *oiketes*, which is formed from the term *oikos*, which means “house,” therefore, this is a home slave or servant (cf. [Luke 16:13](#); [Acts 10:7](#); [Romans 14:4](#); [1 Peter 2:18](#))

The predominate term for slave or servant in the NT is *doulos*.

The term οἰκέτης is well chosen: a servant in the master’s own house, belonging to his immediate family, thus in personal contact with his master. Whose business is it to pass any kind of judgment, either favorable or unfavorable, upon such a servant? Certainly the master’s alone. - Lenski

master .. “Master” is the word for “lord” (κύριος, *kyrios*). In an ordinary master-slave relationship it means “owner.” This meaning carries over into the relationship of each Christian to Jesus Christ; he has bought us with a price ([1 Corinthians 6:20](#)) and therefore is our Lord or owner. It is to him alone (“his *own* master”) that each Christian, as his slave, stands or falls.

stands or falls .. This refers to the Master’s acceptance or nonacceptance of his slave’s conduct.

To his own master he stands or falls .. How Christ evaluates each believer is what matters, and His judgment does not take into account religious tradition or personal preference (cf. [Romans 8:33-34](#); [1 Corinthians 4:3-5](#)). - MSB

for [but, and] .. [γὰρ] The “but” points out that of the two alternatives just given (“standing,” “falling,”) the former, in this case, is certain. - CBSC

Paul’s argument here is that each believer is a slave/servant of Christ. He is their “lord” and He and He alone will direct them and hold them accountable for their actions and motives (cf. [2 Corinthians 5:10](#)). - Utley

The first part of this verse sounds very much like [Romans 2:1](#) and [Romans 2:3](#), where Paul rebuked the self-satisfied Jew. – Constable

Romans 14:5

Romans 14:5

esteems [considers] .. Interestingly, the word for “considers” is *krinō*, the same word translated “condemn” and “judge” in [Romans 14:3](#) and [Romans 14:4](#). Here in v. 5 it obviously has the neutral meaning of “judge between, distinguish, decide.” - CPNIV

above [NIV "more sacred"] .. the preposition *παρά* (*para*), which here means “above, beyond, more than, rather than” ([Romans 1:25](#); [Romans 12:3](#); [Luke 13:2](#), [Luke 13:4](#)). Literally Paul says the weak Christian judges “a day more than a day,” i.e., one day to be more important or more sacred than another day. - CPNIV

esteems one day above another .. Though it was no longer required by God, the weak Jewish believer felt compelled to observe the Sabbath and other special days associated with Judaism (cf. [Galatians 4:9-10](#); *see notes on* [Colossians 2:16-17](#)). On the other hand, the weak Gentile wanted to separate himself from the special days of festivities associated with his former paganism because of its immorality and idolatry. - MSB

prefers one day over another day .. The law required Jews to observe special days, such as the Sabbath, Jewish festivals, and the new moon. Here, Paul refers to Christians who honor these observances (see [Galatians 4:10](#); [Colossians 2:16](#)). - FSB

another esteems every day alike .. The mature believers were unaffected by those concerns.

Some people are still very calendar conscious concerning religion (cf. [Galatians 4:10](#); [Colossians 2:16-17](#)). All days belong to God equally. There are no special days. There is no “secular” versus “sacred.” All is sacred! - Utley

fully convinced in his own mind .. Paul emphasizes that each person must operate with a clear conscience, regardless of his or her practice. Elsewhere, Paul advises believers not to let others judge them with regard to special days ([Colossians 2:16](#)). - FSB

Each Christian must follow the dictates of his own conscience in matters not specifically commanded or prohibited in Scripture. Since conscience is a God-given mechanism to warn, and responds to the highest standard of moral law in the mind ([Romans 2:14-15](#)), it is not sensible to train yourself to ignore it. Rather, respond to its compunctions - MSB

Unlike the other nine commandments in [Exodus 20:1-17](#), the Sabbath commandment seems to have been part of the “ceremonial laws” of the Mosaic covenant, like the dietary laws and the laws about sacrifices, all of which are no longer binding on new covenant believers (see also [Galatians 4:10](#); [Colossians 2:16-17](#)). However, it is still wise to take regular times of rest from work, and regular times of worship are commanded for Christians ([Hebrews 10:24-25](#); cf. [Acts 20:7](#)). - ESVSB

It is not difficult to see that a few Jewish Christians, some of them who perhaps came from the old mother church in Jerusalem, still clung to the Sabbath much as the Christians did after Pentecost. This does not imply that they insisted on this day or on any legal observance but only that they closed their shop or their store, ceased work, and kept the day holy. – Lenski

Romans 14:6

Romans 14:6

the day .. Any of the days under discussion; the days that the Jews kept as religious occasions.

regards [observes] .. Regards it as “holy,” or as set apart to the service of God.

regards not the day .. That is, he does not believe that God “requires” such an observance.

he who eats .. The strong believer eats whatever he pleases and thanks the Lord. The weak brother eats according to his ceremonial diet and thanks the Lord that he made a sacrifice on His behalf. In either case, the believer thanks the Lord, so the motive is the same. - MSB

unto the Lord .. i.e. the Lord *Christ*, “the Lord of the dead and living” ([Romans 14:9](#)). The word thus used is a good implicit proof of St Paul’s view of the supreme dignity of Messiah; especially when we find him just below writing, in the same connexion, “he giveth God thanks.” It would indeed be unsafe to say that in that clause “*God*” means specially or exclusively “*Christ*.” But the two words are so used that no such gulf as that between Creator and Creature can possibly divide them.—“*Unto the Lord:*”—i.e., as one who not only *is* responsible to Him, but *owns* that he is. This seems to be required by the use made of the fact of *thanksgiving* just below. - CBSC

he is thankful .. Paul encourages the believers to be thankful to God regardless of their food customs. - FSB

to the Lord .. Whether weak or strong, the motive behind a believer’s decisions about issues of conscience must be to please the Lord. - MSB

“to the Lord he minds it.” He thinks only of the Lord and casts no reflection on others because he knows that they, too, are most earnestly devoted to the Lord. - Lenski

and giveth God thanks .. Here again, the inward sense of responsibility to “the Lord” is evidenced by the outward act of thanksgiving to “God.”—The thanks given is, of course, for the food (vegetable, or “clean” meat), which he *does* eat. - CBSC

Whether one observes a special day, or eats all foods, or abstains from some foods, the important thing is the **honor of the Lord** and to give **thanks to God**. - ESVSB

The main point is that whatever convictions a Christian has about these and similar matters, he lives out (or *should* live out) his convictions “to the Lord.” In other words, it is a matter between him and his Lord... Paul notes that both the eat-anything Christian and the vegetarian Christian are equally diligent in giving thanks to God for their food, each regarding his meal as a gift from God. ...

This verse probably refers to “the blessing spoken at meals” (Dunn, 2:807), and thus supports the common practice of “saying grace” before eating. It “indicates that grace before meals was the universal practice of Christians in Paul’s day” (*MP*, 527). See [Matthew 15:36](#); [John 6:11](#), [John 6:23](#); [Acts 27:35](#); [1 Corinthians 10:30](#); [1 Timothy 4:4](#). - CPNIV

Romans 14:7

Romans 14:7

For none of us .. Us the justified, the “sons of God.”—Here (and in vv. 8, 9,) St Paul states the great principle on which the practice in question is, or should be, based. He takes it for granted that each Christian owns, and acts upon, a sense of the Lordship of Christ, because that Lordship is a Divine fact.- CBSC

But Paul’s point here is not our connections with other people, but our continuing relationship with our Lord, as [Romans 14:8](#) shows. - CPNIV

for not one of us lives for himself .. No Christian is an island. Christians live first and foremost for Christ (cf. v. 8). Believers’ actions affect others. They are part of a large spiritual family. Therefore, they must limit

their personal freedom in love (cf. [1 Corinthians 10:24](#), [1 Corinthians 10:27-33](#)). They must allow others to grow into personal freedom. Legalism leads to self-righteous uniformity which is not of God. Jesus' harshest words and condemnations were directed toward the self-righteous Pharisees. - Utley

lives to himself ... dies to himself. The focus of Christian living is never oneself—everything we do should be to please our sovereign Lord (cf. 1 Corinthians 6:20; 10:31). - MSB

liveth to himself .. Here, as in 1 Corinthians 4, the argument passes from the Christian's independence of man's judgment to his deep dependence on the Lord's. To "live to himself" is here, manifestly, not so much to live a "*selfish*" life as to live a life in which the mere dictates of conscience and will are the supreme rule, irrespective of Christ. - CBSC

He meant that no Christian should live to please himself alone but should live to please the Lord. - Constable

As the Lord's servants ([Romans 14:4](#)), Christians are to look to God for guidance and seek to honor him in all things - NLTSB

Fundamental to the whole discussion is the reality that the Christian's life is not his own. Both in life and in death, Christians belong **to the Lord**, and he alone is their judge. - ESVSB

Romans 14:8

[Romans 14:8](#)

Both in life and in death, Christians belong to the Lord, and he alone is their judge. - ESVSB

we die to the Lord .. In view of ver. 9, this must mean, "when we die, we do not pass out of His bondservice, but only into another mode of it: in the world to come we are still at His command, responsible to Him." Not so much the act of death as the state of the departed seems to be in question here. (The usage of the Gr. verb rendered "die" fully admits this: it must occasionally be rendered "*lie dead*.") - CBSC

we die to the Lord .. It may mean that at death our bondservice to Christ does not end; rather, we simply pass into another sphere or form of service to him (Moule, 226; Morris, 482). More likely, though, it refers to the circumstances of one's death. Whatever the mode of our bodily death, as Christ's servants we are determined to fully trust his promises and be fully surrendered to his purposes. Whether it be a peaceful transition while asleep or a martyr's violent death, we will bring glory to our Lord by confidently praying, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit" ([Acts 7:59](#)). - CPNIV

Therefore .. "Therefore" gathers up the facts just stated into one summary expression. - CBSC

we are the Lord's .. Paul affirms that neither life nor death can adversely affect the believer's union with Christ (see [Romans 8:35](#); [1 Thessalonians 5:10](#)). - FSB

Believers serve the Lord in all and every possible contingency (cf. [Ephesians 6:7](#); [Colossians 3:23](#))! - Utley

We see, too, why Paul adds dying to living in this connection where the question was one only regarding meat and vegetables. This little life, in which such little questions come up, will soon end. Who of us wants it to end except by dying to the Lord as the Lord's. When they are placed in the light of our end, so many things shrivel into the trivialities they really are. – Lenski

Romans 14:9

[Romans 14:9](#)

to this end [for this reason] .. Here Paul reminds his audience that Christ's death and resurrection should encourage believers to live for the Lord, not themselves. Christians should use their freedom in Christ to show love and respect to fellow believers since He died for all people—both the living and the dead, the strong and the weak. - FSB

died, and rose, and revived .. Better, probably, *died and came to life*. The words “and rose” appear to be interpolated. The balance of the clauses is thus made precise:—He *died* and *lived*; He is Master of the *dead* and *living*. - CBSC

The word for “**returned to life**” is not the usual word for “raised up,” but the word ζάω (*zao*), which means simply “to live.” ...There is no doubt that he means “lived again, came back to life, returned to life,” - CPNIV

The ἐζήσεν cannot refer to the earthly life of Christ prior to his death. There is no reason for speaking of that here, especially with the strangely reversed order “**he died and lived**.” It is current thought in the Scriptures to connect his death and his resurrection with his rule as lord; [Romans 6:9-10](#); [Romans 8:34](#); [Philippians 2:8](#), etc.; [Luke 24:26](#); [Matthew 28:18](#). The verb means, “to be lord and to rule as lord,” κυριεύω matching ὁ Κύριος. - Lenski

that he might be Lord .. *that He might become the Master*. The emphasis is on the word Lord, or Master. - CBSC

Lord of both the dead and the living .. Christ died ... to establish Himself as Sovereign over the saints in His presence and those still on earth (cf. [Philippians 2:11](#); [1 Timothy 6:15](#); [Revelation 17:14](#); [Revelation 19:16](#)). - MSB

Jesus Christ also lived, died, and lives again. Consequently He is Lord of both those who have died and those who are still alive. Paul’s point was that He is the Judge, and we are not.- Constable

Romans 14:10

[Romans 14:10](#)

But why do you .. “You” is strongly emphatic, as in contrast to the Lord. (CBSC)

judge .. Believers must not assume God’s role as judge because they in turn will stand before His judgment seat. See note on [Romans 14:3](#). - FSB

judge ... contempt .. The two groups referred to in v. 3 are again contrasted. One group “*judges*,” the other group regards “with *contempt*.” Both attitudes are inappropriate for “slaves”! Their master, Jesus Christ, is the only One who has the right to “criticize” or “look down on.” For believers to act as judge (1) usurps God’s place and (2) is preliminary and incomplete. - Utley

why ... judge .. Addressed to the “weak” believer who judges the “strong” believer for ignoring standard Jewish piety ([Romans 14:3](#)); **why... contempt ..** Addressed to the “strong” believer who views this disdain and condescension the “weak” believer’s insistence on clinging to certain rules. - NIVZSB

your brother . . A fellow believer in Christ.- MSB

“These are your *brothers and sisters* in Christ! Why are you so eager to condemn them and belittle them?” - CPNIV

all .. Strongly emphatic; the critic as well as the criticized will be there—all on one level. - CBSC

the judgment seat .. Lit. *the bema*; the Greek equivalent of the Latin *tribunal*. (Same word as e.g. [Matthew 27:19](#); [Acts 18:16-17](#)). The great Session is imaged under the forms of imperial law. - CBSC

the judgment seat of Christ .. The preferred rendering is “*the judgment seat of God*” ([1 Corinthians 3:13-15](#)). Every believer will give an account of himself, and the Lord will judge the decisions he made—including those concerning issues of conscience. That verdict is the only one that matters ([1 Corinthians 4:1-5](#); [2 Corinthians 5:9-10](#)). - MSB

It is significant that in [2 Corinthians 5:10](#) (the best commentary on this passage) the undoubted

reading is, as in E. V., “*of Christ*.” - CBSC

we will all stand .. Paul reminds the Roman Christians that it is God, not other Christians, who will ultimately judge all of us (cp. [2 Corinthians 5:10](#)). - NLT5B

The strong should not *despise* the weak, and the weak should not *judge* the strong, for everyone will stand before God, who will judge all on the last day. - ESV5B

all ... before God's judgment .. Anticipation of our own judgment should cause us to think twice before judging a brother. It should remind us that we too are sinners whose only hope in that day will be God's abundant grace, gratitude for which should even now cause us to regard our fellow Christians with a gracious spirit. - CPNIV

judgment seat .. [This] is βῆμα (*bēma*), a word used for the platform upon which a judge's chair might rest, and thus for the chair or seat itself (see [Matthew 27:19](#); [John 19:13](#); [Acts 12:21](#)), and also for the tribunal before which one was judged (“the court”—see [Acts 18:12](#), [Acts 18:16-17](#); [Acts 25:6](#), [Acts 25:10](#), [Acts 25:17](#)). *Bēma* is also used in [2 Corinthians 5:10](#) for “*the judgment seat of Christ*.” This is not different from the “great white throne” of [Revelation 20:11](#) – CPNIV

Romans 14:11

Romans 14:11

it is written .. Paul quotes [Isaiah 45:23](#); [Isaiah 49:18](#) (cf. [Philippians 2:10-11](#)). (LXX)

The Hebrew there runs, “By myself have I sworn ... to me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear.” The LXX. runs, “By myself I swear, ... that to me every knee shall bow, and every tongue shall swear (by) God.” Here St Paul substitutes one frequent formula of Divine Oaths for another; and paraphrases “*shall swear to me*” by its practical equivalent, “*shall confess (my sovereignty) before me*.” (Cp. [Psalms 63:11](#); where to “*swear by God*” is to take the oath of faithful *allegiance* to Him.) - CBSC

... the introductory words (“‘*As surely as I live, says the Lord*’”) are found in a number of texts as a solemn preface to a prophetic word from God (e.g., [Isaiah 49:18](#); [Jeremiah 22:24](#); [Jeremiah 46:18](#); [Ezekiel 5:11](#); [Ezekiel 4:16](#); [Zephaniah 2:9](#)). By including them in his quotation, Paul leaves no doubt as to the identity of the “me” before whom every knee will bow, namely, the Lord (Yahweh) himself. - CPNIV

As I live .. This oath formula expresses the certainty of God's declaration. Here it begins a quotation from [Isaiah 45:23](#). - F5B

every knee shall bow .. To bow the knee before God is an act of submission.

every tongue shall confess .. to confess God with the tongue is to acknowledge that he and he alone is truly God. The word for “confess” is ἐξομολογέω (*exomologeō*), which in the middle voice means “to acknowledge, to confess, to admit.” As an act of worship it can also mean “to praise,” as in [Romans 15:9](#). - CPNIV

The emphasis again is on the universality of this homage: *every* knee will bow; *every* tongue will confess. Some will do so in terror and grudging resentment, having rebelled against God in their lifetime. Others will do so with the same sincere and willing worship they offered up to him while on the earth. Only the latter will receive the gift of eternal life. - CPNIV

Romans 14:12

Romans 14:12

cf. [Romans 2:6](#); [2 Corinthians 5:10](#)

So then .. indicates that this is the logical conclusion from the preceding affirmations.

each .. reaffirms the universality of the judgment. Paul seems to be including himself in this statement. (Lenski)

of us .. makes this prospect very personal...including the strong who are tempted to belittle the weak, and the weak who are prone to condemn the strong, will experience our own personal judgment. -CPNIVC

shall give account .. of all our deeds, including our sins ([2 Corinthians 5:10](#)). We will have to answer for how we have despised our weak brethren, or condemned fellow Christians who are stronger than we are, in matters of indifference. - CPNIVC:Romans2

account .. a word, *logos*

himself .. Emphaic. ἐαυτοῦ pronoun, reflexive, 3rd person, genitive, singular, masculine.

Each will give an account “of himself,” not of someone else. We will answer for what *we* have done, not for what others do.

The Christian is dissuaded from “judging” by the remembrance that his Judge will ask him hereafter for *his own* “peculiar book,” not for his neighbour’s. - CBSC

Romans 14:13

Romans 14:13

let us not judge .. The Pres. Act. Sub. with the negative particle implies stopping an act already in progress. (Utley). [see NLT "Let's stop condemning each other"].

This is addressed to both the strong and the weak, and basically is a transitional statement that sums up vv. 1-12.

resolve .. The verb “to judge” is used elsewhere (e.g. [Acts 20:16](#)), in the sense of “to decide, to determine.” Here, of course, it is so used with epigrammatic emphasis just after the use of it in the ordinary sense. - CBSC

but rather resolve .. The same Greek word translated “judge” ([Romans 14:3](#); [Romans 14:10](#); [Romans 14:13](#)) is here translated “**resolve**.” In vv. 3, 10, 13a the meaning is negative: to condemn. In v. 13b, the meaning is positive: to determine or make a careful decision. The point of Paul’s play on words is that instead of passing judgment on their brothers, they should use their best judgment to help fellow believers. - MSB

not to put an obstacle or a stumbling block .. The term “obstacle” referred to something in the road that causes one to stumble. The term “stumbling block” literally refers to a triggering mechanism on a baited animal trap. - Utley

place a cause for stumbling .. Describes causing someone to do something against his or her conscience or moral principles. - FSB

stumbling block .. Anything a believer does—even though Scripture may permit it—that causes another to fall into sin ([1 Corinthians 8:9](#)).- MSB

The Greek word translated “**obstacle**” (NASB) or “**stumbling block**” (NIV; *proskomma*) refers to an object on a path against which someone strikes his foot and consequently stumbles or falls (cf. [1 Corinthians 8:9](#)). The stronger brother’s liberty might retard the weaker brother’s progress as he walks the Christian path. It might set him back temporarily or even do permanent damage to his sensitive conscience.

Another Greek word translated “**stumbling block**” (NASB) or “**obstacle**” (NIV; *skandalon*) describes a snare used to catch an animal or victim as it walks by (cf. [Matthew 16:23](#); [1 Corinthians 8:13](#)). The stronger brother’s liberty might even constitute a temptation for the weaker brother to sin. It might tempt him to go beyond his stronger brother’s behavior and

cast off restraint in moral as well as amoral matters. - Constable

The "stumbling" metaphor is used throughout the NT (see [1 Corinthians 8:9](#), [1 Corinthians 8:13](#); [1 John 2:10](#); cp. [Matthew 21:42-44](#); [Luke 20:17-18](#); [Romans 9:32-33](#); [1 Peter 2:8](#)).

The point is that we must be sensitive to how our conduct is affecting others, and we must be willing to forgo perfectly legitimate behavior if it has the potential of causing someone to sin against his conscience. Verses 14 and 23 in particular show how this may happen. – CPNIVC

Romans 14:14

Romans 14:14

I know and am convinced by the Lord Jesus .. This truth was not the product of his own thinking or the teaching of others, but of divine revelation (cf. [Galatians 1:12](#)). (See note on [1 Corinthians 7:12](#).)

“I know” and **“I have been persuaded.”** The source of this conviction is **“the Lord Jesus.”** The Greek phrase (ἐν κυρίῳ Ἰησοῦ, *en kyriō Iēsou*) probably means “by the Lord Jesus,” with Paul thus referring to a special revelation given to him in his capacity as an apostle (MP, 529; MacArthur, 2:291) or perhaps to Christ’s public teaching as recorded in [Matthew 15:10-11](#), [Matthew 15:15-20](#); [Mark 7:15-23](#) (see Cranfield, 2:712–713; Hendriksen, 2:462; Moo, 852–853). - CPNIVC

by the Lord .. i.e. as one who acts under His guidance ([Galatians 1:12](#)).

nothing is unclean of itself .. In this context, Paul is referring to food, such as the meat of animals designated by the law as ritually unclean (see note on v. 1; compare [Leviticus 11](#); [Deuteronomy 14](#)). - FSB

nothing unclean of itself .. See note on [Acts 10:14-15](#); cf. [Mark 7:15](#); [1 Timothy 4:3-5](#); [Titus 1:15](#)).

that nothing is unclean in itself .. This same truth is illustrated in [Acts 10:9-16](#). Things are not evil, people are evil. Nothing in creation is evil in and of itself (cf. [Romans 14:20](#); [Mark 7:18-23](#); [1 Corinthians 10:25-26](#); [1 Timothy 4:4](#) and [Titus 1:15](#)). - Utley

to him who considers .. Paul celebrates believers’ freedom from the requirements of the law. However, he qualifies this statement by reminding the strong that some things might be considered unclean by the weak, whose faith is challenged by such freedom. - FSB

This is the principle that applies to the weak. See [1 Corinthians 8:7](#).

to him it is unclean .. The truth that no food is wrong to eat was not easy for pious Jews to accept because they had been raised to honor God by avoiding certain foods. Paul urges those who are strong in faith not to force others to violate their consciences (cp. [1 Corinthians 8:1-13](#)). NLTSB

to him it is unclean .. If a believer is convinced a certain behavior is sin—even if his assessment is wrong—he should never do it. If he does, he will violate his conscience, experience guilt (cf. [1 Corinthians 8:4-7](#); see note on [Romans 2:15](#)), and perhaps be driven back into deeper legalism instead of moving toward freedom (see note on [Romans 14:5](#)). - MSB

Here St Paul appeals to the fact that individual conscience, however misguided, must never be violated by its possessor. Mistaken conscience calls for correction by better light, but never for violation. – CBSC

Romans 14:15

Romans 14:15

But [Yet; For] .. Another reading is **For**. The documentary evidence is doubtful; and the evidence of

connexion favours **But**. If **For** is adopted, it must be explained by treating ver. 14 as a parenthesis; and thus connecting vv. 13, 15: q. d., “resolve to lay no stumblingblock for others; *for you do* lay a stumblingblock, when you neglect their scruples about food.” Reading **But**, the connexion shews it to be a word not of *contrast* but of *pursuance*: q. d., “But, granting what I have just urged, it is the opposite of Christian love to neglect your brother’s scruples.” - CBSC

grieved .. The Greek word refers to causing pain or distress. A weak believer may be hurt when he sees a brother do something he believes is sinful. But still worse, the strong believer may cause his weaker brother to violate his own conscience (cf. [1 Corinthians 8:8-13](#)). - MSB

because of your food .. *with thy meat*; Literally, and better, **on account of thy food**.—“*Meat*,” in the E. V., is never exclusively “*flesh*-meat.” The word is akin to French *met*; a thing *put* on the table. In market-language “green meat” still means vegetables; and so in some country districts “meat” alone still does. Here, of course, the word is *inclusive* of flesh. - CBSC

food .. This either relates to (1) Jewish food laws (cf. [Leviticus 11](#)); or (2) meat sacrificed to idols (cf. [1 Corinthians 8:1-10](#)). [Romans 14:20](#) expresses this truth so clearly. - Utley

walking in love .. Love will ensure that the strong Christian is sensitive and understanding of his brother’s weaknesses ([1 Corinthians 8:8-13](#); see notes on [1 Corinthians 13:1-13](#)). - MSB

In [Romans 14:13](#) Paul urges the strong Christian not to put a stumbling block in the way of the weak; here in **v. 15** he gives one *reason* for this, i.e., it is not consistent with love (*agapē*; see [Romans 12:9](#)). - CPNIVC

destroy [ruin, NLT].. This refers to complete devastation. In the NT, it is often used to indicate eternal damnation ([Matthew 10:28](#); [Luke 13:3](#); [John 3:16](#); [Romans 2:12](#)). In this context, however, it refers to a serious devastation of one’s spiritual growth (cf. [Matthew 18:3](#), [Matthew 18:6](#), [Matthew 18:14](#)). - MSB

The term “**destroy**” is the Greek word *lupeō*, which means “to cause grief, sorrow, or pain” (same in the LXX). Paul uses this word mostly in II Corinthians (cf. [2 Corinthians 2:2](#), [2 Corinthians 2:4](#), [2 Corinthians 2:5](#); [2 Corinthians 6:10](#); [2 Corinthians 7:8-9](#), [2 Corinthians 7:11](#)). Destroy is too strong a translation. - Utley

Do not destroy .. Paul warns the strong that, in some circumstances, their freedom might cause distress for the weak. Christ did not die for only those strong in their faith, but for all who call on Him as Lord (see [Romans 14:9](#) and note). - FSB

This is a PRESENT IMPERATIVE with the NEGATIVE PARTICLE which usually means stop an act already in process. - Utley

destroy [ruin, NLT] .. The word translated **ruin** (Greek *apollumi*, “destroy”) is often applied to eternal damnation (see [Romans 2:12](#); [Matthew 10:28](#); [Matthew 18:14](#); [Luke 9:24](#); [Luke 13:2-5](#); [John 3:16](#); [John 10:10](#), [John 10:28](#); [1 Corinthians 1:18-19](#); [James 4:12](#); [2 Peter 3:9](#)). By insisting on their freedom to eat whatever they want, the strong might cause sensitive Jewish Christians *for whom Christ died* to turn away from the faith. - NLT SB

your food .. There may be a subtle reproof in the word “*your*,” a suggestion of the selfishness underlying the conduct in question. -(CBSC)

for whom Christ died .. The profoundest of all motives for a *Christian’s* tenderness and care.—Here, of course, the reference is to the Lord’s death *for His Church*, ([Ephesians 5:25](#)), of which the “weak brother” is a member by faith. – CBSC

Romans 14:16
[Romans 14:16](#)

therefore .. The word sums up and applies the previous reasonings.

your good .. The rightful exercise of one's Christian liberty (cf. [1 Corinthians 10:23-32](#)). - MSB

But Paul does not refer to "the good" in either an absolute or a general sense, but rather to "the good of you," or "your good." Thus he seems to be referring to the good conduct of the strong brother, i.e., conduct which in accordance with the principle of Christian liberty ([Romans 14:14](#) a) is inherently good. -CPNIVC

what you know is good .. The freedom in Christ to eat any food or treat every day the same. - NIVZSB

spoken of as evil .. To blaspheme. When unbelievers see a strong Christian abusing his freedom in Christ and harming a weaker brother, they will conclude that Christianity is filled with unloving people, which reflects badly on God's reputation (cf. [Romans 2:24](#)). - MSB

This verse seems to change the focus from how Christians treat each other to possibly a concern for non-believers (cf. [v. 18b](#)). The VERB is from the word "blasphemy" (spoken) which is usually used of unbelievers. - Utley

"Open quarrels between the two groups would certainly result in slanderous talk on the part of outsiders" (2:463). Thus strong Christians are admonished to consider "the impact of [their] insensitive conduct upon any onlooking or visiting unbelievers" (Dunn, 2:831). – CPNIVC

Romans 14:17

Romans 14:17

the kingdom of God .. This is the only use of this phrase in Romans. This verse refers to the kingdom of God as a present reality (see [1 Corinthians 4:20](#); compare [Galatians 5:21](#); [Ephesians 5:5](#)). -FSB [[Matthew 3:21](#)]

[1 Corinthians 4:20](#), [1 Corinthians 6:9-10](#), [1 Corinthians 15:50](#); [Galatians 5:21](#); [Ephesians 5:5](#); [Colossians 4:11](#); [1 Thessalonians 2:12](#); [2 Thessalonians 1:5](#); [2 Timothy 4:18](#).

For the kingdom of God .. For an explanation of this phrase, see the note at [Matthew 3:2](#). Here it means that the uniquenesses of the kingdom of God, or of the Church of Christ on earth, do not consist in observing the distinctions between meats and drinks, it was true that by these things the Jews had been particularly characterized, but the Christian church was to be distinguished in a different manner. - BN

is not .. Does not consist in, or is not distinguished by.

eat and drink .. In observing distinctions between different kinds of food, or making such observances a matter of conscience as the Jews did.

but righteousness .. This word here means "virtue, integrity," a faithful discharge of all the duties which we owe to God or to our fellow-men. -BN

righteousness .. Holy, obedient living (cf. [Ephesians 6:14](#); [Philippians 1:11](#)) -MSB

and peace - The word in this context refers to peace or concord in opposition to "contention" among brethren.

peace .. The loving tranquility, produced by the Spirit, that should characterize believers' relationships with God and each other ([Galatians 5:22](#)). -MSB

and joy .. This refers, doubtless, to the "personal" happiness produced in the mind by the influence of the gospel; see the notes at [Romans 5:1-5](#).

in the Holy Spirit .. Produced “by” following the teaching of the Holy Spirit; [Romans 5:5](#); compare [Galatians 5:22-23](#).

In this context, however, the main point seems to be how the church appears before the world, so that it is either spoken against (v. 16) or “approved by men” (v. 18). Thus the righteousness, peace, and joy that are the true essence of the observable church are better understood in a horizontal or “social sense” (Godet, 461), i.e., as having to do with how Christians get along with each other (*SH*, 392; Murray, 2:194; MacArthur, 2:298; Moo, 857). “Righteousness” thus is the daily righteous conduct of Christians, especially in the right use of Christian liberty. “Peace” is the state of loving harmony among all the members of the church (see v. 19), of “the loving, tranquil relationship of believers” (MacArthur, 2:298). – CPNIVC

Romans 14:18

[Romans 14:18](#)

in these things .. In righteousness, peace, and joy.

serves Christ .. Or obeys Christ, who has commanded them. He receives Christ as his “master” or “teacher” and does his will in regard to them.

serveth .. The word bears a suppressed emphasis. The assertor of ceremonial *liberty* is reminded that he is the *bondman* of the Lord, precisely in virtue of his freedom from the doom of the law. -CBSC

is acceptable to God .. Whether he be converted from the Jews or the Gentiles. As a servant pleasing his Master.

and approved by men .. That is, people will “approve” of such conduct; they will esteem it to be right, and to be in accordance with the spirit of Christianity. He does not say that the wicked world will “love” such a life, but it will commend itself to them as such a life as people ought to lead. -BN

approved by men .. This refers to approving something after a careful examination, like a jeweler inspecting a stone to determine its quality and value. Christians are under the microscope of a skeptical world that is assessing how they live with and treat each other (cf. [John 13:35](#); [Philippians 2:15](#)). -MSB

approved by men .. This may be a way of asserting that the Christian’s love for others may open the door of ministry and witness to the unbelieving community (cf. [Romans 14:16](#); [2 Corinthians 8:21](#); [1 Peter 2:12](#)). How we treat one another within the community of faith is a powerful witness, either positively or negatively. – Utley

Romans 14:19

[Romans 14:19](#)

Therefore let us pursue .. The object of this verse is to persuade the church at Rome to lay aside their causes of contention, and to live in harmony.

let us pursue .. This term, *diōkō*, an OT idiom common in the Septuagint and also common in Paul’s writings, means “to follow eagerly” or “endeavor earnestly to acquire.” Paul uses this word in [Romans 9:30-31](#); [Romans 12:13](#); and here in the sense of “pursue,” but in [Romans 12:14](#) he uses it for those who persecute believers (cf. [1 Corinthians 4:12](#); even himself, [1 Corinthians 15:9](#); [2 Corinthians 4:9](#); [Galatians 1:13](#), [Galatians 1:23](#); [Philippians 3:6](#)). - Utley

Note even in English a similarity to the Greek; the near spelling and meaning of “pursue” and “persecute”.

the things which make for peace .. If men aim at the great objects proposed by the Christian religion, they will live in peace. Following one’s own passions and prejudice will make for strife and contention.

what promotes peace .. The Greek phrase used here, *ta tēs eirēnēs*, refers to actions that do not cause hostility but create harmonious relationship between believers. - FSB

things by which one may edify another .. Things that will encourage and counsel others in ways that will benefit them in their Christian life.

edify .. Cp. [Romans 15:2](#).—The metaphor here has its usual (but not invariable) reference to the state and growth not of the individual but of the *community*. -CBSC

may edify .. The word “edify” means properly to “build,” as a house; then to “rebuild” or “reconstruct;” then to adorn or ornament; then to do any thing that will confer favor or advantage, or which will further an object. Applied to the church, it means to do anything by teaching, counsel, advice, etc. which will tend to promote its great object; to aid Christians, to enable them to surmount difficulties, to remove their ignorance, etc.; [Acts 9:31](#); [1 Corinthians 8:1](#); [1 Corinthians 14:4](#). -BN

In these expressions the idea of a “building” is retained, reared on a firm, tried cornerstone, the Lord Jesus Christ; [Ephesians 2:20](#); [Isaiah 28:16](#). Compare [Romans 9:33](#). Christians are thus regarded, according to Paul’s noble idea [Ephesians 2:20-22](#), as one great temple erected for the glory of God, having no separate interest, but as united for one object, and therefore bound to do all that is possible, that each other may be suited to their appropriate place, and perform their appropriate function in perfecting and adorning this temple of God. -BN

Romans 14:20

[Romans 14:20](#)

Do not destroy .. [Literally, **loosen, dissolve, pull down.**] The word here is what properly is applied to pulling down an edifice; and the apostle continues the figure which he used in the previous verse. Do not pull down or destroy the “temple” which God is rearing. - BN

the work of God .. The work of God is what God does, and here especially refers to his work in rearing “his church.” [His building, [Matthew 16:18](#).]

The “Christian” is regarded specially as the work of God, as God renews his heart and makes him what he is. Hence, he is called God’s “building” [1 Corinthians 3:9](#), and his “workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works” [Ephesians 2:10](#), - BN

for the sake of food .. By your obstinate, pertinacious attachment to your own opinions about the distinctions of meat and drinks. -BN

All things are clean .. In this context, “all things” refers to food (compare [Romans 14:14](#) and note). - FSB

All things are indeed pure .. Compare [Romans 14:14](#). This is a concession to those whom he was exhorting to peace. All things under the Christian dispensation are lawful to be eaten. The distinctions of the Levitical law are not binding on Christians. -BN

but it is evil .. Though pure in itself, yet it may become an occasion of sin, if another is grieved by it. It is evil to the man who pursues a course that will give offence to a brother; that will pain him, or tend to drive him off from the church, or lead him any way into sin.

for the man .. The man who eats that which offends his brother.

with offense .. So as to offend a brother, such as he esteems to be sin, and by which he will be grieved.

Romans 14:21

[Romans 14:21](#)

It is good .. The word is in antithesis to the “*it is evil*” just before. -CBSC

It is good neither to eat meat nor drink wine .. It is right; or it is better.

to eat meat .. Such food as the "Jewish" convert regarded as unclean; [Romans 14:2](#).

nor drink wine .. Such as some "meats" were offered to idols, wine was also used in libations in pagan worship and perhaps some new converts were scrupulous about its use from this cause.

or drink wine .. Jews sometimes abstained from wine to avoid the appearance of ritual contamination, since wine was used in pagan religious celebrations (see [Daniel 1:3-16](#)). - NLTsb

Their table wine was the diluted juice of the grape. Today the word is used to refer to alcoholic and intoxicating drink almost exclusively.

Barnes says Nazarites were not allowed to drink wine [Numbers 6:3](#), and the Rechabites Jeremiah 35 drank no wine, and it is possible that some of the early converts regarded it as unlawful for Christians to drink it.

This is the only basis in the Bible for the theological concept of "total abstinence" from certain foods or drinks. Strong Christians must limit themselves in love for their Christian brothers/sisters and sincere searchers (lost people). Much of this self-limiting is cultural, regional and/or denominational. - Utley

"... modern Christians who ... abstain from all alcoholic beverages do so not because they fear ritual contamination. Some abstain because they are leery of a product that has had such a sad history of 'enslaving' those who partake (see the principle of [1 Corinthians 6:12](#) b). Many others do not drink because they do not want to set a bad example for others who might not be able to handle alcohol. Abstinence on these grounds may be a laudable course of action; but it has little basis in Paul's argument in these chapters." - Moo, p. 881 (via Constable)

[See notes on [1 Peter 4:3-4](#).]

This verse also uses drinking wine as an example of Christian liberty. The reference to "drinking" in v. 17 alludes to this, but it is not mentioned anywhere else in Paul's discussions of the subject of liberty. In biblical times wine was commonly drunk with meals, though it was usually diluted considerably with water. The fact that Paul uses this practice as an example of Christian freedom shows that we cannot say that drinking wine in and of itself is wrong.

We are not sure what circumstances would have required the strong brother in *NT* times to abstain from drinking wine. Idol worship sometimes involved the pouring out of wine as a sacrifice to the gods; some converted pagans may have thus associated wine with idol worship as they did meat. Thus their overly -sensitive consciences may have prevented them from drinking wine altogether. *MP*, 531; Dunn, 2:827; Moo, 861. (Via CPNIVC:Romans2).

or do anything .. Any article of food or drink, or any course of conduct.

So valuable is peace, and so desirable is it not to offend a brother, that we should rather deny ourselves to any extent, than to be the occasion of offenses and scandals in the church.

stumbles .. For the difference between this word and the word "offended," see the note at [Romans 14:13](#).

offended ..

or is made weak .. That is, shaken, or rendered "less stable" in his faith and conviction. By being led to imitate the others he would become less firm and established and would violate his own conscience.

Romans 14:22

[Romans 14:22](#)

Do you .. "*You*", σὺ, here is emphatic, and marks the contrast of the "strong" with the "weak".

Do you have faith? .. The word “faith” here refers only to the subject under discussion - to one's personal convictions about meats, drinks, etc.

Do you believe that it is right to eat all kinds of food, etc. The apostle had admitted that this was the true doctrine; but he maintains that it should be so held as not to give offence.

have it to yourself .. i.e. keep it to yourself. The Greek verb in this phrase can be rendered either “*have*” or “*keep*”; and thus affords a slight “play” on the same word (“*Have* you faith?”) just before. - CBSC

Have it to yourself before God .. Do not your faith or opinion on other Christians.

Act on your belief in private without producing disturbance in the church.

before God .. Where God only is the witness. God sees your sincerity, and will approve your action or conduct.

Have it to yourself before God .. This is better translated, “*have as your own conviction before God.*” Paul urges the strong believer to understand his liberty, enjoy it, and keep it between God and himself. - MSB

Happy is he .. Peace, contented and blessed is the man at one with his conscience, and who so understand his liberty as never to misapply it.

who does not condemn himself .. Whose conscience does not reprove him.

The strongest Christian can bring harm to himself in the area of Christian liberty by denouncing or belittling the freedom God has given him ([Galatians 5:1](#)), or by carelessly flaunting his liberty without regard for how that might affect others (cf. [1 Corinthians 10:23-32](#)). - MSB

in what he approves .. In what one does. Many people indulge in practices which their consciences condemn, many in practices of which they are in doubt. But the way to be happy is to have a “clear conscience” in what we do.

what he approves .. The strong believer maintains a healthy conscience because he does not give a weak believer a cause to stumble. -MSB

Romans 14:23

[Romans 14:23](#)

But he who doubts .. He that is not fully satisfied in his mind; who does not do it with a clear conscience.

doubts .. This refers to the weak Christian who does not understand the true implications of Christian belief in this area of opinions. It is not a sin to have this inadequate understanding or to have doubts about such things as eating meat offered to idols, though it would certainly be better to come to a right understanding of such things. But it *is* wrong, in the presence of these doubts, to go ahead and eat the meat anyway. - CP

is condemned .. This is a PERFECT PASSIVE INDICATIVE from *kata + krinō*, meaning (1) “placed in a guilty light by contrast” (cf. Harold K. Moulton, *The analytical Greek Lexicon Revised*, p. 216) -Utle

The one who says eating the meat is wrong, but does so anyway, places himself in a guilty light; condemning himself by what he himself has said.

The “condemnation” is not from God, but himself.

condemned .. This word is *κατακρίνω* (*katakrinō*), an intensified form of *krinō*; it leaves no doubt that eating or doing anything else contrary to one's conscience is condemned by God as a sin. - CPNIVC

is condemn .. We apply this word almost exclusively to the future punishment of the wicked in hell. But it is of importance to remember, in reading the Bible, that this is not of necessity its meaning. It means properly

to “condemn;” and here it means only that the person who should thus violate the dictates of his conscience would incur guilt, and would be blameworthy in doing it. But it does not affirm that he would inevitably sink to hell. - BN

for whatever is not from faith is sin .. “Whatever is not done with a full conviction that it is right, is sinful; whatever is done when a man doubts whether it is right, is sin.” This is evidently the fair interpretation of this place.

whatever [NIV everything] .. The context limits the “*everything*” to the debate about matters of opinion. (See Lard, 428–429; *SH*, 393–394; Murray, 2:196; Cranfield, 2:728; Fitzmyer, 699–700. Taking the former view are Lenski, 853–854; Hendriksen, 2:468; and Dunn, 2:828–829, 835.)

faith .. 1) the weak's brother's personal conviction; or, 2) the "faith" i.e, the gospel, the teaching of Christ.

His action therefore is not consistent with Christian faith as he understands it; thus he is violating his own conscience, to his own condemnation. Even though the action is not wrong in itself, he *thinks* it is wrong; therefore if he does it anyway, for him it is a sin. - CPNIVC

To the "weak" brother's conscience it is "sinful" to eat such meat which is contaminated with idolatry. (I'm not sure it is saying that such is "sinful" in God's sight, for there are no idol gods!) The brother has violated his own personal conviction with "sin".

Can this last statement of v. 23 be extended to cover more than "eating meat"?

1) In context the "whatever" or "everything" is the matter of eating meat which has been offered to idols.

2) The point can be extended.

Thus the point is to extend the statement in v. 23a about *eating* contrary to one's conscience, to cover *all* acts that violate one's convictions about what Christian faith requires. This again is the meaning of “*does not come from faith*,” as in v. 23a. Thus we may paraphrase Paul thus: “Every act that is in fact a matter of opinion but is nevertheless inconsistent with one's (even faulty) understanding of Christian faith is a sin.” CPNIVC

Romans 15:1

Romans 15:1

Ch. 15:1-13 still following the theme of ch. 14 -

Reconciliation of Jewish Christians and Gentile Christians

We who are strong .. Paul aligns himself with those he identifies as strong in faith, and he reveals that the division in the Roman church was not simply between Jews and Gentiles. - NLTSB

strong...weak .. For modern English readers, to label the two perspectives “strong” and “weak” is to prejudice the groups. This was not Paul's intent. The strong group referred to those who had been freed from a rule or ritual-oriented religious life. - Utley

to bear .. The word means “to pick up and carry a weight.” It is used of carrying a pitcher of water ([Mark 14:13](#)), of carrying a man ([Acts 21:35](#)), and figuratively of bearing an obligation ([Acts 15:10](#)). The strong are not to simply tolerate the weaknesses of their weaker brothers; they are to help the weak shoulder their burdens by showing loving and practical consideration for them ([Galatians 6:2](#); cf. [1 Corinthians 9:19-22](#); [Philippians 2:2-4](#)). - MSB

the able .. The word rendered “able” is the same word as that rendered “mighty” in E. V. of e.g. [Luke 24:19](#); [Acts 18:24](#); [1 Corinthians 1:26](#); and “strong” in E. V. of [2 Corinthians 12:10](#). It seems to convey the thought of *strength and something more*; the resources and opportunities of strength. **Able** thus best represents it. Bp Lightfoot (on [Philippians 2:15](#)) suggests that it may have been a favourite title for themselves amongst the

persons here contemplated; and so that there is irony in its use here. - CBSC

infirmities [scruples].. weaknesses.

the weak .. Lit. **the unable**; in contrast to “the able” just above. Same word as [Acts 14:8](#), (E. V. “impotent.”)

The term “the weak” (*adunates*, without strength, cf. [Romans 8:3](#)) is different from the term *astheneō* in Romans 14:1-2, Romans 14:21 (cf. [1 Corinthians 8:7](#), 3x in [1 Corinthians 8:10-12](#); [1 Corinthians 9:22](#)), which also means without strength. - Utley

The contrasting terms are δυνατός (*dynatos*, “able, empowered, possible, strong”) and ἀδύνατος (*adynatos*, “without power, unable, impossible, weak”). - CPNVC

and not just please ourselves .. This is a PRESENT ACTIVE IMPERATIVE with the NEGATIVE PARTICLE, which usually means stop an act in process. Self-centeredness is a sure sign of immaturity; following Christ’s example (cf. v. 3; [Philippians 2:1-11](#)) is the sign of maturity. Again, it is the strong who were being addressed (cf. [Romans 14:1](#), [Romans 14:14](#), [Romans 14:16](#), [Romans 14:21-22](#)). This is not to imply they had all the responsibility in maintaining the fellowship. The weak are addressed in [Romans 14:3](#), [Romans 14:20](#), [Romans 14:23](#); [Romans 15:5-6-7](#). - Utley

” This is a specific instance of the general principle in Galatians 6:2, “Carry each other’s burdens.”

Romans 15:2

Romans 15:2

each of us .. could refer to all Christians (Morris, 497–498), but most likely it refers still to strong Christians, the “we” in Romans 15.1 - CPNIVC

neighbor .. An allusion to [Leviticus 19:18](#), the second greatest commandment (compare [Romans 13:8-9](#)). In this context, “*neighbor*” refers to Christians, especially those who are “weak in faith”. - FSB

edification .. Refers to growth in faith and maturity in Christ. To build up and strengthen. This is essentially the same appeal Paul made earlier ([Romans 14:19](#)), only with the additional qualification of self-sacrifice ([1 Corinthians 10:23-24](#); cf. [Philippians 2:2-5](#)).

Romans 15:3

Romans 15:3

For even Christ .. Christ is our pattern and example. This truth is also stressed in [Romans 15:5](#); [Philippians 2:1-11](#); [1 Peter 2:21](#); [1 John 3:16](#).

pleased not himself .. “Not My will, but Thine be done.”

Christ did not please Himself .. His ultimate purpose was to please God and accomplish His will ([John 4:34](#); [John 5:30](#); [John 6:38](#); [John 8:25](#), [John 8:27-29](#); [Philippians 2:6-8](#)).

as it is written .. [Psalms 69:9](#) (LXX. Psalms 68.9). The quotation is verbatim with LXX.—

It has been doubted whether we are meant in this passage to view the Saviour as preferring the *Father’s* pleasure, or *Man’s* salvation, to His “own will.” The context (vv. 1, 2) favours the latter; the words of the quotation favour the former. But as the two objects were inseparable in our Lord’s work, *both* may well be in view here. His “bearing reproach” was the necessary path, alike to “finishing His Father’s work,” and to saving the lost. - CBSC

written .. Paul has already quoted [Psalms 69:22-23](#) in [Romans 11:9-10](#), confirming its Davidic authorship.

The reproaches ... fell on Me .. “Reproaches” refers to slander, false accusations, and insults. Men hate God, and they manifested that same hate toward the One He sent to reveal Himself (cf. [John 1:10-11](#), [John 1:18](#)). - MSB

A number of passages in the NT use **Psalms 69** to describe Jesus’ suffering ([Matthew 27:34](#); [Mark 15:35-36](#); [Luke 23:36](#); [John 15:25](#); [John 19:28-29](#)). Paul’s quotation of just a small portion of that psalm evokes the whole experience of Jesus’ suffering. - NLTBSB

The insults of those who insult you .. Paul quotes [Psalms 69:9](#) as an example of the attitude that Roman believers should imitate. Christ was willing to endure shame for the benefit of His Father and consequently for those who would put their trust in Him. Christ didn’t misuse His freedom to take advantage of people; rather, He used it to serve others.

reproached thee .. God was “reproached” in effect, by those who, while claiming to act in His Name, were teaching and practicing all that was alien to His love and holiness. - CBSC

Does not St Paul here allude specially to the conflict of Gethsemane, and to the outrages which our Lord patiently bore just afterwards? He had scarcely said “Thy will be done,” when the awful “reproaches” of His night of shame and insult began. - CBSC

The point is that Jesus willingly and unselfishly chose to walk this path of humiliation and suffering for the sake of helpless and ungodly sinners. And if Jesus himself made such a selfless choice, we should all the more be willing to do so for the sake of our weak brothers. – CPNIVC

Romans 15:4

Romans 15:4

v.14 The value of studying the Old Testament

[Verse 14] is a parenthesis in which Paul reminds us of the validity of citing OT texts as a basis for ethical exhortation to Christians: - CPNIVC

aforetime [before] .. Before our time, CBSC

whatever was written .. Refers to all of the OT Scriptures. Here Paul reminds the Roman believers that OT is a source of encouragement and instruction for Christians (compare [1 Corinthians 10:11](#)). - FSB

things ... written before .. The divinely revealed OT, written for our learning. Although Christians live under the New Covenant and are not under the authority of the Old Covenant, God’s moral law has not changed and all Scripture is of spiritual benefit ([1 Corinthians 10:6](#), [1 Corinthians 10:10-11](#); [2 Peter 1:20-21](#)). Paul’s description of the benefits of Scripture certainly includes the NT, but speaks primarily about “the sacred writings”—or the OT ([2 Timothy 3:15-17](#)). - MSB

learning .. i.e. teaching - CBSC

perseverance .. Sometimes translated “*patience*,” this word refers to endurance, the ability to remain under tremendous weight and pressure without succumbing ([Romans 15:5](#); [Colossians 1:22-23](#); [2 Thessalonians 1:4](#); [Revelation 14:12](#)). - MSB

“**Endurance**” (ὕπομονή, *hypomone*) is the same as “perseverance” in [Romans 5:3](#); it indicates patient endurance, steadfastness, the ability to bear and to bear up under whatever comes along.

perseverance and the encouragement .. Notice how the truth of God’s Word and believers’ lifestyle response to it are combined. Faith and practice are bound together (cf. [Romans 15:5](#)). They result in confidence in life, in death, and at the promised hope of Christ’s return. - Utley

“**Encouragement**” (παράκλησις, *paraklēsis*) has the connotation of “*exhortation*” in [Romans 12:8](#), but here it means “comfort, consolation, encouragement.” - CP

Paul expresses confidence that all of the OT was written down for the **instruction** and **encouragement** of God's people, thus indirectly implying that all the words of the OT are words of God, words that he wisely directed to be written not only for his purposes at the time they were written but also for later centuries. - ESVSB

may have hope .. "The hope" is not hope in general, but the special hope of glory through Christ. ([Romans 5:2](#)) — "*The patience, &c. of the Scriptures*" is the patience and comfort taught by the Scriptures, whether in precept or example. - CBSC

"Hope" (ἐλπίς, *elpis*) for Christians is the confident and joyful expectation of the future possession of full salvation, as explained under [Romans 4:18](#) and [Romans 5:2](#). -CPNIVC

It [the OT] provides motivation for enduring and gives encouragement as we seek to remain faithful in our commitment to do God's will. These Scriptures give us hope because in them we see God's approval of those who persevered faithfully in spite of opposition and frustration. - Constable

----- OLD TESTAMENT (LAW)

For our learning- [Romans 15:4](#)

Changed- [Hebrews 7:12](#) & [Hebrews 8:7-8](#) & [Hebrews 8:13](#) & [Hebrews 10:9](#), [Ephesians 2:13-15](#), [Colossians 2:14](#),

Ended at the death of Christ-

[Hebrews 9:15-17](#), [Galatians 3:19](#) & [Galatians 3:16](#) & [Galatians 3:24-25](#), [Galatians 5:4](#) & [Galatians 5:18](#).
Sabbath for Jews - [Deuteronomy 5:2-3](#) & [Deuteronomy 5:15](#).

Made known at Sinai- [Nehemiah 9:13-14](#).

Romans 15:5

[Romans 15:5](#)

Verse 5 and 6 is an amplification of verse 4, and is a prayer for God to bless the church with the spirit of unity. The God who gives, that we may glorify Him.

The God of [who gives] .. The God who gives (who is the source of) perseverance and encouragement, [Romans 15:4](#). Almost a descriptive title of God. (cf. [Romans 15:13](#); [1 Corinthians 1:3](#)). These characteristics of God come to believers through the Scriptures (cf. v. 4).

patience [perseverance, endurance, steadfastness] .. Same as in the previous verse, [Romans 15:4](#), see notes there.

comfort [encouragement, consolation, exhortation] .. Same as in the previous verse, [Romans 15:4](#), see notes there.

grant .. Aorist, Active, Optative, which expresses a wish or prayer.

Paul's prayer, vv. 5–6, had two petitions (1) to be in one mind (cf. [Romans 12:16](#); [2 Corinthians 13:11](#); [Philippians 2:2](#)) and (2) to be in one voice of praise (cf. vv. 6, 7, 9).

to be like-minded toward one another .. Paul urges the strong and the weak (*see notes on [Romans 14:1-12](#)*), despite their differing views on these non-essential issues, to pursue loving, spiritual harmony in regard to matters on which the Bible is silent. - MSB

The heart of Paul's prayer is that God "will give you a spirit of unity among yourselves." CPNIVC

From patience and comfort, and the hope of glory, St Paul passes at once to the duty of affectionate unanimity. The stronger was the sense of peace and hope in each individual believer, the more would the believing community be lifted above the bitterness and littleness of secondary controversies. Cp. perhaps [Colossians 1:4-5](#); "*the love which ye have to all the saints, by reason of the hope laid up for you in heaven.*" – CBSC

according to Christ .. Paul prays that the church will have such unity “as you follow Christ Jesus,” or better, “according to Christ Jesus” (NASB). Some take this to mean “according to Jesus’ example” others “according to Jesus’ will”

Paul may have both of these in mind , but the main point is that Christ Jesus must always be the touchstone of the church’s unity.

the same attitude of mind toward each other that Christ Jesus had .. A mindset that puts the interests of others ahead of our own ([Philippians 2:4-7](#)). – NIVZSB

Romans 15:6

Romans 15:6

with one mind and one mouth .. Our unity should be both real (one mind) and apparent (one mouth). But the consummate purpose of unity is not to please other believers but to glorify God. -MSB

with one mind .. A harmonious spirit involves a unity of faith. Not a harmony on all opinions, but on the basic truth that we worship **the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ**.

with ... one mouth glorify .. “With one mouth” shows that the church’s unity must be on a verbal level, which certainly involves a unity in worship (SH, 396; Dunn, 2:841); but this presupposes a unity *of what we believe* about the one whom we worship. Lenski says it involves outward agreement wherein all confess “the one same gospel truth” (863). - CPNIVC

God, even the Father .. Far better, **the God and Father**. Same words as [2 Corinthians 1:3](#); [Ephesians 1:3](#); [1 Peter 1:3](#). See [John 20:17](#); [Hebrews 1:8-9](#). - CBSC

This is not the God of philosophical necessity, but of revelation. Notice the two titles of God in Paul’s prayer of vv. 5–6 (1) the God of perseverance and encouragement; and (2) the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. - Utley

“This suggests to us that the local church must major in the Word of God and prayer. The first real danger to the unity of the church came because the Apostles were too busy to minister God’s Word and pray ([Acts 6:1-7](#)).” - Wiersbe, 1:562.

Romans 15:7

Romans 15:7

Therefore .. In conclusion. It seems clear that this paragraph is meant to be the conclusion to the section on Christian liberty (Moo, 874). [**Romans 14.1 - 15.6**]

receive [accept, welcome] .. See note on [Romans 14:1](#). cf. [Colossians 3:13](#).

one another .. Encompasses both groups, the strong and the weak. It is inconsistent for a Christian to reject someone whom God has accepted.

as Christ ... received us .. If the perfect, sinless Son of God was willing to bring sinners into God’s family, how much more should forgiven believers be willing to warmly embrace and accept each other in spite of their disagreements over issues of conscience ([Matthew 10:24](#); [Matthew 11:29](#); [Ephesians 4:32](#) – [Ephesians 5:1-2](#)). - MSB

Christianity is characterized by a self-giving of believers to one another (cf. [Romans 1:12](#); [Romans 12:5](#), [Romans 12:10](#), [Romans 12:16](#); [Romans 13:8](#); [Romans 14:13](#), [Romans 14:19](#); [Romans 15:5](#), [Romans 15:7](#), [Romans 15:14](#); [Romans 16:16](#)). - Utley

to the glory of God .. Christ received us “to the praise of the glory of His Father’s grace;” [Ephesians 1:6](#). But possibly a comma should stand after “**received us:**” q. d., “receive one another, (as Christ received us); for this will, by its holy effects, bring praise to God.” This certainly fits the context somewhat more closely;

see verse. 6. - CBSC

to the glory [praise] of God .. One question is whether this phrase modifies “*accept one another*,” thus in effect giving us a motive for obeying this command (Godet, 470; Cranfield, 2:739–740; Moo, 875), or whether it modifies “*as Christ accepted you*,” indicating the glorious result of his accepting us (SH, 397; Lenski, 867; Murray, 2:204).

The word order favors the latter view; but this in effect makes the former true also, since our acceptance of one another is patterned after (“just as”) Christ’s acceptance of us. - CPNIVC

Romans 15:8

Romans 15:8

Now I say .. Better, on documentary evidence, **For I say**. St Paul here expounds the words “*Christ received you*,” by shewing the bearing of the Lord’s Work on the salvation alike of Jewish and Gentile believers. And in so doing he reminds the two Sections of the holy Bond in which they stood united. - CBSC

Christ has become a servant to the circumcision .. Jesus is God’s fulfillment of OT prophecy (cf. [Matthew 15:24](#)). This may be directed to the tension in the Roman church between believing Jews and believing Gentiles. - Utley

the circumcision .. The Greek text here references circumcision; this is a way of referring to Jews. See note on [Romans 2:25](#). - FSB

The **circumcised** refers to the Jews here. In fulfilling God’s saving promises to the Jews, the Lord’s **truthfulness** and faithfulness to his word are demonstrated. - ESVSB

a servant [minister] .. “Servant” is διάκονος (*diakonos*), which can mean “deacon” or “minister.”

That the Logos entered the world in the role of a servant is clear; see v. 3 above, and see [Philippians 2:7-8](#), where he is called a “slave” (δουλος, *doulos*). Jesus says that he “did not come to be served, but to serve” ([Matthew 20:28](#); [Mark 10:45](#); see [Luke 22:27](#)). He was primarily a servant of the Father himself ([Isaiah 52:13](#)), but in that role he served the lost world by giving “his life as a ransom for many” ([Matthew 20:28](#)). - CPNIVC

a servant [minister] .. One who came to *serve the circumcision*; to labour for Israel. See His own words, [Matthew 15:24](#).

St Paul mentions first the Lord’s work for Israel, then His work for the Gentiles. Cp. [Romans 1:16](#). - SBSC

became .. “*Has become*” is in the perfect tense, indicating past action (perhaps the incarnation but certainly the atonement and resurrection) with a lasting result; Christ is still “a servant of the Jews” (Morris, 503). - CPNIVC

a servant to the circumcision . . Jesus was born a Jew (see note on [Matthew 1:1](#)), and as a child, He was circumcised and identified physically with the sign of the covenant (see [Romans 4:11](#); [Genesis 17:10-14](#)).

promises made to the fathers .. The covenant with Abraham that God reiterated to both Isaac and Jacob (see [Romans 4:13](#)).

This probably relates to God’s OT covenant promises to Israel (cf. [Romans 4:16](#)). However, it could refer to God’s promises to redeem all mankind (cf. [Genesis 3:15](#), [Genesis 12:3](#), [Exodus 19:5-6](#); [Isaiah 2:2-4](#); [Isaiah 56:7](#); [Isaiah 66:18-24](#)). The mystery of the gospel is that God’s plan has always been the unifying of Jew and Gentile through Christ (cf. [Ephesians 2:11 – Ephesians 3:13](#)). - Utley

for [on behalf] of the truth .. “*for the sake of it*”; to secure its vindication. “The Truth” had foretold that the Redeemer should be of the seed of Abraham, Judah, David. - CBSC

to confirm .. By being their Fulfillment. - CBSC

Verses 8–10 expand the idea of Jesus Christ accepting us. **Verse 8** deals with His acceptance of Jews. He not only accepted Jewish believers but came to serve the Jewish people, as the Old Testament predicted, fulfilling God's promise to the patriarchs ([Mark 10:45](#); [Matthew 15:24](#); cf. [Galatians 3:16](#)). Consequently the typically stronger Gentile believers should not despise their sometimes weaker Jewish brethren. - Constable

Romans 15:9

Romans 15:9

praise you among the Gentiles ..A quotation from [Psalms 18:49](#). [[2 Samuel 22:50](#)] David speaks this psalm as one who represents Christ.

[Psalms 18:49](#) pictures David rejoicing in God for his victories among the nations that had become subject to him. In [Deuteronomy 32:43](#) Moses saw the Gentiles praising God with the Israelites. These passages would have encouraged Paul's Jewish readers to accept their Gentile brethren. - Constable

The whole of Romans emphasizes the inclusion of the **Gentiles** as well in God's saving plan. They will also **praise** God for his mercy to them. - ESVSB

Gentiles .. Non-Jewish people. See note on [Romans 1:5](#).

To show that God's plan has always been to bring Jew and Gentile alike into His kingdom and to soften the prejudice of Christian Jews against their Gentile brothers, Paul quotes from the Law, the Prophets, and twice from the Psalms—all the recognized divisions of the OT—proving God's plan from their own Scriptures. - MSB

for his mercy .. Lit. **for mercy**. The word “mercy” is here used, perhaps, with reference to the previous position of the *Gentiles* as “strangers from” an explicit “covenant of promise.” ([Ephesians 2:12](#))— Cp. however [Romans 11:32](#) for the real equality of mercy in *all* cases of salvation. - CBSC

For this reason .. *For this cause, &c.*] [Psalms 18:49](#) (LXX. Ps 17.50). Verbatim with LXX., only omitting the word “*Lord*.”

St Paul interprets the verse. as ultimately fulfilled in Messiah, and as foretelling that He, as Saviour, shall rejoice among the Gentiles as the saved. - CBSC

to glorify God for His mercy .. God's mercy is the theological key to Roman's predestination (cf. [Romans 9:15-16](#), [Romans 9:18](#), [Romans 9:23](#)) and Gentile inclusion (cf. [Romans 1:1-32](#); [Romans 15:9](#)). It is God's mercy that saved Israel. It is God's mercy that saves believing Gentiles. The mechanism is not human performance (cf. [Romans 9](#)), but the gracious, unchanging character of God (cf. [Exodus 34:6](#); [Nehemiah 9:17](#); [Psalms 103:8](#), [Psalms 103:4](#); [Joel 2:13](#)) and the promise of Messiah (cf. [Isaiah 11:1](#), [Isaiah 11:10](#)). - Utley

God faithfully fulfills his promises to his people Israel while at the same time accomplishing his purpose to integrate Gentiles fully into the people of God (see especially [Romans 11:11-32](#)). - NIVZSB

sing to your name .. ["sing hymns" NIV] The word for “sing hymns” is simply ψάλλω (*psallō*) ... There is nothing in the Greek to correspond to *NIV's* *hymns*; the translators have assumed (not unreasonably) that it is hymns that would be sung to God” - CONIVC.

Romans 15:10

Romans 15:10

he says .. Or, better. **it says**; i.e. the Scripture.

Rejoice, &c. .. [Deuteronomy 32:43](#). Verbatim with LXX. The word “*with*” is not in the Hebrew Received Text; which may be rendered either “Praise His people, ye nations,” (i.e. congratulate them on His saving goodness;) or “Rejoice, ye nations”, who are His people.” In either case the prophecy indicates, (what is the Apostle’s meaning here,) that the “nations” shall have cause for sacred gladness in connexion with the Covenant of Israel. - CBSC

Again, it says, “Rejoice, O Gentiles, with his people.” .. This next quotation is the first line of [Deuteronomy 32:43](#) (LXX). Deuteronomy 32 is a song of Moses celebrating the righteousness of God that takes vengeance on his enemies and saves his people. In this line Moses invites the nations (Gentiles) to join with God’s people (the Jews) in rejoicing over this. The key phrase is “with his people,” which contemplates Jews and Gentiles praising God with a single voice. Paul sees this as an expression of God’s plan to unite the two groups. - CPNIVC

his people .. Refers to Jews.

Romans 15:11

[Romans 15:11](#)

again .. Quoted from [Psalms 117:1](#).

Praise the Lord, &c. .. [Psalms 117:1](#) (LXX. 116): Nearly verbatim with LXX. See verse. 2 of the Psalm, where the steadfastness of the “*mercy*” and the “*truth*” of God is given as the cause of the praise. - CBSC

laud him, &c. .. Perhaps better, (with another reading,) **let all the peoples laud Him.** - CBSC

And again, “Praise the Lord, all you Gentiles, and sing praises to him, all you peoples.” .. This is a close paraphrase of [Psalms 117:1](#) (LXX, 116:1). The main point again is the reference to the Gentiles, and the fact that they are invited to sing praises to the Lord, the God of Israel.

This is another indication that the work of the Messiah was intended to bring Jews and Gentiles together into one body, so that “his people” ([Romans 15:10](#)) along with “all you peoples” ([Romans 15:11](#)) may glorify God together for his mercy. – CPNIVC

Romans 15:12

[Romans 15:12](#)

15:11–12 Two more quotations picture the Gentiles praising God alone apart from participation in Israel ([Psalms 117:1](#); [Isaiah 11:10](#)). Perhaps Paul cited them to help his Jewish readers remember that their Gentile brethren did not need to come to God through the Jews or Judaism. - Constable

And again .. Quoted from [Isaiah 11:10](#). [verbatim with LXX] **root of Jesse.** A way of referring to Jesus as the descendant of David, and thus of David’s father Jesse (see note on [Revelation 5:5](#)). - MSB

The root of Jesse .. In the original context of this quotation from [Isaiah 11:10](#), the root of Jesse refers to an individual ruler from the Davidic line. Paul’s quotation comes from the Septuagint (the ancient Greek translation of the OT), which emphasizes that the root of Jesse will rule the nations and provide them with hope.

For Paul, Jesus is the root of Jesse—the Messiah from David’s line—who rules over both Jewish and non-Jewish people (Jews and Gentiles). - FSB

a root .. Literally “**the root.**” David was the son of Jesse. (“*The heir to David’s throne*” NLT).

And again, Isaiah says, .. This is taken from [Isaiah 11:10](#), ... It is a specific messianic prophecy, “the Root of Jesse” being a title for Jesus. Jesse was David’s father; thus this title is equivalent to “the Root of David” in [Revelation 5:5](#); [Revelation 22:16](#), which refers to Christ. The word translated “root” is *ρίζα* (*rhiza*), which can mean either the root itself or a shoot or sprout that comes forth from the root. In this case “Jesse,” standing for the family and dynasty of David (see [Luke 2:4](#)), is the root itself; Jesus is the shoot or sprout that

springs up from that root ([Isaiah 11:1](#); [Isaiah 53:2](#)).

The main point is that when “the Root of Jesse” rises up, the Gentiles will rally around him and submit to him and find their salvation in him. The Hebrew text of [Isaiah 11:10](#) says that “the Root of Jesse will stand as a banner for the peoples.” The LXX interprets the banner or ensign as a symbol of command and authority; thus when the Gentiles rally around this banner (which is Jesus himself), they are submitting to him and he is ruling over them. - CPNIVC

in him the Gentiles will hope .. [Isaiah 11:10](#) (which Paul is quoting) reads “the nations will rally to him.” The difference is a matter of wording only; Paul, as usual, is using the Septuagint (the pre-Christian Greek translation of the OT). – NIVZSB

Romans 15:13

Romans 15:13

may the God of hope .. This was a closing doxology to the literary unit begun in [Romans 14:1](#). This was another wonderful title for Deity—the God of hope. - Utley

This verse concludes the section dealing with the practice of God’s righteousness ([12:1–15:13](#)). - Constable

God of hope .. God is the source of eternal hope, life, and salvation, and He is the object of hope for every believer (*see note on* [Romans 5:2](#)). -MSB

The God of hope is the God who inspires hope in and provides hope for His redeemed ones. - Constable

the God of hope .. Literally **of the hope**; i.e. of *our* hope, the special hope in question; the Christian’s hope of glory. So just below, **that ye may abound in the hope**.

St Paul takes up the last word of the last quotation, and applies it in this expression of holy and loving desire. He ceases now to speak of controversy, and looks joyfully heavenward. On the whole verse., cp. [Romans 5:1-5](#). - CBSC

Hope is the link word from [Romans 15:12](#) (see also [Romans 15:4](#)).

[This verse] draws together many of the main threads that the Apostle has woven into the carefully designed pattern of his doctrinal essay about this gospel. Specifically mentioned are **faith, joy, peace, hope, and power**. - CPNIVC

joy and peace .. Paul prays that we as believers may be filled with **joy, peace, and hope**, all of which come from knowing that we are justified by faith in the blood of Christ ([Romans 5:1-2](#)).

Peace is first of all the objective state of being reconciled to God ([Romans 5:1](#), [Romans 5:10](#)). It is also an attitude of inward tranquility and freedom from worry about salvation ([Romans 1:7](#); [Romans 8:6](#)); this is the main point in view here. Finally peace is the corporate harmony that exists among brethren ([Romans 14:17](#)).

Joy is the inward delight and jubilation that keep us excited about being Christians, about being under the blood of Christ, and about living the sanctified life ([Romans 5:2-3](#), [Romans 5:11](#); [Romans 12:12](#), [Romans 12:15](#); [Romans 14:17](#)). **Joy** and **peace** together are “two of the great human desirables,” as Dunn says (2:853), and they are available to mankind only through the gospel of Jesus Christ.

in believing .. The word seems to sum up the great argument of the Epistle. Here closes its course of explicit Instruction, whether concerning Doctrine or Practice.

The remainder is devoted to personal and other incidental topics. Meyer calls the passage, [Romans 15:14-33](#), the “Epilogue” of the Epistle. - CBSC

by the power of the Holy Spirit . The believer’s hope comes through the Scripture (cf. [Romans 15:4](#); [Ephesians 1:13-14](#)), which was written and is applied to every believing heart by the Holy Spirit. –MSB

Romans 15:14

Romans 15:14

15:14–33 In this passage Paul changes topics and addresses his upcoming visit to Rome, as well as his plans to preach the gospel in Spain (see [Romans 1:11-15](#)). After clarifying the nature of his teaching earlier in the letter ([Romans 15:14-15](#)), Paul explains his mission strategy ([Romans 15:16-21](#)) and promotes his plans to carry on his missionary work in Spain ([Romans 15:22-29](#)). - FSB

I myself .. The “I” (*auto egō*—I myself) is very emphatic in Greek. Paul is truly complimenting this church (convinced). - Utley

I myself also .. i.e. as well as others, by whom “*your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world;*” ([Romans 1:8](#)).

In this verse and the next we have an echo, as it were, of [Romans 1:8](#), [Romans 1:11-12](#), [Romans 1:15](#). What St Paul says here is in no insincere diplomatic compliment, but the well-grounded conviction of his mind as to the Roman Christians *as a body*. And it is quite in harmony with the substance and tone of the Epistle, which is evidently written for those who were no novices in Christian doctrine, and who were also comparatively free from such faults of Christian practice as defiled, for instance, the Corinthian Church. He wrote to them as he had written just because they were in a state of spiritual vigour and maturity. - CBSC

Paul asserts three things about these Roman Christians in v. 14: (1) they are full of goodness; (2) they are full of knowledge ; and (3) they are able to admonish one another.

This verse implies that Paul is not bringing a new message to them, but explaining and clarifying the good news which they already had heard and accepted (cf. v. 15).

goodness .. (*ἀγαθοσύνη, agathosynē*). This basically refers to a morally upright character, a general goodness of the heart that loves righteousness and opposes all that is evil.

full .. That the Romans were *full* of goodness is hyperbole, since perfection eludes all. It means ... that they had a “plentiful supply” of goodness ... The sense is this: “I am fully aware of your spiritual maturity and moral virtue, and I commend you for it” (MacArthur, 2:327). This is indeed a high compliment; at the opposite end of the spectrum would be a church like the one at Corinth as reflected in 1 Corinthians. - CPNIVC

goodness .. High moral character. The believers in Rome hated evil and loved righteousness, attitudes their lives clearly displayed. - MSB

Same word as [Galatians 5:22](#); [Ephesians 5:9](#); [2 Thessalonians 1:11](#). It is “*excellence*” in a wide sense. - CBSC

1) If related contextually, it speaks to the believers' love for each other amidst the differences between them.

2) It may relate to the whole gospel faith and practice of it in every way.

filled .. Literally, (*plēroō*) **brimful**. Same word as [Romans 1:29](#). Filled to overflow level. It was Paul's desire to fill believers with the gospel so they overflow in love and service.

filled .. Again a hyperbole, since omniscience belongs to God alone. Paul is saying they are not novices in their knowledge of the gospel.

knowledge .. Refers to deep, intimate knowledge indicating that the Roman believers were doctrinally sound ([Colossians 2:2-3](#)), illustrating the fact that truth and virtue are inseparable (cf. [1 Timothy 1:19](#)). - MSB

admonish one another .. To encourage, warn, or advise—a comprehensive term for preaching ([1 Corinthians 14:3](#)) and personal counseling (see note on [Romans 12:1](#)). Every believer is responsible to encourage and strengthen other believers with God's Word and is divinely equipped to do so ([2 Timothy](#)

[3:16](#)). - MSB

admonish [instruct] .. translates Greek *noutheteō*, “instruct, admonish, warn, counsel,” which is often used of warning against wrong conduct ([Acts 20:31](#); [1 Corinthians 4:14](#); [Colossians 1:28](#); [1 Thessalonians 5:12](#), [1 Thessalonians 5:14](#); [2 Thessalonians 3:15](#)). Paul encourages ordinary Christians (no doubt esp. those who have greater maturity and wisdom) to give one another practical, real-life wisdom and counsel. – ESVSB

Romans 15:15

[Romans 15:15](#)

more boldly .. i.e. in our idiom, *somewhat boldly*. - CBSC

Paul wrote his letter to the Roman Church while he was in Corinth. He was attacked by one of the factions in that church for being bold in his letters, but weak in person. The VERB form of the word “boldly” is found in [2 Corinthians 10:2](#), [2 Corinthians 10:12](#); [2 Corinthians 11:21](#). Paul’s boldness came from his conversion, call, and knowledge of the gospel. - Utley

on some points .. May refer to the elements of the gospel he addressed in this letter: 1) righteousness by faith; and 2) rituals of the Jewish covenant not required for Christians; etc.

as reminding you .. In spite of one's spiritual strength, Christians need to be reminded of truths they already know but could easily neglect or forget (cf. [1 Timothy 4:6](#); [2 Timothy 2:8-14](#); [Titus 3:1](#)).

because of the grace that was given me from God .. Paul refers to the grace of God (cf. [Romans 1:5](#); [Romans 12:3](#); [1 Corinthians 3:10](#); [1 Corinthians 1:1](#); [Galatians 2:9](#); and [Ephesians 3:7-8](#)) which called him, saved him, gifted him, and sent him to the Gentiles (cf. [Romans 11:13](#); [Romans 15:16](#)). It is a way of asserting his apostleship and authority (cf. [Romans 1:1](#), [Romans 1:5](#)). – Utley

Romans 15:16

[Romans 15:16](#)

a minister .. λειτουργὸν leitourgon. [G3011; [Romans 13:6](#); [Romans 15:16](#); [Philippians 2:25](#); [Hebrews 1:7](#); [Hebrews 8:2](#); G3008 [Acts 13:2](#); [Romans 15:27](#); [Hebrews 10:11](#).] This is not the word which is commonly translated “minister” διάκονος diakonos. This word is properly appropriated to those who minister in public offices or the affairs of the state. In the New Testament it is applied mainly to the Levitical priesthood, who ministered and served at the altar; [Hebrews 10:11](#). It is however applied to the ministers of the New Testament, as discharging “substantially” the same offices toward the church which were discharged by the Levitical priesthood; that is, as engaged in promoting the welfare of the church, occupied in holy things, etc.; [Acts 13:2](#), “as they “ministered” to the Lord and fasted,” etc. It is still used in a larger sense in [Romans 15:27](#); [2 Corinthians 9:12](#). - BN

a minister .. as a priest; Paul relates his apostolic duties to those of the OT priests. He considers believers’ obedience to be a type of offering to God (12:1). - FSB

But in the NT it [this word] is used most often of those who serve God in some form of public worship (e.g., [Philippians 2:17](#); [Hebrews 1:7](#), [Hebrews 1:14](#); [Hebrews 8:1](#), [Hebrews 8:2](#), [Hebrews 8:6](#)), including that of a priest ([Luke 1:23](#)). - MSB

to the Gentiles .. Compare [Romans 1:5](#); [Acts 9:15](#).

Although Paul’s practice was always to present the gospel to the Jews first in every city he visited (see note on [Acts 13:5](#)), his primary apostolic calling was to the Gentiles ([Romans 11:13](#); [Acts 9:15](#)). - MSB

ministering .. ιερουργοῦντα hierourgounta. Performing the function of a priest in respect to the gospel of God. The office of a “priest” was to offer sacrifice.

Paul here retains the “language,” though without affirming or implying that the ministers of the New Testament were literally “priests” to offer sacrifice. The word used here occurs nowhere else in the New

Testament. Its meaning here is to be determined from the connection. The question is, What is the “sacrifice” of which he speaks? It is the “offering up” - the sacrifice of the Gentiles. - BN

that the offering up .. The word here rendered “offering up” [προσφορά](#) *prospora* commonly means “a sacrifice” or an “expiatory” offering, and is applied to Jewish sacrifices; [Acts 21:26](#); [Acts 24:17](#).

It is also applied to the sacrifice which was made by our Lord Jesus Christ when he offered himself on the cross for the sins of people; [Ephesians 5:2](#); [Hebrews 10:10](#). It does not always mean “bloody” sacrifices, but is used to denote “any” offering to God; [Hebrews 10:5](#), [Hebrews 10:8](#), [Hebrews 10:14](#), [Hebrews 10:18](#). Hence, it is used in this large sense to denote the “offering” which the Gentiles who were converted to Christianity made of themselves; their “devoting” or dedicating themselves to God. The “language” is derived from the customs of the Jews; and the apostle represents himself “figuratively” as a priest presenting this offering to God. - BN

The Greek word here is the origin of our word *liturgy*. - (CBSC)

the offering .. Having referred to himself as a minister, a word with priestly overtones, Paul explains that his priestly ministry is to present to God an offering of a multitude of Gentile converts. - MSB

It is clear that the Apostle here speaks of himself as a Sacrificer in a sense wholly figurative;... Hodge remarks that we here see the true nature of the priesthood which belongs to the Christian ministry: “It is by the preaching of the Gospel to bring men to *offer themselves* as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God.” See [Romans 12:1](#). - CBSC

Paul compares himself to being like a priest who makes an offering to God, and Paul's offering to God are the Gentile converts. - WG

The church is called by OT priesthood terms in [1 Peter 2:5](#), [1 Peter 2:9](#) and [Revelation 1:6](#). - Utley

might be acceptable .. Or, approved by God. This was in accordance with the prediction in [Isaiah 66:20](#).

being sanctified .. That is, “the offering” being sanctified, or made holy. The sacrifice was “prepared” or made fit “to be” an offering, among the Jews, by salt, oil, or frankincense, according to the nature of the sacrifice; [Leviticus 6:14](#), etc.

sanctified by the Holy Spirit .. The Gentile converts were rendered “holy”, or fit to be offered by their conversion to the Gospel, which was made possible by their obedience ([Romans 15:18](#)) to the words of the Holy Spirit in the inspired Apostle Paul.

This is a PERFECT PASSIVE PARTICIPLE meaning, “have been and continue to be sanctified by the Holy Spirit.” This may again reflect the tension between Jewish and Gentile believers in the Roman church. Paul stated clearly that the nations (Gentiles) had been and continue to be fully accepted and consecrated by the Holy Spirit (cf. [1 Corinthians 6:11](#)). – Utley

Romans 15:17

[Romans 15:17](#)

I have therefore ... - I have cause of glorying. I have cause of rejoicing that God has made me a minister to the Gentiles, and that he has given me such success among them. The ground of this he states in [Romans 15:18-22](#). - BN

The words “*I have*” are slightly emphatic, indicating the reality of his commission, labours, and success; and so the reality of his right to speak as a Teacher to the Roman Christians. - CBSC

glory .. Of “boasting” [καύχησιν](#) *kauchēsín*, the word usually rendered “boasting”); [James 4:16](#); [Romans 3:27](#); [2 Corinthians 7:14](#); [2 Corinthians 8:24](#); [2 Corinthians 9:3-4](#); [2 Corinthians 10:15](#); [2 Corinthians 11:10](#); [2 Corinthians 11:17](#). It means also “praise, thanksgiving,” and “joy;” [1 Corinthians 15:31](#); [2 Corinthians 1:12](#); [2 Corinthians 7:4](#); [2 Corinthians 8:24](#); [1 Thessalonians 2:19](#). This is its meaning here, that the apostle

had great cause of “rejoicing” or “praise” that he had been so highly honored in the appointment to this office, and in his success in it. - BN

in Christ Jesus .. Paul's glorying was in Christ, not in himself.

in those things which pertain to God - Compare [Hebrews 5:1](#). The things of religion; the things which God has commanded, and which pertain to his honor and glory.

Romans 15:18

[Romans 15:18](#)

For I will not dare to speak .. I should be restrained; I should be afraid to speak, if the thing were not as I have stated. I should be afraid to set up a claim beyond what is strictly in accordance with the truth. - BN

which Christ has not accomplished through me .. I confine myself “strictly” to what I have done. I do not lay claim for myself what Christ has done by others. I do not exaggerate my own success, or claim what others have accomplished. (BN)

me .. Emphatic in the Greek. - CBSC

in word and deed .. By preaching, and by all other means; by miracle, by example, etc.

The “deeds,” that is, the “lives” of Christian ministers are often as efficacious in bringing people to Christ as their public ministry.

Compare [Matthew 28:20](#), and the suggestive words ([Acts 1:1](#)) “all that Jesus *began* to do and teach”—as if His doing and teaching continued in the work of His messengers. - CBSC

deed .. Specially (see next verse) deeds of miracle. Cp. [Acts 13:9-12](#), [Acts 14:8-10](#), [Acts 15:12](#), [Acts 16:18](#), [Acts 19:11-12](#), [Acts 20:10-12](#), [Acts 28:3-9](#). St Paul elsewhere distinctly claims miraculous gifts, [1 Corinthians 14:18](#); [2 Corinthians 12:12](#). - CBSC

to make the Gentiles obedient .. To bring them to obey God in the gospel. - BN

God's goal has always been a people who reflect His character... Intimate fellowship with God is evidenced by godly character. The goal of Christianity is fellowship with God and Christlikeness—now! - Utley

Romans 15:19

[Romans 15:19](#)

in mighty signs and wonders .. By stupendous and striking miracles; see the note at [Acts 2:43](#). Paul here refers, doubtless, to the miracles which he had himself performed; see [Acts 19:11-12](#). See [Acts 2:22](#) for a distinction between "signs," "wonders" and "miracles."

by the power of the Spirit of God .. Paul attributes the miracles he performed were by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Paul may be connecting all his success he has been speaking of to the aid of the Holy Spirit.

so that from Jerusalem .. Jerusalem, as a “center” of all religious operations and preaching under the gospel. This was not the place where “Paul” began to preach [Galatians 1:17-18](#), but it was the place where the “gospel” was first preached, and the apostles began to reckon their success from that as a point; compare the note at [Luke 24:49](#). Paul was sent out on his mission journeys from the church in Antioch, [Acts 13:1-4](#), ect.

and round about .. [καί κύκλῳ](#) *kai kuklō*. In a circle. That is, taking Jerusalem as a center, he had fully preached round that center until you come to Illyricum.

to Illyricum .. Illyricum was a province lying to the northwest of Macedonia, bounded north by a part of Italy and Germany, east by Macedonia, south by the Adriatic, west by Istria. It comprehended the modern Croatia and Dalmatia.

So that taking Jerusalem as a center, Paul preached not only in Damascus and Arabia, but in Syria, in Asia Minor, in all Greece and Macedonia. This comprehended a large part of the then known world; There is no where in Acts of any express mention of Paul's going "into" Illyricum and preaching the gospel there. [[Acts 20:1-2](#)] It may have been that when in Macedonia he crossed over into that country; and this is rendered somewhat probable from the fact that "Titus" is mentioned as having gone into "Dalmatia" [2 Timothy 4:10](#), which was a part of Illyricum.

From **Jerusalem** to **Illyricum** was a span of some 1,400 miles.

I have fully preached .. The word used here means properly "to fill up" [πεπληρωκέναι](#) *peplērōkenai*, "to complete," and here is used in the sense of "diffusing [dispensing] abroad," or of "filling up" all that region with the gospel; compare [2 Timothy 4:17](#). It means that he had faithfully dispensed the knowledge of the gospel in all that immense region. - BN

St Paul "**fulfilled**" the whole possible scope of the Gospel-message, in point of geographical space, in the direction taken by his work. A fair paraphrase would thus be, "I have carried the Gospel everywhere."—The idea of unreserved *doctrinal faithfulness* (for which see [Acts 20:20](#), [Acts 20:27](#)), is not suggested by the context here, where the emphasis is on *extent of area*. - CBSC

Paul was not claiming that the work of evangelism had been completed in these regions. His point was that churches had been planted in enough major population centers so that those churches could carry on the work of evangelism themselves. Paul's own distinctive ministry of planting foundational and strategic churches had been fulfilled. – NLTBSB

Romans 15:20

Romans 15:20

I have made it my aim [aspired; ambition; strived;] .. The word used here [φιλοτιμούμενον](#) *philotimoumenon* means properly "to be ambitious, to be studious of honor;" and then to "desire" earnestly. In that sense it is used here. He earnestly desired; he made it a point for which he struggled, to penetrate into regions which had not heard the gospel. - BN

where Christ was not named .. Where the gospel had not been preached before.

Describes Paul's regular missionary practice of preaching the gospel and planting churches only in places where other missionaries had not previously worked. Paul apparently regarded his ministry strategy as a fulfillment of [Isaiah 52:15](#), which he cites in [Romans 15:21](#). See [1 Corinthians 3:10-15](#); [2 Corinthians 10:13-15](#). - FSB

build on another man's foundation .. Paul felt called to establish new congregations of believers among the Gentiles. Others might come along and edify them. But he regarded it as his function to make known the name of the Saviour where it was not before known. Compare [2 Corinthians 10:13-16](#).

Romans 15:21

Romans 15:21

but as it is written .. The quotation is from [Isaiah 52:15](#), verbatim with the Septuagint (LXX), the Greek version which paraphrases the Hebrew.

The design of quoting it is to justify the principle on which the apostle acted. It was revealed that the gospel should be preached to the Gentiles; and he regarded it as a high honor to be the instrument of carrying this prediction into effect. - BN

Romans 15:22

Romans 15:22

Paul's Plan to Visit Rome

For this reason .. (The reason stated in the previous verse.) Paul had been so occupied in preaching to the Gentiles that he had not been able to come to them at Rome yet.

much hindered .. Many ways (persecutions; collecting for the poor at Jerusalem; etc.); not many times. Paul had so frequent and urgent demands on his time elsewhere, that he could not get to Rome. - BN

from coming to you .. Paul had desired to go to Rome, but had been unable to leave the vast region where he might preach the gospel to those who had never heard it.

Romans 15:23

Romans 15:23

But now .. Having no further opportunity in these regions to preach to those who have never heard the gospel.

in these parts .. In the regions before specified. He had gone over them, had established churches, had left them in the care of elders [Acts 20:17](#), and was now prepared to penetrate into some new region, and lay the foundation of other churches.

and having a great desire ... - See [Romans 1:9-13](#).

Romans 15:24

Romans 15:24

Whensoever I take my journey into Spain .. Ancient Spain included the modern countries of Spain and Portugal, or the whole of the Spanish peninsula. It was then a part of the Roman Empire and subject to Roman rule since 200 BC.

It is remarkable, even here, that the apostle does not say that his principal object was to visit the church at Rome, much as he desired that, but only to "take it in his way" in the fulfillment of his higher purpose to preach the gospel in regions where Christ was not named. Whether he ever fulfilled his purpose of visiting "Spain" is a matter of doubt.

Some of the fathers, Theodoret* (on [Philippians 1:25](#); [2 Timothy 4:17](#)) among others, say that after he was released from his captivity when he was brought before Nero, he passed two years in Spain. If he was imprisoned a "second" time at Rome, such a visit is not improbable as having taken place "between" the two imprisonments. But there is no certain evidence of this. Paul probably projected "many" journeys which were never accomplished. - BN

*A pious respected scholar of Antioch, who insisted more on the so-called grammatico-historical sense of the Holy Scriptures. (AD 430)

Spain .. The city and region referred to in the OT as Tarshish ([1 Kings 10:22](#); [Jonah 1:3](#)), located on the far western end of the European continent. It had become a major center of commerce and culture, made accessible by the vast network of Roman roads. Its most famous ancient son was Seneca, the philosopher and statesman who tutored Nero and served as prime minister of the Empire. - MSB

into Spain .. Greek **Spania**. The form *Hispania* is also found in Greek; *Spania* never in Latin. The far commoner Greek name of the Peninsula is *Iberia*. - CBSC

to be helped on my way there by you .. Paul hoped to be assisted by the Rome church in regard to this journey; or to be accompanied by some of them. This was the custom of the churches; [Acts 15:3](#); [Acts 17:14-15](#); [Acts 20:38](#); [Acts 21:5](#); [1 Corinthians 16:6](#), [1 Corinthians 16:11](#); [3 John 1:8](#).

Spain was so far from Paul's previous sending church, Antioch in Syria, that he hoped the Roman church could serve as the logistical base for this future evangelistic effort. - NLTSB

if first .. If on my journey, before I go into Spain.

enjoy your company .. [G1705](#) ἐμπύλημι, *empiplēmi*. This is a strong expression, meaning to be "satisfied," to enjoy. To be "filled" with a thing is to have great satisfaction and joy in it.

ἐμπλησθῆναι signifies to be satisfied, to be gratified, and to enjoy. - Clark

your company .. Greek, With "you;" meaning in your society, company, or companionship. The expression "to be filled" with one, or "to enjoy", in the sense of being "gratified," is sometimes used in the classic writers.

Romans 15:25

Romans 15:25

But now I am going to Jerusalem .. Paul didn't know what would befall him there. He could not be persuaded by his friends to not go there.

minister .. See [G1247](#) minister, διακονῶν, διακονέω *diakoneō*, to serve, to minister. Cf. [Acts 6:2](#)

to minister unto the saints .. Not to preach the Gospel, though doubtless he did that when he was there; but to distribute among the poor saints what had been raised for them by the Greek churches.

During his third missionary journey, Paul collected donations from the Gentile churches to help the believers in Jerusalem and to draw the two wings of the first-century church closer together (see also 1 Corinthians 16:1-2; 2 Corinthians 8-9). - NLTSB

Romans 15:26

Romans 15:26

For it pleased those from Macedonia and Achaia .. That is, the churches of Macedonia, particularly Philippi and Thessalonica, (and perhaps Berea) and the churches of Achaia, especially the church at Corinth, (and perhaps one at Cenchrea?) which was the metropolis of Achaia. There may have been others that we don't know about.

to make a certain contribution for the poor .. a large account is given in [2 Corinthians 8:1](#); from whence Origen and others have rightly concluded, that this epistle to the Romans was wrote after that; since in that the apostle exhorts and encourages them, by the example of the Macedonian churches, to finish the collection they had begun; - BN

The collection is here called a **contribution**, or "communion", as the word signifies; it being one part of the communion of churches and of saints, to relieve their poor, by communicating to them, and to assist each other; and in which they have fellowship with one another.

The Greek word carries the basic idea of sharing and is usually translated "fellowship" or "communion." The context indicates that here it is the sharing of a financial gift to help support the poor in Jerusalem ([1 Corinthians 16:1](#); [2 Corinthians 8:2-4](#); [Galatians 2:9-10](#)). - MSB

Romans 15:27

Romans 15:27

It pleased them indeed .. This is designed to point out the manner in which it was performed: that it was the pure effect of their good will and pleasure.

and they are their debtors ..

For if the Gentiles .. These churches sending the collection was primarily made up of non-Jews.

partakers of their spiritual things .. The “things” were gospel truths first preached to the Gentile believers by the Jewish apostles, prophets, teachers, and evangelists. - MSB

their duty ..

to minister to them in material things .. For the clothing and nourishment of the body. Perhaps Paul said this to stir up the Romans, some who were Gentiles also, and under the same obligations to make a contribution for the poor saints at Jerusalem likewise.

Romans 15:28

[Romans 15:28](#)

When therefore I have completed this ... When Paul had finished the business which the Macedonian and Achaian churches had entreated him too undertake, namely to take their collection for the poor saints to Jerusalem and distribute it, he wanted to go to Spain by way of Rome.

have sealed [finished; completed, performed] .. Have "secured it" to those at Jerusalem. To seal an instrument of writing, a contract, deed, etc. is to “authenticate it,” to make it “sure.” In this sense it is used here. Paul was going himself to see that it was placed “securely” in their hands.

sealed .. The metaphor is from a solemn ratification. St Paul, handing over to the Church at Jerusalem the “fruit,” or proceeds, of the Macedonian and Achaian collections, would thereby finally *attest* it to be now the full property of the receivers: he would put the *seal of their ownership* upon it. - CBSC

have put my seal on this fruit .. The liberality of the Gentile churches is called **fruit**. This material offering for their poor brethren in Jerusalem is fruit of the spiritual seed sown by Paul among the Gentiles. It was the fruit which their benevolence had produced, a "love for the brotherhood" [1 Peter 2:17](#).

I shall go on by way of you into Spain .. It was Paul's plan (and desire) to go to Spain, and to take Rome in his way there. (See note on [Romans 15:24](#)) Whether the apostle ever made it to Spain is not certain nor very probable, since when he came to Jerusalem he was apprehended, and sent as a prisoner to Rome, where he was under house arrest for at least two years, Cf. [Acts 28:16](#); [Acts 28:30-31](#); where the history of Acts ends without informing us of the outcome of the trial or where Paul went afterwards.

Romans 15:29

[Romans 15:29](#)

I know [am sure] .. Greek "*I know*" Expressing the fullest confidence.

when I come to you .. Paul intended to go to Spain by way of Rome. see notes at [Romans 15:28](#); [Romans 15:24](#). After writing this letter to the Roman church, the Lord informed Paul that he must bear witness also in Rome, [Acts 23:11](#). Also see [Acts 19:21](#).

I shall come in [with] the fullness of blessings .. This is a Hebrew mode of expression, where one noun performs the purpose of an adjective, and means “with a full or abundant blessing.” This confidence he, expressed in other language in [Romans 1:11-12](#);

Paul went to Rome; but he went in bonds; [Acts 27-28](#). But though he went in this manner, he was permitted there to preach the gospel for at least two years, nor can we doubt that his ministry was attended with the anticipated success; [Acts 28:30-31](#).

of the gospel of Christ ..

Romans 15:30

Romans 15:30

Now I beg [urge; appeal; beseech] you .. For similar requests for prayer, see [2 Corinthians 1:11](#); [Ephesians 6:19](#); [Colossians 4:3-4](#); [1 Thessalonians 5:25](#); [2 Thessalonians 3:1-2](#). For the language of the request (“*strive* together, &c.”) cp. [Colossians 2:1-2](#), [Colossians 4:12](#) . - CBSC

by [διὰ] our Lord Jesus Christ .. Greek, By or through [διὰ](#) dia our Lord Jesus Christ; It means probably out of love and regard to him; in order to promote his honor and glory, and to extend his kingdom among people. - BN

and by [διὰ] the love of the Spirit .. This phrase occurs only here in Scripture and refers to Paul’s love for the Holy Spirit, not the Spirit’s love for him (cf. [Psalms 143:10](#)). - MSB

I beseech you now to manifest that love by praying earnestly for me.

to strive together with me .. This term is used only here in the NT. It is a compound of *sun* (together with) and *agōnizomai* (to contend, to fight, to strive earnestly, cf. [1 Corinthians 9:25](#); [Colossians 1:29](#); [Colossians 4:12](#); [1 Timothy 4:10](#); [1 Timothy 6:12](#)). This strong INFINITIVE calls on the Roman church to aggressively agonize with Paul in prayer about the reception of the Gentile offering by the mother church in Jerusalem. - Utley

strive together with [on my behalf; ὑπὲρ] me in your prayers .. That you unite with me in earnest prayer. The word “*strive*” denotes intense “agony” or effort, such as was used by the wrestlers in the Greek games; and then the “agony,” or strong effort, which a man makes in prayer, who is earnestly desirous to be heard. The use of the word here denotes Paul’s earnest desire that they should make an “intense” effort in their prayers that he might be delivered from his enemies in Jerusalem.

Apparently, Paul was well aware he had serious enemies in Jerusalem.

to God .. The prayers and appeal was to God in heaven.

See note on [John 16:7](#) for a note of the “*Work of the Trinity*” from the ESV Study Bible.

on my behalf .. The ὑπὲρ ἐμοῦ should be translated “on my behalf”, rather than “with me”.

Romans 15:31

Romans 15:31

that I may be delivered [rescued] .. The unbelieving Jews in Judea had opposed Paul vehemently since his conversion to Christ. They could not forget that he had borne letters of commission from them to persecute the Christians at Damascus. They regarded him as an apostate. They had heard of his success among the Gentiles; and they had been informed that he “taught all the Jews among the Gentiles to forsake the laws of Moses;” [Acts 21:21](#).

from those in Judea who do not believe .. From unbelieving Jews in the heartland of Judaism; [disobedient, NASB].

Many Jews in Judea rejected the gospel and were prepared to attack Paul when he returned. Aware of the trouble that awaited him ([Acts 20:22-24](#)), he wanted the Roman Christians to pray for his deliverance only so he could complete the ministry the Lord had given him. Their prayers were answered in that he met with success in Jerusalem ([Acts 21:17](#), [Acts 21:19-20](#)) and was delivered from death, but not imprisonment ([Acts 21:10-11](#); [Acts 23:11](#)). - MSB

that my service for Jerusalem .. Paul refers to the contribution which he was bearing for the poor saints at Jerusalem.

may be acceptable to the saints .. That the poor Christians there may be willing to receive the benevolence from the Gentile churches in Macedonia and Achaia. ([Acts 21:17](#))

Paul wanted the Jewish Christians in Jerusalem to receive the financial gift from the Gentiles with loving gratitude, recognizing it as a gesture of brotherly love and kindness. -MSB

We can think of two reasons of “doubt” or “hesitation” whether they would be willing to receive this benevolence.

(1) Some among Jewish Christians might have had their minds filled with prejudice against Paul from hearing the reports constantly in circulation among the Jews, that he was opposing and denouncing the customs of Moses.

(Hence, in order to satisfy them, when he went up to Jerusalem, he actually performed a “vow,” in accordance with the Law of Moses, to show that he did not intend to treat Moses' laws with contempt; [Acts 21:22-23](#), [Acts 21:26-27](#).)

(2) Many of the converts from Judaism might be indisposed to receive an offering made by “Gentiles.” They might have retained many of their former feelings, that the Gentiles were polluted, and that they ought to have no fellowship with them.

Romans 15:32

Romans 15:32

so that by God's will .. [RSV & ESV changes the order of the the English from the Greek. Apparently to indicate the "will" of God modifies Paul's "comeing" and not the word "joy".]

It may refer only or at least partly to the *permissive* will of God (*GRu*, 313–317), by which God in his sovereignty allows historical events to unfold according to human free will choices. Or it may refer to God's *purposive* will (*GRu*, 304–310), according to which God intervenes via his special providence [underline WG] in order to accomplish certain purposes, particularly in answer to prayer (see *GRu*, 376–378).

Paul knew that his itinerary was subject to God's will in these senses ([Acts 16:6-10](#); [Acts 18:21](#); [Romans 1:10](#); [1 Corinthians 4:19](#); [1 Corinthians 16:7](#)). - CPNIVC

that I may come to you .. That I may not be hindered, or obstructed by opposition, in my planned journey.

Paul did get to Rome, but in an unexpected way (as a prisoner), but his presence was an encouragement for fellow Christians ([Acts 28:15-16](#); [Acts 28:30-31](#)).

with [in] joy .. Joy to myself in being permitted to come; and producing joy to you by my presence.

by the will of God .. If God will; if God permit. After all his desires, and all their prayers, it still depended on the will of God; and to that the apostle was desirous to submit.

This should be the end of our most ardent desires, and this the object of all our prayers, that the will of God should be done; compare [James 4:14-15](#). Paul “did” go by the will of God; but he went in bonds.

This condition, if God will, he had before inserted upon this very occasion, [Romans 1:10](#). See the like, [1 Corinthians 4:19](#) [James 4:13-15](#). - Poole

be refreshed .. Greek, May find “rest” or “solace” with you.

Literally **may with you repose**; (same [root words [G373](#)] as [1 Corinthians 16:18](#); [2 Corinthians 7:13](#);) a beautiful metaphor for the refreshment of holy intercourse in the midst of toil and care.—Cp. [Romans 1:12](#).—The “repose” would come in “the mutual communication of faith, inner experiences, love, hope, &c.” (Meyer.) - CBSC

Paul wanted a time of quiet rest and recuperation among mature believers (cf. [2 Corinthians 4:7-12](#); [2 Corinthians 6:3-10](#); [2 Corinthians 11:23-33](#))! (Utley)

together with you .. [in your company; RSV] cf [Romans 1:12](#).

Romans 15:33

[Romans 15:33](#)

The God of peace .. this is a frequent title of God in Scripture; he is called *the God of peace*, [Romans 16:20](#) [2 Corinthians 13:11](#) [Philippians 4:9](#) [1 Thessalonians 5:23](#) [2 Thessalonians 3:16](#) [Hebrews 13:20](#). Here it fits his great argument, which was to persuade the believing Romans to be at peace amongst themselves, and not to contend about indifferent things. - Poole

In chapter 15 the Lord has been named *the God of patience and consolation* (v. 5), *the God of hope* (v. 13), and now **the God of peace**. He is the source of everything good and of everything a poor sinner needs now and eternally.

Paul's request for their prayers for him (Romans 15.30) seems to include four items:

- 1) that he be delivered from unbelievers in Judea
- 2) that his service for Jerusalem be accepted by the saints
- 3) that he may come to them in Rome with joy
- 4) that they may be refreshed in each other's company.

Amen .. St. Paul concludes his request for a prayer with a prayer of his own for them. 'Peace,' a keynote of the Epistle, is one of his last thoughts. - ICCNT

Amen note: Does a Christian prayer require a formular tag "*in the name of Christ*" at the end before "Amen"? See note at [Colossians 3:17](#). Prayer "in the name of Christ" is what a Christian is doing, and the statement is not intended to become a ritual. Just as Christian baptism is "for the remission or forgiveness of sins" ([Acts 2:38](#)) and is not intended to be a required ritual statement at baptism.

[While there are a few MSS differences, the best place the whole of chapter 16 following chapter 15 as part of Paul's original letter to the Romans.]

Romans 16:1

[Romans 16:1](#)

Hebrews ch. 11 is a picture gallery of OT heros
Romans ch. 16 is a picture gallery of NT believers

[Romans 16:1,2](#) Paul commends Phebe to the Christians at Rome,
[Romans 16:3-16](#) and sends salutations to many by name.
[Romans 16:17-20](#) He warns them to take heed of those who cause divisions and offences.

[Romans 16:21-24](#) After sundry salutations,
[Romans 16:25-27](#) he concludes with praise to God.

How could Paul know so many people at Rome? He had never been there. One-third of the names are women in the Roman church, this is interesting considering woman's role in Judaism.

Phebe .. The poets called the moon Phoebe, as they did the sun Phoebus. This name is likely to have been given by her parents. *Phoibe* (which means "bright, radiant") was the name of a pagan goddess. (Apollos, a devote Jew, also had a mythological name.)

Phebe is in all likelihood the one who carried Paul's letter to Rome. Paul might have been writing this letter to the Romans from Corinth on a winter-long stop there near the end of his third missionary journey (see [Acts 20:2-3](#)).

our sister .. i.e. in Christ, and by the profession of the same faith: see [James 2:15](#).

servant .. Deaconess (feminine) - The word is used in both a technical and non-technical sense. It is an often used word to indicate service. The qualification of 1 Timothy 3 is of deacons' wives, not deaconesses.

Paul uses the Greek word (δίακονος, *diakonos*), a word which is masculine in form but was used for both men and women. Its basic connotation is "servant, helper, one who carries out the will or purpose of another, one who ministers to the needs of others." The NT usually uses it in this generic sense for Christian workers (and others). In this case the English word "servant" is most appropriate.
- CPNIV

servant of the church .. It is not meant she was a deaconess, or one of the college of widows, of whom he speaketh, [1 Timothy 5:9](#). But she served the church, in harbouring and succouring the saints that were driven out of their country; yea, as appears by the next verse, she was a succourer of the ministers of the gospel, and of the apostle himself. We read, [Luke 8:3](#), of some that *ministered unto* the Lord *of their substance*; there the same word is used. And this Phebe seems to have been employed in the same works; she ministered unto Paul as Onesiphorus did, [2 Timothy 1:18](#); there the same word is used again. - BN

Notice the word "helper" NKJV; "patron" ESV; "succourer" KJV; "leader" CEV; in the next verse. [Romans 16:2](#)

church .. This is the first use of the word "church" (ἐκκλησία, *ekklesia*) in Romans, and (as it does most of the time in Paul's writings) it refers to the local congregation, the collective body of Christians in a particular area. - CPNIV

Cenchrea .. A port or haven belonging to Corinth, on the east side (about 7 miles) towards Asia: there was another on the west side towards Italy, called Lechea. By reason of this double haven, Corinth was called by the poets, *Bi maris*. Here Paul paid a vow, which he had made, [Acts 18:18](#).

Apparently there was a distinct church at Cenchrea as well as at Corinth itself. Such church is nowhere else mentioned. [Acts 18:18](#); [Romans 16:1](#). Such church could have been included in Paul's reference to Achaia, [Romans 15:26](#); ([Acts 18:12](#); [Acts 18:27](#); [Acts 19:21](#); [Romans 15:26](#); [Romans 16:5](#); [1 Corinthians 16:15](#); [2 Corinthians 1:1](#); [2 Corinthians 9:2](#); [2 Corinthians 11:10](#); [1 Thessalonians 1:7](#); [1 Thessalonians 1:8](#).)

From the introduction in [2 Corinthians 1:1](#) it seems the letter would have included such church at Cenchrea if it was distinct from Corinth.

Romans 16:2

Romans 16:2

receive her in the Lord .. i.e. in the Lord's name, or for the Lord's sake; being mindful of the Lord. see [Matthew 18:5](#).

Whenever the early Christians traveled from one church to another, they carried letters of introduction. This was a real courtesy to the church being visited and a help to the visitor. - BBC

in manner worthy of the saints .. As those who profess themselves to be saints, to receive one another.

help her in whatever she may need from you .. Stand by her, and afford her your counsel, or any other assistance. She might have some business in the emperor's court, or there just on business (as Lydia at Philippi, [Acts 16:14](#)) There might be those among the saints that could provide her assistance. (There were Christians of Caesar's household, [Philippians 4:22](#).)

helper [succourer] .. The word used here [προστάτις](#) *prostatis*, means properly "a patron, a help," "Patroness" - probably implying some wealthy or social position.

Various translations read: "helper" NKJV; "patron" ESV; "succourer" KJV; "leader" CEV; in the this verse. [Romans 16:2](#)

Applied to Phebe, it means probably that she had shown great kindness in various ways to the apostle, and to other Christians; probably by receiving them into her house; by administering to the

sick, etc. (BN)

Of more significance for Phoebe's status and influence is the description of her as *prostatis*, the feminine of a word for a leader, ruler, president, guardian, and in Greek and Roman society a patron. This indicates that Phoebe was a person of some wealth and social standing, and it is likely that she owned a home that provided a meeting place for the church and hospitality to Paul and other Christians. This would have given her considerable prominence even if not an officially recognized position in the church. Ferguson, E. (1996). [*The church of Christ: a biblical ecclesiology for today*](#) (p. 338). Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.

This term, *proistatis*, is found only here in the NT. ... This word originally referred to a wealthy patroness. Since Phoebe was traveling to Rome (cf. [Romans 16:1](#)) and had helped many (cf. [Romans 16:2](#)), this may be historically true of her. – Utley

Romans 16:3

Romans 16:3

There are five groups of believers - family households, or family churches. Paul mentions 26 people by name and referred to many others.

Priscilla and Aquila .. A wife and husband who assisted Paul in his missionary work (see [Acts 18:2-3](#)). They helped establish the church in Ephesus ([Acts 18:18](#); [1 Corinthians 16:19](#)). At the time they met Paul, they had left Rome because the emperor, Claudius, had expelled all the Jews ([Acts 18:2](#)). It is unknown when they returned to Rome.

Mentioned six times in the scriptures, always together, three times she is mentioned first. [Acts 18:1-3](#); [Acts 18:18](#); [Acts 19:26](#); [1 Corinthians 16:19](#); [2 Timothy 4:19](#)

Luke refers to her as **Priscilla**, but Paul uses **Prisca**. The variation in the form of Prisca's name has many parallels in Roman nomenclature. - CBSC

It is surmised from ancient records that Aquila was a Jew born in Pontus living in Rome who married a blue-blood of Roman aristocracy. She stuck with him and was converted and migrated with him wherever he went.

Priscilla and Aquila worked in the same trade as Paul, tentmaking ([Acts 18:1-3](#)), and labored with him in Corinth and Ephesus ([Acts 18:1-3](#), [Acts 18:18](#), [Acts 18:26](#)). This married couple is never mentioned separately, perhaps because they ministered so effectively together. The NT does not record how or where Priscilla and Aquila **risked their own necks** for Paul, though it probably happened at Ephesus. - NNIBC

Priscilla .. Priscilla was the wife of Aquila. They are mentioned in [Acts 18:2](#), [Acts 18:26](#); [1 Corinthians 16:19](#). Paul at first found them at Corinth. Aquila was a Jew, born in Pontus, who had resided at Rome, and who had left Rome, and come to Corinth, when Claudius expelled the Jews from Rome; see the notes at [Acts 18:2](#). It is probable that they were converted under the preaching of Paul. Paul lived with them, and they had the advantage of his private instruction; [Acts 18:3](#); compare [Acts 18:26](#). At the death of Claudius, or whenever the decree for the expulsion of the Jews was repealed, it is probable that they returned to Rome. - BN

But during Paul's last days, and Nero's persecution of Christians, they are again at Ephesus, [2 Timothy 4:19](#).

Πρίσκαν καὶ Ἀκύλαν .. cf. [Acts 18:2](#); [Acts 18:18](#); [Acts 18:26](#); [1 Corinthians 16:19](#); [2 Timothy 4:19](#). We first hear of this pair at Corinth, where they were found by S. Paul on his first visit and that connexion was formed which lasted for the rest of his life. They had then lately come from Rome, and presently went with S. Paul to Ephesus, where they remained while he went on his way to Jerusalem. At Ephesus they were when Apollos arrived, and probably were influential in the small Church there, as they put Apollos in the way of full Christian teaching. They were there still, or again, when S. Paul wrote 1 Cor., certainly nine months, perhaps more than a year, before this Epistle. Now they are at Rome, and again some years later (2 Tim.) in

the province of Asia. A difficulty has been raised about this frequent change of home: and it has been directed against the originality of this passage in this place. But, apart from the migratory habits of Jews engaged in business, it is clear from Acts, [1 Corinthians 16:19](#) and this passage that A. and P. had given themselves to the work of propagating the Gospel: and it is not unreasonable to conjecture that just as they were left behind at Ephesus ([Acts 18:18](#)) to begin the work there and to prepare for S. Paul's return, so they may now have been sent by him to Rome to prepare the way for his intended visit; and returned to Asia at a later date, perhaps when he himself was released from Rome. This conjecture is supported by the fact that S. Paul's intention to go to Rome was already formed at least before he left Ephesus ([Acts 19:21](#)). It would explain his knowledge of the Christians who were at Rome at this time, both of those who seem to have centred round these two and of the other groups mentioned. For if they went to Rome to prepare for S. Paul's visit, they would naturally communicate with him as soon as they had got into full touch with the Church there. The list of salutations gains much in naturalness and point, if we can suppose it to have been based on information sent by A. and P. And we may see in such a letter from Rome the direct occasion of S. Paul's letter and even in some degree the influence which determined its character. (Zahn, *Einl.* p. 275, also makes this suggestion.) See *Intro.* p. xii f. - CBSC

co-workers [helpers] .. My fellow-workers. The couple had aided Paul in his work. A particular instance is mentioned in [Acts 18:26](#). They are mentioned as having been with Paul when he wrote the First Epistle to the Corinthians; [1 Corinthians 16:19](#).

in Christ Jesus .. In the Christian cause.

Romans 16:4

Romans 16:4

who risked their own necks .. When did Priscilla and Aquila do this? The occasion is unrecorded but possibly during the riot in Ephesus, ([Acts 19](#), [1 Corinthians 15:32](#)), the matter, however, seems to have been well known.

who did for my life lay down their own neck, (not **necks**). An entirely unknown occasion, on which Aquila and his wife had risked their lives for St Paul's.—“**Laid down:**”—the figure is of presenting the neck, or throat, to the executioner. - CBSC

Laid down their own necks .. To “lay down the neck” is to lay the head on a block to be cut off with the axe; or to bow down the head as when the neck was exposed to be cut off by the sword of the executioner. The meaning is, that they had hazarded their lives, had exposed themselves to imminent danger, to save the life of Paul. On what occasion this was done, is not known, as it is not referred to in the New Testament elsewhere. As Paul, however, lived with them [Acts 18:3](#), and as he was often persecuted by the Jews, it is probable that he refers to some such period when he was persecuted, when Aquila and Priscilla took him into their house at the imminent hazard of their lives. - BN

I give thanks .. Paul was grateful for their rescue.

all the churches .. The matter was well known among the Gentile churches and they knew and appreciated the couple's devotion to Paul in risking their own lives to save him.

Romans 16:5

Romans 16:5

church .. Only one mentioned. One congregation, or family (household). Church households [Acts 12:12](#) ; [1 Corinthians 16:19](#); [Colossians 4:15](#); [Philemon 1:2](#)

[Acts 8:3](#); [Romans 16:5](#); [1 Corinthians 16:19](#); [Colossians 4:15](#); [Philemon 1:2](#). Alford Edersheim points out that in cities where there was no synagogue for the Jews to meet, a wealthy Jewish family would set aside a room for them to meet in. He believes these references refer to assembly rooms where the

Christians would meet, rooms set aside for that purpose by a wealthy Christian family. (Sketches of Jewish Social Life by **Alfred Edersheim**, ch. 12)

Three or more churches mentioned, cf. [Romans 16:14-15](#)

the church that is in their house .. Aquila and Priscilla are mentioned [Acts 18:26](#) as having received “Apollos” into their family, to instruct him more perfectly. The church in their house is also mentioned [1 Corinthians 16:19](#). This may mean either the church that was accustomed to assemble for worship at their hospitable mansion; or it may mean their own family with their guests, regarded as a “church.” - BN

Greet also the church that meets at their house .. In the apostolic era, in some times and places, it may have been possible for the whole church in an area to meet together ([1 Corinthians 11:18](#); [1 Corinthians 14:23](#)), but church buildings as such did not exist, and often the Christians just met together in smaller groups in the houses of individual Christians ([Acts 12:12](#); [Colossians 4:15](#); [Philemon 1:2](#)). Prisca and Aquila hosted house churches both in Ephesus ([1 Corinthians 16:19](#)) and in Rome (indicated here). Verses [Romans 16:14-15](#) also seem to refer to such house churches, though the specific expression is not used. Also, the two households in vv. [Romans 16:10-11](#) may have been nuclei for house churches. - CPNIV

beloved Epaphroditus .. Apparently one of Paul's first converts in Asia and dearly loved by him. Probably an older man well established in the faith. We only know him from this verse. ([1 Corinthians 16:15](#)).

It is possible that he was a convert of Prisca and Aquila ([Acts 18:18-19](#)), and that this is why he is mentioned just after them. - CPNIV

first convert in Asia .. The Greek text here literally means “first fruit.” See [Romans 8:23](#) and note; [Romans 11:16](#).

Asia .. This would be a reference to the Roman province of Asia, of which Ephesus was the capital, today called Asia Minor (western 1/3 of modern Turkey). Some MSS use the word "**Achaia**" instead of Asia. See [Acts 19:10](#), [Acts 19:22](#), [Acts 19:26-27](#), [Acts 19:31](#).

An additional support that the reading should be "**Achaia**" and that Epaphroditus was the "**first fruit**" of the great spiritual harvest there is he is listed immediately after Aquila and Priscilla, and he may have been a convert of theirs (as they may have already been Christians when Paul met them in Corinth, [Acts 18:1-4](#)). If Paul converted the couple he lodged with, he may have converted Epaphroditus before them from his preaching in the synagogue.

Romans 16:6

Romans 16:6

Mary .. Where had she labored with Paul? In Achaia, or where? (Or possibly Jerusalem, [Acts 12:12](#)) Apparently Paul had met many of these believers he mentions during his labors probably during his journeys. Most likely he converted some of them. Some are relatives ([Romans 16:7](#)).

Paul probably courteously mentions the older disciples first (Epaphroditus and Mary).

Nothing more is known about her. Some would speculate she is the mother of John Mark and probably with whom Paul stayed some while in Jerusalem, [Acts 12:12](#); [Acts 12:25](#). John Mark (and his mother) may have had a home in Rome also since his father, it is believed, was a Roman (cf. Timothy, [Acts 16:1](#)) and Mark himself is known later to be in Rome ([Colossians 4:10](#); [2 Timothy 4:11](#); [Philemon 1:24](#)).

labored much .. The verb for “worked hard” is *κοπιᾶω* (*kopiaō*), “to toil, labor, struggle, strive, work hard.” The adverb “very” translates *πολλά* (*polla*), “many things, much,” which intensifies an already strong verb.

The language may be used of those in leadership roles ([1 Thessalonians 5:12](#); [1 Timothy 5:17](#)), but is not limited to this. Laudably laboring for the Lord is something that can be done by both men and women. In this list of greetings Paul uses the term only for four women and no men. – CPNIV

Romans 16:7

Romans 16:7

Andronicus and Junia, my countrymen .. “Junia” is most likely a woman’s name, so this probably refers to another husband and wife team. They likely were converted by Christian Hellenists in Jerusalem. ([Acts 2:10](#))

In Greek, the name **Junia** could refer to a man named *Junias* or to a woman named *Junia*. Most interpreters understand *Junia* as a feminine name.

The deciding factor seems to be the existence or nonexistence of these two names in contemporary Roman inscriptions. The facts are that the feminine name Junia has been found about 250 times in such inscriptions, while the masculine form *Junias* has thus far been found *nowhere* (Lampe, “Romans 16,” 223, 226). The reasonable conclusion, then, is that Junia was a woman, and that Andronicus and Junia were husband and wife. - CPNIVC

my kinsmen .. Of course in a literal sense, which alone can be *distinctive* here. Their names are Greek and Latin (respectively); but this was continually the case with Jews, (cp. *Paulus, Crispus, Apollos, &c.*). They were, we may assume, Benjamites at least, if not near relatives of St Paul’s.—Of his “kinsmen” we elsewhere (outside this chapter) hear only where his *nephew* is mentioned, [Acts 23:16](#). - CBSC

These individuals, along with Herodion ([Romans 16:11](#)), Lucius, Jason, and Sosipater ([Romans 16:21](#)), are called Paul’s “relatives.” This is a misleading translation, because Paul almost certainly means not “close relatives,” but “fellow Jews,” “those of my own race” ([Romans 9:3](#), same word). - CPNIVC

fellow prisoners .. Probably a reference to their actually sharing the same cell or adjacent cells at some point.

These two disciples are also called “**my fellow prisoners**.” Paul uses the same term also for Aristarchus ([Colossians 4:10](#)) and Epaphras ([Philemon 1:23](#)), who were with him during his Roman imprisonment.

fellowprisoners .. Strictly, **fellowprisoners-of-war**. Same word as [Colossians 4:10](#); [Philemon 1:23](#). The word indicates that these Christians had once been in prison with St Paul (a glorious reminiscence) in the course of the *warfare* of Christian duty and suffering.

See [2 Corinthians 6:5](#), [2 Corinthians 11:23](#), for hints of the many (to us) unknown imprisonments of the Apostle. The last passage is specially instructive as proving that the Acts is a narrative of *selection* only. - CBSC

of note [outstanding] among the apostles .. The words may mean either they were themselves (1) “*distinguished Apostles*,” or (2) “*well known to, and honoured by, the Apostles*.” (CBSC)

If (1) then *apostles* refers to “messengers” or “ambassadors, missionaries”; if (2) the kinsmen were loved helpers to other *apostles* beside Paul.

highly respected among the apostles .. This phrase probably indicates that Andronicus and Junia were apostles—i.e., accredited missionaries of the church (see [Acts 14:4](#), [Acts 14:14](#); [1 Corinthians 9:5-6](#); [Galatians 2:9](#)). - NLTB

Some have said that this verse proves that Junia was an apostle, and thus women can fill any church office. The verse seems to be saying, however, that Andronicus and Junia were **well known to the apostles**, not that Junia was herself an apostle. (Other examples of this construction, Greek. *episēmos* plus *en* plus dative, have been found with the meaning “well known to [someone]” - ESVSB

apostles .. Their ministry with Paul, and perhaps with Peter and some of the other apostles in Jerusalem before Paul was converted, was well known and appreciated by the apostles. - MSB

This designation likely is used in a generic sense to refer to missionaries who were sent out (compare

Greek in [2 Corinthians 8:23](#); [Philippians 2:25](#); [Acts 13:1-4](#); [Acts 14:14](#);) and not necessarily a reference to the Twelve. (FSB)

in Christ before me .. A beautiful and affecting tribute to these his “senior saints.” - CBSC

This passage also reveals that the couple was Jewish, had been imprisoned, and had become Christians before Paul. – ESVSB

Romans 16:8

Romans 16:8

16:8–16 The names in this section are unknown to scholarship. They are beloved of God and Paul but their names and service are not recorded in the NT or early Christian literature. What is remarkable is that there is a mixture of common slave names and noble Roman and Jewish family names. There are men and women. There are wealthy freedman and itinerant preachers. There are foreigners from Persia. All barriers are down in the church of Jesus Christ (cf. [Romans 3:22](#); [Romans 10:12](#); [Joel 2:28-32](#) [[Acts 2:14-21](#)]; [1 Corinthians 12:11](#); [Galatians 3:28](#); [Colossians 3:11](#))! - Utley

Amplias .. A common Latin name among the emperor’s household slaves at that time; he may have been one of those in “Caesar’s household” ([Philippians 4:22](#)).

A slave name found on a tombstone in Rome.

Cranfield points out that in a burial chamber in the Catacomb of Domatilla in Rome, there is a late first-century or early second-century tomb with the inscription AMPLIAT[I], belonging to “someone who was specially esteemed” (2:790; see *SH*, 424). Whether this is the person Paul mentions we have no way of knowing. - CPNIVC

Ampliatius ... Urbanus ... Stachys ... Apelles. Common slave names. They may have been either slaves or “freedmen,” former slaves who had gained their freedom. - NIVZSB

my beloved in the Lord .. The term “beloved” [τὸν ἀγαπητόν μου] is used by God the Father for Jesus the Son in [Matthew 3:17](#) and [Matthew 17:5](#), which may be a title from the Servant Songs of Isaiah (cf. [Matthew 12:18](#), quoting [Isaiah 42:1](#)). However, Paul uses it to address believers (cf. [Romans 1:7](#); [Romans 16:8-9](#); [1 Corinthians 4:14](#); [1 Corinthians 15:58](#); [Ephesians 6:21](#); [Philippians 2:12](#); [Colossians 4:7](#); [Colossians 4:9](#); [Colossians 4:14](#); [1 Timothy 6:2](#); [Philemon 1:16](#)). - Utley

This same phrase is variously translated "my dear friend" or "dear friend." The point is that he was a personal friend of Paul. (see [Romans 16:5](#)).

Romans 16:9

Romans 16:9

Urbane .. This is another Latin slave name. **Urbanus.** The name means "city dweller" or "city bred."

This reminds us of the story of Onesimus in Philemon. It was said by Roman historians that every run-away slave made his way to Rome. It was also said that half the population of Rome were slaves.

our fellow worker .. Apparently he had worked with Paul somewhere before coming to Rome. There seems to be significance that Paul says "**our**" and not "my" fellow worker, indicating he is still a worker in Christ. (CP)

in Christ .. A often repeated phrase, along with "*in the Lord*" indicating these workers were all together in one Christian family.

Stachys .. An uncommon Greek masculine name meaning “ear of corn.” He was obviously close to Paul, but the details are unknown.

Romans 16:10

Romans 16:10

Apelles approved .. Another Greek name that was common among Jews (like "Apollon" was, Acts [Acts 18:24](#); [Acts 19:1](#); [1 Corinthians 1:12](#); [1 Corinthians 3:4](#); [1 Corinthians 3:5](#); [1 Corinthians 3:6](#); [1 Corinthians 3:22](#); [1 Corinthians 4:6](#); [1 Corinthians 16:12](#); [Titus 3:13](#).) .

Approved .. One who has been tested and proved faithful. A well tried Christian, [1 Corinthians 11:19](#); [2 Corinthians 10:18](#); [1 Corinthians 13:7](#). Apparently he had undergone a trial (or trials) of which Paul was aware.

who are of the household .. Aristobulus himself may or may not have been a Christian, and the latter is slightly the more likely. "*Those from amongst his*" *household*, or *people*, are probably the converts in his *familia*, or establishment, of slaves and freedmen. (CBSC)

Aristobulus .. Since Paul does not greet him personally, he was probably not a believer, although some relatives and household servants apparently were.

Some scholars believe that he was the brother of Herod Agrippa I (10 b.c.–a.d. 44), and the grandson of Herod the Great (c. 73–4 b.c.). This is uncertain. ([Philippians 4:22](#))

Romans 16:11

Romans 16:11

Herodian my kinsman .. Related to the Herod family, or perhaps a slave in that family. Only three of those Paul mentions in Rome are called by Jewish names.

my countryman .. The preferred reading is "*my kinsman*," indicating that he may have been one of Paul's Jewish relatives. - MSB

However, Paul almost always refers to his fellow countrymen in this same way. [G4773](#), συγγενής, *suggenēs*; **Thayer Definition:** 1) of the same kin, akin to, related by blood
2) in a wider sense, of the same nation, a fellow countryman.

the family [household] of Narcissus .. refers to family members or more likely the slaves in Narcissus's household. The name was a common one at the time.

Some scholars think **Narcissus** was the wealthy freedman who served the emperor Claudius as his secretary (a.d. 41–54). If so, two households within the palace had Christians in them (cf. [Philippians 4:22](#)).

who are in the Lord .. Those slaves, or family members, mentioned were known by Paul to be Christians.

Romans 16:12

Romans 16:12

Tryphena and Tryphosa .. Apparently sisters, probably even twins, whose names mean "delicate" and "dainty."

labored in the Lord .. They were probably, like Phœbe, "servants of the Church." Their service "*toil*" and faithfulness was known to Paul.

Persis .. The Greek is feminine. This means the "Persian woman." Most like it is a proper name and she is named after her native Persia; since her work is spoken of in the past tense, she was probably older than the other two women in this verse. - MSB

beloved Persis .. It is noticeable, as a sign of St Paul's faultless Christian delicacy, that he does not call this Christian woman "*my beloved*." - CBSC

laboured [toiled] .. Toiled. The aorist may point to some special occasion in the past. Or possibly Persis was an aged believer, whose day of toil, being over, was now viewed as *one act* of loving work for Christ. – CBSC

Romans 16:13

Romans 16:13

Rufus .. This name means “red” or “red-headed.” There is an apparently well known Rufus in Rome (cf. [Mark 15:21](#)). - Utley

Rufus .. Biblical scholars generally agree that he was one of the sons of Simon of Cyrene, the man enlisted to carry Jesus’ cross (cf. [Mark 15:21](#)) and was likely saved through that contact with Christ. Mark wrote his gospel in Rome, possibly after the letter to Rome was written, and circulated. - MSB

Rufus .. A Latin name. Possibly this was the Rufus of [Mark 15:21](#), brother of Alexander and son of Simon the Cyrenian. Alexander and Rufus are apparently named by St Mark as well known in the Christian Church, and it is observable that his Gospel was probably written at *Rome*. - CBSC

chosen in the Lord .. Lit. **the chosen one**, &c. All true Christians might be so described, ([Romans 8:33](#)) but this, as Meyer remarks, would not forbid a special and emphatic use of the word, in the case of a Christian remarkable for character or usefulness. - CBSC

Some translations render “chosen” as “choice,” which indicates he was widely known as an extraordinary believer because of his great love and service. - MSB

Rufus .. his mother and mine .. “His mother in a literal sense, and mine in a figurative one.” An instance of the delicacy and tenderness of Paul; of his love for this disciple and his mother, as if he were of the same family. - BN

Rufus was not Paul’s natural brother. Rather, Rufus’ mother, the wife of Simon of Cyrene, at some time had cared for Paul during his ministry travels. - MSB

Evidently, the mother of Rufus (possibly the wife of Simon the Cyrenian,) had endeared herself to St Paul by special Christian kindness; the sweeter to him as his own parents, probably, were long departed. - CBSC

Many believe that this is the son and wife of Simon of Cyrene who bore the cross for Christ. [Mark 15:21](#).

- 1) Apparently Simon is named in the Gospel narratives because he was well known.
- 2) His sons are mentioned because they were well know in Rome.
- 3) Some where along the way Paul had stayed with this family (probably at Antioch [Acts 11:20](#)).

[See the sermon "Mark 15 Simon of Cyrene" in [Sermons_Gann.topx](#) in the e-Sword module on [BibleSupport.com](#) or [Gann_sermons.topx](#) in Topic Notes.

Romans 16:14

Romans 16:14

Vs. 14 Group 4

Greet Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermes, Patrobas, Hermas and the brothers with them . . These men are simply not known to us. It may be, since Paul says nothing about them, that he himself did not know them personally but only by reputation. The “brothers with them” may refer to a house church to which they all belonged. - CPNIVC

All otherwise unknown. The names are Greek. —*Hermas* was the name of the author of “The

Shepherd,” a celebrated religious romance, sometimes compared as such to the Pilgrim’s Progress. But it is at least probable that “The Shepherd” belongs to a later generation than that of the Hermas here named. - CBSC

The early Christian converts seem to have had no scruple in retaining a pre-baptismal name even when the name (as in this case) was that of a heathen deity. Cp. [*Phoebe*, ver. 1] *Hermes*, (ver. 14); *Nereus*, (ver. 15); and such derivative names as *Demetrius* ([3 John 1:12](#)). - CBSC

Hermes is the name of the god of good luck. It was a very common slave name of the first century Greco-Roman world. - Utley

brethren .. The "brethren with them" probably refers to a house church to which they all belonged.

“Brethren” in this context, probably refers to both men and women, which indicates that these names represent the outstanding leaders of two of the assemblies in Rome. - MSB

Romans 16:15

Romans 16:15

Vs. 15 = Group 6

Apparently husband and wife and family.

Philologus and Julia .. *Philologus* is a Greek name meaning "loves words" meaning to love books. *Julia* is feminine and probably the wife of Philologus.

Nereus and his sister, and Olympas .. Probably the children or relatives in the house-church that this describes.

Nereus .. A Greek name; that of a minor sea-god, tutelar of the Mediterranean under Poseidon. - CBSC

Olympas .. A Greek masculine name.

Nereus .. Associated by Roman tradition with Domitilla, a cousin of Domitian, and a Christian who was exiled by him in AD 95.

This group, again unknown to us, may have constituted another house church. Some speculate that the first two were husband and wife, and the next two were their children; but there is no way to verify this. Of interest is the fact that the name *Julia* appears on over 1,400 inscriptions in Rome, which makes it by far the most common name of those in this list (the next most frequent is *Hermes*, 640 times). - CPNIV

all the saints who are with them .. This probably speaks of another house church that meet with this family.

Romans 16:16

Romans 16:16

holy kiss .. [1 Corinthians 16:20](#); [2 Corinthians 13:12](#); [1 Thessalonians 5:26](#)

Same as *kiss of love* in [1 Peter 5:14](#)

holy kiss .. Kissing of friends on the forehead, cheek, or beard was common in the OT. The Jews in the NT church carried on the practice, and it became especially precious to new believers, who were often outcasts from their own families because of their faith, because of the spiritual kinship it signified. - MSB

The kiss, as a mark both of friendship and of reverence, is still almost as usual as ever in the East.— In the early [church] the kiss is given to the newly-baptized. (Bingham, Bk. 12. ch. 4.). - CBSC

in Christian love [NLT] .. (literally *with a sacred kiss*): The kiss was a common way to **greet** another person in the ancient world and particularly among the Jews. It is mentioned frequently in the NT as a greeting ([1 Corinthians 16:20](#); [2 Corinthians 13:12](#); [1 Thessalonians 5:26](#); see [1 Peter 5:14](#)); the kiss of peace became a standard feature of the Christian liturgy by the second century. - NLTsb

Churches of Christ .. all those in Achaia, Macedonia, Asia, etc. cf. [Romans 16:4](#); [1 Corinthians 7:17](#); [2 Corinthians 8:18](#); [2 Corinthians 11:28](#); [1 Corinthians 16:19](#)

The churches .. A better reading gives, **All the churches**. He assumes this universal greeting, from the fact of the universal good-report of the Roman Christians. (See [Romans 1:8](#).) And he offers it as a seemingly message to the Christians of the mighty Capital. - CBSC

Romans 16:17

Romans 16:17

Now I beseech you .. From this ver. to ver. 20, inclusive, we have a paragraph or section by itself. It contains a brief but earnest warning against an evil which everywhere beset and encountered the Apostle ... We may gather that this evil was only just beginning at Rome; otherwise more of the Epistle would be given to it. - CBSC

Mark them .. **watch**; so as to *avoid* them. Cp. [Philippians 3:17](#), where the same word is used with an opposite reference—"watch, so as to *follow* with them." - CBSC

Cause divisions and offenses .. RSV "create dissensions and difficulties"

Strictly, and better, **the divisions and the stumblingblocks**. He refers to circumstances already well-known in various Churches, and beginning to be felt at Rome. - CBSC

Doctrinal falsehood and unrighteous practices (cf. [Matthew 24:24](#); [Acts 20:27-32](#); [Galatians 1:6-8](#); [Ephesians 4:14](#)). - MSB

people who cause divisions: Paul had trouble with divisive false teachers elsewhere (see Galatians, Colossians, 1 Timothy), so he warned the Roman church about this danger. - NLTsb

contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned .. Literally, **beyond the teaching which you** (emphatic) **did learn**. ("Contrary," however, rightly represents the Greek)—The emphasis on "*you*" seems to indicate that the erring teachers were, or would be, visitors to Rome, not original members of the Roman Church.—"**Did learn**:"—at the time of their evangelization. - CBSC

16:17–19 A warning about false teachers is unusual in NT letter closings—especially in this case since the letter does not explicitly mention false teaching anywhere else. Paul's description of the teachers is too general to enable us to identify who they were or what they were teaching. - NIVZSB

There is a list in verses 17–18 of what these false teachers were doing.

1. they stirred up divisions
2. they put hindrances in the believer's way
3. they taught in opposition to the instruction the church had given
4. they were serving their own base appetites
5. they were deceiving the hearts of unsuspecting people by their smooth, flattering talk.

- Utley

avoid them .. A peaceable but effective way of resistance.—Cp. [2 Timothy 3:5](#); [2 John 1:10](#). But these parallels are not *exact*; for the present passage seems to be specially a caution to individual Christians, not to go as *learners* to the erring teachers. - CBSC

Romans 16:18

Romans 16:18

their own stomach .. This might describe false teachers who emphasized Jewish dietary laws (see [Romans 1:1](#) and note; [Philippians 3:19](#) and note) or sought to serve their selfish desires (see [Romans 13:14](#)). - FSB

appetites [NIV] .. Or “bellies,” a vivid way of indicating their preoccupation with satisfying their own bodily comforts (cf. [Philippians 3:19](#)). - NIVZSB

serve ... their own belly .. Driven by self-interest and self-gratification, often seen in their pretentious, extravagant, and immoral lifestyles (cf. [Philippians 3:18-19](#); [2 Timothy 3:7-8](#); [2 Peter 1:20-2:3](#), [2 Peter 2:10-19](#); [Jude 1:12-13](#)). - MSB

smooth words and flattering speech .. Literally, *by their sweet-speech and fair-speech*. The first word denotes the seeming piety, the second the seeming reasonableness, of their doctrine. - CBSC

False teachers are often physically attractive and have dynamic personalities (cf. [Colossians 2:4](#)). They are often very logical in their presentations. Beware! Some possible biblical tests to identify false teachers are found in [Deuteronomy 13:1-5](#); [Deuteronomy 18:22](#); [Matthew 7](#); [Philippians 3:2-3](#), [Philippians 3:18-19](#); [1 John 4:1-6](#). - Utley

the simple .. Lit. **the evil-less**; people unconscious of bad intentions, and hence unsuspecting of them. - CBSC

These apparently new or naive believers were vulnerable (“inexperienced in evil”). - Utley

naive people [NIV] .. “Innocence” about doing evil is a good thing (v. 19), but innocence that involves ignorance about Christian doctrine is dangerous. – NIVZSB

Romans 16:19

Romans 16:19

known to all .. This is referred to in [Romans 1:8](#). This is one of Paul’s hyperboles. - Utley

be wise ... in what is good, and innocent in what is evil .. This reflects the teaching of Jesus (cf. [Matthew 10:16](#); [Luke 10:3](#)). - Utley

Christians should have the wisdom to discern the good they should be doing, and they should be unacquainted with doing what is evil. - NIVZSB

simple concerning evil .. Lit. **untainted**. Same word as [Matthew 10:16](#); [Philippians 2:15](#); (E. V., “harmless”). The original idea (freedom from *alloy*), passes into that of freedom from ill motives, or (as here) from defiling knowledge. – CBSC

Romans 16:20

Romans 16:20

The God of peace .. Refers to the God who brings peace (see note on [Romans 5:1](#)), in contrast to the discord caused by false teachers ([Romans 16:17](#)). - FSB

Bruise Satan .. shortly .. Satan, through using Jewish persecution [Revelation 2:9](#); [Revelation 2:13](#); [Revelation 3:9](#) would suffer a defeat with the Jewish rebellion of AD 67-70 being put down in AD 70 with the destruction of Jerusalem.

under your feet .. This is an allusion to [Genesis 3:15](#). [God promised that Eve’s offspring would “crush” Satan’s “head”] The believer’s relationship with the Messiah gives them victory also (cf. [1 John 5:18-20](#)). - Utley

Christians would be exhonored and vindicated.

the grace of our Lord Jesus be with you .. This is a common closing for Paul (cf. [1 Corinthians 16:23](#); [2 Corinthians 13:14](#); [Galatians 6:18](#); [Philippians 4:23](#); [Colossians 4:18](#); [1 Thessalonians 5:28](#); [2 Thessalonians 3:18](#) and also in [Revelation 22:21](#)). It was possibly written in his own hand. It was his way of verifying his letters (cf. [2 Thessalonians 3:17](#); [1 Corinthians 16:21](#); [Colossians 4:18](#)). - Utley

the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ .. It may be that St Paul was about to close the Epistle here. If so, we may suppose that the request of the Christians round him to add their greetings gave him occasion to add the few remaining sentences. – CBSC

Romans 16:21

Romans 16:21

16:21–23 These verses are a post script. Greetings from the Corinthian Jewish brethren (from where Paul wrote) and Timothy.

Timothy, my fellow worker .. *Timothy* was one of Paul's closest ministry associates ([Acts 16:1-3](#)). He accompanied Paul on his second missionary journey and was with Paul in Corinth while Paul wrote this letter to the Roman church (see [Acts 20:2-4](#)).

See especially [Philippians 2:19-22](#) with this brief allusion to this singularly beloved and honoured friend and helper of the Apostle. His name appears in eleven Epistles; Romans, 1 and 2 Cor., Phil., Colossians, 1 and 2 Thessalonians, 1 and 2 Tim., Philem., Hebr. - CBSC

Lucius .. Either 1) a native of Cyrene, one of the prophets and teachers in Antioch who participated in Paul and Barnabas' commissioning ([Acts 13:1-3](#)) or 2) another form of *Luke*, for "highly educated one"; the author of the Gospel of Luke and the book of Acts. or (3) an otherwise unknown Christian.

Jason .. Possibly the same individual who provided Paul with refuge during a riot in Thessalonica - [Acts 17:5-9](#) One of the first converts in Thessalonica, who evidently let Paul stay in his home for a short time before Paul and Silas were sent to Berea (see notes on [Acts 17:5-10](#)).

Sosipater .. A longer form of "Sopater" ([Acts 20:4-6](#)), a Berean (cf. [Acts 17:10-12](#)) who joined other believers in meeting Paul at Troas after the apostle left Ephesus.

my countrymen . . See note on [Romans 16:11](#).

Lucius bore a Roman name; *Jason* and *Sosipater*, Greek names.

Romans 16:22

Romans 16:22

I, Tertius, who write this letter .. Paul used a scribe (*amanuensis*) to write his letters (cf. [1 Corinthians 16:21](#); [Galatians 6:11](#); [Colossians 4:18](#); [2 Thessalonians 3:17](#)). It is very probably that Paul had poor eye sight and could not write the small, tight script needed to preserve space on a sheet of papyrus or leather scroll (cf. [Galatians 6:11](#))!

[Speculation varies as to how Paul's eyes may have been damaged. cf. [Acts 14:19](#) etc.]

Tertius .. Paul's amanuensis. He wrote down the words as Paul dictated the letter. He adds his identification and personal greeting. See also [1 Peter 5:12](#); Paul apparently takes the pen in hand and concludes the epistle from this point on. [Galatians 6:11](#); [2 Thessalonians 3:17](#).

Tertius had a Latin name, and was perhaps a Roman, personally known to the Church at Rome. There is something strangely real and life-like in this sudden interposition of the amanuensis, with his own personal greeting. - CBSC

who wrote this epistle .. Letter-writing by amanuensis was very common in the days of St Paul; and if St Paul suffered in his eyes, as is not unlikely, he would be doubly sure to use such help. It was his custom (in

his earliest Epistles, at least,) to write a few words at the close with his own hand. See [2 Thessalonians 3:17](#).—Cp. [Galatians 6:11](#); where render, “*See in what large letters I write to you, with my own hand.*” – CBSC

Romans 16:23

Romans 16:23

Vs. 23 Greetings from more people at Corinth who are interested in the church at Rome.

Gaius .. Perhaps the Gaius mentioned in [1 Corinthians 1:14](#). This Gaius may also have been known as *Titius Justus*, whom [Acts 18:7](#) identifies as the person with whom Paul stayed in Corinth. NIVS

There was a different Gaius of Derbe mentioned in [Acts 19:29](#); [Acts 20:4](#).

host to me and the whole church .. This was the hospitality needed in the church. Some believers with resources offered the traveling Christian ministers room and board. Some, as this man, also opened his home to be the meeting place for gathered events. House churches were the norm for over a hundred years. - Utley

Justus [Acts 18:7](#); [Acts 19:29](#); [1 Corinthians 1:14](#). The church at Corinth met in his house, next door to the synagogue.

(Gaius of Derbe was a different man [Acts 20:4](#);) and he could be the Gaius John mentions [3 John 1:1](#); and apparently Gaius also hosted the church in his home at Corinth ([Romans 16:23](#))

EGT p. 163 says of Gaius of [3 John 1:1](#) A common name. Three in the N.T. 1) Gaius of Macedonia, Acts 19:29; 2) Gaius of Derbe, Acts 20:4; 3) Gaius of Corinth, Romans 16:23, 1 Corinthians 1:14. The name is so common this Gaius may be altogether a different one.

Erastus .. He was the city treasurer, a prominent position with political clout. [Acts 19:22](#), [2 Timothy 4:20](#). There is an inscription found at Corinth with his name.

A large Latin inscription in the limestone pavement near the Corinthian theater reads, “Erastus in return for his aedileship laid [the pavement] at his own expense.” An *aedile* was a man elected to oversee aspects of city finances. Often prominent elected officials would fulfill campaign pledges by providing some public structure to the city. Although there is some debate over whether the Greek word for “city treasurer” (*oikonomos*) was the equivalent in the Corinthian Roman colony to the Latin *aedile*, the mid-first-century dating of the pavement and the rarity of the name Erastus in first-century Corinth hold out the distinct possibility that this pavement was laid by Paul’s fellow churchman. - ESVSB

Quartus .. This name in Latin means “fourth.” He may have been a physical brother of Tertius (which in Latin means “third”) but more likely just the final brother in Christ listed here.

Romans 16:24

Romans 16:24

Vs. 24-27 Closing Doxology

The doxology of verse 24 may have been penned by Tertius at Paul's dictation. And then Paul may have taken the pen in his own hand and penned the larger doxology of verse 25-27.

Closing his letters in his own hand was Paul's custom and a mark of genuine authorship. See [1 Corinthians 16:21](#); [Galatians 6:11](#); [Colossians 4:18](#); [2 Thessalonians 3:17](#)).

Romans 16:25

Romans 16:25

16:25–27 This is one sentence in Greek.

16:25–27 The letter concludes with a beautiful doxology that praises God for His work through Jesus Christ and thereby summarizes the major themes in Romans (*see notes on* [Romans 11:33-36](#); cf. [Matthew 6:13](#); [Luke 19:37-38](#); [Ephesians 3:20-21](#); Hebrews 13:20-21; [Revelation 5:9-10](#)). - MSB

to Him who is able .. This is another wonderful title for God used three times in the NT (cf. [Ephesians 3:20](#); [Jude 1:24](#)).

Believers are enabled by the knowledge of the gospel. This gospel has now been made available to all!

my gospel .. The gospel Paul preached was Jesus Christ. His death, burial, and resurrection [1 Corinthians 15:1-4](#).

preaching of Jesus Christ .. Synonymous with the gospel, it was Paul's supreme life commitment (*see notes on* [Romans 10:14-15](#), [Romans 10:17](#); cf. [1 Corinthians 1:23-24](#); [2 Corinthians 4:5-6](#)). - MSB

the preaching of Jesus Christ .. This may grammatically mean either (1) "the preaching which *speaks of Him*;" (in which case it would be a phrase explanatory of "my Gospel;") or (2) "the preaching which *He Himself delivers*." - CBSC

revelation of the mystery .. Something that was secret but now made known. Something now disclosed; how the Gentiles were included in the Kingdom of God. [Romans 11:25](#); [Ephesians 3:3](#) ff; [Colossians 1:26](#) ff.

In the NT, this word does not have its modern connotation. Instead, it refers to something hidden in former times but now made known ([1 Corinthians 4:1](#); [Ephesians 5:32](#); [Ephesians 6:19](#); [Colossians 1:25-26](#); [2 Thessalonians 2:7-8](#); [1 Timothy 3:9](#), [1 Timothy 3:16](#)). The NT's most common mystery is that God would provide salvation for Gentiles as well as Jews (Ephesians 3:3–9). – MSB

Romans 16:26

Romans 16:26

now .. In the days of Messiah, and in Him as the Propitiation. Cp. [Colossians 1:26](#). - CBSC

now is manifested .. This mystery or plan of God has now been clearly revealed to all mankind. It is the gospel of Jesus Christ, and how all (Jew and Gentile) are now to be united in one spiritual body (cf. [Ephesians 2:11–3:13](#)).

prophetic Scriptures made known .. God had told Israel that He would not only call her to righteousness, but appoint her as a light (of the gospel) to the nations (*see notes on* [Isaiah 42:6](#); [Isaiah 49:6](#); [1 Peter 1:10-11](#); cf. [Genesis 12:3](#); [Exodus 19:6](#); [Isaiah 49:22](#); [Isaiah 53:11](#); [Isaiah 60:3-5](#); [Jeremiah 31:31-33](#)). - MSB

This was foretold by the OT prophets. The establishment of a NT church made up of believing Jews and Gentiles was always God's plan (cf. [Genesis 3:15](#); [Genesis 12:3](#); [Exodus 19:5-6](#); [Jeremiah 31:31-34](#)).

has been made known to all the nations .. This is an AORIST PASSIVE PARTICIPLE. It was placed last in the Greek sentence for emphasis. God has presented the gospel offer to the whole world which was always His purpose (cf. [Genesis 3:15](#))! - Utley

the everlasting God .. The Greek word (*aionios*) rendered **everlasting**. ... This adjective is nowhere else in the N. T. attached to the word God. - CBSC

the obedience of faith .. [Romans 1:5](#).

Obedience to the faith .. At the beginning of the book Paul informs us that "the faith" is something to be obeyed among all the nations (Jew and Gentile.) And lest we forget what Paul is meaning by faith, he reminds us again at the end of the book, [Romans 16:26](#), so we shouldn't make any mistake about what he is talking about when he uses this word.

Erroneous doctrines are built on mis-defining Paul's usage of faith in this book.

for the obedience of faith .. i.e. to invite that obedience which, in fact, faith implies; that trustful acceptance of the terms of Salvation which may be described, in one aspect, as “*submission* to the righteousness of God.” (See note on [Romans 10:3](#).) The thought is not so much of the course of moral obedience to which faith leads, as of the element of submission in the act of faith. - CBSC

so that they too might believe and obey him .. Paul uses the same language about the mission to the Gentiles that he used in [Romans 1:5](#), creating a beautiful frame around the letter as a whole. - NLTSB

obedience of faith .. It is God's will that this gospel go to all nations, so that all who are obedient because of their faith will be saved. – ESVSB

Romans 16:27

Romans 16:27

the only wise God .. This is an allusion to monotheism (cf. [Deuteronomy 6:4-5](#)). Christianity has only one God, just like Judaism, however, the full deity of Jesus and the full personality of the Spirit force us to a “trinity,” Trinity. - Utley

go God only wise .. The eternal *Wisdom* is here emphasized because the Gospel is its supreme expression. See especially the profound words of [Ephesians 3:10](#), and [1 Timothy 1:17](#) (with its connexion). Compare also “*Christ ... the wisdom of God,*” [1 Corinthians 1:24](#) - CBSC

to God ... be glory .. It was through the Father that the gospel was ultimately revealed, therefore He deserves all the credit, praise, and worship. - MSB

Some of the sources for these notes on Romans are from the following:

Bernard, J. H. (1929). A critical and exegetical commentary on the Gospel according to St. John. (A. H. McNeile, Ed.). New York: C. Scribner' Sons.

Barry, J. D., Mangum, D., Brown, D. R., Heiser, M. S., Custis, M., Ritzema, E., ... Bomar, D. (2012, 2016). Faithlife Study Bible (John 15:16). Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

Crossway Bibles. (2008). The ESV Study Bible. Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

King James Version study Bible . (1997). (electronic ed., John 15:26). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

MacArthur, J., Jr. (Ed.). (1997). The MacArthur Study Bible (electronic ed., p. 1616). Nashville, TN: Word Pub.

New Living Translation Study Bible. (2008). (John 15:18–27). Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc.

NIV Zondervan Study Bible: Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

CPNIVC .. Jack Cotrell, The College Press NIV Commentary. Romans vol 1 & 2.

The Interpretation of St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans, By
R. C. H. LENSKI

AB = Alex Bayes, Class on Romans

SW = Scott Wright, Class on Romans

And other sources as well.

Notes

on

ROMANS

Windell Gann

Notes from e-Sword Bible Program

**The “note” file and “commentary” can be
downloaded at the e-Sword module page found at
<http://home.hiwaay.net.net/~wgann>**

Introduction	Page 01	
Chapter 1	Page 04	Chapter 09 Page 129
Chapter 2	Page 26	Chapter 10 Page 140
Chapter 3	Page 43	Chapter 11 Page 149
Chapter 4	Page 62	Chapter 12 Page 163
Chapter 5	Page 72	Chapter 13 Page 172
Chapter 6	Page 88	Chapter 14 Page 182
Chapter 7	Page 98	Chapter 15 Page 199
Chapter 8	Page 110	Chapter 16 Page 218